

# communities of excellence<sup>TM</sup> 2026

Improving Economic Vitality, Health,  
Education, and Quality of Life  
in America One Community  
at a Time

National Learning Collaborative Webinar  
May 28, 2020

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# Special Guests

**Al Faber** Baldrige Foundation President/CEO

**Christel Gollnick** Northwest Missouri/Learning Collaborative Support

**Brenda Grant** Kanawha County, West Virginia/Learning Collaborative Faculty

**Kim Halfhill** Excelsior Springs, Missouri/ Learning Collaborative Mentor

**Lowell Kruse** Communities of Excellence 2026 Co-founder and Chair

# Outline for Today

Background on Communities of Excellence 2026

The Communities of Excellence Framework

How the National Learning Collaborative Works

Community Spotlight: Northwest Missouri

How to Join Cohort Four beginning October 2020

\*Please use the questions box during the presentation if you have questions. We will pause frequently to open it up for discussion.

# Background on Communities of Excellence 2026

# Foundation Statement

“For America to sustain its vitality,  
promote opportunity, and create a more  
equitable society  
during its second 250 years of existence,  
we must  
improve the performance of  
communities and the people who lead  
and live in them.”



# Declining Indicators in the U.S.

***Education disparities*** – The average performance levels for students in the least socioeconomically advantaged districts are at least four grade levels below students in the most socioeconomically advantaged districts.

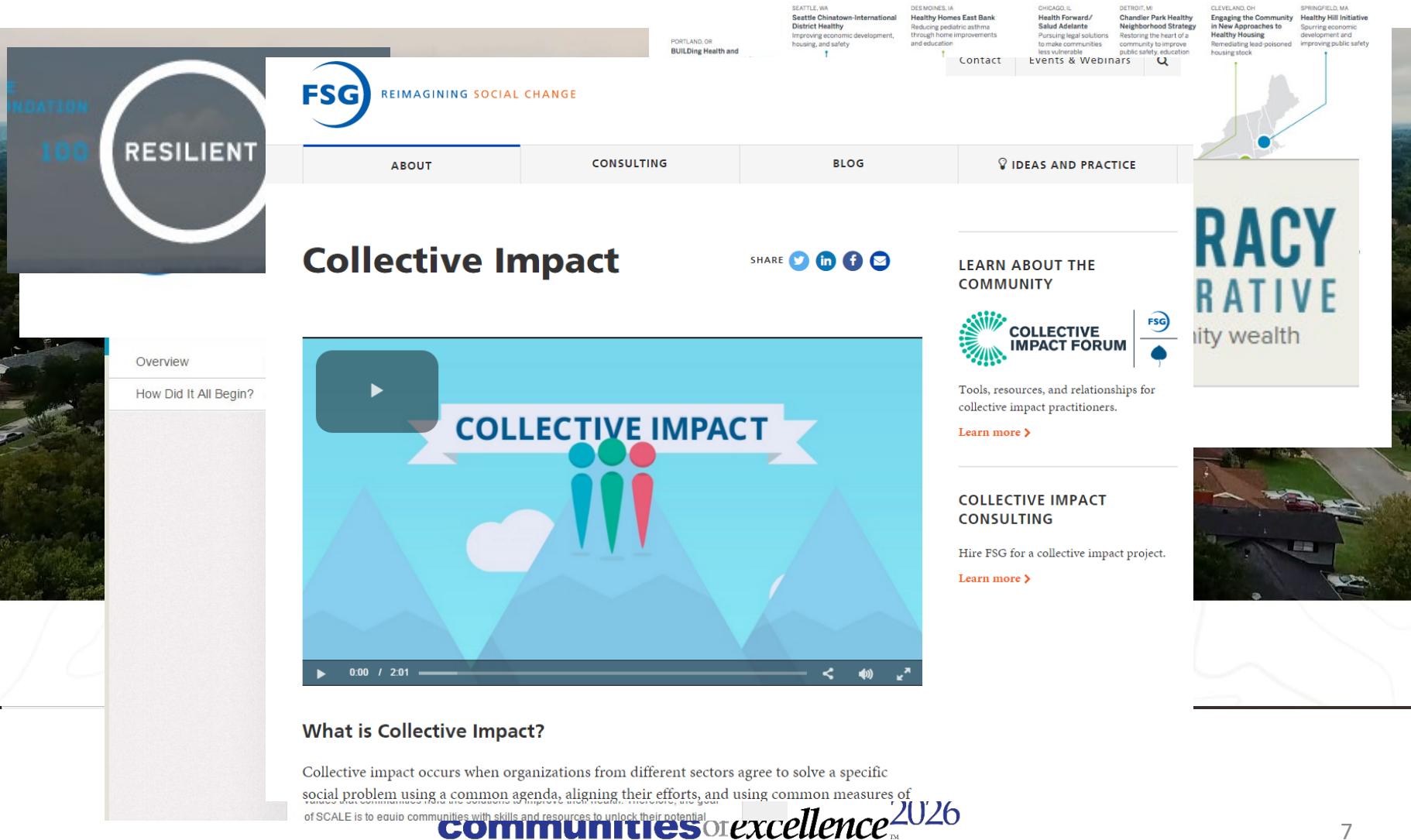
***Deteriorating public health*** - Life expectancy of Americans is now below the OECD average and the U.S. has the highest prevalence of obesity in the developed world.

***Inequalities in economic opportunity*** - 40-45 million Americans live in poverty and smaller cities, towns, and rural areas are particularly suffering, with average annual incomes about \$54,000 less than larger metropolitan areas.





