



BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER

PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT

OCTOBER 2025 - AUGUST 2026





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Performance Progress Report

Grantee: University of Puerto Rico – Mayaguez Campus

Project Title: A US Caribbean Regional Proposal for Innovation & Business Development within Puerto Rico

Project Number: ED21PHI3030013

Period covered by the report: 10/01/2025 - 08/31/2026

Reporting period end date: August 31, 2026

Report Prepared by: Dr. Moraima De Hoyos - Ruperto (PI)

Narrative

The Business & Economic Development Center (BEDC), a University Center at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez campus, as part of the Caribbean Regional UC, completed all the tasks in our scope of work: **job creation (1), job retention (2), and its investment (\$102,887.50), despite not having received the funds.** The Caribbean Regional UC proposes to provide specific activities through the BEDC at UPRM, including technical assistance, applied research, and dissemination as part of the economic development activities. Three major categories of innovation activities proposed are: 1) technical assistance to innovators and existing businesses; 2) applied research through allied centers and courses, and 3) dissemination of all activities that impact economic development in the region. Regarding direct client service, the BEDC received 82 new service solicitations during this period. We provided approximately **24.5 hours of one-on-one assistance.** A group of **28 intern students**, including 11 graduate students, provided technical assistance in their areas of specialization to businesses under the supervision of our mentor professors and business specialists. The BEDC continues as the hub of the **UPRM E-Ship Network**. As an ecosystem builder, we support all the efforts to expand the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the region. Our close partners are the Echar Pa'Lante of Banco Popular, Engine 4, West Chamber of Commerce, Gravital Agency, the Patent and Trademark Resource Center at UPRM, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), and Colmena 66 of the Puerto Rico Science, Technology and Research Trust (PRTRUST). Additionally, the incubator and accelerator Area-E (Area-Empresarial) completed its proposal, impacting more than 317 existing businesses in the five years it operated. The Post Award Grants Management Technical Assistance Program (**PAGM-TAB**) also ended, impacting more than twenty-seven (27) municipalities and organizations in areas such as general grants management and the strengthening of administrative processes. Our Seed Fund program has expanded its services by creating the **Mind Market Neuromarketing Lab**, a space dedicated to supporting companies with 3.5 years or more of operation in developing marketing strategies from a neuromarketing perspective. The program also provides participants with the opportunity to present their projects during a Demo Day, where they can compete for awards of up to \$5,000. To date, the NeuroLab has supported twenty-five (25) companies; they expect to continue expanding their reach and are also preparing for their Demo Day Competition, where they will award three prizes of \$10,000 each.

Beyond these completed tasks and assignments, we would like to highlight the following:

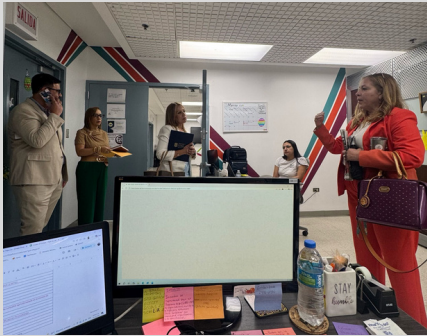
- The CNDE Improvement Team, composed of students led by Industrial Engineering Professor Lourdes Medina, developed a series of workshops and activities to promote a culture of continuous improvement among all staff (professors, undergraduate and graduate students). During this period 2 professional development trainings were provided on subjects related to the center's services and new work systems, for a total of 3 hours of training for all the personnel.
- The magazine **UPRM E-Ship Network La Revista**, developed by a group of students, is currently in its nineteenth edition. This latest volume highlights the **40-year history** and impact of the Business and Economic Development Center (BEDC), celebrating four decades of fostering entrepreneurship, innovation, and collaboration in Puerto Rico. The edition showcases the contributions of community leaders, innovators, and partners who have helped shape the entrepreneurial ecosystem throughout the years.

