## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

**CASE STUDIES**
- Logan County 30
- Grand Lake 34
- Hayden 36

## CASE STUDIES

**LONGITUDINAL CASE STUDIES**
- Rio Blanco County 42
- Steamboat Springs 48

## APPENDIX

- A: Application Survey Synthesis 52
- B: Participation Satisfaction Synthesis 56
- C: Blueprint 2.0 Implementation 64
OVERVIEW

Blueprint 2.0 is a series of technical assistance initiatives offered by the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade (OEDIT) to enhance rural economic development strategies across the state. The program leverages state partnerships and specialized resources to foster community-driven economic diversification in interested regions throughout Colorado.

Since it was launched in the summer of 2016 OEDIT has deployed 42 initiatives in 27 communities, counties, or regions, over the first (2016) and second (2017) rounds of the program. An additional 22 initiatives in 17 communities are to be deployed during the third round of the program beginning in August of 2018. Communities are asked to demonstrate a history of collaboration, strong local leadership, and robust support for the initiatives that they choose to pursue. Though the overwhelming majority of initiatives come with no funding for the implementation of the strategies developed over their duration, the program continues to be a sought after complement to local efforts statewide year over year.

This report will assess the impact of the program’s second year. As Blueprint 2.0 is a fluid program that continually responds to feedback and changing economic conditions, this report will also make recommendations for the improvement of the program for future rounds, and highlight those revisions already made in between rounds 1 and 2 through the following format:

- History
- Research Methods
- Summary of Findings
- Insights and Excerpts
- Conclusions
- Appendix containing Participation Satisfaction Survey Synthesis, Application Survey Synthesis, and promotional materials
THE COLORADO BLUEPRINT

The original Colorado Blueprint was released in 2011 as a statewide strategy to spur Colorado’s economy, help businesses grow and attract new jobs to the state. Each of Colorado’s 64 counties submitted economic development priorities as representatives from OEDIT, the Department of Local Affairs, and other cabinet level agencies met with thousands of individuals across Colorado.

The goal was to build a framework for comprehensive economic development planning that aligned existing efforts and identified opportunities for growth and focused investments.

Out of the Colorado Blueprint came 6 core objectives:

- Build a business-friendly environment
- Retain, grow and recruit companies
- Increase access to capital
- Create and market a stronger Colorado brand
- Educate and train the workforce of the future
- Cultivate innovation and technology

Though the Colorado Blueprint process was valuable in generating feedback, new programming, and a deeper understanding of regionally held core values, the economic recovery in Colorado after the Great Recession was not uniform, and by 2015 it became clear that a more hands on approach was necessary to fuel economic activity in rural parts of the state.

BLUEPRINT 2.0

ROUND 1

Blueprint 2.0 was established through a similar bottom-up process to the Colorado Blueprint, but went a step further in the service of rural Colorado by turning feedback on local economic challenges and opportunities into a statewide series of technical assistance initiatives for which rural and distressed regions could apply.

Over the course of 2015, OEDIT held 13 listening sessions to develop the 10 initiatives that formed the first round of Blueprint 2.0. In a more tactical approach that extended beyond OEDIT’s traditional offerings, the initiatives provided communities the opportunity for a much deeper dive within selected areas of focus.
The recipients of Colorado Blueprint 2.0 initiatives for 2016-17 were as follows:

- Industry Attraction Initiative: Rio Blanco County, Trinidad
- Competitive Advantage: Fort Morgan, Limon, Dillon
- Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry: Ouray, West End of Montrose County
- Strengthen Local Business Brand: San Luis Valley, Buena Vista, Delta County
- Tiny Homes Community Master Plan: Morgan County, Steamboat Springs, Pagosa Springs
- Adaptive Reuse Workshop: Brush, Delta County, Summit County
- Call Yourself Creative: Buena Vista, Rio Blanco County, Kremmling
- Incubator/Accelerator Best Practices: Morgan County, Steamboat, Northwest Council of Governments
- Tourism Promotion: La Junta, Delta County, Rio Blanco County
- Community-Led Initiative: Custer County

**Looking forward**

The third round of Blueprint 2.0 launched in August of 2018 with 8 of the 9 initiatives from the second round, most with no programmatic changes, alongside a new collaboration with the Colorado Workforce Development Council.

Launch a Sector Partnership was designed to assist regions in the development and management of their own next generation sector partnerships which aim to put business at the center of discussions around workforce, industry challenges, economic disruptions, and opportunities so that policy makers may be more nimble and responsive.

Furthermore OEDIT has been soliciting feedback on economic conditions and emerging opportunities that will be synthesized to provide rural Colorado with even more choices for technical assistance in 2019.

**Round 2 (2017-18)**

Early into the pilot year of Blueprint 2.0, OEDIT implemented robust evaluation and feedback processes to gauge satisfaction with the program and to track outcomes. Communities expressed gratitude and excitement over the new programming and we recorded a myriad of positive outcomes described in detail in 2017’s Evaluation Report. However, based upon feedback from recipient communities, our partners, and OEDIT staff there was undoubtedly room for improvement.

As a result, 6 new offerings were either developed or substantially altered from their pilot format. OEDIT began soliciting applications for the 10 initiatives offered for the second round of Blueprint 2.0 in April of 2017, and again deployed assistance across the state over that fall.
METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH PROCESS

This report has three primary data sources:

The Blueprint 2.0 Annual Report, filled out digitally and required of all Blueprint 2.0 recipients. Annual reports were sent out on July 15th, 2018 and recipients were given 30 days to complete them. Follow-up phone interviews were also conducted with select awardees for clarification and/or case studies.

The Annual Report Questions:

1. Please describe your Blueprint 2.0 project.
2. How did your project change from application to implementation? What drove those changes?
3. Please describe collaborations/partnerships that supported your project.
4. What outcomes or tangible impacts have you seen as a result of the project?
5. What outcomes or tangible impacts do you anticipate in the future as a result of this work?
6. What was the best part of participating in Blueprint 2.0?
7. What was the most challenging part of participating in Blueprint 2.0?
8. What advice would you offer for others engaging with a Blueprint 2.0 initiative to make the most of their experience?
9. What’s one next step your community or region will take as a result of participating in this program?
10. Please list any financial resources you secured as a result of your Blueprint 2.0 initiative.
11. Please list any new partnerships or resources you’ve secured as a result of your Blueprint 2.0 Initiative.
12. What could be done to improve your satisfaction with Blueprint 2.0?
13. Is there anything else you’d like to share?

2. A Participation Satisfaction Survey sent out 4-6 weeks post completion of an initiative. This survey seeks to quantify satisfaction with each initiative and survey takers are encouraged to leave comments about their experience.

3. An Application Satisfaction Survey, conducted to assess satisfaction with and improvements that can be made to the Blueprint 2.0 application process.

Secondary sources include final deliverables, reporting from internal OEDIT staff, and supporting documents.

The above information was then synthesized to create the insights, recommendations, and highlights for this document with attention given to identifying larger trends and outcomes.

LIMITATIONS

There are inherent limitations on the comprehensiveness of this report due to the small sample size, selection bias, and self-reporting that is not thoroughly vetted for accuracy.
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<tr>
<th>CHAMPION</th>
<th>BLUEPRINT 2.0 INITIATIVE(S)</th>
<th>COMMUNITY/COUNTY</th>
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<td>Greg Smith</td>
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<td>Katelin Cook</td>
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<td>Brandon Stam*</td>
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<td>John Bristol</td>
<td>A Data-Driven Approach to Economic Development</td>
<td>Steamboat Springs</td>
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<td>Kate Collins</td>
<td>Tourism Promotion and Development</td>
<td>Lake County</td>
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*Indicates change in initiative champion
BREAKDOWN OF PROJECTS BY BLUEPRINT INITIATIVE:

- Brand Building for Communities—3
- Certified Small Business Community—4
- Community Placemaking—2
- Coworking 101—2
- Creativity Lab of Colorado—2
- A Data Driven Approach to Economic Development—1
- Film and Major Production Initiative—2
- Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry Initiative—2
- Tourism Promotion and Development—2
GENERAL INSIGHTS

As a program, Blueprint 2.0 was designed to be flexible and community-driven, and the 2017 recipients engaged in an array of activities to further their economic development strategies. Across the state, communities deployed projects by connecting with partners and engaging their residents, resulting in a range of deliverables and outcomes.

This section details these findings in the following way:

- Resources Secured, Activities, and Partnerships
- Deliverables and Collateral Developed
- Qualitative Benefits of Participation
- Ongoing Blueprint 2.0 Related Work
- Process Insights

RESOURCES SECURED, ACTIVITIES, AND PARTNERSHIPS

Financial Resources Secured

A total of $343,511 was directly awarded to communities as a result of Blueprint 2.0.

The Certified Small Business Community awarded a total of $95,000 to four communities—Lincoln County, Prowers County, Rio Blanco County, and Fruita—in grant and technical assistance funding to expand Small Business Development Center and other entrepreneurial support services.

The Colorado Tourism Office awarded $7,500 each in implementation grant funding to the two recipients of the Tourism Promotion and Development initiative—Rio Blanco County, and Lake County/Leadville—after the successful completion of their respective initiatives. Additionally, Rio Blanco County was awarded a Marketing Matching Grant for $12,271.

Over $142,000 in Rural Economic Development Initiative Grant funding was awarded for the continuation of 3 Blueprint 2.0 projects in Kiowa, Sterling, and Meeker through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs.

Two communities—Fruita and Craig—came up with $28,663 in matching funds from their communities and other regional organizations to fund the opening and operation of a coworking space and for the procurement of branded promotional materials for the Certified Small Business Community and the Brand Building Communities initiatives respectively.

The town of Hayden aligned their budget to make $16,000 available for the installation of planters, banners, lighting, and crosswalks to coincide with an approximate $36,500 resizing of their mainstreet, CO Highway 40.

The town of Grand Lake was awarded $10,000 by Colorado Creative Industries after becoming a Certified Creative District due to work completed through the Creativity Lab initiative.

Nearly 400 individuals from over 200 organizations statewide took part in Blueprint 2.0 related events and activities over the course of the second round.

Activities included 10 community meetings, 7 workshops, and 3 focus groups.

In Clear Creek County, the Colorado Office of Film, Television, and Media integrated 65 High School to Students into the Blueprint 2.0 process by inviting them to take photos of Clear Creek County to be archived on Real Film for film Scouts.
An additional 757 individuals responded to surveys in Logan County, Moffat County, Custer County, and Routt County for the Build a Better Brand and A Data Driven Approach to Economic Development initiatives. Furthermore, communities awarded the Certified Small Business Community conducted a total of 39 Training Events with 394 Attendees.

Four physical spaces for business engagement have been established with two part-time employees:

Grand Lake established a Maker Space and have employed a part-time Coordinator to organize Creative District related activities. The F-works Coworking Space in Fruita opened on April 20th, 2018 with the help of Certified Small Business Community funding with 57 dedicated members. Rio Blanco County has established two Satellite SBDC Spaces and hired a program manager to oversee their business outreach efforts.

**Partnerships Built and Strengthened**

36 new partnerships were identified. Over 70 partnerships were leveraged and strengthened.

Two Communities—Grand Lake and Grand Junction—were invited to apply to become Certified Creative Districts which included attendance at Colorado Creative Industries annual conference to interface with other districts, and Grand Lake was awarded certification in July, 2018.

**Additional Activities and Accomplishments**

Both Grand Lake and Grand Junction formed 501c3 steering committees following a key recommendation from the Creativity Lab initiative. Victor and Clear Creek County hosted three film scouts each during two day-long location scouting familiarization tours. The four Certified Small Business Communities indicate that because of enhanced business support opportunities they now offer they have collectively seen the creation of 23.5 jobs and 10 were retained. The four Certified Small Business Communities indicate that because of enhanced business support opportunities they now offer they have collectively seen the creation of 23.5 jobs with, 10 were retained, as well as a reported $4.5M in capital formation.

