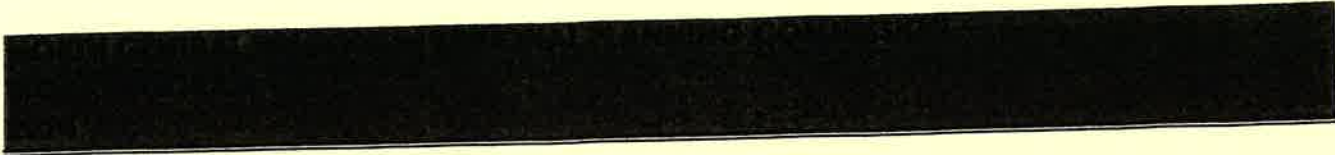


Projects by Program:	Lead Staff:	Fund Source:	Due:
<i>Economic Development (ED)</i>			
General Program Assistance (EDA)	Lawrence	EDA Grant	On-going
ED Chapters - Comp. Plans	Staff	EDA Grant	On-going
EDA Partnership Grant & Administration	Lawrence	EDA Grant	On-going
Grant Writing Assistance	Staff	EDA Grant	On-going
NCWDC Administration	Lawrence	Agreement	On-going
Centergy Administration & Support	Staff	Agreement	2024
EDC's/Grow North/Centergy Participation	Staff	EDA Grant	On-going
Lightcast/EMSI Assistance (WEDC)	Sonnleitner	EDA Grant	On-going
Economic Data & Research (Quarterly Rpts.)	Faust	EDA Grant	On-going
Rural Partners Network	Staff	EDA Grant	On-going
EDA Grant Assistance - MSTC & UWSP	Lawrence	EDA Grant	2024
Wood County Housing Report	Wessel	EDA Grant	2024
Pending/Other:			
Adams County Housing Study			
CEDS Update (due 1/26)			

Projects by Program:	Lead Staff:	Fund Source:	Due:
<i>Intergovernmental Cooperation (IGOV)</i>			
General Program Assistance	Staff	Levy	On-going
Commission & Executive Com. Meetings	Lawrence	Levy	On-going
Annual Report	Lawrence	Levy	Annually
Newsletters/Announcements	Sonnleitner	Levy	On-going
AWRPC	Lawrence	Levy	On-going
NEWCOM	Faust	Agreement	On-going
North Central WI Stormwater Coaliton	Heider	Agreement	On-going
WROC 2025 Planning & Administration	Faust	Levy	On-going
Northwoods Rail Commission	Landeau	Agreement	On-going
Region 9 Broadband Coordination	Faust	Levy	On-going
Geo-partners/Speed Test Administration	Faust	Levy	2024

Pending/Other:

Projects by Program:	Lead Staff:	Fund Source:	Due:
Land Use (LU)			
General Program Assistance	Staff	Levy	On-going
Comprehensive Plans:			
Forest County Comp Plan	Wessel	Agreement	2024
Oneida County Comp. Plan	Wessel	Levy	2024
Portage County Comp Plan	Wessel	Levy	2024
V. of Necedah	Wessel	Agreement	2024
V. of Rosholt	Boulanger	Agreement	2024
T. of Rietbrock	Sonnleitner	Agreement	
T. of Crescent	Lawrence	Agreement	2024
Mole Lake Com Plan update	Lawrence	Grant	
Regional Comprehensive Plan Update	Staff	Levy	2025
All Hazard Plans			
Lincoln County	Landeau	Agreement	2024
Juneau County	Landeau	Agreement	2024
Vilas County	Faust	Agreement	2024
FEMA Grant assistance	Landeau	Levy	



Projects by Program:	Lead Staff:	Fund Source:	Due:
Outdoor Recreation Plans:			
Adams County	Heider	Levy	2024
City of Adams	Heider	Agreement	2024
Oneida County	Heider	Levy	2024
Land & Water Plans:			
Langlade County	Heider	Levy	2024
Vilas County	Heider	Levy	2024
Farmland Preservation Plans:			
Langlade County	Faust	Agreement	2024
Sewer Service Area Plans:			
Portage County (Under DNR Review)	Landeau	Agreement	Submitted
Zoning Assistance:			
None			
Pending/Other:			
Various local comp plan updates			
Portage AHMP			
Wood County Comp Plan Update			
Rib Mt. Corridor Study			
Juneau Comprehensive Plan Update			
Portage & Wood County ORP Updates			
Plover Corridor Study			
Wisconsin River Basin Plan			
Regional Comprehensive Plan Update			



Projects by Program:	Lead Staff:	Fund Source:	Due:
<i>Transportation (TR)</i>			
General Program Assistance	Staff	DOT Grant	On-going
DOT Administration	Landeau	DOT Grant	On-going
Grant Writing	Staff	DOT Grant	On-going
Wausau Area - MPO	Landeau	DOT Grant	On-going
TR Chapters - Comp. Plans	Staff	DOT Grant	On-going
Wood County Bike & Ped.	Landeau	DOT Grant	2024
Wausau SRTS Plan	Heider	Agreement	2024
Urban Boundaires Program	Landeau	Agreement	2024
Forest County Human Services Plan	Landeau	Agreement	2024
Regional SRTS	Heider	DOT Grant	2024
Pending/Other:			

North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission

Regional Comprehensive Plan

2025 Update Process

BACKGROUND

Regional planning commissions are required to have a regional comprehensive plan for the regions they serve. These plans need to be updated every ten years.