# What is Being Done to Address These Issues?



The screenshot displays the FSG Collective Impact website. At the top, a navigation bar includes the FSG logo with the tagline 'REIMAGINING SOCIAL CHANGE', and links for 'ABOUT', 'CONSULTING', 'BLOG', and 'IDEAS AND PRACTICE'. A secondary navigation bar lists various city-based initiatives: PORTLAND, OR (BUILDing Health and...), SEATTLE, WA (Seattle Chinatown-International District Healthy...), DES MOINES, IA (Healthy Homes East Bank...), CHICAGO, IL (Health Forward/Salud Adelante...), DETROIT, MI (Chandler Park Healthy Neighborhood Strategy...), CLEVELAND, OH (Engaging the Community in New Approaches to Healthy Housing...), and SPRINGFIELD, MA (Healthy Hill Initiative...). A map of the United States highlights these locations. Below the navigation, the main heading 'Collective Impact' is followed by social media share buttons. A video player is embedded, showing a graphic with the text 'COLLECTIVE IMPACT' and three stylized figures. To the right of the video, a section titled 'LEARN ABOUT THE COMMUNITY' features the 'COLLECTIVE IMPACT FORUM' logo and a description: 'Tools, resources, and relationships for collective impact practitioners.' Below this is a 'COLLECTIVE IMPACT CONSULTING' section with the text 'Hire FSG for a collective impact project.' and a 'Learn more >' link. On the left side of the page, a sidebar contains a video player with the title 'Overview' and a description 'How Did It All Begin?'. At the bottom, a section titled 'What is Collective Impact?' provides a definition: 'Collective impact occurs when organizations from different sectors agree to solve a specific social problem using a common agenda, aligning their efforts, and using common measures of success that communities find and understand to improve and sustain themselves; the goal of SCALE is to equip communities with skills and resources to unlock their potential.' The page is branded with 'communities of excellence' and the year '2026'.

**FSG** REIMAGINING SOCIAL CHANGE

**Collective Impact**

SHARE [Twitter](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Facebook](#) [Email](#)

**COLLECTIVE IMPACT**

**LEARN ABOUT THE COMMUNITY**

**COLLECTIVE IMPACT FORUM**

Tools, resources, and relationships for collective impact practitioners.

[Learn more >](#)

**COLLECTIVE IMPACT CONSULTING**

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**What is Collective Impact?**

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**communities of excellence** 2026

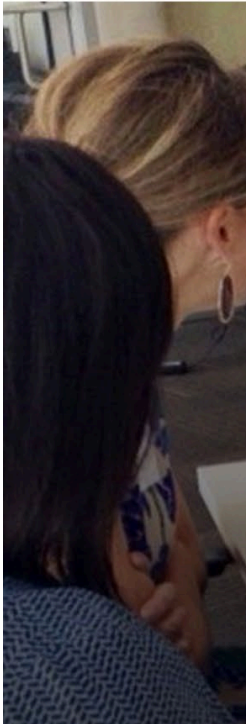
# What is Being Done to Address These Issues?

All participants have a shared vision for change including a common

## •The Seven Patterns of a Healthy Community

Practices ongoing dialogue.  
Generates leadership everywhere.  
Shapes its future.  
Embraces diversity.  
Knows itself.  
Connects people and resources.  
Creates a sense of community

COLLABORATIVE  
HEALTH NETWORK




organizations and agencies.




# What is Being Done to Address These Issues?

## Kansas University Community Toolbox

 **COMMUNITY COMMONS** [Activity](#) [Maps & Data](#) [Hubs](#) [Channels](#) [Support](#) [Register](#)


Enrich your community work with maps and data reports that can be shared and saved.



### [Make a Map](#)

[Map Gallery](#)  
Browse and open maps created by users of the Commons.

[Data](#)  
Check out our [data list](#) or see [what's new](#).



### [Build a Report](#)

[Community Health Needs Assessment](#)  
Identify assets and potential disparities in your county/region related to community health and well-being.

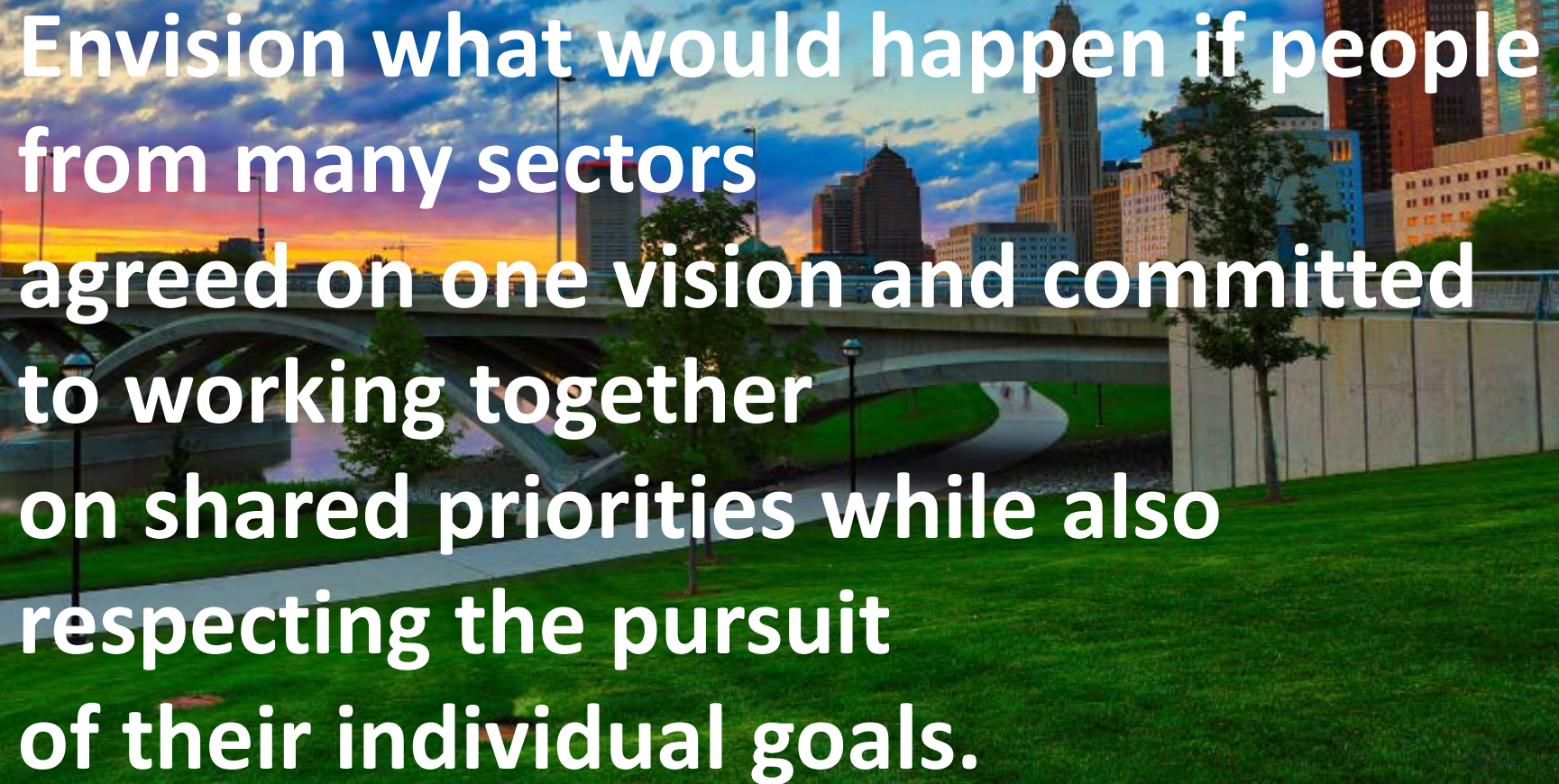
[Vulnerable Populations Footprint](#)  
Find areas in your community with low educational attainment and high poverty.

