

June 2016

Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation

2016-2018 Strategic Plan



Adopted by the
Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation
Board of Directors on:

June 2, 2016

PREPARED BY



Institute for Decision Making | University of Northern Iowa

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Overview of the Planning Process

The Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) identified a need and desire to examine their organizational structure; review their mission; and develop a 1 to 3 year strategic plan for the organization and for economic development activities in Calhoun County. This resulting plan identifies priorities for strategic change and sets goals, objectives and actions that will positively impact the organization's priorities.

The Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation called on the Institute for Decision Making (IDM) at the University of Northern Iowa to assist with the development of the 2016-2018 CCEDC Strategic Plan. The planning process involved a preparation element, a stakeholder priority setting session and a plan development session with CCEDC staff members before final review, revision and adoption by the CCEDC Board of Directors.

Priorities for Strategic Change

CCEDC has identified eight areas of activity through which they will fulfill their mission. These priorities serve as the basis for the organization's strategic plan:

- Organizational Leadership and Countywide Collaboration
- Sites, Buildings and Infrastructure
- Housing
- Increase Business Capital Resources
- Business Retention and Expansion
- Marketing
- Business Attraction
- County Program Administration

Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation 2016-2018 Strategic Plan

Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation Mission

The Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation is a non-profit organization formed to undertake a unified economic development effort within the county. Assistance is provided to community organizations in their pursuit of local development efforts.

In addition, the mission of CCEDC is to enhance business retention, start-up and growth so as to increase both employment opportunities and the tax base. The organization also devotes resources to improve quality of life and to promote the county as a desirable place to live.

Organizational Leadership and Management

To effectively carry out the mission of an organization, strong leadership is required. As a countywide entity, broad support from within the service area is critical to ongoing success. CCEDC intends to rejuvenate its board and raise awareness of the organization throughout the county.

Goal 1: CCEDC is led by a board of directors and staff whose expertise and influence facilitate organizational and economic development success.

Objective 1.1: Update the CCEDC bylaws to enable the organization to operate more effectively

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Committee

Timeline: Complete by October 1, 2016

Success Indicators: Bylaws appropriately updated

Actions:

1. Review current bylaws for amendment or restatement procedures and requirements
 2. Update current bylaws
 3. Review by executive committee
 4. Review by attorney
 5. Review and adoption by full board
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Objective 1.2: Develop a CCEDC policies and procedures manual for board and staff members

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Committee and staff

Timeline: Complete by November 1, 2016

Success Indicators: Manual developed and reviewed by board and staff

Actions:

1. Review existing policies and identify additional policies needed: conflict of interest, gift, ethics, confidentiality, revolving loan...
2. Collect samples of policies, adjust to fit CCEDC
3. Identify board and staff roles
4. Identify tasks needing procedures: banking, investment, RLF application intake, communications...
5. Pull together policies and procedures into document
6. Board review and approval

Objective 1.3: Develop an orientation session for new board members led by CCEDC board chair and executive director

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Committee and staff

Timeline: Complete by January 1, 2017

Success Indicators: Orientation sessions held with all new board members

Actions:

1. Develop a board member binder that includes: history of CCEDC; bylaws; articles of incorporation; CCEDC mission, vision and strategic plan; staff, officers and board member job descriptions; policies and procedures manual; staff and board contact and term information
2. Distribute and walk through board member binder with current board members
3. Set a meeting with new board members to distribute and go through binder
4. Create an acknowledgment page for board members to sign that highlights what they've learned or received

Objective 1.4: Revitalize the CCEDC board membership based on the updated bylaws*Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Committee and staff**Timeline: Complete by January 1, 2017**Success Indicators: New board members recruited and board operating**Actions:*

1. Identify qualifications for board members (e.g. areas of expertise, geographic representation)
2. Develop a matrix of prospective board members considering their qualifications, decision-making authority and representation from certain constituencies: school, hospital, city administration, utilities, industry, county supervisors, banks
3. Recruit board members
4. Secure commitment from board members (consider a non-binding contract such as: <http://www.blueavocado.org/content/board-member-contract>)
5. Approve board members
6. Establish a committee structure to help implement the plan

Sites, Buildings and Infrastructure

A major challenge for new development and expansion projects within the county is the lack of readily available sites and buildings. The infrastructure needed to support growth, such as utilities, transportation (roads and airport) and communications is also an issue in many areas. While the organization has no ownership capabilities in these areas, CCEDC can guide and offer technical assistance to communities and organizations as they work to improve their assets.

