



**MID AMERICA**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
COUNCIL

**2026 ANNUAL ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AWARDS**

**CALL FOR ENTRIES**

## The Mid-America Economic Development Council invites you to participate in the 2026 Economic Development Awards!

These awards recognize outstanding endeavors in economic development efforts, marketing campaigns, and marketing events in our thirteen Mid-America region states. Winners will be announced at the Mid-America EDC Annual Conference, August 31 - September 2, 2026 in Grand Rapids, MI. Award recipients will be recognized on the Mid-America EDC website and through our social media outlets! Don't miss this opportunity to highlight your organization's achievements!

### Award Information

#### Judging:

Award winners are selected at the discretion of the judges, who reserve the right to reassign entries and to award fewer awards per category based on submissions. Entries will be evaluated by a judging committee according to the following criteria:

1. Effectiveness in reaching stated goals
2. Quality of content
3. Visual impact
4. Design
5. Uniqueness, innovation & originality
6. Economic impact

#### Organizational Awards:

Award recognition is divided into three community population divisions per category:

- Small Population (Less than 10,000)
- Medium Population (10,000 - 25,000)
- Large Population (More than 25,000)

**Project of the Year Award:** This award recognizes a collaborative project having significant and measurable impact on a city, county or region. The project must have already broken ground and be in the initial phase of implementation between January 2025 and May 2026. The measurable impact can include capital investment, jobs, supplier network, economic impact or new partnership initiatives that positively improve the community.

**Marketing Program Award:** This award will recognize a marketing campaign with a significant positive outcome in raising awareness, creating interest, and/or generating leads for economic development. This campaign must be on behalf of a geographical region (community, county, state, or region), and may take the form of an annual report/newsletter, event, or online program.



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**Overcoming Adversity Award:** Recognizes a project that your community, region, or state utilized while overcoming a challenge. This challenge could be anything from a factory shut-down to a natural disaster. Entries should display a creative and impactful solution to overcoming the challenge.

**Workforce & Talent Award:** Recognizes an activity or innovative program that attracts new talent, strengthens the skills of an existing workforce, and/or encourages talent retention. The activity or program should demonstrate a new, impactful, or creative way to approach talent acquisition, retention, and growth.

**Entrepreneurial Award:** Recognizes a program that offers a unique approach to enhancing the entrepreneurial culture in your city or region. This may be a unique approach for assisting young companies through the early stages of a business life cycle, a program to inspire and promote small business, or other efforts in your area.

**Placemaking Award:** This award will recognize projects or programs that make your community a better place to live, work, and play by transforming underutilized public spaces into vibrant community places. Placemaking capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspirations and potential that contribute to people's health, happiness, safety and well-being.

**People's Choice Award:** This award will be selected from all awards submissions. Attendees of the Mid-America EDC 2026 Annual Conference will receive information about all submissions and vote at the conference on which they think is the most deserving of recognition.

## Individual Award: Economic Development Impact

The Economic Development Impact Award recognizes an individual who has been an economic development professional in the Mid-America region for at least the past year who has been impactful through their efforts as an economic developer. The award celebrates an individual who has met the challenges of providing economic development and who demonstrates the ability and commitment to positively impact their community's/organization's/region's economic growth.

## Submissions

The competition is open to all economic development organizations. Projects or organizations nominated must be located in or serve a state in the Mid-America region (Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, or Wyoming). Entries must have been executed between January 2025 and May 2026. Each entry may only be submitted in one category; however, there is no limit to the number of distinct entries an organization may submit.

The winner for each category will be notified in early July. Winners will be asked to provide electronic photos, graphics, and/or video clips related to their award to be used for program and marketing



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purposes. Winners, particularly those in the Project of the Year category, may also be contacted to participate in a future webinar to overview their winning entry.

## Entry Guidelines:

Entries must be received no later than **May 18, 2026** with entry fees payable to Mid-America EDC. Once submitted, entries become the property of Mid-America EDC and cannot be returned. Mid-America EDC assumes no responsibility for lost or damaged materials. Please note that entries that provide supplemental materials (in addition to the narrative) tend to score higher in judging.

In order to submit an individual or organization for consideration, please include:

- A video or written narrative detailing your entry, including overall objectives and outcomes, quantifiable results, significant successes, and the economic benefits to your community or organization
  - Video narratives should be a report of your story by an individual to a camera, not a promotional video
- A completed award submission form
- Entrance fee of \$25 (members) or \$100 (non-members)
- Any supplemental marketing materials, links, or documents (optional)

## To Apply:

Fill out the application at [MidAmericaEDC.org](https://MidAmericaEDC.org), including all materials, no later than **May 18, 2026**.

## Payment Information:

If you select online payment in the application, Mid-America EDC will contact you within two business days with a secure credit card link.

If you select mail payment in the application, please mail checks or money orders to:

Mid-America Economic Development Council  
400 W. Wilson Bridge Road, Suite 120  
Worthington, OH 43085