

Building a Stronger Future for Montgomery County

What's Next for MCOFuture?

- Expand the region's economy and opportunity;
- Educate citizens to enter the economic mainstream;
- Protect vital public services;
- Use public tax dollars and resources more efficiently.

Because...

- Competition for jobs has never been keener.
- Quality of life matters to a first-rate workforce.
- A successful region depends on strong, educated individuals and families.
- Tax dollars are increasingly scarce, but people need and want services.

Our Research Determined that Counties Outpacing Ours Have:

- Higher levels of educational attainment.
- More diversified local and regional economies.
- Tax advantages compared to their competition.
- Great appreciation for, and track record of, regional collaboration.
- Palpable community pride and more positive image.
- A stronger housing market.

Based on our university experts' review of hundreds of counties nationwide, as well as research and feedback from local citizens in public surveys and forums, MCOFuture has identified high-priority initiatives critical to success.

Now the Hard Work Begins

Organizing to make critical changes happen now, creating working groups with accountable leaders, and committing ourselves to ensure these goals are realized.

1. What We'll Do: Increase the percentage of adults who have a college degree or a post high-school credential that certifies they have a skill or trade.

Action: Become the first Ohio county to ensure access to preschool for children in families whose families desire it and who are at or below 200 percent of the federal family poverty level by 2015.

- Support high-quality preschools by securing public and private grants for pre-school scholarships for low-income families.
- Use Human Service levy dollars to ensure more preschools are “star-rated” by the State of Ohio.

Action: Support a community-wide initiative to ensure all 3rd-graders learn to read well.

- Work with Learn to Earn Dayton, school districts, libraries and human-service programs to guarantee children who are behind have the tutoring and mentoring they need to be strong readers.
- Focus on improving the reading levels of children in foster care.

Action: Improve and upgrade workforce development by getting more people on track for credentials needed for in-demand jobs.

- Identify three top employment growth sectors and create training programs to link unemployed or underemployed individuals with specific companies struggling to hire qualified workers.

Action: Recruit local university students to live and work here after graduation, and “bring home” talented young people who have left.

- Double the 50 internships Montgomery County now offers and challenge other government agencies and businesses to match our commitment.
- Highlight the region’s assets in a robust social media campaign targeted to area college grads and those who grew up here, left and want to come home.

2. What We'll Do: Target the county's economic development assistance to small businesses.

Action: Actively support small businesses via our economic development programs, grants and contracts.

- Re-allocate and target up to \$1 million per year of ED/GE funds to small and emerging businesses that show good potential for creating significant new and well-paying jobs.
- Include language in our agreements with vendors, contractors and grantees to encourage inclusion of fully qualified, small and emerging businesses as primary participants and subcontractors.
- Lead an effort to encourage more businesses to support fully qualified, small and emerging business as primary participants and subcontractors.
- Accelerate efforts to bring state-of-the-art broadband and high speed, fully network enabled wireless capacity to every business and residence throughout the county.

3. What We'll Do: Collaborate to save money, improve efficiency and add competitiveness.

Action: Increase our community's many collaborations by streamlining services and economic development.

- Form a Montgomery County Council of Governments, establishing a central point for shared services and combined service delivery.
- Encourage the co-location of our private and public sector economic development organizations.
- Coordinate and co-locate state-mandated regulatory and permitting offices such as building, fire and plumbing inspection.
- Establish a county-wide Joint Economic Development District to simplify payroll tax collection, end in-county poaching and tax-induced relocations.

4. What We'll Do: Measure our results, improve our best practices and market our successes.

Action: Benchmark ourselves against best practices and position our advantages with cooperative marketing.

- Measure our progress compared to counties that outperform Montgomery County and nearby metropolitan areas.
- Create a "peer communities group" with winning counties to share data and best practices.
- Collaborate with peer communities to help one another transfer applicable best practices and accelerate progress.
- Make clear, regular progress reports to the public.
- Define the best messages to position our appeal and advantages.
- Collaboratively market the county's advantages, reinforcing our core messages, the region's image and the county's arts, cultural, recreation, community and economic development assets.

Guiding Principles

To secure stakeholder participation and produce meaningful results, implementing each MCO FUTURE initiative will incorporate five critical success factors. The respective MCO FUTURE teams will ensure each initiative and project meet the same standards as the overall program by being:

1. **DURABLE**, and therefore stable, adaptable and collaborative to make a sustained, significant difference in our community.
2. **INCLUSIVE**, with avenues for voluntary participation for relevant constituencies that can bring the perspectives of our economic, demographic and civic diversity to the work.
3. **EFFECTIVE**, with high standards, regular measurement and transparent reports to ensure proven quality and real benefits to stakeholders, future users and the general public.
4. **AFFORDABLE**, for the people and organizations who benefit from the initiative, the taxpayers who support it and the partners who cooperate in creating and sustaining it.
5. **WELL-SUPPORTED**, by stakeholders and the general public as a result of its purpose, process, success and responsiveness to data, feedback and changing situations.

By staying focused on these guiding principles, MCOFuture can lead to major long-term differences for the success of Montgomery County.

MCOFuture Success Factors

Montgomery County Council of Governments (COG)

Goal:

Establish a Montgomery County Council of Governments (COG), creating a central place for shared services, combined service delivery and the consideration and deliberate the full range of opportunities for government collaboration, cooperation and coordination.

Rationale:

Successful communities utilize tax revenue and government resources through shared services and collaborative programs that build and sustain strong local communities with quality public services while holding down costs. Our ability to share and combine services and reduce costs is essential to having the resources necessary to invest in our future.