[Location Opportunity Footprint](#)  
Find areas of opportunity in your community. Map housing and transportation costs, school proficiency and availability of jobs.

SUPPORT YOUR INITIATIVE WITH FREE GUIDANCE FROM THE COMMUNITY TOOL BOX. [LEARN MORE.](#)

There is no systematic approach familiar to and used by all entities within communities that ensures federal, state, local, and private sector efforts are aligned and integrated to maximize their benefit and impact.



A vibrant cityscape at sunset. In the foreground, there is a lush green lawn and a paved path. A bridge with multiple arches spans a body of water in the middle ground. The background features a dense urban skyline with various skyscrapers, including the Willis Tower, under a dramatic sky with orange, yellow, and blue hues.

Envision what would happen if people from many sectors agreed on one vision and committed to working together on shared priorities while also respecting the pursuit of their individual goals.

# Our Hypothesis

That a framework proven to drive performance excellence in *companies and organizations* – the Baldrige Framework - can be modified to achieve performance excellence in *communities* to benefit the health and wellbeing of all residents. Primary focus on:

Economic Vitality

Health

Education

Safety





# Why Baldrige?

## Some History...

The goal of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-107) was to enhance the competitiveness of U.S. businesses. Its scope has since been expanded to health care and education organizations (in 1999) and to nonprofit/government organizations (in 2007) and in 2017.

### **Congress created the Award Program to:**

- **Establish a criteria for evaluating improvement efforts**
- **Identify and recognize role-model businesses**
- **Disseminate and share best practices**



# Why Baldrige?

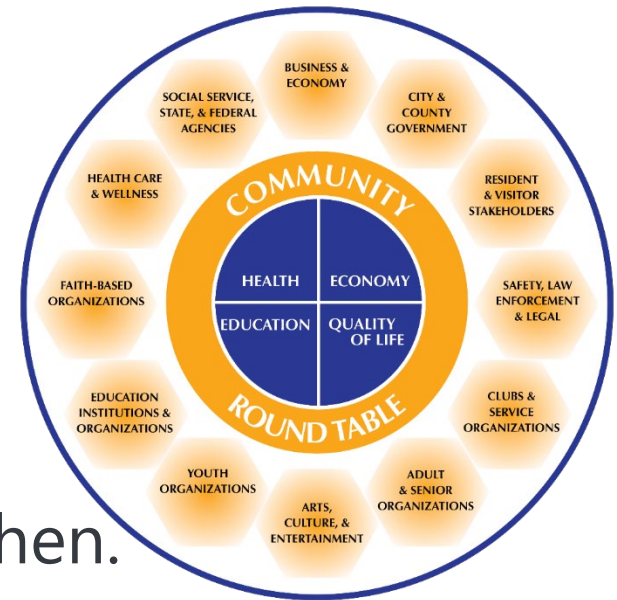
- Identifies strengths and improvement opportunities using an integrated systems approach
- Facilitates improvement, innovation, alignment, and integration of key processes
- Assists in delivery of value to customers & stakeholders
- Facilitates organizational and personal learning
- Monitors progress over time and helps organizations achieve and sustain world class results

**A 2011 study estimated the ratio of Baldrige Program benefits for the U.S. economy to program costs at 820:1.**



# Why Baldrige in Communities?

- True systems perspective - Equal emphasis and focus on how each part impacts and links with the others.
- Optimizes an entire system rather than just focusing on pockets of excellence.
- Many tools focus on one or a few of components of the system.
  - Helps to decide which tools will benefit you most and when.



