



COASTAL BEND BUSINESS INNOVATION CENTER

AN EDA UNIVERSITY CENTER

University

Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi

Center Director

Bill Cone

Center Location

College of Business

Center since 2010

Center Activities

- Applied research
- Technical assistance
- Entrepreneurship support
- Commercialization support

Clients

- Start-ups and entrepreneurs
- Local governments
- Local economic development organizations
- Venture/angel investors

Assessment Techniques

- Client interviews
- Client surveys
- Feedback at regional workshops

Contact Information

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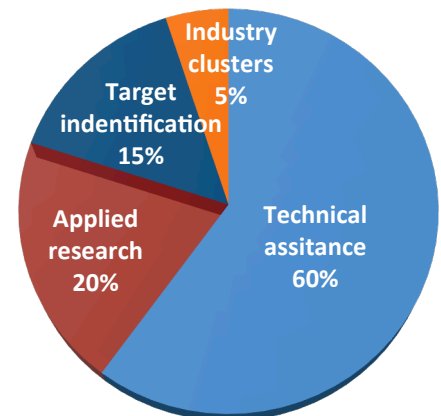
Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center

The EDA University Center at Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) is part of the school's Coastal Bend Business Innovation Center (CBBIC). CBBIC promotes cross-disciplinary academic and entrepreneurial programs across the University, including business incubation services and executive/professional education. The University Center's primary aim is to develop data resources that promote long-term economic development in the Coastal Bend region, as well as assisting businesses that will strengthen existing and emerging innovation clusters.

Activities

The Center's activities primarily focus on two components: technical assistance to businesses through incubation services and dissemination of research on regional economic topics. CBBIC, which houses the University Center, provides business incubation facilities that supply technical assistance and commercialization support to businesses in targeted industries.

Around 40 active companies in at least 13 industry sectors are currently housed in the incubator. The incubator especially focuses on assisting innovative businesses that can achieve primary employer status and create high-paying jobs in the region. The Center is supporting efforts to form a regional angel investor group to help address funding gaps for entrepreneurs.



In addition to its incubator, the Center also focuses on creating a vibrant "Economic Resource Hub" which serves as a gateway to data and research about the Coastal Bend region. This tool compiles and disseminates economic and business data from community stakeholders and other sources for the benefit of public

and private sector stakeholders. Other applied research activities include analysis of regional clusters; regions', strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; and innovation analyses to help identify and support targeted innovation clusters.

"The Center has been very successful and exceeded our expectations. It created an environment for clients to do better and learn business and other skills while providing an opportunity for students and faculty to practice and sharpen their skills in a live laboratory."

----Center Stakeholder

Leveraging

A strong cadre of university faculty

and graduate student workers and volunteers from sciences, engineering and technology, and business support CBBIC staff in providing assistance to incubator companies. CBBIC also

facilitates direct contact between incubator clients and the TAMU-CC

Associate Vice President for Research to access university research experts and the technology commercialization expertise of the broader Texas A&M University System. Other external partners include Corpus Christi Regional Economic Development Corporation, Chambers of Commerce, Coastal Bend Council of Governments, Port & Port Industries of Corpus Christi, and Del Mar College.

Success

Targeted innovation cluster growth through incubation services

CBBIC's business incubator offers a 2- to 5-year incubation program supported by faculty, staff, student interns, graduate students, a resource network of local businesses, and a nearby SBDC. When CBBIC first launched in 2009, its large client base was primarily "lifestyle" companies with low potential for scalability and job creation. Learning from this, the incubator now focuses on businesses that show high growth and job creation potential, especially businesses in the Coastal Bend region's targeted innovation clusters (which have been identified through the applied research activities of the University Center). Most firms in the CBBIC are in the high-tech and

alternative energy sectors, which have higher growth potential than the region's traditional manufacturing and service sectors. The incubator also intentionally maintains a low client base, focusing on businesses that have reached the start-up stage, so that it can provide productive hands-on assistance – including providing an Advisory Board member as a mentor to every business, along with a mentor. One recent client, SCORgolf, came to CBBIC after developing and marketing a new product for golf's short game (the first real reengineering of wedges for the short game in the last 40 years). SCORgolf had a provisional patent on their system, and wanted CBBIC to assist them with finding investors and with their website and e-

commerce applications. CBBIC was able to introduce the company to some angel investors, and it is continuing to attract investors as its performance improves. Since becoming a client, SCORgolf had its first six-figure sales month and subsequently doubled those sales over the following months.

Over a three-year period, CBBIC clients have secured \$4.5 million in funding, created over 50 full-time jobs, and generated \$2.3 million in salaries. Texas A&M University, Corpus Christi University Center's targeted assistance for startup companies through its incubator program is facilitating business growth and job creation in the region's key innovation clusters.