



5 PILLARS OF ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

A Best Practices Guide Brought to You by:



Center for Industrial Services
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Introduction
4	Pillar 1: Strategic Communications
8	Pillar 2: Robust Business Retention & Expansion Plan
12	Pillar 3: Transformational Workforce Development
16	Pillar 4: Innovative Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development
20	Pillar 5: Enhanced Digital Marketing & Recruitment Tools
24	Disaster Recovery Resources/Partners
25	How UT CIS Can Help
27	Appendix

INTRODUCTION

Economic resilience refers to “the ability to withstand, prevent or quickly recover from major disruptions – or shocks – to its underlying economic base” (EDA). Economic developers play a vital role in building economic resiliency in their local and regional economies. Being prepared on the front end can significantly affect a community’s ability to bounce back after such disruptions.

Most communities and businesses have experienced and responded to some level of disruption including natural disasters such as an extreme weather event, an economic shock such as a national downturn, man-made disaster such as a cyber attack, or a global health crises resulting in social and economic disruption.

This Resiliency Guide was developed by [University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services \(UT CIS\)](#) with two things in mind. (1) To provide economic developers and community leaders with practical tips and resources to build resiliency into all aspects of their economic development strategies and (2) To serve as a practical guide that includes checklists for Economic Development Organizations (EDOs)/Chambers of Commerce to be better prepared to respond during a disaster and throughout the recovery.

From maintaining a robust business retention/expansion plan to digitizing the recruitment tools and transforming the workforce for the future, economic developers must think holistically and creatively, while embracing regionalism, to successfully assist their communities in becoming more economically resilient.



5 Pillars of Economic Resiliency

PILLAR 1: Strategic Communications

PILLAR 2: Robust Business Retention & Expansion Plan

PILLAR 3: Transformational Workforce Development

PILLAR 4: Innovative Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development

PILLAR 5: Enhanced Digital Marketing & Recruiting Tools



PILLAR 1 STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS



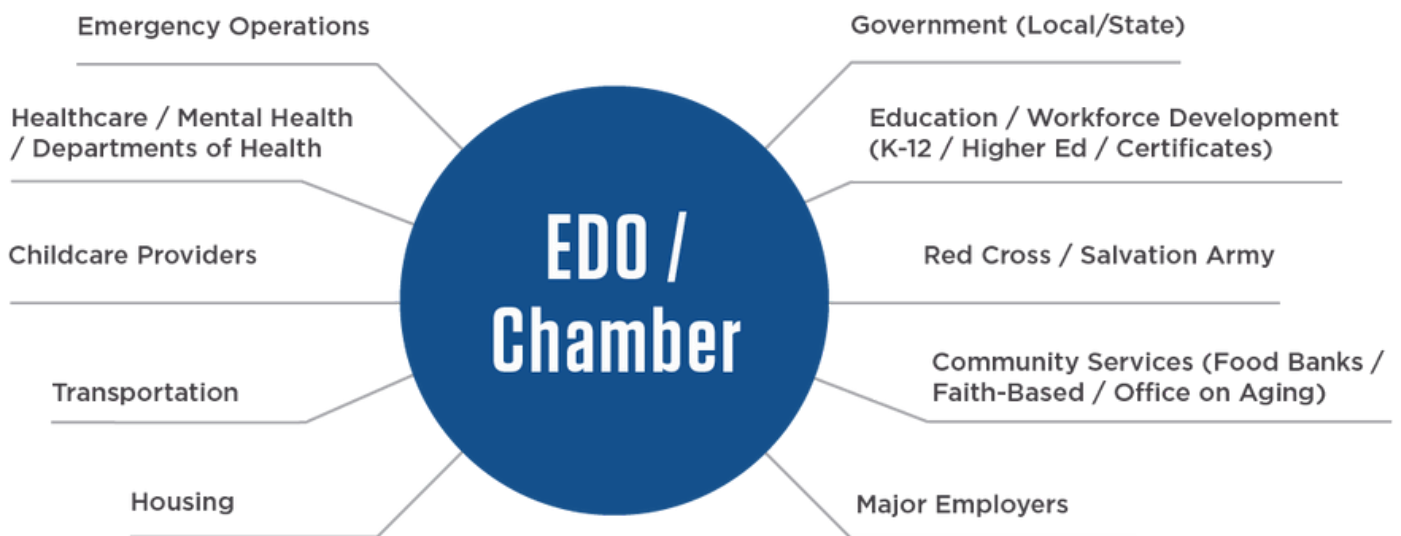
Effective communication is crucial in disaster preparedness and response to minimize confusion and dispel rumors. The EDO/Chamber must facilitate clear, timely and credible communication among all stakeholders, acting as the lead liaison for business and industry.

Expand the traditional economic development resource network

EDO/Chamber networks should extend beyond local and state government and the education/workforce community to include various community resource providers.

The expanded network should also include key agencies like social services, housing, healthcare/mental health, transportation, Red Cross, departments of health, childcare and major employers.

Expanded Economic Development Resource Network





Engage with local government emergency preparedness organizations

It is important for EDOs/Chambers to understand the emergency management process to better assist existing businesses during a disaster and the recovery.

- **A senior EDO/Chamber staff member** should be a member of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and/or Emergency Operation Center (EOC).
- **EDO/Chamber should request placement on the communications tree** for the local Emergency Operation Center (EOC) and/or the Local Emergency Management Agency.
- **Stakeholders should conduct a thorough review** of actions taken, challenges encountered, and outcomes achieved following any disaster or exercise. This after-action review is essential for identifying lessons learned and implementing changes to improve future preparedness and response efforts.

Create a communications plan before a disaster occurs

- **Develop the crisis communications team** and determine the primary spokesperson.
- **Identify internal and external stakeholders** including contact information.
- **Establish notification and monitoring systems** i.e., social media, text, electronic newsletter, etc.
- **Develop key messaging** that aligns with local government officials and maintain active communication to ensure continuity of messaging.
- **Include the organization's notification tree** of who notifies who in the communications plan.
- **Conduct tabletop and practical exercises** to test the effectiveness of the communications and response plans. Use the outcomes to identify gaps, refine strategies and improve coordination among stakeholders.

