Abstract:


Included is a combination of updated regional demographics, activities, and the presentation of continuing and new projects. This document also identifies any changes in the region which may affect the area's economy or require a program modification. A sample work plan with updates is provided for reference of planned, completed, and ongoing projects.

Finally, there is brief discussion of efforts regarding regional resilience and recovery, along with an attached WCWRPC 2017 Annual Report which illustrates the diversity of projects and activities completed by the agency in a typical calendar year.
Strategy Committee

West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (WCWRPC) is a multi-county planning agency serving county and local governments in the Wisconsin counties of Barron, Chippewa, Clark, Dunn, Eau Claire, Polk and St. Croix. The Commission was created in 1971 by the seven aforementioned counties and derives its authority from Wisconsin Statute 66.0309. The Commission's governing body consists of three representatives from each of the seven counties in the region.

WCWRPC serves as the governing board and planning organization for the seven-county Economic Development District. The Commission members represent a broad variety of economic interests ranging from farmers and business owners to not-for-profit entities and public officials.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

**BARRON COUNTY**
Steve Buchanan
Louie Okey
Gary Taxdahl

**CHIPPEWA COUNTY**
Dave Eisenhuth
Steve Gerrish
Glen Sikorski

**CLARK COUNTY**
Peter Kaz
Allen Krause, Jr.
Joe Waichulis Jr.

**DUNN COUNTY**
Diane Morehouse
Thomas Quinn
Steve Rasmussen

**EAU CLAIRE COUNTY**
John L. Frank
Melissa Janssen
Connie Russell

**POLK COUNTY**
Joe Demulling
William Johnson IV
Tracy LaBlanc

**ST. CROIX COUNTY**
Judy Achterhof
Daniel Hansen
Larry Weisenbeck
# Table of Contents

## SECTION I. OVERVIEW
- Introduction .................................................. 6
- DETAILS OF THE 2018 CEDS ANNUAL UPDATE .......... 6
- ECONOMIC OVERVIEW ...................................... 6
- Regional Overview .......................................... 7

## SECTION II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- Report Purpose ............................................. 8

## SECTION III. ANNUAL EVALUATION
- Economic Health & Performance .......................... 9
  - PRIMARY ECONOMIC HEALTH INDICATORS .......... 9
- Changes in the WCWRPC Region ........................... 10
  - TOTAL POPULATION & GROWTH ...................... 10
  - TOTAL EMPLOYMENT & GROWTH ....................... 10
  - UNEMPLOYMENT RATE & CHANGE ...................... 10
  - JOBS BY INDUSTRY ..................................... 11
  - EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY & CHANGE ............... 12
  - LARGEST OCCUPATIONS ................................ 13
  - FASTEST GROWING OCCUPATIONS .................... 14
  - HIGHEST PAYING OCCUPATIONS ....................... 15
- Cluster Identification ...................................... 16
  - TOP 12 CLUSTERS IDENTIFIED IN WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN . 16
Table of Contents

Detailed Performance Measures . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 17
Update of Regional Goals & Performance Measures . . . . . . 18
  GOAL 1: INFRASTRUCTURE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 18
  GOAL 2: SENSE-OF-PLACE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 19
  GOAL 3: NEW BUSINESS . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 20
  GOAL 4: REGIONAL WORKFORCE . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 21
  GOAL 5: COORDINATION . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 22

SECTION IV. WCWRPC WORK PLAN
  Work Plan Status & Updates . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 23

SECTION V. ECONOMIC RESILIENCE
  Economic Resilience & Recovery Update . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 28

APPENDIX A
  WCWRPC 2017 Projects Report . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 29
Introduction

In March 1980, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission was designated as an Economic Development District by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

In order to maintain this economic development district designation, and for entities within the region to qualify for most EDA assistance programs, the region’s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) must be updated at least once every five years and performance reports must be submitted annually to the EDA. The region’s CEDS was last updated in October 2015 and was accepted by the Economic Development Administration as meeting all the requirements as defined within 13 CFR 300.7.

