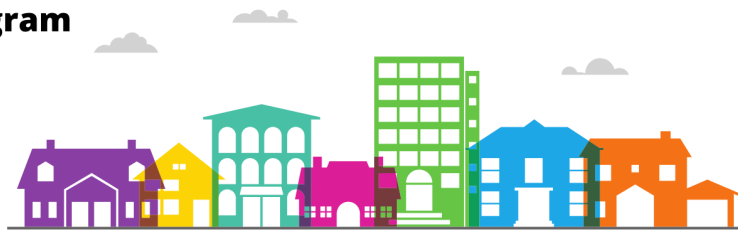


# First Tier Suburbs

## Economic Development Program

Sponsored by NLC and TIP Strategies



### INVITATION TO APPLY

The National League of Cities (NLC) First Tier Suburbs Council is pleased to offer first tier suburb communities the opportunity to partner with national economic and workforce development consulting firm TIP Strategies (TIP) to host the 2021 Economic Development Conference. The virtual event will be the third collaboration between NLC and TIP designed to help local leaders come together to identify and address common challenges.

### ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The virtual conference goal is to provide data analysis and insights to help a first-tier suburb, or group of suburbs in a region, identify and address shared issues and opportunities. This year's conference will focus on talent attraction and retention.

- ♦ In 2019, the Mid-America Regional Council, which serves the nine-county Kansas City metropolitan area, was chosen to host the inaugural conference following a competitive selection process. The event and related analyses focused on the challenge of workforce housing and resulted in a successful conference, and best practices report available on the NLC website.
- ♦ In 2020, a multi-city collaboration between the City of Mesa and the towns of Gilbert and Queen Creek, AZ, all first-tier suburbs of Phoenix, focused on building a small business ecosystem. This project occurred in parallel with the emergence of COVID-19 and quickly adapted to focus on small business resilience and recovery.

As with previous conferences, TIP Strategies will donate economic data analysis and expertise to facilitate a half-day virtual conference of community leaders. The event will highlight collaborative opportunities for local governments and formulate economic development solutions that will build on the community's strengths and mitigate barriers.

### CONFERENCE DESCRIPTION

The half-day virtual conference is designed to convene elected leaders, government officials, nonprofit organizations, and education professionals from the selected applicant location to focus on a single issue and discuss potential solutions. During the half-day event, participants will review national economic development best practices, generate ideas for addressing areas of concern, and identify opportunities for regional collaboration.

The event will be facilitated by TIP Strategies and include the following sessions:

- ♦ **Current state.** Attendees will gain an understanding of where their region (and/or participating communities) stands on the chosen topic based on a targeted analysis of relevant indicators.
- ♦ **Best practice models.** A panel discussion featuring NLC members will highlight examples from around the country that have found innovative solutions to talent attraction and retention.



- ♦ **Breakout sessions.** Attendees will participate in small group discussions to review and synthesize the ideas and solutions presented and propose specific opportunities for local stakeholders to collaborate to effect economic change.

## TOPICS

In 2021, priority will be given to keeping, growing, and attracting talent. Examples of topics that affect this issue and may be included in the conference include:

- Collaboration with educational institutions
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Local employer partnerships
- Placemaking
- Remote worker recruitment

## Outcomes

The virtual conference will provide the selected community with analysis highlighting current conditions related to talent attraction and retention and a list of next steps and solutions conceived during the event. TIP Strategies will synthesize these ideas into a best practices guide so other communities can learn from the selected region.

The results of this conference are intended to serve as a learning model for other NLC members and will become part of a clearinghouse of regional solutions and approaches for dealing with the biggest obstacles to long-term regional economic success. Additionally, the selected city/cities may be featured on the NLC website, blog, and at the 2021 City Summit Conference.

## WHO SHOULD APPLY?

Is your community outside a larger city that garners most of the economic development attention?

Would your community or region benefit by better leveraging its resources and assets, maximizing strengths, or minimizing weaknesses?

Are you grappling with keeping, growing, and attracting talent?

If so, your community may be an ideal candidate to participate in this NLC First Tier Suburbs Council initiative.

## WHAT IS A FIRST-TIER SUBURB?

A **first-tier suburb** is a municipality just outside of a larger core city. Generally speaking, they were the first suburbs to form around cities after WWII. Because of their proximity to large cities, the suburbs are overshadowed by the adjoining municipality's economic might. Because of their age, they sometimes—but not always—have aging infrastructure and face the challenges that come along with it.



