

## 4.4 Determine Regional Economic Development Opportunities

### Instructions:

- **What:** Determine the status and/or potential for regional economic development programs and activities.
  - **Why:** Leveraging regionalism increases your community's visibility and contributes to the scale effect to make your economic development and marketing dollars be more effective.
  - **Who:** Community & economic development leadership and elected officials, because they are often the ones that need to get behind regional cooperation to make it work.
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### Determine Regional Economic Development Opportunities:

**Scope:** The following are recommended orders-of-operation to determine regional economic development opportunities.

1. **Determine Regional Partnerships:** Determine the status of any regional partnerships for economic development in your area among counties. This could include partnerships to jointly market the region (e.g. Northeast Ohio) to companies for investment, or for other economic development purposes such as workforce development. It would also be helpful to get information from elected officials and local government managers on other ways your county or cities are cooperating such as regional infrastructure (water and sewer, other), regional airports (commercial or general aviation), etc. Other areas for regional cooperation include workforce development and improving technical training and higher education resources in the region.
  - No:** If your community is not part of a regional alliance, determine if any efforts have been made in the past and why they failed. Engage adjacent counties in discussions on the benefits and feasibility of a regional economic development partnership in your region. Also, visit other areas that have regional partnerships to learn from them.
  - Yes:** Proceed to next step
2. **Compile Regional Alliance Information:** Collect the following information to get a better understanding of what is already in place:
  - Organization:**
    - Name
    - Purpose of Regional Alliance
    - When was it formed?

- How is it staffed?
- Where is the office located? Satellite offices?
- Is the organization a public/private partnership?
- Members:** Who already belongs to this regional alliance?
- Contacts:** Collect key economic development contacts in each member county
- Board of directors:** Who is on it and how is the board composition decided?
- Budget and financial support:** How do the counties contribute (flat fee for all counties, or based on other criteria such as population)?
- Marketing:** What is the marketing budget and the marketing plan? How is this determined? For both “traditional economic development (the three legs of the stool) but also for tourism promotion.
- Strategic Plan:** Does the regional organization have a strategic plan? How old is it and is it updated regularly?
- Results:** How does the alliance share data on new jobs and growth in the region and in each community. In what other ways does the alliance measure success and return on investment?
- Communication:** In what other ways does the regional alliance promote inter-county cooperation for community and economic development - regional industrial/business parks? Regional infrastructure (e.g. water and sewer)?