Regional Comprehensive Plans

Under Wisconsin law ss. 66.0309(9), "The regional planning commission shall have the function and duty of making and adopting a master plan for the physical development of the region." As such, the NCWRPC adopted the 1981 Framework for Regional Development. That effort was funded in part by a grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In 1999, the state passed ss. 66.1001 - the comprehensive planning law. To comply with that requirement, the NCWRPC developed and adopted the 2003 Regional Comprehensive Plan, which incorporated the elements described in the new law. Funding was received through a state grant program to prepare that plan.

In 2015 the Regional Livability Plan (RLP) was adopted, as the ten-year update, which builds upon those previous efforts. Funding to prepare that plan was obtained from a grant through the US Federal Highway Administration. It is currently posted on our website at ncwrpc.org.

In 2020, we prepared a brief Five-year "Plan Status" report to evaluate the status of the RLP. The evaluation identified various ways the plan was being incorporated into local plan efforts and recommended the prepare an update in 2025, incorporating some additional planning considerations.

Current Plan

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) adopted the Regional Livability Plan (RLP) in 2015. The plan serves as the regional comprehensive plan for the ten-county area. Several key issues impacting the region were identified and analyzed, eleven overall goals were established, and a detailed strategy was developed based around economic development, housing, land use, and transportation. Overall, this document provides a framework for the communities within the region and introduces goals, objectives, and recommendations to promote livability, sustainability and quality of life. In addition, the RLP provides the foundation for local plans prepared by the NCWRPC.

Plan Goals

Many issues are regional in nature, and as such, they cannot be dealt with effectively by any one unit of local government. Over the years, NCWRPC has identified issues of regional significance, including housing, land use, transportation, and economic development.

Eleven overall goals were developed as part of the RLP. They are listed below:

- Promote a variety of safe and affordable housing options that meet the needs of all community members.
- Ensure the availability of a skilled and flexible workforce.
- Support and develop a diverse economic base ensuring economic resiliency and growth.
- Support infrastructure needed for economic development.
- Develop tourism and knowledge-based economy into leading economic sectors.
- Provide and improve access and transportation to people of all ages and abilities ensuring lifelong mobility and accessibility to the community.
- Fund the maintenance and expansion of the transportation system.
- Enhance the regional economy by reinforcing airports and freight rail.
- Preserve and protect the Region's landscape, environmental resources, and sensitive lands while encouraging healthy communities.
- Promote the reuse of vacant and underutilized buildings and land.
- Monitor and update the Regional Livability Plan.

The goals and the strategy supported by them still appear relevant to the region. They should be reviewed again as part of the next update.

Future Planning Considerations

The Five -Year evaluation identified some additional topics that should be considered in the next update to develop a stronger plan for the region. The issues that should be considered are:

- Public Health Needs/Pandemic Response
- Economic Recovery
- Resiliency - Weather & Climate Change
- Fiscal Conditions of the Region
- Widening Equity Gap

Local Implementation

Implementation of the Regional Plan requires action by individual counties and local communities. Within the ten-county region, there are 258 local units of government: 198 towns, 39 villages, and 21 cities. It is those local community level plans that pull data, goals, and strategies from the Regional Plan to integrate into their local plans.

Local and county comprehensive plans are the most direct way to implement the Regional Plan, however, there are other related plans that also play a critical role. Here we examine plans at

the county level, except for the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) which is a regional plan. The county level plans identified below are the usual plans provided to member communities by the NCWRPC. Through these many other local efforts the RCP is implemented.

- Outdoor Recreation Plans
- Farmland Preservation Plans
- All Hazard Mitigation Plans
- Land & Water Resource Management Plans
- Housing Studies
- Specialized Transit Plans/County Transit Coordination Plans
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans

Overall, based on the considerable development and adoption of county level plans implementation of the Regional Livability Plan has occurred. NCWRPC will continue to implement plans throughout the region that are influenced by the Regional Livability Plan. Each community should select the most applicable goals, objectives, and recommendations that best fit their community. In addition, federal, state, and regional government agencies and quasi-governmental organizations may be directly involved in project coordination, funding and execution based on the findings of the Regional Plan.

UPDATE PROCESS:

Tasks

The goal is to have the recommended draft Regional Comprehensive Plan presented for adoption in October of 2025. Therefore, over the next 18 months or so staff will be working on the update. Funding for the plan's development will be from our EDA and DOT planning grants as well as our local levy.

The process requires the following tasks:

- Establish an oversight committee/Ad Hoc RCP Advisory Committee
- Develop work plan to prepare the update, including detailed timeline
- Prepare Public Participation Plan
- Data collection and mapping
- Align plan update with CEDS and Strategic Plan
- Prepare draft document for review by committee
- Identify Peer Review folks for various chapters of plan
- Post draft document on website for public review
- Present recommended draft to Commission
- Implement the plan as part of our annual work program

Tentative Plan Outline

It is anticipated that the plan will include ten major chapters. See below:

- Regional Demographics
- Regional Trends & Issues
- Regional Natural Resources
- Regional Housing
- Regional Utilities & Community Facilities
- Regional Transportation
- Regional Economic Development
- Regional Land Use
- Regional Intergovernmental Cooperation
- Regional Implementation

Overall, the plan will be brief in nature, not an exhaustive document. The intent is to be user friendly. The implementation section will focus on NCWRPC's annual work program. The plan will also become the framework for the local and county level plans in our region.

