

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION**2017 Schedule for BR&E Training Courses**

A healthy, vibrant local economy depends largely on the strength of a community's existing businesses. Community leaders can help local businesses survive and grow by implementing effective business retention and expansion (BR&E) strategies programs. But how do you make that happen?

The University of Minnesota Extension's BR&E Course is designed for economic and community development professionals, as well as other community leaders who want to learn how to implement a community-led BR&E effort. You can take the course online or in a traditional face-to-face workshop.

SCHEDULE

Format	Dates	Deadline
Face-to-face, St. Paul campus	January 31 – February 2, 2017	Register by Jan. 13th
Online course - spring	April 5-May 31, 2017	Register by March 24th
Online course - fall	September 27-November 22, 2017	Register by September 15th

COURSE COST

The cost of the course is \$500. There are also community team pricing options (details available at <http://z.umn.edu/brecourse>).

A PROVEN APPROACH

Economic development efforts rely on action from many community players. Without community buy-in, economic development stalls. Extension's BR&E Strategies Program, established in 1990, is a proven approach for involving the community and building consensus to move forward. Our online BR&E course was redesigned in 2016 and is grounded in the community economic development principles of the BR&E Strategies Program approach. We also offer a traditional face-to-face version of the course. Many professionals from Minnesota and beyond have taken our BR&E courses and moved forward with BR&E initiatives in their communities.

After completing the BR&E course, **you will be able to:** understand the three major elements of the BR&E process, access BR&E resources and networks as needed, plan a BR&E initiative that fits your community, and organize a community to implement BR&E strategies.

WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT

Online Course: The course takes 2-3 hours per week over an 8-week period. You can work at times convenient for your schedule but you need to stay involved on a weekly basis. There are a few videos or readings, activities, and discussion forums each week. Two “live” highlights are a visit to a real business and a panel discussion with experts with BR&E tips and stories. The course “capstone” project is planning your community BR&E initiative via a written paper, video, or voice recording.

Face-to-face Course: The course goes from 1 p.m. on a Tuesday to noon on a Thursday at the University of Minnesota’s St. Paul campus. It’s a three-day BR&E immersion with a little bit of everything: presentations, video, discussions, individual and small group work, and lots of discussion and even debate. Highlights include practice visits to some real businesses (and a mock planning session based on the results), guest experts who provide BR&E tips and stories, and a chance to get to know some other economic developers and expand your network. There is no course paper or homework, but you get the opportunity to think about the best BR&E approach for your situation.

WHICH COURSE IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Do you need to get away from everything at home and the office in order to focus? Do you learn well by listening and through live group discussions? Do you like working with small groups? Do you prefer binge learning? Do you prefer 3D to 2D (i.e. actual vs. virtual)? Do you have a travel budget? If most of these are true, then the **face-to-face** course is probably a good bet.

Do you like to learn one section at a time and have the opportunity to go deeper if you want? Do you like reading, writing and seeing videos on a computer? Are you OK with group learning but tend to prefer learning quietly by yourself? Do you like screen time? Most importantly, are you able to discipline yourself to do weekly assignments even though you’re not going away on a trip to take a course? If these are mostly true, then the **online** course is probably a good bet.

QUESTIONS AND REGISTRATION

For more information, visit <http://z.umn.edu/brecourse>. To register for the course, contact Michael Darger, University of Minnesota BR&E Director, at 612-625-6246 or darger@umn.edu. You will receive instructions for logging in to the course site as part of the registration process.

