Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Central location with interstate access to most of the United States • Resources, educational institutions, and care facilities that contribute to the region's quality of life • Low cost of living compared to similar metropolitan areas • Progressive Healthcare System (2023) • Transportation systems modification to meet changing market needs (i.e., CVG expanding cargo capacity) waiting for information from CVG to expand this element (2023) • Access to utilities including broadband, natural gas, cellular services, water, wastewater • "Business Friendly" region • Regional collaboration and alignment of all development partners	• Attainable and income-aligned housing for all • Minimal cultural variety • Limited public transportation throughout the region • Access to quality early childhood education • Labor costs • Limited skilled workforce causing labor shortages • Entrepreneurship investment opportunities
Opportunities	Threats
• Workforce housing with proximity to workforce hubs • Attracting and retaining diverse populations • Additional social interactive opportunities for all ages • Creating a sense of place through natural resources, outdoor recreation, and community resources • Addressing redevelopment needs for all employers in each community • Provide additional training and upskilling opportunities to meet employment needs • Improved access to quality early childcare and early childhood education • Improved performance of K-12 schools • Access to alternative fuels and clean energy • Aligning educational opportunities with employers needs to create a trained and skilled workforce. (2023) • Improving digital inclusion in the region (2023)	• Aging infrastructure • Shrinking population (2023) • Limited infrastructure to support sustainable development outside the I-275 corridor (2023) • Ever-changing talent/workforce needs make solutions a challenge • Decreasing the overall percentage of jobs that offer a self-sustaining wage • Exodus of educated and trained workforce • Limited attainable housing choices • Limited healthcare and mental healthcare services • Inadequate quality childcare to support workforce development • Lack of shovel-ready developable industrial sites • Prevalence of substance use disorder • Underutilizing brownfield sites for redevelopment (2023)

SWOT analysis elements in italics have been added for the 2025 Northern Kentucky CEDS update. Analysis elements added in previous years are indicated with the year after the element.

Vision Statement: The Northern Kentucky Economic Development District will collaborate with its eight-counties and 52 municipalities to increase economic growth capacity and foster impactful economic development through successfully implementing strategic initiatives that improve the quality of life for everyone in the region.

Goal 1: Promote a Globally Competitive Region
1. Collaborate to attract and retain companies
2. Encourage entrepreneurship and small to medium size company growth throughout the region
3. Implement a multilayer regional strategy to attract and retain skilled talent
4. Encourage renewable energy use
5. Advocate for attraction and retention through an equity lens

Goal 2: Enhance Regional Infrastructure
1. Improve the safety and mobility of common methods of transportation
2. Increase traffic into local transportation ports traffic (Air, water, and rail)
3. Expand infrastructure to meet the growing use of alternative and sustainable transportation
4. Provide infrastructure to meet regional public transportation needs
5. Ensure Northern Kentucky's water systems meet and exceed all regulations
6. Address critical infrastructure needs that could hinder economic growth

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities
1. Sensible redevelopment and infill development
2. Promote environmental stewardship
3. Foster community vibrancy through recreational and attraction development
4. Acknowledge the importance of celebrating the region's agricultural roots
5. Advocate for continuous improvement of PK-12 schools to meet state and national criteria
6. Encourage community planning through placemaking

Goal 4: Embrace All People
1. Incorporate nontraditional educational opportunities into the workforce pipeline
2. Emphasize the importance of available affordable and attainable housing
3. Encourage accessible healthcare
4. Ensure access to early childhood learning opportunities
5. Reduce barriers to services and resources for all in need
6. Increase income self-sufficiency

Evaluation Framework

Items in italics have been added to the 2025 Northern Kentucky CEDS update. Items added in previous years are shown in gray.

Goal 1: Promote a Globally Competitive Region				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
1. Collaborate to attract and retain companies	• Address hinderances to development • Promote regional business attraction • Intentional approach to "best use" industrial development	Economic Development Agencies, Port Authorities, Local Government, Planning Organizations	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *BE NKY released the report "Navigating Change & Charting a Course to a More Competitive Northern Kentucky."* • *The OneNKY Alliance annual summit, "Changing it Up in OneNKY: A Systemic Focus on Excellence," convened representatives from the eight Northern Kentucky counties and key industry leaders to discuss strategies for attracting tech companies and fostering innovation in the region.* • *Kenton County Fiscal Court, in partnership with the Northern Kentucky Port Authority and Planning & Development Services of Kenton County, updated its Site Readiness Initiative and created a development plan for two focus areas within Southwest Kenton County.* • *The "Bridging Back Business" initiative was launched to revitalize the economies of the Cities of Dayton, Bellevue, Newport, Covington, and Fort Thomas following a fire that closed the I-471 bridge connecting Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati.* • *Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG) opened the first development at its Global Logistics Park.* • *Boone County Fiscal Court adopted Our Boone County 2045, which includes the planning and building of new and infill residential developments and guides land use and development throughout unincorporated Boone County and the Cities of Florence, Union, and Walton.* • *Kenton County Fiscal Court adopted the Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Planning and Development Services of Kenton County (PDS) and approved by the Kenton County Planning Commission (KCPC).*

Goal 1: Promote a Globally Competitive Region				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• *The NKY narrative for business, tourism, and talent attraction was created through the collaboration of MeetNKY, BE NKY, and the NKY Chamber.* *oing* • *CVG 2050 Master Plan focuses on continued air cargo growth.* • *Groups such as the Northern Kentucky Port Authority, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Kenton County Fiscal Court, City of Covington, and private developers collaborate to leverage Northern Kentucky's strategic advantages, including lower business costs and robust infrastructure, and use various incentives, such as tax credits and grant reimbursement programs, to attract and retain biomedical research companies.* • *Pendleton County Fiscal Court Office of Economic Development is a participant in the 2025 Duke Energy Site Readiness Program for the Commonwealth Commerce Center industrial park located south of Falmouth.* • *Per MeetNKY, tourism supports close to 13,000 jobs in Northern Kentucky.* • *MeetNKY is utilizing the NKY narrative, developed in collaboration with BE NKY and the NKY Chamber, for business, tourism, and talent attraction.* • *OneNKY Alliance launched its "OneNKY Building Community Unity" initiative to focus on resident pride and present a unified narrative that reflects who we are and where we aspire to go, together as a community.* • *The Campbell County and Municipal Planning and Zoning Commission is preparing a new comprehensive plan that covers unincorporated Campbell County and the Cities of Crestview, Silver Grove, Melbourne, Southgate, and Woodlawn.* 2024 Ongoing • Establishment of a joint House and Senate Workforce Attraction and Retention Task Force to study how Kentucky should address workforce shortages

