



# Building Strong Teams for Community Excellence

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LEADERSHIP  
REGIONAL LEARNING COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM



## **Session 12**

### CELEBRATE & GROW TRANSFORMATION - PAUSING TO RECOGNIZE SUCCESS & ASSESS

**September 23, 2026**

**8:30 - 10:00 a.m.**

**In-Person | inspireU, St. Joseph, MO**



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
OF  
NORTHWEST MISSOURI

# SHARED EXPECTATIONS

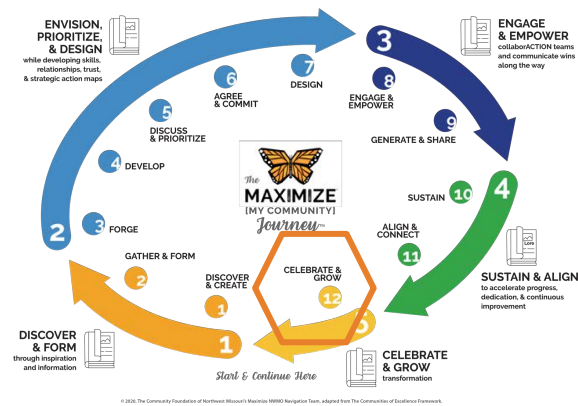
- ◆ **Be focused.**
- ◆ **Be engaged.**
- ◆ **Be open & curious.**
- ◆ **Practice courage & leadership.**
- ◆ **Demonstrate willingness to listen & collaborate.**
- ◆ **Share ideas and information.**

## ◆ **Practice Zoom courtesies:**

- ◇ Mute when not talking, but go ahead and talk when appropriate.
- ◇ Keep your camera on as much as possible. Your engagement contributes to everyone's positive experience.
- ◇ Everyone's voice is necessary. Listen and let everyone speak.
- ◇ Value the role of the parking lot. Your thoughts, ideas, and questions are important. We'll get to them all.

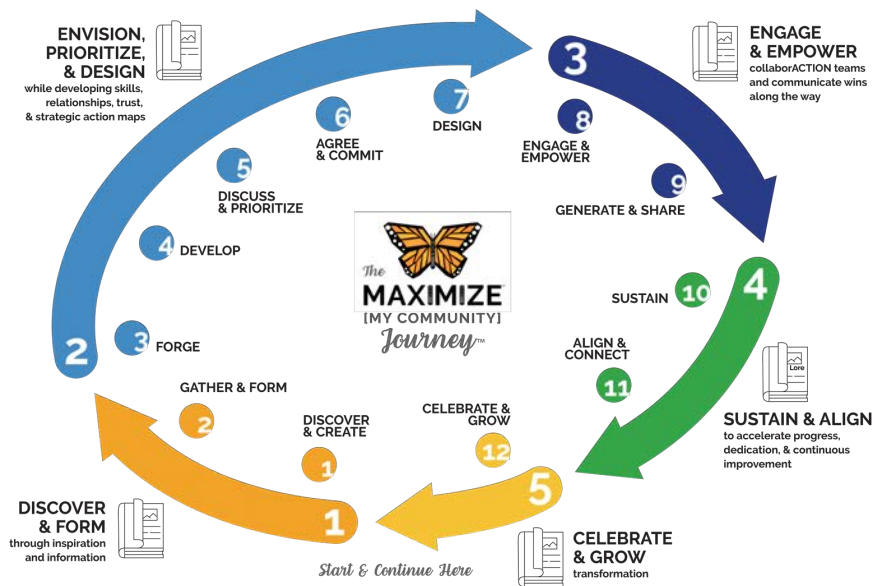


# Your Itinerary for the Year



|                                 |                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| September 24, 2025<br>In-Person | Maximize NWMO 3 <sup>rd</sup> Annual Celebration Lunch<br>Session 1: Discover & Create a Sense of Urgency                                                  |
| October 8, 2025                 | Session 2: Gather & Form a Guiding Coalition                                                                                                               |
| November 12, 2025               | Session 3: Forge a Consensus & Community Vision                                                                                                            |
| December 10, 2025               | Session 4: Develop a CollaborACTION Story Through Systems Thinking                                                                                         |
| January 14, 2026                | Session 5: Discuss & Prioritize with All Sectors & Groups                                                                                                  |
| February 11, 2026               | Session 6: Agree & Commit to Shared Vision, Values, & Opportunity Priorities a.k.a. Strategic Objectives                                                   |
| March 11, 2026                  | Session 7: Design Strategic Action Maps Based on Data & Stakeholder Experience With Design-Thinking                                                        |
| April 8, 2026                   | Session 8: Engage & Empower CollaborACTION Teams to Work Through the Action Maps for Each Priority                                                         |
| May 13, 2026                    | Session 9: Generate & Share Wins Along the Way                                                                                                             |
| June 10, 2026                   | Session 10: Sustain Accelerated Progress & Dedication Through Support & Networking                                                                         |
| July, 2026                      | NO SESSION - SUMMER BREAK                                                                                                                                  |
| August 12, 2026                 | Session 11: Align & Connect to Continuously Improve Performance & Outcomes                                                                                 |
| September 23, 2026<br>In-Person | Session 12: Celebrate & Grow Transformation: Recognizing Success & Areas of Improvement to Continue Maximize NWMO 4 <sup>th</sup> Annual Celebration Lunch |

# SESSION 12 ITINERARY



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- Celebrating and Continuing On Your Journey
- Planting Seeds
- Intro to Step 12:  
Celebrate to Grow Transformation and Pause to Recognize Success and Assess Progress
  - Culture of CollaborACTION
  - The Power of Questions
- Community Presentations
- Celebrating Each Other



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# Engaging and supporting leaders through a journey



# The Journey

**Milestone 5** is where how you are working better together reveals itself.



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# The 7 C's of CollaborACTION

1. **CLARIFY** purpose
2. **CONVENE** the right people
3. **CULTIVATE** trust and respectful inclusion
4. **COORDINATE** existing and new activities
5. **COLLABORATE** for systems (network) impact
6. **CELEBRATE** wins and appreciating the people responsible
7. **CONTINUE** to improve through next cycle of action

These are  
also ongoing  
activities to  
ensure  
sustainability!