Maintain stakeholder relations

- **Maintain open lines of communications** with all stakeholders including employees, board of directors, existing businesses, elected/appointed officials, regional ED partners, media and the community at large.
- **Internal stakeholders** should hear important news from you first.
- **Create an inventory of community support resources**, such as the [Knoxville Chamber Workforce Services Directory](#) or the [Sumner County Not-For-Profit Checklist](#), to assist residents and local organizations. Make the inventory accessible by publishing it on your website.
- **Stakeholders should develop action plans** tailored to their specific focus areas and priorities, based on their organization's unique needs and concerns.
- **Promote and actively develop a culture of resilience**, raising awareness of steps that can be taken to improve disaster preparedness and response.





Build relationships with the media

The media plays an integral role in disaster management and serves as an essential stakeholder for operational and business continuity needs. To fulfill this role effectively, media personnel should receive training, participate in preparedness exercises, and be included in planning efforts to fully understand their responsibilities during emergencies.

- **Establish a rapport with local media** through lunch meetings, networking and sharing information. Invite a board member to join you.
- **Develop a communications strategy** for working with all local media outlets prior to a community crisis. Designate specific staff members to engage with the media to ensure correct messaging.
- **Maintain constant communication** with local officials and emergency response team to ensure consistency.
- **Respond to media inquiries** in a timely manner to avoid reporters turning to another source that may not provide correct information.

Be a positive voice for the community

Negative perceptions by external audiences can jeopardize economic recovery, especially when the community relies heavily on tourism. EDOs/Chambers are in a unique position not only to provide a platform for resources for the community, but also to promote unity and celebrate the community during a disaster and through its recovery. Tell a story of opportunity!

- **Be a convener and create opportunities to bring the community together** to assist in the recovery.
- **Celebrate the community's positive actions and outcomes** during a crisis and share on social media. Businesses and site selectors looking at your community to locate or expand will pay attention to how a community responds to a disruption.
- **Post on social media as soon as possible the "We are open for business!"** message to the outside world. This is especially important when your community relies heavily on tourism.

Become the communications hub for existing business and industry

- **Prepare and maintain an up-to-date list of available resources** from public and private resources to share with businesses. Consider hosting a resource page on your website.
- **Maintain current contact information** of the existing industries including cell phone numbers and personal email addresses for CEOs and/or key personnel in the event of a disaster.
- **Make contact as soon as possible** after a disaster. Be prepared to utilize virtual meetings when in-person visits are not possible.
- **Provide clear and accurate information** to enable businesses to make sound decisions as they begin to recover.
- **Assist businesses in communicating** their damages and needs to local officials.
- **Advocate for additional services** that may be needed from local, state or federal resources to assist in business recovery.
- **Assist your businesses in communicating** when they are open for business to external audiences.





**SECTION
RESOURCES**

Leadership in Times of Crisis Toolkit

From restoreyoureconomy.org

**IC Disaster Recovery
Communications Plan Template**

From SmartSheet

Social Media Accounts to Follow

From Ready.Gov

**Business Emergency
Preparedness Toolkits**

From Ready.Gov

Social Media Preparedness Toolkits

From Ready.Gov

Workforce Services Directory

From Knoxville Chamber

**Sumner County Not-For-Profit Checklist
and Mapping**

From Forward Sumner



PILLAR 2

ROBUST BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION PLAN

It is vital that economic developers stay informed of the industries in their communities to assess the risk of disruption or closure. On average, 80% of new jobs and capital investment are generated by existing businesses.

Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) efforts must extend beyond the traditional approaches to build and sustain economic resiliency. BRE is the economic developer's primary link to the business community.

Develop a business and industry outreach plan

Every community must have an outreach plan for its existing industries pre-and post-disaster. The plan must be flexible depending upon the severity and longevity of a disaster.

- **Establish a disaster outreach and recovery team** including members beyond your organization, such as emergency management, childcare providers, food banks, departments of health, mental health and faith-based organizations.
- **Maintain up-to-date contact information** of the existing industries, including cell phone numbers and personal email addresses for CEOs and/or key personnel in the event of a disaster.
- **Prepare and maintain a list of available resources** to share with businesses and keep it up to date. Reach out to regional and state partners such as [TNECD](#), [TVA](#), [Development Districts](#) and [UT CIS Solutions Consultants](#) to understand all resources available. Economic developers need not become subject matter experts, but must become experts at making connections.
- **Contact existing industries as soon as possible after a disaster.** Be prepared to utilize virtual meeting platforms when in-person visits are not possible. (See Emergency Response Survey for Businesses in Appendix)
- **Consider targeted groups of virtual meetings** when a disaster is widespread. Invite resource providers to share information on assistance. During a pandemic, providers can set up virtual office hours for drop-ins.





Encourage Business Continuity Planning

Many businesses are not prepared for a disruption in operations. Small businesses with a single location are particularly at risk. According to [Ready.Gov](#), 75% of small businesses without a continuity plan fail within 3 years of a major event.

- **Provide workshops and resources on business continuity planning** and emergency preparedness for your industries. Reach out to [TSBDC](#) and [UT CIS](#) for assistance. (See Hazard & Vulnerability Assessment Survey in Appendix)
- **Explore [Ready.Gov](#) and [DisasterSafety.org](#)** for disaster preparedness and business continuity planning, [toolkits](#) and sample [templates](#).

Understand the supply chain and the capabilities of your industries to help them grow

The global pandemic exposed supply chain vulnerabilities, accelerating the shift to US-based production and local manufacturing, creating new opportunities for industries.

- **Develop and maintain an existing industry directory.** Posted on your website, a directory will provide industries with added visibility and improved Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Directories should include updated contact information, website address and ideally, capabilities, special equipment and certifications.

