



2024

BUSINESS RETENTION &
EXPANSION INTERNATIONAL

**ANNUAL
CONFERENCE**

JUNE 11-13 | VIRTUAL

EVENT AGENDA

*Details subject to change

Agenda

Day One

Tuesday, June 11th

Workforce Improvements and Opportunities

Noon

Welcome

Dennis Williamson, Fort Smith, Arkansas

12:15PM

Aligning Skills to What is Needed in Industry

Sarah Lewis

This session will discuss ways that educational organizations, industry and government can align to best prepare students and professionals to the changing world with the skillsets needed to match present and future industry demands.

1:15PM

Diversity in the Workforce

Speaker TBD

This session will explore the need and opportunities behind hiring individuals from different backgrounds and who have various disabilities in order to improve the cross-sectional growth and development of businesses as well as how those businesses relate to the community at large.

2:15PM

Strengthening Roots: Enhancing Business Longevity and Workforce Growth through BR&E

Diane Lupke, CEcD

This interactive session is designed for business leaders, policymakers, and economic development professionals focused on harnessing the power of Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) to foster economic resilience. Attendees will explore cutting-edge strategies for sustaining business growth and developing a robust workforce. Through case studies, group discussions, and expert panels, this session will offer insights into creating synergies between business health and workforce development, ensuring a thriving local economy.

3:15PM

Building Workforce with Re-Entry Populations

Wes Jurey, Redemption Bridge

A large number of individuals in the active workforce have been incarcerated at some point in their past. The uncertainty and difficulty in hiring this population often places a burden on both the business and the employee. Re-entry programs are able to help the workforce and support businesses with available positions. This session will discuss re-entry programs and how they are able to support local businesses as well as the workforce at-large.

4:15PM

Adjourn Day 1



Agenda

Day Two

Wednesday, June 12th
Workforce Improvements and Opportunities

12:15PM

Revitalize to Thrive: Fostering Sustainable Business Improvement Districts and Downtown Revival

Alia Abbas, Ramona Gallagher, and Patty Hayes

Aimed at BR&E professionals, urban planners, and community leaders, this workshop delves into the art and science of revitalizing Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) and downtown cores. Participants will learn about successful revitalization strategies, from stakeholder engagement and community partnership building to innovative economic and environmental sustainability practices. The session promises to be a blend of theory and practice, providing participants with the tools and inspiration needed to transform their downtown areas into vibrant economic and cultural centers.

1:15PM

Business Succession and Transition

Michael Darger

American business owners over 55 continue to be the majority and they are growing as a percentage of all business owners. While the ages of owners and businesses are changing every year in small businesses, the combination of those two factors is worth studying because it represents an important BRE issue. Therefore, the University of Minnesota conducted a survey of Minnesota employer businesses in 2023. We received 286 valid responses and this has created a valuable dataset (which is likely relevant to other states as well) about owner awareness, attitudes, aspirations, and preparedness for transitioning the ownership to new owners. This presentation will cover our Business Succession and Transition research as well as our online Extension resources for businesses, economic developers, and business advisers.

2:15PM

Business Continuity and Resiliency

Tarek Habib

This session will explore strategies around helping business owners to find opportunities for continuity of their businesses as well as to overcome obstacles that they face.

3:15PM

Economic Mobility Through Entrepreneurship

Kamesha "Kay" West

This session will feature a 'fireside chat' discussing economic opportunities for entrepreneurship and how individuals can improve their lives and communities.

4:15PM

Adjourn Day 2



Agenda

Day Three

Thursday, June 13th

Innovative Concepts

12:15PM

Annual Meeting / Awards Session

The BREI Annual Meeting will present business for the association. Following this meeting, the organization will present its Awards of Excellence to deserving applicants for business retention and expansion projects in their local areas. Attendees will have the opportunity to learn about these projects.

1:15PM

Survey Design and Analysis

Simon Webb

This session will review the tips and strategies behind designing surveys for community businesses, analyzing the results of those surveys, and carrying these results into practical follow-up and community improvement.

2:15PM

Rethinking Community: Senior Housing Transitions

John Bennett

This session will explore innovative ideas around housing for senior citizens in communities, the challenges behind the higher acuity of need of these housing options, and the opportunities that such housing opens for business growth and residential expansion.

3:15PM

Adjourn Day 3

