

2023 Community of Excellence Application



McCook, Nebraska

Communities of Excellence 2026



McCook, Nebraska

2023 Journey to Community Excellence Application

Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations

CEG- Community Excellence Group

CHA – Community Health Assessment

CHNA – Community Health Needs Assessment

COE – Communities of Excellence

MEDC – McCook Economic Development Corporation

NE – Nebraska

PDCA – Plan-Do-Check-Act

SDOH – Social Determinants of Health

SIPOC – Suppliers, Inputs, Processes, Outputs, Customers

UNL – University of Nebraska Lincoln

VOC – Voice of the Customer

VOR – Voice of the Resident

Community Profile

P.1 Community Description: What are your community’s key characteristics?

P.1a Community Environment

P.1a (1) Community Definition and Identity. What geographic area is included in your community?

We define our community as the City of McCook including the city’s zoning of a two-mile extension beyond the city limit line for utility support and future growth opportunities. We have chosen to stay within our city limits for our data and metric purposes however, McCook has a consumer base that serves closer to 32,000 whom utilize our services.

McCook is located at the intersections of Highway 83 going from North to South, a highway that goes from the Canadian border to the Mexico border and Highway 6 and 34, which is a well-traveled road that connects easily between Eastern Nebraska cities of Lincoln and Omaha, to Colorado including Denver and the Estes Park area. Figure P.1a (1) – 1 shows the City of McCook on a map.

Figure P.1a (1) - 1 McCook, NE



The closest towns of larger size are to the north by 75 miles, North Platte, population 24,110 and to the northeast by 105 miles, Kearney, population 33,520.

What are your community’s population and growth compared with that of other communities locally, regionally, or nationally?

McCook itself has a population of approximately 7,400 people. McCook has experienced a slight decline of population like most rural communities. The State of Nebraska population is growing slightly, mostly in the eastern urban areas. Demographics: Figure P.1a (1)-2 includes US Census bureau information.

Figure P.1a (1) - 2 US Census Bureau Information

What is your COMMUNITY IDENTITY?

McCook offers a regional trade center that is an excellent opportunity for families. It is the perfect place to put down roots, raise a family, and retire.

Outdoor recreation is woven into the fabric of western Nebraska rural communities like McCook. Nature is never more than a few minutes away. Numerous State Recreation Areas, Reservoirs, and Wildlife Management Areas throughout the area are great place for birding, camping, hunting and fishing.

McCook is the home to the award winning, Heritage Hills Golf course, Nebraska’s only James Beard recognized restaurant, and the only Frank Lloyd Wright designed home in the state.

Whether you come to McCook for shopping, an overnight stay or a several day excursion for the whole family, we promise that it will be a memorable experience! Enjoy the natural settings and outdoor adventures along the river, prairie lakes and walking trails. Celebrate with us during our award-winning festivals, special

| United State Census Bureau (QuickFacts McCook) | |
|---|----------|
| PEOPLE | |
| Population, Census April 1, 2020 | 7,430 |
| Population estimates, July 1, 2022 (V2022) | 7,326 |
| Population percent change - April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2022 | -1.4% |
| Age and Sex | |
| Persons under 5 years, percent | 6.7% |
| Persons under 18 years, percent | 24.8% |
| Persons 65 years and over, percent | 19.9% |
| Female persons, percent | 52.2% |
| Race and Hispanic Origin | |
| White alone, percent | 91.9% |
| Black or African American alone, percent | 1.0% |
| American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent | 1.2% |
| Asian alone, percent | 0.1% |
| Two or More Races, percent | 5.3% |
| Hispanic or Latino, percent | 5.0% |
| Other, percent | 0.5% |
| Income & Poverty | |
| Median household income (in 2022 dollars) | \$53,387 |
| Per capita income in past 12 months (in 2022 dollars) | \$31,161 |
| Persons in poverty, percent | 12.7% |

events, and annual celebrations. Stroll along our brick streets at your leisure while visiting our specialty shops and restaurants.

P.1a (2) Community Offerings. What are your community’s key offerings to its resident and other CUSTOMER GROUPS in the areas of health, education, the economy, and quality of life?

McCook, established in 1882, offers history deeply rooted in agriculture, the railroad, raising buffalo and the spirit of the American pioneer. McCook became the center of commerce and trade in Southwest Nebraska and Northwest Kansas. As the town grew and established itself as a commercial center, farming and ranching spread across the surrounding area.