- **Think regional!** Become familiar with the businesses in neighboring counties, the region and the state that are potential customers or suppliers to your local businesses.
- **Engage in local and regional** Manufacturing Roundtables and HR Associations.
- **Contact your area [UT CIS Solutions Consultant](#).** As part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) [Manufacturing Extension Partnership](#) (MEP) network, UT CIS consultants can assist with supply chain issues and identify growth opportunities. Partnering with TMEP means gaining the tools to anticipate and overcome disruptions. From Supplier Scouting to strategic sourcing, you protect operations, reduce risk and stay competitive.
- **Reach out to your area [TNECD Business Development Consultant](#) and [TVA Regional Specialist](#)** to identify available incentives that will assist in the growth of your existing industries.
- **Introduce your manufacturers to [Made in Tennessee \(MIT\)](#).** MIT is an initiative to support and celebrate Tennessee manufacturing. The no-cost program includes an online directory providing added visibility to manufacturers.

On average, **80% of new jobs and capital investment** are generated by existing businesses.



Provide assistance with access to recovery capital

During a disaster, accessing capital is critical, but most small businesses don't know where to turn for assistance and programs can be difficult to navigate.

- **Position your organization as a navigator** for business disaster recovery resources and capital. Designate a point person to collect information on resources at all levels of government.
- **Develop relationships with local banks, regional and state partners** such as [TSBDC](#), [Development Districts](#) and [Pathway Lending](#) to accelerate communications and facilitate connections when disaster strikes.
- **Establish a business recovery fund** controlled locally for short-term assistance until federal or state funds can be secured.
- **Reach out to public and private institutions** such as [Development Districts](#) and [Pathway Lending](#) regarding the development of a disaster bridge loan program.

Introduce your existing industries to new streams of revenue

Businesses that are agile and economically diversified are inherently more resilient against economic shocks. Assist businesses in finding short-and longterm opportunities for growth and resiliency.

- **Identify and connect businesses to new opportunities** during a disaster. Some manufacturers were able to pivot and retool to produce high demand supplies such as PPE during the pandemic.
- **Host a free training workshop** on how to economically diversify and grow a business through (1) government contracting with the [Tennessee APEX Accelerator](#) at UT CIS and (2) exporting products with [TSBDC International Trade Center](#).
- **Introduce your existing industries to commercialization** opportunities. Tennessee is fortunate to have valuable research assets such as [ORNL](#), [Y-12](#) and [UT Research Foundation \(UTRF\)](#) with technology transfer offices to assist businesses across the state with commercialization opportunities.



**SECTION
RESOURCES**

Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) Staff Directory

From TNECD

Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Economic Development Team

From TVA

Tennessee Development Districts

From Tennessee Development Districts Association (TDDA)

UT CIS Solutions Consultants

From UT Center for Industrial Services

Manufacturing Extension Partnership National Network (MEPNN)

From NIST.gov

UT CIS Emergency Preparedness

From UT Center for Industrial Services

U.S. Small Business Administration

From SBA.gov

Tennessee Small Business Development Centers (TSBDC)

From TSBDC

Business Continuity Plan Template

From Ready.Gov

Business Continuity Toolkit & Master Checklist

From DisasterSafety.org

Supplier Scouting

From UT Center for Industrial Services

Made in Tennessee (MIT)

From UT Center for Industrial Services

Pathway Lending

From Pathway Lending

Tennessee APEX Accelerator

From UT Center for Industrial Services

TSBDC International Trade Center

From TSBDC

Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) Technology Transfer

From ORNL.gov

Y-12 Office of Technology Commercialization and Partnerships

From Y12.doe.gov

UT Research Foundation (UTRF) Technology Transfer & Licensing

From UTRF



PILLAR 3

TRANSFORMATIONAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A quality, skilled workforce is a main driver for economic development and EDOs/Chambers must take a lead role in transformational workforce development strategies to start, expand, retain and recruit businesses in their communities.

Get ahead of future workforce skills needed by your employers

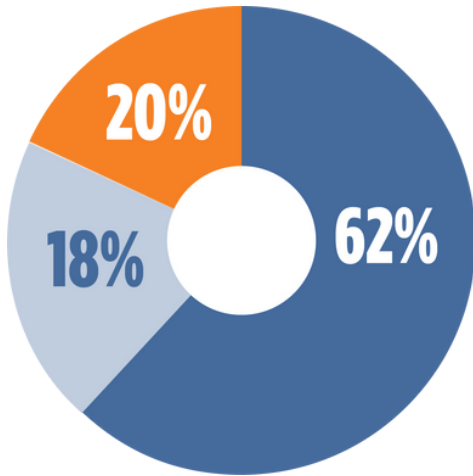
According to the Tennessee AI Advisory Council's [May 2025 Report to the General Assembly](#), more than 500,000 jobs across Tennessee are likely to be augmented or replaced by AI in the future.

- **Inventory the current and future skills needed** of your local businesses and identify the skill gaps in the workforce. Share those findings with your community colleges, universities and technical colleges.
- **Develop an understanding of the region's workforce** through the state's [Labor Force Profile](#) and [Labor Force Participation Analysis](#) including neighboring counties.
- **Understand your Laborshed** by utilizing the U.S. Census Bureau [OnTheMap tool](#) or reach out to your regional EDO or state ECD partner for an existing study.
- **Create a key contact list and maintain a good working relationship** with HR Managers/representatives and/or business owners in your area.
- **Join a local or regional** manufacturing roundtable and/or HR association. Consider creating a CEO roundtable.
- **Engage with the local area** [Workforce Development Board](#), [Vocational Rehabilitation](#) and regional [American Job Center](#) and facilitate connections to area businesses.
- **Help employers access funding support** for new customized skills training programs. Look to programs like the [TN Incumbent Worker Training Program](#).



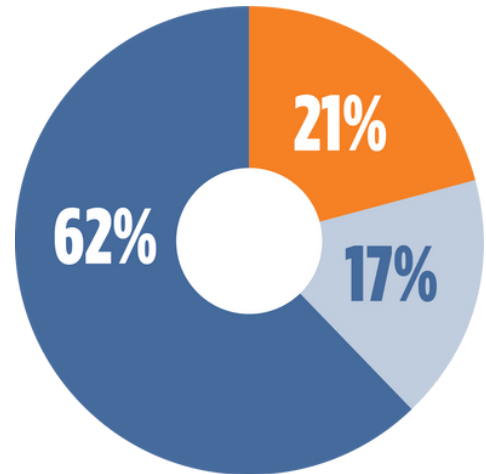


Expanded Economic Development Resource Network



Our workforce has the skillsets needed for future agility and resilience.