North Central Wisconsin

Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC)



**Comprehensive Economic
Development Strategy (CEDS)**

2024 Annual Performance Report



Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2024 Annual Performance Report

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The NCWRPC's ten-county region is designated as an Economic Development District (EDD) by the U. S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA).

This document was prepared by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and was partially funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA).

I. Introduction

The North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) is a voluntary association of governments, created in 1973 under Wisconsin State Statute 66.945, now 66.0309. Currently, the Commission serves the Counties of Adams, Forest, Juneau, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas and Wood. This area received designation as an Economic Development District (EDD) in 1980 and has maintained that designation since.

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Performance Report was discussed, reviewed, and adopted by the Full Commission of the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC). The Full Commission serves as the committee to oversee this effort.

This Performance Report provides an update on the activities of the NCWRPC related to the 2021 CEDS, which was the last full update. As part of the update process a CEDS Committee will be organized to oversee the effort. The committee will include local elected officials, economic development groups, workforce groups and others. In addition, three area advisory organizations will provide review and input into the CEDS process as well. These are Centergy, which represents five counties in the central and southern area of the Region, Grow North, which represents five northern counties in the Region, and the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, which is the area workforce development agency.

II. Recent Activities

The following provides a brief listing of economic development activities conducted by the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission since the last Performance Report. Assistance is provided at both the regional and local level:

Regional Activities:

Economic Development Planning: The CEDS will be revised annually and updated every five years, while in other years a Performance Report is prepared. The most current demographic and economic data available will be used with oversight provided by a CEDS Committee and or the Full Commission. The strategy becomes the foundation for all other economic development efforts of the NCWRPC.

Continue to partner with other regional organizations: Partners include all local and county economic development organizations, as well as the two regional marketing groups in the Region (Centergy & Grow North) and the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, among others. There have also been recent discussions with the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point – the only four-year institution in the Region – to promote connections between the university and community

development. Maintain staff assistance to these economic development groups and promote additional cooperation and cooperation within the Region.

Promote Livable and Sustainable Development: Bring the principles of livability and sustainability into the planning discussion in the Region. Also consider equity in all planning efforts.

Regional Data & Mapping Center: Maintain clearinghouse of data by continuing to assemble and array various data relating to economic development, e.g. employment and unemployment statistics, population estimates, income levels, etc. Also maintain a regional mapping database.

Training and Education: Maintain staff expertise by attending EDA conferences, national and state level economic development and planning conferences, as well as workshops and other training opportunities.

Access to Capital: Work to secure financing for local businesses and work with local communities to secure funding for projects. NCWRPC will work with area businesses to secure funding through various programs, including the Central Wisconsin Economic Development (CWED) Corporation. The NCWRPC will also provide oversight to the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC).

Regional Assistance Summary:

- Prepared the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Annual Performance Report.
- Provided pandemic related assistance to communities related to recovery and resiliency.
- Assisted State of Wisconsin distribute business grant funding throughout the Main Street Bounceback Program. A total of 560 awards were made throughout the Region.
- Maintain Census Data, Socioeconomic Information and Planning Library. Provide special Census data and EMSI reports on request.
- Updated County Profiles graphically display economic data, including an inventory of all sixty-nine industrial parks.
- Assemble and arrange various data relating to economic development, e.g., employment and unemployment statistics, sales tax receipts, population estimates, income levels, etc.
- Prepared Quarterly Economic Development Reports for each county, the Region, and the Grow North and Centergy regions.
- Continued to provide staff support to the Northwoods Rail Commission to maintain and expand freight rail options for area businesses in northern Wisconsin.
- North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation (NCWDC) assistance. This organization manages a revolving loan fund. These “gap” funds assist local businesses to

expand and create jobs throughout the Region. Many of these businesses are in EDA funded business parks.

- Provided various support to other economic organizations and efforts in the Region.

Local Activities:

Local Assistance: Provide direct assistance to local units of government, businesses and other groups involved in economic development. Assistance is made available through providing data, developing plans, preparing grant applications, or providing staff assistance. Also provide assistance to updates of county and local comprehensive plans, in particular the economic development sections.

Maintain detailed Economic Development Profiles for each county in the Region. Economic data would be collected and analyzed, maps prepared, and economic development profiles would be designed. These would be prepared in both print and digital format and used to market the area to prospective businesses.

Foster Communication and Coordination: Promote the recommendations of the CEDS, maintain liaisons with federal, state, regional and local government agencies, disseminate current information about economic development and financial assistance programs and coordinate and evaluate economic development efforts in the Region. Attending and participating in various committees and organizations throughout the Region fosters these objectives.

Staff will continue to work with various organizations throughout the Region, such as Workforce Development, Wisconsin Economic Development Association (WEDA), Centergy, Grow North, Member County Economic Development Corporations, and the Wausau Business Incubator Board, among others.

Support Local Efforts: Support the efforts of and collaborate with Workforce Development Boards, Technical Colleges, Colleges and Universities, and Regional Economic Development Organizations.

Support Infrastructure Efforts: Support businesses and communities applying for funding for new and improved infrastructure, as well as technology upgrades, such as broad band.

Work to incorporate economic development principles and implement CEDS strategy into local plans, particularly economic development chapters of comprehensive plans.