Goal 1: Promote a Globally Competitive Region				
Action Step	**Performance Metric**	**Responsible Entities**	**Update Frequency**	**Status**
				• The Northern Kentucky Port Authority works to identify, control, prepare, and promote sites for subsequent private commercial and industrial development and redevelopment that exceed community employment and wage targets with projects that include the OneNKY Center and SparkHaus. • CVG 2050 Master Plan focuses on continued air cargo growth • Kenton Co Fiscal Court – Southwest Kenton Co Site Readiness Initiative to create a new primary industry site readiness initiative • County Planning Agencies are conducting major Comprehensive Plan updates with a focus on future development • Pendelton County Fiscal Court hired an economic development and tourism director to lead the county's economic development efforts. 2023 Ongoing through local economic development organizations • Re-establish the Northern Kentucky Port Authority to identify, control, prepare, and promote sites for subsequent private commercial and industrial development and redevelopment that exceed community employment and wage targets. • CVG 2050 Master Plan focuses on continued air cargo growth • Kenton Co Fiscal Court – Southwest Kenton Co Site Readiness Initiative to create a new primary industry site readiness initiative
2. Encourage entrepreneurship and small to medium size company growth throughout the region	• Support initiatives for existing industries, small businesses, and entrepreneurs with a combination of funding and growth initiatives	Blue North, Main Street Ventures, Aviatra Accelerators	Semiannually	*2025* *Completed* • *The City of Covington completed the Madison Avenue Streetscape corridor project, with new sidewalks, gutters, traffic signals, lighting, pavement resurfacing, and relocation of above-ground utilities to below-ground between 8th Street and 11th Street to enhance transportation efficiency and support local businesses.* • *The Duke Energy Foundation and Blue North sponsored the 2024 NKY Small Business Grants program to allocate $1,000 to $10,000 to businesses with 50 or fewer employees.* *oing*

Goal 1: Promote a Globally Competitive Region				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• *Blue North and its entrepreneurship partners are collaborating to grow businesses in the region.* • *Redevelopment continues of the Simms Building as SparkHaus business incubator; eGateway Partners is the first tenant.* • *Duke Energy and the NKY Chamber partnered to provide $45,000 in grants to small businesses in Northern Kentucky.* • *The City of Covington's Small Business Program helps fledgling businesses with first-year rent and façade improvements of commercial buildings.* • *Owen County Chamber of Commerce launched a small business grant program.* 2024 Ongoing • Blue North and entrepreneurship partners are working together to grow businesses in the region • Located in Covington, Blue North is one of six innovation hubs across the commonwealth that support entrepreneurs and high-tech, high-growth-potential startups by leveraging the region's unique strengths. As an innovation hub, Blue North serves 17 counties across northern Kentucky. • SparkHaus received support from the 2024 KY General Assembly for an entrepreneurship hub in Covington to serve the region. 2023 Ongoing • Blue North and entrepreneurship partners are working together to grow businesses in the region
3. Implement a multilayer regional strategy to attract and retain skilled talent	• Partner with higher education to align with targeted business and industry sectors to ensure a qualified, trained workforce	Economic Development Agencies, Workforce Development Partners, Educational	Quarterly	*2025* *Completed* • *The "Home for All: Northern Kentucky Housing Strategies" outlines 50 strategies to address the region's housing shortage. The report was released by a coalition of over 90 community leaders and experts led by NKADD and Brighton Center/Brighton Properties.*

Goal 1: Promote a Globally Competitive Region				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
	• Consult with employers to understand and address their employment needs • Create employment pipelines to keep graduates in the region • Create self-sustaining employment opportunities for those underemployed or with hinderances to employment through training and upskilling	Institutions, Local Government, Planning Organizations		• *The "Corridor of Commerce in the Heartland" white paper was written by eGateway Capital and released by OneNKY Alliance* • *Kenton County Fiscal Court, Northern Kentucky Port Authority, Northern Kentucky University, and the University of Kentucky secured funding from the Kentucky General Assembly in the 2024 biennial budget for the Commonwealth Center for Biomedical Excellence in Covington, which will house the Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law and the University of Kentucky College of Medicine's Northern Kentucky campus.* *Ongoing* • *NKY Works continues as a regional workforce development initiative to provide a single point of contact for employers to find data, best practices, partners, and resources that enable them to attract, grow, and retain talent.* • *The Kentucky Chamber continues to provide Talent Pipeline Management to convene businesses, provide talent solutions, and improve collaboration.* • *NKY Chamber provides "College Community Connections," Young Professionals, and Encounter NKY programs for rising talent.* • *The Talent Relocation Task Force, formed by the NKY Chamber and NKY Works, explores strategies to attract and retain new talent.* • *The Northern Kentucky Accountability Group at the Kenton County Public Library is a job search support group for professionals in career transition.* • *CVG is implementing a regional aviation development plan to engage regional economic development strategies to support the aviation ecosystem.* • *Enzweiler Building Institute at the Building Industry Association of Northern Kentucky offers an apprenticeship model trade school for working adults, has introduced a 13-week afternoon program in collaboration with the Life Learning Center, and offers the Intro to Trades program for high school students. These programs are designed to serve as a pathway to career advancement and economic mobility for adults throughout the region.*

Goal 1: Promote a Globally Competitive Region				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				4 Completed • Based at CVG, the Epic Flight Academy program trains students to become FAA-certified airframe and powerplant (A&P) aviation mechanics Ongoing • NKYWorks launch in 2024 provides new governance and funding around existing and new workforce development initiatives. • Talent Pipeline Management and the NKY Chamber to better understand employee needs • NKY Regional Housing Data Analysis/Study • NKY Chamber "College Community Connections," Young Professionals, and Encounter NKY programs for rising talent • Talent Relocation Task Force formed by NKY Chamber and NKY Works to explore strategies to attract & retain new talent • One NKY Alliance Corridor of Commerce • CVG is implementing a regional aviation development plan to engage regional economic development strategies to support the aviation ecosystem • Expansion of Kentucky's public universities in the region (Northern Kentucky University and the University of Kentucky) 2023 Completed • Workforce governance study completed (GROW NKY) • Pillar metrics established by GROW NKY to foster future workforce development Ongoing • Workforce governance recommendations implementation (GROW NKY) • Talent Pipeline Management and the NKY Chamber to better understand employee needs • NKY Regional Housing Data Analysis/Study • NKY Chamber "College Community Connections" program

Goal 1: Promote a Globally Competitive Region				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• One NKY Alliance Corridor of Commerce • CVG is implementing a regional aviation development plan to engage regional economic development strategies to support the aviation ecosystem
4. Encourage renewable energy use	• Increase opportunities to access renewable energy sources	Local Government, Planning Organizations, Utility Companies	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *Duke Energy added solar power facilities in Kenton County and Amazon's facility at CVG.* *Ongoing* • *NKADD, counties, and cities continue research and seek grant opportunities.* • *The Rumpke landfill in Pendleton County is recapturing energy and putting it back into the power grid.* • *Duke Energy is playing a leading role in the development of small modular nuclear reactors, citing its direct work with another company's reactor and energy storage program (carbon plan).* 2024 Ongoing • Continue to look for and research grant opportunities • The Rumpke landfill in Pendleton County is recapturing energy and putting it back into the power grid • Duke Energy - playing a leading role in the development of small modular nuclear reactors, citing its direct work with another company's reactor and energy storage program (carbon plan) 2023 Completed • CVG 2023 Energy and Sustainability Master Plan outlines achieving net-zero carbon emissions, supporting and promoting Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), and developing a reporting framework Ongoing • Continue to look for and research grant opportunities • The Rumpke landfill in Pendleton County is recapturing energy and putting it back into the power grid