# The Communities of Excellence Framework

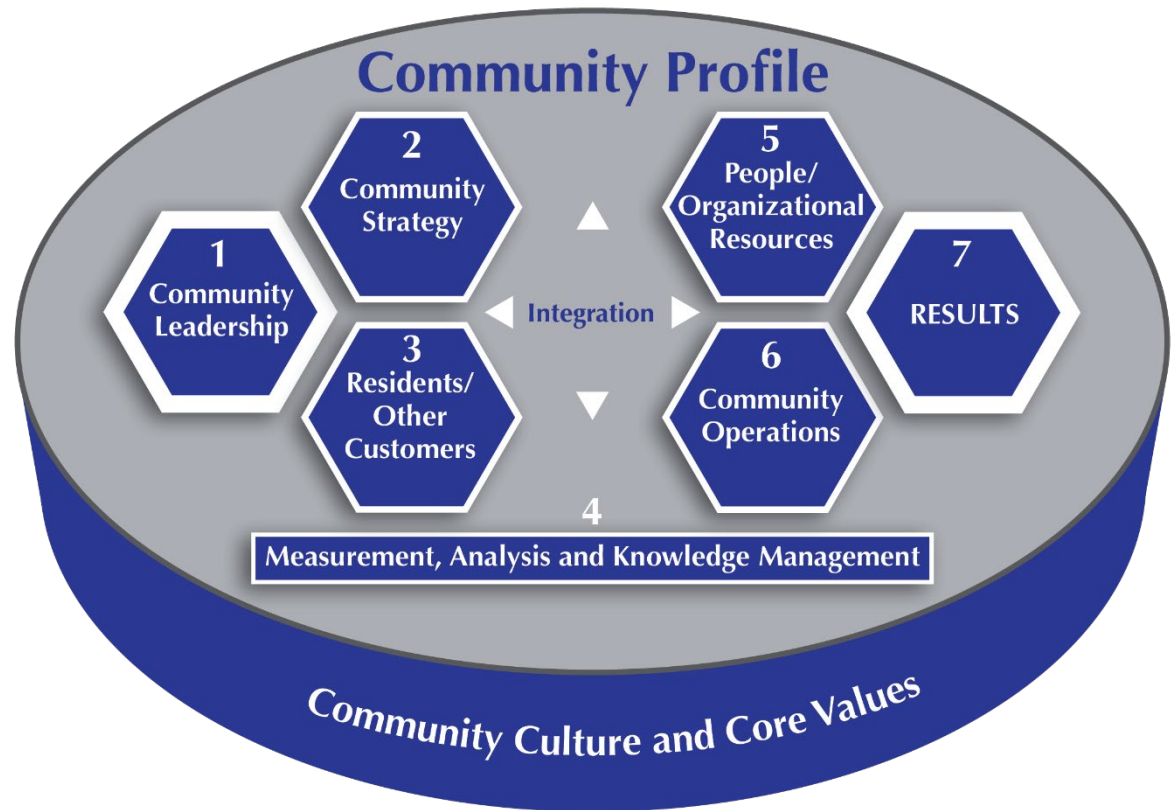
# Baldrige Excellence Framework



- Applicable to *any* organizational entity
- Evaluates performance and assess where improvements are needed
- Scalable
- Benchmarks excellence
- Evidence-based Decision Making

# Communities of Excellence Framework

- Applicable to any community
- Encourages collaboration across sectors
- Aligns people, processes, and plans
- Identifies and pursues community-driven goals
- Evaluates progress
- Instills a culture of leadership and responsibility across generations



Adapted from the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, 2015. 2015-2016 Baldrige Excellence Framework: A Systems Approach to Improving Your Organization's Performance. Gaithersburg, MD: U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology. <http://nist.gov/baldrige>.

# Community Leadership Structure

## Community Leadership Team

General Oversight and Decision-Making  
Co-Chair Co-Chair

## Advisory Group

Overview of Strategic Planning, Communication, and Strategy  
Meetings facilitated by Backbone Organization, attended by representatives from each work group and community leadership team members

## Work Groups

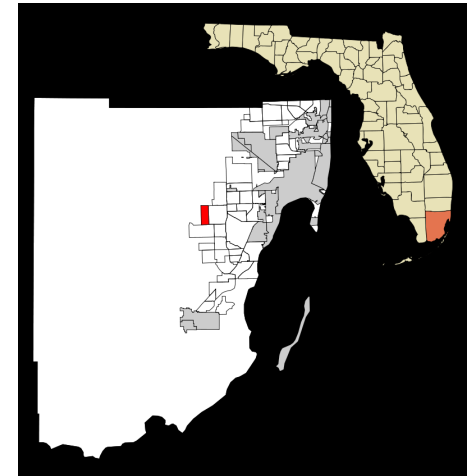
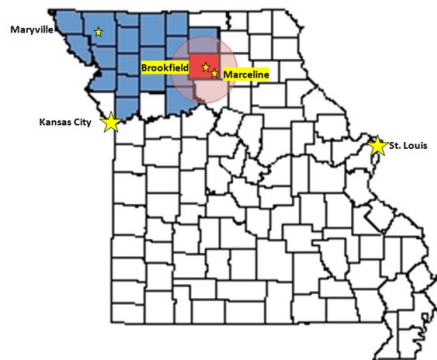
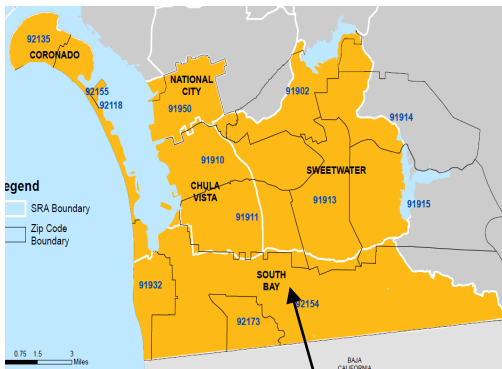
Health  
Work Group  
Co-Chair  
Co-Chair

Education  
Work Group  
Co-Chair  
Co-Chair

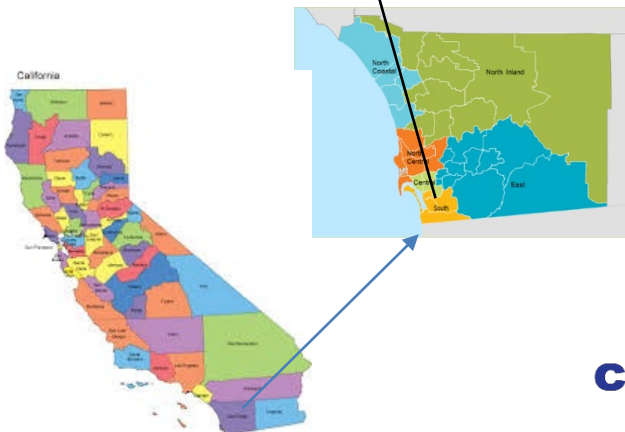
Economic Vitality  
Work Group  
Co-Chair  
Co-Chair

# How Do We Define Community?

*A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common*



“Think Regionally, Act Locally”