SOMEWHAT AGREE
 DISAGREE
STRONGLY AGREE



Our company knows what skillsets we need in the workforce of the future.

Engage with the education community and connect them to industry

Employers and job training institutions need better connections to educators and schools. According to a [recent RAND report](#), most educators are still using the same strategies they have relied upon for decades to prepare students for work.

- **Network with the education community** including school boards, school principals, higher education institutions and other local officials related to education in your community.
- **Introduce educators into the business community** such as organizing plant tours and lunch-and-learns to provide educators with the insight to better connect the dots between what students learn in the classroom and what is required in the workplace.
- **Learn about the local and regional training providers** and programs at community colleges, universities and technical colleges. Refer and connect local businesses to these resources.
- **Facilitate conversations** (roundtables, forums, individual meetings) between the business and education community regarding needed skills training and gaps.



Identify key barriers to employment and connect workers to resources

Solving some community-wide problems can improve workforce participation. For example, 2.3M women stopped working in 2020, due to a lack of access to childcare.

- **Develop diverse community working groups** (including those affected) to tackle issues such as the lack of quality and affordable childcare, substance abuse, transportation and housing.
- **Create an inventory of available resources** to assist the workforce such as the Workforce Services Directory developed by the Knoxville Chamber or the Workforce Services Checklist and Mapping tool from Sumner County.

Assist businesses in developing a workforce pipeline

The next decade will require workforce participation from the populations that have been overlooked in the past, as well as new workers with skills that are only just now being identified.

- **Understand your community's** labor participation rate vs. the unemployment rate to identify underutilized workforce segments such as out commuters, retirees and the formerly incarcerated. Explore successful re-entry programs such as Project Return in Nashville and Chattanooga.
- **Explore hidden pipelines of workers** such as underemployed, disabled, trailing spouses, separating military and part-time workers.
- **Start a youth leadership program** in your community and engage them in community conversations and decision making.
- **Engage students in events** such as manufacturing day or career exploration fairs. Start as early as elementary school.
- **Facilitate apprenticeships**, internships, job shadowing and work-based learning opportunities with local businesses such as Chattanooga's Gestamp Work-Based Learning Program.

Take a leadership role in supporting access and opportunity

Incoming generations of workers are more racially, ethnically and culturally diverse than any generation in the past. This is not only changing the dynamics of how businesses recruit and retain workers, but also how businesses are making relocation and expansion decisions. It has become commonplace for site selectors and businesses to include questions on RFIs to assess how a community fosters access and opportunity.

- **Host, sponsor or participate in business and workforce programs** presented by organizations representing diversity and inclusion such as Negocio Prospero (Prosperous Business) hosted by Nashville's International District to support Spanish entrepreneurs.
- **Consider a website audit** to improve your EDO/Chamber's online presence by including such elements as bilingual versions, audio features and chat support. Usability.gov and the WAVE® Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool provide a variety of resources to assist in this audit.
- **Encourage and embrace community-wide access and opportunity** by hosting or sponsoring ethnic and cultural events or programs in your region.
- **Lead job fairs for employers** to include bilingual, remote work, job sharing and flex opportunities.





**SECTION
RESOURCES**

Labor Force Profile

From TN Dept. of Labor &
Workforce Development

Labor Participation Analysis

From TN Dept. of Labor &
Workforce Development

OnTheMap Tool

U.S. Census Bureau

American Job Centers

From Department of Labor

**Vocational Rehabilitation - Business
Services**

From TN.Gov

TN Incumbent Worker Training Program

From TN Department of Labor and
Workforce Development

Workforce Services Directory

From Knoxville Chamber

**Workforce Services Checklist and
Mapping**

From Forward Sumner

**Gestamp Work-based Learning
Program**

From Gestamp

Project Return Re-entry Program

From Project Return Inc. - Nashville, TN

**Negocio Prospero (Prosperous
Business)**

From Conexion Americas/Casa
Azafran, Nashville, TN

Website Audit How To & Tools

From Usability.gov

WAVE® Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool

From Utah State University



PILLAR 4

INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

(Retail/Main Street/Startups)

Entrepreneurs and small businesses play a critical role in the local economy. Entrepreneurs tend to stay and grow in their local communities – they contribute to placemaking, and they create local wealth and jobs. When a disaster strikes, entrepreneurs and small businesses are seldom as prepared as their larger counterparts.

According to FEMA, one in four small businesses do not reopen following a large-scale disaster. Occasionally, disasters can create a spike in new business starts. Nationwide, for example, the number of new start-ups jumped by 24% during the recent pandemic.

Help entrepreneurs and small businesses access disaster recovery capital

During a disaster, accessing capital is critical, but most small businesses don't know where to turn for assistance and programs can be difficult to navigate.

- **Position your organization as a navigator** for small business disaster recovery resources and capital. Designate a point person to collect information on resources at all levels of government. Readily share the information and monitor for updates.
- **Develop relationships with local banks, regional and state partners** such as [TSBDC](#), [Development Districts](#) and [Pathway Lending](#) to accelerate communications and facilitate connections when disaster strikes.
- **Hold financial workshops to educate and provide opportunities** for businesses to network with financial resource providers pre- and post-disaster.

- **Reach out to public and private institutions** such as [Development Districts](#) and [Pathway Lending](#) regarding the development of a disaster bridge loan program.
- **Establish a business recovery fund** controlled locally for short-term assistance until federal or state funds can be secured.
- **Reach out to TNECD [Business Resource Office \(BERO\)](#)** to explore funding through initiatives such as the [TN Placemakers Entrepreneurship Fund](#).





Promote Business Continuity Planning

According to [Ready.Gov](#), 75% of small businesses without a continuity plan fail within 3 years of a major event. But similar to writing business plans, entrepreneurs and small businesses seldom have a continuity plan and those who do struggle to keep them updated.

- **Provide regular workshops and resources** on business continuity planning and emergency preparedness for your businesses. Reach out to [TSBDC](#) and [UT CIS](#) for assistance.
- **Explore [Ready.Gov](#) and [DisasterSafety.org](#)** for disaster preparedness and business continuity planning, [toolkits](#) and sample [templates](#).
- **Provide a localized continuity plan template** with key public information completed and updated regularly. Post to your website as a free resource.

