

Economic Development

Background

This element is based on the statutory requirement for a “compilation of objectives, policies, goals, maps, and programs to promote the stabilization, retention, or expansion of the economic base and quality employment opportunities.” An analysis of the economic base and labor force of Oneida County is included, as well as a list of various economic development programs.

[Previous Plans and Studies](#)

[Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\), 2021](#)

Oneida County is one of ten counties included in the North Central Wisconsin Economic Development District as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA). North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) is responsible for maintaining that designation. As part of the designation, NCWRPC annually prepares a CEDS. This report summarizes and assesses economic development activities over the past year and presents new and modified strategies to promote growth.

[North Central Wisconsin Regional Entrepreneurship Assessment & Strategy, 2023](#)

In 2023, NCWRPC surveyed businesses across its ten-county region to assess how business-friendly the region is for entrepreneurs. Included in this report are survey findings, recommendations, and an inventory of all programs and facilities that support entrepreneurship. An Entrepreneurship Portal containing these resources is found on NCWRPC’s website.

[North Central Wisconsin Regional Recovery Plan, 2022](#)

The purpose of this plan is to guide economic stabilization, recovery, and resiliency efforts within the North Central Wisconsin Region in the face of events that cause economic shocks, such as natural disasters.

[North Central Wisconsin Industrial Park Inventory, Absorption, and Needs Study, 2022](#)

NCWRPC conducted a 10-county study of available industrial park acreage, the rate at which it is being developed, and how much acreage is needed in the future. The study includes industrial park planning recommendations along with up-to-date maps of Oneida County's five industrial parks. As of 2020, there were only 2 acres remaining in Oneida County in the City of Rhinelander.

[Regional Livability Plan, 2015](#)

Economic Development is one of four elements included in the RLP, adopted by the NCWRPC in 2015. The Economic Development Assessment Report within the RLP observes in detail the economic health of the ten-county region and identifies trends and issues facing the local economy. The RLP addresses three economic development issues:

- [Available Labor Force and Employment](#) Businesses need a workforce with the proper education to meet the demands of an ever-changing job market.
- [Living Wage](#) over the past ten years, the region's cost of living (i.e. home prices and rent) have increased faster than per capita and household incomes.
- [Broadband](#) High-speed broadband connections are crucial for government services, healthcare, education, library systems, private businesses, and residents.

[ALICE: A Study of Financial Hardship in Wisconsin, 2023](#)

This report, developed by the United Way, describes households in Oneida County that are above the federal poverty level, but still struggle to afford basic household necessities, or "ALICE" households (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). The ALICE report shows that 36% of Oneida County households are either below the federal poverty level or are considered ALICE households, indicating that the average household in Oneida County is slightly more financially strained than the average State of Wisconsin household (34%). Additional information is available on United Way Wisconsin's website.

[Issues](#)

[Access to Broadband](#)

The ability to access broadband impacts where businesses can locate, especially if they are home-based. Programs for broadband expansion have been announced in recent years to address this issue, resulting in the creation of a County Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Plan. See Chapter 4 for details on broadband infrastructure.

[Aging Population](#)

As retirements continue and demand for senior-oriented services increases, the County's economy is expected to shift. Attracting and retaining workers to support the economy will also be a challenge as household size continues to shrink.

[Childcare](#)

It is becoming increasingly difficult for families to find childcare with availability that is affordable, removing potential employees who are parents from filling vacant jobs.

[Housing](#)

Like much of Wisconsin, limited housing choices make it more difficult to recruit workers to Oneida County. As discussed in Chapter 5, 6,400 workers commute into Oneida County each day from another County.

[Limited Industrial Park Land and Infrastructure](#)

According to NCWRPC's 2022 Industrial Park Inventory, Absorption, and Needs Study, there were only 2 available acres of industrial park land remaining in Oneida County as of 2020. The County and/or its municipalities may consider facilitating the creation of additional industrial park lots to expand business opportunities, and this chapter contains a list of programs that could potentially be used to fund these projects.

[Tourism and Outdoor Recreation](#)

There are opportunities to capitalize on the County's natural resources through the outdoor recreation and tourism economy. In 2022, the tourism industry generated a \$362 million economic impact in Oneida County, according to the Wisconsin Department of Tourism.

Inventory

This analysis provides insight regarding how industries in Oneida County are performing by comparing the County with state and national statistics. Using the American Community Survey and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) data, Oneida County's economic strengths and weaknesses are identified, along with a series of strategies.

