



Business Retention & Expansion Plan 2026

Cheyenne LEADS' Business Retention & Expansion (BRE) Program is designed to strengthen relationships with existing employers, better understand their needs, and support long-term business growth in Laramie County. Through employer visits, surveys, industry engagement, and targeted support programs, LEADS will work proactively to identify challenges, connect businesses with resources, and encourage expansion and investment. This program positions LEADS as a long-term partner focused on helping local companies succeed, grow, and remain competitive in our community.

Program success will be measured through employer engagement, expansion projects supported, workforce initiatives connected, private investment leveraged, and jobs retained or created. Through this effort, Cheyenne LEADS will take a more proactive and strategic role in supporting existing employers, strengthening economic resilience, and encouraging continued investment throughout Cheyenne and Laramie County.

1

BRE—Semi Annual Survey

Designed to identify growth opportunities, detect operational barriers and risks, and inform strategic decisions

> Framework

Conduct semi-annually to monitor trends and emerging issues.

Strategic, consistent questions aligned with prior years to allow for year-over-year comparison and trend analysis.

Results reported in aggregate only to ensure confidentiality and encourage candid participation.

Participation goal of 50% among targeted employers.

Distributed to primary employers in Cheyenne and Laramie County.

> Survey Goals

Provide employers an opportunity to share concerns and challenges.

Identify gaps in business support services.

Detect infrastructure and utility constraints.

Assess workforce needs and hiring challenges.

Identify potential relocation or downsizing risks early.

Track industry and economic trends.

Measure awareness of available programs and resources.

Gather feedback on LEADS' effectiveness and value.

> Follow up

Create an action plan based on results.

2

Workforce Development Support

➤ Support other organization's workforce initiatives

Providing relevant insights gathered from employer interactions to those focused on workforce training and development.

Share trends related to hiring challenges, skill gaps, and training needs with workforce and education partners to improve alignment and responsiveness.

3

BRE—Visits/Interactions

Relationship-driven, strategic check-ins—not data collection

Conduct proactive, in-person visits with primary employers throughout Cheyenne and Laramie County.

➤ Expansion & Investment

How are things going?

Have you been thinking about adding equipment, investing in upgrades, or expanding operations?

➤ Facility & Infrastructure Needs

Is your current facility working well for you?

If good, do you think you will need something different in the future?

➤ Workforce & Hiring

How's your staff?

Any positions that have been especially tough to fill? Why do you think it's challenging?

How do you advertise openings?

Have you ever taken advantage of the Wyoming Workforce Apprenticeship or Business Training Grants?

Have you talked with Laramie County Community College about their programs?

➤ Risks & Retention (When Appropriate)

What keeps you up at night about the business?

Are there any things that are concerns with your long-term plans?

➤ Support & Connections

Is there anything you need help with right now?

Offer to make connections that seem helpful based on conversation.

For manufacturing - Are you aware of Wyoming's Sales and Use Tax Exemption?

Casual Conversations are the best! Ask causal questions, and reinforce LEADS' role as a partner.

4 Community Participation

Staff will take every opportunity to engage employers in conversation about business conditions, expansion plans, and operational concerns (see section 3).

Ensure all membership meetings incorporate a BRE component, including outreach to new members, to reinforce available support.

Integrate BRE discussions into routine interactions, strengthening relationships and maintaining consistent visibility within the business community.

Attend community and industry events to maintain accessibility and gather real-time feedback from employers.

5 Host Events

› Casual, industry-focused gatherings (e.g., happy hours) designed to:

- Create a relaxed environment for candid conversation
- Surface operational challenges
- Identify expansion opportunities
- Detect emerging risks earlier
- Strengthen relationships across similar industries
- Fosters relationships between LEADS staff and businesses
- Commercial Owner Association (COA) Meetings

› Why This Works

People often share more information in casual settings.

Discussions uncover common workforce, supply chain, or infrastructure issues.

Trends emerge faster than through surveys alone.

Positions LEADS as a convener and connector.

6 Communications & Awareness

› Create/Use LEADS BRE Logo

Establish a distinct brand identity for the BRE program, clearly differentiating it from business recruitment efforts.

› Social Media

Launch a targeted social media campaign to increase awareness of available business tools, incentives, and support resources.

› Dedicated BRE Webpage

Highlights details of the new BRE Fund and organizes funding opportunities and resources.



7

Expand Knowledge

➤ **BRE Best Practices Research**

Research and evaluate leading BRE programs to identify new ideas and best practices.

