



Connect | Recruit | Develop | Retain

Dubuque Works Strategic Plan 2017–2022

Greater Dubuque Development Corporation

Circles Initiative

City of Dubuque

Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque

Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce

Dubuque Area Labor Management Council

Dubuque Community School District

East Central Intergovernmental Association

Holy Family Catholic Schools

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Iowa Works

Multicultural Family Center

Northeast Iowa Community College

Telegraph Herald

United Way Services, Inc.

Western Dubuque Community School District

Dubuque Works is made possible through financial support provided by the City of Dubuque, Q Casino/Dubuque Racing Association, and the Dubuque County Board of Supervisors.

INTRODUCTION

The Greater Dubuque region has taken workforce solutions to the next level with Dubuque Works, a collaborative regional partnership of employers, funding partners, workforce experts, and educators.

Dubuque Works focuses on three goals:

- **HUMAN CAPITAL:** Partners identify and address recruitment, retention, and relocation needs as defined by Greater Dubuque employers;
- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:** Partners build workforce capacity by enhancing training to meet employer demand;
- **COLLABORATION & EVALUATION:** Partners combine collaborative workforce efforts with quality research to generate evidence-based practices that improve performance and outcomes for local employers.

Dubuque Works is of vital importance to existing companies looking to expand, as well as prospective businesses considering a Dubuque location. Through Dubuque Works, the region is taking a proactive approach to ensure a steady pipeline of talent to support your business. Working together at the regional level, we can maximize recruitment and skill development of workforce success, regardless of national fluctuations in available talent.

CALL TO ACTION

CONNECT, RECRUIT, DEVELOP, RETAIN

Causes of workforce shortages including baby boomer retirements, skills gaps, millennial job-hopping, brain drain, and employee disengagement have been sounding alarms nation-wide creating a workforce bogeyman. On the other end of the spectrum, perhaps growing bored of the workforce shortage rhetoric, some economists and politicians¹ have also begun a post-skills gap drumbeat, claiming that tackling the skills gap to solve job shortages is insufficient at best and completely ineffective at worst. This is also an oversimplification as we look in our own community to the skills gaps that enjoy a much healthier pipeline today than five years ago---these include middle-skill occupations like welding, CNC machinists, industrial sewers, and construction equipment operators that recently topped Skills Gap analyses in our region.

As with most complex challenges, we believe there must be a third way to address workforce challenges. The solutions differ from community to community because the causes or workforce shortages are unique to each locality, and so the solutions to address those shortages must be local as well.

Our solutions will include a disciplined approach that uses community demographic data as well as data gathered from in-depth HR Action and Info Action interviews with companies to develop custom solutions for the Greater Dubuque area. These include strategies to:

- **Connect** students, underemployed workers, and underrepresented populations to career exploration, education and training opportunities that will position them to pursue and attain high-demand jobs in our market.
- **Recruit** talent both close-to-home and from across the country, including on our very own regional college campuses, through cutting-edge tools and regional promotion.
- **Develop** the technical, academic, and soft skills needed of our workforce now and into the future through collaborations with institutions of higher education, non-profits, and other federal, state, and local resources
- **Retain** skilled workforce and top talent in the Greater Dubuque area through integrated partnerships with the business, non-profit, housing, workforce, health, recreation, and arts and culture communities.

Join us in moving this strategic plan off the paper and into our Greater Dubuque community! The following pages will walk you through recent Dubuque Works accomplishments, local demographics and trends, state and regional workforce efforts, and our 2017–2022 Strategic Plan.

¹ <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2016/11/14/why-the-skills-gap-doesnt-explain-slow-hiring>

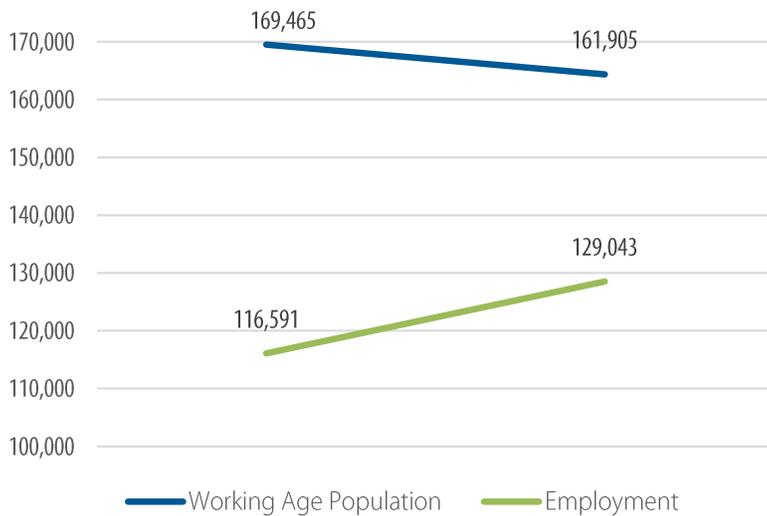
2016 UPDATE

Recent Dubuque Works accomplishments and accolades include the following:

- In 2016 Greater Dubuque Development took first place in the Mid-America Economic Development Council (MAEDC) Workforce Development category for its HR Action program, which collects qualitative and quantitative local workforce data from human resources professionals to inform the strategy of Dubuque Works.
- Greater Dubuque Development's Newcomer Services continue to be heavily used by local employers. In fiscal year 2016, 112 newcomers participated in the free 5-night Distinctively Dubuque class from 48 unique employers; we provided 160 community tours to newcomers, and provided 74 other types of assistance to newcomers through our concierge services.
- In 2016, the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) recognized Dr. Liang Chee Wee, PhD., president of Northeast Iowa Community College, as its Institutional Leadership Award designee for his contribution to economic development through education for programs including the Dubuque Works-funded Opportunity Dubuque and participation in Start-Up Dubuque, which benefits local start-up companies and entrepreneurs.
- In 2016, the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) also awarded Mayor Roy Buol with a Leadership for Public Service award for this commitment to economic development through public-private partnership programs such as Dubuque Works among other accomplishments.
- Opportunity Dubuque administered by Northeast Iowa Community College continues to expand and contribute to a skilled workforce in the region; as of Dec. 31, 2016, the job training initiative has graduated 434 individuals with a job placement or continuing education rate of 98% for students they were able to contact after program completion.
- Opportunity Dubuque has also increased the diversity of its enrollees through a targeted outreach program implemented through the joint hiring of a NICC success coach; From July 1, 2015 to Dec. 31, 2016, the Outreach Success Coach has engaged 198 students, 81 of which have completed or are scheduled for training. Of the 52 individuals who completed certificates, they were all employed or continuing education within 6 months of completion (14 were unable to be reached). 39% of the completers disclosed their race as Black/African-American, 8% as Hispanic or Latino, and 41% as White.
- The Jule College Student Ridership program is experiencing a high percentage of college students utilizing the daytime and nighttime access to public transit. As of October, 21% of Clarke students utilized the Jule, 29% of Loras students, and 17% of University of Dubuque students. This ridership often increases during second semester on campuses.
- Other funded Dubuque Works programs include the Dubuque Circles Initiative, which connects volunteers and community leaders to families wanting to move out of poverty through pathways to self-sufficiency; Dubuque Area Labor Management Council to fund Career Exploration Fairs and the Exploring Program; and the Dubuque Area Chamber of Commerce for their Business After School program.

LOCAL WORKFORCE TRENDS

Greater Dubuque Region 2016 - 2026



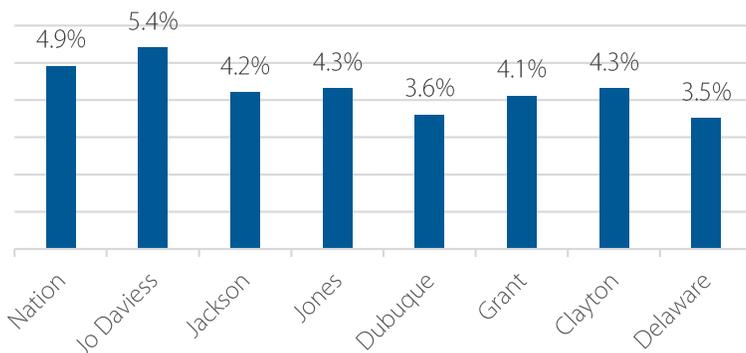
Employment Growth

Region	2006-2016	2016-2026
Dubuque MSA	9.3%	12.2%
Dubuque Region	5.2%	10.7%
Iowa	5.4%	11.0%
Nation	6.2%	10.1%

Working Age Population

Region	2006-2016	2016-2026
Dubuque MSA	7.3%	-1.8%
Dubuque Region	1.8%	-4.5%
Iowa	5.2%	-2.3%
Nation	8.5%	-0.6%

2016 Average Unemployment by County



Earnings per Worker (Median Hourly)