Economic Overview

Chapter I discussed how Oneida County is growing, but at a much slower rate than the State of Wisconsin and the nation. While growth brings development pressure to the County, there are concerns about if there will be a big enough working population to support the growing retired population. Retirees from other locations may find the County attractive due to its relative affordability and proximity to good healthcare, outdoor recreation, and services.

Oneida County's top three industries in terms of having the highest percent of all jobs in the County are educational, health, and social services (22.3%), manufacturing (14.4%), and retail trade (13.7%). This is due to the presence of Nicolet Technical College, various school districts, various Marshfield Clinic and Aspirus Health locations, and several industrial parks and businesses. See **Table 6-1**.

Table 6-1: Employment by Industry					
Industry	2000	2010	2021	2000-21 Net Change	2000-21 % Change
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	526	383	377	-149	-28.3%
Construction	1,455	1,843	1,138	-317	-21.8%
Manufacturing	2,080	2,028	2,450	370	17.8%
Wholesale trade	425	428	483	58	13.6%
Retail trade	2,815	2,613	2,328	-487	-17.3%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	689	780	503	-186	-27.0%
Information	434	435	229	-205	-47.2%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	636	802	1,002	366	57.5%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	898	1,228	1,391	493	54.9%
Educational, health, and social assistance	3,953	4,080	3,777	-176	-4.5%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation, and food services	1,694	1,851	1,747	53	3.1%
Other services, except public administration	733	652	880	147	20.1%
Public administration	861	679	663	-198	-23.0%
Total	17,199	17,802	16,968	-231	-1.3%

Source: U.S. Census 2000; American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2010 & 2021

Economic Sectors

In 2021, there were an estimated 16,968 Oneida County residents who were employed. Because of how the Census records this information, this figure represents the number of jobs held by Oneida County residents, and not the total number of jobs in Oneida County. Overall, the number of employed residents decreased by 1.3% between 2000 and 2021, which is slower than the state (9.4%) and nation (21.4%) during the same time.

Industries that grew the most from 2000-2021 in terms of total employment include:

- Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing (57.5%)
- Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services (54.9%)
- Other services, except public administration (20.1%)

Industries that decreased the most from 2000-2021 in terms of total employment include:

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining (-28.3%)
- Transportation and warehousing (-27.0%)
- Public administration (-23.0%)

Finally, industries that employ the largest total number of people are:

- Educational, health, and social assistance (3,777 employees)
- Manufacturing (2,450 employees)
- Retail Trade (2,328 employees)

These sectors were the largest in 2000 and 2010 as well, but retail trade has declined significantly since 2000 (-17.3%) because of online shopping, and manufacturing has increased (17.8%) since then. Educational, health, and social assistance declined only slightly (-4.5%) during this time. Training, education, and recruitment will ensure that Oneida County will continue to fulfill employers' needs as conditions continue to change.

Major Employers

According to the Job Center of Wisconsin, in 2020, Oneida County's largest employers are Ahlstrom-Munksjo Paper Mill, Akelas World, Ascension at Home – Rhinelander, Aspirus Health, Camp Timberlane for Boys, Honey Rock Camp, Jehovah's Witnesses, Kohl's, Lakeland Union School District, Menards, Musson Brothers, Inc., Nicolet Area Technical College, Rennes Health & Rehab Center, Rhinelander School District, St. Matthias Thrift Shop, Trig's, Walmart, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Economic Analysis

This section uses Location Quotient to provide detailed information on Oneida County's economy. Location Quotient identifies which economic sectors are currently at a higher or lower concentration compared to state and national averages. Additionally, future job projections are also included. Most data in this section are from Lightcast (formerly EMSI), a private company that specializes in global labor market analytics.

Location Quotient

Location quotient (LQ) compares local, state, and national employment data by economic sector. It measures the ratio of jobs that a locality has in an economic sector compared to state and national ratios. The higher the LQ, the higher the concentration of that type of job is for Oneida County, see Table 6-2. LQ divides the economy into two sectors:

- The Basic (Exporting) Sector are goods and services that are purchased or consumed by customers outside Oneida County, which are also called exports. These are industries with an LQ above 1.00.
- The Non-Basic (Importing) Sector are goods and services consumed in Oneida County. These are industries with an LQ less than 1.00.

