



2017-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION

Hancock County, Illinois, will be a place of prosperity, where individuals, families and businesses can develop and thrive as a result of a shared vision, strong local leadership, and community-led efforts.

MISSION

The mission of Hancock County Economic Development is to enhance the economic vitality of Hancock County, Illinois.

POSITIONING STATEMENT

Hancock County, Illinois, located on the Mississippi River in the heart of the rural Midwest, is distinguished by strong local leadership and community-led efforts so all may develop and thrive in our caring, vibrant communities.

FOCUS AREAS

Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction
Workforce Development
Marketing and Recruitment

GOALS & STRATEGIES

BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION & ATTRACTION

Goal: To develop and strengthen existing business, industry and entrepreneur partnerships.

Strategy 1: Build relationships and consistent stewardship with major, stage two (companies with 10-100 employees, or \$1-50 million in revenue) and target industries and entrepreneurs through retention and expansion visits; and track visits through Synchronist or other means.

Activities:

1. Visit 50 unique Hancock County businesses annually (one per week) to maintain strategic, one-on-one communication, identify opportunities and threats, provide assistance and build and maintain relationships.
2. Help facilitate 5 connections per year between stage two businesses and other firms, resources or units of government.
3. Identify five businesses in healthcare, agricultural and tourism and provide additional assistance and critical information needed to survive and thrive.

4. Identify five entrepreneurs and provide additional assistance and critical information needed to take ideas from concept to development.

Strategy 2: Deploy a Hancock County Business SWAT Team comprised of volunteer subject matter experts in finance, legal, succession planning, marketing, etc., to assist between 4-5 businesses and entrepreneurs annually.

Activities:

1. Identify and recruit SWAT Team - volunteer subject matter experts and resources.
2. Identify and recruit businesses and entrepreneurs during the annual BRE (Business Retention and Expansion) visit that could benefit from SWAT Team assistance.
3. Connect businesses and entrepreneurs with the people and organizations that can help take them to the next level — business associations, universities, roundtable groups, service providers and more.

Goal: To attract new businesses to Hancock County.

Strategy 1: Provide information and resources to potential new businesses that will help these businesses make location decisions.

Activities:

1. Submit and update available sites and buildings within Location One Information Systems (LOIS).
2. Respond to requests for information (RFIs) from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.
3. Provide easily accessible and updated site selection data on the Hancock County Economic Development website.

Strategy 2: Build relationships with vendors and suppliers of current Hancock County businesses through strategic communication that shares the benefits of locating and doing business in Hancock County.

Activities:

1. Identify potential vendors and suppliers based on annual BRE visits with existing businesses.
2. Communicate benefits of doing business in Hancock County to vendors and suppliers.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Goal: To develop a technically educated and skilled workforce prepared for employment.

Strategy 1: Support the efforts of the Hancock County CEO through the investment of 200 volunteer hours by the members of the Hancock County Economic Development board and annual financial support.

Activities:

1. Make an annual contribution to Hancock County CEO to pay for the program's licensing fees.

2. Support CEO alumni through an engagement program that connects the graduates with local businesses and resources.
3. Connect 80% of 2016-2017 CEO graduates with local businesses and resources.

Strategy 2: Provide strategic, integrated career awareness education to at least 1,500 students annually, resulting in improved understanding of career opportunities and pathways in Hancock County.

Activities:

1. Work with workforce partners and regional businesses to identify and publish career pathways.
2. Foster relationships between business and education through dialogue with each school district at a minimum of once per year.
3. Support current school career fairs by making connections with businesses and by providing volunteers and financial assistance.
4. Create complementary events and programs for students in middle school through high school seniors.
5. Promote job shadowing, internships and volunteer opportunities within local businesses.

Strategy 3: Develop a Hancock County Workforce Readiness Certificate Program in partnership with schools and businesses by May 2019, resulting in at least 25 certificates awarded by May 2020.

Activities:

1. Work with workforce partners, regional businesses and resources in neighboring counties to identify a workforce readiness certificate program that will meet the needs of local students/recent graduates and employers.
2. Identify and recruit businesses to participate in the certificate program.
3. Identify and recruit students/recent graduates to participate in the certificate program.
4. Track employment of certificate bearers and survey participating businesses.

MARKETING AND RECRUITMENT

Goal: To communicate the unique benefits of living and working in Hancock County to individuals, families and businesses with Hancock County connections.

Strategy 1: Develop a distinct and memorable Hancock County brand that conveys the values of Hancock County and its desirable attributes.

Activities:

1. Create and convene a Hancock County marketing committee comprised of business and organizational leaders by September 2017.
2. Research Hancock County (Discovery) and its competitors (Market Research).
3. Identify positioning and messaging strategies (Brand Strategy).
4. Approve key deliverables (Creative Concepts and Brand Guidelines).

Strategy 2: Create and implement an annual comprehensive marketing and communications plan to consistently communicate the Hancock County brand to both internal and external stakeholders.

Activities:

1. Define target audience(s) including retired Baby Boomers and Young Professionals with families and focus messaging on these distinct groups.
2. Develop marketing personas (fictional, generalized representations of your ideal targets) to help customize messaging.
3. Determine the appropriate marketing mix and budget including website, social media, video, print advertising, outdoor advertising, direct mail/email, etc.
4. Develop benchmarks to measure and track the success of the plan.

Strategy 3: 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.

Activities:

1. Create a strategic plan reporting document to share quarterly with elected officials and investors.
2. Attend at least one meeting for each elected body annually to report on activities.
3. Provide important information needed by elected officials to make decisions that will positively affect economic development and business growth.