SUMMARY

- Employment in the Dubuque MSA is projected to grow (12.2%) at a rate slightly above the projections for the region (10.7%), State of Iowa (11.0%) and the Nation (10.1%).
- While the working age population (age 15 to 69) is projected to remain relatively flat nationally (-0.6%), greater declines are projected in Iowa (-2.3%) and the Dubuque MSA (-1.8%), with the greatest decline projected for the region at -4.5%.
- Iowa's labor force participation rate hovers around 70%; The labor force participation rate is the percentage of the eligible age population that is either employed or actively seeking work. Nationally the rate currently 62.3%.
- The region's unemployment rate remains low and below the national unemployment rate; highlighting the region's need to import workforce in as part of an overall workforce strategy.
- The Dubuque MSA's median hourly earnings per worker of \$17.89/hr. is 7% less than the State median and only slightly higher (2%) than the region's median hourly wage.
- Of the 8 MSAs in Iowa, Dubuque's median wage ranks 6th.

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

POPULATION

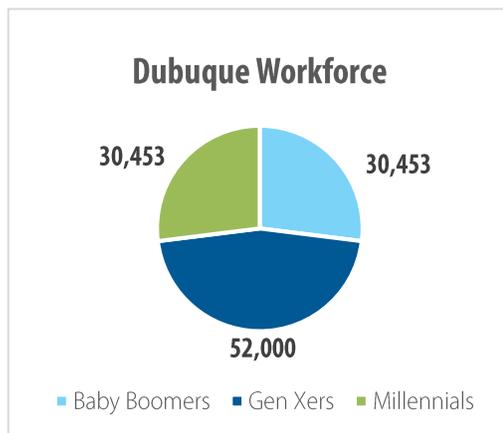
The U.S. Census Bureau's most recent 2015 population estimates confirm 3.6% population growth for Dubuque County since 2010 with a population estimate of 97,003. The Greater Dubuque 7-county region experienced a 0.8% growth rate over the same period with a population of 247,831. This growth is projected to continue over the next 5-10 years, with the majority of growth centered in Dubuque County.

WORKFORCE

The Greater Dubuque laborshed includes a 7-county, tristate region, with Dubuque as the employment and population hub. All areas are well connected by 4-lane highways, and it is common for employees to travel throughout this area for work. This laborshed includes approximately 152,800 residents of working age. Dubuque County workforce statistics are strong, confirming 60,600 people working in the county as of June 2017.

GENERATIONAL CHANGE IN THE WORKPLACE

Millennials, born between 1981 and 1998, are the fastest growing segment of the U.S. workforce. In 2015, they surpassed Gen Xers and Baby Boomers as the largest generation in the U.S. workforce at 53.5 million. In the Greater Dubuque Region, the millennial workforce is approximately 38,417 while the boomer workforce is approximately 30,453. Locally, however, Gen Xers are still the largest cohort, bucking the national trend, at approximately 52,000 employees.



In 2016, Greater Dubuque Development and Northeast Iowa Community College hosted three millennial roundtable events to delve into how generational change is affecting local employers in the Dubuque area. The top findings follow:

MOTIVATION: The number one factor motivating millennials is opportunity for growth and advancement. Companies that can show millennials how to advance and provide a clear model for their growth are more likely to win their favor. Second, millennials are motivated by compensation. Third was a flexible environment. Finally, millennials are also motivated by the mission of the employer and having meaningful work accomplishment.

RETENTION: We asked millennials what retention techniques they'd like to see in the workplace. Consistent with their desire to advance and grow, they most want paid education and training opportunities. Other top retention opportunities include improved benefits, time set aside for planning their growth and advancement path, and a flexible schedule.

COMMUNICATION: Unlike their Gen X supervisors and co-workers who often prefer email, millennials are more like the baby boomers in their desire to communicate face-to-face. In fact, not one millennial suggested that professional communication should happen via text or social media.

GENERATIONAL CHANGE, CONT.

GROWTH & ADVANCEMENT: Sixty-six percent responded that their current employers presented opportunities for growth and advancement during the interview process. This rose to 73% when asked if they were offered such opportunities the first 30 days on the job. This is critical for HR professionals to consider because 75% of attendees said they would rather be offered a lower starting salary with a defined growth and advancement plan over a higher starting salary with no such plan.

RELOCATION: Millennials are willing to move and leave the area for a better professional opportunity; in fact, 60% indicated they would leave the Dubuque area for the right job advancement. The good news for the Dubuque area, however, is that this percentage drops to 33% when asked if they would move for the same opportunity that simply pays more elsewhere. Again, advancement and growth appear more important to millennials than compensation alone.