# Annual Assessment and Recognition Program



## Identified Key Gaps and Action Plans

<b>Key Gap 1: DATA</b> Lack of formal data system to gather and update information from NCCLT and other partners who contribute to CEP	<b>Key Gap 2: BUSINESS SECTOR ENGAGEMENT</b> A plan to better engage more business sector in NCCLT and/or the priorities and actions of the CEP	<b>Key Gap 3: VOICE OF THE RESIDENT</b> Engaging our residents, customers, and stakeholders
<b>Lead(s):</b>	<b>Lead(s):</b>	<b>Lead(s):</b>
<b>Next Steps:</b>	<b>Next Steps:</b>	<b>Next Steps:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet with groups who are contributing to the data, and document the process</li> <li>• Checks to make sure the data you've collected is the correct data (make sure it is meaningful)</li> <li>• Tie the data points to our strategies and priorities</li> <li>• *Clear Impact</li> <li>• Collect qualitative data/success stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking inventory of existing business relationships/partnerships</li> <li>• What are we doing for them to be involved? (taking inventory and analyzing it for strategic planning)</li> <li>• Cross-reference with <i>Live Well</i> partner</li> <li>• Key informant interviews with the partners (asking the 2-prong questions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of behavioral health RLA forums happening in North County</li> <li>• Cross-reference CEP</li> <li>• Inventory in how many active groups we have in North County</li> <li>*South Region started doing this – connecting with their team</li> <li>• Review community-based meetings – what populations are missing and what meetings can we address those missing populations</li> </ul>



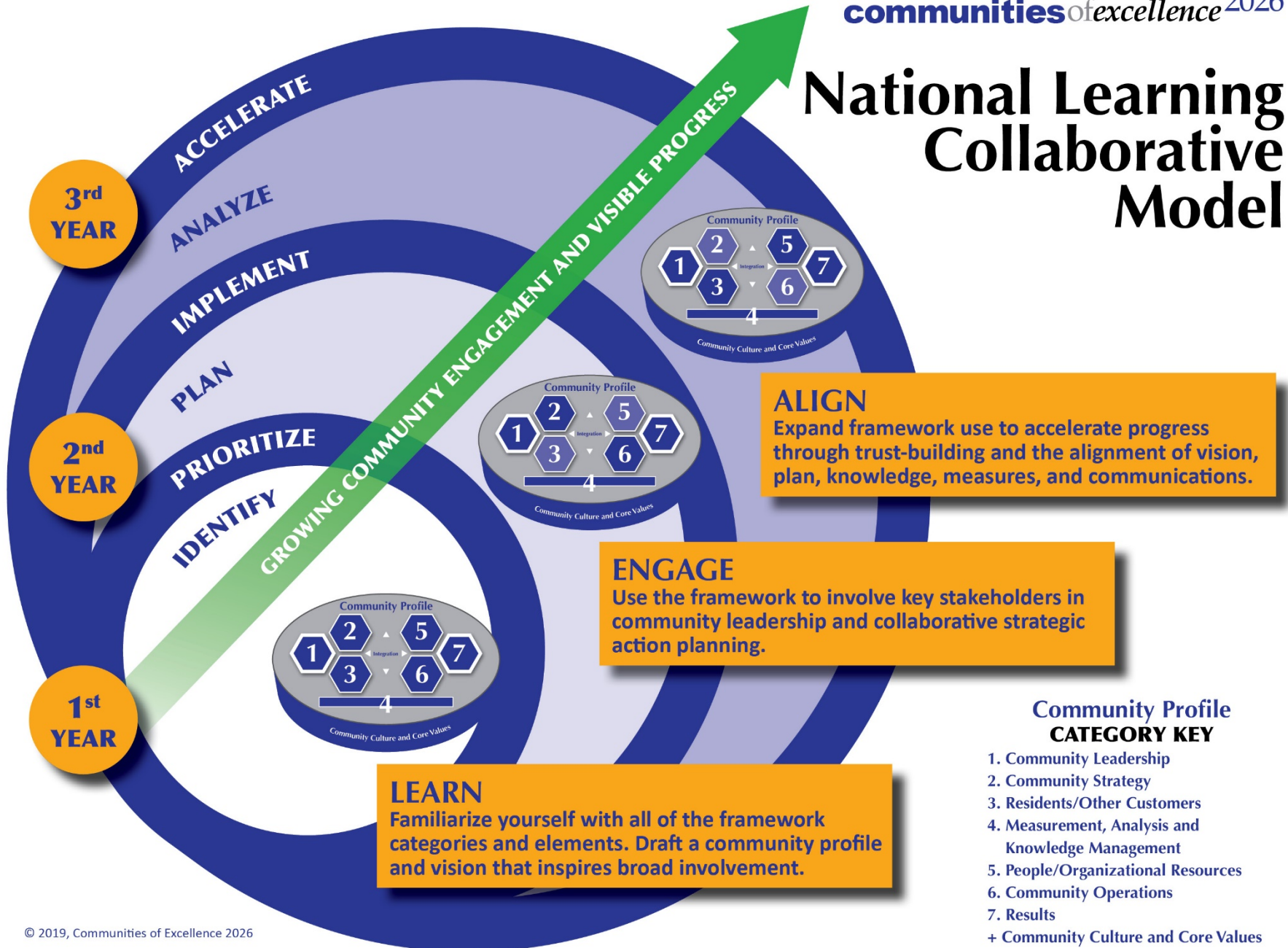
# How the National Learning Collaborative Works



- What is your community, and what is important to it? **Community Profile**
- Where do you want to go? **Vision**
- How will your community prepare for the future? **Community Strategic Planning**
- What are the gaps and how do you as a community engage to prioritize which ones to focus on first, next?
- How will you know when you get there? **Results**



# National Learning Collaborative Model



# Collaborative Observations/Benefits

Clear Roles and Responsibilities: Backbone Organization

Community Profile as a tool to learn how to work together

Adopting a common language challenging but valuable

Shift in thinking: Activities versus Outcomes and Silos versus Systems

Sharing new ideas and approaches (both how and what)

Framework provides focus and direction

**Building Leadership Capability and Capacity is key**





# 2019 COE/Baldrige Fall Conference



# Learning Collaborative Offerings

## **Attendance at the COE/Baldrige Fall Conference**

Includes registration for two community members to attend the October 21-22<sup>nd</sup> event in Milwaukee, Wisconsin\*

## **Online Sessions (Twice monthly)**

Led by COE 2026 Faculty and invited presenters. Includes teaching presentations, presentations by communities and assignments that will assist the community to build their Profile, and strengthen their Leadership and agree on strategic priorities.

