

Information Sheet - The PCED Certification Exam

October 2011

The Community Development Council (CDC) is a national nonprofit organization with the mission of improving professional training and practice in community development. Currently, the CDC oversees five Community Development Institutes, including sites in Illinois, Arkansas, Texas, West Virginia, and Idaho. Furthermore, CDC also certifies individuals who demonstrate their experience, knowledge, and abilities as community development professionals. Individuals who successfully meet the criteria for certification receive CDC's designation, "Professional Community and Economic Developer". The certification process is managed by CDC and is not controlled by individual CDI sites.

In order to earn the PCED certification, you must first qualify to take the PCED examination. This requires a total of eight points which can be earned based on job experience and relevant education and training. Participation in CDI counts for one point for each year. The application to take the PCED examination is available at <http://www.cdccouncil.com/ccd.htm>. A CDC committee reviews all applications and decides which qualify for the exam. Please apply at least 30 days before the scheduled examination to allow time for review.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PCED EXAM

The PCED exam is based on the content of the *2006 Community Development Handbook (copyrighted by the Community Development Council)*, although several chapters have been revised from the original book. Community and economic development is a dynamic field and it is the intent of the Community Development Council (CDC) to periodically update the chapters in the Handbook in order to provide CDI participants with the best educational materials.

You may obtain a compact disk form of the Handbook from the Community Development Council – please contact Laura at laura@sedc.org – for \$35. It includes all the relevant chapters for the exam, including the revised chapters.

The exam includes questions to measure both the understanding of content and the ability to apply the appropriate methods and tools to specific community situations. The exam consists entirely of multiple choice questions divided into two parts. Part 1 covers content from selected

chapters of the *Community Development Handbook as revised*. Part 2 consists of three case studies in which you are asked to apply knowledge gleaned from work experience, training, and/or the *Handbook* to respond to a situation in a community. In these case studies, you will be asked to explain the factors that led to the current situation in the community or to suggest what actions might be taken.

In order to pass the exam, you must receive a minimum score of 70% on each part of the exam. You are able to re-take the examination if you do not pass it. If you pass one part of the exam and not the other part, you are only required to re-take the part of the exam that you did not pass.

CONTENT OF THE EXAM

The PCED exam is based on the Core Curriculum topics that are offered at all CDIs. The Core Curriculum ensures that the same essential body of knowledge relating to community and economic development is taught at all CDI sites. The following table identifies the 1) Core Curriculum topics for the CDIs nationally and 2) the corresponding chapter on the compact disk.

CDI Core Curriculum Subject	Handbook Chaps
<u>Year 1</u>	
Intro to economic development. Relationship between CD and ED.	Introduction
CD basics. What is CD? What is the CD process? What do community developers do?	1
Team building, group decision making and communication, team leadership	1
Community assessment	4
Asset-based CD	2 and 8
Strategic planning in community development	6
Newtown simulation	None
<u>Year 2</u>	
Retention and expansion of existing businesses	11
Entrepreneurship in CD and ED	12
Community and economic development project finance	14
The business site selection process	None
Globalization, international trends and the affect on CD	17

Year 3	
Workforce development	5
Tourism	10
Establishing, managing local development organizations	13
Marketing the community	9

PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

The examination was designed to verify your knowledge and application of Community Development principles and practices. **This is not a test that you should treat lightly.** Individuals who attempt to “walk in and wing it” will find it difficult.

The best ways to prepare for the exam are: 1) to participate actively in CDI sessions, and 2) review and study the relevant Handbook chapters. Without reviewing the Handbook, it is unlikely that most individuals will be able to pass the exam.

As a busy professional, it is not easy to find additional time in your schedule for studying. Furthermore, it may have been a long time since you took an examination. Here are a couple suggestions that you may find useful:

- 1* Devise a preparation strategy and plan that best matches your best performance on past exams and work projects.
- 2* Set aside time and regularly study the content a little at a time. Do not cram for the exam. You may want to take a chapter at a time, and then, review the key ideas, points and concepts that you marked in the chapters.
- 3* When you study the Handbook, concentrate on one chapter at a time. You may want to highlight or underline key items, concepts, and important points. The test questions are not “picky” so be certain that you understand the main points of each chapter.
- 4* You may find that studying with another individual or group will help you to underscore what is most important in the chapter and reinforce key points. The opportunity to discuss these ideas with your peers is very effective for many people who prefer interaction rather than “book learning”.

5* We also suggest that you participate in or review the Somerset case study offered in Year 3 by Jack Vincent. The Somerset case study is good preparation for Part 2 of the PCED.

CERTIFICATION OR EXAM QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about the certification process or the exam, please contact John Gruidl at 309-298-2984 or JJ-Gruidl@wiu.edu. Thank you.