The land area is also enriched with access to water and land for fishing and hunting. There are three lakes available within 30 minutes of McCook that provide irrigation to farming, fishing and recreation activities.

McCook has a strong political heritage. McCook was the home of George Norris, widely considered one of the top 5 United States Senators in the history of the country. McCook was also home to three Nebraska governors including Ralph Brooks, Frank Morrison, and Ben Nelson (also a United States Senator).

McCook Ben Nelson Regional Airport offers commercial flights each day of the week going to and from Denver. The city has Burlington Northern Railroad coming through our community and offers an Amtrak stop.

The area has access to high speed internet through both wireless and wired, for a telecommunication structure that is advanced by access to major fiber optic lines. Through rural broadband high speed internet acts there is availability within the city and in the rural areas.

McCook is also home to two large manufacturing facilities that support the economy with a number of jobs. Valmont Industries focuses production efforts solely on center pivot irrigations. Parker makes a number of hose applications from hydraulic to garden usage.

Figure P.1a(2) – Community Key Offerings

| Pillar: | Key Offerings: | Key Organizations: |
|------------------|---|---|
| Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25 bed critical access hospital that provides general surgical, emergency and numerous specialty services. - Wellness McCook Initiative including numerous community organizations and leaders working towards making McCook and the surrounding area a healthier population. - Large independent primary care practice and urgent care options for primary medical care. - Two rehabilitation facilities for physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy and medical nutrition services. - Two health departments offering a number of general health screenings, immunizations and educational offerings. The health departments also have targeted initiatives in area of dental care, radon testing, POD (a particular clinics offering targeted to minority and underserved populations.) - One county owned 100+ bed nursing home facility and a handful of assisted and independent living facilities. Through our Health Pillar CNA initiative we have increased staffing in all of these facilities to increase bed capacity. - Multiple mental health and substance abuse service providers that provide necessary support to the community. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Hospital- McCook - Primary Care Clinics - Mental, Behavioral, Occupational Health Services - Southwest Public Health Department & Red Willow Health Department - Assisted Living Facilities/ Nursing Home - Wellness McCook Initiative |
| Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High school aged students have the opportunity to become college and career ready through different programs at MPCC. - Bison Days, Career Days, Senior Industrial Tour, Ag Days, are all prime examples of programs for students to - McCook Public Schools and St. Patrick’s Elementary School outperforms the state scoring in standardized and ACT testing. - MPCC offers Business and Community Education to the community. - St. Patrick’s Elementary School offers a faith based school system. - University of Nebraska Extension offers programs including: 4-H, Rural Prosperity Nebraska, youth leadership, and early childcare. - Preschools and daycare centers provide necessary enrichment and support to area children and their families. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid-Plains Community College- McCook - McCook Public Schools - St. Patrick Elementary School - University of Nebraska Extension - Preschool and Daycare - Southwest Area Training Services |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support to individuals and families with developmental disabilities in education and training programs. | |
| Family (Quality of Life) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senior Center provides meals and social activities for senior citizens. - Story walk provides families the opportunity to engage and learn while being active. The library changes the stories monthly. - Numerous recreational and green spaces offer the community outdoor enrichment. - The YMCA, effectively the city's recreation department, offers programs for youth and adults from after school programs to adult sporting leagues. - Many denominations of churches welcome residents to practice their faith. - Addressing transportation needs identified through SDOH data. - A strong sports culture encourages all ages to be active and involved in community activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - McCook Heritage Senior Center - Walking Trails/Story Walk - Various denominations of churches - McCook YMCA - Numerous recreational parks and green space - Area transportation services |
| Economic Vitality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The businesses in McCook can be categorized in these sectors: retail, healthcare, accommodations and food, financial and insurance, and manufacturing. - Agricultural hub for Southwest Nebraska - More than 300 businesses service McCook - The community has dedicated plots of land for future housing development opportunities, an industrial park with rail line access, resources for entrepreneurs, business incubators, and remote/ co-work office spaces. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - McCook Economic Development Corporation - The City of McCook - McCook Chamber of Commerce - Red Willow County |

What is the relative importance of these offerings to your community's well-being?

Our key offerings show that we have a wide variety of resources available to impact our community's wellbeing.