DETAILS OF THE 2018 CEDS ANNUAL UPDATE

This annual report provides a brief update of economic development activities in the Region and a snapshot of annual changes to the region benchmarks developed for the 2015 CEDS Update. This includes an update and evaluation of both the Primary Economic Health Indicators and Detailed Performance Measures used to review and assess economic health and performance of the West Central Region. The report also describes progress of the 2015 CEDS Update along with the status and updates of the WCWRPC Work Plan.

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Population (2017)
Population grew by 7,435 over the last 5 years and is projected to grow by 6,568 over the next 5 years.

Jobs (2017)
Jobs grew by 12,976 over the last 5 years and are projected to grow by 10,669 over the next 5 years.

Avg. Earnings Per Job (2017)
Regional average earnings per job are $15.9K below the national average earnings of $64.2K per job.
Regional Overview

The West Central Region of Wisconsin comprises seven counties with a total landmass of 6,205 square miles. In part from its close proximity to the Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota metro area, the Region experiences continuous growth with increasing ties to the economic opportunities associated with the Twin Cities. Overall, the Region is mostly rural. However, Eau Claire and St. Croix counties have experienced continued growth over the last twenty years. The Region itself comprises only 13.7% of the State's population while covering around 10.5% of it's total landmass.

Eau Claire, WI
Metropolitan Area
Annual Wage - $39,594
2016
Annual Wage Growth Rate - 3.97%
1998 to 2016

Minneapolis, MN
Metropolitan Area
Annual Wage - $55,708
2016
Annual Wage Growth Rate - 2.96%
1998 to 2016

Menomonie, WI
Micropolitan Area
Annual Wage - $38,328
2016
Annual Wage Growth Rate - 4.12%
1998 to 2016
This CEDS Annual Report is meant to assess work activities completed regionally by WCWRPC and its partners in improving economic conditions in the Region. It is a requirement to maintain EDA planning partnership grant funding for WCWRPC, but more importantly it provides an opportunity to take a step back annually to address the initiatives that are being implemented. The five regional goals identified in the 2015 CEDS Update continue to be on point as priorities. They include:

1. Strengthen Community, County & Regional Infrastructure
2. Promote & Assist In Developing Sense-of-Place as an Economic Development Tool
3. Encourage & Support New or Existing Businesses
4. Address Regional Workforce Development & Attraction Issues
5. Improve the Coordination of Economic Development Professionals & Services

While much work is yet to be done in meeting these goals, progress is being made through completed activities and with close collaboration with partner agencies. This progress is apparent when examining annual metrics and indicators of economic health and performance. Some of the key highlights in the Region include:

- Increasing population
- Growing employment
- Decreasing unemployment
- Increased wages in most industry sectors

Economic development strategies and work activities identified in the 2015 CEDS document will continue to be implemented and modified as necessary into 2019 with the goal of continued success in helping to meet the needs of the region.
Economic Health & Performance

Key partners in the Region employ a variety of performance measures to evaluate implementation of the 2015 CEDS Update. Several agencies maintain an extensive resource library of regional resources, up-to-date demographic and economic data, along with planning and regional business support through its various plans and programs. This allows various partners or agencies to continually assess the economic health of the Region, and track the progress of CEDS implementation.

WCWRPC works regularly with partner organizations to implement or provide support for accomplishing goals and objectives of the CEDS. This includes regular meetings and updates of progress related to the five regional goals and how individual partner organizations have contributed to or supported economic development projects in the region.

PRIMARY ECONOMIC HEALTH INDICATORS

Primary metrics established for the 2015 CEDS Update are shown in the graphic below, followed by any available updates where data is available. These primary metrics, along with input from partnering organizations helps establish a snapshot of the economic health of the region and provide a benchmark for future comparison.