If a County's basic sector of the economy is weak, residents depend more on buying goods and services from other locations, which is known as industry sector leakage. Attracting and retaining businesses and employees is essential to the County's economic well-being. Exports bring money from outside the county into the local economy and imports represent local dollars flowing outside the county. Table 6-2 provides a summary of the location quotient analysis results.

Table 6-2: Location Quotient (LQ) by Industry	
Industry	LQ
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1.32
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0.00
Utilities	0.63
Construction	1.01
Manufacturing	1.21
Wholesale Trade	0.78
Retail Trade	1.73
Transportation and Warehousing	0.66
Information	0.68
Finance and Insurance	0.46
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	0.69
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	0.30
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0.36
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	0.46
Educational Services	0.10
Health Care and Social Assistance	1.36
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0.93
Accommodation and Food Services	1.39
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1.16
Government	0.96
Unclassified Industry	0.04
<i>Source: Lightcast 2021-2022</i>	

As depicted in Table 6-2, Oneida County has a greater concentration of jobs in the following industries than statewide and nationwide averages:

Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting

Although this industry only employs 2.2% of County residents, it has the second highest location quotient, demonstrating its importance to Oneida County’s economy.

Construction

This industry has an LQ that is only slightly higher than average, and it employs about 6.7% of Oneida County residents. Historically, home construction, especially for seasonal or retiree populations, has fueled demand for new construction.

Manufacturing

Manufacturing is a significant export as it has an LQ that is higher than average and employs over 14% of County residents. The number of manufacturing jobs has also increased by almost 18% since 2000. Manufacturing is often considered an important industry since tends to employ many people with higher-than-average wages.

Retail Trade

This industry has the highest LQ of all of Oneida County's sectors, and it employs almost 14% of County residents. The number of jobs has declined, however, with competition from online commerce having increased since 2000.

Health Care and Social Assistance

This industry's high LQ is a result of Oneida County being home to several Marshfield Clinic and Aspirus Health locations. This industry could continue to grow based on the County's aging population.

Accommodation and Food Service

This industry's high LQ is likely a result of the County's tourism, which results in numerous hotels and restaurants.

Other Services (except Public Administration)

Jobs that do not fit neatly in the other categories fall under this category, which has a higher-than-average concentration in the County.

The following industries are considered import industries in Oneida County:

- Mining, quarrying, oil, and gas extraction
- Utilities
- Wholesale trade
- Transportation and warehousing
- Information
- Finance and insurance
- Real estate rental/leasing
- Professional/scientific/technical services

- Management of companies and enterprises
- Administration and support
- Waste management
- Educational services
- Arts/entertainment/recreation
- Government

This means that there is a lower concentration of these industries in these industries than there on average nationwide. Note that changing conditions can impact the concentration of jobs in each industry. For example, although finance, insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing employment is found at a lower concentration than statewide or national concentrations, employment in these jobs in Oneida County has grown by over 57% since 2000.

Employment Projections

Based on analyses of historical and national data, Lightcast projects predicted employment for industries and occupations for the next decade. Table 6-3 summarizes the projected number of jobs between 2021 and 2031. The numbers are adjusted to complement projections from other sources, such as the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. See **Table 6-3**.

Countywide, there is a projected increase of 1,373 jobs between 2021 and 2031. Industries expected to grow the most are educational services (32%), manufacturing (25%), and wholesale trade (24%). Jobs projected to decrease the most are in utilities (-50%), management of companies and enterprises (-48%), and finance and insurance (-11%). Overall, there is predicted to be variability between the number of jobs created or lost in different industries, but the overall ranking of each industry's total employment is not expected to shift considerably over the next decade.

Note that, because Lightcast's data is different from U.S. Census data, the total number of jobs in each industry varies between the two sources despite using 2021 data for both. This is because the U.S. Census records the number of Oneida County residents who have a job (within or outside Oneida County), while Lightcast records the number of jobs that exist within Oneida County (even if workers reside in another county).