What major facilities, infrastructure, and resources (e.g., technology, housing, transportation, and natural resources) support your community's KEY offerings?

See above figure P.1a (2) for key organizations and how they support McCook's Key offerings.

P.1a (3) Residents, Other CUSTOMERS, and STAKEHOLDERS. What are your community's key resident groups, other CUSTOMER groups, and STAKEHOLDER groups?

The key resident groups:

- Working Age
- Seniors/ Retired
- Students/ Youth

Customer groups:

- Consumers travel into McCook on various occasions from entertaining and shopping needs or for tourism and special events.

Stakeholder groups:

Figure P.1a(4) – 1 Key Stakeholder Groups

| | Education | Economic Vitality | Family | Health |
|---|-----------|-------------------|--------|--------|
| County Government | | | * | * |
| City Government | | | * | * |
| Community Hospital | | * | * | * |
| McCook Economic Development Corporation | | * | | |
| UNL Extension | * | | * | * |
| McCook Chamber of Commerce | | * | | * |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| McCook Public Schools | * | | * | |
| McCook Community College | * | * | | |
| Southwest NE Public Health Dept. | * | | * | |
| Red Willow County Health Dept. | * | | * | |
| Red Willow County Ministerial Association (representing Churches) | * | | * | * |
| McCook Community Foundation | | * | | * |
| McCook Optimists | * | | * | * |
| McCook Tourism | | * | | * |
| McCook Rotary | * | | * | * |
| Local Agriculture Industry | | * | * | |

What are their KEY requirements and expectations of your community?

| Community | Key Requirements & Expectations |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Working Age (18-65) | Job opportunities, housing, recreation and entertainment, childcare, safe community |
| Seniors/ Retired (65+) | Access to transportation, accessible healthcare, social networks, senior housing |
| Students/ Youth (20 and under) | Access to transportation, quality education, recreation and entertainment |
| Customer Groups (Consumers) | Retail and dining options, recreation and entertainment, accessible health services (healthcare, dental, eye care), professional services |
| Stakeholders | Thriving and diverse economy, sustainable leadership, adequate workforce, engaged community members, safe community |

What are the differences in requirements and expectations among resident groups, other CUSTOMER groups, and STAKEHOLDER groups?

The differences within these groups are focused around age and personal preferences.

P.1a (4) People and Organizational Resources. What KEY Community groups and segments are involved in delivering your community's KEY Offerings?

| Community Groups & Segments | Numbers | Definition |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--|
| Residents | 7,400 | Residents live in McCook full time. |
| Community Groups | Approximately 50 | Non- profit/ volunteer groups with a specific focus within the community. |
| Business & Commerce | More than 500 | Most of the 500 businesses in McCook are owned/ operated by residents of McCook and surrounding towns. |
| Consumers | 32,000 | Consumers come to McCook for use of retail, community groups, events, and various other resources. |

What recent changes has the community experienced in its needs for these community groups and SEGMENTS?

In just a few years we have experienced change from a pursuit of more jobs to a pursuit of more workers. This is due to a paradigm shift of our working population now becoming the aging population who is retiring. We do not have enough skilled workers to replace those who are retired.

Who are the formal and informal COMMUNITY LEADERS that represent KEY organizations, groups, and SEGMENTS?

The Core group is made up of four Community Hospital employees, Chamber of Commerce Director, McCook Economic Development Corporation Director, McCook Community Foundation and McCook Community College leaders. The Informal leaders at the advisory group are made up of several McCook leaders from sectors of retail, education, clergy, government and others.

P.1a (5) Regulatory Environment. What are the Key aspects of the regulatory environment under which your community operates?

Most organizations are accountable to at least some regulatory standards if not a number of different Federal, State, County or City regulations. In particular our COE efforts might be constrained to Nebraska Legislative Bill 840 (LB840). This is a local sales tax appropriated for economic development. Tax Incremental Financing (TIF) rules and regulations. TIF is a source of funding using future property taxes to fund current infrastructure improvements.

P.1b Community Excellence Group

P.1b (1) Mission, Vision, and Values. Why have you formed a community excellence group?

We formed this collaborative group and joined Communities of Excellence because we know that McCook can always be better. The short term goal for our community isn't to make it great, because it already is. What we wanted to identify is where the strategic planning for the community could develop even better cooperation and collaboration between all the players. There are many overlaps and meetings between all the local agencies, but before COE there was nothing formal that brought everyone's missions together.

