communities of excellence 2026

Jumpstart Your Journey

Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup> and Friday, April 22<sup>nd</sup> Elms Hotel and Spa, Excelsior Springs, Missouri

## DAY ONE – THURSDAY APRIL 21<sup>st</sup>

8:00 am	Registration and Breakfast			
8:30 – 8:35 am	Welcome and Opening Remarks			
	Stephanie Norling, Executive Director/Mentor, San Diego, CA			
8:35 – 9:30 am	Crossroads of America			
	Where We've Been and Where We're Headed			
	Lowell Kruse, Chair and Co-Founder/Mentor, St Joseph, MO			
9:30 – 10:00 am	Are We There Yet?			
	Introduction to the Communities of Excellence Dashboard and How to Use It			
	Kim Halfhill, Faculty/Mentor, Excelsior Springs, MO			
10:00 – 10:20 am	Been Driving All Day - Need a Brake			
	National Learning Collaborative Participants	General Participants		
10:20 – 10:50 am	Going the Extra Mile to (Re)Engage your Volunteers and Partners	Starting your Journey to Community Performance Excellence		
	Kim Halfhill, Faculty/Mentor, Excelsior Springs, MO	The Why and How of Forming a Community Excellence Group		
10:55 – 12:15 pm	Looking in the Rearview Mirror – What We've Learned So Far	Interactive Presentation and Table Activities		
	Leadership	Christel Goll <mark>nick, Faculty/Men</mark> tor, <i>Trimble, MO</i>		
	• Strategy	Stephanie Norling, Executive Director/Mentor, San Diego, CA		
	Communication	and the second sec		
	Promising Practice Presentations and Table Activities	· Para		
12:15 – 1:15 pm	Lunch and Refueling Time			
1:15 - 2:15 pm	No Road is Long with Good Company - The Thrive Excelsior Journey			
	Panel Presentation			
	Thrive Excelsior Steering Committee and Task Force Members, Excelsion Springs, MO			
2:15 – 2:30pm	Been Driving All Day - Need a Brake			

## DAY ONE CONTINUED

	National Learning Collaborative Participants		General Participants
2:30 – 3:45 pm	<ul> <li>Road Trip Conversations</li> <li>Funding your Community Excellence Journey</li> <li>Succession Planning</li> <li>Using Data</li> <li>Presentations and Table Activity</li> </ul>	Mapping your Journey – Writing your Communities of Excellence Application Brian Lassiter, Faculty/Board/Mentor, Minneapolis, MN Brenda Grant, Faculty, Southside, WV	Introduction to the Baldrige-based Communities of Excellence Framework Interactive Presentation and Table Activities Manuel Castañeda, Faculty/Mentor, Rio Rancho, NM Gary Floss, Faculty, New Brighton, MN
3:50 – 4:00 pm	Wrap Up of Day One Harry Hertz, Faculty, Boyds, MD		
4:30 – 6:00 pm	Let's Have a Wheel Nice Time! Reception and Networking Generously hosted by the City of Excelsior Springs		

## DAY TWO – FRIDAY APRIL 22<sup>nd</sup>

8:00 – 8:30 am	Welcome, Reflections from Day One, and Breakfast		
	Sandra Potthoff, Faculty/Board/Mentor, Nisswa, MN		
8:35 – 9:30 am	Keynote		
	Keynote Presentation		
	Presenter to be Confirmed		
9:30 – 9:45 am	Been Driving all Day - Need a Brake		
9:45 – 10:45 am	m Overcoming Roadblocks		
	Panel Discussion		
10:45 – 11:00 am	Been Driving all Day - Need a Brake		
	National Learning Collaborative Participants	General Participants	
10:45 – 11:45 am	Get to Know Your Traveling Companions	Destination Community Collaboration	
	Alumni (Cohorts 1 and 2)	Viewing your Community as an Inter-connected System	
****	Cohort 3	Interactive Presentation	
,	Cohort 4	Christel Gollnick, Faculty/Mentor, Trimble, MO	
	Cohort 5	Manuel Castañeda, Faculty/Mentor, Rio Rancho, NM	
	Activity and Discussion grouped by Cohort and Faculty		
11:45 – 12:00 pm	1:45 – 12:00 pm Closing Remarks and Conference Conclusion		
	Stephanie Norling, Executive Director, San Diego, CA		
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