➤ **Collaboration with Economic Development Peers**

Discuss BRE programs with other economic developers during travel to gain new ideas.

➤ **BRE Training and Professional Development**

Participate in BRE-focused trainings, workshops, and professional development opportunities as available to ensure the program remains current and effective.

8

Project Management & Development Support

These efforts are often behind the scenes and may be one of the most significant aspects of the Business Retention & Expansion Program. By helping remove barriers and supporting project implementation, Cheyenne LEADS plays an important role in encouraging business investment, expansion, and long-term retention.

➤ **Infrastructure Coordination**

Assist companies with off-site infrastructure improvements needed to support business growth and operations, including water, sewer, drainage, roads, utilities, and site access improvements. Coordinate with local jurisdictions, utility providers, engineers, and contractors to help move projects forward efficiently.

➤ **Entitlement & Development Assistance**

Support companies through the entitlement and development review process, including zoning, permitting, utility coordination, and communication with city, county, and service providers. Help businesses navigate processes and identify solutions that reduce delays and barriers to investment.

➤ **Project Facilitation**

Serve as a connector and project partner throughout expansion and improvement projects by coordinating stakeholders, identifying resources, and helping resolve challenges as they arise. Maintain communication between businesses and community partners to support successful project outcomes.

9

Expansion Solutions Fund

➤ **Purpose**

Support small-to-mid capital improvements that remove barriers and accelerate local investment through job retention, expansion, and/or operational efficiency.

➤ **Examples of Fund Eligibility: (tied directly to BRE)**

- Design Fees (architecture, engineering, planning)
- Equipment Purchase
- Infrastructure (water, sewer, storm water)
- Leasing Fees
- Permitting Fees (City, County)
- Power Upgrade
- Site Improvements (fencing, access, pavement)
- Utilities (electric, fiber, telephone)

➤ **Examples of Ineligible Uses**

- Cosmetic upgrades
- Operating costs
- Routine maintenance
- Others not listed

➤ **Financial Structure**

Annual Fund: \$200,000 (unused funds remain in fund with \$200,000 added annually)

Max Award: \$100,000

Typical Award: \$20,000–\$50,000

Match Requirement: Minimum 2:1 company match

No more than one award per company per 24 months

Board to provide decision within 30 days

Additionally, a small contribution will be added to each membership invoice to be designated to the BRE fund.

➤ **How to Apply**

Application and requested documents must be completed.

➤ **Evaluation Process**

All eligible applications will be submitted and reviewed by Cheyenne LEADS staff.

Cheyenne LEADS Staff will hold a pre-application meeting with applicant.

Cheyenne LEADS Board of Directors will review and make a decision on the application.

➤ **Performance-Based Reimbursement**

No upfront checks (exceptions could be made).

Funds reimbursed only after project completed and receipt for funded project provided.

Must be a Cheyenne LEADS member to receive funds.

➤ **Goals**

- 2-3 projects per year
- \$ amount - private investment leveraged
- 100 jobs retained/created
- Tangible physical improvements

➤ **Reporting Requirements**

Complete Annual Survey provided by Cheyenne LEADS for 10 years

Possible Questions/Answers

Is this a giveaway to businesses?

No. This is a reimbursement-based performance incentive tied to job creation/retention and capital investment. No funds are disbursed until commitments are met.

Why not use this for recruitment instead?

Retention is statistically more cost-effective than attraction. Approximately 80% of new jobs and capital investment come from companies already in the community.

How are companies selected?

Applications are scored using a standardized 75-point system evaluating economic impact, wages and capital leverage.

What prevents abuse?

- 2:1 private match
- Capital investment minimum
- Maximum award caps
- Funding one specific need

Why fund infrastructure like fencing and engineering?

These improvements directly increase production capacity, operational efficiency, and site competitiveness.

What industries qualify?

Primary Employers that supply, produce, or support goods and/or services where the majority of revenue generated for these is derived from outside of Laramie County. Retail and hospitality are typically excluded unless strategically significant.

Impact Metrics

> Engagement

Number of business visits per year

Number of times staff took the opportunity to ask questions during a non-BRE meeting

> Number of actionable issues identified

% of identified issues identified and resolved

Expansion projects supported

At-risk companies identified early

Companies retained after intervention

> Workforce & Talent

Hiring challenges recorded

Workforce pipeline programs shared (LCCC)

Number of Training grants secured