We also have an opportunity as we select future members for our collaborative to tap into different groups and people that have talent in our community. We are like many communities where the same people seem to always be at the table and we know that there are several other sources of expertise and energy that we can encourage to be engaged for the future of our community.

What are the group's stated MISSION, VISION, and VALUES?

Mission: Enhancing the quality of life for our residents by collaborating to focus on education, family, economic vitality and health.

Vision: Moving toward excellence by evaluating and improving the quality of life in our community: McCook on the **MOVE**.

Values:

Momentum- We are working together to encourage communication between organizations in McCook to foster teamwork and move forward on similar initiatives and goals.

Opportunities- We are creating the space for transition among leaders and using our assets to meet current needs, while ensuring that adequate resources are available for entrepreneurs and future generations.

Visionary- We value the input and ideas of each resident, organization and consumer in our region and are determined to give each person a voice in community improvement.

Excellence- We are constantly seeking ways to identify areas for improvement in order to provide the highest quality of life for our residents, jobs for the region and retail for consumers.

P.1b (2) Composition. What KEY people, organizations, and groups are involved in your community excellence group?

The core group started in August 2018 with seven members from the hospital, MEDC, McCook Chamber of Commerce and UNL Extension. Other additions in our CEG include the schools, Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department, Red Willow County Health Department, McCook Community Foundation Fund, YMCA, McCook Community College, City of McCook, local banks, industry, churches, government, retail and the media.

What are the KEY drivers that engage them in achieving your group's MISSION and VISION?

The group realized that collaboration was how we were going to achieve community goals. We learned that we go further together.

What is the BACKBONE ORGANIZATION, if your group includes one?

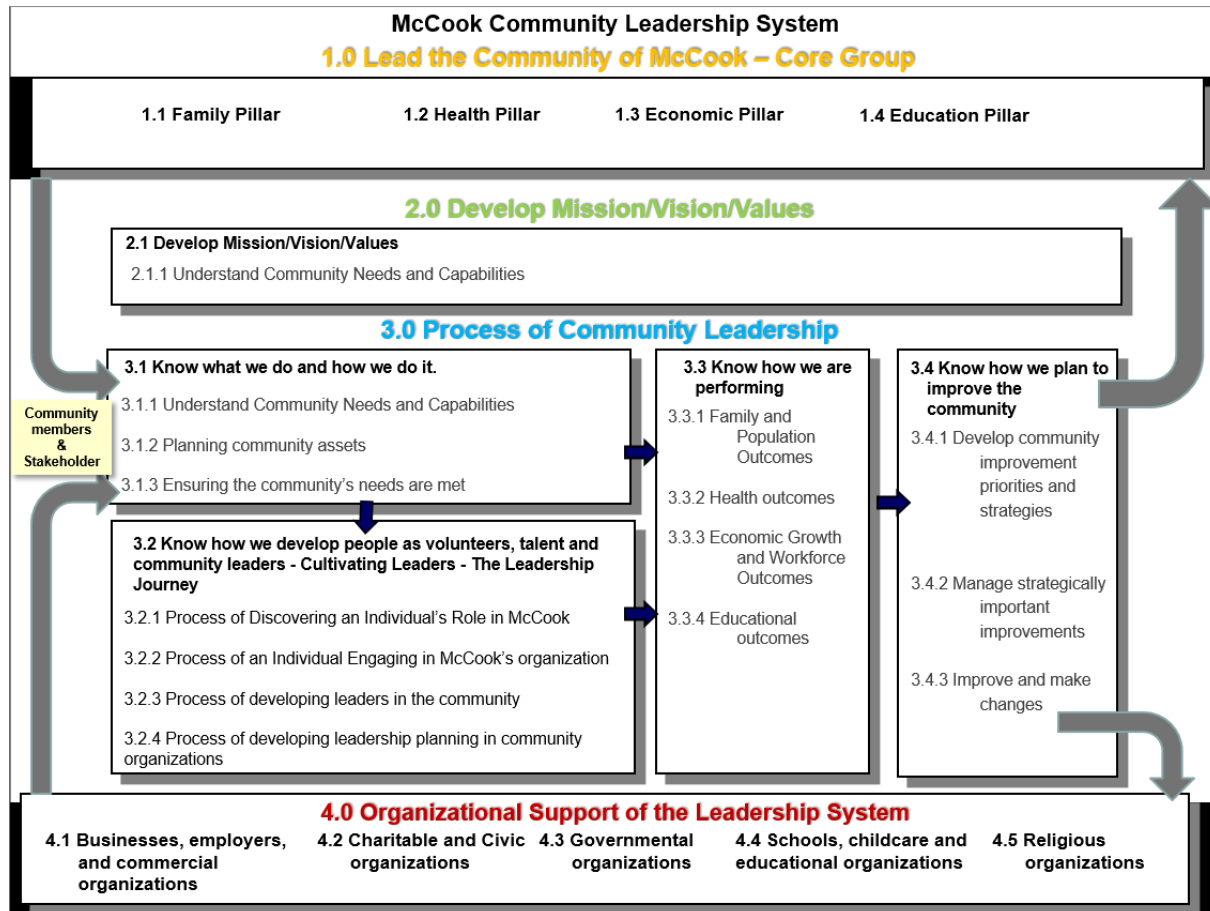
Community Hospital is the Backbone Organization for McCook's Communities of Excellence initiative.