Goal 1: Promote a Globally Competitive Region				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• Duke Energy - playing a leading role in the development of small modular nuclear reactors, citing its direct work with another company's reactor and energy storage program (carbon plan)
5. Promote attraction and retention through a fairness perspective.	• Prioritize creating a community to incorporate inclusion	Economic Development Agencies, Workforce Development Partners, Educational Institutions, Local Government	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *BE NKY released the report "Navigating Change & Charting a Course to a More Competitive Northern Kentucky."* • *The NKY narrative for business, tourism, and talent attraction was created through the collaboration of MeetNKY, BE NKY, and the NKY Chamber.* • *Pounds of Plastic opened a new manufacturing facility in Owenton by leasing a building purchased by the Owen County Industrial Development Cooperation using Community Development Block Grant funds through the Owen County Fiscal Court. Pounds of Plastic has created at least 39 jobs for Owen County residents, with at least 51% being LMI.* • *Brighton Center received a $300,000 grant to support sustainable employment through a three-pronged approach focusing on skills, credentials, and career pathways for individuals in recovery.* • *The Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy (NKYODCP) received its second $1M award from KYOAAC (Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Committee) for continued funding of the NKY CAREs Program, which supports a "No Wrong Door" approach to entering treatment and recovery, expediting treatment, after-care, employment assistance, and transportation services.* *...oing* • *Nonprofit partners, such as Fiesta and Kentucky Refugee Ministries, provide individuals with resources to gain sustainable employment.* • *NKY Chamber hosts a quarterly Inclusive Business Strategies event series for businesses committed to enhancing their talent pool, driving innovation, and gaining a competitive advantage through diversity.* • *NKWIB and NKY Works partners continue to work at attracting and retaining new talent to the region.* • *The City of Covington employment programs connect disadvantaged*

Goal 1: Promote a Globally Competitive Region				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				residents with employment opportunities. • *Gateway Community and Technical College's Gateway Adult Education ESL Program is expanding to a second location.* • *The Talent Relocation Task Force, formed by the NKY Chamber and NKY Works, explores strategies to attract and retain new talent.* • *MeetNKY is utilizing the NKY narrative, developed in collaboration with BE NKY and the NKY Chamber, for business, tourism, and talent attraction.* • *United Way of Greater Cincinnati supports local non-profit organizations that provide workforce development and support services specifically for underserved populations, aiming to increase their access to skilled jobs and improve retention.* 2024 Ongoing • Nonprofit partners, such as Fiesta and Kentucky Refugee Ministries, provide individuals with resources to gain sustainable employment • NKWIB and NKY Works partners continue to look at attracting and retaining new talent to the region • BE NKY and MeetNKY formalizing a regional identity to help with attraction and retention to the region 2023 Ongoing • NKWIB and GROW NKY partners continue to look at attracting and retaining new talent to the region • BE NKY and MeetNKY formalizing a regional identity to help with attraction and retention to the region

Goal 2: Enhance Regional Infrastructure				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status

1. Improve the safety and mobility of common methods of transportation	• Improve roadways, bridges, and interchanges to increase safety and mobility, mitigate congestion and open up areas for development
	• Support construction projects to reduce daily interstate traffic congestion (I-275 interchanges, I-75 bridges, interchanges, and exits, and I-71 lane limitations)
	• Support construction projects on state routes to improve accessibility and safety concerns (KY 8 infrastructure, KY 25 widening, KY 536 extension, KY 2345 extension and *cross county port to the port corridor*)
		Local Government, Planning Organizations	Yearly	*2025*
				Completed
				• *The Kentucky Department of Transportation opened a new Highway District 6 office that serves the Northern Kentucky region. District 6 staff coordinate all aspects of road development from planning, design, and right-of-way purchasing to administering construction contracts.*
				• *The City of Florence created a Transportation Improvement District.*
				• *The OKI Board of Directors adopted the update to OKI's 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The Plan Update serves as a blueprint for transportation projects in our region through the year 2050.*
				• *The City of Newport and Boone County Fiscal Court undertook traffic signal synchronization projects to reduce congestion and improve safety.*
				Ongoing
				• *NKADD, through the Safe Streets for All Grant, is developing a Safety Action Plan for Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen, and Pendleton counties.*
				• *Kentucky Industrial Access and Safety Improvement (KIASI) grant funding:*
				  ○ *Soil stabilization of two switch tracks from industrial parks in Florence, Boone County.*
				  ○ *Soil stabilization of railroad roadbeds for mainline track in Grant County.*
				• *Boone County Fiscal Court is updating the county transportation plan.*
				• *KY Transportation Cabinet, through the I-75/I-275 Interchange Scoping Study, is working to identify and evaluate options to reduce congestion, improve travel safety, and promote better connectivity.*
				• *KY 2024 Transportation (Construction and Preconstruction) Budget contains projects to improve safety, mobility, and operation throughout NKY, including I-75, I-71, I-275, I-471, US 42, US 25, US 27, KY 22, and KY 536.*
				• *The Purple People Bridge Company is working collaboratively with the Cities of Newport and Cincinnati, and regional public, private, and*

Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				philanthropic communities to maintain, preserve, and enhance the bridge for public multi-modal transportation and creative placemaking, with the repainting and lighting of the bridge as a regional asset and destination. • *The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's SHIFT (Strategic Highway Investment Formula for Tomorrow) is a data-driven approach to prioritize roadway projects based on safety, asset management, congestion relief, and economic development across the state. This includes the highest prioritized projects within the 8 NKADD counties of Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen, and Pendleton.* 2024 Ongoing • Submission of Boone County and NKADD's "Safe Streets for All" planning grants • KY Transportation Cabinet is conducting a 75/275 interchange corridor study to address transportation needs and reduce congestion issues within the corridor • KY 2024 Transportation (Construction and Preconstruction) Budget contains projects to improve the safety, mobility, and operation throughout NKY, including I-75, I-71, I-275, I-471, US 42, US 25, US 27, KY 22, KY 536 • The Purple People Bridge Company is working collaboratively with the Cities of Newport and Cincinnati as well as the regional public, private, and philanthropic community to maintain, preserve, and enhance the bridge for public multi-modal transportation and creative placemaking with the repainting and lighting up the bridge as a regional asset and destination. 2023 Ongoing • Submission of Boone County and NKADD's "Safe Streets for All" planning grants • KY Transportation Cabinet is conducting a 75/275 interchange

Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				corridor study to address transportation needs and reduce congestion issues within the corridor
2. Increase traffic into local transportation ports traffic	• Ensure current available flights and future passenger flight development meet local demand • Maintain current projected air cargo growth through the development of critical infrastructure and supportive resources • Encouraged the continued use of river docks and terminals to move goods into and through our region • Assist employers along active rail lines transport materials into and out of the region	Local Government, Planning Organizations, *Airport Authorities (Kenton County Airport Board/CVG Airport)*, Northern Kentucky Port Authority, Economic Development Agencies	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *NKADD updated the NKY Coordinated Regional Transit Plan and released the NKY Coordinated Transit Study with OKI Mobility Management grant funding. The documents provide a comprehensive framework for enhancing mobility and coordination among transportation providers across the NKADD region.* • *Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport (CVG) opened the first development at its Global Logistics Park.* *...oing* • *CVG continues to increase the number of non-stop and international flights.* • *NKADD, BAWAC, TANK, and Owen County Public Transit meet regularly to discuss how to implement the suggestions of the NKY Coordinated Transit Study.* • *Governor Andy Beshear announced $1.6 billion in funding for the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project. In addition to the new bridge, this project includes upgrades to 8 miles of approaches, interchanges, and infrastructure, significantly impacting the region's transportation network.* • *Continuing to upgrade the Gallatin County Regional Airport.* • *Planning for a new box hanger with rotating floor and an expanded concrete apron at the Gene Snyder Airport, Pendleton County, continues* • *NKADD, the eight Northern Kentucky counties, and transportation providers are implementing the NKY Regional Coordinated Transit Study recommendation to offer transportation services across need-based programs while eliminating duplication of services, improving service efficiency, and lowering operating costs.* 2024 Ongoing • CVG continues to increase the number of non-stop and international

Goal 2: Enhance Regional Infrastructure				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				flights. • The NKADD Safe Streets for All Grant is continuing, including holding data collection training so each county can collect data to incorporate into the Action Plan. • In partnership with OKI, the Mobility Management grant to complete the NKADD Regional Transportation Plan is in the data collection phase and is scheduled to be completed by the project's consultant, Benesch, by the beginning of Fall 2024. 2023 Completed • Gallatin Co Regional Airport opened in June 2023 to provide regional aviation services to communities along the I-71 corridor. Ongoing • What is going on with the Carroll Co port? • CVG continues to increase the number of non-stop and international flights.
3. Expand infrastructure needs to meet the growing use of alternative and sustainable transportation	• Work to create infrastructure to support electric vehicles and vehicles fueled by hydrogen • *Expand the current bicycle lanes system to increase safe passage throughout the region*	Local Governments, State Cabinets, Utility Companies	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *TANK completed its current round of upgrading its fleet with hybrid units.* • *The Cities of Covington and Newport adopted their first joint Bicycle Transportation Plan.* • *Governor Andy Beshear unveiled the 2024 Recommended Highway Plan, which includes significant investments in electric vehicle charging stations and improvements to bike lanes and pedestrian pathways.* *Ongoing* • *Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) continues to seek build-out certification across its AFC network, which within the NKADD region includes I-71, I-75, and I-275.* • *Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) is working on the next phases of Kentucky's Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Deployment Plan to leverage National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Funds. With possible funding within the NKADD region, similar to the first phase.*

Goal 2: Enhance Regional Infrastructure

Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				Various organizations and businesses, including Boone County Public Library, Meijer, Northern Kentucky University, Ovation Project, Enterprise, CVG, and the City of Covington, have added EV infrastructure. 2024 Completed • National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program funds were awarded for the construction of 4 charging stations (Crestview Hills, Florence, Sparta, and Walton) Ongoing • Continue to support the Southeast Hydrogen Hub coalition, including Duke Energy and LG&E/KU, as they build on existing infrastructure utilizing technologies to advance the production, storage, transport, and delivery of hydrogen • Make ready credit for EV and tariff • DUKE Energy has started to replace aging gas lines to meet the needs of alternative transportation • TANK is expanding its hybrid bus fleet 2023 Ongoing • The City of Covington and CVG were awarded funding to install EV charging stations. • Included in the Southeast Hydrogen Station proposal. • Make ready credit for EV and tariff • DUKE Energy has started to replace aging gas lines to meet the needs of alternative transportation • TANK is expanding its hybrid bus fleet
4. Provide infrastructure to meet regional public transportation needs	• Provide public transportation options in rural communities • Provide public transportation solutions for seniors, those with	Local Governments, Community Service Agencies, Public Transportation Authorities	Semiannually	*2025* *Completed* • *NKADD updated the NKY Coordinated Regional Transit Plan and released the NKY Coordinated Transit Study with OKI Mobility Management grant funding. The documents provide a comprehensive*

Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
	disabilities, and those with hinderances to employment in the workforce • Develop an alternative solution for quick access along the I-75/71 corridor			*framework for enhancing mobility and coordination among transportation providers across the NKADD region.* • *TANK modified routes to employment hubs.* oing • *Governor Andy Beshear announced $1.6 billion in funding for the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project. In addition to the new bridge, this project includes upgrades to 8 miles of approaches, interchanges, and infrastructure, significantly impacting the region's transportation network.* • *TANK Plus, provides on-demand, curb-to-curb transportation or connection to a TANK fixed route transfer point.* • *TANK Regional Area Mobility Program (RAMP) offers door-to-door paratransit service to disabled citizens in Boone, Campbell, and Kenton counties who are unable to use TANK's fixed-route bus service.* • *NKADD, BAWAC, TANK, and Owen County Public Transit meet regularly to discuss how to implement the suggestions of the NKY Coordinated Transit Study.* • *Owen County Public Transit (OCPT) operates on-demand transportation services in Owen, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Boone, Kenton, Campbell, and Pendleton counties.* • *Carroll County Wellness Transportation (CCWT) transports community members lacking alternative transportation.* • *The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's SHIFT (Strategic Highway Investment Formula for Tomorrow) is a data-driven approach to prioritize roadway projects based on safety, asset management, congestion relief, and economic development across the state. This includes the highest prioritized projects within the 8 NKADD counties of Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen, and Pendleton.* 2024 Ongoing • NKADD has received a new planning grant for public transit in southern counties. • Modifying TANK routes to employment hubs

Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• TANK piloting a "micro-transit" approach to provide door-to-door transportation in new areas 2023 Ongoing • NKADD has received a new planning grant for public transit in southern counties. • Modifying TANK routes to employment hubs
5. Ensure Northern Kentucky water systems meet and exceed all regulations	• Replace aging infrastructure ○ *Create a mapping platform for all water and sewer utilities, including age, materials, and repair history. (Use this to develop a coordinated rehabilitation upgrade plan coordinated with the transportation project.)* • Expand services throughout the region as needed • Address changing regulatory requirements • Implement long-term sustainability measures • *Coordinate utilities repairs/replacements with road improvement and repaving projects* • Provide affordable services.	Water Utilities, Wastewater/Stormwater Utilities, Local Governments	Semiannually	*2025* *Completed* • *Per federal mandate, water utilities inventoried all drinking water service lines with a focus on lead service pipes.* • *Water districts used an App to detail where lead lines are located.* • *The Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet implemented the EPA's final PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulation to regulate six PFAS in drinking water.* • *The Northern Kentucky Water Management Council (WMC) has developed a regional priority list of projects.* • *The Northern Kentucky Water Management Council (WMC) provided information on Kentucky Rural Water's Registered Apprenticeship Program to support the workforce talent pipeline to fill water system employment opportunities.* *Ongoing* • *NKADD monitors for new regulations and funding availability.* • *NKADD, counties, cities, and water utilities seek funding to replace lead water lines.* • *NKADD, counties, cities, and water utilities seek funding to extend lines into unserved areas.* • *There are 13 water and wastewater projects under construction. Projects include water main extensions, treatment plant improvements, water loss reduction, meter replacement, and sewer system improvements and extensions.* • *Utilities are planning Water Treatment Plan upgrades to address PFAS regulations.*

