



THE INDIE IMPACT STUDY SERIES

A JOINT PROJECT OF THE AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION AND CIVIC ECONOMICS

The American Booksellers Association (ABA) and Civic Economics are pleased to offer American retail organizations the opportunity to create a localized study of the economic benefits provided by independent retailers in your community.

Nine years ago, Civic Economics worked with BookPeople and Waterloo Records in Austin to create the Livable City retail impact study, comparing the economic impact of those merchants with the impact of a proposed Borders Books & Music store proposed, with public subsidies, for the same corner. The results were striking. The independents returned three times as much to the local economy as a proportion of revenue; the Borders project died; and the independent business community in Austin earned media coverage that continued to this day.



Over the years, Civic Economics has received countless requests for similar studies in other communities large and small, and has conducted related studies in Chicago, San Francisco, Grand Rapids, Phoenix, and New Orleans. However, preparing these analyses one at a time requires extensive legwork and research time, pricing the study beyond the means of most independent business organizations. In order to bring these tools to more communities, the ABA has offered to facilitate this study series, reducing per-community costs by (1) sharing the cost of chain research and project organization among several participating communities and (2) providing supporting funds for participating communities.

The local studies will compare the economic benefits of independent storefront retailers to examples of four large chain stores: a general merchandise discount chain, a home center chain, a bookseller chain, and a warehouse club. Local sponsoring entities will be responsible for recruiting independent retail owners to complete an intrusive but confidential survey of revenues and expenditures.

At the conclusion of the study series, each community will receive a local report of findings, emphasizing the economic benefits of supporting local business. These studies have, in the past, provided the independent business organizations in study communities with substantial media coverage and opportunities to educate both consumers and policy makers about the value of independents. (Examples and bookseller comments may be found in the October 13, 2011 edition of *Bookselling This Week*.)



We are currently seeking ten American communities to participate in the study series. The requirements are simple:

1. The sponsoring entity must represent the local independent retail community and include at least one bookseller;
2. The study will include only independent storefront retailers whose lines of goods overlap the major chain stores described above;
3. The sponsoring entity will be responsible for recruiting local business owners to participate in a confidential survey of revenues and expenditures;
 - a. The number of participating businesses will be established on enrollment, but should include no fewer than ten in small markets
4. The sponsoring entity is responsible for fees of \$1800 (to be supplemented by additional funds from the ABA).

Upon contract signing and payment of study fees, Civic Economics will provide the sponsoring entity with a link to the survey instrument, including a confidentiality agreement for participating businesses. We will periodically update sponsors as to the progress of local businesses in completing the survey. Once the target number of participants has been reached, Civic Economics will compile the localized impact analysis.

At the conclusion of ten localized studies, Civic Economics will compile a national summary document placing local results in a broader context and providing a national benchmark for wider application.

Interested sponsors should contact Civic Economics to discuss participation:

Dan Houston, Civic Economics, dhouston@civiceconomics.com

We will be accepting the first ten communities to sign on, then the study series will likely be closed to further participation. Communities enrolled prior to October 21, 2011 with surveys completed by November 11 will have the opportunity to receive results before Thanksgiving weekend, providing a holiday shopping media boost for independent retailers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

To view previous Civic Economics retail studies, please visit:

<http://www.civiceconomics.com/html/library.html>

To see a bibliography of books citing these studies, please download:

http://www.civiceconomics.com/CE_in_Print.pdf