



Our Mission
To drive economic, workforce and population growth strategies, and to help businesses succeed.

Our Vision
To be the top economic growth region in the country.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2021

Key Indicators: GDP Growth - Workforce Growth - Member Satisfaction

Economic Development & Workforce

The Economic Alliance leads regional efforts to attract, retain and expand growth-oriented businesses and the regional workforce.

- **Lead efforts to secure financial incentives and promote initiatives related to economic growth**
 - » Assist companies and developers to create, in the next five years 4,000 jobs and 15 new businesses as part of \$2 billion in total capital investment
 - » Assist in development of a 5-Year Regional Economic Development Plan, collaborating with businesses, developers, cities, counties and economic development partners to determine a post-Covid pandemic economic growth strategy for the region
 - » Transition former coalitions of ICR Iowa (Diversity/Inclusion, Talent/Workforce) to sustain momentum of the coalitions and ensure focus on initiatives directly related to inclusive economic growth
- **Attract business and grow workforce in our seven-county region**
 - » Provide services or connections that substantively add to workforce of at least three area companies, including direct assistance to crafting and submitting proposals for state funding programs such as the Employer Innovation Fund and other components of Future Ready Iowa
 - » Connect area college students and interns to economic opportunity and quality of life experiences that improve the likelihood they will take or keep jobs in the region by creating an early-career Talent Hub with at least 50 students, conducting Ignite ICR programming that attracts at least 200 participants and offering other programs that grow the talent development pipeline and encourage internship programs
 - » Lead regular meetings of rural and urban economic developers in the ICR region, providing training, programming, public policy connections, project leads and any necessary assistance to help drive business and workforce growth
- **Provide expert resources and data, and connect members to additional resources, as needed, from local governments, economic and community development organizations**
 - » Complete 410 substantive meetings with corporate decisionmakers, differentiating strategies for out-of-state vs. ICR-area headquartered companies; analyze collective information and communicate trends and highlights to business community
 - » Increase by 10% the number of businesses referred to job training, property redevelopment, job creation/capital investment and other economic incentive programs
 - » Conduct quarterly programs on emerging issues / strategies of value and through other communications vehicles provide at least six times a year information on economic trends and data related to existing industries and emerging business opportunities



Community Development

The Economic Alliance works to strengthen core districts, and to promote their growth and success.

- **Create and support perpetual workday and nightlife vibrancy in core districts**
 - » Create action plans for aesthetic improvements to enhance connectivity and user experience
 - » Initiate a core district collaboration project among MedQuarter, Czech Village/New Bo, Kingston and Downtown
 - » Help execute key priorities of core district plans to distinguish districts through branding, district gateways and public art projects
- **Confront challenges and seize opportunities that arise in the wake of the pandemic and the return to relative normalcy**
 - » Spur discussions among local leaders, core district property owners, subject matter experts and the Community Development Innovation Council on challenges related to the realm of commercial real estate
 - » Help mitigate challenges core district businesses will continue to face as a percentage of pre-Covid workforce continues to work remotely
 - » Plan, promote and execute on placemaking events such as Farmers Markets to re-energize core districts when large gatherings again become possible
- **Collaborate with district leaders to keep focus on long-term strategic priorities**
 - » Continue advocacy and education on core district housing to support a goal to continue to add at least 300 new units of core district housing annually
 - » Provide regular updates on flood control system and ConnectCR to keep stakeholders informed and involved in relevant ways in two critically important development projects
 - » Support and work closely with ParkCR and the DPMI Board as they manage and operate a parking system significantly impacted by consequences of the pandemic



Public Policy

The Economic Alliance educates, engages and advocates for economic growth policies on the local, state and federal levels.

- **Align and partner with like-minded organizations to advocate as one voice and promote Economic Alliance public policy priorities**
 - » Work with others in multiple efforts to advocate and educate for the protection of tax credit programs and other economic development incentives from local, state & federal programs including Research Activities Credits, Brownfield/Grayfield grants and housing programs
 - » Use our leadership positions through our involvement in statewide and national organizations to promote Economic Alliance public policy priorities
 - » Build and strengthen relationships with and among urban and rural stakeholders, advocates and legislators throughout the region to advance our shared interests
- **Strategically engage to drive major initiatives that lead to transformational improvement locally, regionally and statewide**
 - » Demonstrate legislative progress on fair chance hiring, childcare solutions, the hemp industry, criminal justice reform and immigration as a part of our efforts to grow a skilled workforce and open new markets
 - » Gain agreement among broad stakeholders on policy positions and funding assistance that would impact population growth through placemaking and quality of life projects
 - » Explore options to determine our role in championing the extension of Linn County's Local Option Sales Tax, which has generated municipal revenue for infrastructure, community improvements and tax relief that help drive economic growth
- **Educate and connect our members and stakeholders to leverage their influence**
 - » Encourage members to communicate our message of civility and cooperative debate at all levels of government and support elected officials who work together to focus on serving our communities
 - » Provide members with opportunities to echo Economic Alliance advocacy messages with elected officials during crucial times of decision-making, particularly with issues listed in our strategic plan.
 - » Garner appointments of regional leaders in alignment with the Economic Alliance to targeted boards, commissions or task forces



Business Support

The Economic Alliance engages with small and locally owned businesses to help them succeed.

- **Deliver tangible benefits that provide clear value**
 - » Establish small business recovery grant program and process for the next crisis that requires immediate financial assistance to help businesses survive
 - » Increase business-to-business member engagement through networking and new member engagement programs that ensure at least 50% of new members have engagement with stakeholders beyond Economic Alliance staff
 - » Collaborate with partner organizations to expand networking and business information programs, including a new focus on quarterly speed networking programs, with overall increase of 10% over historic participation
- **Implement buy local strategies to emphasize the value of local commerce**
 - » Extend buy local initiatives for year-round impact, and measure small business involvement and economic impacts of the efforts
 - » Increase business-to-business local spending by featuring more information on what area companies supply and the economic impact companies can have with their spending decisions
 - » Showcase and demonstrate the value of local spending/commerce through substantive storytelling to audiences beyond membership
- **Provide convenient access to business resources that connect, develop and educate**
 - » Expand distribution of the Economic Alliance's most valuable reports, data and information through social media and other means, particularly highlighting good news and local wins
 - » Increase connections of businesses to financial resources available through federal, state and other funding opportunities that can assist businesses with things like micro grants or low-rate loans
 - » Launch business programming focused on diversity, equity, inclusion issues, including stakeholder-led discussions around race and social justice issues and how those impact business