



**ARKANSAS**



**ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**Delta Center for**  
**Economic Development**

#### **UNIVERSITY**

Arkansas State University

#### **CENTER DIRECTOR**

Jarrett Free

#### **CENTER LOCATION**

Arkansas State University  
Delta Center for Economic  
Development

#### **CENTER SINCE 2018**

#### **CENTER ACTIVITIES**

- Technical Assistance
- Project Support/Research
- Training and Development
- Fostering Entrepreneurship and Innovation

#### **CLIENTS**

- Local government
- Communities
- Small businesses and entrepreneurs
- Nonprofits
- Industry

#### **ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES**

- Engagement

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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#### **WEBSITE**

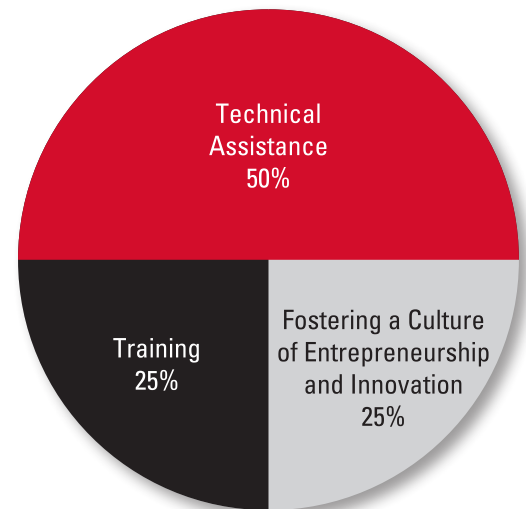
AState.edu/DeltaCED

## **Arkansas State University EDA University Center**

The EDA University Center at Arkansas State University is a division of the Delta Center for Economic Development. The mission of the University Center is to develop a world-class model of university support and collaboration for small towns in a 12-county region. By connecting university resources and expertise with local communities, the University Center augments current economic development efforts and helps ready communities for new opportunities.

### **ACTIVITIES**

The University Center has created a repository of the university's talent and resources and is matching them with the needs of the region's communities and small towns. As a result, the University Center has been asked to provide both technical assistance and applied research to communities. In addition, the University Center team has worked to spur entrepreneurship and innovation within the region. Examples of the University Center's comprehensive outreach services are:



- During a meeting with a local mayor regarding a rail spur extension project, University Center staff suggested the EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Program as a possible funding source. Subsequently, the University Center coordinated an introduction between the EDA economic development representative and the mayor's office. An application was submitted and \$2 million was awarded.
- A small-town mayor requested an intern to help with developing a sketch for a new city park. The University Center staff worked with the College of Engineering and Computer Science to secure the best student for the project. A third year civil engineering student was selected to create the sketch needed for the city and has completed the project. The mayor is using the sketch to obtain funding for the park and enhance the quality of life for residents.
- University Center staff provided an economic impact analysis for a manufacturer interested in locating within the University Center footprint.
- During the initial stages of the global COVID-19 pandemic it was noted that protective equipment would be beneficial for personal and professional safety. Public-private partnerships were needed to provide equipment in a timely manner. The University Center partnered with a local industry to mass produce personal protective equipment (PPE). The Center's role was to help create a headwear component for 500 face shields. These shields were assembled and sent out to a local county hospital system.



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## LEVERAGING

The Delta Center for Economic Development leverages a wide range of university resources and is comprised of the A-State Innovation System, the EDA University Center, the Small Business Technology Development Center, and Arkansas Manufacturing Solutions, that work together to provide a holistic approach to economic development.

## SUCCESS

Music and cultural tourism are a growing sector for the Arkansas Delta region.

Osceola, Arkansas has been experiencing declining population, erosion of tax base due to outmigration and rising crime rates. Leadership in the city has come together to develop a plan to improve the overall economic and well-being of the city. To assist in this effort the mayor contacted the University Center to explore the possibility of developing a strategic plan that focused on music and cultural heritage in an effort to establish a sustainable tourism industry for the city. The University Center partnered with an A-State professor to prepare a plan, primarily focusing on a five-year horizon, but with realization that some aspects will have a longer period of time for achievement. The strategic plan includes, but is not limited to, a mission statement, core values, SWOT analysis, planning assumptions, strategic issues, and objectives and strategies. Subsequently, the city has requested a feasibility study on one of the projects identified in the strategic plan.