**MANY PRODUCTS EMERGED FROM THESE ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING DELIVERABLES THAT WERE A DIRECT RESULT OF BLUEPRINT 2.0 WORK:**

**Reports, Plans, and Recommendations**

Development Counsellors International in coordination with OEDIT’s digital media manager created individualized branding plans, with community value propositions, taglines, logos and implementation recommendations (3) Destination Marketing Plan Tourism Public Relations Plan Action Item Prioritization schedule for increasing off-season visitor traffic Peer case studies and recommendations for riverwalk commercialization Observation and recommendation documents from creative district consultants (2)
战略计划包括创意区认证（2项）
战略文件包括实施建议和设计概念，用于公共空间的复兴（2项）

其他产品和结果

多个社区表示，他们积极参与到资产的宣传当中。

洛根县正在与当地组织合作，为州际76号公路的宣传设计制作标志。里奥布兰科县利用多个CTO营销资源和机会，包括两个Instagram接管活动，CTO社交媒体合作社，开发与Matador Network的内容，并被授予一个CTO营销匹配赠款，以进一步推广其营销努力。

最后，克拉克县正在为未来生产开发一个县范围内的许可。

BLUEPRINT 2.0 是基础性工作，为社区提供了探索和建立在选项基础上经济多元化和增长的机会。未来通过关系建立、教育、规划和战略。

定性收益

受赠人还指出了这些关键的定性收益，使Blueprint 2.0项目参与。

社区强化

Blueprint 2.0项目鼓励对共同目标的投入，促进了沟通，并成为当地自豪的来源。

“它改善了社区参与，尤其是在研讨会中。我们很喜欢看到城镇居民的参与并提供他们希望改善当前居住地的建议。”

Gaby Cheatham, Town of Kiowa
Community Placemaking

“...所有已经成功的非营利组织现在都通过Grand Lake Colorful Creatives合作。这有助于加强我们的社区。”

DiAnn Butler, Town of Grand Lake
Creativity Lab of Colorado

“...最好的部分是让社区团结在一起，这有助于获取对我们的项目的支持。”

Matthew Mendisco, Town of Hayden
Community Placemaking
Credibility

Outside experts brought a sense of urgency and importance to issues and opportunities communities had not previously addressed.

“...experts came from out of town. As an experienced marketing professional, I did what I could, but my credibility as a volunteer is not the same as someone the state sends in.”

Greg Smith, Custer County
Brand Building for Communities

Capacity Building

Blueprint 2.0 provided participants with the additional capacity and resources to explore new ideas and implement new strategies.

“Blueprint 2.0 gave us the ability to do something that was critically needed, but we did not have the resources to accomplish on our own.”

Christina Oxley, Moffat County
Brand Building for Communities

Collaboration and Support

Communities built, leveraged, and improved partnerships across the board, from local organizations to statewide networks.

“For us, the best part of Blueprint is the increased focus, relations and partnerships formed throughout the project. Due to these projects (and future blueprints) we are now more connected to state resources, have a larger pool of industry experts we can call on, and we have more focus to our economic development activities within the County.”

Katelyn Cook, Rio Blanco County
Tourism Promotion and Development, Coworking 101, Certified Small Business Community

“...[The] best part of participating in the Blueprint program [aside from funding] is the establishment of great relationships with other CSBC recipients, and the OEDIT team of directors in Denver. We all benefit from collaborative work, the adoption of best-practices, and furthering the productivity of our region to the benefit of Colorado.”

Troy McCue, Lincoln County
Certified Small Business Community

“Working directly with OFTM and having their support throughout the project was great. OFTM has access to so many contacts that we wouldn’t have otherwise been able to so easily attract to Clear Creek County.”

Lindsay Valdez, Clear Creek County
COFTM Major Production initiative
ONGOING BLUEPRINT 2.0

RELATED WORK

Continual Engagement with Blueprint 2.0

Seven communities awarded Blueprint 2.0 in 2017-18 applied for and were awarded additional initiatives for the 2018-19 round, allowing them to further their local strategies and build upon previous work.

Clear Creek County:
Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry
Rio Blanco County:
Community Placemaking,
Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry, and
Brand Building for Communities
Logan County:
Certified Small Business Community,
Creativity Lab of Colorado
Moffat County:
Launch a Sector Partnership
Town of Silverton:
Certified Small Business Community
Town of Steamboat Springs:
COFTM Film Festival Initiative
Town of Hayden:
Brand Building for Communities

Six Communities Are Pursuing Future Planning Efforts

Leadville/Twin Lakes is developing a consumer research plan for 2019.
Grand Lake is developing a new website, creative marketing plan, and launching an annual calendar of creative workshops in the fall of 2018.
The town of Silverton has engaged the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service to work on trail management planning.

Steamboat Springs and greater Routt County will use the results of the Data Driven Approach to Economic Development initiative to implement a formal business retention and expansion program as well as a defined cluster strategy to target key sectors for growth.
Grand Junction and the Town of Kiowa both received funding from the Department of Local Affairs to administer feasibility studies.

Four communities are actively seeking funding to further their Blueprint 2.0-related work

Grand Lake is pursuing funding to enhance its Certified Creative District and applied for scholarships through the local Rotary to sponsor memberships for local youth at the community’s maker space.
The Town of Hayden is pursuing multiple grant opportunities to enhance and beautify their downtown.
The town of Lamar is looking into options that will allow them to create a standalone SBDC office.
Logan County is working with their Citizens Advisory Board and Lodging Tax Board to reallocate some funds for additional marketing efforts.

Three Communities Indicated that They’ll Make Substantial Physical Improvements to Assets Identified through Blueprint 2.0

The town of Hayden, through a strong partnership with the Colorado Department of Transportation, will undertake a “road on a diet” plan to reduce the driveable width of Highway 40 through downtown to slow traffic, increase pedestrian safety and walkability, and add bike lanes.
The town of Trinidad will install lights along
their riverwalk to increase its appeal and useable hours. The town of Sterling will begin construction on a coworking space this fall.

**Other Steps Underway**

The town of Leadville is pursuing the creation of a “Two Mile High” Marker or iconic sign, for visitors to photograph themselves in front of and post to social media. The town of Silverton is hosting a fall cycling event in collaboration with Fort Lewis College with plans to put a second similar event on their calendar. The town of Fruita is planning on expanding their coworking space based on demand and to begin actively marketing the City of Fruita/FWorks as a place to “live, work and play” in the “Colorado you were promised.”

**PROCESS INSIGHTS—CONDITIONS FOR BLUEPRINT 2.0 PROJECT SUCCESS**

Across the Annual Reports, surveys, and follow-up interviews, participants identified several key factors as being critical to successful outcomes. These central themes included:

**Clarity on Desired Outcomes**

“You have to have a vision for what you want and be clear in your expectations. OEDIT will work with you to meet them. It’s a team effort for Colorado.”

*John Bristol, Steamboat Springs*

*A Data Driven Approach to Economic Development*

**Developing a Relationship with OEDIT and Project Consultants**

Connect with your consultants. Share pictures, experiences, anecdotes, ideas. Don’t expect direct reflections. Do expect they will mold what you share into an impression that will best reach others. From your community, seek out consensus builders, be sure to explain the process.

*Greg Smith, Custer County*

*Brand Building for Communities*

**Stakeholder Engagement**

*“Have a crystal clear idea of what you want, build your key stakeholder relationships quick and strong, know your limits on what you can actually achieve with the funds available, and ask for help from other organizations who have been through the process or that are subject matter experts.”*

*Jon Maraschin, Fruita*

*Certified Small Business Community*

*“I would recommend making sure that those who apply have a good understanding of what they want to get out of the process and that they have strong engagement from those needed to make it happen. The Blueprint format works best when there is engagement from numerous stakeholders who have a shared vision for their project.”*

*Brandon Stam, Grand Junction*

*Creativity Lab of Colorado*
The Value of Having a Dedicated Local Team

“It is critical to have a strong local team. We realized quickly that we did not have the manpower to complete all we wanted to do in such a short period of time. Engaging [another organization] was a huge help.”

Lindsay Valdez, Clear Creek County
COFTM Major Production Initiative

“Just to have good communication with everyone and make sure to ask questions and collaborate with people in your community, even if you don’t think you need help.”

Melanie Russek, Silverton
Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry

Committing To the Project Long-Term

“Be committed to the process and initiative. Don’t spend time on these if you are not willing to commit to them long-term.”

Trae Miller, Town of Sterling
Coworking 101

“It also is important for applicants to realize that the receipt of an award through Blueprint is an honor, but also a good deal of time for reporting and compliance. Building capacity through the Blueprint program all leads to greater output and more robust resources— all hallmarks of good hard work for rural Colorado. This is a perfect example of not resting on one’s laurels once awarded. In other words, once awarded...now the work starts!”

Troy McCue, Lincoln County
Certified Small Business Community

Lastly, One Recipient Spoke To the Advantage of Being Flexible as the Blueprint 2.0 Process Evolves

“The Clear Creek EDC teamed up with Communities That Care (CTC) to engage local youth. This addition made the project so much more fun and rewarding. The students were able to get hands on experience, meet with industry professionals, and provide a great deal of assistance to the CCEDC in updating the location photo database.”

Lindsay Valdez, Clear Creek County
COFTM Major Production Initiative
INITIATIVE SPECIFIC FINDINGS

In response to feedback received from the pilot round of Blueprint 2.0, one of the immediate changes to the program was to outline initiative objectives in the promotional material produced for Blueprint 2.0. These “one-pagers” (available in the appendix) dictate at a high level the scopes of work, timelines, benchmarks, and specific, potential outcomes that could result as a part of participating in Blueprint 2.0. These outcomes are categorized below by short, medium, and long-term expected results.

In reviewing the annual reports, ancillary documentation, and conducting interviews with selected participants, themes across the outcomes of individual initiatives became more apparent and there was strong evidence of progress towards these goals.

Additionally, Blueprint 2.0 either removed, added, or revised six initiatives from their original formats in 2016 based on recipient feedback and outcomes. Asterisks will denote an initial offering, with a brief explanation of why the programming had been altered.

BRAND BUILDING FOR COMMUNITIES

Called “Build a Better Business Brand” during the pilot round, although no programmatic changes affecting the desired outcomes were made.

- Development of a cohesive community/regional brand that includes updated vision statement, value proposition, tagline and logo (ST)
- Awareness, education, and local cooperation on brand (ST/MT)
- Community/regional adoption of brand, including brand guidelines for activation (MT)
- Effective brand communication resulting in an increase in positive perception, increased exposure and increased opportunity to draw investment, new residents and visitors. (LT)

CERTIFIED SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY*

The Certified Small Business Community was added to the Blueprint 2.0 programming line-up to provide underserved areas of the state with increased SBDC services and other small business and entrepreneurial support mechanisms.

- Expansion of SBDC services, including increased consultation hours, workshops, training seminars, events, and the establishment of satellite offices (ST)
- Regional understanding and support of importance of business assistance in promotion, retention and expansion efforts (MT)
- Measurably increased business activity including job creation and retention (MT)
- Establishment and sustainability of effective small business and entrepreneurial business support network and services (LT)

COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING*

Built to introduce communities to the value of developing a sense a place by aligning community leaders on a cohesive vision to increase the attractiveness of natural public spaces like downtowns and parks leading to an increase in foot traffic and overall economic vitality.