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# Asking “HOW?” Helps You Determine What is Working and What Needs Improving



**APPROACH:** How do you do the things the group is doing?

**DEPLOYMENT:** Are you all doing it the same way?

**LEARNING:** How are you getting better?

**INTEGRATION:** How is your community benefiting?



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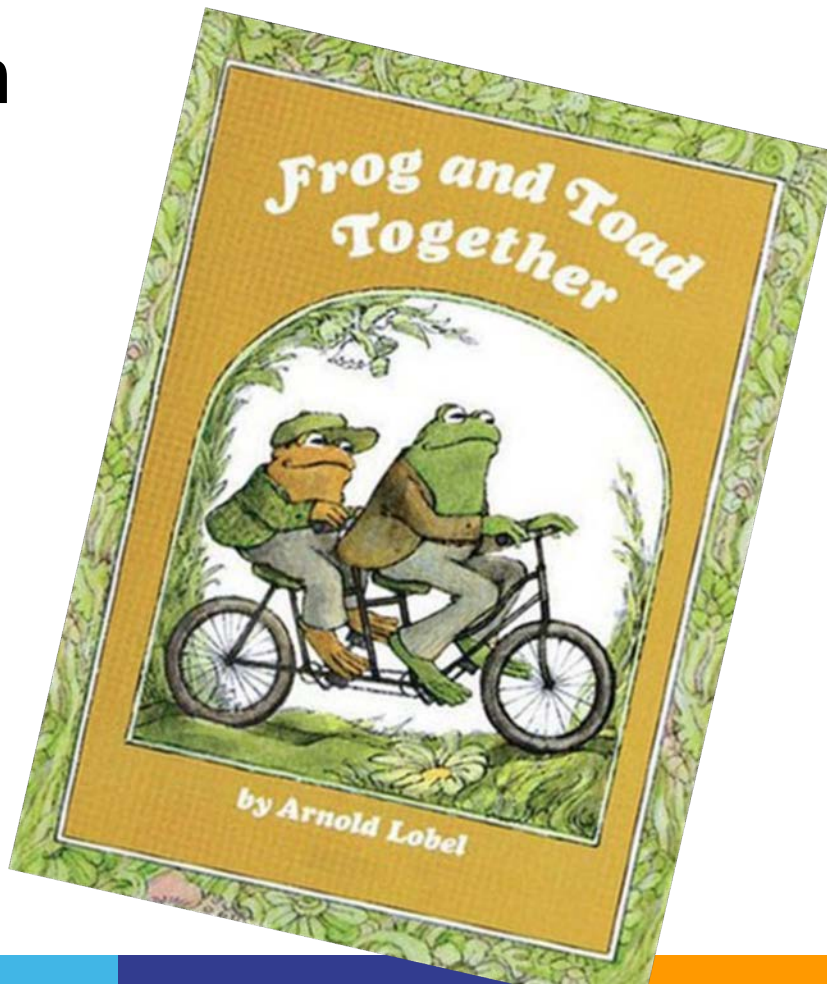
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# The Garden



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# DISCUSSION



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## The Garden

- What were Frog & Toad's beliefs about creating the garden?
- What were Frog & Toad's behaviors that reflected those beliefs?
- What other parallels can we draw with our journey and the tools and knowledge we have acquired?



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# Regardless of How You Decide to Do Your Work Together, Remember These Three Keys . . .

**Sustainable Community Success Requires:**

**HAVE A  
CAN DO  
ATTITUDE**



**INVEST  
IN  
THEMSELVES**



**DEVELOP  
LEADERS  
ACROSS  
GENERATIONS**



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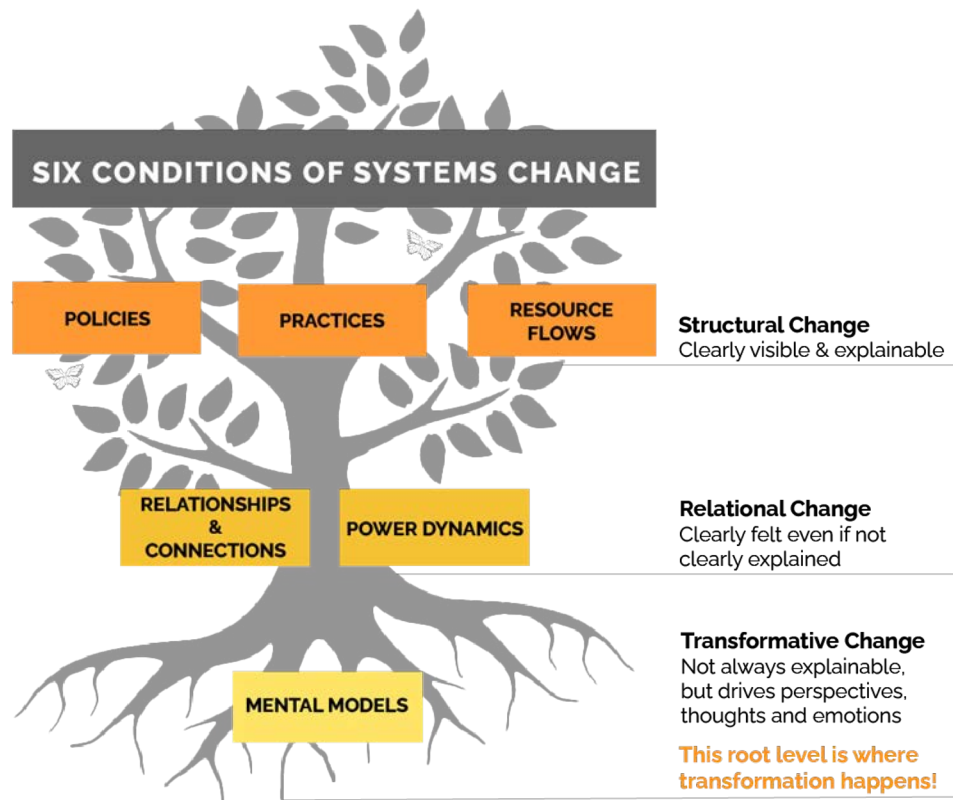
STEP

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# The Culture of CollaborACTION

What is:

- ◆ Seen?
- ◆ Felt?
- ◆ Heard?