Local Planning Assistance: Continue to assist local communities in developing and updating Comprehensive Plans. Assist local comprehensive planning efforts develop economic development sections in their plans that relate and are compatible with the CEDS. Also assist in the development of detailed economic plans, such as downtown plans, redevelopment strategies, and financial plans.

Grant Application Assistance: Continue to assist area businesses, local governments, and development corporations in preparing state and federal economic development matching grant applications for local projects. Prepare Economic Development Administration (EDA), Wisconsin Department of Administration, and USDA's Rural Development applications, among others for additional economic development funding for active district members and NCWRPC sponsored projects. For example, NCWRPC recently assisted the Lac du Flambeau Tribe prepare an EDA application for a tribal-owned molding plant, North Central Technical College prepare an EDA application to support sawmill and forest products workforce development, and Mid State Technical College prepare an EDA application for equipment for an advanced manufacturing training facility.

A major component of the NCWRPC's efforts in grant assistance is helping communities secure funding for eligible economic development projects through EDA's various grant programs. Since 1979 EDA has funded 45 projects totaling over \$30 million throughout the Region. Table 1 below breaks down EDA's investments within North Central Wisconsin by county.

Table 1: EDA Investments in North Central Wisconsin by County (1979-2023)		
County	Number of Awards	Amount Awarded
Adams	3	\$1,553,135
Forest	5	\$2,268,575
Juneau	5	\$2,188,885
Langlade	4	\$3,191,497
Lincoln	1	\$500,000
Marathon	5	\$4,722,346
Oneida	0	\$0
Portage	1	\$470,965
Vilas	5	\$8,620,937
Wood	9	\$5,931,310
Regional	7	\$1,191,850
Total	45	\$30,639,500

Local Assistance Summary:

- Provided general assistance to area economic development organizations at the county and local levels.
- Prepared the Wausau Area workforce and the Juneau County housing studies.
- Continued to provide general assistance to communities related to economic development.
- In partnership with WEDC, provided Lightcast (formerly EMSI) reports as requested.
- Assisted in the preparation of several EDA grants in the Region.

- Provided assistance for various state and federal grant applications on behalf of local communities.
- Prepared economic development chapters as part of comprehensive planning efforts throughout the Region, including county, city, village, and town plans, including Forest County, Portage County, Vilas County, and several local communities.
- Staff worked with various economic development and related organizations throughout the Region.

In addition, staff provides EDA Grant Administration as required for the Partnership Planning Grant. This consists of completing the annual EDA planning grant application, preparing and submitting EDA reports (semi-annual and year-end), maintaining financial statements, preparing and submitting EDA fund requests, and other related tasks to maintain EDA compliance. This also includes attendance at EDA meetings and other tasks as required for the planning grant.

III. Regional Demographic & Economic Changes

The Region's population in 2022 was 447,762, which was about 8 percent of the state's total population. Over the last twelve years the population has slowly increased by 1.3%, meanwhile over the same period the state grew by about 3.4%. The largest county is Marathon with over 137,000 persons, while Forest County is the smallest with just over 9,200 persons.

County	2010	2020	2022	2010-2022 Change	2010-2022 % Change
Adams	20,875	20,654	20,730	-145	-0.7%
Forest	9,304	9,179	9,239	-65	-0.7%
Juneau	26,664	26,718	26,695	31	0.1%
Langlade	19,977	19,491	19,512	-465	-2.3%
Lincoln	28,743	28,415	28,402	-341	-1.2%
Marathon	134,063	138,013	137,820	3,757	2.8%
Oneida	35,998	37,845	37,799	1,801	5.0%
Portage	70,019	70,377	70,281	262	0.4%
Vilas	21,430	23,047	23,146	1,716	8.0%
Wood	74,749	74,207	74,138	-611	-0.8%
Region	441,822	447,946	447,762	5,940	1.3%
Wisconsin	5,688,040	5,843,443	5,882,128	194,088	3.4%

Source: U.S. Census 2010, 2020; American Community Survey 2018-2022

Employment numbers have rebounded since the recession. In 2022 there were 213,842 jobs within the North Central Wisconsin Region. Overall employment grew by only 0.2% between 2010 and 2022. The state grew at a faster rate, growing by over six percent during this time. However, the slow growth in regional employment is likely due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as employment was steadily increasing between 2010 and 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic drastically decreased employment in 2020. The North Central Wisconsin Region has since recovered the jobs lost due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Region gained 4,468 jobs between 2020 and 2022.

Table 3: North Central Wisconsin Employment 2010-2022

County	2010	2020	2022	2010-2022 Change	2010-2022 % Change
Adams	8,022	7,325	7,333	-689	-8.6%
Forest	3,764	3,423	3,648	-116	-3.1%
Juneau	12,359	12,435	12,838	479	3.9%
Langlade	9,083	8,754	8,895	-188	-2.1%
Lincoln	13,920	13,934	14,261	341	2.4%
Marathon	66,842	69,316	71,105	4,263	6.4%
Oneida	17,161	16,707	17,226	65	0.4%
Portage	36,752	35,470	36,446	-306	-0.8%
Vilas	9,197	9,628	9,754	557	6.1%
Wood	36,337	32,382	32,336	-4,001	-11.0%
Region	213,437	209,374	213,842	405	0.2%
Wisconsin	2,820,620	2,897,422	2,992,049	171,429	6.1%

