



## **What recent recipients of the Certified Texas Economic Developer (CTED) program say about it.....**

The Texas Certified Economic Developer (TCED) courses have been an invaluable part of my professional journey. Each session has equipped me with practical tools and real-world strategies that I can apply directly to my work; whether it's attracting new businesses, creating jobs, supporting workforce development, or fostering public-private partnerships. These courses have strengthened my ability to lead with intention and collaborate more effectively across departments and sectors. Learning alongside peers in a cohort-style environment was truly invaluable, offering diverse perspectives and shared experiences that enriched the learning process. The instructors were incredibly knowledgeable and brought real-world expertise that made each topic relevant and impactful. I'm eager to put this knowledge into action as I continue my work to make Kyle a thriving, inclusive community where people and businesses can grow and succeed.

*Victoria Vargas, CTED  
Director of Economic Development  
City of Kyle*

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Earning the CTED certification has been a meaningful milestone in my career in economic development. It represents more than just a credential, it signals a commitment to excellence and continued growth, supported by an organization that champions economic and employment opportunities across Texas. Through this certification, I've gained not only valuable knowledge but also recognition that I've been trained through a respected and experienced network deeply invested in the future of our Texas communities.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the CTED journey was the camaraderie built along the way. Connecting with passionate professionals from across the state has created a strong support network that I now consider a vital resource in my day-to-day work. Whether I'm seeking insight, advice, or collaboration, I know I have a deep well of expertise to draw from.

For anyone considering the CTED certification, it's more than a professional achievement, it's an investment in your ability to make a greater impact. It equips you with practical tools, expands your network, and strengthens your credibility in the field. If you're committed to driving meaningful economic change in your community, this is a step worth taking.

*Stacy Crossley, CTED  
Executive Director  
Canton Economic Development Corporation*

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Earning the CTED designation is one of the best highlights of my 25-year career. I received a title change and pay increase having earned this prestigious designation. The interactive class experience with other Texas Economic Development Professionals was really nice. I have already implemented a new program in The Colony as a direct result of this CTED program. The expertise of the trainers and the curriculum tailored to Texas is so valuable. As you know, we do things different in Texas. We do them bigger.

*Diane Lemmons, IOM, CTED  
Assistant Director  
The Colony Economic Development Corporation*



What I enjoyed most about the program was the curriculum, which was directly relevant to my work and provided me with a comprehensive understanding of the core aspects of economic development. The courses were incredibly engaging and well-structured, offering a mix of practical knowledge and real-world applications. I found that the interactive nature of the courses allowed me to apply the concepts in practical settings, which made the learning experience both valuable and enjoyable. The most beneficial aspect of the CTED program for me was the opportunity to engage with fellow economic development professionals. The networking and exchange of ideas have proven invaluable, and I've walked away with new insights and best practices that I am already applying in my work.

For anyone considering advancing their career in economic development, I would strongly recommend pursuing the CTED program. It's a powerful tool for anyone looking to enhance their credibility and be recognized as a leading professional in the field.

*Shani Bradshaw, BREC, CTED  
Director, Economic Development  
City of Sanger*

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Earning the inaugural Certified Texas Economic Developer designation is an incredible honor and a testament to the knowledge gained from extraordinary lecturers and remarkable peers across our great state. This journey has deepened my passion for economic development and strengthened my commitment to excellence. I encourage every economic developer to pursue this opportunity and help shape the future of Texas communities.

*Susan Gill, CEcD, MEDP, CTED  
President  
Lindale EDC*

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The CTED program was one of the most valuable professional development experiences I've had in Economic Development. The curriculum was strong, and each module offered meaningful content, but what truly set this program apart was the opportunity to learn alongside peers from across Texas. Every participant brought real-world experience to the table, and the networking, collaboration, and shared insights were incredibly impactful. I would highly recommend this program to anyone looking to reinforce and expand their technical knowledge of the work we do every day to grow Texas communities.

*Jason Greiner, CTED  
President  
Wylie Economic Development Corporation*

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I found this program to be exceptionally valuable to my growth as an economic development professional. The diversity of courses included in the program helped me expand my outlook and see economic development from the perspective of external stakeholders, which will enhance my ability to work with and negotiate with those stakeholders.

*Christophe Trahan, CTED  
Executive Director  
Palestine EDC*



Everything's bigger in Texas, so it's about time we had a certification program that's as big as our commitment to economic development! The CTED Program has expanded my knowledge and equipped me with new tools that will help turn Texas-sized ideas into real results for my community.

*Drew Brassfield, CPM, SHRM-CP, CTED  
Assistant Director, Planning Department  
City of Amarillo*

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A cohort-based style of learning is invaluable for building a strong network. I am truly grateful for this experience and for the opportunity to connect with the original graduating class. Texas is home to incredibly talented economic developers, and I now understand why we continue to win the Governor's Cup year after year.

*Amy Mueller, CTED*

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Participating in the Certified Texas Economic Developer (CTED) Certification Program has been a transformative experience in both my professional journey and my ability to serve my community. The CTED Program is an expert-led, peer-driven initiative that delivers a rigorous, Texas-specific curriculum designed to equip economic developers with the tools, strategies, and leadership skills essential for impact.

The program's eight comprehensive course modules—ranging from Strategic Planning and Advanced Economic Development Finance to Talent Ecosystems and Real Estate Development—deepened my understanding of the complex economic landscape of Texas. Each module not only expanded my technical expertise but also strengthened my strategic thinking and collaborative leadership abilities.

Through the CTED, I developed a sharper lens for innovative approaches to business retention and expansion, explored entrepreneurial strategies to support local startups, and gained actionable insights into workforce development that directly align with the unique needs of Texas communities. The capstone project/group exercise further enhanced my ability to apply knowledge in real-world scenarios, fostering a hands-on, solution-oriented mindset.

The cumulative effect of the CTED Program has empowered me to lead with confidence, think holistically, and engage stakeholders more effectively. It has reinforced my commitment to driving sustainable economic growth and has elevated my role as a trusted, informed professional dedicated to the prosperity of the regions I serve.

*Rachel Steele, PCED, CTED  
Director of Economic and Community Development  
City of Magnolia*