



# Resource Development Group

*30 Years of Economic  
Development Fundraising*

## **From Collaboration to Capital: How Modern EDOs Turn Data Into Investment**

*By RDG Principal Ellie Dunavant*

Economic development is constantly changing – and the communities keeping pace aren't the ones working the hardest; they're the ones working together. Today's most effective EDOs and chambers are mastering a three-part formula: building cross-sector alignment, using clear data to guide decisions, and translating that clarity into a bold, investable vision. Together, these elements create real momentum – helping communities enhance effectively, attract investment, and make better decisions with greater confidence.

Our clients consistently find that collaboration is no longer optional. Many of the factors shaping their community competitiveness – workforce, housing, childcare, and infrastructure – don't belong to any one organization but instead span sectors. EDOs and chambers are uniquely positioned to convene business leaders, local government, education, and nonprofits, fostering alignment that sharpens priorities, stretches resources, and builds investor confidence. Alignment backed by data is what turns coordination into readiness.

Growing expectations for measurable outcomes - and a clear articulation of how EDOs and chambers drive impact – have been a consistent theme across RDG's capital campaigns, feasibility studies, and stakeholder conversations. Dashboards and consistent KPI reporting have become game-changing tools, allowing communities to communicate progress and gaps with precision, keep partners focused on shared goals, and demonstrate transparency.

The Maury County Chamber of Commerce offers a strong example where [the data speaks for itself](#). Its accessible [KPI dashboards](#) help leaders stay aligned and communicate results with credibility, making momentum easier to sustain. Similarly, the Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA) and the Charleston Metro Chamber are two key collaborators in launching the

[Charleston Regional Data Center \(CRDC\)](#) – an impressive demonstration of organizations working together to showcase momentum and ROI.

Former CRDA team member and current RDG Principal Brent Jones reflected on the initiative: “Our leaders recognized years ago that a single, trusted source of data was key to unlocking growth, investment, and opportunity. Data isn’t just information – its infrastructure. When data is accessible, communities become stronger. The CRDC ensures that everyone – from policymakers to entrepreneurs – has the tools to understand our region and shape its future.”

Recently, RDG has worked with several EDOs and Chambers on the cusp of bold new plans. Conducting a feasibility study ahead of a strategy execution does more than test alignment and organizational performance – it strengthens strategic focus, introduces data early, and creates a powerful first opportunity to engage investors. When everyone shares a clear understanding of the starting point, building a shared, ambitious vision becomes far more achievable – and investable.

Communities that secure transformational funding tend to share the same traits: multi-sector alignment, clear and accessible data, and a confident, measurable plan. This combination builds trust, signals readiness, and gives the private sector a compelling reason to invest in something larger than any one organization could accomplish alone.

At RDG, we see this pattern every day. Communities with strong collaboration and strong data are best positioned to raise the capital needed to move their vision forward.

Three actions EDOs and chambers can take today to strengthen their competitiveness:

- *Convene intentionally - Create regular, meaningful engagement with stakeholders. You can read more on our investor engagement tips here.*
- *Measure what matters - Identify a focused set of KPIs and update them consistently.*
- *Dream bigger together - Use data to shape a shared vision—and invite investors into the story.*

Economic development is moving too fast for organizations to operate in silos or rely on intuition alone. Communities that collaborate deeply, track progress transparently, and articulate bold, shared visions are the ones gaining momentum—and attracting the investment needed to thrive.

*Resource Development Group (RDG) partners with chambers of commerce and economic development organizations across the country to design and*

*execute fundraising strategies that drive measurable impact.*

Learn more at [www.rdgfundraising.com](http://www.rdgfundraising.com)

To learn more about Ellie Dunavant [go here](#). Please [go here](#) to visit the RDG Interactive Blog.



**Resource Development Group** is celebrating 30 years of economic development fundraising consulting for clients across the United States. RDG is highly specialized in that the firm **ONLY** works with chambers of commerce and economic development organizations and brings to bear a team with deep roots from the industry. Reach out to Clint Nessmith at [Clint@RDGfundraising.com](mailto:Clint@RDGfundraising.com) with feedback, questions, or to explore how RDG can work with you to help you achieve your revenue goals.

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Resource Development Group (RDG) is an economic and community development consulting firm. In addition to capital campaign management, we conduct feasibility studies, best practice research, and organizational development and optimization work. Our client base includes chambers of commerce, economic development organizations and public-private partnerships throughout the United States. RDG was founded in Columbus, Ohio. We have three offices in Georgia (Atlanta, Statesboro, and Columbus) as well as in Asheville, NC, Charleston, SC, and Paris, France. Our mission is to help you elevate!

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Resource Development Group | 907 Monarch Circle | Statesboro, GA 30458 US

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