Benchmark framework developed for the 2015 CEDS Update.
SECTION III: ANNUAL EVALUATION

Changes In The WCWRPC Region

TOTAL POPULATION & GROWTH
(Source: ESRI)

2017:  427,787
2018:  431,141

CHANGE: 0.77%

SUMMARY: Total population in the Region continues to increase with the highest growth rate occurring in St. Croix County (1.48%). The population growth rate in Western Wisconsin is also higher than the State average of .50% and lower than the U.S. average of 1.22%.

TOTAL EMPLOYMENT & GROWTH
(Source: ESRI)

2017:  222,065
2018:  231,806

CHANGE: 1.52%

SUMMARY: Total employment in the Region shows a slight increase from the previous year. Some of the fastest growing occupations in Western Wisconsin include: Personal Care Aides, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers, Food Preparation and Servers, Retail Salespersons, and Office Clerks (EMSI).

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE & CHANGE
(Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development)

2017:  3.1%
2018:  2.9%

CHANGE: -0.2%

SUMMARY: Unemployment rates in the Region decreased slightly from the previous year, and are currently below U.S. rates and tied with the State of Wisconsin rate.

Source: Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
Manufacturing is the largest employment industry in the Region, followed by Health Care and Social Assistance, and Government.
### Employment by Industry & Change

*Source: EMSI*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUSTRY</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>CHANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>32,894</td>
<td>33,892</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>29,775</td>
<td>30,036</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>28,111</td>
<td>27,857</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>23,656</td>
<td>23,396</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>15,987</td>
<td>16,446</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>10,080</td>
<td>10,367</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin/Support/Waste &amp; Remediation Services</td>
<td>8,911</td>
<td>8,669</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>8,369</td>
<td>8,501</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services (except Public Administration)</td>
<td>8,318</td>
<td>8,480</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>6,363</td>
<td>6,385</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Insurance</td>
<td>5,830</td>
<td>6,054</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>6,376</td>
<td>6,031</td>
<td>-5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing &amp; Hunting</td>
<td>5,220</td>
<td>5,287</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of Companies and Enterprises</td>
<td>2,973</td>
<td>3,089</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation</td>
<td>2,664</td>
<td>2,762</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>1,720</td>
<td>1,653</td>
<td>-3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Services</td>
<td>1,580</td>
<td>1,622</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate and Rental and Leasing</td>
<td>1,471</td>
<td>1,483</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction</td>
<td>391</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>-1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While manufacturing continues to employ the highest number of workers in Western Wisconsin, the highest rate of increase occurred in the Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction industry.

*Fairmount Santrol, Menomonie. Photo by Dan Reiland, The Eau Claire Leader-Telegram.*
### Largest Occupations

*Source: EMSI*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office and Administrative Support Occupations</td>
<td>26,859</td>
<td>26,687</td>
<td>-172</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>$16.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Occupations</td>
<td>23,013</td>
<td>23,544</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$16.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Related Occupations</td>
<td>17,759</td>
<td>17,551</td>
<td>-208</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>$12.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations</td>
<td>16,430</td>
<td>16,760</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$10.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Material Moving Occupations</td>
<td>15,066</td>
<td>15,275</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$16.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations</td>
<td>11,980</td>
<td>11,913</td>
<td>-67</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>$30.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Training, and Library Occupations</td>
<td>11,160</td>
<td>11,383</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$22.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations</td>
<td>8,050</td>
<td>8,206</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$21.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Occupations</td>
<td>7,146</td>
<td>7,204</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$41.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care and Service Occupations</td>
<td>7,036</td>
<td>7,744</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$11.54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Fastest Growing Occupations