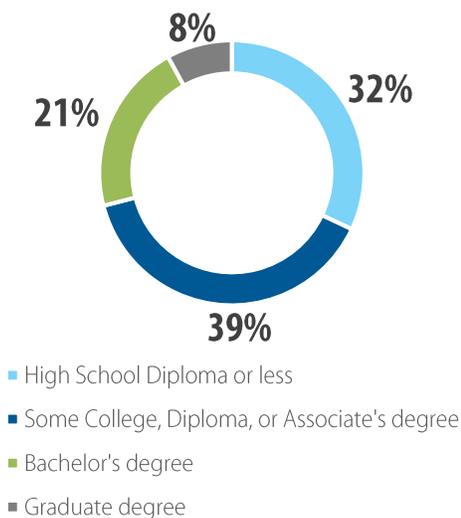
EDUCATION & TRAINING: Seventy percent of attendees responded that they participated in a formal orientation when they began their current job, and 83% have been offered training opportunities at no cost. In fact, 53% said their employers offer tuition reimbursement.

TRAINING PREFERENCES: Sixty-three percent indicated that they prefer a showing/mentoring relationship over self-paced learning or classroom style learning. No participants selected webinars as a preferred training method. Millennials largely have no preference where training occurs, but feel strongly that it should occur during the work day and not before or after.

MENTORSHIP: When it comes to mentorship, their preferred method, 43% indicate they do have a formal mentor who they regularly meet with and discuss their career, and 83% have an informal mentor they go to for professional advice. The group was split on how they felt about a mentor facilitated by their employer, with 57% responding yes.

STATE WORKFORCE TRENDS

2025 Jobs by Credential



WORKFORCE TRENDS

The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce's analysis of industry and occupational requirements projects that by 2025 68 percent of jobs in Iowa will require postsecondary education or training beyond high school.²

Jobs requiring a High School Diploma or less will largely be blue-collar; food service; and support occupations with a shift toward requirement of upskilling to a higher degree.

Some College or "middle skill jobs" are projected to break down as follows:

- 12 percent Associate's degrees;
- 5 percent postsecondary vocational certificates;
- 5 percent occupational licenses and professional certifications;
- 3 percent apprenticeship programs; and
- 14 percent some college credits that have market value including noncredit courses with market value.

² Carnevale, Anthony, Nicole Smith, Artem Gulish, and Andrew Hanson; Iowa: Education and Workforce Trends through 2025. Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce. 2015. <https://cew.georgetown.edu/iowa2025>

INDUSTRY TRENDS

According to the recent Georgetown University Center report, Iowa's largest industries are manufacturing; healthcare and social assistance; and finance and insurance.³ These industries will contribute the most to job growth in the next decade, along with waste management and remediation services.

Manufacturing accounts for both the largest share of output (18% of Iowa's GDP) and the highest share of employment (16%). Healthcare and social assistance is the second largest industry in Iowa. It accounts for 7 percent of output and 14 percent of employment. The finance and insurance industry, retail trade, and government also employ significant numbers of Iowans and contribute substantially to the state's GDP. Together, these industries account for 28% of GDP and 21% of the state's employment. The Education sector accounts for 10% of the state's employment.

The healthcare and social assistance and finance and insurance industries will account for 68,000 new jobs in Iowa, or 27 percent of new jobs by 2025. Other industries that will account for a substantial number of new jobs are administrative and support and waste management and remediation services (23,000 jobs); government (23,000 jobs); and manufacturing (19,000 jobs).

FUTURE READY IOWA

Future Ready Iowa is an initiative to build Iowa's talent pipeline. The goal of Future Ready Iowa is for 70 percent of Iowa's workforce to have education or training beyond high school by 2025. The Dubuque Works collaborative supports the Future Ready Iowa goals and initiatives.

History

- A Future Ready Iowa Alliance was created through the signing of Executive Order 88 in August of 2016
- Executive Order 88 charges the Alliance with developing and recommending a strategic plan by October 31, 2017, to accomplish the 70 percent goal, including metrics and benchmarks.

Goals

- Progress toward reducing the socioeconomic, ethnic and racial achievement gaps in kindergarten through 12th grade and increasing equity in postsecondary enrollment
- Progress toward increasing the percent of traditional-age students and adult learners who earn postsecondary degrees, certificates or other quality credentials
- Progress toward how well degrees, certificates and other credentials awarded by Iowa postsecondary institutions align with high-demand job needs and job-placement rates⁴

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

In 2014, Congress passed reauthorizing legislation, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), for the nation's workforce development system. The new law triggers some changes in how states administer the programs associated with the law.