Goal 2: Enhance Regional Infrastructure				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• *The Northern Kentucky Water Management Council (WMC) has begun work on completing Asset Inventories.* 2024 Ongoing • Per federal mandate, inventorying all drinking water service lines with a focus on lead service pipes ○ Working to find funding to replace the lines • Monitoring new regulations and funding availability • Creating a workforce talent pipeline to fill water system employment opportunities • Work continues to secure remaining funding to complete the Carrollton Utilities Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion. 2023 Ongoing • Working to find funding to replace the lines • Monitoring new regulations and funding availability • Creating a workforce talent pipeline to fill water system employment opportunities
6. Address critical infrastructure needs that could hinder economic growth	• Replace aging infrastructure • Develop action plans to address critical infrastructure needs throughout the region • Upgrade aging attraction and facility infrastructure (Covington Convention Center, General Butler State Park) • Ensure fairness in providing reliable broadband service to	Local Governments, Community Service Partners, Utility Companies, Economic Development Agencies	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *The City of Covington completed the Madison Avenue Streetscape corridor project, with new sidewalks, gutters, traffic signals, lighting, pavement resurfacing, and relocation of above-ground utilities to below-ground between 8th Street and 11th Street to enhance transportation efficiency and support local businesses.* *Ongoing* • *United Way of Greater Cincinnati has prioritized digital inclusion for all and has provided funding through a new Digital inclusion Grant Program.* • *Broadband expansion increased with support from the Kentucky Office of Broadband Development. Boone, Carroll, and Gallatin Counties received $2.5 million from KY BEAD (Broadband Equity Access and*

	everyone.			*Deployment Program) for 2,730 unserved locations.* • *Working together, local governments and non-profits have created an NKY regional "wish list" of projects.* • *Northern Kentucky Water District continues its water main replacement program.* • *The City of Covington launched "Covington Connect" to expand access to free public Wi-Fi.* • *Governor Andy Beshear announced $1.6 billion in funding for the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project. In addition to the new bridge, this project includes upgrades to 8 miles of approaches, interchanges, and infrastructure, significantly impacting the region's transportation network.* • *There are 13 water and wastewater projects under construction. Projects include water main extensions, treatment plant improvements, water loss reduction, meter replacement, and sewer system improvements and extensions.* • *The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's SHIFT (Strategic Highway Investment Formula for Tomorrow) is a data-driven approach to prioritize roadway projects based on safety, asset management, congestion relief, and economic development across the state. This includes the highest prioritized projects within the 8 NKADD counties of Boone, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen, and Pendleton.* 2024 Ongoing • Working together, local governments and non-profits have created NKY regional "wish list" projects • Broadband expansion through the region has increased with support from the state • United Way of Greater Cincinnati has prioritized digital inclusion for all • After sustaining damage in December 2022, the General Bulter State Park Restaurant and Lodge has been repaired and updated. • Work continues to secure remaining funding to complete the Carrollton Utilities Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion.

Goal 2: Enhance Regional Infrastructure				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• The City of Covington, Southbank Partners and Kenton County Planning and Development Services are collaborating to create an inventory of aging infrastructure to understand the infrastructure update needs of the river cities. 2023 Ongoing • SD1 continues to update and submit its decent decree • Working together, local governments and non-profits have created NKY regional "wish list" projects • Broadband expansion through the region has increased with support from the state • United Way of Greater Cincinnati has prioritized digital inclusion for all

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
1. Sensible redevelopment and infill development	• Support urban core development (IRS redevelopment, Covington Convention Center, Riverfront Commons, Downtown Restoration Projects) • Encourage infill development and redevelopment in suburban and rural communities (Neighborhood Commercial Districts and Main Streets) • Monitor redevelopment of aging/declining	Economic Development Agencies, Local Government, Planning Organizations, Community Development Agencies, Catalytic Fund	Bi-annually	*2025* *Completed* • *Boone County Fiscal Court adopted Our Boone County 2045, which includes the planning and building of new and infill residential developments and guides land use and development throughout unincorporated Boone County and the Cities of Florence, Union, and Walton.* • *Kenton County Fiscal Court adopted the Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Planning and Development Services of Kenton County (PDS) and approved by the Kenton County Planning Commission (KCPC).* • *The "Home for All: Northern Kentucky Housing Strategies" outlines 50 strategies to address the region's housing shortage. The report was released by a coalition of over 90 community leaders and experts led by NKADD and Brighton Center/Brighton Properties.* *Ongoing* • *Redevelopment continues of the Simms Building as SparkHaus business incubator; eGateway Partners is the first tenant.*

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
	neighborhoods to lessen the potential of gentrification			• *The City of Covington's Small Business Program helps fledgling businesses with first-year rent and façade improvements of commercial buildings.* • *Southbank Partners is working with the Cities of Ludlow, Covington, Newport, Bellevue, Dayton, Fort Thomas, Silver Grove, Southgate, Highland Heights, and Wilder on specific corridor studies within each of the cities to evaluate future redevelopment and investment opportunities.* • *Ovation Project: A $1 billion multi-use development in Newport, covering 25 acres at the intersection of the Ohio and Licking Rivers. It includes over 1,000 residential units, 500,000 square feet of office space, multiple hotels, 150,000 square feet of retail and entertainment space, and surface and underground parking.* • *Central Covington Riverfront: A 23-acre redevelopment project transforming the former IRS processing center into a mixed-use site with offices, homes, hotels, and retail shops, along with significant public infrastructure improvements.* o *Included in this redevelopment project is the Commonwealth Center for Biomedical Excellence, which will house the Northern Kentucky University Salmon P. Chase College of Law and the University of Kentucky College of Medicine's Northern Kentucky Campus, and funded by the Kentucky General Assembly's 2024 biennial budget and secured by Kenton County Fiscal Court, Northern Kentucky Port Authority, Northern Kentucky University, and the University of Kentucky.* • *Brent Spence Bridge Project: Governor Andy Beshear announced $1.6 billion in funding for the Brent Spence Bridge Corridor Project. In addition to the new bridge, this project includes upgrades to 8 miles of approaches, interchanges, and infrastructure, significantly impacting the region's transportation network.* • *OneNKY Center: A new building that will house Northern Kentucky's major growth organizations, fostering collaboration and economic development in the region.*