Assist entrepreneurs and small businesses with adopting technology innovation into all aspects of their business

Just like their larger counterparts, [small businesses with strong technology operations are more resilient in times of disaster and recover more quickly to pre-disaster status.](#)

- **Help small businesses improve their online operations** by hosting workshops on subjects such as inventory control, HR functions and cybersecurity.
- **Host local workshops and/or create a toolkit** to enhance online presence such as digital marketing, social media and online commerce potential.
- **Connect small businesses** to free online resources such as [Grow with Google](#) to build their business with the Google suite of digital tools.
- **Assess your community's broadband accessibility.** Work with [TNECD](#) and regional partners to strive for fiber to every business and home.
- **Consider offering free downtown WiFi** to bring visitors downtown.



According to Ready.Gov,
**75% of small businesses without a continuity plan
fail within 3 years of a major event.**



Assist Small Businesses and entrepreneurs in establishing new streams of revenue

Revenue streams are often disrupted or lost during a disaster. Helping small businesses develop short- and long-term pivot strategies can make the difference between survival and closing.

- **Establish and actively promote** Buy Now/ Redeem Later Gift Card Campaigns or Shop Local Programs.
- **For long-term growth, introduce small businesses** to new opportunities such as government contracting. Host a free workshop with the [Tennessee APEX Accelerator](#) at UT CIS.
- **Explore and connect entrepreneurs to commercialization opportunities** from technology discovered at [ORNL](#), [Y-12](#) or through the [UT Research Foundation \(UTRF\)](#).
- **Hold workshops for brick-and-mortar-only** businesses to help them pivot to online commerce. Reach out to your region's [TSBDC](#) and [BERO](#) for assistance.

Help retail businesses navigate state & local regulations

In the aftermath of a disaster, relaxing or altering regulations and ordinances short-term can make a significant difference to those existing businesses getting back on their feet. Individual businesses cannot effectively lobby for changes, but your organization can.

- **Communicate early and often** with small businesses affected by the disaster to learn their pain points. Do this through surveys, town meetups or walk arounds. (See Emergency Response Survey for Business in the Appendix).
- **Aggregate the concerns and needs of the small business community** and identify the specific ordinances, rules or regulations that need to be addressed. Be an advocate for the business community and share concerns with local officials.

Build an ecosystem now to support both existing and startup entrepreneurs

Inventory the resources and services of the region and establish a physical hub now to serve entrepreneurs and small business. This will also streamline and accelerate recovery efforts during a disaster.

- **Create a database of resources and capital providers** in the region and make it easily accessible on your website. [BERO's quick link webpage](#) is a great place to start.
- **Consider investing in a physical hub**, like a coworking space, incubator or consistent meetup location. During a disaster, these hubs can be a go-to location to access recovery services and/or provide temporary space for those forced out of their locations. Reach out to [Launch Tennessee](#) and [BERO](#) for assistance.

1 in 4 small businesses do not reopen following a large-scale disaster (FEMA).





[U.S. Small Business Administration](#)

From SBA.Gov

**[Tennessee Small Business
Development Centers \(TSBDC\)](#)**

From TSBDC

[Tennessee Development Districts](#)

From Tennessee Development Districts
Association (TDDA)

**[Pathway Lending and Pathway
Learning](#)**

From Pathway Lending

[Business Resource Office \(BERO\)](#)

From TN Dept. of Economic and
Community Development (TNECD)

[TN Placemakers Entrepreneurship Fund](#)

From TN Dept. of Economic and
Community Development (TNECD)

[UT CIS Emergency Preparedness](#)

From UT Center for Industrial Services

[Grow with Google](#)

From Google

[Assess Broadband Accessibility](#)

From FCC.gov

[Tennessee Broadband Resources](#)

From TN Dept. of Economic and Community
Development (TNECD)

[Tennessee APEX Accelerator](#)

From UT Center for Industrial Services

**[Oak Ridge National Laboratory \(ORNL\)
Technology Transfer](#)**

From ORNL.gov

**[Y-12 Office of Technology Commercialization
and Partnerships](#)**

From Y12.doe.gov

**[UT Research Foundation \(UTRF\) Technology
Transfer & Licensing](#)**

From UTRF

**[Small Business Quick Links & Database
of Resources](#)**

From TN Dept. of Economic and Community
Development (TNECD)

[Launch Tennessee Entrepreneur Resources](#)

From Launch Tennessee



PILLAR 5

ENHANCED DIGITAL MARKETING & RECRUITMENT TOOLS

To compete in the global economy, EDOs/Chambers must maintain a strong digital presence for their communities. The pandemic brought to light deficiencies such as limited broadband access and accelerated trends such as virtual site visits, virtual meetings and remote workers. The economic development profession continues to become digitized!

Virtual Recruitment Tools

We live in a digital world and virtual meetings and virtual site visits have been normalized.

- **Virtual Site Visits** - Learn to lead virtual prospect meetings with platforms such as [Zoom](#), [GoToMeeting](#), [Google Meet](#) and [Microsoft Teams](#). Check technology on both sides and do a test run with your entire team before you host a site visit.
- **Utilize online tutorials** to become more proficient at [delivering online presentations](#).

Explore and utilize digital tools such as Google Earth for [Virtual Interactive Mapping](#), [Google Street View](#) to create 360 images and check out [Google Indoor Maps](#) for 3D images of building interiors.

- **Tap into resources** to enhance your virtual presence such as [TVA's conceptual designs](#) for a building on an industrial site, utilize the [TNECD Flickr images](#) for your county and apply for [TDTD's Tourism Marketing Grant](#).





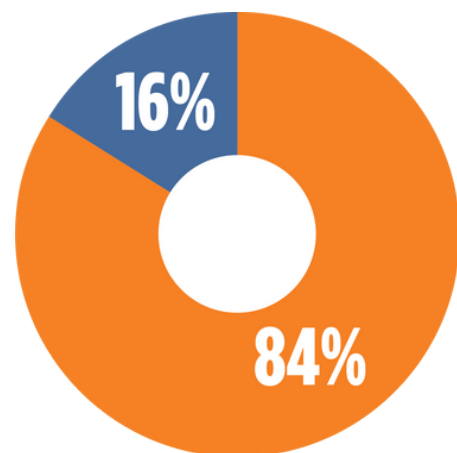
Enhanced Website

Your website is the front door to your community. Site selection is a matter of site elimination. Don't be eliminated because a site selector can't easily find their way through your front door. First impressions do matter!