**Source:** EMSI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Care and Service Occupations</td>
<td>7,036</td>
<td>7,744</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>$11.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Occupations</td>
<td>23,013</td>
<td>23,544</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$16.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations</td>
<td>16,430</td>
<td>16,760</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$10.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and Extraction Occupations</td>
<td>7,035</td>
<td>7,352</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$23.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Training, and Library Occupations</td>
<td>11,160</td>
<td>11,383</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$22.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Material Moving Occupations</td>
<td>15,066</td>
<td>15,275</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$16.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations</td>
<td>8,050</td>
<td>8,206</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$21.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Financial Operations Occupations</td>
<td>5,961</td>
<td>6,103</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$26.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations</td>
<td>1,988</td>
<td>2,050</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>$13.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Occupations</td>
<td>7,146</td>
<td>7,204</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$41.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Highest Paying Occupations

Source: EMSI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Occupations</td>
<td>7,146</td>
<td>7,204</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$41.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and Engineering Occupations</td>
<td>3,030</td>
<td>3,019</td>
<td>-11</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>$31.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations</td>
<td>11,980</td>
<td>11,913</td>
<td>-67</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>$30.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer and Mathematical Occupations</td>
<td>2,313</td>
<td>2,306</td>
<td>-7</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>$28.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Occupations</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>$26.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Financial Operations</td>
<td>5,961</td>
<td>6,103</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$26.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>-58</td>
<td>-7%</td>
<td>$26.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and Extraction Occupations</td>
<td>7,035</td>
<td>7,352</td>
<td>317</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>$23.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education, Training, and Library Occupations</td>
<td>11,160</td>
<td>11,383</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$22.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations</td>
<td>8,050</td>
<td>8,206</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>$21.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cluster Identification

According to the Brookings Institution, an industry cluster is a group of firms, and related economic actors and institutions, that are located near one another and that draw productive advantage from their mutual proximity and concentrations. The most important findings for policymakers and practitioners related to cluster analysis finds that:

1. **Clusters are the key organizational unit for understanding and improving the performance of regional economies.**

2. **Cluster thinking matters because it orients economic development policy and practice toward groups of firms and away from individual firms.**

3. **Cluster thinking offers important lessons for economic development policy and practice.**

A report developed for the West Central Region using EMSI software found that Local Education and Training scored the highest among the top 12 ranked clusters in the Region. This cluster is made up of 6 industries that include the following:

- Elementary and secondary schools
- Other technical and trade schools
- Fine arts schools
- Automobile driving schools
- Vocational rehabilitation services
- Elementary and secondary schools

**Top 12 Clusters in West Central Wisconsin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Education &amp; Training</th>
<th>Business Services</th>
<th>Nonmetal Mining</th>
<th>Local Health Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plastics</td>
<td>Medical Devices</td>
<td>Communications Equipment &amp; Services</td>
<td>Local Utilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural Inputs &amp; Services</td>
<td>State Government Services</td>
<td>Food Processing &amp; Manufacturing</td>
<td>Vulcanized &amp; Fired Materials</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Detailed Performance Measures

The list of performance measures included in this section help to identify a mix of regional actions and tasks to support the 2015 CEDS goals. Key metrics are identified for each of the five regional goals of the 2015 CEDS Update. While it is not always clear who is responsible for accomplishing specific goals or strategies outlined in this document, continued coordination and use of established strategies of the CEDS are meant to help guide professionals in the Region to address specific action items based on their own agency needs, knowledge or expertise.

Performance Measure Categories

(based on CEDS regional goals & strategies)

- Goal 1: Major Infrastructure Projects
- Goal 2: Promoting Sense-of-Place
- Goal 3: New or Existing Businesses
- Goal 4: Workforce Development & Attraction
- Goal 5: Improved Coordination

Benchmark framework from the 2015 CEDS Update.

PRIMARY Economic Health Indicators
### Regional Goal 1: Strengthen Community, County & Regional Infrastructure

**SWOT FINDING:** Transportation facilities (roads, bridges, etc.), broadband services and water/wastewater utility infrastructure construction and repair is a major concern facing communities in the Region. As communities look to support economic development projects and steady population growth, national and state level programs or funding opportunities will be critical to maintaining a healthy, functioning infrastructure system.