- Identify local assets and align community stakeholders on community vision (ST)
- Implementation of “soft touch improvements”— Banners, planters, benches, art etc.— to make identified assets more welcoming (MT)
- Organization of community events to activate public spaces (MT)
Implementation/construction of “heavy touch improvements” which include permanent infrastructure upgrades like bike paths, traffic calming measures, pedestrian crosswalk investments, and interactive installations (LT)
Increased pedestrian and business activity in enhanced spaces (LT)

COWORKING 101

Coworking 101 was designed as a replacement for the pilot years’ Incubator/Accelerator Best Practices initiative. Upon reviewing the feedback from participants and other Blueprint 2.0 recipients it became clear that rural communities needed access to a space for business professionals to coalesce, instead of curriculum-driven programming that most do not have the financial resources to sustain.

Understanding of the components coworking spaces and their value as a hub of business activity in rural communities (ST)
Local support for coworking bolstered by networking events and opportunities (ST/MT)
Successfully launch a locally owned coworking space (MT/LT)
Increased localized business activity, including business expansion and a greater demand for localized services and amenities (LT)

CREATIVITY LAB OF COLORADO

Creativity Lab of Colorado was conceived as an evolution of the Call Yourself Creative initiative to offer a more hands-on approach to support creative industry ecosystems within communities furthering the community goal of ultimately becoming a Certified Creative District.

Note: From the 2017-18 round of Blueprint 2.0 onward, participation in the Creativity Lab of Colorado initiative is compulsory before being invited to apply to become a Certified Creative District.

Identification of key principles that lead to a locally sustainable and vibrant creative industry (ST)
Deeper understanding of how creative industries can drive economic growth (ST)
Community alignment and support of Creativity Lab recommendations for success including strategic planning, financial commitments, and the formation of a 501c3 steering organization (MT)
Certified Creative District Designation resulting in creative sector job growth, enhanced business support mechanisms, and new funding opportunities (LT)

A DATA DRIVEN APPROACH TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

OEDIT’s Strategy and Analytics team from the Global Business Development (GBD) division integrated many of the successful components from three initiatives—Adaptive Reuse, Analyze Competitive Advantages, and Industry Attraction—into an initiative designed to give local economic developers the tools to measure the satisfaction of the local business community.

Local recognition of the importance of quantitative decision making in the development of business retention, expansion, and attraction policies (ST)
Increased familiarity with the tools and methods for population surveying (ST)
The definition of drivers for and the measurement of success in the community (MT)
Adoption of a long-term strategy of regularly surveying business owners and the development of clarity on local value proposition for the robust retention of businesses (LT)

**FILM AND MAJOR PRODUCTION INITIATIVE**

The 2017-18 round marked the first programming entry into Blueprint 2.0 from the Colorado Office of Film Television and Media in order to introduce communities to the film industry in Colorado with the goal of promoting unknown locations to local film scouts and developing film readiness practices to compete for film productions.

- Development of local knowledge of the impacts of the film industry as well as the benefits, challenges, and expectations of working with the film industry (ST)
- Analysis and archival of local assets considered to be “filmable” in Reel Scout (ST/MT)
- Adoption of film readiness procedures including alignment among local entities, streamlined permitting processes, and the development of a familiarization tour for film scouts (MT)
- Attraction of a film production (LT)

**TOURISM PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT**

- Community / region builds needed skills, knowledge and support to make an existing attraction stronger (ST)
- Target audiences become more aware of the attraction and its value (MT)
- Increase in visitors to the attraction (MT/ LT)
- Increase in local sales and lodging taxes as a result of increased visitation (LT)

Note: Tiny Homes Community Master Plan was discontinued due to lack of interest.

Evidence from the annual reports and deliverables suggests Blueprint 2.0 recipients made great gains on short- and medium-term outcomes and are on track to accomplish their long-term goals. Five communities—Steamboat Springs, Hayden, Grand Lake, Logan County, and Rio Blanco County—whose activities stood out in particular are profiled in the following case studies beginning on page 28.

**PROGRAMMATIC CONSIDERATIONS**

A key component of Blueprint 2.0 is that the program was built to be adaptive, not only to rural economic needs, but participant criticisms as well. Participants were prompted, through the annual reports, surveys, and follow-up interviews, to provide OEDIT with suggestions for program improvement. These lessons learned are important to consider to strengthen the program in future years:

Having scopes of work that were not entirely clear to participants was an issue that affected program
satisfaction across many of the initiatives over the pilot year. Although OEDIT took multiple steps to set expectations upfront with communities for the 2017-18, for example by producing in-depth initiative outlines, Blueprint 2.0, especially with the newer initiatives, could still improve on the clarity of scope for programming in future rounds to improve the experience for participating communities while still continuing to allow autonomy and flexibility for the best local outcomes.

**Improvements Should Include:**

Brief engagement agreement, outlining project scope and the roles and responsibilities of OEDIT and the selectee, And a timeline/work plan of activities for the program, including expected time commitment.

"We believe a written set of ‘do’s and don’ts’, as well as greater specifics in grant policy and management is needed. While serving as the proverbial ‘guinea pigs’ in this program, we noted some changes as the program got more organized as the year progressed. Having more specifics in writing upfront could have helped our first year have a bit greater [of an] impact on the local business community”

**Troy McCue, Lincoln County**
Certified Small Business Community

Some suggested that insights into social media or other digital media outreach, for example, could have aided their efforts in engaging populations with a wide geographic dispersion.

"More help with publicity and general communications to the community would be a good first step. Tiny communities such as ours, while apparently intimate, are often spread out, both physically and figuratively. We lack the resources to effectively promote and explain something as vague as branding.”

**Greg Smith, Custer County**
Brand Building for Communities

Many recipients commented that their efforts could have been advanced with more robust follow-up from OEDIT and other Blueprint 2.0 partners.

"Capacity for OEDIT to continue follow-up and outreach to awardees to ensure they are making progress would also help the success of these.”

**Trae Miller, Town of Sterling**
Coworking 101

Many of those individuals whose communities were not chosen felt that the explanation of denial could have been more in-depth in its critique of the rejected applications so the communities could have more clarity on what to improve upon for future applications.

Several communities indicated that they could have used more assistance with community engagement.
Lastly, and related to increasing the capacity for follow-up within Blueprint 2.0, nearly all participants stated that the biggest hurdle in between the completion of Blueprint 2.0 assistance and implementation was funding. Nearly all communities requested that some type of funding, however large or small, be made available for the successful continuation of the work launched through the initiatives.

“Technical assistance grants are great as planning tools but being from a small poor county, it is hard to see all the items to fruition with limited funds. The ideas are great but it can be frustration trying to figure out how to make them happen and not just have another planning document sitting on the shelf. I think technical assistance grants with follow up cash funding to help with the priority projects could be a great idea to help get them over the finish line—at least for the poorer communities.”

Melanie Russek, Silverton
Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry

“Another positive aspect of this program are the funding options tied to the tourism and Certified Small Business Community programs. That implementation funding makes such a huge difference for project sustainability.”

Katelin Cook, Rio Blanco County
Certified Small Business Community, Tourism Promotion and Development, and Coworking 101

“The Certified Small Business Community funds communities directly while the Colorado Tourism Office has implementation grants of up to $7,500 available upon the completion of the Tourism Promotion and Development initiative. The rest of the initiatives offer only technical assistance.”
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In its second year, Blueprint 2.0 helped 17 communities on 20 different projects within the scope of 9 distinct initiatives. Through this programming, OEDIT provided technical assistance throughout rural Colorado bringing expertise, specialized partnerships and other resources to local communities for customized economic development strategies. By integrating feedback from the pilot year the program was able to add even more value, offering an even broader menu of programming topics to advance rural economies including placemaking, film production, coworking, and additive small business support. Each program was then individually tailored to the unique needs and goals of each participating region and driven by the community.

MEASURABLE HIGHLIGHTS

BLUEPRINT 2.0 COMMUNITIES ENGAGED IN A DIVERSE SET OF ACTIVITIES:

Engaged with over 1500 individuals and 222 organizations through surveys, community meetings, workshops, and other in-person events.

Communities reported establishing 37 new partnerships, strengthening over 70, and creating two 501c3s.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

Communities secured over $340,000 for programming and the continuation of projects identified through Blueprint 2.0.

INTRODUCTION TO VALUABLE TOOLS

Hayden used the recommendations from their project to engage the University Technical Assistance program in the creation of road narrowing and downtown beautification designs which they leveraged to gain commitment for the project from CDOT worth over $36,000.
**DETERMINABLES**

Communities were provided 11 individualized strategic planning documents to support their long-term efforts.

**KEY QUALITATIVE BENEFITS**

Capacity to advance new ideas and strategies locally.
Strengthened communities through dialogue and alignment.
Enhanced community vision.

Project champions highlighted the positive impact of Blueprint 2.0 on their local economic development efforts:

- “It will take time for results, but we are headed in the right direction. We truly appreciate all the insight Blueprint 2.0 has brought us and thankful for the opportunity to have been able to go through the process.”
  
  **Gaby Cheatham, Kiowa**

- “I’ve been working in tourism, ski and travel marketing for most of my career. I thought the process was thoughtful and effective, and I appreciate the efforts of OEDIT and the CTO to help smaller destinations in Colorado develop their capacity.”
  
  **Kate Collins, Leadville/Twin Lakes**

- “Overall, I think Blueprint is a great program. I hope it will continue under the next Governor and that OEDIT will continue to look at new types of initiatives that can be created and offered to help build value and capacity in rural communities. Thank you for your support of rural Colorado!”
  
  **Trae Miller, Sterling/Logan County**

Most of the participating communities from the pilot year are poised to continue their work in meaningful ways beyond the initiative:

- Four communities are actively engaged in seeking funding to support their efforts.
- Six communities are engaging planning efforts to complement or advance their projects.
- Three communities have committed to substantial physical investments.

Not only is it critical to OEDIT to consider all the feedback of Blueprint 2.0 participants to further hone the programming but Blueprint 2.0 also serves as a conversation starter to help OEDIT understand what it can do better to help rural Colorado share in the same success as the Front Range Corridor. Though each Colorado community is unique, by having a cross section of the state communicate their needs to OEDIT, this office can continue to identify universal needs and values shared by rural Colorado communities and develop strategies to engage with those needs and values.

Blueprint 2.0 has demonstrated its immense value for rural communities over the last two years by providing access to resources and expertise that would traditionally be out of reach or cost-prohibitive. The work done through this program has laid a foundation in recipient communities and the results of these efforts will unfold for years to come.
CASE STUDIES
2017-2018
The following case studies will examine the work in detail of the communities that stood out for the effectiveness of their projects to understand the factors that contributed to project success. Hayden, Logan County, and Grand Lake participated in the program for the first time during the second round and have seen considerable success in the advancement of their goals. The other two communities featured—Steamboat Springs and Rio Blanco County—have participated in Blueprint 2.0 since the program’s inception and are able to provide, through a longitudinal lens, insights on what Blueprint 2.0 can help communities accomplish over time. These case studies offer observations and lessons learned to inform the future efforts of Blueprint 2.0 and related initiatives.

**SUCCESSFUL ASPECTS OF BLUEPRINT 2.0 WORK IN CASE STUDY COMMUNITIES**

Robust community engagement and local buy-in
A strong community champion bolstered by a diverse, supportive team
Validation of existing efforts through the introduction of outside expertise
Encouragement from expert mentors and responsiveness from OEDIT staff
Doable recommendations that encouraged incremental progress
Alignment with existing local priorities and partnerships
Either secured, were awarded, or earmarked funding to sustain Blueprint 2.0 related efforts

**ADDITIONAL PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS FROM CASE STUDIES**

The goals of any Blueprint 2.0 initiative take time to achieve so communities should plan to be engaged with the project for several years outside of the specific project to realize success.
Begin the planning process before the initiative even deploys to hit the ground running and maintain community momentum.
Be sure to include any and all relevant community organizations and collaborate with them regularly.
Logan County is located in northeast Colorado bordering Nebraska to the north. Both Logan County and the county seat of Sterling were awarded the Brand Building for Communities and the Coworking 101 initiatives respectively.