Table 6-3 Employment Projections

Industry	2021 Jobs	2031 Jobs	2021 - 2031 Change	2021 - 2031 % Change
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	170	204	34	20.0%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	0	0	0	0.0%
Utilities	58	29	-29	-50.0%
Construction	819	811	-8	-1.0%
Manufacturing	1,670	2,088	418	25.0%
Wholesale Trade	486	603	116	24.0%
Retail Trade	2,838	2,598	-241	-8.0%
Transportation and Warehousing	435	511	75	17.0%
Information	229	276	47	20.0%
Finance and Insurance	321	287	-35	-11.0%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	187	190	3	2.0%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	331	345	14	4.0%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	98	51	-47	-48.0%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	514	528	15	3.0%
Educational Services	35	46	11	32.0%
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,780	3,344	564	20.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	211	238	28	13.0%
Accommodation and Food Services	1,904	2,158	253	13.0%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	578	598	20	3.0%
Government	2,144	2,276	132	6.0%
Unclassified Industry	0	<10	Insf. Data	Insf. Data
Total	15,808	17,182	1,373	9.0%

Source: Lightcast, 2023

Labor Force Analysis

This section examines four factors related to the County’s labor force. These factors are labor force, unemployment, workforce participation, and education & training. **Table 6-4** displays a variety of information related to the County’s labor force.

Table 6-4: Labor Force Indicators					
Indicator	2000	2010	2021	2000-2021 % County Change	2000-2021 % State Change
Labor Force	18,311	18,836	17,393	-5.0%	8.9%
Employed	17,199	17,802	16,968	-1.3%	10.2%
Unemployed	1,112	1,032	425	-61.8%	-18.8%
Unemployment Rate	6.1%	5.5%	2.4%	-60.7%	-25.2%
Participation Rate	63.4%	61.7%	54.9%	-13.4%	-4.3%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000; ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2010 & 2021

Labor Force

The labor force is defined as the number of County residents sixteen and over, employed or looking to be employed. Persons over sixteen who are students, stay-at-home parents, retired, institutionalized, or unable or unwilling to seek employment are not considered part of the labor force. Overall, the size of the labor force decreased by 5.0% between 2000 and 2021 in Oneida County, for a decrease of 918 individuals. Note this is the number of people who live in the County and have jobs, not the number of jobs in the County, and some workers work in other counties. While the labor force declined during the past few decades, the State of Wisconsin’s labor force grew slightly.

Unemployment

In 2000, the County had 6.1% unemployment compared to the state rate of 4.7%. This rose to 5.5% in 2010 due to the 2007-2008 Global Financial Crisis, but has since dropped to 2.4%, slightly under the statewide unemployment rate of 3.5%. Unemployment is defined as the difference between the total civilian labor force and total persons employed. Stay-at-home parents, retirees, or persons not searching for employment are not considered unemployed because they are not considered to be part of the labor force.

Workforce Participation

In 2000, over 63% of Oneida County residents over the age of 16 were in the labor force, but this decreased to 54.9% by 2021. This is slightly higher than the statewide participation rate of

66%. The decrease is partially due to the large number of baby boomers who are retiring but can also be due to other factors including a lack of childcare.

Workforce participation is a measure expressed in terms of a percentage of persons not actively seeking employment divided by the total working age population. These persons may not seek employment due to retirement, disability, choose to be a home care provider, or simply are not looking for work.

Education and Training

The level of educational attainment is an important indicator of the skills of the labor force. Formal education and job training reflect a community's ability to provide a labor force for certain types of industry. As identified earlier in the plan, educational attainment in the county is similar to the statewide average in terms of those with a high school diploma or better, and bachelor's degrees or higher. The County has higher educational attainment rates than the nationwide average.

Training is another labor force indicator. Partnerships between local businesses, governments, and educational institutions are very useful in developing the County's economy. Institutions such as Nicolet Technical College often direct their programs to the training needs of local workers and businesses. Training services for dislocated workers is provided at the Job Center of Wisconsin, which has its nearest locations in Marathon and Shawano Counties. The center is intended to be a one-stop resource for employers to meet their workforce needs and job seekers to get the career planning, job placement, and training services they need to obtain jobs. Organizations such as the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board are important to this process as well.

Income and Wages

There are two basic measures of income: median household income and per capita income. Median household income provides an indication of the economic ability of the typical family or household unit while per capita income provides a measure of relative earning power on a per person level. As identified earlier in this plan, the Median Household income in 2000 was \$37,619 and the Per Capita income was \$19,746. By 2021, both median and per capita incomes rose by 67 and 86%, respectively. Both median household income and per capita income grew faster in Oneida County than in the state as a whole.

Table 6-5 provides average annual wage data by industry as reported by the 2021 American Community Survey. While average wages in Oneida County are overall similar to neighboring counties, they are lower than statewide figures. This is offset by a cost of living that is lower than the statewide average.