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• *The expansion and enhancement of Riverfront Commons, a planned 20-mile scenic multi-use path from Devou Park to Pendery Park along the Ohio River.*
				• *The Campbell County and Municipal Planning and Zoning Commission is preparing a new comprehensive plan that covers unincorporated Campbell County and the Cities of Crestview, Silver Grove, Melbourne, Southgate, and Woodlawn.*
				• *Promoting regional brownfield programs, including the City of Covington, Kenton County, and Carroll County.*
				• *Revitalization of Downtown Carrollton and Williamstown.*
				2024 Ongoing
				• Redevelopment has started for a mixed-use development on the old Covington IRS site.
				• Redevelopment within the Mall Road Corridor in Florence
				• Mixed-use development of 25 acres in Newport (Ovation)
				• Continuing to promote the regional brownfield program, including programs in the City of Covington and Carroll County
				• Redevelopment of the Simms Building as SparkHaus business incubator
				• Revitalization of Downtown Carrollton and Williamstown
				• Use the 2023 Northern Kentucky Housing Data Study to create a housing playbook to provide guidance on creating housing opportunities throughout the region
				• Southbank Partners is working with the Cities of Ludlow, Covington, Newport, Bellevue, Dayton, Fort Thomas, Silver Grove, Southgate, Highland Heights, and Wilder on specific corridor studies within each of the cities to evaluate future redevelopment and investment opportunities.
				2023 Ongoing
				• *Continuing to promote the regional brownfield program, including programs in the City of Covington and Carroll County*

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				Redevelopment of the Simms Building as an incubator *Revitalization of Downtown Carrollton and Williamstown*
2. Promote environmental stewardship	• Conservation of natural resources	Local Governments, Conservation Agencies	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *The Cities of Covington and Newport adopted their first joint Bicycle Transportation Plan.* • *The Kentucky General Assembly created the Ohio River Recreation Authority (KORRA).* *Ongoing* • *Collaborate with Green Umbrella, a public policy group, to create environmental stewardship policies and changes.* • *The Rumpke landfill in Pendleton County is recapturing energy and putting it back into the power grid.* • *Duke Energy Foundation supports community impact by funding tree plantings, trail development, and philanthropic initiatives in the community.* • *Local County Extension Offices work with landowners and environmental organizations to promote stewardship.* • *The Ohio River Way works to conserve and preserve the waterway, surrounding areas, and the viewshed, as well as promoting economic development, recreation, education, and tourism.* • *The Cincinnati Off-Road Alliance (CORA) and Tri-State Trails collaborate to maintain and promote sustainable trail use in natural areas across Northern Kentucky, encouraging responsible recreation and conservation of these resources.* • *The County Conservation District offices promote environmentally responsible practices by offering educational programs and workshops on topics such as stormwater management, soil health, and native plant landscaping.* • *The City of Erlanger continues to develop Eons Adventure Park (formerly known as Greenway at Dry Creek), a 1000-acre multi-functional park designed to attract tourists and provide recreational opportunities for residents.*

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				2024 Ongoing • Collaborate with Green Umbrella, a public policy group, to create environmental stewardship policies and changes • DUKE Energy Foundation continues to support community impact by funding tree plantings, trail development and philanthropic community • Local County Extension Offices are working with landowners and environmental organizations to promote stewardship throughout the region • The Ohio River Way works to conserve and preserve the waterway, surrounding areas and the viewshed and promote economic development, recreation, education, and tourism. Creation of Kentucky Ohio River Recreation Authority (KORRA) by Kentucky General Assembly • Creation of new The NKY Trail Fund was established with Horizon Community Funds, in partnership with the Cincinnati Off-Road Alliance and Tri-State Trails. • Creation of the Greenway at Dry Creek, an interactive park from Erlanger to the Ohio River. 2023 Ongoing • Green Umbrella is a public policy group focused on environmental stewardship • ACI • DUKE Energy Foundation continues to support community impact by funding tree plantings, trail development and philanthropic community • Local County Extension Offices are working with landowners and environmental organizations to promote stewardship throughout the region • The Ohio River Way works to conserve and preserve the waterway, surrounding areas and the viewshed and promote economic development, recreation, education, and tourism.

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
3. Foster community vibrancy through recreational and attraction development	• Promote access to parks, rivers, and trails (Grant County Heritage Trail Project, Licking River Blue Water Trail (Paddling Trail) including access points, Licking River Greenway, Northern KY Greenline natural surface trails, multi-use cross-county trails, Riverfront Commons) • Promote regional attractions locally, regionally, nationwide, and internationally • Expand outdoor recreation opportunities through development (disc golf, wayfinding/ signage, regional and state parks) • Continued investment in arts/culture (Ark Development, Bourbon Trail (tasting rooms)) • Invest in family-focused projects (pools, large sports facilities)	Local Governments, Convention and Visitor Bureaus, Chamber of Commerce	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *The National Park Service designated Big Bone Lick State Historic Site as a National Historic Landmark. The state park is one of only 16 in the United States to possess National Historic Landmark and National Natural Landmark status.* • *America's River Roots Festival, October 8 through 12, 2025, celebrated the country's 250th anniversary and the food, music, and culture of the Ohio River Valley.* • *The City of Newport created a new website, Meet on Monmouth, and a monthly business spotlight to attract more attention and increase foot traffic to Monmouth Street.* • *The NKY narrative for business, tourism, and talent attraction was created through the collaboration of MeetNKY, BE NKY, and the NKY Chamber.* • *The Kentucky General Assembly created the Ohio River Recreation Authority (KORRA).* *Ongoing* • *MeetNKY is utilizing the NKY narrative, developed in collaboration with BE NKY and the NKY Chamber, for business, tourism, and talent attraction.* • *The City of Erlanger continues to develop Eons Adventure Park (formerly known as Greenway at Dry Creek), a 1000-acre multi-functional park designed to attract tourists and provide recreational opportunities for residents.* • *The Ohio River Way works to conserve and preserve the waterway, surrounding areas, and the viewshed, as well as promoting economic development, recreation, education, and tourism.* • *The expansion and enhancement of Riverfront Commons, a planned 20-mile scenic multi-use path from Devou Park to Pendery Park along the Ohio River.* • *The City of Covington, partnering with the Carnegie Visual and Performing Arts Center, The Center for Great Neighborhoods, ArtsWave, and the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation, is*

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status

				undertaking a national design competition to install a landmark piece of art at a prominent location in the developing Covington Central Riverfront neighborhood.
				• *The B-Line (Bourbon Line) continues to bring visitors and international recognition to the region while adding new distilleries.*
				• *The Cincinnati Off-Road Alliance (CORA) and Tri-State Trails collaborate to maintain and promote sustainable trail use in natural areas across Northern Kentucky, encouraging responsible recreation and conservation of these resources.*
				• *Discussions started about creating the KY River Water Trail in Owen and Carroll counties.*
				