Source: WI DWD, LAUS

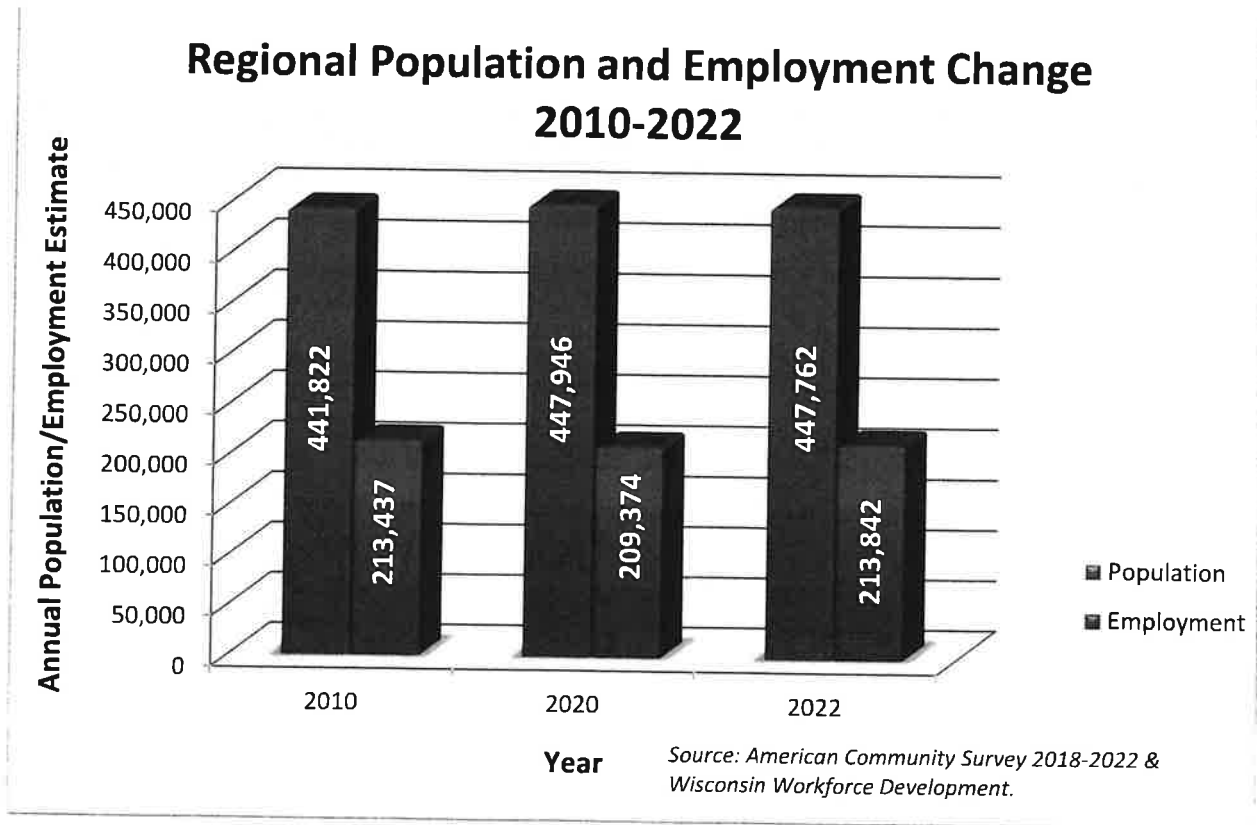
In 2022, unemployment within the North Central Wisconsin Region was 3.1%, ranging from 2.5% in Marathon County to 4.8% in Adams County. Meanwhile, the Region's Per Capita Income was \$37,913, ranging from \$40,136 in Vilas County to \$30,310 in Forest County. Generally, the Region's county incomes lag behind the state and nation.

Table 4: North Central Wisconsin Unemployment Rates & Per Capita Incomes

County	Unemployment Rate, 2022	Per Capita Income, 2022
Adams	4.8%	\$32,223
Forest	4.7%	\$30,310
Juneau	3.2%	\$31,211
Langlade	3.6%	\$32,989
Lincoln	3.1%	\$35,558
Marathon	2.5%	\$38,886
Oneida	3.3%	\$40,086
Portage	2.9%	\$37,990
Vilas	3.9%	\$40,136
Wood	3.3%	\$36,712
Region	3.1%	\$37,913
Wisconsin	2.9%	\$40,130
United States	3.6%	\$41,261

Source: WI DWD, LAUS; American Community Survey 2018-2022

The graph below graphically displays both the population and employment changes in the Region. Overall, both population and employment have increased in the Region since 2010.



In summary, the Region's population has grown since 2010, but at a slower rate than the state and nation. However, that growth is concentrated in only some of the counties. Five of the ten counties experienced declines in overall population. Employment has grown in the Region as well, but similar to population, only five counties had an increase in employment during this time.

