

STRENGTHENING STARK

The Strengthening Stark report was developed by Stark Community Foundation on behalf of The Stark Civic Group, an informal group of leaders representing all sectors of Stark County. Upon completion of the report, which examined the demographic and economic trends and projections of our county, the Stark Economic Development Board (SEDB) was asked to lead the creation of a county-wide plan.

The Strengthening Stark Economic Competitiveness Plan, made up of seven focus areas and 22 initiatives, is aimed at transforming Stark County from a smaller, older and poorer community into a larger, younger and more prosperous community.

Economic development entities and community partners from across the county have assumed responsibility for much of the plan's development.



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Middle School Students Work with us to determine how you can learn about career options that may be well-suited for you.

High School / College Students Learn about your career options and select the best path for you: 2-year college, 4-year university, trades, union apprenticeship, etc. Start to engage with local businesses by signing up for an internship.

Parents Learn about the career options that are best for your children and help them make positive choices.

Employers & Business Owners Work with the Strengthening Stark team to develop an exclusive pipeline into our schools by hiring interns and speaking to students about your business and industry. Contact us if you need help evolving your business through innovation and entrepreneurial training.

Job Seekers In Stark County, we have the jobs that align with your skills. Live, work and play in Stark County.

Elected Officials Gain clarity on how your respective municipality can tie into the overall Strengthening Stark effort.

Community Enthusiasts Join our leadership group and help us maximize our impact. Minority and female leaders are especially valued.

Nonprofit & Community Leaders Join our efforts and see how we can collectively drive even greater impact.

A NEED for
change.
A NEED for
strength.

You are
the Strength
in Stark.

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A NEED for **change.** A NEED for **strength.**



STRENGTHENING STARK Economic Competitiveness Plan

1 Governance

Deliver a high degree of programmatic impact and ensure long-term program sustainability.

- Governance oversight
- Program funding management
- Quality control of initiatives

2 Workforce

Better prepare the workforce and employees to help raise the average household income of Stark County residents.

- Comprehensive Stark Jobs database
- High-performance career planning
- Integrated career education pathways
- Leadership development programs
- At-risk population wrap-around interventions

3 Business Retention & Expansion

Help sustain and grow local companies so that they can add meaningful living-wage jobs to the community.

- Business retention & expansion outreach
- Chamber consortium revitalization
- Business education programming
- Business 911 platform and resource network

4 Business Attraction

Expand the core industry clusters in Stark County such that high-wage jobs are added to the economy.

- Business Attraction Industry Targets:
 - Manufacturing (metals)
 - Manufacturing (food)
 - Petrochemical/oil/gas
 - Digital technology

5 Entrepreneurship

Increase the deal flow of innovation-based, high-growth, high-wage startups across the county.

- Integrated support network (incubation hub)
- Targeted entrepreneurial support: industry and arts
- Key programming: Innovation District and Stark Tank

6 Infrastructure

Attract private, federal and state investments so that the county has the infrastructure to support high-wage businesses.

- Broadband access
- Community arts
- Site development and promotion
- Transportation network

7 Community Engagement & Outreach

Engage with citizens and leaders to help them understand what steps they can take to pursue their enlightened self-interest.

- Educate and engage community on initiatives
- Strengthening Stark Week