



# **From Vacant to Vibrant Webinar Series: Strategies for Rural and Small-Town Renewal**

Webinar #3  
**Self-Supporting Entrepreneurship**  
September 18, 2025





**EDD CoP**

Economic Development District  
Community of Practice



**More info at: [www.nado.org/EDDCoP](http://www.nado.org/EDDCoP)**

This webinar is offered through the Economic Development District Community of Practice (EDD CoP), managed by the NADO Research Foundation to build the capacity of the national network of EDDs. To learn more, visit: [www.nado.org/EDDCoP](http://www.nado.org/EDDCoP). The EDD CoP is made possible through an award from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce (ED22HDQ3070106). The statements, findings, conclusions, and recommendations in this webinar are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Economic Development Administration or the U.S. Department of Commerce.



# The State of the EDDs & CEDS Content Guidelines Updates (June 2023)



In the spring of 2023, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) designed its 400th **Economic Development District (EDD)** and released updates to the **Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Content Guidelines**. The website landing page is a reflection on the state of the regional network of EDDs and information about the updated CEDS Content Guidelines that highlight equity, climate resilience, and workforce development. Presentation slides are [available here](#) (PDF).

## CEDS 101: What You Need to Know Right Now About the CEDS (March 2021)



During the webinar, staff from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, NADO Research Foundation, and local/state conference (LSC) covered CEDS fundamentals, best practices, and latest trends. The session is intended primarily for new staff working on the CEDS, though it may also be of interest as a refresher for CEDS veterans. Presentation slides are [available here](#) (PDF).

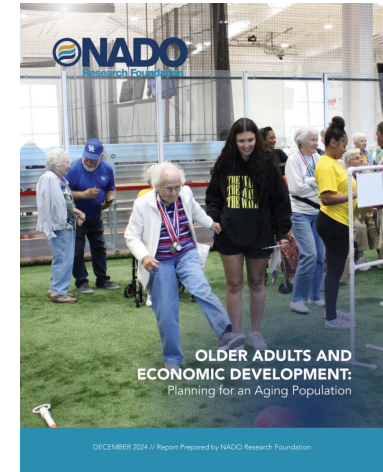
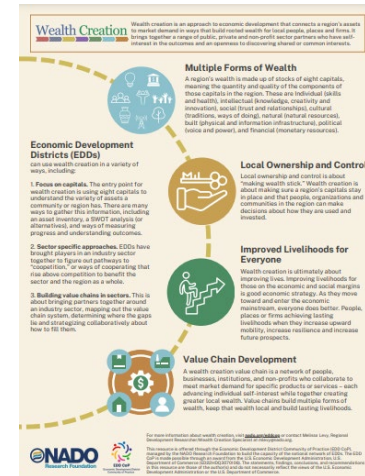
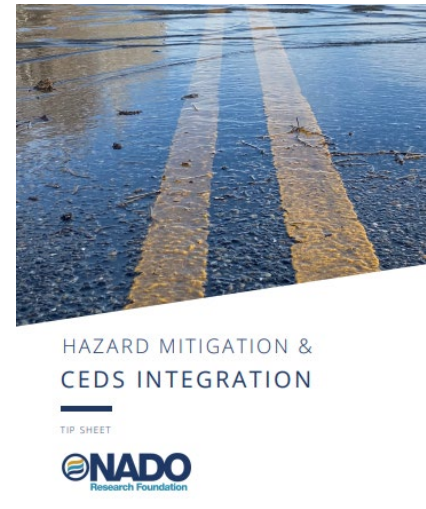
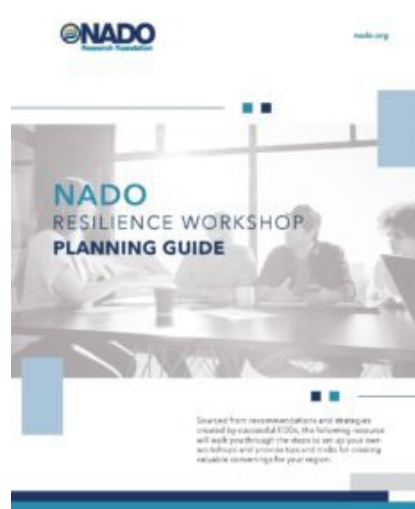
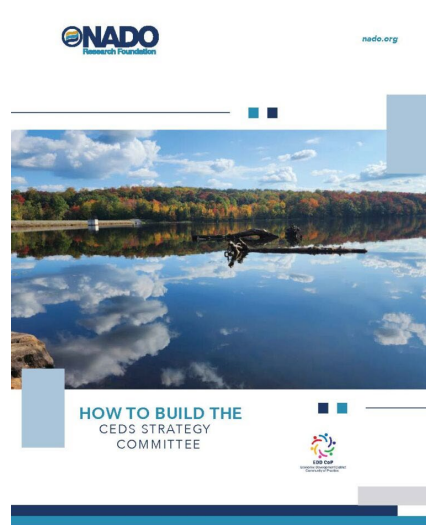
## Federal Grant Administration Webinar Series