IV. Regional Economic Issues

Over the last year there were several economic issues that were identified within the Region. These include:

- The Region is aging, which impacts future workforce size
- Labor shortages in many fields, including manufacturing, technology, and the tourism & hospitality industry
- Regional economy lags slightly behind national economic recovery
- Lack of adequate broadband access in areas of the Region, especially in rural areas
- Low availability of childcare
- Shortage of affordable workforce housing
- Lack of new housing being built and a lack of housing diversity in the existing housing stock
- Lower wage and benefits packages offered locally than the state and national averages poses challenges in attracting workers to the Region
- Continued lack of access to National Forest for timber production
- Decline of Paper Manufacturing industry and ripple effect in rail needs throughout the Region, especially in the northern counties

V. Regional SWOT

As part of the previous CEDS Update a Regional Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats exercise was completed. It was reviewed as part of the Performance Report process.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Manufacturing Base • Access to quality Interstates • Access to Regional airport • Regional economic development effort and communication • Innovative workforce • Tourism • Knowledgeable and hardworking workforce • Competitive wages for businesses • Lower Cost of Living • Quality education system • Technical, 2-year and 4-year college programs • Access to natural resources • Quality freshwater resources • Quality of life/place • Quality healthcare options • Wealth of recreational activities • Low state taxes for businesses • Access to regional/local airports 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry specific 2-year training programs • Innovative workforce • Creative new uses for existing infrastructure, i.e. paper mills • Emerging healthcare sector • Better use of the regional airport • Access to Federal Lands timber • Specialized manufacturing clusters • Access to freshwater • Natural resources and environment • Entrepreneurial support • Increasing number of incubators and seed accelerators • Increase Regional collaboration • Capitalization of educated active retiree population • Strong work ethic • Municipal airports • Amtrak stop
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited broadband • Roads limits for heavy transportation • Unprepared future workforce • Lack of skilled labor for specialties • Lack of knowledge of manufacturing careers • Distance to major markets • Limited freight rail access in North • High dependence on traditional manufacturing industries • Waste disposal/ solid waste issues • Declining young population • Aquatic/ natural and terrestrial invasive species • Lack of national forest access for timber cutting • Lower wages for workers • Availability of diverse affordable housing options • Lack of public transit 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow population growth • Shrinking workforce • Unprepared workforce • Low wages result in low quality workers • Aging population • Manufacturing dependency • Paper manufacturing dependency • Lack of diversity in industries • Shortage of older woods supply • Shrinking manufacturing workforce • Aquatic and terrestrial invasive species • Declining water quality • Lack of creative industry clusters • Decreasing population under 17 • Aging/ retiring workforce • Growing healthcare costs • Brain drain, threat of people not moving back after receiving education • Funding for entrepreneurial, small, and midsize businesses

VI. Regional Economic Strategy

Economic development is pursued by many communities and organizations throughout the Region with the overall goals of expanding the regional economy, increasing employment levels, and increasing tax base. Much of this work requires collaboration and partnerships with the various economic development organizations, state and federal agencies, local and county governments and the business community of the Region. The goal of the CEDS is to provide a general framework for communities throughout the Region as they work toward these goals.

To help accomplish this, the following strategy was developed during the preparation of the CEDS Update. It is reviewed annually as part of the CEDS Performance Report.

Goals and Objectives:

Goal 1: Encourage business retention and expansion to maintain and increase employment opportunities in the Region.

Objectives:

1. Expand communication with existing businesses to identify opportunities and challenges.
2. Improve the Region's competitiveness by assessing and leveraging industry clusters.
3. Educate businesses on different grant and funding opportunities available.
4. Encourage and promote business education on exporting opportunities.

Goal 2: Create an innovative atmosphere to foster an entrepreneurially supportive environment.

Objectives:

1. Diversify the Region's economy by fostering the development of emerging industry sectors, including preparing a regional assessment.
2. Identify, create and promote programs, activities, and policies fostering innovation and new business reducing the risk for entrepreneurs.
3. Identify resources and build a website to provide information
4. Promote a culture of entrepreneurial and innovative business development.
5. Promote and encourage the development of new business incubators throughout the Region.
6. Develop the connection between the creative industries and economic development.
7. Identify and study "place-making" opportunities to improve public spaces.
8. Establish a link between educational institutions and business development.

9. Support start-up and small businesses with training, market research, financial assistance, strategic planning and other assistance.

Goal 3: Promote and attract new business to the Region.

Objectives:

1. Work with local governments, Regional partners and the state to assist with the attraction of new businesses to the area.
2. Recruit new businesses and industries that complement existing clusters, and place special emphasis on higher wage clusters.
3. Diversify the Region's economy fostering the development of emerging and evolving industry clusters.
4. Make prudent use of government incentives to enhance business development in the Region.

Goal 4: Encourage the reuse of existing commercial and industrial sites for more sustainable economic development.

Objectives:

1. Ensure that building and development codes and plans within the Region promote and facilitate the redevelopment of existing structures and infill development.
2. Continue to assess, remediate, and redevelop brownfield sites throughout the Region, taking full advantage of federal and state funding opportunities.
3. Work to increase the number of key, viable businesses and institutions in the downtown districts of our communities.
4. Maintain and enhance infrastructure and public facilities throughout the Region.

Goal 5: Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce prepared to meet the needs of both existing and emerging industries and technologies.

Objectives:

1. Work with North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development to provide training to workers of all ages and economic strata to ensure they are current in existing and emerging skills, knowledge, ability and expectations.
2. Increase the number of 4-year high school completions in the Region.
3. Increase the number of associates and 4-year degrees in the Region.
4. Develop entrepreneurial training and education at area high schools, technical colleges, and universities.