### 1. Major Infrastructure Projects

- Increase number of infrastructure projects
- Increase broadband coverage through partnerships or grants
- Increase knowledge and support for passenger rail service to the Region
- Increase public transit availability/use
- Increase rural transportation connectivity through planning or construction
- Increase bike/pedestrian infrastructure

### 2018 UPDATE:

WCWRPC continues to work with its partners to secure major infrastructure funding and projects in the Region. Notable projects include funding procurement and project administration for replacement of an aging and deteriorating sanitary sewer, storm sewer, and other related water infrastructure in the City of Greenwood, WI. WCWRPC staff also worked with several School Districts to complete Safe Routes to Schools plans that will directly result in new or improved infrastructure to support multi-modal transportation in the Region.

WCWRPC staff continue to work with the West Central Wisconsin Rail Coalition that provides leadership and coordination to develop passenger rail service through West Central Wisconsin. Staff also continues to support broadband coverage and expansion planning for rural areas of West Central Wisconsin. Other projects contributing to CEDS goals related to public infrastructure in 2018 include:

- Public Transit Bus Stop Survey for the City of Eau Claire Transit
- Broadband funding investigation for Dunn County
- Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans
- Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) application for a trail segment in the Town of St. Joseph
- River Falls and Rice Lake Ride Share Taxi Program Administration
- Chippewa/Eau Claire Sewer Service Area Policy Update
Regional Goal 2: Promote & Assist In Developing Sense-of-Place as an Economic Development Tool

SWOT FINDING: There are many unique regional assets in the form of diverse natural and cultural resources that make the area an attractive place for new residents and businesses. There needs to be greater capitalization of these assets and a coordinated approach to market the many quality of life benefits of living in West Central Wisconsin.

2. Promoting Sense-of-Place

- Increase number of placemaking exercises
- Increase marketing of regional assets
- Increase number of outdoor recreation planning efforts
- Increase outreach efforts, methods, and funding sources to enhance and promote quality of place

2018 UPDATE: WCWRPC and partner agencies throughout the Region continue to work with local communities on infrastructure projects that enhance local assets and help build identity and establish a strong sense-of-place. Notable projects include the development of a Non-Residential Design Guideline Manual and Ordinance Development Manual for the Town of St. Joseph and Placemaking/Branding events in the Village of Boyceville.

WCWRPC also developed proposals to assist Barron County and the City of Chippewa Falls with Outdoor Recreation Plan Updates that will start in late 2018. Other notable on-going projects include:

- Watershed Planning to Improve Water Quality
- Stormwater Education & Outreach
- Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning
- Placemaking
Regional Goal 3: Encourage & Support New or Existing Businesses

**SWOT FINDING:** Business growth in the Region can take on various forms. This may include the encouragement and support of new entrepreneurial ventures, the retention and expansion of existing businesses, or the attraction of new business developments. A variety of programs and resources are in place to facilitate these activities, while others could be added to further strengthen regional efforts to drive the economy forward. Emphasis should be placed on key cluster and driver industries that compliment and strengthen the current mix of industries.

### 3. New or Existing Businesses

- Increase number of jobs
- Increase number of establishments
- Increase business start-ups
- Decrease poverty rates
- Decrease unemployment rates
- Increase wages and earnings
- Increase number of applications to Regional Business Fund, Inc. or other similar agencies to support business retention or expansion
- Increase number of incubators, accelerator programs and/or centers for new or existing businesses
- Maintain up-to-date data for businesses interested in locating in the Region

**2018 UPDATE:** WCWRPC continues to work with businesses and municipalities to encourage and support new growth, startups, and innovation in the Region. Notable projects in the Region include the completion of the St. Croix Valley Business Innovation Center that provides private offices, light manufacturing, and co-working space with business advisors and coaches for entrepreneurs and business owners. WCWRPC wrote the $1.4 million grant application awarded by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and also administered the project funding.