				2024
				Ongoing
				• Redevelopment of the region's riverfronts
				  ○ Southbank Partners is working with the Cities of Ludlow, Covington, Newport, Bellevue, and Dayton on redeveloping their riverfronts and marketing the entire NKY riverfront into one area, "Riverfront Commons." Riverfront Commons is a world-class active destination that connects people through a 20-mile greenway along the Ohio River.
				    ▪ Southbank Partners secured funding for a USDOT RAISE grant for this project.
				  ○ In partnership with ReNewport, the City of Newport received a technical service grant from the National Parks Services Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program for General James Taylor Park.
				• The B-Line continues to bring visitors and international recognition to the region while adding new distilleries.
				• Expansion of the Ohio River Way program
				• Revitalization of community parks, including the City of Glencoe's JuJu Sullivan Playground,
				• BE NKY and MeetNKY formalizing a regional identity

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				2023 Ongoing • Southbank Partners' new USDOT RAISE grant will connect seven cities within the urban core through 20 miles of multi-use paths (Riverfront Commons). • The B-line continues to bring visitors and international recognition to the region while adding new distilleries. • Expansion of the Ohio River Way program • BE NKY and MeetNKY formalizing a regional identity
4. Acknowledge the importance of celebrating the region's agricultural roots	• Increase access to fresh food • Support projects that promote alternative uses of the region's agricultural products • Support non-traditional research to introduce new agricultural products to the area • Agritourism	Local Governments, Extension Offices	Bi-annually	*2025* *Ongoing* • *Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs.* • *Agricultural extension agents serving Northern Kentucky work with local farmers to explore and potentially introduce new specialty crops.* • *Local restaurants and producers create Farm to Table events.* • *UK extension offices' countywide farm tours.* • *Increased agritourism opportunities include Benton Farms, Kidman Farms, and Sugar Ridge Farms.* • *The County Conservation District offices promote environmentally responsible practices by offering educational programs and workshops on topics such as stormwater management, soil health, and native plant landscaping.* 2024 Ongoing • Local restaurants and producers creating Farm to Table events • UK extension offices' countywide farm tours • Increased number of agritourism opportunities include Benton Farms, Kidman Farms, Sugar Ridge Farms 2023 Ongoing • Local restaurants and producers creating Farm to Table events • UK extension offices' countywide farm tours • Converted industrial facility into a vertical farming facility (80 Acres)

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• Increased number of agritourism opportunities include Benton Farms, Kidman Farms, Sugar Ridge Farms
5. Promote continuous improvement of PK-12 schools to meet state and national criteria	• Partner with community stakeholders to ensure local schools meet all requirements	Educational Institutions, Community Service Partners, Educational Partners (Northern Kentucky Education Council, Northern Kentucky Educational Cooperative)	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *BE NKY, under its Community Competitive Initiative, hosted, in conjunction with the NKY Chamber, "Bridging Futures – Career Development & Education for a Thriving Business Community" that brought together education and business leaders on how local businesses can get involved with helping students from kindergarten through 12th grade get early exposure to local industries and trades, explore different career paths, and engage in real-world experiences that bring learning to life.* *ｎｇoing* • *Collaborations with regional educational non-profits, such as NKCES "Co-op," NKY Education Council, EducateNKY, NKY Works, I-Lead, and CS71, to better prepare students.* • *Elevate discussions of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities in high school.* • *Ignite Institute is Kentucky's first STEAM-focused high school specializing in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. Located in Boone County, the school is also available to Kenton County students.* • *Educate NKY aims to align policies and develop innovative education strategies.* • *Northern Kentucky University's College of Education partners with local school districts to provide research-based professional development.* 2024 Ongoing • Collaborations with regional educational non-profits, such as NKCES "Co-op" NKY Education Council, EducateNKY, NKY Works, I-Lead and CS71, to better prepare students. • Elevate discussions of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities in high school o Assisting Carrollton Utilities in the creation of an apprenticeship program through

Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				the Kentucky Rural Water Association • Ignite Institute – high school with hands-on learning and real-life experiences 2023 Ongoing • Collaborations with regional educational non-profits, such as NKCES "Co-op" NKY Education Council. GROW NKY Pillar 2, I-Lead and CS71, to better prepare students. • Educate NKY by aligning policies and developing innovative education strategies. • Ignite Institute – high school with hands-on learning and real-life experiences
6. Encourage community planning through placemaking	• Work together to improve the quality of life by realizing the importance of public services, community publications, a friendly environment, and better everyday conveniences.	Community Service Partners	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *BLINK, the nation's largest art and projection mapping festival, was held for four nights in the urban core of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.* • *Boone County Fiscal Court adopted Our Boone County 2045, which includes the planning and building of new and infill residential developments and guides land use and development throughout unincorporated Boone County and the Cities of Florence, Union, and Walton.* • *Kenton County Fiscal Court adopted the Comprehensive Plan prepared by the Planning and Development Services of Kenton County (PDS) and approved by the Kenton County Planning Commission (KCPC).* *oing* • *City of Covington Quality of Place grants, from $1,000 to $30,000, support creative, place-based projects to improve neighborhoods that align with the city's Economic Development Department's strategic focus on "Experiencing Covington."* • *The City of Covington, partnering with the Carnegie Visual and Performing Arts Center, The Center for Great Neighborhoods, ArtsWave, and the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation, is*

Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				undertaking a national design competition to install a landmark piece of art at a prominent location in the developing Covington Central Riverfront neighborhood. • *Initiatives by Southbank Partners and MeetNKY to create regional destinations and experiences.* • *The Purple People Bridge Company is working collaboratively with the Cities of Newport and Cincinnati, and regional public, private, and philanthropic communities to maintain, preserve, and enhance the bridge for public multi-modal transportation and creative placemaking, with the repainting and lighting of the bridge as a regional asset and destination.* • *The expansion and enhancement of Riverfront Commons, a planned 20-mile scenic multi-use path from Devou Park to Pendery Park along the Ohio River.* • *River cities' efforts attract and drive populations to the region.* • *The Campbell County and Municipal Planning and Zoning Commission is preparing a new comprehensive plan that covers unincorporated Campbell County and the Cities of Crestview, Silver Grove, Melbourne, Southgate, and Woodlawn.* • *Local community newspapers and online publications, such as the NKY Tribune and LINK nky, highlight local events, community initiatives, and public service announcements.* • *MeetNKY and ArtsWave announced a new partnership designed to increase cultural vibrancy in Northern Kentucky (NKY) through art and creative placemaking.* • *OneNKY Alliance launched its "OneNKY Building Community Unity" initiative to focus on resident pride and present a unified narrative that reflects who we are and where we aspire to go, together as a community.* 2024 Ongoing • Quality place grants in Covington to improve neighborhoods. • Initiatives by Southbank Partners and MeetNKY to create regional

Goal 3: Foster Healthy and Vibrant Communities				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				destinations and experiences • The Purple People Bridge Company is working collaboratively with the Cities of Newport and Cincinnati as well as the regional public, private, and philanthropic community to maintain, preserve, and enhance the bridge for public multi-modal transportation and creative placemaking with the repainting and lighting up the bridge as a regional asset and destination. • The expansion of Riverfront Commons, a planned 20-mile scenic multi-use path from Devou Park to Pendery Park along the Ohio River, was announced. • River cities' efforts attract and drive populations to the region. • County Planning Agencies are conducting major Comprehensive Plan updates with a focus on future development • MeetNKY, along with the NKY Chamber of Commerce, BE NKY Growth Partnership, and OneNKY Alliance, have been working to create an external narrative for the NKY Regional Identity that creates a brand identity for the region, including a tourism standpoint, a business attraction standpoint, and a talent development standpoint, along with quality of life. 2023 Ongoing • Quality place grants in Covington to improve neighborhoods. • Initiatives by Southbank Partners and MeetNKY to create regional destinations and experiences • River cities' efforts attract and drive populations to the region.