## **Expert Review and Feedback on your Community Profile Draft and Assignments**

COE Experts will provide specific tailored feedback on your community work to advance your efforts

## **Expert Mentoring Session (Monthly)**

Each community will be assigned one COE/Baldrige mentor to follow their progress and be available each month for specific tailored assistance and questions.

## **Assessment and Recognition Program**

Application fees are included in the Learning Collaborative yearly fee.



# COVID-19

"The networks, communication channels, and relationships established through our COE work over the 2 ½ years are proving extremely beneficial to community leaders during this time. As we move into recovery, these same channels will be used to coordinate a long-term response and recovery effort. We have a common strategic planning process that can be replicated to develop a community-wide response. Our shared processes or network would not exist without the work we've put in because of COE. The systems approach provided in the COE framework is an asset to communities anytime, but especially in times of crisis and instability."

*Kim Halfhill, Community Coach, COE Learning Collaborative Cohort 1 – Excelsior Springs, Missouri*



# Helpful Information

## Q. Who should be involved in my community?

A. You have options, such as:

Pre-existing community leadership teams representing all sectors and generations. OR, committed leaders of key sectors – such as health, education, business, government, social services, and/or safety ready to participate.

## Q. How do we know we're ready to join?

A. Here are some initial considerations:

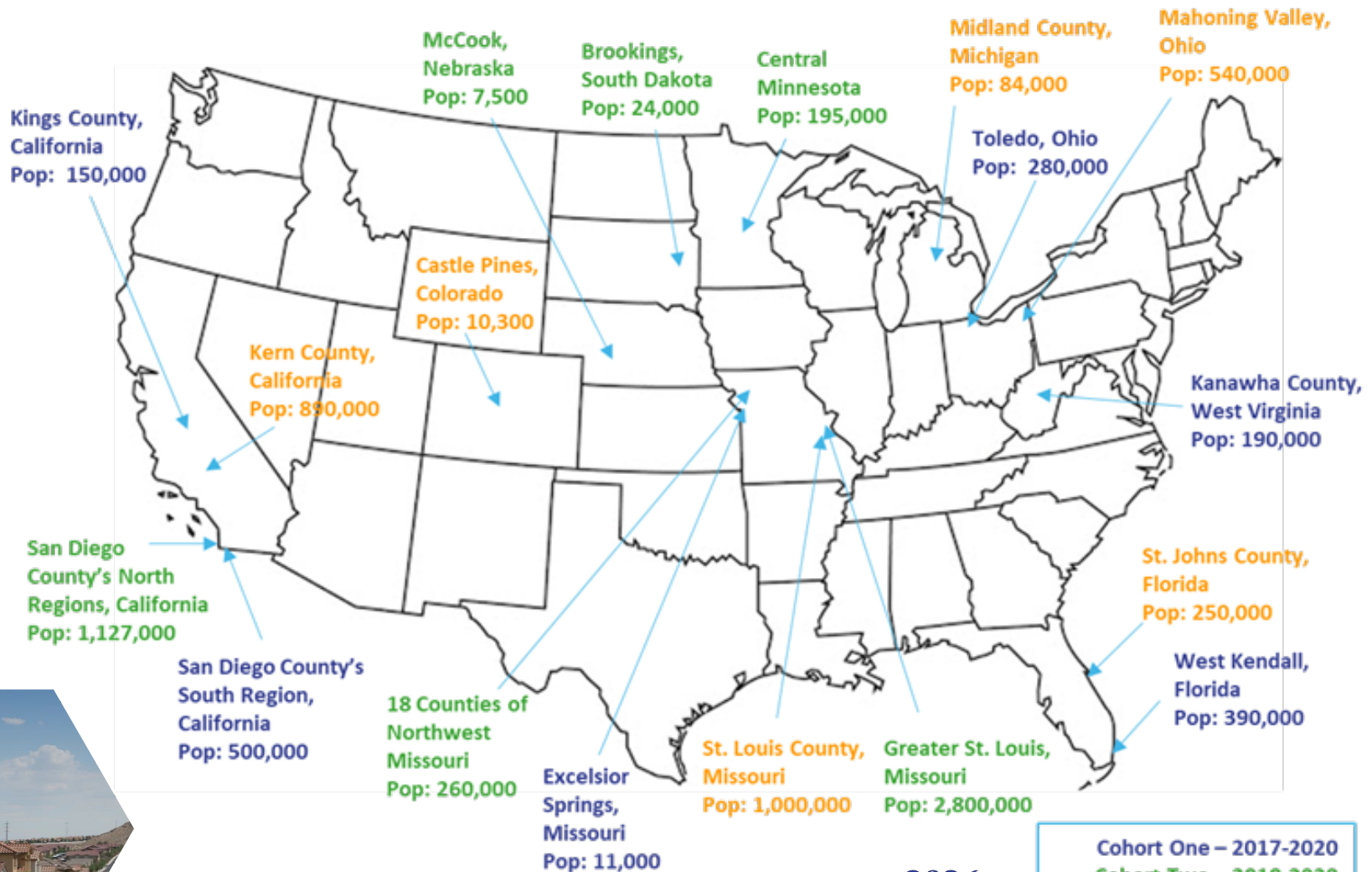
You've identified a backbone organization(s) to provide the ongoing support required to sustain the effort and serve as the key contact.

Your group is willing to share generously and commit the time and resources required to meaningfully engage in implementing the Framework.

You have individuals engaged that possess a knowledge of Baldrige Performance Excellence Principles or a strong desire to learn.