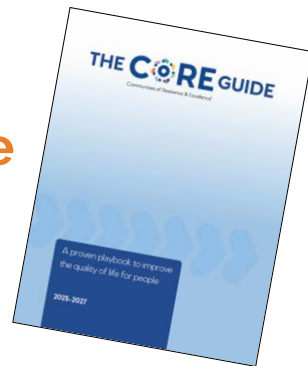
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# The Power of Questions

Asking and answering the guiding questions  
in *The C.O.R.E. Guide* from Communities of Resilience  
& Excellence that are embedded within  
The Maximize [My Community] Journey™...



- Helps move you from Reactive to Proactive and launches you toward Aligned and Integrated
- Helps you inspire others by sharing WHY, WHO, WHAT, and HOW
- Drives your next round of urgency for CollaborACTION



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# Looking Back at Your Getting Started Readiness Assessment

30+?



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## Getting Started Readiness Assessment

In order to ensure that you and your group have the most positive and productive experience engaging in Maximize NWMO's Regional Learning Collaborative program "Building Strong Teams for Community Excellence," we request that you complete this self-assessment prior to our first session. All participants will be asked to share where their collaborative community efforts currently stand in recognition that all participants may be at different points in their journey.

### STEP 1:

Gather a small group of people who are interested in learning more about applying the Communities of Excellence Framework to your community development and improvement efforts. This worksheet is designed to help your group determine where to start in embarking upon your Communities of Excellence Journey as a community excellence group.

### STEP 2:

We recommend that each person in your group complete the assessment individually and then come together to discuss each statement and/or question to come up with a collective answer. If there are varying levels of knowledge about a topic, go with the most knowledgeable perspective in your group. If you are not sure of the answer, use your best judgment. You are also free to contact our Executive Director, Stephanie Bledsoe at [storing@communitiesofexcellence0086.org](mailto:storing@communitiesofexcellence0086.org) or 616-719-1845 to discuss your questions.

### STEP 3:

Mark the box that best describes your understanding of your community and its leaders in formal (e.g. those with elected or paid titles) and informal (i.e. civic and social organization volunteer titled) positions.

| #  | Question                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | We don't have enough to answer | We aren't sure | We have some understanding | We have a good understanding | We have a deep understanding |
|----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| EX | We are interested in learning more about how communities in our region and across America are improving the places they live, learn, work, and play.                                                                                                                                                              |                                |                |                            |                              | 4                            |
| 1  | We are a group of at least 3-5 individuals who have gathered to complete this assessment and are committed to working together over the next several years.                                                                                                                                                       |                                |                |                            |                              |                              |
| 2  | Our community/county has an existing organized group with several representatives who work together on shared priorities. This group has been together for several years or more.<br><i>(If you responded with a 3 or a 4, please fill in the answers to the next two questions before moving to Question 3.)</i> |                                |                |                            |                              |                              |
| 2a | What is the name of the group?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                |                |                            |                              |                              |
| 2b | How is it structured? Formally organized, informally organized, hierarchical or distributed leadership?                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                |                |                            |                              |                              |
| 3  | Our group, whether new or existing, is made up of representatives from multiple sectors, population segments, and areas of interest within our community/county.                                                                                                                                                  |                                |                |                            |                              |                              |
| 3a | Who is involved? What sectors are represented?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                |                |                            |                              |                              |
| 4  | Our group's collaboration (working together) efforts could improve to more effectively produce our intended results.                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                |                |                            |                              |                              |

This worksheet is provided by The Maximize My Community Journey Framework, created by Maximize NWMO. No regional cities included in The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri have a Community of Excellence with resources. [www.maximizemymissouri.org](https://www.maximizemymissouri.org)

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## Getting Started Readiness Assessment

5. We have important issues or challenges that need addressing in our community/county that fit into one or more of the following areas:
- (1) health care, wellness and safety,
  - (2) educational quality, access, and attainment,
  - (3) economic and business vitality, and
  - (4) quality of life, including housing, utilities, recreation, social connections, broadband infrastructure, and other elements.

*(If you responded with a 3 or a 4, please fill in the answers to the next two questions before moving to Question 6.)*

5a. What are these issues or challenges?

5b. Who is already working on these issues or challenges in your community or county?

6. The formal leaders (e.g. those with elected or paid titles) in our community and county are interested in becoming a place that maximizes its potential through resilience and excellence by working with informal leaders and residents.
7. Our informal leaders (e.g. civic and social organization volunteer titled) are interested in becoming a place that maximizes its potential through resilience and excellence by working with formal leaders.
8. Our community or county actively engages youth in decision-making and civic involvement and invests in leadership development activities and programs for all ages of youth and adults.
9. Our group would benefit from having a proven framework that helps us be more inclusive, organized, and sustainable.
10. We want to empower our group and others to be more engaged and effective at collaboration, decision-making, and following through on our plans for our community/county.
11. The formal and informal leaders in our community/county could improve their efforts to build relationships with people representing many different voices in our place (ages, genders, races, religions, income levels, political views, neighborhoods, etc.).

