



*A program of the Irondale Commercial Development Authority*

# **OVERVIEW**

Business retention and expansion is the primary objective of the Commercial Development Authority. Actively engaging city leaders, the education community and our city's residents in building and maintaining relationships with our business community is the catalyst for our **BUSINESS FIRST** program.



**BUSINESS FIRST** will foster the ongoing development of these relationships with the most powerful and effective method of communication — a face-to-face conversation.

**BUSINESS FIRST** recognizes the businesses in our city as customers/clients who use our office as the main point of contact for a variety of business services. The information we obtain from business owners, CEOs and their team members will facilitate connecting each company to resources that are specific to their needs.

**BUSINESS FIRST** touches five city council districts, many public and private schools, churches in every district, approximately 13,000 residents and over 400 businesses within the Irondale city limits. Our program will enhance municipal interdependency by encouraging every person involved to work collaboratively towards achieving the goals that create win-win situations for everyone.

**BUSINESS FIRST** endeavors to exist as an on-going, ever-evolving program whose foundation is established as a “working plan” that focuses on the following:

- Corporate Sectors - What industries are represented in our city as it relates to large corporations?
- Workforce - Where is the human resource capital(*present and future*) being developed and how ready are they to contribute to our business community?
- District Meetings - Who are the community leaders taking an active role with the city's adopted comprehensive plan “IRONDALE ON THE MOVE”? Where and when do they meet?
- Business Walks - CDA board members are responsible for the implementation of this aspect of our program, but we strongly encourage city leaders and residents to join us as we build personal relationships with our business owners and provide shadowing opportunities for students in our schools.
- Communication - What is the highest and most effective level of communication we can achieve with the use of technology, printed material and good “old-fashioned” conversation?
- Training - Training will be provided to ALL participants so that our message and protocol remain consistent. The right training environment becomes the best place to prevent unnecessary challenges and learn from “new” challenges that arise.

The **BUSINESS FIRST** program is currently involved in research and development. Minimal effort regarding R&D has already provided us with this list of specific needs regarding some of the businesses in our city. We have relationships, based on our local and nationwide network, to meet these needs. Existing residential development is also playing a key role in meeting certain expressed needs. The list is as follows:



<u>Need</u>	<u>Possible solutions in our network</u>
Workforce development	People in our community Students in our schools
Reduction of inventory costs	Procurement advisors
B2B connections	Intentional business introductions between industrial and retail from CDA members, Business Walk team members and Chamber of Commerce
Payroll tax management	Payroll tax specialists who work primarily with HR supervisors, business owners and payroll administrators
Commercial lending options	Our local banks and nationwide lenders for business owners who need alternative financing
Foot traffic	Additional rooftops from residential development, pop-up events and the expansion of annual events ( <i>SpringFest, Team Magic Cycling, WhistleStop, etc.</i> )
Investment Banking	Financial advisors for specific IB needs

These are just a few of the needs we've uncovered as we seek to establish a relevant starting point with our **BUSINESS FIRST** program. As our activity increases, we will constantly add new items of importance to our list. The best way for commercial development to expand and provide growth to our business community is to find the need—or create it, then fill the need with an existing business—or bring in a new one. It all starts when we are intentional about focusing on **BUSINESS FIRST**.