Goal 2: Calhoun County has available sites and buildings identified for development and infrastructure that can accommodate growth in those areas.

Objective 2.1: Each Calhoun County community has identified available sites for future development including strategies for installing appropriate infrastructure*Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director, local governments and local development organizations**Timeline: Complete by July 1, 2017**Success Indicators: Sites identified in each community**Actions:*

1. Develop a set of common site preparation/size “minimums” to share with communities
2. Promote Community Comprehensive Planning/Zoning and land use
3. Meet with communities and local ED groups to clarify roles and understand timelines for readiness in order to respond as opportunities arise
4. Create maps and visuals for sites and communities

Objective 2.2: Develop a database of county assets and resources

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director

Timeline: Complete by August 1, 2016

Success Indicators: LOIS data updated, supporting information and database developed

Actions:

1. Develop a countywide site and building list
2. Review infrastructure data on LocationOne Information System (LOIS)
3. Monitor and update LOIS as needed
4. Monitor and update other internal databases (retail or downtown buildings/sites) as needed

Objective 2.3: Understand the path to improving internet speed and access throughout the county

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director and Business Development Committee

Timeline: Potential strategies identified by October 1, 2017

Success Indicators: assessment completed, goals set

Actions:

1. Contact Connect Iowa and complete a technology assessment
2. Evaluate goals of the assessment
3. Research what has been done elsewhere to improve broadband access

Objective 2.4: Work with Rockwell City to complete enhancements around the airport to enable full utilization of the runway

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director, Business Development Committee and City of Rockwell City

Timeline: March 1, 2017

Success Indicators: airport plans reviewed, goals set to improve access

Actions:

1. Review Rockwell City Municipal Airport plans and airport zoning ordinance (<http://www.iowadot.gov/aviation/airports/AirportIntermediate.aspx?FAACode=2Y4>)
2. Research current usage and identify lost usage due to inability to utilize the full runway
3. Review Long Range Transportation Plan and meet with Transportation Planner to determine what can be done to improve access

Housing

Like many rural areas in Iowa, housing development is an issue for Calhoun County and its communities. An aging housing stock, rentals in poor condition and housing that does not fit the needs of today's homebuyer are issues affecting economic development in Calhoun County by impacting the county's ability to adequately house its workforce.

Goal 3: The quantity and quality of housing has increased in Calhoun County through new development and the rehabilitation of existing housing stock.

Objective 3.1: Complete a housing needs assessment to determine the County's true housing needs

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director, Community Development Committee and Housing Task Group

Timeline: January 1, 2017

Success Indicators: Housing needs assessment completed

Actions:

1. Convene a Housing Task Force and identify Chairs (include representation from groups that may be working on housing in the county such as Community Action, Habitat for Humanity, Homeward Housing Trust fund, the local Council of Government...)
2. Work with utilities and others to fund a housing study/assessment
3. Commission a Housing Needs Assessment

Objective 3.2: Organize a Calhoun County Housing Development Group to assist communities enhance their housing

Responsibility: Housing Task Group, Community Development Committee and CCEDC Executive Director

Timeline: January 1, 2017

Success Indicators: Issues/needs identified, Housing Development Group formed

Actions:

1. Review Housing Needs Assessment for recommendations
2. Identify whether there are gaps between what is already being done by existing entities and what is recommended by the housing study/assessment
3. Collect and offer case studies as to what's working elsewhere to address similar issues
4. If needed, lead the formation of a new entity, the Calhoun County Housing Development Group
5. Recruit Board Members
6. Offer technical assistance as needed

Business Financing

One of the keys to the future success of Calhoun County businesses and start-ups is having appropriate capital and financing available for them as they grow. CCEDC has funded seven loans over the past five years from its revolving loan fund. The loan fund is in need of a capital infusion to allow the organization to continue taking loan applications. Fortunately, there are other loan funds available to businesses within the county that can serve as additional sources of capital for businesses, however, it is clear from the number of inquiries that additional capital in the CCEDC revolving loan fund is needed.