### STEP 4:

Total the score in each column. If your group scored a 3 or a 4 on nearly all of the statements (total of 30 or more), your group is likely ready to get started with the "Building Strong Teams for Community Excellence" of Maximize NWMO's Regional Learning Collaborative. If your group scored a 1 or 2 on most of the statements (total is less than 30), we welcome the opportunity to discuss your results and determine whether our introductory program is a better place for you and your group to get started on your Maximize My Community Journey. We look forward to engaging with you as you apply The Maximize My Community Journey Framework to difference-making collaboration in your community or county.

### STEP 5:

Please contact our Navigation Team at [together@maximizemymissouri.org](mailto:together@maximizemymissouri.org) to connect with a team member about your next steps. Thank you!

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# Celebrating

**“Celebration is a kind of food we all need in our lives, and each individual brings a special recipe or offering, so that together we will make a great feast. Celebration is a human need that we must not, and can not, deny. It is richer and fuller when many work and then celebrate together.”**



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- Corita Kent, American artist, designer and educator, and former religious sister

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# Sustaining Efforts

- ✓ ● Culture is key
- ✓ ● Planning beyond the right now
- ✓ ● Engaging all generations and demographics
- ✓ ● Utilizing talent by engaging passion and strengths

Many Voices



One Vision



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## CELEBRATING!!!

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# Why Celebrate?

## THE TWO EXTREMES OF CELEBRATIONS

Unnecessary for  
simply following  
through on a  
commitment



Every  
accomplishment  
deserves a party  
and recognition

How do you feel about celebrating your  
group and your community?



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# Compelling Reasons to Celebrate

- Encourages collaboration
- Brings clarity to shared goals
- Enhances agility
- Reinforces shared sense of purpose
- Improves quality
- Inspires trust



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# Celebrating Well With Our People

- **Celebration should be intentional**
  - Tied to a specific event
  - Well-founded
  - Precisely worded
- **ASK how individuals desire to be recognized**
- **Adapt beyond your own style**



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# Celebrating on Purpose

**Know your celebration system!**

- **WHY** will you celebrate?
- **HOW** will you communicate when celebration needs to happen?
- **HOW** will you celebrate?
- **WHEN** will you celebrate?
- **WHERE** will you celebrate?



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# The Four A's of Celebration



**1. Accountability**

**2. Assessing Performance**

**3. Appreciation of Efforts**

**4. Authenticity in Messaging**

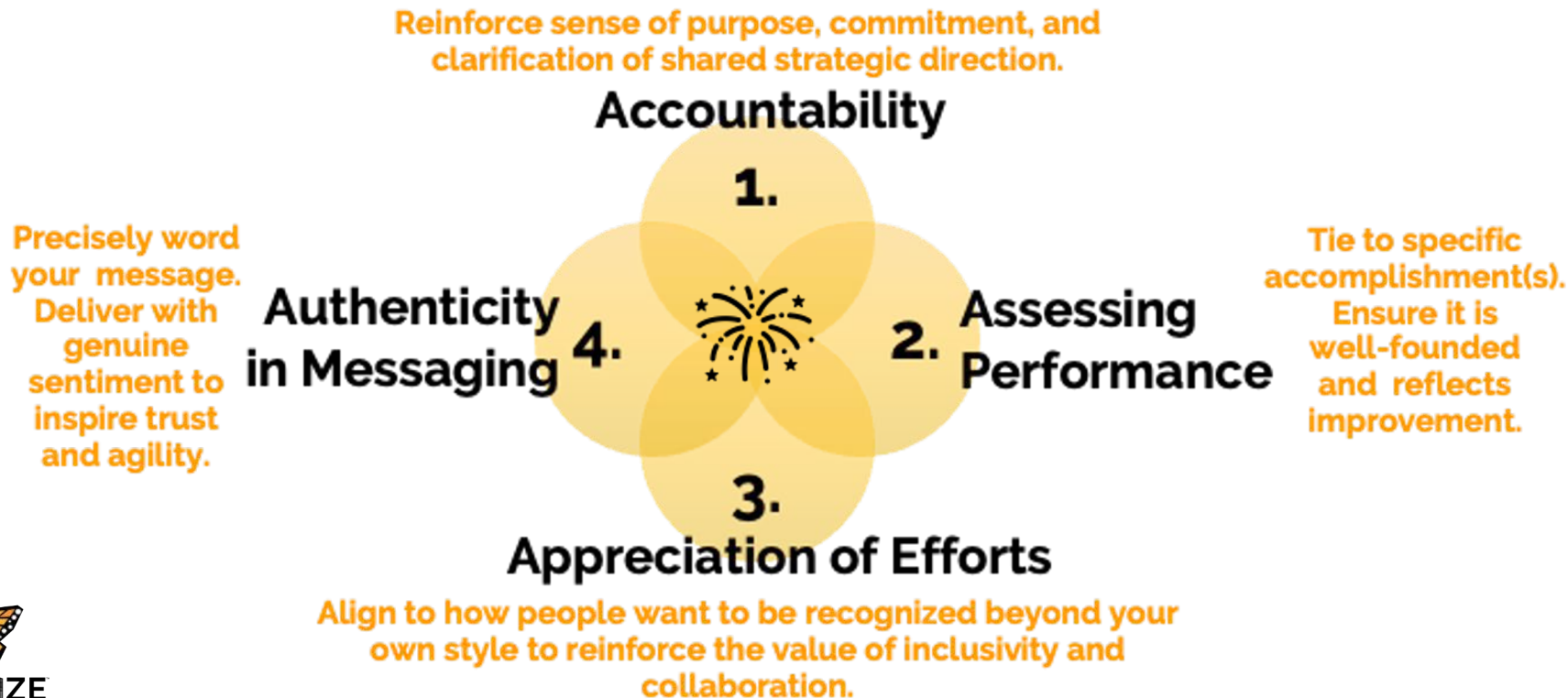


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# The Four A's of Celebration



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# Maximize Monarch Town

A Story of Successfully Building a Strong Team

*Who Tangibly Improved Their Community  
Over Time*

What does  
Monarch Town  
have to celebrate?



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# What do you have to celebrate?