WIOA's emphasis on credential attainment, sector partnerships, career pathways, and enhanced data is supported by the Dubuque Works collaborative.

³ Ibid.

⁴ <http://www.futurereadyiowa.gov/about-future-ready-iowa>

SECTOR PARTNERSHIP & CAREER PATHWAYS

Sector partnerships are nationally recognized as an effective method for aligning education, economic and workforce development systems to address labor market needs. Effective sector partnerships are industry-driven, meaning industries identify needs and assume the lead role in developing strategies which address their identified needs.

Dubuque Works supports the following sector partnerships:

- Information Technology Sector Partnership
- Manufacturing Alliance
- Long-term Care Sector Partnership
- Transportation Sector Partnership
- Construction Sector Partnership

Career pathways, such as those provided through Opportunity Dubuque, are one strategy utilized by sector partnerships to address industry-identified workforce needs. Career pathways organize education and training into a stackable sequence aligned within specific occupations within a given industry. In this way, career pathways support an individual in developing the personal, technical, and employability skills required for advancement within an industry, and transitioning from training and education into the workplace.

Dubuque Works supports the following career pathway certificates through Opportunity Dubuque:

- Class A Commercial Driver's License
- Culinary Foundations
- Information Technology (various)
- Building Construction
- Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Operator
- Electromechanical Technician
- Industrial Sewing
- Restoration Academy
- Welding (Basic & GMAW)
- Construction Equipment Operator
- Certified Nurse Aide
- Emergency Medical Technician
- Phlebotomy Technician

2017–2022 DUBUQUE WORKS STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Sustain or increase state and local funding of these critical workforce programs:

- | | |
|--|---|
| a. Dubuque Works | f. Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act |
| b. Iowa PACE | g. Promise Jobs |
| c. Iowa Adult Literacy and Education | h. Home Base Iowa |
| d. Iowa GAP tuition assistance | i. Registered Apprenticeships |
| e. Iowa Workforce Training and Economic Development Fund | j. Future Ready Iowa |

STRATEGY: Engage local partners to support strategic investments and advocate collaboratively at state and local level

STRATEGY: Ensure robust local implementation and communication of these programs to ensure strong outcomes, including sharing of personal success stories

STRATEGY: Work with employers and state and local programs to understand and decrease adverse effects experienced by program participants due to misalignment of state and federal benefits with wage increases, i.e. “cliff effect”.

2. Increase retention of local college graduates and recruitment of regional college graduates with in-demand skills through strategic partnerships among educational institutional and employers, including robust internship and graduate placement models.

STRATEGY: Increase relationships between regional employers and local college faculty, staff and students, utilizing the Employer College Connections manual a how-to guide for employers

STRATEGY: Develop Dubuque area recruitment tool for employers and partners to utilize at college events to engage millennials to consider making the Dubuque area their home after graduation

STRATEGY: Increase utilization of AccessDubuqueJobs.com by both employers and students as a go-to place to find internships and employment opportunities in the Greater Dubuque Area

STRATEGY: Increase participation of local college students in Leaders Luncheon, networking events, Future Young Professionals, utilizing new mentoring program, and other programs that encourage college students engagement within the community

3. Increase access to local public transportation for college students and 2nd and 3rd shift workers in the City of Dubuque and Peosta.

STRATEGY: Sustain campus and partner-funded access to the Jule transportation system for college students, increasing their access to employment and community amenities.

STRATEGY: Increase college population utilizing the Jule through campus and community awareness.

STRATEGY: Sustain increased evening hours of the Jule implemented in 2017 and work with public-private partnerships to expand Jule service to serve more employees on 2nd and 3rd shifts.

STRATEGY: Explore public-private partnership models and employer incentive models to provide transportation from Dubuque to Peosta Industrial park and Northeast Iowa Community College campus in Peosta.

4. Support pathways to employment for individuals with significant barriers to employment such as ex-offenders, individuals with disabilities, individuals with mental health barriers, individuals with substance abuse barriers, unemployed and underemployed individuals, English Speakers of Other Languages, etc., which include access to 1:1 coaching and wrap-around services (child care, transportation, work related cost assistance)

STRATEGY: Close the gap between minority unemployment and overall unemployment in the Greater Dubuque area through identification of barriers to target populations and connections to existing or newly developed solutions.