**Not sure if your city would be considered a first-tier suburb?** There's no hard and fast rule of what qualifies, so please apply if you feel this opportunity would benefit your community.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

In selecting a host community, the following questions will be considered.

- ◆ Is the community an NLC member? NLC member cities are eligible to be selected. Non-member cities will be eligible if applying as part of a regional group of cities. Preference may be given to member cities and group applications with full NLC membership.
- ◆ Does the community have the capacity to host a successful conference with at least 50 attendees?
- ◆ Is the community part of a pre-existing partnership that is willing to support and participate in the conference?
- ◆ Are the challenges and opportunities of the community applicable to those of other NLC members?
- ◆ Will selecting the community create the potential for creative solutions to be showcased at the conference?

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### NLC RESPONSIBILITIES

NLC's First Tier Suburbs Council will promote the application and selection process, identify panel and keynote speakers from the NLC membership, market, and host the Economic Development Conference. The Council's selection committee will review applicants and select an awardee based on the strength of the application.

Preference will be given to NLC member cities. Not an NLC member? Join today ([www.nlc.org/membership](http://www.nlc.org/membership)).

### SELECTED COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITIES

The conference will be coordinated by a program team comprised of:

- ◆ Host city representatives
- ◆ NLC staff
- ◆ TIP Strategies staff

Led by local representatives, this team will build a custom agenda; line up local and national speakers; arrange an event location; and identify the analyses, partnerships, and programs to be highlighted at the conference.

The host community will be responsible for convening local leaders in economic development, government, business, nonprofits, and community organizations to attend the conference. The selected community will share available data with TIP as part of the data analysis part of the project and attend regular program team meetings to plan the conference.

The selected community must attend the NLC City Summit in Salt Lake City, Utah: November 17-20, 2021, and participate in the presentation of the final report.



## TIP STRATEGIES RESPONSIBILITIES

TIP Strategies will be responsible for the following.

- ◆ Donating analysis of local/regional economic data related to talent attraction and retention.
- ◆ Facilitating a half-day conference with local elected, public, private, educational, and community leaders.
- ◆ Documenting and synthesizing the ideas shared and solutions discovered at the conference.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

You may apply either as an individual city/town or in partnership with adjacent municipalities. Any NLC members willing to serve as a host for this program are invited to apply. While preference will be given to NLC member cities, all cities are eligible to apply.

Applications will be due on March 19, 2021, and must include the following information.

- ◆ Name of the NLC member.
- ◆ Name of neighboring municipal partners (if applicable).
- ◆ List of other community partners that will participate and support the conference.
- ◆ Description of the issue facing the region and its municipalities.
- ◆ Description of what successful conference outcomes might be for the community.
- ◆ Description of the community's ability to convene at least 50 stakeholders for a virtual conference.
- ◆ List of potential local speakers/leaders that are actively working to address the proposed topic.

The selected applicant will commit to the following responsibilities.

- ◆ Coordinating the event and covering all associated costs. These costs will include but are not limited to the event venue, video & audio, virtual platform, and all associated event coordination expenses.
- ◆ Designating staff to support TIP's data collection efforts.
- ◆ Managing the conference details such as invitations and RSVPs, formatting and graphic design for the agenda and other conference materials such as programs or pamphlets, and providing volunteers to assist with facilitating and notetaking during the conference breakout groups..
- ◆ Designating a city staffer to work with TIP and NLC, ensuring that the conference is successful.



## TIMELINE AND KEY DATES

| WHAT                   | WHEN           | WHERE  |
|------------------------|----------------|--|
| Applications Open      | March 7, 2021  | Online   |
| Application Deadline   | March 19, 2021 | Email Kirk Ross ( <a href="mailto:Ross@nlc.org">Ross@nlc.org</a> ) |
| Announce Selected City | March 26, 2021 | NLC First Tier Suburbs Council meeting, NLC website, and email     |
| Conference             | TBD            | Virtual  |

## ABOUT TIP STRATEGIES

TIP Strategies, Inc. (TIP) is a privately held Austin-based firm providing consulting and advisory services to public and private sector clients. Established in 1995, the firm's core competence in strategic planning for economic development has broadened to include expertise in talent strategies and in organizational development.

TIP has worked with more than 300 clients in the US and abroad to develop innovative strategies, programs, and outreach campaigns. We are a team of experienced practitioners who have led successful public and private sector initiatives before we consulted. Our depth of hands-on, professional experience allows us to understand the unique challenges our clients face. We pride ourselves on our ability to think creatively, and we customize each engagement to meet the client's specific needs, from initial outreach to final implementation.

TIP maintains offices in Austin, Seattle, and Boston.