- Forming Your Group?
- Meeting Consistently?
- Inviting and Engaging a Wide Variety of Perspectives?
- Gathering Relevant and Accurate Data?
- Deciding on and Conducting a Dream Big Listening Project?
- Prioritizing and Planning?
- CollaborACTING?
- Results (i.e. Outputs & Outcomes)?



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# DISCUSSION



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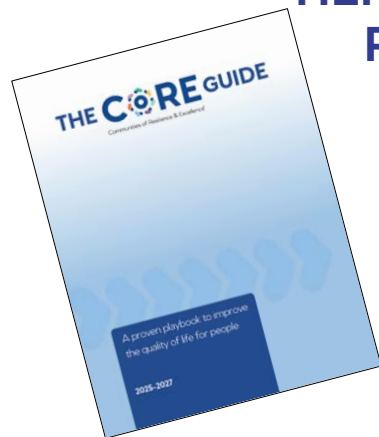
- **What are some examples of your favorite celebrations? How can ideas from those help you with building a culture that values celebration balanced with improvement in your group and community?**

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# Your Community CollaborACTION Story

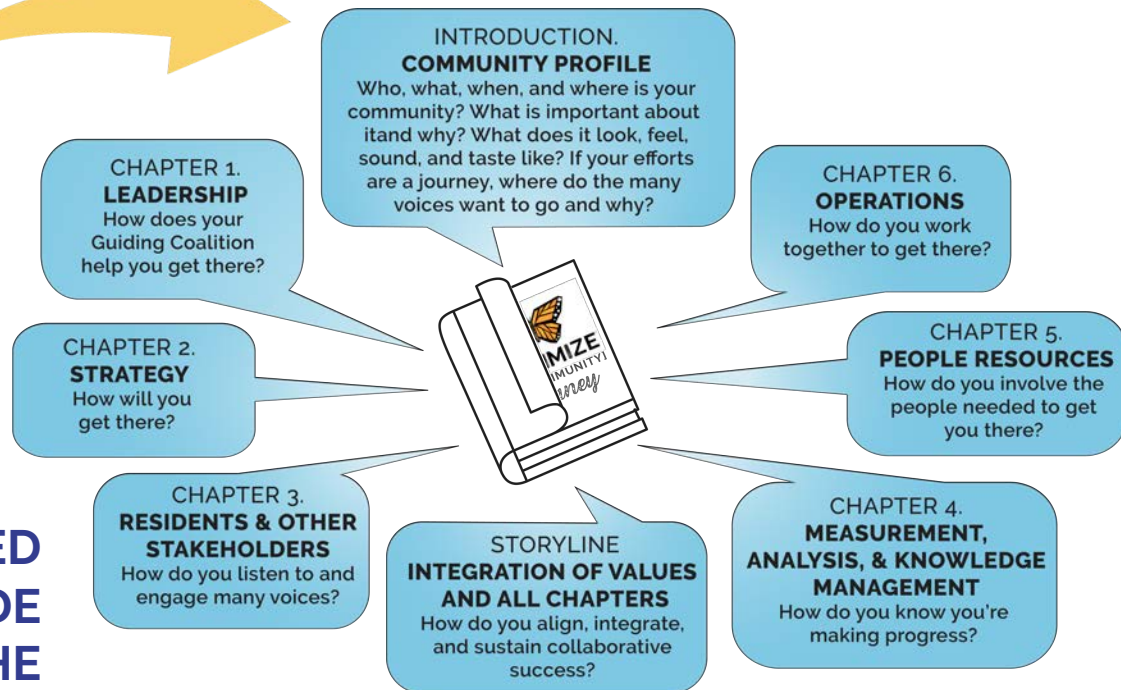
WE'VE FOCUSED  
HERE IN THIS  
PROGRAM



CONTINUED  
COACHING CAN GUIDE  
YOU THROUGH THE  
CHAPTERS



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# SHARE OUT

## FOLLOW UP FROM SESSION 11

- **CollaborACTION 5-7-Minute Group Slide Presentations**
- **Do you have the first draft of your CollaborACTION Story documented?  
How can we help ensure your information is being gathered in one place that is accessible to your group?**





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**MARCELINE**

*Getting Started on*

# MAXIMIZING OUR COLLECTIVE POTENTIAL

September 2026

# OUR NAVIGATION GUIDE

## CURRENT STATEMENT

Maximize Marcelline is dedicated to writing the next chapter of our hometown's story – one filled with pride, opportunity, and the kind of small-town magic that stays with residents and visitors long after they leave Main Street.

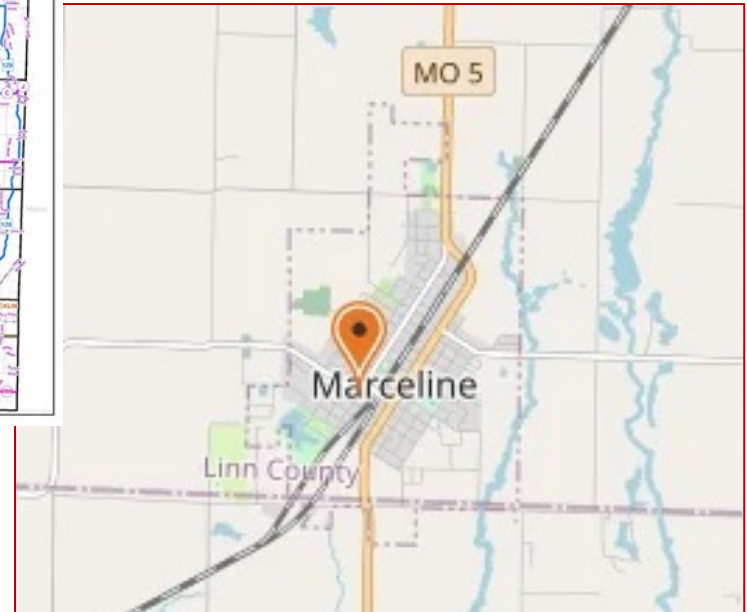
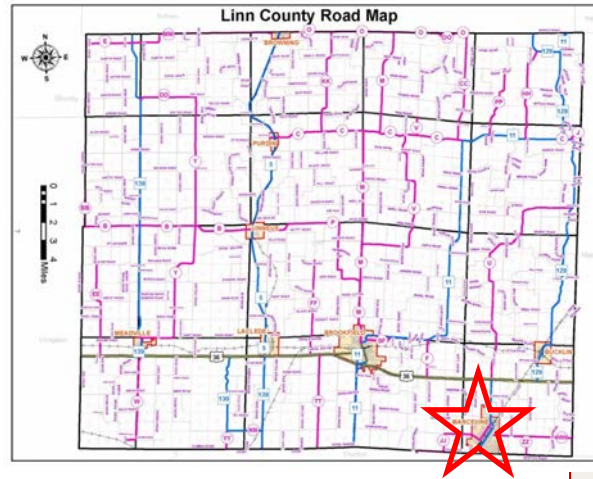
And as Walt Disney reminded the world,  
*Main Street is everyone's hometown – the heartline of America.*  
We carry that spirit forward to every project, every partnership, and every step we take together.