**COWORKING 101**

Coworking 101 Champion Trae Miller, the Logan County Economic Development (LCEDC) Director, had originally intended that Sterling’s Blueprint 2.0 project was going to be about exploring the viability of a Coworking Space in town. Following the Coworking 101 workshop in November 2018, in which the two selected communities for the initiative traveled to Denver and toured six different spaces with the help of program mentors from Proximity Space, he began earnestly pushing for the adoption of Coworking in his community. Sterling has since secured two sources of grant funding for a Coworking space to occupy part of an under-utilized building owned by the Logan County government in central Sterling beginning the summer of 2019.

**BRAND BUILDING FOR COMMUNITIES**

On a broader regional scale, the second initiative Logan County was selected for was Brand Building for Communities, for assistance in the development of a cohesive county-wide brand to be used for the recruitment of new businesses, new residents, and to expand tourism marketing efforts. Beginning in January of 2018, Laurie Jones, LCEDC Assistant Director and Small Business Development Center consultant, along with Trae Miller and a dedicated group of partners from the Logan County Chamber of Commerce, City of Sterling, and Logan County Government worked with Rachel Deloffre, the project lead from Development Counsellors International (DCI) to widely distribute a DCI survey to determine local assets and values. From the synthesis of these results and working closely with Logan County’s leadership group, DCI constructed Logan County’s value proposition, brand promise, and key messaging including a new tagline, “space to find your place,”. OEDIT’s Digital Media Manager then incorporated Logan County’s unique brand into the design of an exclusive county logo.

DCI also conducted market research to determine Logan County’s initial target audience and provided the community with a marketing plan and recommendations on brand deployment for the greatest impact.

**OUTCOMES**

A clear, concise county brand including a new logo and tagline, with accompanying marketing strategies.
Regional adoption of brand through local municipal resolutions.
$62,577 in REDI grant funding from the Department of Local Affairs, and $25,000 in grant funding from the Certified Small Business Community initiative, which Sterling received as a part of the third round of Blueprint 2.0, for the advancement of coworking and small business support services.
New and strengthened partnerships countywide from an introduction to Proximity Space and Startup Colorado to a better working relationship with the Logan County Commissioners.

**NEXT STEPS AND CHALLENGES**

Coworking space construction, with a long-term vision for the renovation of the entire building to include shared office space, and even possibly a creative industry or maker-space.
Although funding for the deployment of the new Logan County brand is limited, LCEDC printed 5000 stickers with the logo and is undertaking what Laurie Jones calls a “guerrilla marketing movement”. The logo and tagline are also in use in all digital communication including websites, county literature and documentation, proposal packets and RFI's, and Chamber of Commerce circulations.

The county will continue to implement the marketing plan recommendations and have included new stakeholders in the process including local creatives, the Colorado State University Engagement Center, and small businesses. Additionally, they’re in the process of negotiations with the Citizens Advisory Board and Lodging Tax Board to fund billboards along I-75 and to deploy other targeted marketing strategies.
WHAT WORKED FOR THE BLUEPRINT 2.0 EXPERIENCE

Both champions mirrored what other participants had said about the value of outside expertise and local collaboration.

“The collaboration of our stakeholder team was a big part of the success and it made sure everyone was on the same page. Having outside expertise elevated the project and gave it a higher level of credibility.”

Laurie Jones

“Local buy-in and local support is absolutely critical— the more buy-in and support you have the more successful you’ll be.”

Trae Miller

ADVICE FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

One champion emphasized how beneficial the capacity for follow-up from OEDIT would have been.

“We needed follow-up support, including help identifying viable locations and next steps to implementing, vetting the market and understanding demand.”

Trae Miller

And added a suggestion to make ongoing support feasible:

“One idea might be to enlist some type of internship attached with the initiatives through universities. It might be a good way to create a new partnership that could add value on all sides and provide additional capacity for execution of the initiative strategies.”

Trae Miller

Project leads noted that additional resources are needed to sustain the effort in the future.

“Getting additional funding and allocating staff resources for all marketing related needs from billboards to literature and social media will take time and tenacity to help various key community leaders understand the value of this initiative for our community’s future.”

Laurie Jones

One champion would give the following advice to future program participants:

“...discuss in advance of the application the role and expectations of the champion and team members and time commitment. And to lay out the framework in-advance for organization structure and responsibilities for implementing the initiative including getting funding commitments in-place from the government or other key entities.”

Laurie Jones
It was refreshing and fun to be on this project. And to work so closely with our core team members to make this initiative happen. It was amazing to see the core team reactions and excitement when we first saw the new branding messaging and logo concepts.

Laurie Jones

Working through the Coworking 101 initiative we were able to see how other facilities have become successful and other small communities that have been able to replicate the model. Additionally, the connections made with resources such as Proximity Space have helped us find a path that seems manageable for not only setting up a facility, but also managing the memberships long-term.

Trae Miller

Looking forward, Logan county was awarded two additional Blueprint 2.0 initiatives for the third round of the program.

To further Logan County’s economic diversification and small business attraction efforts, the town of Sterling was awarded the Creativity Lab of Colorado initiative in recognition of the community’s support of the creative economy, in addition to the Certified Small Business Community Initiative, mentioned previously. Both these initiatives are expected to deploy in the late summer of 2018.
Grand Lake is located in Grand County and is the western gateway to Rocky Mountain National Park, which connects the town to Estes Park via Trail Ridge Road (U.S. Route 34). Grand Lake was awarded the Creativity Lab of Colorado initiative as a part of Blueprint 2.0’s second year, and was designated a Certified Creative District in the summer of 2018.

**CREATIVITY LAB**

According to local champion, DiAnn Butler, the objective for Grand Lake’s Creativity Lab of Colorado experience was to identify “the tools needed to merge the (community’s) physical and creative assets to promote a creative economy.” The Creativity Lab, in collaboration with the lead organization on behalf of this effort, Colorful Creatives, as well as a robust group of local stakeholders, including the local Chamber of Commerce, creative merchants, the town of Grand Lake, and representatives from Grand County, held two workshops in the community with 60 individuals in attendance. Through these workshops, Creativity Lab mentors and founders, Bill Marino and Kevin Yoshida introduced community members to the 10 Community Readiness Principles needed to sustain a successful creative corridor. The mentors then worked with Grand Lake to identify each of these principles in practice, and provided direction on actionable ways to improve. Grand Lake immediately went to work implementing Creativity Lab’s recommendations over the winter of 2017 and spring of 2018, and in the summer of 2018 applied for and became designated a Colorado Certified Creative District.

**ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES FROM THE CREATIVITY OF COLORADO INITIATIVE**

- Connected with second, lake-front home owners to involve them in the town’s creative efforts
- Implemented a 4th Friday of the month meeting to bring all stakeholder entities together
- Developed a strategic plan for the long-term sustainability of the district
- Finalist for the Space to Create Program
- Have been given the use of a local maker space with The Rocky Mountain Wooden Boat School, and secured six scholarships through the local Rotary Club to sponsor local youth in wooden boat restoration projects
- Creative District Certification has enabled the community to take advantage of more creative opportunities like Detour, a multi-stop tour highlighting local Colorado musicians.

**WHAT WORKED FOR THE BLUEPRINT 2.0 EXPERIENCE**

Bringing in outside experts lends credibility to ongoing activities:

> "We were already working on becoming a Creative District but by having the team come out it validated [our work] and put a different level of momentum into the process."

**Initiative Champion**

Advice on inclusivity for future participants:

> "Prepare your community to attend beyond the creative. By having other members of the community and town officials in attendance it helped to educate them on the creative movement throughout the state [and] the opportunities that the CD brings to towns and the creative community."

**Initiative Champion**
WHY BLUEPRINT 2.0 MATTERS

“...The Creativity Lab gave us tools and resources and provided a road map for the Grand Lake community and creative groups and allowed us to really nail down our strategic plan...”

Initiative Champion
Hayden is a small community in between Steamboat Springs and Craig on Highway 40 in Routt County. The town is home to both the Routt County Fairgrounds and the Yampa Valley Regional Airport and was selected for Community Placemaking for the second round of Blueprint 2.0.

COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING

The goal of the Community Placemaking Initiative in Hayden was to create a community vision and communications plan to tie in with other strategic economic development efforts. OEDIT, The Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), and Community Builders, an urban planning and community development organization from Glenwood Springs, worked with the local Champion, Mathew Mendisco, and his project steering team that included the Hayden town council, school board, a Routt county commissioner, and local business leaders, on the fundamentals of developing a sense of place and how it ties into a cohesive community vision based upon community assets.
In the fall of 2017 representatives from OEDIT, DOLA, and Community Builders began working with Hayden on visioning and the identification of key physical assets for reinvigoration. The project champion, along with the core leadership group identified three public spaces to focus efforts on including the downtown corridor and Dry Creek Park, a large community park adjacent to the Routt County Fairgrounds. OEDIT, DOLA, and Community Builders then traveled to Hayden in November 2017 for a two-day community workshop to lead a broad cross-section of community members in the development of their local vision and interactive exercises to demonstrate placemaking in action.

Results from community input garnered during the workshop were synthesized into an activity matrix that the local core leadership group prioritized. Activities included soft-touch upgrades— things like planters, signs, and other inexpensive beautification investments— to heavy-touch investments like highway narrowing through the downtown corridor and the installation of a new playground. Outcomes from both the workshop and this matrix made up the framework of the final strategy document delivered in February of 2018 outlining recommendations, responsibilities, and resources.

OUTCOMES FROM THE COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING INITIATIVE

Invested in some soft-touch improvements including planters and benches to make the downtown corridor more inviting.
Applied for a grant to install a community garden in a downtown parkette through the Yampa Valley Community Foundation.
Applied for a grant through the Colorado Health Foundation for $500,000 to install new playground equipment in Dry Creek Park.
Partnered with the University Technical Assistance (UTA) program out of the University of Colorado Denver to design a roadway reconfiguration also known as a "road on a diet" to narrow U.S. Highway 40 through downtown Hayden to introduce traffic calming measures, increase parking, establish bike lanes, install light-up crosswalks, and enhance walkability. The UTA program is also helping with a general downtown revitalization design to enhance the feel and look of the area.
CDOT is in the final stages of approving the reconfiguration plans and will start construction in the Spring of 2019.

WHAT WORKED FOR THE BLUEPRINT 2.0 EXPERIENCE

Reporting that kept the project on track:

"Success relies on the fact that we had quarterly reporting and it holds you accountable."

Initiative Champion
Prioritizing tasks and goals gave the community a clear way forward:

"The session after the community workshop—the matrix, timelines, and deciding who was responsible—that helped us start. Without it we wouldn't have gotten there. We realized we needed more specificity as we went on but without [that step] we wouldn't have gotten there."

Initiative Champion

Community engagement is crucial:

"Just be engaged and get the community engaged as well. If you include them it helps get community buy in for the future implementation."

Initiative Champion

To remember that Blueprint 2.0 is a first step:

"The one thing with the placemaking initiative is that it’s just that—an initiative. It gets you moving in the right direction and gives you ideas and funding sources but the one thing it doesn't do is tell you how to do it."

Initiative Champion

WHY BLUEPRINT 2.0 MATTERS

"...placemaking is a good thing that brings people together and unifies them around an idea, it unifies them around a concept of what they want their community to be."