Table 6-5: Median Annual Income by Industry

Industry	Oneida	Vilas	Lincoln	Wisconsin
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	\$50,966	\$32,315	\$29,250	\$33,140
Construction	\$43,000	\$47,200	\$45,446	\$51,433
Manufacturing	\$52,412	\$52,059	\$49,520	\$50,316
Wholesale trade	\$61,250	\$44,375	\$45,313	\$52,719
Retail trade	\$26,279	\$24,294	\$22,609	\$26,593
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	\$45,938	\$46,900	\$46,156	\$49,491
Information	\$37,292	\$41,058	\$31,205	\$49,575
Finance and insurance, and real estate, and rental and leasing	\$56,094	\$41,328	\$53,456	\$54,982
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative, and waste management services	\$49,688	\$32,184	\$35,507	\$48,187
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	\$38,585	\$41,960	\$31,412	\$40,810
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	\$18,464	\$21,800	\$13,074	\$15,356
Other services, except public administration	\$30,794	\$30,000	\$23,693	\$31,109
Public administration	\$52,520	\$42,083	\$51,513	\$56,259

Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2021

Redevelopment

Generally, redevelopment areas are those that are underutilized or vacant and there is some existing infrastructure and public services in place. Often these might be called blighted or deteriorated, or even condemned. They can be redeveloped to improve the tax base without having to add new roads, sewers, and other infrastructure.

In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) lists information on contaminated properties and documents activities relating to eventual reuse and cleanup of “brownfield” lands through the Wisconsin Bureau for Remediation and Redevelopment Tracking System (BRRTS). The five types of sites tracked by BRRTS include Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) sites, Environmental Repair (ERP) sites, Spills, Liability Exemption (VPLE) sites, and Abandoned Container sites. The DNR’s website has a BRRTS map that has the latest information on each site.

Economic Development Infrastructure

Oneida County's economic development infrastructure is concentrated along main highways, especially USH-8, USH-45, USH-51, STH 17, STH-32, STH 47, and STH-70. A Fox Valley & Lake Superior Rail Line also traverses the County in an east-west direction.

This infrastructure investment provides a wider range of opportunities for prospective entrepreneurs and greatly increases the county's chances of developing and maintaining a stable employment base for its workforce in the future. There are five industrial parks totaling approximately 294 acres, four of which are in the City of Rhineland and another in the Town of Three Lakes. Two of Rhineland's industrial parks are served by rail, and the whole County has access to Rhineland-Oneida County Airport. Although each park is served by infrastructure, only 2 acres remain undeveloped, and future development will need infrastructure to be extended to meet demand. See Chapter 5 for a complete list of truck routes, railroads, highways, airports, and other forms of transportation that facilitate economic development.

Industrial parks are important for creating and retaining jobs. An industrial park is a planned subdivision of land that provides sites for potential industrial firms with necessary infrastructure. The park is designed in such a way that it ensures compatibility between industrial operations and the existing activities of the area in which the park is located.

Economic Development Programs

There are several economic development programs available to businesses and local governments in Oneida County. The following is a partial list of those programs.

Local

Downtown Rhineland, Inc.

Downtown Rhineland, Inc. (DRI) is a collaboration of business and community members that is responsible for promoting businesses and events, as well as maintaining Downtown Rhineland's appearance.

Impact Seven Business Lending Loans

This program provides flexible, affordable loans to a wide variety of business types, specializing in commercial and mixed-use real estate and affordable housing. From large catalytic development projects to Main Street businesses, Impact Seven invests in the people and places that build community.

Local Chambers of Commerce

The following organizations offer information on local business, tourism, and industry by promoting events and programs for the business community:

- Arbor Vitae-Woodruff Chamber of Commerce
- Hazelhurst Information Center
- Let's Minocqua Visitors Bureau and Chamber of Commerce
- Oneida County Tourism Council
- Pelican Lake Chamber of Commerce
- Rhinelander Area Chamber of Commerce
- Three Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce and Welcome Center, Inc.
- Tomahawk Regional Chamber of Commerce

Each organization has its own website for more information.

Oneida County Economic Development Corporation

Founded in 1989, the Oneida County EDC was created as a partnership between business and industry with the responsibility of growing new and existing businesses Countywide.

Regional

Central Wisconsin SCORE

Central Wisconsin SCORE consists of a team of experienced entrepreneurs who volunteer their experience and knowledge to help small business professionals start, develop, and grow businesses. SCORE offers free business advice, business training, and numerous templates and tools. SCORE also offers the opportunity to be connected with mentors and provides business education tools such as events, online courses, recorded webinars, and a startup roadmap.

