



2021-2023 Strategic Plan

Focus Area: Business Retention & Expansion

1. Proactively engage existing businesses and potential entrepreneurs to help them grow, expand, and/or begin.
 - a. Facilitate problem resolution for companies and assist by identifying resources, both internal and external to the county.
 - i. Visit at least 50 unique Hancock County businesses annually and maintain strategic, one-on-one communication to build and preserve relationships.
 - ii. Identify issues of importance to 5 existing businesses, obstacles to their success, and opportunities for assistance.
 - iii. Identify issues of importance to 5 entrepreneurs, obstacles to their success, and opportunities for assistance.
 - b. Help businesses seize growth opportunities.
 - i. Provide business owners and managers access to webinars, seminars, and other business training through partners and other resources.
 - ii. Support local business organizations (such as Chambers) to help strengthen the business culture in each community.
2. Attract new businesses to Hancock County.
 - a. Provide information and resources to potential new businesses that will help them why they should choose Hancock County as their business location.
 - i. Submit and update available sites and buildings within Location One Information Systems (LOIS).
 - ii. Respond to requests for information (RFIs) from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.
 - iii. Update the HCED website to include data and information relevant to businesses looking to open or expand into Hancock County.

- b. Identify and pursue opportunities to increase broadband connectivity county-wide.
 - i. Create a Technology Task Force to help understand the needs of the individual communities, businesses, and other organizations within the county.
 - ii. Assess the current state of internet access for the county.
 - iii. Facilitate relationships between governmental agencies, corporations, businesses, and other community organizations to help accomplish county-wide broadband goals.

Focus Area: Workforce Development

- 1. To develop a technically educated and skilled workforce prepared for employment.
 - a. Support the efforts of the Hancock County CEO.
 - i. Make an annual contribution to Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship to cover the Hancock County CEO licensing fees.
 - ii. Connect 80% of CEO graduates with local businesses and resources through an engagement program that aligns with the Hancock County CEO Alumni Relations Committee.
 - iii. Invest 200 volunteer hours per year by the members of the Hancock County Economic Development Board by hosting class visits, serving as a guest speaker, participating in the mentoring program, and/or other activities that directly affect the students' success in the program.
 - b. Provide strategic, integrated career awareness education to result in improved understanding of career opportunities and pathways in Hancock County.
 - i. Work with workforce partners and both local and regional businesses to identify and publish career pathways.
 - ii. Foster relationships between business and education through dialogue with each school district and community college.
 - iii. Support school career fairs and other events by providing volunteers and financial assistance to impact 1,500 (is this a realistic number) students, annually.
 - iv. Create and support complementary events and programs for students in elementary school through high school.
 - v. Promote job shadowing, internships, and volunteer opportunities within local businesses.

- c. Connect adult job seekers with job and career opportunities and resources which will allow and encourage them to enrich their skill set to be qualified for these positions.
 - i. Collaborate with workforce partners to address skill shortages and worker retention.
 - ii. Collaborate with workforce partners to connect job seekers with job openings.

Focus Area: Marketing, Recruitment, & Tourism

- 1. To communicate the unique benefits of living and working in Hancock County to individuals, families, and businesses with Hancock County connections.
 - a. Create and implement an annual comprehensive marketing and communications plan to consistently communicate the Hancock County brand to both internal and external stakeholders.
 - i. Define target audience(s) including retired Baby Boomers and Young Professionals with families and focus messaging on these distinct groups.
 - ii. Develop marketing personas (fictional, generalized representations of your ideal targets) to help customize messaging.
 - iii. Determine the appropriate marketing mix and budget including website, social media, video, print advertising, outdoor advertising, direct mail/email, etc.
 - iv. Develop benchmarks to measure and track the success of the plan.
 - b. Develop and implement an annual communications strategy aimed at local elected officials and HCED investors, resulting in at least quarterly interactions between HCED and representatives from elected bodies, and HCED and major investors.
 - i. Create a strategic plan reporting document (dashboard) to share quarterly with elected officials and investors.
 - ii. Attend at least one meeting for each elected body annually to report on activities.
 - iii. Provide important information needed by elected officials to make decisions that will positively affect economic development and business growth.
- 2. Identify several emerging tourism types for Hancock County
 - a. Define categories of tourism.
 - i. Develop an advertising tool that lists all types of tourism found in Hancock county under the defined categories.
 - ii. Showcase tourism activities for sportsmen and several outdoor destinations on HCED website.

- iii. Work on permanent presence of tourism at the county level through a tourism director
- b. Support Lake Copper Loop initiative.
 - i. Contact Chi Eastmen and understand where assistance is needed on the Illinois side of the loop.
- c. Develop destinations for recreation tourism.
 - i. Learn what natural resources or facilities could be utilized in creating recreation tourism.
- d. Support the development of specialty festivals in the winter
 - i. Work on winter light parade or display to complement Keokuk City of Christmas and Fort Madison Parade of Lights.