



Midwest Partnership Economic Development
Strategic Plan

2020-2023

Adopted by the MWP Board of Directors on:

_____, 2019

PREPARED BY:



Institute for Decision Making | University of Northern Iowa

Background

Midwest Partnership Economic Development serves Adair and Guthrie Counties in west central Iowa. Midwest Partnership works closely with its communities and partners to create jobs and grow the tax base in the two-county region. Recent structural changes to the organization led the Midwest Partnership Board to determine that the time was right to revisit strategic planning and develop a well-articulated, formalized plan to guide the work of the organization over the next three to five years.

Working with the Institute for Decision Making at the University of Northern Iowa, Midwest Partnership engaged its board members, as well as community stakeholders, to understand their priorities for economic development within the region and to develop a new Midwest Partnership Economic Development strategic plan. The planning process involved board and stakeholder input collected via a pre-planning questionnaire, in-person interviews and planning sessions with the board and/or staff to consider the input, determine and refine priorities, goals, objectives and action plans to be pursued by the organization over the coming years.

Board of Directors and Staff

Douglas Burns	Everett Grasty	Kristen Renslow	Mike Underwood
Marty Doud	Stacie Hull	Jerry Sullivan	Matt Wedemeyer
Charlie Dunn	Cheryl Marks	Scott Tunderum	Julie Zajicek
Sarah Gomez, Executive Director			

Vision Statement

Midwest Partnership is the source of innovative thought and expertise with respect to economic growth and prosperity throughout the region; and is providing leadership for project collaboration among communities, elected officials and stakeholders.

Mission Statement

Midwest Partnership is the region's leading facilitator for the retention, expansion and attraction of business to create jobs and improve quality of life in Adair and Guthrie counties.

Core Values

Service

We exist to serve our region by providing connections to resources and assistance to our businesses and communities quickly and efficiently.

Dedication

As residents, we are dedicated to the economic development of our region and are invested in the success of the work we do every day.

Collaboration

We are the leaders for the creation and discovery of new and innovative resources and partnership opportunities essential to our stakeholders.

Entrepreneurship

Whether working with small, large, start-up, new or established businesses, we view opportunities with a spirit of entrepreneurship, continually evaluating and implementing new ideas to create success.

Stewardship

We value the support and financial contributions of our stakeholders by ensuring fiscal responsibility and financial stability for long term sustainability of the organization.

Priorities for Strategic Change

Stakeholder input was gathered from an online questionnaire and in-person interviews and shared with the Midwest Partnership Board. After discussing the input and considering the current work of the organization, the MWP Board identified the following as organizational priorities for the coming years:

- A. Business Retention and Expansion
- B. Business Attraction
- C. Local Business Development
- D. Workforce Development/Talent Attraction
- E. Housing
- F. Organizational Sustainability

Managing Implementation

To ensure that the goals, objectives and actions within this plan are carried out, committees have been assigned as responsible for overseeing implementation of various objectives and actions. It is recommended that committees appoint a chair whose role is to oversee the work of the committee in order to avoid the executive director being assigned all action steps by default. The following committees are critical to the success of this plan:

MWP Board and Executive Committee: Responsible for overseeing plan implementation, and monitoring and evaluating the results of each action as well as organizational budgeting, financing/fundraising and staffing.

Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Committee: Assists with and ensures a robust BR&E program that serves existing businesses.

Business Attraction Committee: Charged with business recruitment assistance and product development and marketing.

Entrepreneurship Committee: Coordinates activities and initiatives that support entrepreneurs and start-ups.

Workforce Committee: Coordinates and promotes talent attraction efforts and organizes workforce development activities in collaboration with community partners.

Public Events Committee: Responsible for marketing and events that increase knowledge about MWP; and promote the development of future community leaders.

Strategic Goals, Objectives and Actions

Priority A: Business Retention and Expansion

Goal A1: Midwest Partnership develops and maintains strong relationships with the region's key employers.

Objective A1.1: Through the Business Connection Program, Midwest Partnership's BR&E efforts assist key employers within the two-county area with retention issues and expansion plans.

Lead Responsibility: Executive Director

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Develop list of targeted businesses (in addition to Synchronist list)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MWP Staff • BR&E Committee 	January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List created and refined
b. Maintain technical assistance (TA) resource list (resource providers, available space, local government contacts, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director 	January 2020 and then as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List developed and maintained
c. Conduct BR&E visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director • BR&E Committee 	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of visits
d. Deliver TA as appropriate (direct or referral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of TA projects • # of expansions
e. Consider holding MWP board meetings at key employer locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MWP Board Chair 	Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of offsite meetings
f. Maintain Synchronist database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MWP Staff 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer information up-to-date

Priority B: Business Attraction

Goal B1: The Midwest Partnership is attracting new business to available sites and buildings within communities that are ready for growth.