11	26	02	09
September	September	October	October
SINGLE AUDIT READINESS AND SURVIVAL	GRANT COST ALLOWABILITY 101	INDIRECT COST RECOVERY FOR RDOs	PURCHASING GOODS AND SERVICES WITH FEDERAL FUNDS
2:00-3:30 p.m. ET	2:00-3:30 p.m. ET	2:00-4:00 p.m. ET	2:00-3:30 p.m. ET

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER FOR FREE AT:

[nado.org/eddcop/calendar-edd-cop/](https://nado.org/eddcop/calendar-edd-cop/)

This webinar series is offered through the Economic Development District Community of Practice (EDDCoP) supported by the NADO Research Foundation. To learn more, visit [nado.org/EDDCoP](https://nado.org/EDDCoP). The EDDCoP is made possible through an award from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) Department of Commerce (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT). The webinar series, webinars, and recommendations are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Economic Development Administration or the U.S. Department of Commerce.



Visit: [www.nado.org/EDDCoP](https://www.nado.org/EDDCoP)

## Peer Learning

The NADO Research Foundation manages four virtual Peer Learning Communities as part of the Economic Development District Community of Practice. These cohorts are designed to build and strengthen bonds among EDD staff across the national network Economic Development Districts. Each group has a different audience and objective – read on to learn more about the specifics of each and how you can get involved.



### EDD CoP Collaborative Learning Group

The Collaborative Learning Group (CLG) is a 6-month virtual training and networking opportunity for new Economic Development District (EDD) staff who have been at their organization for 2 years or less.

[Learn More](#)

### CEDS Peer Exchange Groups

These informal groups are designed to help staff troubleshoot challenges with their CEDS, share methods and 'best practices', and support each other during yearly and 5-year CEDS updates.

[Learn More](#)

### NADO Mentor Program for Executive Directors

The NADO Mentor Program pairs experienced executive directors with new executive directors for one year to help new executive directors address the challenges facing their organizations and regions by connecting with experienced RDO leaders.

[Learn More](#)

### New Executive Directors Resources

The New Executive Directors group was formed to share experiences, learn firsthand from experienced Directors, and have support when beginning this often-challenging role.

[Learn More](#)

### Virtual EDD Chapter Meets Ups

Virtual EDD Chapter Meet Ups provide a space for Economic Development District staff to connect and network quarterly in small group discussions with peers in their EDA regions/NADO chapters.

[Learn More](#)

Learn more about our **virtual peer learning groups** at: <https://www.nado.org/copgroups/>



Join us in Salt Lake City, UT on October 14-17, 2025!

More info at: <https://www.nado.org/2025atc/>





# NADO News

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## **From Vacant to Vibrant Webinar Series: Strategies for Rural and Small-Town Renewal**

**Tuesday, September 9**  
"Filling Empty Buildings"  
2:00 p.m. ET

**Tuesday, September 16**  
"Innovative Rural Business Models"  
2:00 p.m. ET

**Thursday, September 18**  
"Self-Supporting Entrepreneurship"  
2:00 p.m. ET

**All Recordings and Slides Will Be Available Tomorrow!**



Stay in Touch!

# Brett Schwartz

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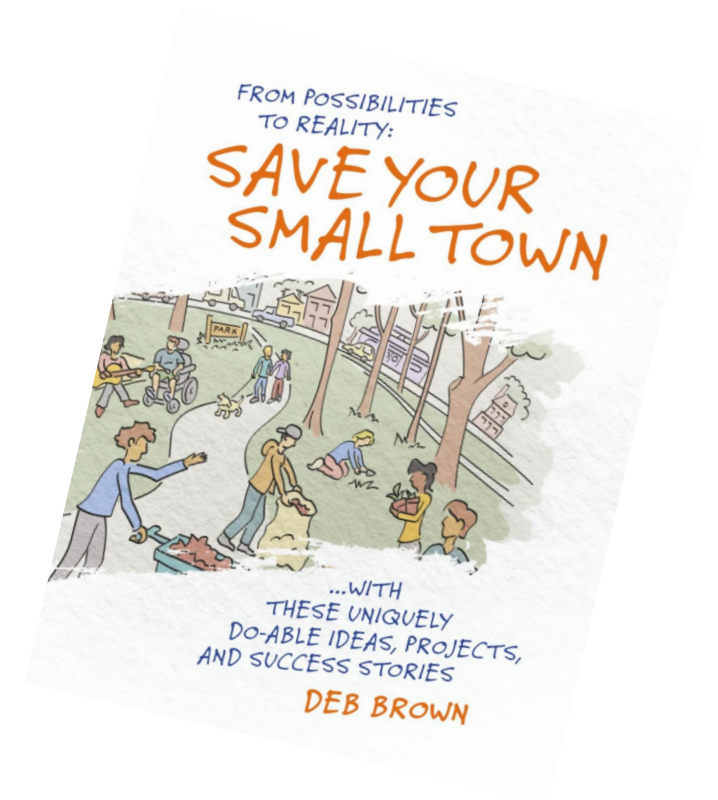