# Participating Communities



# Community Spotlight: Northwest Missouri



# A rural region's adaptation of The Communities of Excellence Framework

## MANY VOICES, ONE VISION



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
OF  
NORTHWEST MISSOURI

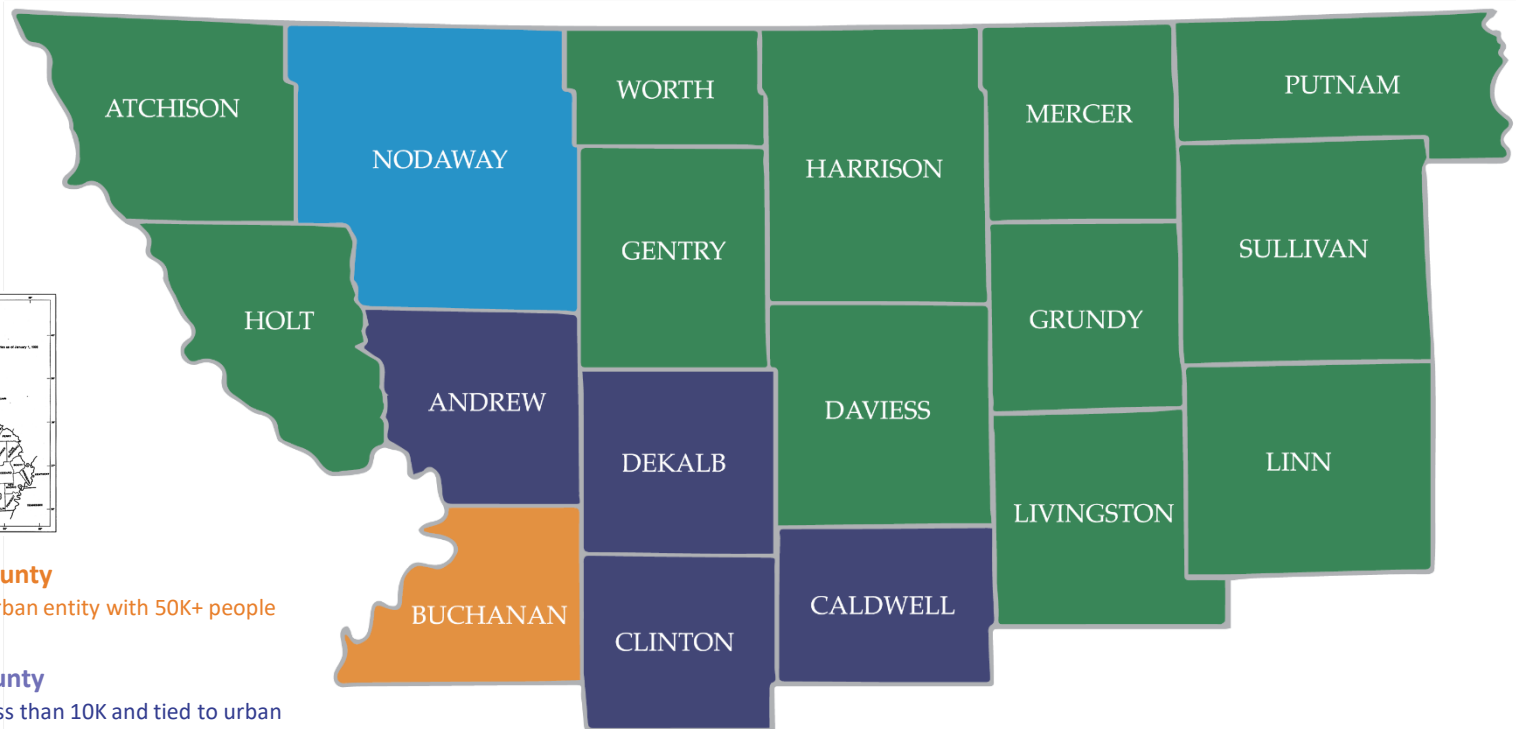
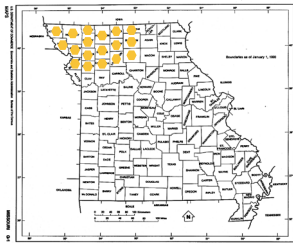
33 | MAY 28, 2020



**MAXIMIZE™**  
**NWMO**

Dream big and grow together.

# OUR REGION Northwest Missouri's 18 Counties



## URBAN, Metro County

Has a densely-settled urban entity with 50K+ people

## RURAL, Metro County

All urban clusters are less than 10K and tied to urban core with 25%+ workers commuting to or from

## RURAL, Nonmetro Micropolitan County

Has an urban cluster of 10K-49,999K people

## RURAL, Nonmetro, Noncore County

All urban clusters are less than 10K and urban core commuters at less than 25%



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
OF  
NORTHWEST MISSOURI

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# 2019-2021 ENVISIONED END GOAL

**A rural-based system of collaborACTION that serves as a guide and source of support for leaders to reach shared goals.**

**Help local communities and the region:**

- **Recognize opportunities across map lines,**
- **Make decisions together, and**
- **Change economy for the better.**



# 2019-2021 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## #1 REGIONAL SHARED PRIORITIES & KNOWLEDGE SUPPORT

- Expand the entrepreneurship support system
- Expand the entrepreneur pipeline through population retention and growth.

## #2 COMMUNICATIONS

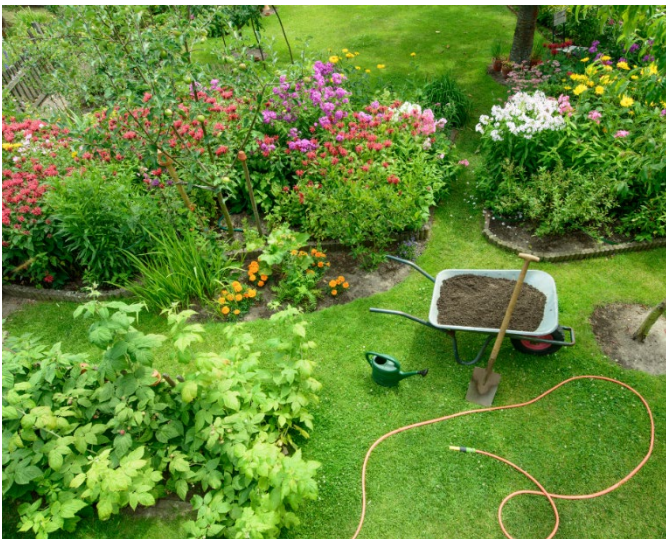
Implement a strategic integrated communications action plan.

## #3 LEADERSHIP

Expand access to next-level leadership training.

## #4 OPERATIONS

Initiative management, pilot community coaching, project coordination, and regional decision-making and continuous growth system design.



