

“Job Generation Engines – Business Incubators and Entrepreneurship in Wisconsin”

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About the WBIA Survey

- Conducted every three years, since 1990
- 2002 Survey is fifth in the series
- Mail Questionnaire
- Explores: facilities, services, clients, management, finances, outputs, outcomes

Wisconsin Incubator Successes

- Strong Infrastructure
- Serving More Clients Than Ever Before
- Increased High Tech Role
- Continued Support for Women and Disadvantaged Entrepreneurs
- Clear Impact on State Economy

Strong Infrastructure

- 33 Incubator Facilities
- Healthy Mix of Established and New Programs
- Urban, Suburban, and Rural Contexts
- 87% Growth in Facility Size Over 13-Year Period
- Vacancy Rates Lowest Since 1993
- 78% Lease Up Rate

Serving More Clients

- Steady Growth in Client Base Since 1993
- Average Stay Has Decreased Since 1996

Increased High Tech Focus

- 55% of WI Incubators Have High Tech Clients; Up From 17% in 1996
- More Incubators With High Tech Specializations (Computer Hardware/Software, Medical and Biotech)

Continued Assistance to Women/Disadvantaged Entrepreneurs

- Over 30% of WI Incubators Focus on Low Income Businesses
- 42% Focus on Minority-Owned Businesses
- 45% Focus on Women-Owned Businesses

Evidence of Economic Impact

- 83% Increase in New Businesses Created
- 80% of Current Tenants/Affiliates are Profitable
- 80% of Graduate Firms Still in Operation
- Created 2,475 FTE Positions in 2002; Up Nearly 300% from 1990

Survey Raises Broader Issues

- Lack of Investment in Enterprise Development
- Need for More Links to Higher Ed.
- Need for Better Tracking of Graduates
- Need for Greater Focus on Client Entrepreneurs
- Limits of Self-Sufficiency Strategies
- Fragmentation of Entrepreneurship Assistance

Recommendations

- Take a Practices-Based Approach
- Fully Track Progress of Current Clients and Graduates
- Build a Network
- Think in Terms of Investment, Not Subsidy; Demand ROI