5. Work with businesses, K-12 Schools, Higher Education (both 2-and 4-years programs) and Workforce Development to determine and develop skill sets.
6. Enhance business-specific leadership skills in young professionals
7. Develop a plan to retain and attract a young workforce.
8. Develop a mentor program for older workers to work with new workforce.
9. Develop a training program for retiring workforce to help develop a “second career”.

Goal 6: Meet the full range of business’ infrastructure needs with emphasis on transportation, utilities and communications.

Objectives:

1. Work with WISDOT to plan for, develop and maintain the capacity of the Region’s transportation system.
2. Continue to support upgrades and repair of existing roadways.
3. Expand utility and transportation links to serve areas where they are needed for job growth.
4. Develop a reliable data infrastructure using both wireless and high-speed fiber optic networks, especially in north sub-Region.
5. Support efforts to maintain and expand freight rail in the Region.
6. Work with Central Wisconsin Airport and the Rhinelander /Oneida County Airport to expand cargo and passenger service in the Region.
7. Explore commuter and passenger rail service to the Region.

Goal 7: Promote and increase communication between Regional and county economic development, workforce development and other organizations.

Objectives:

1. Collaborate with local, county, economic development organization, surrounding regional planning commissions, state and federal agencies, as well as private business on economic development goals, objective and activities.
2. Create a unified vision of Regional growth and development needs for the Region.
3. Increase communication and collaboration at the Regional level about land use and transportation planning as it relates to economic development.
4. Coordinate economic development efforts among all entities to provide a seamless approach to maintain and diversify the Regional economy.
5. Establish and maintain partnerships to promote economic development for North Central Wisconsin.

VII. Regional Performance Indicators

In an effort to monitor change over time, these ten indicators have been established. These will be examined in the CEDS Update. These are listed in no particular order:

1. Total regional population, including age by cohorts
2. Total regional employment
3. Total regional business establishments
4. Regional unemployment
5. Regional employment per sector
6. Regional Location Quotient changes
7. Regional Per Capita & Median Household Income
8. Regional education levels for high school, associates, and bachelor's degrees
9. Broadband access and reliability (area change)
10. Acreage available for industrial/businesses development

VIII. NCWRPC Action Plan

Below is the current Action Plan to guide the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The following section provides a brief summary of tasks that the NCWRPC will undertake alone or in support of members, as resources permit, to support the overall goals of the CEDS:

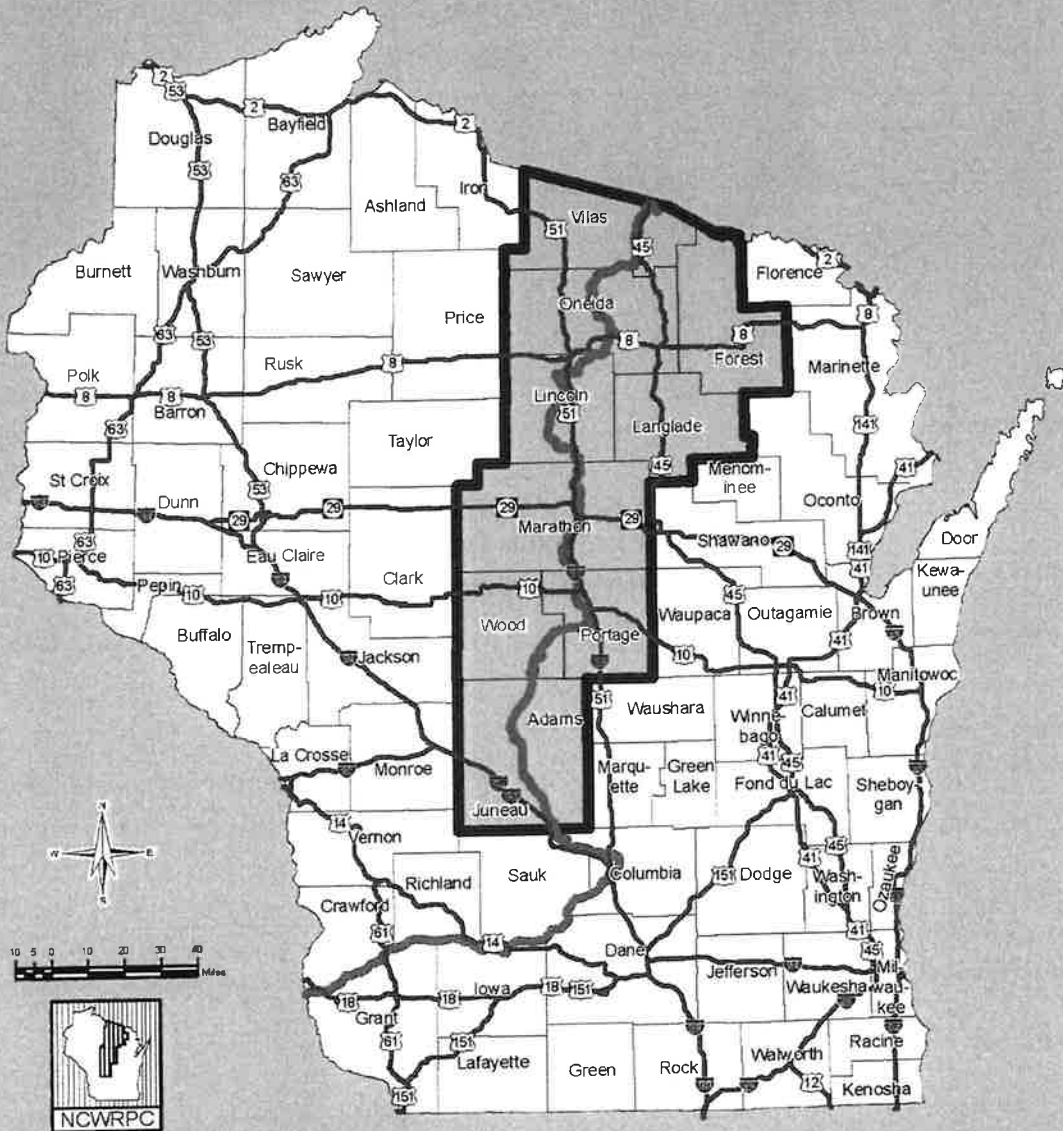
NCWRPC Strategy	
Goal 1. Encourage business retention and expansion to maintain and increase employment opportunities in the Region.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Prepare Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy/Annual Performance Reports.	Annually
Attend member County Economic Development Corporation's meetings to provide updates on CEDS and NCWRPC assistance.	Ongoing
Update comprehensive plan Economic Development Chapters to incorporate CEDS goals locally.	Ongoing
Provide Regional demographic information using Lightcast (formerly EMSI) and other data to complete economic analysis.	Ongoing
Update County Economic Development Profiles.	Occasionally
Assist the North Central Wisconsin Development Corporation and other existing loans funds in the area to support local business development.	Ongoing
Provide assistance to members as needed. Explore WEDC, WHEDA, DOA, EDA, USDA-RD and other grant opportunities to complete plans/projects.	Ongoing
Assist local development corporation staff, county ED committees, and regional economic development groups.	Ongoing
Encourage and assist preparation of county and local economic development strategies.	Ongoing
Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses.	Ongoing
Encourage and assist start-up of firms in the Region.	Ongoing