Goal 4: Calhoun County businesses have greater awareness and access to financing options to start and grow their businesses.

Objective 4.1: Increase the capital in the CCEDC revolving loan fund

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director, Revolving Loan Fund Loan Review Committee, Business Retention Committee and Business Development Committee

Timeline: April 1, 2017

Success Indicators: \$100,000 increase in capital, # of new loans funded; amount of capital available

Actions:

1. Determine needs and potential demand
2. Research options for funding (<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs#Business>) that fit local needs
3. Find local support and secure required match for potential grant applications
4. Submit applications

Objective 4.2: Develop, maintain and promote an inventory of available financing resources for start-ups and businesses

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director, Business Retention Committee and Business Development Committee

Timeline: September 1, 2016

Success Indicators: Inventory developed and posted on CCEDC website, update as needed

Actions:

1. Research resources
2. Compile information for each resource (eligibility parameters, loan amounts, match or down payment requirements, contact information...)
3. Create document/webpage for distribution/posting

Business Retention and Expansion

Research has shown that nearly 80% of new job growth and investment within a community comes from businesses that are already located there. This makes business retention and expansion efforts an integral part of any economic development strategy.

Goal 5: Develop and strengthen relationships with existing businesses in Calhoun County and assist with retention and expansion projects

Objective 5.1: Conduct a formal visit with the 20 largest employers in Calhoun County to understand the business climate in the county

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director, Business Retention Committee and Business Development Committee

Timeline: September 1, 2016

Success Indicators: Visits completed and survey data entered into Synchronist and/or internal database

Actions:

1. Develop list of large employers and contact information
2. Obtain Synchronist surveys, train board members
3. Schedule regular business visits with large employers (utilize Synchronist survey)
4. Input survey data into Synchronist system and/or internal database
5. Maintain database(s)

Objective 5.2: Identify business needs and expansion opportunities and take appropriate actions to assist those businesses

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director, Business Retention Committee and Business Development Committee

Timeline: September 1, 2016

Success Indicators: Synchronist data analyzed and action taken to address retention issues and expansion opportunities, # of businesses assisted, # of workshops/trainings held, # of attendees

Actions:

1. Review Synchronist survey results for business specific issues/opportunities and for common business needs that could be topics for workshops or trainings
2. Take appropriate business-specific actions to address issues/opportunities
3. Host workshops and trainings
4. Develop a business resource list
5. Promote the organization as a source and liaison for businesses and business resources

Objective 5.3: Serve as a resource for entrepreneurs and start-up businesses

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director, Business Retention Committee and Business Development Committee

Timeline: Ongoing

Success Indicators: # of clients served, # business start-ups, # of workshops/trainings/networking events held, # of attendees

Actions:

1. Provide technical assistance as appropriate (business plan development, financials, site location...)
2. Make referrals as possible to local technical assistance partners/providers
3. Host networking events, workshops or trainings
4. Develop a small business resource list

Business Attraction

High quality job creation is important to the county in terms of developing a strong tax base and supporting the quality of place demanded by today's families and younger generations. Developing higher quality jobs can reduce trailing spouse issues, housing affordability issues and small business sustainability.

Goal 6: Understand the County's capacity for new business development and pursue new businesses that "fit"**Objective 6.1: Calhoun County and each community is prepared respond quickly to Requests for Proposals (RFP)/Requests for Information (RFI) from prospective businesses or site selectors**

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director, local governments and local development organizations

Timeline: Complete by October 1, 2016

Success Indicators: Basic information compiled for rapid response, # of RFI/RFP responses submitted

Actions:

1. Obtain templates or a guide to responding to RFP/RFIs to determine the community information needed
2. Share with cities and obtain necessary information
3. Work with cities to develop consistent and pre-determined policies and incentives for potential development projects
4. Set parameters and a timeline for information from cities to be included in responses to inquiries

Objective 6.2: Evaluate the county’s workforce, existing businesses and other assets to determine gaps and opportunities to attract new businesses to the county

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director and Business Development Committee

Timeline: July 1, 2018

Success Indicators: Gaps identified and targeted industries considered

Actions:

1. Understand community infrastructure capacity
2. Review existing industry input for complementary business needs
3. Review laborshed for workforce capacity
4. Determine whether a targeted industry study is appropriate

Communications and Marketing

Once the “product” has been prepared, and the workforce and infrastructure capacity research has been conducted, CCEDC will focus on marketing the County internally to inform and engage stakeholders and externally to attract people and businesses. CCEDC administers tourism for the county and is already involved in marketing the county’s recreational and cultural assets.

