

The Voorhees Center has been designated an EDA University Center by the US Economic Development Administration. The designation lasts for five years starting on October 1st 2016. The Center is intended to promote green economic development in Cook County with the focus on Southeastern Cook County in the Calumet Corridor.¹

The EDA Center designation provides Federal funding matched by UIC for 5 years which the Center can use to:

- Conduct applied research
- Provide technical assistance
- Disseminate results of both technical assistance and applied research efforts

Why this initiative and why now?

The combination of industry and environment makes the region an ideal candidate to transition to new and green economic development. Specific attributes of the Calumet region that make it a prime target:

- hosts a large concentration of heavy industry
- a leader in transportation and logistics
- home to some of the region’s environmental gems (e.g., Indiana National Dunes, Big Marsh)
- a place of national attention with focus on industry and environment (Millennium Reserve, Pullman National Monument, proposed Calumet National Heritage Area designation)
- already beginning to leverage attributes to encourage green industries and green jobs

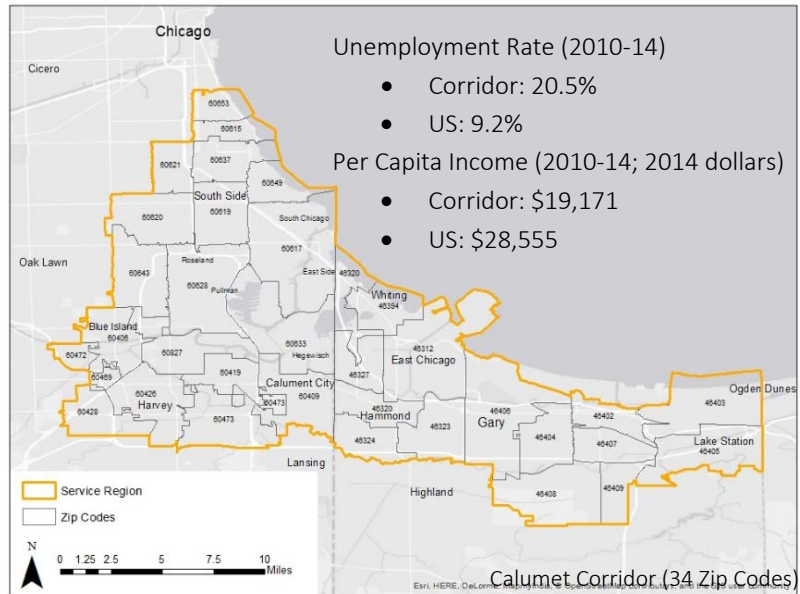
Challenges to full realization of regional goals:

- The region suffers from severe income polarization compounded by race and ethnicity
- There is a mismatch between employer needs and labor force
- The development of economic opportunities across the corridor is uneven

Mission Goal: Facilitate development of model for eco-friendly green development

Focus Areas

- Workforce development
- Green economic industrial corridor activities
- Capacity building
- Communication



¹ Green economic development strives to create jobs while protecting the environment, focusing on industry that is resource-efficient and low-carbon.

Main Activities

Work force development:

- Conduct talent pool data assessment to fill existing and potential green industries
- Assess workforce training needs for existing and potential green industries
- Develop new, targeted training programs for existing and potential green industries

Green economic development:

- Conduct impact assessment on new green energy potential
- Develop green industry and brownfield marketing plan
- Develop technical assistance plan

In capacity building:

- Train stakeholders to sustain program in the long run
- Develop and pursue financing strategies to sustain program over the long run
- Secure funding to implement immediate workforce development initiatives
- Secure EDA and other resources to implement center related projects

In communication and dissemination:

- Disseminate research on green development
- Promote green industrial development
- Assist in marketing the region

Target audience

- Existing and future industry
- Unemployed/underemployed adults particularly minorities, young adults, veterans and women
- Economic development officials, workforce agencies, community advancement organizations, non-profit organizations focused on green industrial development, and local and regional planners
- Community leaders and advocates for green economic development

Leveraging

To accomplish its mission, the Center will collaborate with local, county and regional players as well as other stakeholders and will seek to develop additional resources to enhance the work of the center and to support the efforts of implementing entities.

This includes the **Southeast Environmental Task Force (SETF)** and **Chicago Southland Economic Development Corporation (CSEDC)**.² SETF is leading the newly launched Green Economic Industrial Corridor effort to expand green jobs in the region. The CSEDC provides extensive services to these communities including brownfields redevelopment assistance, industrial recruitment, and infrastructure planning, and fosters entrepreneurship for makers and leads the Industry Sector Partnership of CGMP.

The Center will also collaborate with the **Digital Manufacturing and Design Innovation Institute (DMDII)**, which is part of UI LABS. DMDII is committed to providing technical assistance on workforce development and to selected manufacturers, and will work with the Center to provide both as identified through research the Center completes and that is within the scope of its own funding (i.e., UI Labs will not be funded through this EDA grant).

² No EDA University Center funding or match from UIC will be paid to these organizations.