



Course Requirements

Welcome to the Fundamentals Course sponsored by Business Retention and Expansion International (BREI)! On behalf of the Board and the entire BREI membership, we'd like to welcome you to the world of this exciting and effective economic development strategy. We hope you enjoy the course and that it will provide effective strategies that will assist you in developing jobs and incomes for your community.

Because this is a certification course, there are a number of factors which will make the course a successful learning experience for you. First, attendance is required. You can't learn about any topic unless you are present and engaged in the conversation (more on that later). However, we do realize that unexpected issues may arise that require you to miss a portion of the class. If this is the case, inform the instructor before the class that you are going to be missing and arrangements can be made for you to attend that session in the next offered class in order to receive the certification that you will earn on successful completion of the course.

Second, since this is a synchronous course, your engagement in the class is expected. This means that you should be present at each class **with your cameras on** and participate by asking and answering questions and offering input based on your thoughts and experiences where appropriate. The discussion portions of the class are very important to the learning experience and your participation will be greatly appreciated by all of the participants (and most especially the instructors!).

The course website will remain active for you as a participant after the course is completed. You are free (and encouraged) to make use of the materials on the website to strengthen your local program. All class sessions will be recorded and links to those recordings are posted to the website the night after a particular session ends.

In addition, the contact information for the course instructors are provided on the website. The instructors are experienced professionals who have a keen interest in seeing your local program succeed. You are encouraged to contact the instructors even after the course is over for their insights and feedback to opportunities or problems that you may encounter in your work.

Because this is a certification class, it is essential that you as the participant demonstrate an understanding of the concepts presented in order to complete the course. To this end, there are four "homework" assignments which must be completed before certification can be awarded. Three of these homeworks address specific topics covered in the course (program planning, social capital, and survey analysis and reporting) while the final assignment is developing a plan for a BR&E Visitation program in your community. **The required submission format for each homework assignment is a Microsoft Word document with single spacing and 8 point spacing between the paragraphs in 11 point Calibri font. Documents that do not meet the submission criteria (including pdf documents and online documents with a url as the access point) will not be accepted. Submissions should be emailed to the lead instructor and all submissions will be incorporated into the course website for all participants to view.**

Each assignment will be graded according to the following rubric and an average score of 3.0 is required in order for you to receive credit. Submissions that do not meet this criterion will be required to be corrected and resubmitted. While participants who work for the same economic development organization are encouraged to collaborate on assignments, each participant is required to submit an individual assignment. Identical submissions from participants working for the same organization will not be accepted.

Criteria	Excellent (4 points)	Good (3 points)	Satisfactory (2 points)	Unsatisfactory (1 point)	Points
Content Quality	Thorough understanding demonstrated; insightful analysis; well-supported arguments	Good understanding; mostly clear analysis; supported with examples	Basic understanding; limited analysis; some unsupported claims	Limited understanding; lacks analysis or support	
Relevance & Focus	Fully aligned with assignment objectives; stays focused throughout	Generally relevant; minor deviations from focus	Somewhat relevant; parts are off-topic or unclear	Off-topic or unfocused; irrelevant content	
Organization & Structure	Clear, logical structure; well-organized sections; smooth flow	Mostly organized; minor issues with flow	Somewhat organized; jumps or gaps in logic	Poorly organized; difficult to follow	
Use of Examples	Uses relevant examples effectively where appropriate	Uses relevant examples (where appropriate) with minor inaccuracies	Examples are limited or somewhat irrelevant	Lacks examples; very limited or no support	
Presentation & Language	Clear, concise, well-written; free of grammatical errors	Clear writing; few grammatical issues	Adequate but with some grammatical/spe lling errors	Difficult to understand; many errors	

A BR&E Visitation Program is a comprehensive economic development effort that requires a myriad of skills to complete. Many of these skills will be developed as the economic development professional progresses in the design and implementation of the program, but there are some basic skills that are required for successful completion of this class. A comprehensive list of skills required for the program is provided below with skills required for successful completion of the course highlighted in ***bold italics***.

- ***Ability to use the Zoom videoconference platform with a camera and microphone for participation in the class.***
- A basic understanding of the concept of economic development.

- An understanding of the region's economic, political, and social environment.
- An understanding of secondary data sources and how they can be used to provide a snapshot of the region's economic and social environment.
- A basic understanding of the concept of social capital and how it can be used to influence economic development.
- ***A basic understanding using Microsoft Excel® to analyze responses.***
- An understanding of basic survey development and assessment.
- A basic understanding of strategic planning concepts.
- ***An understanding of basic statistical methodology and practice.***
- An understanding of economic development program planning and evaluation methods.