Additionally, work on the Osceola Fabrication Laboratory and Workforce Development Facility is underway. WCWRPC staff prepared a feasibility study and EDA grant application for the project and is assisting with administration of project funding.

The Regional Business Fund (RBF) remains busy providing flexible financing and low-interest loans to new or expanding businesses in the Region. The RBF continues to be a vital resource to diversify the economy, add new technology, revitalize buildings, and create quality jobs and capital investment in West Central Wisconsin. Together, these and other initiatives have and will continue to help western Wisconsin stand out from the rest of the State for the number of new start-ups and the growth of new and existing businesses.
Regional Goal 4: Address Regional Workforce Development & Attraction Issues

**SWOT FINDING:** While the Region has many higher education opportunities, fewer employment options for these graduates contribute to a "brain drain" and loss of a skilled workforce. The out-migration of many younger people coupled with the aging population will likely result in insufficient workforce numbers in the Region in the near future.

### 4. Workforce Development & Attraction

- Increase participation of regional partners with Workforce Development Board of Western Wisconsin
- Increase participation of regional partners with economic development efforts of Momentum West
- Increase/encourage participation in placemaking and sense-of-place marketing of the Region
- Increase number of workforce trainings/programs to train or recruit workers
- Increase support to educational institutions and their programming needs
- Increase efforts to retain young talent

**2018 UPDATE:** WCWRPC was recently awarded funding from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) for short-term planning assistance to help build capacity of both the RPC and the region it serves. The proposed activities meet EDA Investment Priorities to help address the region’s toughest economic development issues that will dramatically support ongoing work far into the future. The two components awarded funding from the EDA application include:

- **Brown Bag Luncheon Program**
- **Purchase of Audio/Visual Equipment for Broadcast and Recording of Brown Bag Program Events and Other Trainings**

WCWRPC also prepared a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Special Project application for funding of several housing studies to be completed in Barron County. The application was recently awarded funding which will cover 50% of the project costs to complete studies in the communities of Barron, Cameron, Chetek, Cumberland, Rice Lake, Turtle Lake, and also an overall Barron County study. WCWRPC will be completing the work on the studies in coordination with the Barron County Economic Development Corporation and the Survey Research Center of the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. The work began in September 2018 and should be complete by March of 2019. The studies were initiated in response to reported housing shortages and the ability to recruit workers for businesses.
Regional Goal 5: Improve the Coordination of Economic Development Professionals & Services

SWOT FINDING: While there are many resources to assist communities with economic development objectives, one major obstacle in the Region is often knowing the clearly defined roles and responsibilities of agencies, individuals, professionals and organizations offering economic development programs and services. This regional strategy seeks to develop a network of regional economic development professionals with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to prevent duplication of service and effort in the Region.

5. Improved Coordination

- Increase coordination/collaboration between economic development entities
- Develop coordinated regional economic development strategy
- Increase support for meetings of economic development professionals
- Develop list of defined roles, tools and resources of regional agencies and/or partners

2018 UPDATE: WCWRPC participated in several workshops and trainings to help improve coordination in the Region. On June 14, 2018 the Association of Wisconsin Regional Planning Commissions (AWRPC) held its first ever Regional Planning Commission Summit in Wisconsin Rapids. Several RPC commissioners and staff from all of the state’s nine planning commissions were invited to participate and the day was filled with information sharing sessions, project presentations, and networking opportunities. Due to participant feedback for the event, it is anticipated that the Summit will continue to be held once every two years.