Initiative Champion

To further their efforts, Hayden was also awarded the Brand Building for Communities initiative for the third round of Blueprint 2.0 to refine their core marketing and messaging efforts. This initiative is expected to deploy in late summer, 2018.
LONGITUDINAL CASE STUDIES

Two communities were awarded Blueprint 2.0 initiatives in both the pilot year and the second round: Steamboat Springs and Rio Blanco County. Though awarded vastly different initiatives and for remarkably different purposes, each community experienced both the benefits and evolution of Blueprint 2.0.
Rio Blanco County is located in the northwestern part of Colorado’s Western Slope and its two primary communities are Rangely and Meeker. The county has overwhelmingly been the most active participant in Blueprint 2.0 garnering 3 initiatives per year since the program was first developed, thanks to the tireless efforts of the county’s Economic Development Coordinator, Katelin Cook. Katelin has championed all six of the county’s awarded initiatives which include the Industry Attraction, Call Yourself Creative, and Tourism Promotion and Development initiatives during the pilot year, and Coworking 101 and Certified Small Business Community Initiatives in addition to being awarded the Tourism Promotion and Development initiative a second year in a row for the 2017-18 round. Katelin has worked with the same dedicated core group of local partners for the past two years, as well as for the upcoming third round of Blueprint 2.0, for which Rio Blanco county was again awarded three initiatives. Rio Blanco’s key local stakeholder group includes the municipal governments of Meeker and Rangley, local business owners, and the Rio Blanco County government including support from each county commissioner. Through each subsequent round of Blueprint 2.0, Katelin has leveraged over a dozen additional partnerships to ensure the success of each initiative.

**THE PILOT YEAR OF BLUEPRINT 2.0 (2016-17)**

The goals of the three initiatives that Rio Blanco County received during the pilot year of Blueprint 2.0 were as follows:

1. **Industry Attraction:** to capitalize off of broadband investments that resulted in Rio Blanco county boasting 1 Gigabit fiber for an affordable $70 per month through the attraction of a data center or other broadband reliant businesses.
2. **Call Yourself Creative:** to enhance and support the creative sector in Meeker and determine competitiveness for Certified Creative District designation
3. **Tourism Promotion and Development:** to assess and evaluate tourism assets in Rio Blanco county and to identify target audiences with key messaging to market to.

**OUTCOMES OF THE PILOT YEAR OF BLUEPRINT 2.0**

Initially, when interviewed about the outcomes of the initiatives and the benefits of participating in Blueprint 2.0, Katelin felt that the only initiative that had been truly impactful was the Tourism Promotion and Development initiative.

For that initiative, Katelin and her team worked closely with Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) to learn about existing opportunities, and were mentored by Russell Walters with the Adventure Travel Trade Association to design and deliver a two-day community workshop to understand adventure travel trends, assess local community assets and to identify challenges and opportunities. During the second day, participants focused on how to market Rio Blanco as a region. Following this initial learning, planning, and assessment work, Rio Blanco then worked with a marketing consultant who helped the county develop a specific written action plan to further the region’s identified tourism goals, namely the promotion and development of the county’s OHV trail system. The county saw
tangible benefits come from their efforts including a doubling of lodging tax receipts between Q3 in 2016 and Q3 in 2017, the reception of an implementation grant for $7,500, and a marketing-matching grant for over $13,000, both from CTO, and published travel itineraries on the Colorado Field Guide.

However, with the benefit of hindsight, both the Industry Attraction and Call Yourself Creative initiatives were impactful for Rio Blanco county. For the Industry Attraction initiative, the OEDIT team responsible compiled an industry attraction plan with all the considerations a community must undertake for the recruitment of businesses. Although not apparent at the time, this plan has now become a critical component of Katelin’s annual budget requests and project timelines. Looking back on the program she stated that “we didn’t see any success at first, but it was part of the conversation we needed to start (in the county) and it got the ball rolling on prioritization”.

For the Call Yourself Creative initiative Meeker hosted Margaret Hunt, the director of Colorado Creative Industries, and began working through a creative suite of tutorials that were available in coordination with the initiative, to map out local assets and understand areas for improvement. The community came to understand that while Meeker had work to do in order to be competitive for Certified Creative District designation, one of the most beneficial takeaways was that a community need only consider themselves creative, they don’t require the certification to support a thriving local arts scene. This mentality has been transferred into the community’s broader goals for community revitalization and downtown improvement such that Meeker was awarded the Community Placemaking initiative for the third round of Blueprint 2.0.

GOALS FOR THE SECOND ROUND OF BLUEPRINT 2.0

CERTIFIED SMALL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Rio Blanco County applied to the Certified Small Business Community initiative with the primary goal of opening two satellite Small Business Development Centers in Meeker and Rangely to support small business and entrepreneurship in the county. Through this initiative, Rio Blanco county was able to allocate funds for paid staff to implement the program, develop a consulting network, host 13 business trainings and workshops with 142 attendees, and consult 17 clients in 26 sessions over the course of the first year of the program. The Certified Small Business Community program is a three year commitment, after which Rio Blanco county will need to earmark financing for the continuation of services.
COWORKING 101

Rio Blanco County’s objective with Coworking 101 was “to fully leverage the broadband service for economic development benefit” through the development of a coworking space in one and/or both of the downtown areas of Rangely and Meeker. Alongside Trae Miller from Sterling, representatives from Meeker, Rangely, and Rio Blanco county traveled to Denver for the Coworking 101 workshop to tour spaces in November of 2017. Additionally, and with an expanded group of stakeholders, the county engaged Proximity Space, the Coworking 101 partner organization and subject matter expert, on a Western Slope site-visit tour on March 29, 2018, touring Proximity Space affiliates in Grand Junction, Montrose, and Ridgeway. A local business and property owner in downtown Meeker who attended the tour began working with Katelin and the town of Meeker, and after four months of renovations, opened Meeker Community Coworking on August 23rd, 2018.
TOURISM PROMOTION AND DEVELOPMENT (NOW CRAFT STUDIO 201)

The goal of Rio Blanco County’s second project with the Colorado Tourism Office was to evaluate their existing marketing plan that had been developed as a part of the county’s first year involvement with Tourism Promotion and Development. The county wanted to take the plan further by establishing an evaluation tool for marketing strategies, and helping local tourism businesses, and the county as a whole, develop cohesive marketing strategies. For this initiative, Rio Blanco County worked with an experienced marketing mentor, Beth Buehler, of Buehler Communications Inc., to develop and evaluate marketing strategies to encourage county-wide collaboration. The county has since begun implementing the resulting public relations plan in addition to utilizing more CTO marketing resources and opportunities including two CTO Instagram Takeover event, participation in a CTO Social Media Coop, the development of content with Matador Network, and the establishment of Rio Blanco’s own marketing co-op program and to provide a series of workshops to help businesses with their marketing efforts.

OUTCOMES FROM TWO YEARS OF BLUEPRINT 2.0 INVOLVEMENT

A business attraction plan that lead to the prioritization of efforts
Instruction on the cultivation and empowerment of the creative sector and its integration into community vitality
Awareness of local tourism assets and the successful promotion of them leading to lodging and sales tax increases and heightened regional awareness
Establishment of a brick and mortar coworking space with dedicated members
Enhanced small business support and activity
Dozens of new and strengthened relationships from the local to the state level, and broad stakeholder engagement within the county

WHAT WORKS FOR BLUEPRINT 2.0?

The champion had this to say about initiatives complementing one-another.

“I anticipate achieving our goal of elevating the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Rio Blanco County with the work we have started through these blueprint projects. The lasting impact of the coworking project will feed into our SBDC work through Certified Small Business Community. The tourism marketing efforts benefit that industry, and we anticipate seeing additional gains in our sales and lodging tax collections (which is our best indicator of growth within the tourism industry).”

Initiative Champion
On knowing your partners and on the most effective way to engage stakeholders:

“I immediately make a partners list of people who I think should be involved, and wants to be involved. When we kickstart our projects we ask- who isn’t here who should be here?”

Initiative Champion

What’s changed in the program:

“I think one of the biggest changes was that first year was ‘let’s see if this works’ and then the second year took it to the next level. What we saw was a little more focus, obviously there were some lessons learned, and now when you get your Blueprint [2.0 initiative] you identify your scope of work, set your expectations, and focus on outcomes. I think [the program] became more robust and more strategic.”

Initiative Champion

Wins and challenges—The program lead had this to say on high points of the program:

“For us, the best part of Blueprint is the increased focus, relations and partnerships formed throughout the project. Due to these projects (and future blueprints) we are now more connected to state resources, have a larger pool of industry experts we can call on, and we have more focus to our economic development activities within the County.”

Initiative Champion

And on areas where it can still improve:

“Have each project start with an identified, clear scope of work that all parties agree to. (We did this for the tourism project, and it was very helpful in managing expectations).”

Initiative Champion
Advice for other communities—The champion had these three recommendations for participating in Blueprint 2.0:

1) Know that Blueprint 2.0 is a one-year process but the project is not a one year process. I’m still referencing a document from 2016 for my goals in 2019. It should be wrapped into your overall strategic plans.
2) It takes a while to see results.
3) Make sure what you’re applying for ties into your strategic objectives for your community.

Initiative Champion

WHY BLUEPRINT 2.0 MATTERS

“"I love this program, and it provides so many great resources and opportunities for communities.”

Initiative Champion

The initiatives Rio Blanco County was awarded for the third round of Blueprint 2.0 include the continuation of the Certified Small Business Community initiative, the Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry Initiative, Brand Building for Communities, and Community Placemaking.
Steamboat Springs, located in Western Routt County, may be an internationally known ski destination, but as with many rural Colorado communities, Steamboat Springs’s economy is predominantly centralized around a singular industry. John Bristol, the local champion and Economic Development Director for the Steamboat Springs Chamber of Commerce, has dedicated himself to making economic diversification a major priority. During Blueprint 2.0’s pilot year, John’s predecessor was awarded the Tiny Homes Master Planned Community and Incubator/Accelerator Best Practices initiatives, the latter of which John took on responsibility for completing. For the second round, Steamboat Springs was awarded the Data-Driven Approach to Economic Development Initiative with John’s guidance. John’s key partners over the last few years are due to how the economic development function at the Steamboat Springs Chamber was established—as a public-private partnership with the Chamber, the City of Steamboat Springs and Routt County as equal investors for county-wide regional economic development.

During the first year of Blueprint 2.0, Steamboat Springs was awarded two initiatives: Tiny Homes Master Plan and Incubator/Accelerator Best Practices. Though the Tiny Homes Master Plan initiative was completed prior to John’s arrival in his role, the goal remained the same: to enable the community of Steamboat Springs to hold the much needed dialogue about alternative forms of attainable housing available to their community. This conversation later lead to a county-wide adoption of policy changes regarding density, and as of August, 2018 a Steamboat Springs-based developer broke ground on a 10-unit duplex-style subdivision in neighboring Hayden.

John did see the Incubator/Accelerator Best Practices initiative through to deployment, with the goal of exploring the feasibility and suitability of a business incubator or accelerator in Steamboat Springs or greater Routt County. In March of 2017, Bizhub at the University of Northern Colorado hosted John and the other initiative awardee from Morgan County to discuss their business model and curriculum, and to give the two initiative recipients an inside view of the operation of a successful business incubator. The community has deepened its understanding of the value of programming-based business support and has since funded a feasibility study to further explore business incubation as a tool for economic health in Steamboat Springs.

During the second round of Blueprint 2.0, Steamboat Springs was the only community awarded the Data-driven Approach to Economic Development Initiative. According to John, the initiative aligned with Steamboat Springs economic development goals of taking a data-centric focus in planning for business retention and expansion because, “with limited resources, we know that data is vital in the planning process so that we can make informed decisions that will yield the highest ROI for our community”. Two representatives from OEDIT’s Strategy and Analytics team held three focus groups with business owners in Steamboat Springs, Hayden, and Oak Creek to determine what they valued in their communities and what they found challenging about operating in their communities. They used these focus group answers to develop a survey sent out to business operators countywide to help the Steamboat Springs Chamber of Commerce determine those factors that increase business owner’s satisfaction with their decision to locate in Routt County, which will influence business retention and expansion efforts in the region for years to come.
OUTCOMES FROM TWO YEARS OF BLUEPRINT 2.0 INVOLVEMENT

A data-driven business retention, expansion, and attraction strategy
Increased local awareness of and support for locally hosted business development and support services
Regional adoption of policies to encourage the development of attainable housing
Stronger regional cooperation and collaboration

WHAT WORKS FOR BLUEPRINT 2.0?

