

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Social workers in community development roles often engage in economic development activities.

Where might a social worker who is interested in economic development work?

- Economic development councils, departments, corporations
- Government or politics
- Extension services
- Banking, financial institutions
- Foundations
- Micro-enterprise development programs
- Redevelopment corporations
- Housing organizations

What might the job title be?

- Director of economic development
- Project manager/officer/project associate
- Project administrator
- Executive officer
- Community development specialist
- Director of special projects

What are some of the job functions of a social worker in economic development?

- Prepare economic development plans for and market under-invested neighborhoods
- Recruit and retain business and industry; address tourism
- Oversee preparation of abandoned sites: clear titles, deal with environmental issues
- Promote and provide technical assistance on micro-enterprise
- Advocate and facilitate home ownership and insurance coverage
- Teaching economic and business skills including money management
- Staff public/private partnerships, facilitate groups
- Write grants
- Manage public relations

Social workers in economic development should possess skills in:

- Evaluation of community assets and barriers to improvement including formal and informal systems
- Management and finance relative to land use, home ownership, small business development, banking, and loans
- Consensus-building with community coalitions, grassroots groups, public/private collaborations
- Counseling, consultation, and technical assistance
- Group facilitation and training/Leadership development
- Policy development that integrates social and economic development efforts
- Communication, information, and referral/Media relations

What personal characteristics should a social worker in community development have?

- Ability to facilitate the shaping of a vision for the community
- Skill in establishing trust in order to gain acceptance in the community
- Positive, upbeat attitude
- Patience and organization with attention to detail

Prepared by the Core Group of the Career Development Directors in Social Work Education, 7/99