West Central Wisconsin is fortunate to have in place a strong economic development network representing both the public and private sector. WCWRPC sits on several boards related to economic development and is an active participant at regular stakeholder meetings throughout the year. Stakeholders in this network include the following:

- Regional Business Fund, Inc.
- County Economic Development Corporations
- Local economic development organizations and staff
- Private businesses
- Universities and Technical Colleges
- Momentum West
- Workforce Development Board of Western Wisconsin
- SBDC offices
- Local financial institutions
- Many others at local, state, and federal levels
The following section presents the WCWRPC Work Plan from the 2015 CEDS Update with an update of completed and on-going activities and program support. While every effort is made to identify accomplishments for these activities, this in no way encompasses all the efforts and accomplishments of all the dedicated economic development professionals and stakeholders in the Region.

### WORK PLAN STATUS & UPDATES

The following table provides a summary of the activities and their status as of the Year Ending December 2018:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK ELEMENT</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>SCHEDULE</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prepare and submit 2015 CEDS Update to EDA.</td>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>Complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prepare and submit 2016 CEDS Annual report to EDA.</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>Complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Prepare and submit 2017 CEDS Annual report to EDA</td>
<td>October 2017</td>
<td>Complete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Economic Development Integration</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>Proposal complete and approved. Integration efforts ongoing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Prepare and submit 2018 CEDS Annual report to EDA</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>In Progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Provide technical and grant preparation assistance to member governments to accomplish identified projects.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Provided assistance to units of government in all seven counties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WORK ELEMENT</td>
<td>ACTIVITY</td>
<td>SCHEDULE</td>
<td>STATUS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Provide assistance to businesses on financing, start-ups, expansions, and relocations</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Approximately 60 businesses assisted through RBF, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Continue to provide county, community, and industrial park profiles.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Updated annually and available on WCWRPC website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Assist in strengthening and maintaining an active economic development network.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Participation on the Board of Directors for the Wisconsin Economic Development Association, Momentum West, Workforce Development Board, and the UW-River Falls Chancellor’s Advisory Board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Provide guidance and resources in completing necessary regional studies and solutions</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Completed a white paper on the impacts of an aging population. Coordinating the Red Cedar Watershed project. Completed a community action plan for the Eau Claire River Watershed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Work with local governments on recreation trail development.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Successful TAP grant award for the Chippewa River Trail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Assist local governments in applying for outdoor recreation aids.</td>
<td>Yearly</td>
<td>Assisting Chippewa, Dunn, and Eau Claire counties with Bike and Pedestrian plans. Assisting Chippewa Falls and Barron County with Outdoor Recreation Plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Provide technical assistance to local governments to manage rural growth through comprehensive planning.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Completed Rice Lake, Curtiss &amp; Cumberland comprehensive plan updates. Starting work on updates for Owen, Turtle Lake and Stanley.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## WCWRPC WORK PLAN - 2018 CEDS UPDATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK ELEMENT</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>SCHEDULE</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Provide data and other technical assistance services to local governments and other partners.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Provide regular assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Prepare hazard mitigation plans for counties and promote community resiliency.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Plans nearing completion for Polk and Barron Counties. Beginning work on Eau Claire, St. Croix, Clark and Chippewa counties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Continue to administer Regional Business Fund, Inc. and other local revolving loan funds.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>On-going. Record number of loans in 2017.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Assist on local transportation issues (rural transportation coordination, inter-city passenger rail, transit studies, local financing, etc.).</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Completed transit center site selection study in the City of Eau Claire. Working on bus stop assessment survey and transit feasibility study for St. Croix County. Providing grant writing assistance to the Dunn County Economic Development Corporation and Dunn County Transit Commission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Collaborate on regional economic development marketing efforts for west central Wisconsin.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>On-going through coordination with Momentum West.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Provide coordinating support to regional broadband implementation efforts.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Provide on-going staff support to regional broadband group and serve on statewide advisory committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Conduct placemaking workshops to promote sense-of-place.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Placemaking activities completed in Rice Lake, Barron, and Cumberland and Boyceville.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### WCWRPC WORK PLAN - 2018 CEDS UPDATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK ELEMENT</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>SCHEDULE</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Provide grant administration services to communities receiving funding for infrastructure projects.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Administrative assistance provided to River Falls, Rice Lake, Greenwood, Osceola, Luck, Chippewa Falls and others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Maintain board position on Momentum West.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Continue to serve on board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Maintain board position on Workforce Development Board of Western Wisconsin.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Continue to serve on board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Maintain board position on the Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA), the statewide economic development organization.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Continue to serve on board.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Provide technical assistance to county economic development corporations.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Provide regular assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Maintain a priority list of infrastructure projects in need of funding.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>On-going updates annually.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Conduct Safe Routes to School (SRTS) planning.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>SRTS plans completed in Eau Claire, Hudson and Altoona School Districts. Funding sought for a regional SRTS implementation program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Process applications for Momentum West's Gold Shovel program.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Applications processed as received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Provide information and consultation on potential funding opportunities and their requirements.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>On-going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Assist local governments in assessing the necessary tools and resources to preserve and maintain theirowntowns, neighborhood commercial areas, historic properties/areas, culturally significant, and environmentally sensitive areas.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>On-going.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