Goal 7: The visibility of Calhoun County and CCEDC has increased among current and perspective businesses, workforce and visitors.

Objective 7.1: Undertake strategies to raise the countywide (internal) awareness of the organization

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director and Board of Directors

Timeline: Launch by July 1, 2016

Success Indicators: # of attendees at outreach events; newsletter reach; social media stats

Actions:

1. Identify internal audiences (cities, businesses, organizations...) for outreach
2. Provide city leadership with quarterly updates
3. Bring community organizations together for updates and project or activity alignment
4. Present/report to city councils of larger communities at least biannually
5. Create and distribute a quarterly newsletter showcasing CCEDC’s areas of activity and resources
6. Utilize social media to promote CCEDC’s activities

Objective 7.2: Continue participation in Mid Iowa Growth Partnership

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director and Board of Directors

Timeline: Annually

Success Indicators: Membership maintained, dollars leveraged, # trade shows, # of CVN projects in region

Actions:

1. Budget for/pay annual dues
2. Serve on board and/or committees
3. Assist with goal implementation
4. Attend trade shows, CVN events and other marketing events as possible
5. Participate in regional initiatives

Objective 7.3: Coordinate Calhoun County Tourism efforts

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director, Tourism Committee

Timeline: Ongoing

Success Indicators: Guide completed and distributed, Retail Sales in tourism-related business groups, # of web reviews, # of visitors to tourism sites

Actions:

1. Identify external audiences
2. Update and distribute Calhoun County Visitors Guide
3. Maintain membership with Western Iowa Tourism
4. Participate in Western Iowa Tourism meetings and initiatives as applicable
5. Maintain and update Calhoun County Tourism's social media sites

Objective 7.4: Develop and maintain webpages for CCEDC's programs

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director

Timeline: January 1, 2017 and ongoing

Success Indicators: Webpages developed

Actions:

1. Collect content and design Tourism page (tourism assets, community links...)
2. Collect content and design Economic Development page (resources, sites, buildings, contact info, infrastructure assets...)
3. Collect content and design Historic Preservation page (CLG commission members, CLG plan, link to state sites...)
4. Collect content and design Community Foundation page (board members, mission, application timelines and guidelines, brochure, giving information...)

County Program Administration

CCEDC adds value to the county and its communities by providing facilitation and administrative services for important countywide programs. The Calhoun County Community Foundation and the Calhoun County Historic Preservation Commission (Certified Local Government) are managed by CCEDC.

Goal 8: CCEDC provides services that allow the Calhoun County Community Foundation and the Calhoun County Historic Preservation Commission to thrive and succeed as impactful county initiatives.

Objective 8.1: Manage the Calhoun County Community Foundation

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director and Foundation Board

Timeline: Ongoing

Success Indicators: # and \$ of grants awarded, # of projects impacted, funds leveraged by grants, Community Foundation fund growth

Actions:

1. Convene Community Foundation board meetings (notice, agenda, minutes...)
2. Administer day to day operations
3. Manage grant records
4. Manage board terms, policy materials and records
5. Organize annual grant process:
 - a. Update applications
 - b. Develop/distribute advertising
 - c. Address applicant questions
 - d. Accept applications
 - e. Facilitate grant award decisions and notify applicants
 - f. Organize and host annual grant awards ceremony
 - g. Monitor grant reporting
6. Attend training sessions

Objective 8.2: Manage the Calhoun County Historic Preservation Commission

Responsibility: CCEDC Executive Director and Foundation Board

Timeline: Ongoing

Success Indicators: CLG status maintained, # of projects

Actions:

1. Convene Historic Preservation Commission meetings (notice, agenda, minutes...)
2. Administer day to day operations
3. Ensure compliance with terms of the CLG Agreement
4. Manage commissioner terms, policy materials and records
5. Keep the Commissioners informed of training and/or grant opportunities