Outside involvement as away to bring the community together:

“There’s tremendous value in using Blueprint 2.0 as a tool to bring people together. I can pull people together to have a conversation about the economy and data and I get three people. I have a conversation about the same thing with OEDIT hosting it and I get a dozen—it expands that interaction and reach.”

Initiative Champion

What’s changed in the program:

“That [OEDIT] is adding in different, new projects that are innovative. That [OEDIT] is trying new things. Flexibility is really important, that’s what’s cool about Blueprint 2.0. And I think the transition from relying only on OEDIT staff to pulling in outside experts was very helpful.”

Initiative Champion
WINS AND CHALLENGES

The usefulness of the initiative in providing information to support long-term economic development policies

“To be given such high-level data and information is tremendously helpful. Rural economic development can be heavily influenced by politics so having the reality of data to give other rural economic developers the support to say ‘let’s focus on this, and let’s make this investment’, I cannot underestimate the value of this process in economic diversification”

Initiative Champion

The lack of funding affects the ability to maintain community momentum

“The balance between technical assistance and financial assistance— it’s very tough. The financial resources are just not there in rural communities. For local economic developers that have such a shoestring budget, even $100 is a big deal.”

Initiative Champion

Advice for other communities

“Have a point person, a key champion who’s willing to organize, and then a group of people who are willing to follow that person, work with that person, and support them. Have ambassadors for the project.”

Initiative Champion

WHY BLUEPRINT 2.0 MATTERS

“The OEDIT team is always a great group to work with and I can never say enough about their capabilities and eagerness to serve the people of Colorado.”

Initiative Champion

For the 2018-19 round of Blueprint 2.0 Steamboat Springs was awarded the Film Festival Initiative from the Colorado Office of Film, Television, and Media, to host a locally grown and supported film festival during the community’s shoulder season. As always in Routt County, the towns of Hayden and Oak Creek have been invited to participate as well.
A survey to determine satisfaction with the application process has been sent out twice since the inception of the Blueprint 2.0 program: Once during the first round and again after the selection process for the third round had concluded. The application is two-fold in purpose: First, OEDIT needs to determine where there is room for improvement in the application process, and secondly to determine whether applicants were likely to reapply for Blueprint 2.0 and likely to recommend the program.

Survey recipients were asked 5 questions to rate on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being the lowest, or most negative score possible, and 10 being the highest, or most positive score possible): the clarity, ease, and satisfaction given time, energy, and effort of the application process; their satisfaction with the transparency of the selection process; and overall satisfaction with the application process. Survey takers were also instructed to write-in answers if they gave a score lower than 5 to any of the answers, and were given a write-in option at the end of the survey regardless of score.

![Figure 1: Survey Results](Image)

**Comparison of Application Satisfaction Survey Results Between 2016 and 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>Impact Weights*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Application Terms</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Application Process</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction Given Time, Energy, Effort</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency of Selection Process</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Score Recipient</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Score Non-Recipient</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average Score</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>100*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Respondents</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Impact weights were derived using combined responses

**Methodology**

To derive the impact weights, we used a method called Ordinary Least Squares Regression, which helps determine within a range of statistical probability the impact that each of the attributes survey-takers were asked to rate had on the overall score, which in this case is a measurement of satisfaction with the application process. After
running this regression on the combined data from two years of observations, we found that satisfaction given time, energy, and effort was the most important aspect of the application process accounting for 49% of the reason an applicant gave a specific overall score, followed by the ease of the application process at 28% and the transparency of the selection process at 23%. Clarity of the application criteria terms was not found to be statistically significant and was therefore not given an impact weight.

In synthesizing the results from the first round of Blueprint 2.0 we found that the major complaints were focused on the platform that hosted the application and the redundancy of many of the questions. We addressed these concerns by adopting a new platform (Salesforce) and streamlining the application so that all applicants would be asked a general set of questions addressing community buy-in, alignment with existing goals, and the strength of the local leadership group, before being asked a set of questions specific to the initiative for which they were applying.

In between years one and three of the program, overall satisfaction among recipients increased from 8.1 to 8.8, otherwise scores given to attributes tracked the initial values given very closely. However, there is an outlier within Blueprint 2.0’s application process that explains much of this apparent lack of improvement. Outside of this additional initiative, survey-takers were most likely to say that a lack of clear constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement once an application was rejected was responsible for them giving the process a lower score.

The Certified Small Business Community (CSBC) initiative was added to Blueprint 2.0 during the second round in 2017. This initiative has the potential to offer communities up to $30,000/year in grant funding for business support services and so has a great deal more requirements that the rest of the initiatives that are purely technical assistance without funding included. As a result, it does not make use of the general application template that the rest of the initiatives share and applicants were more unsatisfied with the CSBC application than they were with the application process for other initiatives:

This suggests that the changes from the first year through the third did have an impact on overall satisfaction with the process on those initiatives using the general, streamlined application template while scores for attributes for the CSBC application process were on average .6 points below the rest of the scores. This matters because these lower scores can impact the likelihood people will promote the program.

![Figure 2: Comparison Between General Template and CSBC Application]

Comparison of Application Satisfaction Survey Over Time Between General Application and CSBC Application

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2018 w/ CSBDC</th>
<th>2018 w/o CSBC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of Application Terms</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of Application Process</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction Given Time, Energy, Effort</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transparency of Selection Process</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Score Recipient</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Score Non-Recipient</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Average Score</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT’S A GOOD SCORE?

A promoter of Blueprint 2.0 is an individual who gave a 9 or 10 on the following behavioral questions: 1) Given your experience with the application process, how likely would you be to reapply for another round of Blueprint 2.0 initiatives and 2) how likely would you be to recommend Blueprint 2.0 initiatives to other rural Colorado communities? Identifying promoters of the program serves to relate applicant’s provided overall value of the application process with the percentage of those individuals who would also reapply for and promote the program.

A good overall score is level at which at least half of respondents are promoters. Responses from the 2018 group of applicants suggest this overall score is 7, because promoters at an overall score of 6 drop off to 0%. However, while getting 33 responses out of 45 applications (and 31 out of 43 in 2018) is a fantastic response rate, the overall number of observations from a single year is a little low to really determine a trend. By combining responses to the behavioral questions in between the two years the surveys were distributed, we can see applicant’s expectations much more clearly in Figure 4.
To get at least 50% of applications to be Blueprint 2.0 Promoters, an overall score of at least 7.2 is needed.

Based on these longitudinal responses, it’s highly unlikely that applicants will either recommend or reapply for Blueprint 2.0 at an overall score of less than 7.2. This value is important to account for in future rounds of Blueprint 2.0 as recipients of the program in 2018 gave an overall score of 8.8, but non-recipients gave a score of 6.1 indicating that they will not reapply, nor recommend the program. This could be damaging to the reputation of the program long-term as it relies so much on word-of-mouth promotion from peer, rural communities.

While it’s clear there is still work to do improving the application process so that it’s easier for rural Coloradans to access the resources that their communities need to support and grow their local economies, there were some marked improvements in applicant satisfaction between the application process for the first round and the third round. Firstly, all attribute scores for the general application process rose by half a point on average, and the average non-recipient score (again for the general process) rose from 6.8 to 7.4, bringing it above the promotion threshold. Secondly, the response rates for the surveys remain high among recipients and non-recipients alike, providing OEDIT with clarity on applicant expectations throughout the application process. Lastly, and most importantly, net promoters increased between rounds from 61% to 71% suggesting that Blueprint 2.0’s responsiveness to and integration of critique has garnered the program increased support over the years.
In addition to measuring satisfaction with the application process, Regional Economic Development also sought to better understand the value of participating in Blueprint 2.0 to the awarded communities. To understand what aspects of Blueprint 2.0 drive value for participants, Regional Development completed an analysis using Customer Value Management (CVM) tools. Regional Development interviewed a subset of recipients, and in collaboration with OEDIT’s Strategy and Analytics team, developed a survey during the pilot year to collect data on those program attributes that drive value for the selected communities. By examining the value participants derive from the program, OEDIT can better determine the link between participant satisfaction and aspects that will engender communities to the program. Furthermore, OEDIT can extrapolate these insights more broadly across OEDIT’s range of programming to understand what rural Colorado values from programming and use these insights to change the way other rural efforts are deployed.

**FRAMEWORK AND DESIGN**

This analysis explores the link between attributes of the Blueprint 2.0 program and the participant satisfaction, or value, that was derived from these attributes. To understand the make-up of this value during the pilot round, participants were asked to brainstorm a simple list of what they considered to “benefits” to participation in the program, and what they considered to be “costs or challenges” of participation. OEDIT interviewed a broad subset of participants to obtain these qualities, and grouped them into like categories to complete the framework detailing the value participants derived from the program.

Twelve attributes in three distinct categories were identified based upon interviews conducted during the first round. For the second round of Blueprint 2.0 the number of attributes participants were surveyed about was revised down to ten1, but in the same three categories of “benefits,” “relationship components,” and “costs” as illustrated in Figure 1 (following page):

---

1 The revision was in an attempt to lessen the effect of multicollinearity experienced in the survey analysis from the first round. Multicollinearity occurs in scenarios where there is a small sample size (i.e. a small number of individuals taking the survey) in proportion to the number of attributes being analyzed. For the 2016 round of initiatives, we found that combined all attributes thoroughly explained why the overall scores were given, but not necessarily which attributes were responsible in a measurable manner.
The Benefits component includes the following categories:

- **Community-Driven** — the degree to which the community was the driving force behind the outcomes of the initiative.
- **Local Distinction** — community recognition and pride for participation.
- **Quality of Information** — value of acquired knowledge, usefulness of information, and outside expertise.
- **Exposure to Resources** — access to governmental or industry contacts and opportunities for additional assistance.

The Relationship Component includes the following categories:

- **Stakeholder and Community Engagement** — community and regional collaboration, cooperation, and increased buy-in around objectives.
- **Partnerships with the State** — relationship with OEDIT and the Governor’s office.
- **Initiative Scope and Quality of Support** — Responsiveness of OEDIT staff and partners, clarity on scope of work, project timelines, and outcomes, and effective implementation.

The Costs Component includes the following categories:

- **Workload** — reasonableness of work performed in proportion to outcomes.
- **Time-Cost of Community Engagement** — time and effort of community outreach, organization, and engagement.
- **Financial Costs** — the tangible funds spent on the implementation of the initiative.
These categories and their attributes formed the framework for the survey distributed to all participants in the second round of Blueprint 2.0. This survey asked for satisfaction ratings on all attributes on a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 10 (very satisfied), as well as “the overall sum of all benefits,” “the overall sum of all relationship components,” and “the overall sum of costs.” The final question asked participants to rate their overall satisfaction with the program “considering all the benefits, relationship components, and costs, how satisfied were you with Blueprint 2.0?”

Responses help OEDIT to identify the relative importance of programmatic aspects to the community and construct a framework for measuring the value participants found in Blueprint 2.0, in order to increase the future consistency of the program’s delivery.

**WHAT’S A GOOD SCORE?**

The second round of Blueprint 2.0 awarded 20 initiatives of 9 economic development concentrations to 17 communities and regions. Several communities or areas were awarded more than one initiative. We received a response from each initiative recipient, and of those one individual answered survey requests for more than one initiative.

The graph in Figure 2 relates participants’ overall satisfaction score with Blueprint 2.0 to the percentage of participants who would promote the program. In an analysis identical to that used for the Application Satisfaction Survey, promoters were those initiative recipients who gave a score of 9 or 10 to two behavioral questions determining likelihood to reapply to the program, and likelihood to recommend the program to other rural communities.