Objective B1.1: Actively participate in business attraction marketing through its affiliation with the Greater Des Moines Partnership.

Lead Responsibility: Executive Director

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Develop and maintain community profiles and statistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director • GD Partnership 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Profiles developed/shared
b. Maintain site/building information on LOIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MWP Staff • GD Partnership 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOIS up-to-date
c. Respond to RFPs/RFIs as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director 	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of responses
d. Organize and train a "prospect/site visit team"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Attraction Committee • Executive Director 	Summer 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mock site visit completed

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
e. Maintain communication with real estate agents, brokers, property owners and site selectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director • Business Attraction Committee 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of meetings • # of referrals
f. Serve as a liaison for prospects (with financial incentive programs, governments and/or resource providers), close deals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director 	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of prospects assisted • # of businesses attracted • # of jobs created • \$ of private investment

Objective B1.2: Work with local development organizations, site and building owners and developers to increase the number of quality sites and buildings in the counties that meet the needs of targeted industry sectors and other businesses interested in the region.

Lead Responsibility: Executive Director and Business Attraction Committee Chair

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Identify and maintain list of potential development properties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Attraction Committee 	Spring 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Properties identified/mapped
b. Explore option process for potential sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Attraction Committee 	Spring 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of options acquired
c. Engage in relationship-developing activities with local property owners, real estate agents and brokers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Attraction Committee 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of 1 - 1 meetings
d. Explore feasibility of 20,000 SF expandable spec. building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Attraction Committee 	Fall 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision on spec building made

Objective B1.3: Assist the communities and the counties with developing formal incentive criteria and programs to assist with business attraction and business retention and expansion.

Lead Responsibility: Executive Director

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Share possible local incentive programs with cities and county	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director 	January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of communities offering incentives • # of businesses accessing incentives
b. Maintain an inventory of available community and regional incentives and financial assistance (e.g. Urban Renewal Area locations, utility discounts/fee waivers, Revolving Loan Funds, abatements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentive inventory developed

Objective B1.4: Encourage and assist the region's communities with developing business (and workforce) attraction assets.

Lead Responsibility: Executive Director

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Meet with community leaders regularly to share information and best practices in community development as an attraction tool, and how MWP can offer assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director 	Biannually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of communities represented # of best practices implemented by communities
b. Serve as a liaison for communities with questions about funding programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director 	As requested	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of inquiries # of projects funded
c. Share business feedback from BR&E visits with communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director 	Annually or ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of communities acting on feedback
d. Include articles on the importance of quality of place for business and workforce attraction in newsletters and social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director 	Biannually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of articles # of likes/shares
e. <i>Help community leaders identify priorities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none">

Priority C: Local Business Development

Goal C1: Entrepreneurs, start-ups and existing small businesses are accessing services and activities through Midwest Partnership to grow and strengthen within the region.

Objective C1.1: Connect entrepreneurs, start-up and existing small business owners with useful information and a network of support.

Lead Responsibility: Executive Director and Entrepreneurship Committee Chair

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Continue to host EntreBash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MWP Staff Entrepreneurship Committee 	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of attendees # of TA follow up referrals
b. Develop a B2B mentoring program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurship Committee 	Spring 2020 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of mentors/mentees # of new business partnerships
c. Recruit potential new businesses or entrepreneurs through more "Pitch a Project" type competitions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurship Committee 	January 2021 and annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of participants # of new businesses
d. Develop/maintain resource list for entrepreneurs, start-ups and small businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of referrals/inquiries

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
e. Develop/manage a new funding source to support these “riskier” businesses in development and growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurship Committee 	Summer 2021 and ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$ of capital in fund • # of applications /loans

Objective C1.2: Hold a Small Business Blitz annually in at least one community within the region with support from local development organizations and Chambers.

Lead Responsibility: BR&E Committee

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Develop business list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MWP Staff • BR&E Committee 	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List developed and finalized
b. Organize for Blitz (volunteers, maps, surveys, pre-survey correspondence/promotion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MWP Staff 	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blitz work plan completed
c. Maintain technical assistance (TA) resource list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List developed and maintained
d. Conduct Blitz visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BR&E Committee 	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of businesses visited
e. Deliver TA as appropriate (direct or referral)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Director 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of businesses given follow up assistance • # of businesses expansions

Objective C1.3: Continue to offer business succession planning programming.

Lead Responsibility: _____

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Host programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of participants • # of transitions

Priority D: Workforce Development/Talent Attraction

Goal D: Midwest Partnership is working to ensure an adequate workforce for the region’s businesses, now and in the future.