Goal 2. Create an innovative atmosphere to foster an entrepreneurially supportive environment.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Assist local communities prepare and update comprehensive plans and other related plans.	Ongoing
Assist preparing “downtown” and “place-making” plans as part of a Quality of Place/Life efforts.	Ongoing
Support area business incubators and prepare feasibility studies for new business incubators.	Ongoing
Goal 3: Promote and attract new business to the Region.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Research and identify new business grant opportunities with DOA, WEDC, WHEDA, USDA, and EDA.	Ongoing
Maintain an inventory and map of business parks, including available acreage within the Region.	Ongoing
Support communities in the recruitment of new businesses to the Region.	Ongoing
Research and identify emerging clusters in the Region and state.	Ongoing
Goal 4: Encourage the reuse of existing commercial and industrial sites for more sustainable economic development.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Assist Brownfield planning efforts to assist communities.	Ongoing

Utilize GIS mapping to identify brownfields in the Region as requested.	Ongoing
Continue to support the Wisconsin's Regional Planning Commission Brownfields program with the Wisconsin DNR.	Ongoing
Pursue grant opportunities from federal agencies, such as EDA, EPA and USDA, and state programs, such as DNR and WEDC.	Ongoing
Goal 5: Ensure the future availability of a skilled and flexible workforce prepared to meet the needs of both existing and emerging industries and technologies.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Support the efforts of and collaborate with the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Technical Colleges, 2 and 4-year Colleges and Universities.	Ongoing
Provide data related to employment characteristics and needs.	Ongoing
Encourage educational institutions to develop training programs needed by the area's businesses.	Ongoing
Encourage educational institution and job training centers to offer "second" career training options.	Ongoing
Work with various organizations to create a plan to attract and retain young professionals in the Region.	On-going
Goal 6: Meet the full range of business' infrastructure needs with emphasis on transportation, utilities and communications.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Maintain a listing of all business/industrial parks in the Region.	Ongoing
Promote telecommunications/broadband infrastructure and other technology development and expansion in the Region.	Ongoing
Work with CWA and Rhinelander/Oneida County Airport as needed.	Ongoing

Assist efforts of the Northwood Rail Commission.	Ongoing
Goal 7: Promote and increase communication between Regional and county economic development, workforce development and other organizations.	
Tasks	Timeframe
Attend local and county economic development corporation meetings to discuss EDA and NCWRPC assistance.	Ongoing
Attend regional economic group meetings, and related.	Ongoing
Attend meetings/conferences/ webinars with various state and federal agencies and other organizations.	Ongoing

North Central Wisconsin



North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
Annual Performance Report

**NORTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
RESOLUTION 2024-1**

ADOPTING COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS)
2024 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

WHEREAS, the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (NCWRPC) has identified economic development as a regional concern; and

WHEREAS, the NCWRPC has been actively involved in economic development planning and received Federal "designation" as an Economic Development District (EDD) in April 1979; and

WHEREAS, the NCWRPC previously updated its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) in 2021; and

WHEREAS, annually the NCWRPC reviews progress made related to the CEDS; and

WHEREAS, adoption of the 2024 Annual Performance Report by NCWRPC resolution confirms its commitment to supporting the CEDS; and

THEREFORE, NOW BE IT RESOLVED: that the NCWRPC adopts the 2024 *Comprehensive Economic Development Annual Performance*; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the NCWRPC continues its work as an Economic Development District as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) pursuant to Title IV of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended.

Adopted this 31st day of January 2024.

Paul Millan, Chairperson

Ron Nye, Secretary/Treasurer