



Local Government CENTER

Wisconsin Business Improvement District (BID) Education

The University of Wisconsin- Extension (UWEX), through its statewide network of county-based UWEX educators is a leader in helping Wisconsin communities examine and evaluate how Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) can support their economic development plans.

In 1984, Wisconsin passed enabling legislation that granted municipalities (i.e., cities, towns and villages) the power to create one or more special assessment districts known as BIDs. These districts represent a geographic grouping of commercial properties where owners pay an annual assessment that generates funds that can be used for the “management, development, maintenance, or the promotion” of the district.

With over 85 operating BIDs, Wisconsin is one of the leading states in the creation of these districts. BIDs have had a significant impact on the face of many traditional downtowns. BIDs have created new alliances and introduced new funding opportunities to support the process of commercial center redevelopment. BID funds often help underwrite the cost of Main Street programs, support large-scale streetscape improvement projects, pay for program employees and projects, as well as support special events and other types of promotional programs.

UWEX educational support to Wisconsin communities includes:

- co-sponsoring workshops covering a wide range of topics related to BID operation;
- offering periodic statewide teleconferences and webinars covering the basics of BID history, establishment and impact;
- delivering community-based presentations designed to help municipalities evaluate BID appropriateness through improved understanding of how BIDs are created, operate and are administered; and,
- the maintenance of a website devoted to information about Wisconsin BIDs including related literature, a set of FAQs, presentation documents and background materials archived from previously offered workshops and distance education programs. See:

<https://lgc.uwex.edu/business-improvement-districts-bids/>

For more information, contact your [County UWEX Community Resource Development Educator](#) (see: <https://counties.extension.wisc.edu/>) or:

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