- **Create a website** with current information that is easy to navigate. Make sure to maintain the site and add updated content regularly.
- **Test your website on different browsers.** Some websites may operate with no trouble on a certain internet browser but may crash on others.
- **Consider each audience** that might look to you for information and provide relevant and organized content.
- **Clearly display contact information** for your organization on the footer of each page. Make it easy to find email addresses and phone numbers for key staff, including the primary economic developer for your community.
- **Avoid using an inquiry form** for economic development or data reports. A site selector or a business looking to relocate will move on to the next community if information is not easily accessible.
- **Provide links to partner websites** such as TVAsites.com, TNECD and regional EDOs that maintain property listings. Keep your property and building listings up to date!
- **Monitor and enhance your Search Engine Optimization (SEO)** so that you rank higher in relevant search results. By incorporating relevant keywords throughout your website pages, adding alternative text to images and creating blog posts, you can improve your chances of being seen in an organic search results page. Use [Google Lighthouse](https://www.google.com/search/lighthouse/) to assist with your audit.

- **Access your website on different devices.** The website may look good and operate perfectly on your desktop but may be challenging for mobile users to access. Optimizing your website for users on smartphones and tablets improves their experience and contributes to improved search results rankings.
- **Make your website accessible to everyone.** Ensure all potential users, including people with disabilities, have a positive user experience and can easily access your information. Usability.gov and [WAVE® Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool](http://WAVE.org) provide a wide variety of tools and information that can help you improve your website's accessibility regardless of your web development skill level.

Proportions of Direct and Discovery searches per Google My Business listing



DIRECT SEARCHES

DISCOVERY SEARCHES



Identification, Location & Proximity Tools

It is important to know how your organization and your key economic development assets appear in searches.

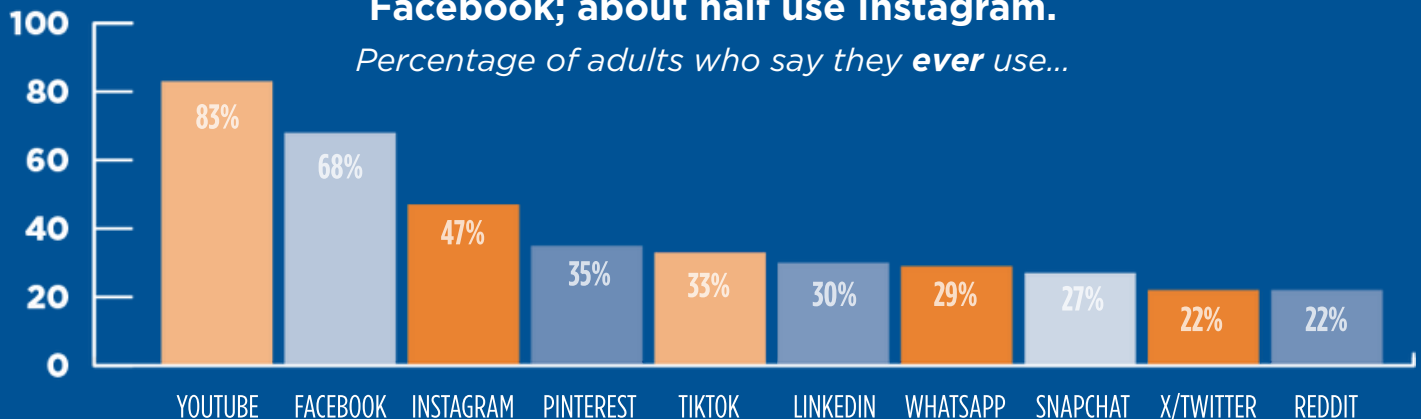
- **Google Business Profile** has become essential and offers a free business profile. This is often the first place customers look. Make sure the information is accurate, complete and up to date.
- **Search Primary Maps and Mobile Apps such as Google Maps, Map Quest and Waze** for your location and check for accuracy.
- **Search for key economic development assets** in your community to check for accuracy. See how the maps and mobile apps bring visitors into your community.
- **Set Google Alerts** for when your organization, city, county etc. are mentioned.
- **What does Wikipedia say?** Check for accuracy about your city and/or county.
- **Complete your Facebook page details.** Your Facebook page should include your location and contact information details readily available in the About section of the profile.

Social Media Savvy

Social media is an important way to stay in touch with community members, promote business and industry, celebrate successes and tell your community's unique story.

- **Choose the right social media platform** for your audience and actively post relevant information. Put your time and energy into creating/sharing great content on the platforms you can effectively manage. Having a strong social media presence on one social media platform is better than having four platforms with no valuable information.
- **Monitor social media and create a strategy** for handling negative comments. Site selectors and relocating businesses review social media in communities that are being considered.
- **Encourage stakeholders** such as your board and young professionals to post positive happenings in your community. Ask them to tag your accounts in their posts so other users can click through to your profile(s).
- **Consider a podcast** to tell your community's story.
- **Use Facebook or LinkedIn** to promote your businesses and community. Video a business owner and share a success story or unique offering and post to social media and your website.
- **Provide links** to your social media platforms on your website.

Most U.S. adults say they use YouTube and Facebook; about half use Instagram.





