

Southeast Regional Director Institute's Voluntary Council Assessment Program

The Southeast Regional Directors Institute's Voluntary Council Assessment Program is a multi-month process of both in and out of region segments. The assessment process' goal is to develop strategies to maximize regional council's support and assistance to its member governments (owners) and place the council in the most relevant position in the region, so that it helps in enhancing the local governments, their communities, and the region.

While each assessment is tailored to best fit each individual regional council's need, the following component parts of a beginning structure are used to build an assessment tool to maximize the benefit to the council being assessed:

Survey of Region's Leaders. Prior to the in-region assessment, there will be an electronic survey conducted of a Board of Directors and if determined by the Board, other local elected and appointed officials, and other regional leaders whose opinions would be of value in trying to build the most credible and relevant council possible. The survey will include but not limited to such questions as: what's good about council; what concern's you about council; what is the most valuable thing you receive from the council; is there an opportunity out there that you think council should be engaged in that it is not; and, if you could change one thing about council what would it be? The participants will have 30 days prior to the in-region assessment to complete and submit their answers. The SERDI staff will tabulate the results share them with the council at the Board's work session during the in-region assessment.

One-on-One Interviews with Regional Leaders. SERDI staff will conduct one-on-one interviews with up to 25 regional leaders identified by the regional council. These people are seen as key regional leaders...public or private sector...elected or appointed...affiliated or not, with the regional council...but significant people that are key to region's success. The interviews are 30 minutes in length. The results of the interviews are shared with the Executive Director of the regional council.

In-Region Focus Group Sessions. There will be up to 6 focus group sessions held facilitated by the SERDI staff. The focus groups will not exceed 1 1/2 hours in length. The number of participants in each focus group should not exceed 20. It will be up to the council how many focus groups will be held and if they will be held by geography or by sector (managers, planners, economic developers, workforce, etc.). Some of the same questions asked in survey will be asked, but the focus of the group sessions will be on the position of the council in the region, its assets, its liabilities, its staff, the big opportunities, challenges, and issues facing the region, and what role does or should the council play in addressing those things; and should the council play more of a convener role than it does in bringing the local governments of the

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region together when appropriate. Finally, group participants will be asked how they feel the council should be position itself to absolutely maximize its relevancy and usefulness to its owners, the local governments of the region. Parts of three days should be set-aside for the group sessions.

Board of Directors Review and Strategies Work Session. Following the focus group sessions, either at the end of the third day or on the fourth day (in either event the session should be aligned with a regularly scheduled board meeting of the council) a review and strategies work session, not to exceed 1 1/2 hours will be facilitated by the SERDI Staff. The survey and focus group work will be presented for review, consideration, and discussion. SERDI staff will also present several preliminary rough draft strategy recommendations for discussion only. The council will have an opportunity to propose draft strategy recommendations as well.

Complete Record Report. Within 14 business days following the completion of the Board of Directors Review and Strategies Work Session, the SERDI staff will submit to the council a complete record report of the council assessment including final recommendations.

Cost: The cost of the SERDI council assessment process is \$5000 plus travel expenses. The regional council will be invoiced for the describe services with the submission of the assessment Complete Record Report. Travel reimbursement will be paid upon request.

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