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# GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

MARCELINE, LINN COUNTY, MISSOURI



*“We are Small Town America,  
Perfectly Imagined”*

# WHAT WE'VE LEARNED

- We are slow learners...but we get there eventually.
- We know quality of life is the common goal for all our local organizational 'silos.'
- We know that *Communication* is one key—the public needs to know our “Who & Why”, and so do all the 'silos.'
- We know *Collaboration* is another key—our 'silos' need to be part of our strong team.
- We know *Commitment* is also key as we navigate our way to a stronger community.

# OUR PROGRESS 2025-2026

- **Big Dream Survey** – Results were 2% of our population, with a desire for thoughtful growth that strengthens local identity, preserves small-town character, and enhances quality of life.
- **The *Marceline Legacy Fund*** has been established with The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri as a direct result of Session 9 of Building Strong Teams for Community Excellence and Andrew McCrea's presentation.

# HOW MAXIMIZE NWMO AND THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION HAVE BEEN HELPFUL

**Both Maximize NWMO and CFNWMO have catalysts for our growth this past year.**

**The Maximize [My Community] Journey™ framework, *The C.O.R.E. Guide*, the lessons of Monarch Town, and the resources provided are there for us as needed.**

**The personnel of both organizations have been very generous with their time and patient with our questions.**

# WHAT'S ON OUR HORIZON

*Collaboration* is the action word in front of us.  
We will reach out to the organizational 'silos'  
in Marceline and invite them to join us  
in moving Marceline forward.

*Thank You!*



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**MARCELINE**

*Progressing Towards*  
**MAXIMIZING OUR  
POTENTIAL**



**September 2024**

# OUR WHY

## MISSION STATEMENT

As The Clinton County Initiative,  
**we come together to create a growing economy, an inclusive and diverse countywide community, and a vibrant learning environment as the building blocks of a great rural life.**