Central Wisconsin Economic Development (CWED) Fund

Revolving loan funds are available to entrepreneurs and their lenders to structure financing packages for start-up and expanding businesses to encourage economic growth in the area. CWED manages a revolving loan fund designed to address a gap in private capital markets for long-term, fixed rate, low down payment, low-interest financing.

Grow North

Grow North is a non-profit organization whose mission is to assist area counties and communities in their efforts to recruit and retain businesses, stimulate new job creation, and to foster an environment conducive to entrepreneurial growth. It was created to foster cooperation

among economic development partners and foster economic growth efforts in Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Oneida, and Vilas Counties.

The GRID (Guiding Rural Innovation and Development)

The GRID acts as a one-stop connection to a wide-ranging list of business resources for entrepreneurs and small businesses in Northern Wisconsin.

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

The County is a member of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, as are all local governments based on county membership. Membership brings with it a variety of planning benefits and services. Benefits include participation in the Economic Development District, including eligibility for a variety of grants administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration.

Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center (NWMOC)

The Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center provides operations assessments, technology training, and on-site assistance to help firms in Northern Wisconsin modernize and streamline manufacturing processes.

State

Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC)

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation is the state's primary department for the delivery of integrated services to businesses. Their purpose is to 1) foster retention of and creation of new jobs and investment opportunities in Wisconsin; 2) foster and promote economic business, export, and community development; and 3) promote the public health, safety, and welfare through effective and efficient regulations, education, and enforcement. WEDC manages a variety of programs intended to assist businesses and communities, including:

- Brownfield Program
- Capacity Building Grants (CB)
- Certified Sites
- Historic Preservation Tax Credit
- Business Opportunity Loan Fund
- Workforce Training Grants
- Idle Industrial Sites Redevelopment Program
- The Industrial Revenue Bond (IRB) Program
- Community Development Investment (CDI) Grant Program
- Fast Forward Program (see below)
- Wisconsin Investment Fund
- Technology Development Loan Program

Transportation Economic Assistance (TEA)

This program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, provides immediate assistance and funding for the cost of transportation improvements necessary for major economic development projects.

The Wisconsin Innovation Service Center (WISC)

This non-profit organization is located at the University of Wisconsin at Whitewater and specializes in new product and invention assessments and market expansion opportunities for innovative manufacturers, technology businesses, and independent inventors.

Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF)

DCF has partnered with the nonprofit First Children's Finance to finance small business loans to childcare entrepreneurs. They work with other lenders, community partners, economic developers, and directly with childcare businesses to provide financing.

Wisconsin Fast Forward

This program, administered by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, is a nationally recognized, innovative talent development solution driven by Wisconsin businesses to train and retain highly skilled workers. Grant funds support employer-led worker training projects that:

- Encourage increased collaboration between Wisconsin businesses and workforce training partners.
- Fill current and ongoing skill requirements of Wisconsin employers.
- Place workers in long-term positions with opportunities for professional growth and economic advancement.

Wisconsin Housing and Economic Development Authority (WHEDA)

WHEDA administers a variety of programs to support small businesses, with several programs designed specifically for agribusiness.

Wisconsin Office of Rural Prosperity (ORP)

As part of the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), the Office of Rural Prosperity seeks to foster vibrant, prosperous, and resilient rural communities across Wisconsin. ORP functions as a one-stop shop to help rural stakeholders navigate programs and resources serving rural communities and businesses. ORP's website contains a list of available grant programs, grant writing consultants, and grant writing training opportunities.

Wisconsin Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

The UW-Stevens Point SBDC is partially funded by the Small Business Administration and provides a variety of programs and training seminars to assist in the creation of small businesses in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin Small Cities Program

The Wisconsin Department of Administration provides federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to eligible municipalities for approved housing and/or public facility improvements and for economic development projects. Economic Development grants provide loans to businesses for such things as the acquisition of real estate, buildings, or equipment; construction, expansion, or remodeling; and working capital for inventory and direct labor.

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC)

WWBIC makes loans to small and micro businesses up to \$350,000. They work with both women and men in analyzing their business' financial needs and guiding them through the loan process.