STRATEGY: Increase recruitment, completion and employment of Opportunity Dubuque graduates through strategic outreach, multiple offerings and delivery models, development of new, in-demand certificates, increased engagement with employers, and implementation of work experience component for individuals with multiple barriers.

STRATEGY: Fully implement and enhance Second Chance Hiring pathway for individuals with prior criminal backgrounds who have difficulty obtaining employment, including partnership with Fountain of Youth's Real Talk on Elm Street and mentoring programs, Iowa Works' Providing Opportunities for Ex-Offenders to Succeed (POETS) program, and other relevant programs.

STRATEGY: Develop stronger employer partnerships with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services to increase employment of individuals with disabilities who are seeking employment, including increasing utilization of Ticket to Work program.

STRATEGY: Build relationships among workforce partners and mental health providers, including substance abuse services, to enhance cross-referrals and improve pathways to employment for individuals from the mental health system and to increase employer ability to access to mental health services for their employees.

STRATEGY: Enhance workforce and employment services and improve outreach to English Speakers of Other Languages to increase engagement with this community in workforce opportunities.

STRATEGY: Increase participation in existing programs serving the target and utilization of existing resources in the community through targeted outreach and intentional partnerships with service providers.

5. Increase student exposure to high-demand and high-wage occupations through support of preK-12 workforce readiness programming, including the following:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. Concurrent enrollment | d. Tech Works | h. Future Ready Iowa website |
| b. Career Learning Link | e. Business After School | i. Junior Achievement |
| c. Iowa Career and Technical Education Task Force | f. iJag | j. Mentorship programs |
| | g. Heart program | |

STRATEGY: Increase communication of local labor market information to educators, counselors, parents and students, including job outlook and wage information, through the Future Ready Iowa portal.

STRATEGY: Sustain Career Learning Link model, which introduces high school students to high-demand career pathways, including work-related experiences and coursework.

STRATEGY: Support implementation of Dubuque's Local College Access Network (LCAN) grant.

STRATEGY: Engage employers to participate in preK-12 workforce development and exposure opportunities through sector boards participation and direct outreach, including increased opportunities for K-12 instructors to participate in externships or partner with the private sector.

Increase student exposure to high-demand and high-wage occupations, cont.

STRATEGY: Implement college and career readiness course in grades 9-12 to expose students to career "soft skills."

STRATEGY: Host career exploration events and industry tours for students in middle and high school to expose them to career opportunities in the tri-state area.

STRATEGY: Increase participation in the Tech WORKS program for students interested in pursuing a career in the trades.

6. Expand pathways for opportunity youth and adults to re-engage in employment and training by completing a high school diploma or a high school equivalency degree, and then continuing a pathway to further education and employment.

STRATEGY: Develop a pathway for individuals without a high school diploma to achieve a High School Equivalent Degree (HSED) and Opportunity Dubuque Training.

STRATEGY: Sustain and enhance Reengage Dubuque to improve program graduates' ability to continue directly into career training following completion of high school diploma or equivalency.

7. Support integrated partnerships with City and non-profit service providers in Housing, Education, Workforce, Health, and Arts and Culture to reduce duplication of services to low-income residents and enhance client success to achieve economic stability.

STRATEGY: Ensure relationship among multiple service providers/coaches, including ability to share data and information, to improve client handoffs and services.

STRATEGY: Ensure Dubuque Works supported programs are well-known by service providers outside the workforce sector to increase collaboration, alignment of systems and processes, and cross-referrals.

8. Support disaggregation of all program data, workforce data, and population data to identify inequities and bias, support equity education opportunities and utilize an equity lens to inform decisions.

STRATEGY: Continue to disaggregate data and set targets to reduce disparities or gaps

STRATEGY: Share information and partner with Inclusive Dubuque network to enhance equity of Dubuque Works' programming

STRATEGY: Enhance HR Action survey to ask better questions of employers about equitable hiring practices

9. Support community development and marketing strategy that attracts millennial and other workforce, including social media campaign and other joint marketing of the Greater Dubuque area

STRATEGY: Utilize data from newcomer focus groups and millennial roundtables to identify regional strengths and challenges in attracting millennial and other workforce and to develop a shared marketing strategy for the Greater Dubuque Area.

STRATEGY: Partner with Travel Dubuque (formerly Dubuque Visitors and Convention Bureau) to leverage existing market reach in implementation shared marketing strategy.