



Case for Support: Barrett Economic Development Corporation (BEDCo)

Our Mission: To strengthen and support the Barrett community by enhancing the local economy and economic opportunities of town residents.

Why Now?

Barrett Township is at a critical juncture. We are a unique and beloved community, with many small businesses that have boot-strapped themselves into success and weathered national economic volatility across the decades. We have active and thriving neighborhoods, with multi-generational residents who have remained deeply committed to Barrett, despite the changing landscape of employment in the region. We have passionate volunteers that make a life worth living happen, including supporting our community food bank and creating special, shared moments - such as the annual Halloween parade and the Rotary's Concert in the Park. This wealth of history and community vitality is at risk when we fail to invest in modern economic infrastructure. This is evidenced in dilapidated buildings owned by out-of-town LLCs, unevenly enforced building codes, and the extreme burden placed on existing and start-up small business owners. Without the targeted, coordinated intervention of concerned residents and business owners, vacant properties will continue to disintegrate, and our taxpayer-funded state and federal resources will continue to go elsewhere, impacting community morale, burdening all other taxpayers, and putting Barrett at risk of further decline.

BEDCo is responding to this crisis by implementing a proven approach to local economic development and community planning. We are an *Economic Development Corporation* - the specific entity type that exists nationwide to address these issues in a community-forward, collaborative manner. We currently have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to protect Barrett and reverse recent trends of property decline. We have convened local businesses, non-profit organizations, and residents and aligned with state, federal, and local government leaders to work together through BEDCo to restore vitality to the area.

Need and Impact:

As the Economic Development Corporation for Barrett Township, we will be responsible for ensuring that Barrett achieves the following goals. As a result, our community will be revitalized, beautified, and strengthened:

- Maintain, increase, and diversify tax base
- Increase revenues faster than the cost of municipal services increases
- Business retention
- Economic vitality and diversification for commercial areas
- Maximize property through highest and best use
- Create and retain jobs, increase per capita income
- Self-sufficiency in the face of state and federal budget issues
- Recognition of local products, services, and tourism
- Beneficial partnerships between local governments, businesses, and community members

Why Communities Invest in Economic Development



Who Benefits? BEDCo's work is to benefit the local economy of Barrett Township: its residents and current and prospective business owners. Our core mission is to strengthen and support the Barrett community by enhancing the local economy.

Who is BEDCo? BEDCo was officially formed in April 2025 by a group of concerned residents and business owners. Board member biographies are available on our website.

Our Solution:

BEDCo follows the successful model of economic development corporations (EDCs) found throughout the nation, including in neighboring Pennsylvania communities, including Honesdale, Hawley, the Wyoming Valley, the Lehigh Valley, and Carbondale. EDCs are the best-practices informed model to guide and implement local economic development activities and are structurally necessary entities to secure competitive federal and state grant funding for that purpose.

BEDCO's 5-year Strategic Plan is currently under development with an anticipated completion date in late February 2026. This plan will specifically outline our goals for community impact, programs designed to achieve those goals, and action steps to be taken to implement those programs and measure success. Everything we have done and will do in the future is in support of our mission: To strengthen and support the Barrett community by enhancing the local economy and economic opportunities of town residents.

What Have We Accomplished? We have already reached the following significant milestones:

Organizational Milestones: Forming a new organization is hard work. We are extremely proud of all that we have accomplished in our first year.

- **April 2025:** Charitable entity registered; Formed Board of Directors
- **April 2025 - Ongoing:** BEDCo Chair Michael Allegretti has met in person, one-on-one with over 30 concerned residents and business owners to hear their input.
- **May 2025:** Held small-format business roundtable input session
- **July 2025:** Initial "friends and family" fundraising event raised nearly \$100,000 in start-up capital
- **August 2025:** Convened a meeting of regional Economic Development Corporation leaders to provide guidance and input on our organization's goals and strategy
- **August 2025:** Secured volunteer commitments for key professional services, including fundraising and grants management (\$120,000 in value), and nonprofit strategic planning (\$25,000 in value)
- **August 2025:** Held second small-format business round table input sessions
- **September 2025:** Formed Community Advisory and Business Advisory Boards
- **October 2025:** Granted 501c3 exempt status by the IRS
- **October 2025:** Launched BEDCo's internal strategic planning process
- **October 2025:** Researched and interviewed candidates and secured initial engagement with Derck & Edson, a leading firm in community economic development and land use planning

- **November 2025:** Held large-format, in-person community information session with over 250 attendees - an astounding 5% of the township population.

Community Impact / Project Milestones: While we are deeply committed to developing our strategic action plan based on community input and professional best practices, we have jumped in to help where there are obvious problems that we could lend a hand to fix by virtue of the network we have already built and without a significant outlay of resources:

- **August 2025:** Addressed and fixed downed Verizon lines along Route 390.
- **September 2025:** Created a gateway to the Barrett Administrative & Recreation Center (BARC) with new signage and landscaping.
- **November 2025:** Currently working on railing repairs on the Route 390 Cresco bridge.

What's Next:

- **February 2026:** Hire paid staff and begin implementation of BEDCo's programmatic activities, which, based on the Strategic Plan, may include grants to local businesses, connecting Barrett residents and businesses to resources such as workforce training, attractive financing, and business technical assistance.
- **March 2026:** Complete BEDCo's 5-Year Strategic Plan, outlining goals, programs, action steps, and organizational budget
- **June 2026:** Complete Derck & Edson's community engagement visioning process and land use study for the Village of Canadensis and the BARC

Call to Action:

Help us fulfill our mission to make Barrett an even better place to live, work, and play. You have a voice in this public process, and we encourage you to join an advisory board, complete surveys, and/or participate in upcoming visioning sessions. Partner with us today to secure the economic future of Canadensis and Barrett Township.

Visit our website or contact us to volunteer, contribute financially, or send feedback.

Barrett Economic Development Corporation

P.O. Box 256, Mountainhome, PA 18342

www.BetterBarrett.org | Sign-Up, Volunteer, Send Feedback:

AskUs@betterbarrett.org