Community Hospital has been on a performance improvement journey since 2009 using the Baldrige framework. The hospital has obtained the top Colorado award and is now applying on the National Level. The hospital sees the

power of what these collective efforts can do for our community. The overall health and wellness of the community is a driving factor for the hospital where it is important that the organization support other agencies and groups in succeeding in their efforts, making everything more prosperous and successful.

P.1b (3) System. What LEADERSHIP SYSTEM does your community excellence group use to lead its community excellence effort?

Figure P.1b (3) - 2 Leadership System



What Key community organizations, groups, and segments are involved in this system?

McCook Economic Development Corporation, McCook Chamber of Commerce, Community Hospital, Mid- Plains Community College, McCook Community Foundation Fund, and McCook Public Schools. There are portions of the Advisory group that are involved in this system as a collaborator or a partner.

P.1b (4) Programs and Services. What programs and services are offered through the efforts of your community excellence group?

There have been some specific seminars that have been offered. There have been discussions on an overall McCook health plan for some overall Capital investments.

The Flow downs for each pillar represent programs currently offered like housing items on Economic Vitality done by MEDC. The efforts are improving and growing through the initiatives chosen and included on the flow down. Health pillar this past year has discussed how to get Dental Vouchers out to early grade school for dental services this is now evolving into a dental day where they have student dentists coming into the community to provide services.

P.1b (5) Suppliers, Partners, and Collaborators. What KEY suppliers, PARTNERS, and COLLABORATORS support your community excellence group?

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Pillar Suppliers | Organizations present in meetings |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - City of McCook - MEDC - Community Hospital - McCook Community Foundation Fund - McCook Community College - Community Groups - McCook Chamber of Commerce - McCook Public Schools |

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Pillar Partners | Organizations present in meetings |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - YMCA - McCook Clinic - Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department - City of McCook - Community Hospital - McCook Community College - McCook/ Red Willow County Visitors Bureau - McCook Chamber of Commerce - MEDC - McCook Public School's - McCook Community Foundation - Rise Therapy - Tri Valley - McCook Public Transit - Hitch and Hay Public Transport |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Pillar Collaborators | Organizations present in meetings |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mid-Nebraska - Family Resource - Hillcrest Nursing Home - Red Willow Health Department - Kinship Pointe - Highland Park - MNB - Pinnacle Bank - Valmont - St. Patrick's Elementary School - Red Willow County Ministerial Association |

What role do they play in its WORK SYSTEMS, especially in producing and delivering its programs and services?

Early sessions gave the core team good input for who would be a partner or a collaborator of the COE journey and how involved they would like to be. Through the beginning Pillar meetings, it became a reality for who will be in the room for discussion and active in action plans. The partners list are bought in to our initiative and are at the table for various short and long term initiatives while our collaborators are called on to be at the table for specific initiatives.

P.2a Competitive Environment

P.2a (1) Competitive Position. With regard to its KEY Offerings, what is your community's competitive position relative to similar or nearby communities?