Federal

America's Seed Fund: SBIR & STTR

Through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, America's Seed Fund provides technology-focused entrepreneurs, startups, and small businesses with funding to develop their ideas and a pathway to commercialization. Powered by a network of federal agencies, entrepreneur support organizations, and the Small Business Administration, America's Seed Fund advances federal missions and fosters a culture of innovation in the United States

The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)

This Planning Grant from the Federal Communications Commission, administered by Wisconsin Public Service, enables eligible entities to opt-in to receive formula funding to participate in broadband planning activities that will inform the state Five-Year Action Plan which will guide broadband deployment and implementation of the BEAD program.

Economic Development Administration (EDA)

EDA offers a guaranteed loan program as well as public works grant program. These are administered through local units of government for the benefit of the local economy and, indirectly, private enterprise.

Small Business Administration (SBA)

SBA provides business and industrial loan programs that will make or guarantee up to 90% of the principal and interest on loans to companies, individuals, or government entities for financing in rural areas. Wisconsin Business Development Finance Corporation acts as an agent for the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) programs that provide financing for fixed asset loans and for working capital.

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA – RD)

The USDA Rural Development program is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. Financial programs include support for such essential public facilities and services as water and sewer systems, housing, health clinics, emergency service facilities, and electric and telephone service. USDA-RD promotes economic development by supporting loans to businesses through banks and community-managed lending pools. The program also offers technical assistance and information to help agricultural and other cooperatives get started and improve the effectiveness of their member services.

Goals, Objectives, & Policies

Goal 1: Maintain, diversify, and expand the economy, while maintaining the rural character and environmental integrity of the County.

Objectives:

- Promote the retention and expansion of the current economic base.
- Encourage the creation of new businesses.
- Promote the relocation of compatible businesses to the County.
- Pursue increased funding from both public and private sources.
- Encourage infill development throughout the county, where existing facilities exist.
- Encourage sustainable yield forestry by promoting the harvesting of wood products as raw materials for the energy industry.
- Encourage development of high-speed Internet infrastructure capabilities to meet the growing needs and challenges of an information-based economy.

Policies:

- Working with the Oneida County Economic Development Corporation conduct a business retention survey from time to time to understand the needs of area businesses.
- Working with the Oneida County Economic Development Corporation and U.W. Extension continue to support and expand the Inventors & Entrepreneurs Club to assist local inventors to create new firms, work with area entrepreneur networks.
- Pursue U.S. Economic Development Administration, USDA – Rural Development, and Wisconsin Department of Commerce funds, among other sources for projects.
- Research private community and national foundations as a source of project funding.
- Examine the economic impacts of metallic mining on groundwater, health, and quality of life in the county by employing commonly accepted business practices of due diligence, cost benefit analysis and risk assessment.
- Encourage “best management practices” for the development of county and private commercial forestland that both benefit the economy of the county and maintain its rural character.
- Encourage the location of communication towers in areas that provide the widest coverage throughout the county while minimizing the impact on the landscape and wildlife migration patterns.

Goal 2: Conserve and enhance the quality of life in the county by promoting the infrastructure and human resources that will foster economic development compatible with Oneida County's rural Northwoods character.

Objectives:

- Maintain and enhance public facilities and services.
- Work with area schools and the technical college to develop and maintain a well-educated and trained workforce.

Policies:

- Continue to support the Rhinelander/Oneida County Airport as an economic development asset.
- Continue to support an active rail system as an economic development and tourism asset.
- Plan for an adequate supply of land for commercial and industrial needs.
- Evaluate, maintain, and enhance infrastructure as necessary to facilitate economic growth, such as an industrial park.
- Promote telecommunications infrastructure, especially broadband Internet, and other technology related to development and expansion.
- Encourage industrial development to areas with the infrastructure and services to support the development.
- Encourage educational institutions to develop training programs needed by the area's businesses to meet identified needs.
- Support and work with local school officials on expanding the school to work program.
- Working with Workforce Development, determine current employment characteristics and identify existing and future employment needs.

Goal 3: Encourage the coordination of economic development efforts with the Oneida County Economic Development Corporation, City and Towns, Chambers of Commerce, as well as other local and regional organizations.

Objectives:

- Establish strong local and regional partners in the area of economic development.

Policies:

- Incorporate the economic development strategies developed in the Town plans into the County plan.
- Continue and strengthen relations with the Oneida County Economic Development Corporation, local chambers, and other local organizations.
- Participate in regional economic development efforts with surrounding counties, Grow North, the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, and other regional efforts.