A good score in this instance, where at least half of participants are program promoters, is approximately 6.8. While this may seem like a “low” overall score on a scale of 1-10 it illustrates the powerful effect that overall score improvement can have on increasing program promoters. By increasing overall satisfaction by 2/10 of a point to a 7, 67% of participants were promoters of the program, and at a score or 8 or above 100% of participants were promoters.
In comparison to the first round of initiatives, the threshold for at least 50% of participants to be promoters was substantially lower, from an overall score of 8.3. There are many plausible reasons for this downward trend, the two most likely being a shift in expectations and substantial programmatic changes to the delivery of Blueprint 2.0 initiatives between the first and second round based on feedback that was in part responsible for the construction of this survey. In the first year there was a strong correlation between those who valued their initiative enough to not only reward it a high score but to also promote the program (39% of total participants), whereas those who scored the program below an 8 were very unlikely to promote the program. For the second round there was a larger spread of overall scores but substantially more promoters (75% of participants), suggesting that even if participants were not completely satisfied with the program, they valued what they received from it enough to promote it.
PARTICIPATION SATISFACTION SYNTHESIS [APPENDIX B]

OBSERVATIONS

Figure 3 lists three columns of data sets obtained by the survey. The first, “Impact Weights”, are derived using the same statistical technique used in the application satisfaction survey called an ordinary least squared regression. These values assign a relative weight, or importance, to each attribute and each category of attributes meaning that impact weights with higher values make the biggest difference to participants satisfaction. The singular flaw in using this technique, however, is that it usually requires at least 60-70 observations to achieve statistical significance (the likelihood that our overall value is caused, in part, by a particular attribute or set of attributes). Given there were only 20 initiatives in the 2017 round of Blueprint 2.0, we only received 20 responses to the survey. Though some individual attributes were statistically significant, there were not enough in any one category to make any definitive statements about which specific attributes of the programming either enhance or detract from overall satisfaction with the program.

The one set of impact weights that we decided to keep were the effects the overall component scores had on the overall satisfaction score as seen at the bottom of Figure 3. These scores suggest that the benefits of the program contribute to 55% of a participants’ overall score and costs contribute to 45%, while the relationships component was inconclusive.

The second column contains averaged scores from all survey takers and represents the degree to which Blueprint 2.0 satisfied participants on each attribute. The third column does the same but for the subset of participants identified as promoters or individuals who indicated that they would be very likely to recommend the program to other rural communities across the state as described in the previous section. By comparing these values we can begin to identify and target the discrepancy between attribute scores, as increasing those non-promoter scores may not only boost the satisfaction of future participants but also increase responders’ willingness to promote Blueprint 2.0.

The Overall Value score, found at the bottom of Figure 3, is the average of participants responses to a question
## Participation Satisfaction Performance and Impact Weights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Impact Weight</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Promoter Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Benefits</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-Driven</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Distinction</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Information</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exposure to Resources</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Benefits</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder and Community Engagement</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships at the State Level</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative Scope &amp; Quality of Support</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Relationships</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-Cost of Community Engagement</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Costs</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs Overall</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Benefits</strong></td>
<td>55%</td>
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<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Relationships</strong></td>
<td>—</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs Overall</strong></td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall Value</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent of respondents who would do it again: 85%
Percent of respondents who would recommend: 80%
Percent of Blueprint 2.0 Promoters: 75%

Concerning the broad categories of Benefits, Relationships, and Costs. This score reflects the relative influence that all three broad categories had on participants satisfaction with Blueprint 2.0 as a whole. Notably, the Relationships component was not found to be statistically significant, but it’s highly likely that there is a linkage between the benefit and relationship attributes influencing “relationships” lack of statistical significance, in that changes in either attribute may impact the other.
WHAT DOES THE DATA MEAN?

Ultimately, implementing 20 projects statewide is an enormous accomplishment, but it doesn’t offer conclusive data. The survey data suggests that Colorado communities regard the attributes of Benefits and Costs to a somewhat similar degree when participating in Blueprint 2.0, but the inconclusive nature of the Relationships component is not in alignment with qualitative write-in answers from the survey, in-person conversations, and other types of reporting required of recipients, and due to an alteration of the survey in between the first and second rounds of the program, integrating first year responses in an attempt to achieve significance on attributes would damage statistical integrity, and likely further muddy the findings.

What we are able to conclude from interviews and write-ins, coupled with survey data is that Blueprint 2.0 is highly valued in the communities that receive the assistance, but could still be improved programmatically when it comes to scopes of work and the narrowing of focus for assistance. Recipients lauded the fact that Blueprint 2.0 projects do not require matching funds on behalf of participating communities (likely influencing the overall Costs score) but also expressed disappointment that the program failed to provide funding and follow-up assistance for implementation (Blueprint 2.0, as a program overall, remains un-funded).

In program improvements between the first and second year however, the gap between promoters and non-promoters has narrowed substantially. In responses from the pilot round, the average of the differences between promoter scores on attributes and non promoter scores was 1.8 points; in 2017 the average difference was only 0.3. In fact, in the 2017 round of surveys, scores increased on all attributes across both promoters and non-promoters, suggesting the programmatic changes that streamlined the delivery of initiatives implemented in between the pilot and the second round of the program had a real impact on the satisfaction of participants.
SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

The feedback used in this analysis, and the ability to translate this feedback into measurable and traceable attributes, holds widespread potential for improving our offerings and stakeholder relationships throughout the state. Not only can this information be used to inform the development of future rounds of Blueprint 2.0, but also educate on what rural communities value most from programming when interacting with the state.

The most critical component of a successful program in the eyes of our rural communities is that it be driven by the community itself. This was a foundational principle in the pilot year of the program, and based on attribute specific observations from this years surveys through participant comments, this is very much still a driver of success and of participant satisfaction. Although, as we explained in previous sections we lack the statistical significance to dictate exactly how important this is in relation to other identified attributes, through the optional write-in’s, nearly all participants cited both Blueprint 2.0’s ability to generate community involvement and buy-in as a key reasoning behind their satisfaction with the program. Similarly, participants noted that feeling as though their input was not only valued but respected by initiative leaders, whether they be state employees or contractors, was instrumental in empowering the participant communities.

Communities also felt strongly that the workload was appropriate and was not so time consuming as to take away from the process or the outcomes. Many participants felt that the return on investment from a project far outweighed the time and resources they put in which is likely why that particular element ("Costs") was found to be statistically significant. Responsiveness by initiative leads and regular correspondence, as well as clearly communicated expectations only helped to alleviate any unnecessary tasks, which appears to have also contributed to the high scores associated with costs (remember, the higher the score for the "Costs" component, the less burdensome they were considered).

However, Blueprint 2.0 still struggles with some of the same issues it faced during its pilot year that detract from the efficacy of its initiatives, namely, it remains unfunded. This affects communities in two ways: implementation and follow through. Beginning with follow through, many respondents stated that having some sort of check-in or follow-up post-initiative completion would have contributed to greater success or at least more momentum to keep the project going once complete responsibility was yielded to the communities, something that OEDIT, at this point, cannot offer. With implementation, nearly all participants stated that not having any funding once a strategy had been identified through Blueprint 2.0, was a hindrance.

Moving forward, the goal will be to further strengthen the framework for the deployment of initiatives put into place in between the pilot year and second round of the program. As illustrated this had an enormous impact on participant’s satisfaction and very nearly closed the gap between promoters and non-promoters of the program. While there is still work to do fine-tuning the program OEDIT now confidently has a clear mechanism for the delivery of this technical assistance that still respects the desires of the participating communities.
BLUEPRINT 2.0
IMPLEMENTATION

[APPENDIX C]
In 2016, OEDIT led a bottom-up effort to turn regional feedback on local economic needs, into a statewide set of initiatives to advance the economies of communities around the state. Blueprint 2.0’s goal is to leverage state partnerships and specialized resources in service of the unique economic development goals of rural Colorado. After evaluating the successes and opportunities presented by deployment of 27 initiatives, of 10 different offerings, in 10 of Colorado’s 14 regions in 2016, OEDIT is excited to launch the next round of Blueprint 2.0 initiatives for 2017.

HOW DO COMMUNITIES AND REGIONS ACCESS THESE RESOURCES?

Local economic developers will apply on behalf of a community or region and will need to demonstrate local support. If you are interested in a Blueprint 2.0 initiative, connect with your local economic development organization.

APPLICATIONS OPEN ..........April 3
APPLICATIONS DUE .............June 2
AWARDS ANNOUNCED ..........July
INITIATIVES DEPLOYED ......early fall

*program information and application date available in June

GET STARTED!

1. ORGANIZE YOUR TEAM
2. COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL APPROACH?
3. PICK A LOCAL CHAMPION
4. CHOOSE YOUR INITIATIVES
5. START YOUR APPLICATION

BLUESH 2.0 INITIATIVES

- Tourism Promotion and Development
- Coworking 101
- Community Placemaking
- Tiny Homes Workshop
- Grow Your Outdoor Recreation Industry
- Certified Small Business Community*
- Brand Building for Communities
- Film and Major Production Initiative
- Creativity Lab of Colorado
- Data-Driven Approach to Economic Development

www.chooseroando.com/blueprint
As part of the Colorado Tourism Office’s efforts to raise awareness of and appreciation for tourism statewide, the office will initiate a peer-assistance and training program for regions and destinations that want to improve or expand their own tourism assets.

**NUMBER OF OFFERINGS:** 2 – 3

Through this initiative, your community can expect the following:

▶ To be paired with a peer expert based on the specific needs of your community
▶ Up to 100 hours of individualized, consulting assistance with a mentor
▶ At least one, in-person site visit from mentor
▶ Consultations (by phone and in-person) from mentor
▶ A scope of work, deliverables and timeframe developed by community and mentor during first stage of initiative
▶ Continued support from the CTO

*Please Note: This initiative does not include a cash award and success of the endeavor may not rely on further funding from this program.

**POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:**

▶ Increased visitation to region or destination
▶ Increased awareness of region or destination
▶ Creation of a plan for development or promotion of a region or destination

**REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION:**

▶ Local, engaged leaders committed for one year to accomplishing the goal of this initiative
▶ Strong, demonstrable community buy-in
▶ Clearly developed measurements for success and reporting capabilities
▶ Applicants must be currently engaged with tourism on some level. If you are not directly employed by or provide services to the tourism industry below are additional qualifications:
  ▶ Attendance at a Colorado Governor’s Tourism Conference
  ▶ Attendance at a Colorado regional tourism conference
  ▶ Participation in Colorado.com
  ▶ Member of any tourism related association
With a growing national trend towards remote employees, freelancers, and independent professionals, and increased mobility for both businesses and startups, Coworking spaces have become a progressively popular and increasingly vital alternative to the traditional workplace. These shared collaborative spaces have shown measurable successes in attracting, retaining, and engaging the ever-growing population of location neutral workers. For the Coworking Space 101 initiative, OEDIT will partner with Proximity Space, the owner and operator of multiple successful coworking spaces in Colorado and who’s own initiatives have created a network of connected coworking spaces throughout the State. OEDIT and Proximity Space will host a first of its kind forum where community leaders and potential owners can interact with current coworking spaces and discuss benefits, costs, challenges, and lessons learned from operating a Coworking space, and how communities can apply these best practices.

