



Ellensburg's Business Development Authority, dba CenterFuse (meaning 'at the center of Washington state where we ignite economic opportunity') is a public development authority and 501c6 created almost 30 years ago. It wasn't until December 2020 that CenterFuse hired staff for the first time (currently one FTE, the Executive Director position); prior to that time there was a mix of city staff and contractors.

We have successfully secured grant funding for priority work and are building mutually beneficial partnerships in meaningful ways. Read about some of our current projects:

It's been a long time, I believe over ten years, since Kittitas County has applied for and received funding from the US Department of Agriculture's Rural Business Development Grant Program. CenterFuse received an opportunity grant in the amount of \$25,000 to perform **an inventory of non-residential buildings and land in Ellensburg's Urban Growth Area**. The project is progressing well, and we anticipate having a full data set of an estimated up to 4,000 properties by April 2023.

For the first time, the Washington State Microenterprise Association has awarded funds to Kittitas County to support CenterFuse's efforts in microenterprise business start-up and expansion. The \$25,000 grant is targeted to **assisting food truck businesses** adversely impacted by recent regulatory climate stay and grow in Ellensburg, and to expand our partnership with Central Washington University (CWU) to **engage students (CWU and high school) in entrepreneurial endeavors**. Also, for the first time CenterFuse was awarded a \$4,000 **City of Ellensburg Community Grant to advance youth entrepreneurship**.

As a founding partner of the Ellensburg Arts and Culture Alliance, CenterFuse authored a Washington Department of Commerce Building for the Arts grant to help fund the **remodel of the Ramsay Building Ballroom**. Ellensburg offers year-round arts and culture events, and our community is filled with talent - talented actors, musicians, singers, dancers of all ages who seek to perform before an attentive audience. Yet they struggle to find public space to share their talents. The Ramsay Building renovation will establish a small, accessible performance space. The Building for the Arts program staff

Mission driven, focused on results.

Our mission is to connect businesses with the resources so they can start, grow, and prosper.

Ellensburg's job base is 37% public sector with the next highest sector of jobs in the food and retail industry – an unsustainable economy. This is why CenterFuse is focused on diversifying Ellensburg's business community, creating quality wage jobs, and increasing local revenue streams to retain our small town feel during expansion. We focus on five key industries who complement our community assets and values, and on a business growth trajectory: Healthcare, Construction, Manufacturing, Warehouse/Distribution, and Technology.



recommended a grant award in the amount of \$100,000 which is included in Governor Inslee's 2023 budget.

Adding to a previously CenterFuse authored Community Economic and Revitalization Board (CERB) broadband planning grant for Kittitas County, we are happy to report award of \$50,000 each for *two CERB planning grants*: one looking at the **expansion of Ellensburg's value-added wood products sector** and a second to **identify and address obstacles and opportunities for private development of vacant land at the I-90 West Interchange**. Consultant selection is complete for both planning grant projects, and we anticipate finalizing the study and action plan for each by the end of 2023. *More good news*: a third CERB planning grant in the amount of \$25,000 to **identify and assess artist production and performance space** was approved at the CERB board in January 2023.

We penned an interagency agreement with the city of Ellensburg for funding equal to prior years with an opportunity to secure additional funding to use as cash match on city approved grants. We are grateful for the funding we receive from the Kittitas County Distressed Grant Program. This funding provides the support needed to **advance economic development activities** in significant ways in Kittitas County.

LOOKING AHEAD:

To improve the user experience, we are working on some enhancements to our Start in Ellensburg website (<https://startinellensburg.com>).

Make available city permitting data. We are adding permitting activity data to the interactive map of the Start In Ellensburg website to include new residential and commercial and tenant improvements (commercial) valued over \$100,000. Prospective developers will see at a glance the type of new residential and commercial construction work under permit with the city of Ellensburg.

Display non-residential buildings and land. Many properties for sale or lease in Ellensburg are only known about by word of mouth, making it difficult for prospective businesses new to the area to get a full picture of what truly is available. We will soon have a data set of all non-residential land and buildings in Ellensburg. This data will become another layer to our Start In Ellensburg website so existing and prospective businesses can easily get key information about a property they might be interested in.

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