# WHO IS INVOLVED?

## OUR PLACE

### CLINTON COUNTY, MISSOURI

**268,800 acres**  
**420 sq. miles**  
 Approx. 10% is water and  
 bottom lands

**County Seat:**  
**Plattsburg**

**Largest Community:**  
**Cameron**

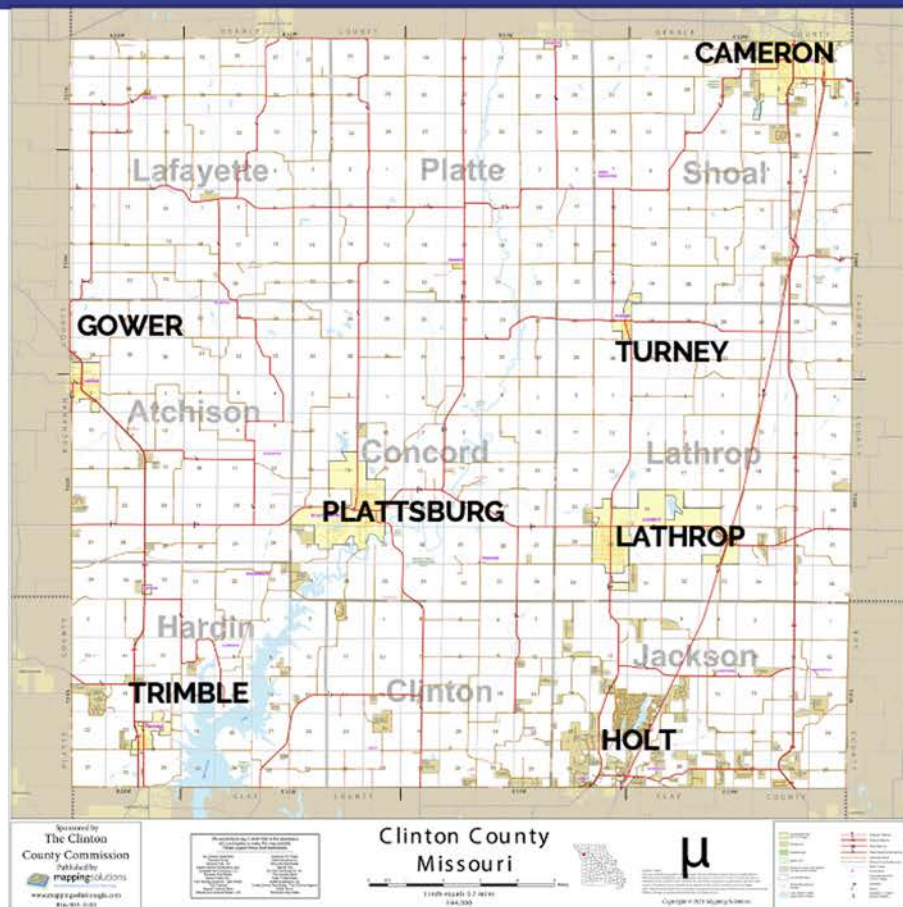
**East-West:**

- **MO Hwy 116**

**North-South:**

- **I-35**
- **MO Hwy 169**
- **MO Hwy 33**

**Largest Body of Water:**  
**Smithville Lake**  
 4,500 acres (of 7,000)  
 85 mi. shoreline of 170



## POPULATION

| Data Indicator   |                                   | Clinton County | Missouri  | United States |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------|---------------|
| Total Population | Total Population                  | 21,184         | 6,154,913 | 331,449,281   |
|                  | Total Land Area (Sq. Miles)       | 418.96         | 68,746.51 | 3,532,068.58  |
|                  | Population Density (Per Sq. Mile) | 50.56          | 89.53     | 93.84         |

**Cameron: 8,513**  
**Plattsburg: 2,222**  
**Lathrop: 2,271**  
**Gower: 1,533**  
**Trimble: 573**  
**Holt: 414**  
**Turney: 114**

# WHO IS INVOLVED?

## OUR INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, and GROUPS

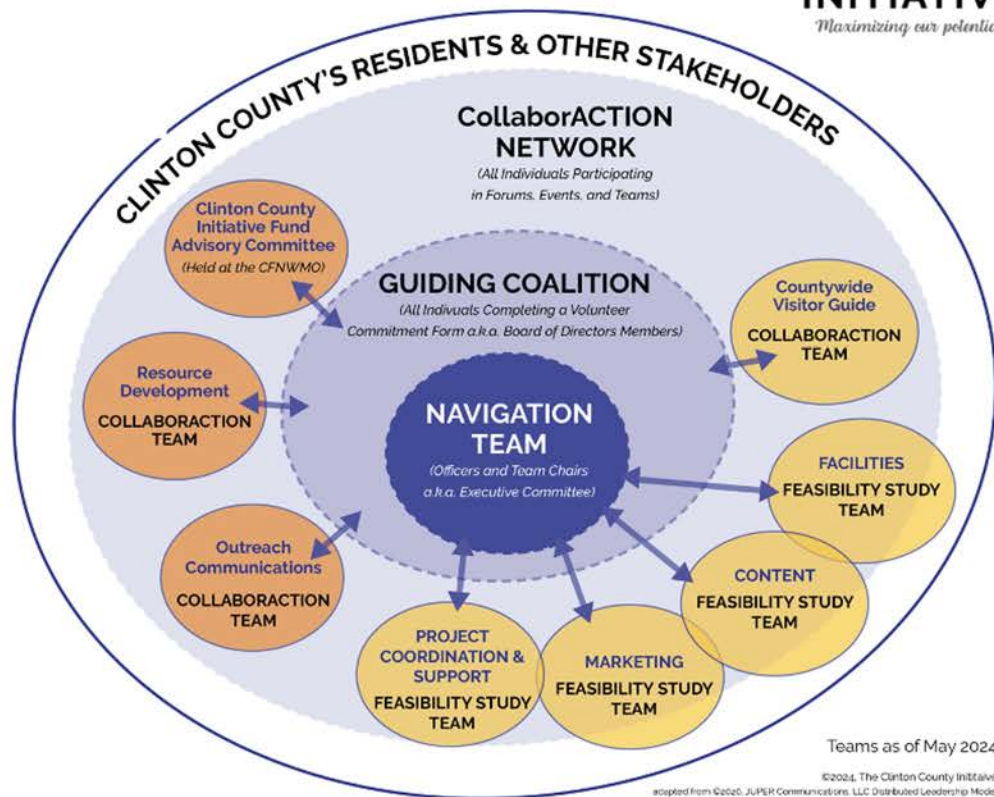
### CLINTON COUNTY, MISSOURI

- County and city governments
- Nonprofit and civic sectors
- Business and banking
- School districts
- Health professional
- Faith community leaders
- Many active volunteers and retirees



# HOW WE WORK TOGETHER

An **ENGAGEMENT** Approach  
that **Distributes/Shares**  
**Decision-Making**  
**Across More People**  
**Throughout**  
**the County to Collaboratively**  
**Make Things Happen**



Teams as of May 2024

©2024, The Clinton County Initiative  
adapted from ©2020, JUPPER Communications, LLC Distributed Leadership Model

# WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- **Invited, engaged, and decided to incorporate as a MO nonprofit corporation and successfully obtained IRS 501(3) status**
- **Helped with Plattsburg Tigers On Main, a student-driven downtown store**
- **Secured Turney as the location of a broadband experiment for delivering high-speed Internet** *(Funded by the National Science Foundation and operated by United Fiber)*
- **Inspired Gower Senior Center and Downtown Sidewalk Renovations**
- **Completed a countywide Dream Big listening project through surveys and community forums to identify shared priorities**

# WE'VE LEARNED A LOT

## COUNTYWIDE

- **Looked at BASELINE DATA on our demographics, economy, resources, assets, access, etc. about our PLACE**
- **Conducted a DREAM BIG LISTENING PROJECT**
- **Working through a FEASIBILITY (a.k.a. "POSSIBILITY" Study with funding from USDA-Rural Development matched by private donors**

# DREAM BIG SURVEY PRIORITY SORTING



## We're better together on many issues!

June 2021 – August 2022 Results Based on 241 Respondents

### What challenge could be solved if Clinton County's communities worked together?

**'Happier with health, safety, and education than business climate, public services, and opportunities for all ages to connect'**

#### HEALTH & SAFETY

- #8 – Safety: Low Crime Rate & More Drug Abuse Prevention – 8%**
- #12 – Better Access to Low-Cost Health Care & Health Food Options – 6%**

