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Many programs in place to promote economic expansion

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The promotion of economic expansion and investment in a community is a challenging role for municipal officials. Regional competition for the corporate investment dollar is intense and in many cases, the final choice for a business location decision is tied to a number of factors, including quality of life, proximity to market, tax issues and the quality of the physical infrastructure and local labor force. East Providence has always been competitive in these areas and will continue to strive for excellence in terms of quality of government, fiscal responsibility, and the promotion of an environment that promotes economic expansion.

A demonstration of this level of commitment can be tied to the programs and policies that are in place to promote economic expansion. East Providence maintains a number of important programs designed to promote business development and expansion. These programs include a progressive tax stabilization program that offers generous tax benefits for significant economic development projects in our city. Qualified projects can receive up to twenty years of tax stabilization, where property taxes are phased in over the period of stabilization. The program is designed to be flexible, the larger the project, generally, the larger the tax stabilization. East Providence's tax stabilization program is considered one of the most progressive programs in the state offering significant tax benefits over the term of the stabilization period.

East Providence's designation as a State Enterprise Zone provides significant tax benefits for job expansion. Qualified businesses that participate in this program can take advantage of tax benefits that provide up to \$2,500 for each qualified employee the eligible company adds to its payroll. Other benefits are also available through this program, which is administered locally in collaboration with the State Economic Development Corp.

The city's commercial/industrial loan program can provide loans to eligible East Providence businesses seeking to locate or expand in the city. With a rate of 20% below prime, the program has been quite popular with businesses seeking either gap financing or first position loans for business expansion.

Other programs include the city's Microloan program, providing loans of up to \$10,000 for small businesses with ten or fewer employees and the city's façade improvement program, which provides matching grants for businesses in qualified areas who are completing improvements to their business facades. Through this program, the city provides up to \$2,000 in matching grants for businesses who complete eligible improvements to their building facades. This article is designed to provide an overview of the economic development programs available to businesses seeking to locate or expand in the city.

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