# Our Guide Today



**Deb Brown**  
Cofounder, **SAVEYOUR**  
*.town*



# SAVE YOUR

*.town*



Photo Norfolk Lavendar Farm backroom tour, by Becky McCray

## Self-supporting Entrepreneurship



# There are entrepreneurs in small towns.

*They just don't look like  
they used to.*



Outlook photo by Kathleen Gilluly

## Pandemic painter!

Eugene Wiesner of Laurel, took up painting during the pandemic. He said he is working on developing his own style and enjoys painting animals and nature. Wiesner recently left his job and decided to take up the hobby in his spare time. He said he has gotten a good response from friends on Facebook and his wife, Mary. After he builds an inventory of paintings, Wiesner plans to offer them for sale.





***Old Way: Make it hard and make it the same***

***New Way: Don't go it alone***





Photo by Becky McCray

**Old Way: formal classes**

# SAVE YOUR *.town*

**Entrepreneurs support  
each other**

- ***Get together informally***
- ***Mix of attendees***
- ***Chance to reflect***





Photo from unsplash

**Get together informally  
with a mix of attendees**

# The best part is the interaction.

*Why not just do that part?*





*Photo by Deb Brown*

**Point of Need Learning**



# Backroom Tours for Business Owners







*Photo by Deb Brown*

**Wine and advice on an as needed basis**



# Peer gatherings







Photo by David Hinkle on unsplash

***Adults learn by reflecting  
on their experiences***



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Photo from unsplash

**Connect people to people *for innovation***



Photo by Kristine Kelly

## Message groups



# Facebook groups



Photo at IOM dinner





# Artists in Jackson County, KY



Photos by Greg Lakes



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## Connect people to resources *for next steps*



*Photo by Red Lodge Chamber*





*Photo Courtesy of Norfolk County*

## Networking Events



*Photo Courtesy of Michele Robles*

## Business Fairs



## Niche Business fairs

*Photo via Washington State Extension Service*



*Courtesy of Washington State Extension*





# Business Resource Night

Photo by Deb Brown



# Holiday Markets

*Photo from Kennett Square  
Collaborative Facebook page*



# Just In Time Training



Photo by Becky McCray



# Youth Projects



Photo Courtesy of Norfolk County, Ontario



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*town.*

**Places that help  
entrepreneurs  
support each  
other**

***Shared space  
Mix of businesses  
Chance to reflect***



Photo by Deb Brown



# Coworking



Photo from Build-website





# Arts Maker Spaces



Photo by Discover Oklahoma



# Market Village







**Attracted branch businesses**

**Local makers expanded**



Photos by Deb Brown



# Old Geezers





# The Corner Spot



Photo from [www.thecornerashland.com](http://www.thecornerashland.com)



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*.town*

## Small steps

*Failure is ok*  
*Flex and adapt*



*Photo from unsplash*



# Failure is not a reason to quit





Try a new location







Photo by Deb Brown

# Flex and Adapt



# SAVE YOUR *.town*

## *Three basic principles:*

### *Gather your crowd:*

**Entrepreneurs support each other**

### *Build connections :*

**people to people and people to resources**

### *Take small steps:*

**failure is a chance to adapt**



**Community happens when  
people talk to each other.**

*Photo from the Corner place in Pittsburgh, KS*



# Thank you

**Deb Brown**

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***[BuildingPossibility.com/BuytheBook](http://BuildingPossibility.com/BuytheBook)***

***[SaveYour.Town/idea-friendly-creed/](http://SaveYour.Town/idea-friendly-creed/)***

We thrive by doing more  
business together.

We celebrate the entrepreneurs,  
business people, dreamers,  
makers, artists, experimenters,  
performers, crafters, bakers,  
upcyclers, junkers, people who  
sell in booths and homes and  
parking lots and trucks and  
sheds.

Together we prosper, right here  
where we are.