SECTION RESOURCES

Virtual Presentation Skills for Leaders Video Tips

From Mimi Bliss

How To take 360 pictures with Google Street View

From YouTube

Google Street View

From Google

Google Maps: Indoor Maps

From Google

TVA Sites

From TVA

Google Lighthouse Audit Tool

From Google

TNECD Available Properties

From TN Dept. of Economic and Community Development (TNECD)

The Beginner's Guide to SEO

From Moz

How To and Tools - Website Accessibility

From Usability.gov

WAVE® Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool

From Utah State University

Google Business Profile

From Google

Google Alerts

From Google

Social Media Fact Sheet

From Pew Research Center

10 Social Media Statistics You Need to Know

From Oberlo

LinkedIn for Economic Development Organizations (On-Demand Webinar)

From LinkedIn

DISASTER RECOVERY RESOURCES/PARTNERS



TENNESSEE

[Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry](#)

From TN Chamber

[Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development \(TNECD\)](#)

From TNECD

[Tennessee Department of Health](#)

From TN.GOV

[Tennessee Development Districts](#)

From Tennessee Development District Association (TDDA)

[Tennessee Emergency Management Agency \(TEMA\)](#)

From TN.GOV

[Tennessee Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(TOSHA\)](#)

From TN.GOV - Department of Labor & Workforce Development

[Tennessee Silver Jackets - \(Flood Risk Management Program\)](#)

From Silver Jackets

[Tennessee Small Business Development Centers \(TSBDC\)](#)

From TSBDC

[US Army Corps of Engineers - Tennessee](#)

From US Army Corps of Engineers - Nashville District

[UT Institute for Public Service Agencies \(UT IPS\)](#)

From UT IPS

OTHER

[American Red Cross](#)

From American Red Cross

[Restore Your Economy \(IEDC\)](#)

From RestoreYourEconomy.Org

[The Salvation Army](#)

From The Salvation Army USA

FEDERAL

[Appalachian Regional Commission \(ARC\)](#)

From ARC

[Delta Regional Authority \(DRA\)](#)

From DRA

[DisasterAssistance.gov](#)

From Website of the Department of Homeland Security

[EDA and Disaster Recovery](#)

From Economic Development Administration (EDA)

[FEMA - Post-Disaster Recovery Planning Resources](#)

From FEMA

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)

From OSHA

[Public Health Emergency](#)

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services - PHE.Gov

[Ready.Gov Website Resources - Toolkits and Checklists](#)

From Ready.Gov

[Tennessee Valley Authority \(TVA\)](#)

From TVA Economic Development

[USDA Rural Development](#)

From U.S. Department of Agriculture

[U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)

From HHS.gov

[U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development \(HUD\)](#)

From HUD Exchange

[U.S. Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#)

From SBA

HOW UT CIS CAN HELP

The University of Tennessee Center for Industrial Services (UT CIS) **delivers technical assistance and training** to businesses and communities throughout Tennessee.

Economic Development:

The Economic Development team helps communities build their capacity to grow jobs and investment:

- The Tennessee Certified Economic Developer (TCED) Program offers comprehensive training in the principles and practices of economic development.
- As a designated EDA University Center, UT CIS connects communities, businesses and organizations to resources across the University of Tennessee System.
- The Tennessee Workforce Development (TNWFD) Academy provides professional development and training to strengthen the alliance between economic and workforce development.
- Visit cis.tennessee.edu/economic-development for more information.

Energy Efficiency & Environmental Management:

UT CIS helps companies and communities reduce energy costs as well as comply with federal & state environmental standards.

This program offers:

- Customized supply chain development programs.
- Environmental system training and assistance to industries.
- Visit www.cis.tennessee.edu/EEEM for more information.

Government Contracting:

Tennessee APEX Accelerator at UT CIS provides training and helps businesses successfully compete for government contracts. APEX Accelerator can help businesses with:

- Federal, state and local government contracting
- Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Programs
- Cybersecurity compliance
- Visit cis.tennessee.edu/government-contracting for more information.

Health, Safety & Emergency Preparedness:

The HSEP team can help your organization prepare for an emergency and comply with federal and state safety regulations.

- Occupational safety, emergency response/preparedness training and audits
- Business continuity planning and emergency preparedness
- OSHA Training Institute Education Center
- Visit cis.tennessee.edu/health_safety for more information.

Manufacturing Excellence:

The Tennessee Manufacturing Extension Partnership (TMEP) works with manufacturers to achieve their improvement goals by providing hands-on technical assistance and training.

- UT CIS Solutions Consultants provide customized solutions for industries in your community
- UT CIS offers solutions for workplace development and leadership training
- Visit cis.tennessee.edu/tmep for more information.

Made in Tennessee

Made in Tennessee celebrates and highlights our manufacturing community that connects local manufacturers with broader markets and raises their visibility through a searchable online directory.

Tennessee manufactures are:

- Eligible to join with NAICS codes beginning with 31, 32 or 33 (excluding food, beverage and tobacco)
- Provided a personalized company listing to showcase their products and services
- Granted use of the Made in Tennessee logo to display on their products, packaging, and media
- Visit madeintn.org/ for more information.

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL UT CIS SOLUTIONS CONSULTANT

UT CIS Solutions Consultants represent Tennessee's Manufacturing Extension Partnership and all other UT CIS programs by providing technical assistance, training, and strategic support for small and mid-sized U.S. manufacturers and businesses across all 95 counties, from innovation strategies to process improvements to green manufacturing.