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Activity Summary

Activity	Task	Benefits/Outcome/Impact	During this Period
Technical Assistance and Innovator Existing Businesses 	Assistance includes workshops, seminars, one-on-one and group meetings, as well as other activities to support entrepreneurs with professionals and help them expand their networks.	BEDC-UPRM • Fourteen (14) startups and Fifteen (15) potential entrepreneurs (in the developing idea stage) received technical assistance in marketing, funding requests, programs applications, business plan, government regulations, Intellectual Property, Copyrights, pitch mentoring, among others. • In this period, one (1) startup saved investments of \$100 (in-kind). Handlez, a startup we assisted, won a prize of \$10,000 on the Entreprize Competition to Grupo Guayacán. • Four (4) existing businesses received technical assistance in the development of a compensation plan, business plan, marketing, funding requests, programs referrals, intellectual property, copyrights, among others. Assisted companies saved on investments of \$7,287.50 (in-kind). Those businesses retained two (2) employee and created one (1) new jobs. Two of those existing business, El Sión and Next Cycle Foods won prizes of \$25,000 and \$10,000, respectively, on the Entreprize Competition to Grupo Guayacán.	

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Activity	Task	Benefits/Outcome/Impact	During this Period
Applied research through allied centers and courses 	Identifying a specific challenge or problem to be addressed by the entrepreneur; determine courses, centers, programs that may assist the client and are available in the entrepreneurial network; facilitate the process to connect the entrepreneur with a resource.	BEDC-UPRM • Around eight (8) undergraduate students from the course of Project Management, Industrial Engineering Faculty (ININ 4090) worked with two clients: Burujas and Monty Solutions. We estimate an in-kind contribution of \$4,000, the creation of one (1) new job through the services provided to our clients, and the retention of two (2) employees. • Professor Glennys Rivera and Doctor David Santiago both served as a resources on the professional development program called CRECEN of the College of Business Administration, impacting ten (10) potential entrepreneurs and eight (8) volunteers and officers to potential Non Profit Organizations. • Twenty eight (28) innovation interns, at undergraduate (17) and graduate level (11), participated directly in their service to clients and the development of entrepreneurship ecosystem activities, as part of the different BEDC programs. Students worked on the idea generation process, business consulting, marketing, information systems, accounting, and other business areas such as web developing, project management, while strengthening the ecosystem. These innovation interns brought their own set of expertise from their university studies and incorporated themselves into services offered by BEDC. • Currently, six (6) professors, nineteen (19) students (graduates and sub graduates), and administrative staff compose the BEDC team to supervise and manage all the programs. • Currently, three hundred and sixty one (361) entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs are registered in the I&E Virtual Education Program.    	

Activity	Task	Benefits/Outcome/Impact	During this Period
Dissemination of all activities that impact economic development in the region 	Outreach efforts to make the BEDC programs publicly known and share the diverse opportunities available in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.	BEDC-UPRM - With the collaboration of Fuck-up Nights, Grupo Guayacán, Friends of Puerto Rico, Department of Economic Development and Commerce - Government of PR, Colmena 66, among others they offered more than eleven (11) Entrepreneurial Agenda events. Some of the events are: - Fuck-up Nights Mayagüez - Halloween 3D Printing Workshop 3D Printing Slicing Workshop - AI: A Practical Tool for PYMES - Fuck-up Nights Mayagüez, Students edition - Manage your Finances with Outcome Project - Take Control of your Finances with Coffee on a Budget - Amor 90.9 radio session - Dr. Mari Luz Zapata, Atty. Marién Méndez, and other BEDC staff members participated in various radios interviews, speaking forums , and other activities, talking about the services we provide, entrepreneurship, innovations, and motivation for future entrepreneurs.	    



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Timeline

The Business & Economic Development Center (BEDC), a University Center (UC) at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez campus (UPRM), has been part of the Caribbean Regional University Center (CRUC) for 40 years. During this period, we created one (1) job, retained two (2) jobs, and saved investments of \$102,887.50.