Objective D1.1: Continue activities and programs that assist student, parents and educators in the region understand the local employment and career opportunities in the region.

Lead Responsibility: Workforce Committee

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Continue to host Teaching for the Workforce Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Committee 	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of participants

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
b. Continue to participate/promote local career fairs, internship opportunities, job shadows, student project opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of events or opportunities # of participants # of students hired by local businesses
c. Organize student/teacher/parent tours with employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Committee 	Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of attendees
d. Convene school leadership and key employers in a roundtable discussion about challenges and needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of resulting programs/collaborations # of participating entities

Objective D1.2: Work with employers and communities to implement strategies to attract new talent to the region.

Lead Responsibility: Workforce Committee

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Share best practices for people attraction incentive packages with communities and employers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of communities with packages
b. Work with alumni groups to promote communities and opportunities at alumni events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workforce Committee 	As possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of alumni engaged # of returning residents
c. Formalize an employee/prospective employee welcome program with employers and communities, with trailing spouse services (e.g. Community Concierge)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director Workforce Committee 	Fall 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of new residents # of partnering businesses

Priority E: Housing

Goal E: Midwest Partnership has equipped the region's communities with information and ideas to support adequate housing for current and future residents.

Objective E1.1: Assist the communities in the region with understanding their housing needs, identifying best practices and creating opportunities for housing development in their communities.

Lead Responsibility: Executive Director

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Share best practices for incenting housing development with communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive Director 	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> # of communities with incentives

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
b. Establish housing committees in each willing community – share housing study analysis with them as an action plan	• Executive Director	January 2021	• # of Committee Established
c. Share housing development programs and resources with community leaders and housing committees	• Executive Director	As released	• # of program utilized • # of resources accessed
d. Continue to organize field trips to see and learn about successful housing development in other communities	• Executive Director • MWP Staff	As requested	• # of field trips
e. Invite housing developers to tour the region and discuss opportunities	• Executive Director	Ongoing	• # of developers engaged • # of units developed as a result
f. Continue to promote Housing 360 resources, tours and events	• Executive Director	Ongoing	• # of promotions

Priority F: Organizational Sustainability

Goal F: Midwest Partnership is a strong organization in human and financial capital, known for its work in economic development and community guidance

Objective F1.1: Ensure that the Midwest Partnership Board is fully engaged, knowledgeable about economic development, and reflects the diverse communities it represents.

Lead Responsibility: MWP Board Chair and Executive Director

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Develop a realistic board makeup matrix that reflects the needed skills and expertise and identifies diversity goals in terms of gender, age, race, economic status	• MWP Executive Committee	January 2020	• Matrix developed
b. Recruit board members as terms expire to fit the matrix	• MWP Executive Committee	As needed	• Matrix achieved
c. Offer periodic board trainings by inviting service providers or other economic development or industry professionals to speak at board meetings	• MWP Board Chair • Executive Director	Biannually	• # of trainings/ guests
d. Encourage board member attendance at economic development related conferences	• MWP Board Chair	As possible	• # participating
e. Offer board members leadership development opportunities	• MWP Board Chair	As possible	• # participating

Objective F1.2: Secure at least \$_____ annually so that Midwest Partnership is financially stable for the long term, with strong public and private support.

Lead Responsibility: MWP Executive Committee

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Develop a clear budgeting process that identifies ideal staff size and the dollars needed to support it	• MWP Executive Committee	January 2020	• Budget developed
b. Continue to host fundraising events (e.g. golf tournament, annual meeting)	• Public Events Committee	Annually	• Fundraising goals met • # of attendees
c. Identify a sustainable funding structure (public/private support needs)	• MWP Executive Committee	January 2020	• Feasible structure identified
d. Develop a fundraising plan given needs and structure (fundraising campaign/fundraising strategy)	• MWP Board	January 2020	• Plan completed/implemented

Objective F1.3: Develop and implement a public relations and marketing strategy to ensure that stakeholders understand the services and assistance available to them through the Partnership.

Lead Responsibility: Executive Director

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Continue public relations/marketing through newsletter, social media, email blasts and website	• Executive Director	Ongoing	• # of clicks/likes/visits, etc.
b. Help board members become messengers/advocates for the organization and its work (develop elevator speech, enlist as hosts or partners)	• MWP Executive Committee • Executive Director	Summer 2021	• # of board members engaged
c.	•		•

Objective F1.4: Foster the development of future community leaders in the region by hosting and supporting leadership training.

Lead Responsibility: Public Events Committee

Action:	Responsibility:	Timeline:	Success Indicators:
a. Host a leadership academy or training	• Public Events Committee	Annually	• # of participants • # of communities participating
b. Support a Young Professionals group	• Public Events Committee • Executive Director	Ongoing	• # of members