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6 Carmen O'Hagan, 423-834-2082
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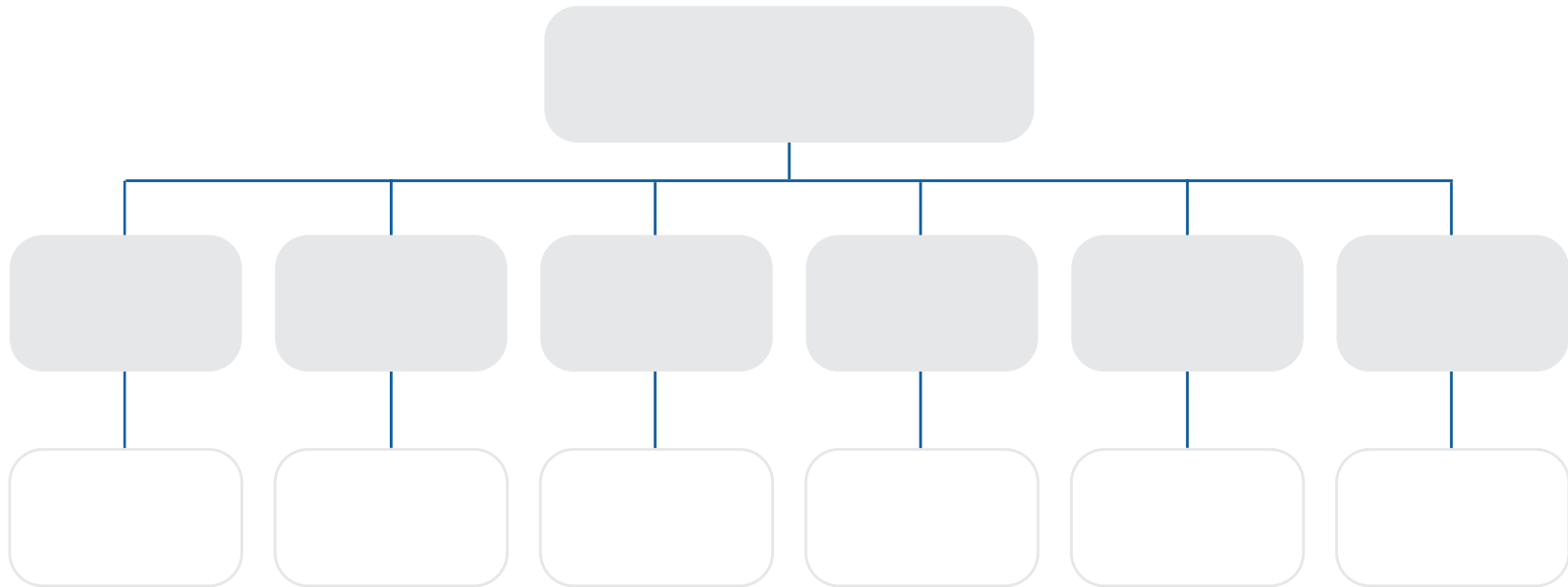
APPENDIX

Resource templates can be downloaded from the [UT Center for Industrial Services Website](#)



Center for Industrial Services
INSTITUTE *for* PUBLIC SERVICE

If the Senior Manager is unavailable, the Manager listed in Row 1 of the second table will be responsible for activating the phone tree. If the Manager in Row 1 is also unavailable, responsibility moves to the Manager in Row 2 and so on.



Senior Manager Name	Title	Office Phone	Mobile Number	Other Phone

ID	Manager Name	Department	Office Phone	Mobile Number	Other Phone
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					

EMERGENCY RESPONSE SURVEY FOR BUSINESS

Company Name: _____ Date: _____
Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____
Contact Name: _____ Title: _____
Phone: _____ Email: _____

Leader Interviewer: _____ Organization: _____
Other Interviewer: _____ Organization: _____

Emergency / Disruption:

Date of Event: _____
Cause of Event: _____

Facility

Damage to the facility? None____ Minor____ Significant____ Total Loss____ Facility

Damage comments: _____

Is the facility open? Yes____ No____

If closed, how long is the estimated closure? _____

Are there any access points blocked to the facility? Yes____ No____

Access comments? _____

Workforce

What portion of employees can work in the facility? All____ Some____ None____

How many jobs are impacted? _____

Impact level to Municipal and related services:

Service Impacted	No Impact	Minor	Significant	No Service	N/A
Electricity					
Gas					
Water					
Sewer					
Trash Removal					
Broadband Internet					
Wireless Internet					
Landline Phone					
Mobile Phone					
Road Transit					
Rail Transit					
Air Transit					
Water Transit					

Other: _____

Have you contacted the local Emergency Operations Center (EOC)? Yes _____ No _____

What additional assistance do you need? _____

Follow up date/plan: _____

Follow Up Questions:

Does your business have an emergency response plan? _____ If yes, did you use it? _____

Does your business have a business disaster preparedness / continuity plan?

Yes _____ No _____

HAZARD AND VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT



Center for Industrial Services
INSTITUTE for PUBLIC SERVICE

This worksheet will help you determine which hazards to plan for based on probability. Each hazard should be rated by column from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest). Total all columns for each hazard on the far right. Use the totals to identify the most significant threats facing your organization and prioritize planning efforts.

Potential Hazard	Likelihood of Occurrence	Impact on life	Impact on Facility / Property	Impact on Business Operations	Impact on Dependencies	Total
Hurricane						
Fire						
Severe Weather						
Tornadoes						
Hazardous Material Spill						
Transportation Accident						
Earthquake						
Flood						
Nuclear Accident						
Terrorism / Sabotage						
Utility / Power Outage						
Active Shooter						
Civil Disturbance						
Heat Wave						
Public Health Emergency						
Human Error						
IT Disruption						
Mudslide						
Wildfire						
Loss or Illness of Key Staff						

ONLINE PRESENCE CHECKLIST

Website

Website URL _____

Who is responsible for updating the website? _____

Does the website function properly on different browsers? _____

Does the website function properly on different devices (mobile phone, tablet, etc.)?

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Days / Hours of Operation
	Special Holiday Hours
	Phone Number
	Social Media Icons
	Location / Address
	Email Address

Google Business

Who is responsible for updating the Business Profile? _____

Who is responsible for monitoring and responding to reviews? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Days / Hours of Operation
	Special Holiday Hours
	Phone Number
	Address in Google Maps
	Photos

Wikipedia

Who is responsible for monitoring the Wikipedia page?

Who is responsible for suggesting edits on the Wikipedia page?

How frequently is the Wikipedia page checked for accuracy? _____

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE CHECKLIST

Facebook

Facebook URL or handle _____

Who is responsible for managing your Facebook page? _____

Who is responsible for replying to comments and messages received through
Facebook Messenger? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Days / Hours of Operation
	Cover Photo
	Phone Number
	Website URL Listed
	Location / Address

LinkedIn

LinkedIn URL _____

Who is responsible for managing your LinkedIn Business page? _____

Who is responsible for replying to comments and messages? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Overview
	Headquarters & Location
	Phone Number
	Specialties

X (formerly Twitter)

Twitter URL _____

Who is responsible for replying to comments and messages? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Overview
	Location
	Email

Other Social Media Platforms

Other platform: _____ URL: _____

Other platform: _____ URL: _____

Other platform: _____ URL: _____

Who is responsible for managing these pages? _____

Who is responsible for replying to comments and messages? _____

Completed / Up to Date?	Item
	Overview
	Location
	Email or Phone Number