SECTION IV: WCWRPC WORK PLAN
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK ELEMENT</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>SCHEDULE</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Provide general support for Disaster Ready Chippewa Valley (DRCV).</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Continue to provide support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Monitor state and federal legislation regarding areas of concern such as comprehensive planning, community and rural development, transportation, solid waste, water quality, and education.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Continue to provide support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Act as a coordinating entity between local governments and state and federal agencies.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Continue to provide support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Act as the regional coordinator for Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM)’s 13-county Western Wisconsin Regional Interoperability Council.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Continue to provide support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Serve on educational institution committees and provide data and input as requested.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Provided assistance to UW-Eau Claire, UW-Stout, and UW-River Falls. Worked with CVTC and WITC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Participate on regional advisory committees relating to special projects and efforts.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Continue to provide support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Provide staffing for regional water quality planning efforts.</td>
<td>On-going</td>
<td>Provide staff and administrative support to Rain to Rivers of Western Wisconsin and recently completed a report for Dunn County in defining Environmental Sensitive Areas. Coordinating the Red Cedar Watershed project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several major threats to economic resilience in the Region were identified in the West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2015 Update. A regional approach to economic resilience was identified with project partners and WCWRPC continues to make significant progress in preparing communities for natural and economic disruptions through its hazard mitigation planning program.

By the end of 2019, all seven counties in the WCWRPC Region are expected to have newly adopted hazard mitigation plans that increase regional capacity through the resiliency framework identified in the 2015 CEDS Update consisting of the following:

PHASE I: MITIGATION
PHASE II: PREPAREDNESS
PHASE III: RESPONSE
PHASE IV: RECOVERY

In addition to completing hazard mitigation plan updates, WCWRPC has also assisted communities with FEMA grant applications for mitigation activities and infrastructure projects. Notable projects in 2017-2018 include applications for the construction of community safe rooms (storm shelters) in areas where storms have historically caused significant damage or loss of life.
APPENDIX A

WCWRPC 2017 Projects Report

The West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission recently completed a 2017 Projects Report that highlights agency activities and partnerships throughout 2017. The document is included as an Appendix to this Annual CEDS Performance Report to illustrate the diversity of work completed by WCWRPC and its partners to meet the 2015 CEDS goals and strategies.

The report will also be used as a marketing and capacity building tool for stakeholders and elected officials in West Central Wisconsin. The goal is to provide greater knowledge of programs and services available to communities and businesses in the Region, and to foster greater collaboration between stakeholders and partner organizations.

WCWRPC plans to develop a similar report on a recurring annual basis to keep project partners and stakeholders informed of successful projects and planning efforts occurring in the Region. The hope is also to educate and inspire communities to develop similar plans or projects that will contribute to CEDS goals and ultimately lead to greater economic health and prosperity in West Central Wisconsin.