NUMBER OF OFFERINGS: 3

WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY CAN EXPECT:
▶ Analysis of local characteristics by OEDIT staff members.
▶ Assisted creation of a local, online community for independent professionals.
▶ Facilitation of a teleconference with recently opened coworking spaces.
▶ A workshop where Proximity Space provides perspective and actionable guidance on identifying your audience, creating an online foundation for a connected community, identifying viable physical locations, opening and operating a coworking space in rural and urban communities.
▶ A final strategy document your community will build and utilize for the advancement of your goals.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:
For Coworking 101 Participants*
▶ Community successfully assesses the need for a co-working space
   - OR -
▶ Decides a different direction would be a better community fit

*All applicants will be invited to create an online community with an actionable plan in place for the applicant to cultivate a connection to untethered members in their community.

REQUIREMENTS:
▶ Local engaged leaders committed for one year to the goal of potentially opening and/or continuing to support a coworking space.
▶ Appropriate (centralized/unique/effective) site selection started. Available real estate options must be identified though a final selection is not required.
▶ Reliable Internet. The speed of the connection is not specific however the capability of the Internet must meet or exceed that which is readily available in the community.
▶ Strong, demonstrable community drive/buy-in.
▶ Clear definition of success for a coworking space. Being able to answer the question “What are you hoping a coworking space will do for your community?”
OEDIT will be partnering with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and Community Builders, a community planning and placemaking non-profit based out of Glenwood Springs, CO, who knows that the key to building a strong and resilient economy starts with creating a great community where people want to live and work. The initiative will engage your community by identifying local assets, providing instruction on the fundamentals of developing a sense of place, and developing a cohesive vision and strategy based on community assets.

**NUMBER OF OFFERINGS:** 2

**WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY CAN EXPECT:**

- **PRELIMINARY PHONE MEETING:** Discussion with community project leaders to relay the expected scope of work, approach, and schedule.
- **COMMUNITY PLACEMAKING INFORMATIONAL MEETING:** An information session and community meeting designed to engage the community’s stakeholders to learn more about placemaking, expand the core local leadership for the project among stakeholders, and identify community assets and characteristics.
- **PLACEMAKING WEBINAR (IF NEEDED):** Webinar to expose more of your community’s potential participants to the placemaking concept and possible strategies.
- **INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY WORKSHOP:** A community workshop providing an in-depth exploration of economic benefits, project potentials, and community led exercises demonstrating placemaking in action. At this meeting your community will refine your vision and develop your local placemaking strategy.
- **STRATEGY DOCUMENT:** A brief final strategy document that summarizes the goals and specific strategies developed in your interactive community workshop (this can be used as a guide for action and implementation).

**POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:**

- Alignment across segments of community—from civic and business leadership to elected officials—on a collective vision and action items for progress
- District conceptualization such as proposal for downtown improvement
- Identification of physical assets for small-scale renewal
- Identification of actions to reinvigorate public spaces

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- Strong support for economic development among elected officials,
- Broad community buy-in,
- An existing plan or concept the community would like to see put into action,
- Previous community engagement and planning experience and examples.
This initiative will include a full day workshop to engage community stakeholders in a dialogue to explore tiny homes as a potential strategy to address local housing needs. Representatives from the State and the Tiny Homes Industry Association will cover the definition, benefits, challenges, and examples of tiny homes. The recipient of this initiative will be provided with a Tiny Homes Workshop Summary with identified strategies for moving forward and educational information addressing tiny homes.

NUMBER OF OFFERINGS: 2

WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY CAN EXPECT:

▶ PRELIMINARY PHONE MEETING: This call will identify the project goals, scope, stakeholders, and schedule with the local project lead.

▶ INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP: This workshop will provide an opportunity for local stakeholders to learn about the definition of tiny homes, market, regulations, financing, case studies, opportunities, and challenges associated with tiny homes projects.

▶ TINY HOMES WORKSHOP SUMMARY: A workshop summary with key actions to move forward will be provided.

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:

▶ Increased understanding of the definition of tiny homes and various approaches

▶ Assessment of community needs, challenges, and opportunities for tiny homes

▶ Identification of potential strategies and next steps to explore tiny home development opportunities

APPLY HERE
OEDIT will again be partnering with the University of Colorado-Boulder’s MBA Program to help grow your town’s outdoor recreation industry. The Leeds Outdoor Industry Club (LOIC) will be assigning a team to work with each community to better understand their resources, strengths, and weaknesses. Further they will work with you to identify opportunities in the growing Colorado outdoor recreation landscape and assist in positioning your town in the “marketplace” to improve reach and impact.

**NUMBER OF OFFERINGS:** 2

**WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY CAN EXPECT:**
- 3-5 month engagement with bi-weekly to monthly calls
- 3 Phase Plan
  - **PHASE 1:** Introduction & Discovery
  - **PHASE 2:** Research (Interviews/Surveys/Visit/Web) & Agreement on focus
  - **PHASE 3:** Analysis, Enhance strategic plan, Presentation
- Depending on location 1-2 visits
- Depending on need, a training workshop
- Typically a deliverable in the form of an enhanced, prioritized strategic plan (PDF or PPT) and presentation
- Flexibility in focus, as the town and LOIC team will discuss and agree to project scope early in the project, and revisit it frequently.
- Sometimes expectations may be revised to ensure a more appropriate or beneficial engagement.
- This is often done to better assist the community while also leveraging specific skill sets of LOIC team members.

**POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:**
- An enhanced strategic roadmap that includes an assessment of existing processes and programs, identification of new opportunities, and prioritization of key initiatives and tasks
- A better understanding of your community’s place/role in Colorado’s outdoor recreation industry ecosystem
- Improved local and regional communication and collaboration
- Future growth in businesses and organizations in this space.

**PRE-REQUISITES:**
Any town selected must have prior strategy/structure towards an Outdoor Recreation Industry already in place. This program is not to begin a strategy/structure, but rather enhance an existing one.
NUMBER OF OFFERINGS: 2

OVERVIEW OF INITIATIVE & ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES:

The Certified Small Business Community Initiative will be a program for rural communities who can define their unique entrepreneurial niche and how it distinguishes them in retaining and attracting small business. Selected communities will receive a designation of a “Certified Small Business Community” to promote a great place to “Work, Live, and Play” in Colorado.

▶ Your community will need to be a site of a concentration of entrepreneurship and be engaged in the promotion and retention of existing businesses.

▶ Your community will need to show engagement with your local small businesses through offering various programs and services that assist them.

▶ Your community will have to demonstrate a need for additional support in fostering entrepreneurship.

▶ Your community will need to develop an action plan based on your vision for success that includes a long-term plan for sustainability.

Check back in June for additional program information and the application date!
Colorado’s Chief Marketing Officer along with Development Councilors International are excited to offer Brand Building for Communities for a second year to assist communities in developing a concise and distinctive brand.

**NUMBER OF OFFERINGS:** 3

**WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY CAN EXPECT:**

OEDIT will conduct community interviews and surveys to identify Value Proposition, Brand Promise and Key Messaging, the results of which will be presented to your community in a one-day workshop which will create the framework for your community’s marketing plan, and which key metrics you’ll use to evaluate it.

Access will then be provided to OEDIT’s in-house graphic artist for initial ideas on Logo development*, with all artwork and art files provided to community.

Additionally, a webinar series will be available to participants on the following topics:

- Six Mistakes in Economic Development Marketing (and how not to make them)
- Marketing Ideas for Rural Communities
- Social Media Best practices
- Business Retention & Expansion

*If needed. Limited to 1 round of revisions.

**POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:**

At the end of this program, the community will have developed a Clear, Unique Brand and Positioning, Initial Target Audience, Key Messages and Visual identification (logo), exclusive to the community.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

The community/region needs to demonstrate any previous branding work and identify a marketing budget for implementation. Community must demonstrate key personnel, preferably with a marketing background, who will be responsible for implementation of the marketing plan.
The Office of Film, Television & Media will partner with local communities to make connections with accomplished location scouts in the film industry in order to promote Colorado’s unknown locations and diverse landscape. The initiative will engage your community by identifying geographic and cultural assets attractive to film productions and capitalize on a film team’s desire to find “un-filmed” locations.

**NUMBER OF OFFERINGS:** 3

**WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY CAN EXPECT:**

- Analysis of local characteristics, advantages, and opportunities considered to be “filmable” locations.
- An information session discussing the benefits, challenges, and expectations of working with the film industry.
- Templates and suggestions for implementing familiarization trips and film permits or procedures.
- Introduction to location scouts for community hosted 1-2 day familiarization trips.

**POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:**

- General education on film readiness and promotion
- Increased exposure to the industry
- Eventual attraction of film production

**REQUIREMENTS:**

- The ability to lodge at least 100-150 crew members within a 30 mile radius
- Community buy-in from local businesses, organizations, elected officials, residents, and city civil employees (police chief, fire chief, county administrators, etc.). Some productions require shutting down a major city block, or intermittent shut downs of major streets, and can impact the day-to-day operations of businesses or resident life.
This offering is designed for community leaders (creatives, creative district advisors, community organizers, civic leaders, policymakers, elected officials, city planners, and economic development professionals) who want practical insights into both the process and elements involved in marshalling creative transformation in a community. Facilitators will work with selected communities on 2-3 focus areas based on a self-assessment process tied to the Creativity Lab’s 10 Community Readiness Principles™ — a Path to Community Actualization. Community members will then gather for an in-person workshop that will encompass either two half days or one full day. (based on schedule and availability)

The Creativity Lab of Colorado (the Lab) is a collection of collaborative capabilities centered around creativity, innovation, and the entrepreneurial spirit. A public-private nonprofit, formed in 40 West Arts District and supported by Colorado Creative Industries, Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design and other community partners, the Lab serves students and start-ups, emerging entrepreneurs and existing businesses, creatives and community leaders—all aimed at empowering the art of entrepreneurship.

NUMBER OF OFFERINGS: 3

WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY CAN EXPECT:

▶ An orientation call with Lab facilitators to answer any questions and help prepare for the engagement
▶ A guided self-assessment on the 10 Community Readiness Principles™ to identify 2-3 top priorities, or focus areas, resulting from an online survey of key stakeholders in your community
▶ One in-person workshop (either two half days or one full day) providing an in-depth exploration of the selected 2-3 focus areas for your community
▶ Access to field-tested strategies and tactics that align stakeholders and help move community transformation forward

POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:

▶ A framework for productive collaboration for creatives, business owners, and municipalities that provides clarity on priorities and future action
▶ Alignment across segments of your community—from civic and business leadership to elected officials—on a shared vision and clear action items
Why do businesses operate in your community? How do you measure and quantify what is important to businesses and provide value as a community?

These are important questions for any community that wants to attract, retain, and grow businesses in their community. This offering is designed for communities that seek to answer the questions above. The Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade’s Strategy and Analytics (S&A) team will facilitate community workshops and focus groups so community members can make data-based decisions. Through this initiative, local economic developers will participate in a workshop and coordinate community 1 to 3 community focus groups.

The S&A team will perform workshops and focus groups with local economic developers and community members and provide a toolkit to measure business and community satisfaction.

**NUMBER OF OFFERINGS:** 2

**WHAT YOUR COMMUNITY CAN EXPECT:**

- OEDIT will provide 1 to 2 workshop with local economic developers and 1-2 focus groups with community members.

- Through the focus groups, local economic developers will be able to define drivers for success and measure success in their community.

- OEDIT will provide an introduction on the common data resources utilized when engaging with businesses and community members.

**POTENTIAL OUTCOMES:**

- The community will identify the outcomes, both qualitative and quantitative, that are important to them to be a successful business community (i.e. job growth, business retention, community vibrancy, community cohesiveness, etc.). Once outcomes are identified, S&A will customize workshops and focus groups for the community.

- OEDIT will provide a toolkit to measure business drivers in your community.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION:**

The community is required to identify their goals and outcomes. The community must be able to organize 1-3 focus groups with a maximum of 12 participants.
This report was compiled by Danielle Lendriedt, Regional Coordinator and Analyst at OEDIT and program manager for Blueprint 2.0, with input from Mission Spark, LLC.