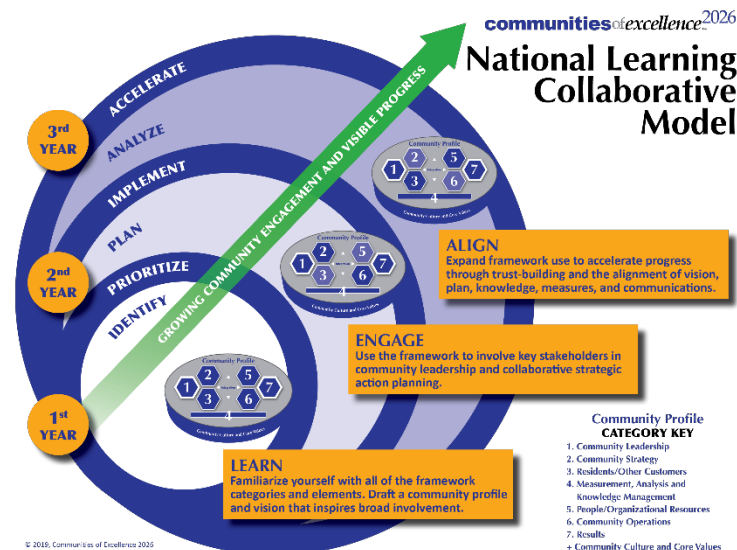
# OPERATIONS #1 START WITH A PROVEN APPROACH

## A catalyst for growth...

- Coordination and alignment of efforts
- Mutually agreed upon shared values
- Leadership development and coaching
- Data-informed decision-making
- Inclusive and broad communication
- Performance improvement principles
- Asking the right questions

*"We are getting out of our traditional thinking and seeing things happen across organizations. I give credit to this approach for that. We're busy working on the priorities we identified."*

— Josh McKim, Maryville Economic Development Director





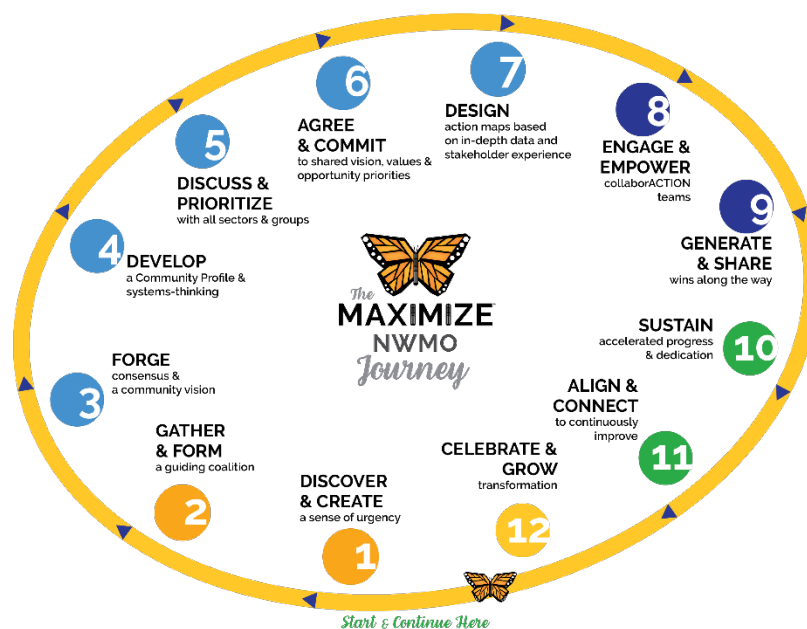
## OPERATIONS #2 BUILD IN PROMISING PRACTICES FOR COMMUNITIES

### Transformation step-by-step...

- Supporting progress in local communities and the region at the same time in a repeating cycle
- Broad spectrum of public participation
- Visionary leadership and crisis communications
- Respecting self-, shared, and common interests
- Cycle as improvement, involvement, and succession plan empowering people to act

*“One of our biggest challenges is to shift the mindset that rural isn’t a good place to make a living. Many people are discovering ways to thrive in northwest Missouri. We need to tell our kids and their parents about the opportunities they have to grow here. Working to involve people in our communities whether they are native or new to the area will also help them feel more valued.”*

— Randy Railsback, Green Hills Regional Planning Director



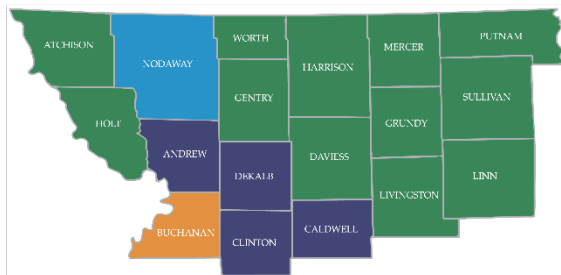


# DREAMING BIG AND WORKING TOGETHER



Many Voices, One Vision

# BUILDING AN INTERACTIVE FRONT LOBBY ONLINE TO CONNECT AND PROMOTE THE REGION



A screenshot of the Maximizenwmo.org website. The header features the logo "MAXIMIZE NWMO" with a butterfly icon, a search bar, and the tagline "Many Voices, One Vision". The main banner says "WELCOME! Sign up to speak up today! NORTHWEST MISSOURI REGIONAL VITALITY". Below the banner, there's a welcome message and a "News and Notes" section with a link to "2020 Great Northwest Day Legislative Priorities Released". A "Key Dates" section lists "Regional Community Conversation Online" (Apr 29 2020), "CONNECTING the Region Conversation" (May 01 2020), and "PROMOTING the Region Conversation" (May 08 2020). Two featured cards are visible: "Connecting Communities for Support through the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Crisis" and "REGIONAL Community Conversations ONLINE ON OUR ECONOMY".

[maximizenwmo.org](https://maximizenwmo.org)

[together@maximizenwmo.org](mailto:together@maximizenwmo.org)

# Tips for Getting Started

- Have a Backbone Organization(s)
- Identify Who Should be Involved and in What Roles
- Have a clear understanding your “why”
- Define your community
- Email me for our Application Form and apply by July 31<sup>st</sup>!



*“For America to sustain its vitality, promote opportunity and create a more equitable society during its second 250 years of existence, we must improve the performance of communities and the people who lead and live in them.”*

*Communities of Excellence 2026 Foundational Statement*

Thank you for your time!

For more information contact:

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858-342-8185