#### EDUCATION

- #10 – Quality Education – 6%**
- #5 – No Response/No Opinion – 20%**

#### ECONOMIC VITALITY

- #1 – Business & Job Growth/ Innovation – 23%**
- #4 – Population Growth Balanced with Rural Life Style – 21%**
- #7 – More Strategic Vision, Promotion, & Collaboration – Strong Leadership & County Wide Brand – 10%**

#### QUALITY OF LIFE

- #2 – Public Services: Improved Roads & Infrastructure: Wise Use of Resources – 23%**
- #3 – Recreation, Opportunity, and Inclusivity for All Ages – 23%**
- #6 – Broadband Internet for Everyone – 13%**
- #9 – Care of Natural Resources/Wildlife Conservation & Beautification/Clean-up of Yards, Streets, Parks, Ditches – 7%**
- #11 – Higher Quality Senior Housing & Child Care Options – 6%**

# WHAT OUR COLLECTIVE GROUP IS DOING NOW

## WHAT WE'RE FINISHING UP THIS FALL & WINTER

- Documenting and reporting the facilitated discussions with each interest area and sector of the county to identify common strategic goals and priorities
- Launching a Visitor Guide and countywide community Events Calendar.
- Completing the documentation of the feasibility study exploring the steps to establish an Innovation Center with community space for library services with areas for children, teens, and adults, entrepreneur support, co-working space, commercial kitchen, and more!

# FEASIBILITY STUDY



## *Creating a Cornerstone of Countywide Learning & Gathering*

**90%+** of survey and forum participants **are in favor of establishing a modern multi-use center** as a vibrant hub designed to foster connection, creativity, learning, and collaboration among residents of **all ages**.

- ✓ **LIBRARY SERVICES**
- ✓ **CO-WORKING & MAKER SPACE**
- ✓ **COMMERCIAL KITCHEN**
- ✓ **INTERNET ROOMS FOR ONLINE LEARNING & TELEMEDICINE**
- ✓ **MEETING SPACE FOR GROUPS**

- ✓ **RESOURCE CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICES AND ENTREPRENEURS/BUSINESSES**
- ✓ **ART GALLERY**
- ✓ **LOCAL HISTORY & VISITOR INFO**
- ✓ **SENSORY ROOM FOR KIDS**

# FEASIBILITY STUDY



*Creating a Cornerstone of Countywide Learning & Gathering*

**We formed a study team of three sub-groups:**

- **Content Research** – What could happen in the space?
- **Marketing Input Opportunities** – Involving as many voices as possible and deciding based on who shows up
- **Facility Research** – Renovation or new construction and location of facility

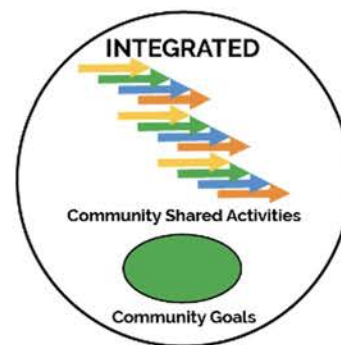
# FEASIBILITY STUDY

## *Recommendations & Next Steps*

- **VOTE** TO MOVE FORWARD WITH ESTABLISHING A LIBRARY DISTRICT
- **RAISE FUNDS TO COMPLETE THE DOCUMENTATION AND SHARING** of the study's detailed findings
- **FOSTER THE FORMATION** of a "Friends of the Center/Library" organization
- **EDUCATE** the county's residents and stakeholders of the value of a multi-use facility for the county....use of library services are UP nationwide and we don't want to continue to be left behind!
- **HELP THE NEW LIBRARY DISTRICT BOARD STRATEGIC ACTION MAP** and **PLAN** the new facility

# A PATHWAY FORWARD

**A desire to work together across the county to accomplish things that no one community or organization can accomplish on its own.**



**Respecting each other's interests while working together on shared needs and opportunities.**

*From Project Oriented... to ... Working smarter, not harder.*

# THANK YOU!



[www.maximizenwmo/Clinton-County](http://www.maximizenwmo/Clinton-County)

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# Celebrating Our Time Together



Gifts and Certificate of recognition for enrolling and participating in the Maximize NWMO Regional Learning Collaborative Program

“Building Strong Teams for Community Excellence”



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# Celebrating Your Enrollment & Participation



## CALDWELL COUNTY & HAMILTON COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

What has been your biggest takeaway from this learning experience?

Cole Crawford\*

Bob Hughes\*

Bud Motsinger\*



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\* Earned a Certificate of Completion

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# Celebrating Your Enrollment & Participation



What has been your biggest takeaway from this learning experience?

Michael Dunlap\*

Bruce Hageman

Jeff Harkins\*

David Jett\*

Jan Schwarz\*



\* Earned a Certificate of Completion

STEP

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# Celebrating Your Enrollment & Participation



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**MARCELINE**

What has been  
your biggest takeaway  
from this learning  
experience?

**Chris Ankeney\***

**Donna Bell\***

**Aaron Ervie**

**Lindsey Ewigman**

**Lindsey Havard**

**Sumner Nesbitt\***

**Tom Oldham\***

**Joe Peck**

**Kristen Seyler\***

**Tyler Shoemaker**

**Amy Spencer**

**Jane Spencer\***

**Joseph Sportsman**

**Mary Switzer\***

**Richard Switzer\***

**Dave Tavres**

**Paula Wright\***



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**NWMO**

\* Earned a Certificate of Completion

# DISCUSSION



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## Planning, Planting, and Cultivating CollaborACTION

### What is next for your group?

- Would you be interested in other learning opportunities for your group on how to apply *The C.O.R.E. Guide* to your Maximize [My Community] Journey?
- Do you have another group of volunteers involved in your group that you would like to experience this community development leadership program?
- Would you like to continue with Maximize NWMO community coaching? What level?

STEP

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## Remember . . .

**“There are three kinds of groups:  
those that make things happen,  
those that watch things happen,  
and those that wonder  
what happened.”**

- Anonymous



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*Dreaming big and growing together!*



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**NWMO**

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