How we will achieve this goal:

We will establish a steering committee with representatives from cities, townships and the business community to develop a structure, charter and governing model for the COG. The resulting COG structure and organization will then be presented to all government entities in Montgomery County, with an open invitation to join.

Guiding Principles:

✦ DURABLE

A COG that's "built to last" will be chartered, structured and operated to achieve a consensus long term vision/mission. It will focus on big picture issues, plan and manage a future focused agenda, and remain neutral in specific (inter)jurisdictional disputes. Its leaders will consistently be able to work closely with major constituencies, institutions and officials on common community concerns.

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opportunity together

✦ **INCLUSIVE**

The COG's charter and functions will be planned and informed with inputs from members and advisory groups that bring the perspectives from the county's full demographic, economic, civic and institutional diversity. It will be open to emerging trends and concerns because dynamic input is essential for meaningful cooperation and collaboration.

✦ **VOLUNTARY**

While countywide in scope, the COG will truly be a "council" where governments can resolve common problems, share services and resources, and develop data to address future issues. It will help plan and manage agreements among members, not force solutions by votes. The body will face shared issues with shared resources -- voluntarily.

✦ **EFFECTIVE**

An effective COG will have tangible results for communities and county citizens. It will find cooperative, coordinated and affordable ways to sustain services. It will fully engage key officials as representatives and alternates, collaborate with relevant local partners, and communicate key issues and its successes.

✦ **WELL-SUPPORTED**

An effective COG will be viewed as a critical cooperative organization that is a priority to support, both financially and politically. Engaged members and partners will provide sufficient resources for the COG's strategy and agenda.

MCOFuture Success Factors Workforce Development Initiative

Goal:

Establish a contractual partnership between Montgomery County Public Workforce Development, Sinclair Community College, and the Miami Valley CTC to deliver workforce solutions to targeted industries.

Rationale:

The information driven economy not only demands higher skill and knowledge levels from the workforce but it also requires a more time-sensitive response in meeting workforce needs. Without the right skills, too many local citizens face chronic unemployment or underemployment, and employers cannot find the workers they need which negatively impacts economic growth.

How we will achieve this goal:

We will identify emerging workforce training needs in collaboration with targeted industry partners, and then provide customized training solutions to equip the workforce with the skills needed.

Guiding Principles:

✦ DURABLE

To be effective, this initiative has to be affordable enough to be maintained over time. Two systems have to work well. (1) A system of collaboration among the core team members (County, Sinclair, and CTC) and targeted industries must be optimized. (2) A systematic approach to effective screening, assessment, training, job preparation, and job placement has to be implemented.

✦ INCLUSIVE

While this initiative will start with a focused program in at most two targeted industries, the goal is to build a broadly applicable model that will be open to proposals from a wide variety of business sectors and industry partnerships.

✦ **EFFECTIVE**

Progress must be measured and “surfaced” so that the benefits are easily recognized. Data to assess need and to determine if needs have been met have to be developed and then validated with employers.

✦ **AFFORDABLE**

It is difficult to secure funding from employers without a “proof of concept.” Therefore, upfront or “seed” funding is needed to develop the training program as well as provide training for an initial cohort of individuals. When employers experience the value, they are more willing to help fund programs that align with existing public workforce dollars which is essential to create a model of affordability and sustainability.

✦ **WELL-SUPPORTED**

Employers must be engaged and committed to the initiative by demonstrating support through: partnering in curriculum development and ongoing updates; specifying the appropriate screening tools, sharing job descriptions and the number of workers needed for those positions, facilitating hands-on training experiences in the actual work-setting, and committing to interview successful training completers.

MCOFuture Success Factors Early Learning Initiative

Goal:

Become the first county in Ohio to offer voluntary preschool for all children in families at or below 200 percent of the federal family poverty level by 2015, with expanded participation in preschool for all students regardless of family income.

Rationale:

Children who begin school ready to learn are at less risk of falling behind and are more likely to succeed throughout their school career. Successful students are the essential ingredients for an educated workforce.

How we will achieve this goal:

We will support high-quality preschools by securing public and private funding for pre-school scholarships for low-income families, and we will use Human Services Levy dollars to increase preschool participation for all students from high-need families.

Guiding Principles

✦ DURABLE

To matter, to be effective, this initiative has to be affordable enough to be maintained over time. Are there funds that can be redirected? Or is this initiative dependent on finding largely new money? If the latter, does that money exist?

✦ INCLUSIVE

It's important that this "offering" be truly voluntary, that parents not be required to send their children to preschool or be penalized in any way for declining to do so. Some sectors are suspicious of government expanding more into public education or "overreaching" to influence the development of young children.

✦ **EFFECTIVE**

There have to be adequate high quality preschool offerings, which is not currently the situation in all neighborhoods in Montgomery County. The shortage exists, in part, because there is not significant demand in all areas to support low-margin businesses and to create the economies of scale that they must have to be viable. Start-up costs will be daunting for many of these enterprises.

✦ **AFFORDABLE**

The sliding scale subsidy has to be generous enough that financially stressed families can afford to pay their portion. What may seem like a small sacrifice to policy makers will, in fact, be a significant hardship to parents living from pay check to pay check. The true cost associated with offering affordable, voluntary preschool to all low-income families has to be quantified and made public. We know it will be expensive, but how expensive?

✦ **WELL-SUPPORTED**

Middle-class families who don't qualify for a subsidy may well be resentful of the initiative. If they're struggling to pay for their child (even children's) preschool, they likely will want to know why needy families are being "given" what is a necessity for them as well.