BEDC UPRM		October 1, 2025 to August 31, 2026
Jobs Created Goal: 25		1
Jobs Retained Goal: 50		2
Investment: Goal: 500K-1M		\$102,887.50



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Milestone

Anticipated Impact by Program Milestones -UPRM

Program Milestones	UPRM Benchmark Metrics per Year PI: Pre- incubation Businesses	UPRM Benchmark Metrics per Year GB: Growing Businesses	UPRM Metrics October 2025 through March 31,2026 PI: Pre- incubation	UPRM Metrics October 2025 through March 31,2026 GB: Growing Business
1. Technical Assistance (TA)				
1.1 Educational Program (S&A)- I&E VMP	10	5	32	32
1.2 One - on-One TA	50	5	29	4
1.3 Mentorship program	13	3	1	13
2. Applied Research Efforts				
2.1 Challenge Identification And plan Development	15	5	76	1
2.2 Resource Identification- Matching Process	15	5	7	2
2.3 Successful Completion of AR Program	7	3	6	0
3. Dissemination Efforts				
3.1 Outreach Activities	4	4	9	9
3.2 Engagement Businesses and Potential Entrepreneurs (Solicitation of TA)	75	10	33	33
3.3 Successful Completion of PI or GB Program	25	5	10	4

Client and Ecosystem Building Success Stories

Talantos



Talantos is a platform that connects young athletes (9th to 12th graders specifically) with their potential future through a comprehensive platform serving the three pillars of youth athletic development: parents, college recruiters, and performance analysis. The platform was created by Prof. Ramón Álvarez, a professor of the Kinesiology Department of the University of Puerto Rico at Mayagüez, and his students through several semester projects. The goal of the platform is to serve as a pilot for over a thousand students to find opportunities of growth, create their network, and discover scholarship opportunities.

Emergemos



Emergemos is a holistic health clinic in Puerto Rico that integrates conventional medicine with lifestyle and ancestral therapies. Dr. Maribel Campos, its founder and a client of ours since 2023, has benefited from support by the BEDC's faculty and students over the years in areas such as business improvement, task organization through, service prioritization, pricing strategies, pro bono tax rate structuring, and business planning.

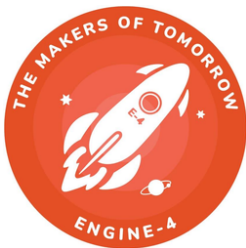
Challenges and Mitigation

After 40 years, unfortunately, we received the bad news this year that the UC Program has been eliminated. Despite this, we continue to work on the program's outstanding commitments. Having seen firsthand the significant impact the UC program—despite its limited budget—has had on university campuses and the broader community, we hope it will be reinstated soon so that we can continue the great work we have been doing.



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The BEDC continue as a hub of the *UPRM E-ship Network* serving as a role models to the other campuses and organizations in the process of strengthening and developing their I&E Ecosystem. During this period we continue supporting several allied programs such as the Engine 4, CFP of the "Resarch Grants Program", SBIR Comitte and "Phase I" of the PRSTRUST, I-Corps RUM, Guayacán, Pre18, Venturewell, Puerto Rico Manufacturing Extension, Patent and Trademark Resource Center at UPRM, among others. We still collaborate with projects related to CDBG-DR grants, such as CRECEN. We continue leveraging our impact on Puerto Rico's west side, through collaboration with programs such as West Chamber of Commerce, Mercado Colegial, among others.



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Press Engagements / Opportunities: (please see press release for details)

Examples of media coverage of the BEDC's accomplishments, its clients and partnership initiatives.



Figure 1:

<https://www.elnuevodia.com/negocios/empresas-comercios/notas/de-estudiante-y-empleado-a-fundador-de-la-fresqueria-y-otros-negocios-en-el-oeste/>