The city of McCook is an economic necessity for the Agriculture base in the region. The City is also a regional hub for smaller neighboring communities. The closest communities are much smaller and do not offer the amenities that McCook does for things like retail, grocery, hardware stores, movies, farm/country stores, implement/car dealerships, automotive repair and supply, and healthcare services.

What other communities are your community's Key competitors?

The Key competitors for retail is North Platte, 75 miles north and Kearney, 105 miles to the northeast where there are larger malls and specialty stores that people will use for more extensive shopping. We are a regional hub because of our geography and convenience in location.

P.2a (2) Competitiveness Changes What KEY changes, if any, are affecting your community’s competitive situation, including changes that create opportunities for INNOVATION and Collaboration for your community excellence group, as appropriate?

The community has many opportunities and challenges because of the geography and economic situation. Figure P.2a (2) – 1 Community Competitive Situation describes.

Figure P.2a (2) - 1 Community competitive situation

| Pillar | Key Changes | Innovation Opportunity |
|-------------------|--|--|
| Health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Age and Health of our population *Declining reimbursement and coverage for healthcare services * Deterioration of recreational facilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Dental coverage *Health promotion and programs for exercise * Building new pool and ballfields; and renovating YMCA |
| Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Graduates from high school and college leaving the area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Local programs to train trade jobs |
| Economic Vitality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Agriculture prices and economic impact *Low unemployment limits job applicants *Housing challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Agriculture extending businesses * Opportunity to increase affordable housing so we can attract more labor force. |
| Family | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Recreation and entertainment * Transportation needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Family friendly events *increase awareness and promotion of current offerings |

P.2a (3) Comparative Data. What KEY sources of comparative and competitive data about your community are available to your community excellence group?

We have good Housing and economic data through the MEDC. The health pillar has been using RWJ Foundation annual data and the US Census Bureau American Community Survey. The health pillar did a Facebook survey for Social Determinants of Health information from the public.

The City of McCook completes a comprehensive plan every decade for the future planning and expansion of the city. It evaluates the infrastructure in general and the needs for the growth or decrease in population.

Hospital regional market assessment information gives the current market share of services the volume of specific services and how they are changing and comparing to other healthcare organizations in the area. There is a future forecast of how service demands are expected to trend. The report also includes demographic data with forecasted changes.

Southwest Public Health Department has extensive data that tracks and trends healthcare attributes for the populations. The College and Public school systems both have benchmarking data.

What limitations, if any, affect the ability to obtain or use these data?

The limitations is that the overwhelming amount of data is dated and not completely reflective of the population we are accessing.

P.2b Strategic Context.

P.2b (1) Core Competencies. What are your community’s CORE COMPETENCIES? What are your community excellence group’s CORE COMPETENCIES, and what is their relationship to its Mission?

The Core Competencies for our efforts is understanding a community based on an agriculture economy. The community is responsive and changes based on economic price fluctuations and changes in an agriculture environment.

P.2b (2) Challenges and Advantages. What are your community's Key STRATEGIC CHALLENGES and ADVANTAGES?

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shifting demographics: Decreasing working age population and an increasingly aging population - Attracting, recruiting, and retaining necessary qualified workforce to a small rural community - Highly dependent on an Agricultural based Economy - Access to technology - Access to affordable and available housing options - Available childcare programs |
| Advantages | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leadership from all generations – Southwest Nebraska Leadership, McCook Optimists, etc. - Wide array of offerings for residents - Hub for trade and multiple job opportunities - Environment for Value added agriculture entrants - Natural Resources – close lakes for fishing/camping and opportunities for hunting - McCook Community College student base - Community Service Groups – Optimists, Rotary, Lions, Habitat for Humanity - Geography being a regional hub used more being 70 to 100 miles from larger cities |

How do these challenges and advantages relate to your community excellence group's MISSION and VISION?

These challenges and advantages relate to our groups missions and vision because it is our goal to enhance the quality of life for our residents. Any of the bullet points from above are either helping us achieve our mission or it is hindering us. The challenges give us an opportunity to improve and bring momentum on initiatives to further achieve our mission.

P.2c Performance Improvement System

What are the KEY elements of the performance improvement system used by your community excellence group, including its PROCESSES for evaluating and improving Key projects and PROCESSES?

As a group we have reviewed our performance improvement system and going forward in our journey we will utilize Plan Do Check Act (PDCA) cycle. The backbone organization also utilizes PDCA which was a motivating factor.