Goal 4: Embrace All People				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
1. Incorporate nontraditional educational	• Utilize all educational opportunities to create a skilled workforce	Trade Associations, School Districts	Yearly	*2025* *Completed*

Goal 4: Embrace All People				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
opportunities into the workforce pipeline	(Building Industry Association/ Enzweiler Building Institute, area technology centers, vocational training, satellite campus, charter schools)			• *The Northern Kentucky Water Management Council (WMC) provided information on Kentucky Rural Water's Registered Apprenticeship Program to support the workforce talent pipeline to fill water system employment opportunities.* • *Thomas More University expanded its online learning platform to include certificate programs in project management and digital marketing, providing flexible learning options for working adults.* • *NKU launched its 3 States, 1 Rate tuition model for new undergraduate students from Kentucky, Ohio, and Indiana.* *Ongoing* • *Elevate discussions of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities in high school.* • *Continued expansion of dual-credit opportunities for high school students to gain college credits and shorten the time/cost of associate degrees and higher, including NKU, Thomas More University, and Gateway Community and Technical College.* • *Gateway Community and Technical College, through open enrollment, provides leadership and technical skills training that utilizes existing funding sources, thus reducing employers' costs.* • *Northern Kentucky University offers micro-credential courses in data analytics and cybersecurity, designed to upskill workers and meet industry demands.* • *Enzweiler Building Institute at the Building Industry Association of Northern Kentucky offers an apprenticeship model trade school for working adults, has introduced a 13-week afternoon program in collaboration with the Life Learning Center, and offers the Intro to Trades program for high school students. These programs are designed to serve as a pathway to career advancement and economic mobility for adults throughout the region.* • *Cincinnati State Technical and Community College operates a vocational school at CVG to train aviation technicians.* 2024 Completed • Based at CVG, the Epic Flight Academy program trains students to become FAA-certified airframe and powerplant (A&P) aviation mechanics

Goal 4: Embrace All People				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				Ongoing • NaviGo partnerships with local schools to provide the YouScience assessment and the My Career E3 employment database. Grant received through Kentucky WIOA Statewide Reserve to fund ongoing YouScience reporting. • Elevate discussions of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship opportunities in high school • Continued expansion of dual-credit opportunities for high school students to gain college credits and shorten the time/cost of associate degrees and higher • Gateway Community and Technical College, through open enrollment, has created leadership and technical skills training that utilizes existing funding sources, thus reducing the cost for employers 2023 Completed • Heritage Trades Academy receives increased funding • Building Industry Association – Enzweiler Institute expands programs and adds location Ongoing • NaviGo partnerships with local schools to provide the YouScience assessment and the My Career E3 employment database
2. Emphasize the importance of available income aligned and attainable housing	• Preserve and expand the supply of income aligned units to meet demand • Expand attainable housing in proximity to employment hubs • Support alternative housing opportunities for those most vulnerable	Local Governments, Housing Authorities, Community Service Providers, Economic Development Agencies	Semiannually	*2025* *Completed* • *The "Home for All: Northern Kentucky Housing Strategies" outlines 50 strategies to address the region's housing shortage. The report was released by a coalition of over 90 community leaders and experts led by NKADD and Brighton Center/Brighton Properties.* *Ongoing* • *Incorporation of non-traditional housing stock to meet demand.* • *United Way of Greater Cincinnati launched a public awareness campaign highlighting the need for income aligned housing and encouraging community support for new housing initiatives.* 2024 Completed

Goal 4: Embrace All People				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• With the help of a grant from Interact for Health, Brighton Center Properties and the NKADD created a housing playbook with a menu of options to assist elected officials, shareholders and developers in decision-making related to housing Ongoing • Incorporation of non-traditional housing stock to meet demand • Use the recently completed housing playbook to inform and educate local leaders on the menu of options to address the regional housing needs 2023 Competed • Completion of NKY Regional Housing Study • Churchill Downs/Turfway incorporated onsite housing for backside workers Ongoing • Incorporation of non-traditional housing stock to meet demand • With the help of a grant from Interact for Health, Brighton Center Properties and the NKADD are working together using the housing study as a guide on the next steps related to housing
3. Encourage accessible healthcare	• Support adequate healthcare facilities • Expand healthcare and mental healthcare for the most vulnerable populations • Ensure diverse healthcare options throughout the region • Empower families to make informed healthcare decisions, including easy access, existing health concerns	Healthcare Providers, Community Service Partners, Local Governments	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *The Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy (NKYODCP) received its second $1M award from KYOAAC (Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Committee) for continued funding of the NKY CAREs Program, which supports a "No Wrong Door" approach to entering treatment and recovery, expediting treatment, after-care, employment assistance, and transportation services.* *going* • *The Lift Up program creates a one-stop job training and transition to employment for Northern Kentucky individuals in treatment for SUD (Substance Use Disorder). Lift Up is a partnership of St. Elizabeth, Life Learning Center, and NKWIB. Lift Up participants work on increasing independence and productivity by participating in pre-vocational training, substance use treatment, and transitional services to*

Goal 4: Embrace All People				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
	and long-term care options.			*employment.* • *Welcome House launched a pilot program, in partnership with FwdSlash, to expand housing and medical access to 3,000 individuals and 170 families by providing innovative social services and healthcare education.* • *TANK Plus, provides on-demand, curb-to-curb transportation or connection to a TANK fixed route transfer point.* • *TANK Regional Area Mobility Program (RAMP) offers door-to-door paratransit service to disabled citizens in Boone, Campbell, and Kenton counties who are unable to use TANK's fixed-route bus service.* • *NKADD, the eight Northern Kentucky counties, and transportation providers are implementing the NKY Regional Coordinated Transit Study recommendation to offer transportation services across need-based programs while eliminating duplication of services, improving service efficiency, and lowering operating costs.* • *Gallatin County Fiscal Court is adding a pharmacy to the existing Gallatin County Health with CDBG grant funding.* 2024 Ongoing • Lift Up is a partnership with St. Elizabeth, Life Learning Center, Brighton Center, and NKADD that provides those in recovery a no-wrong-door approach to employment • Expansion of rural county pharmacies to meet the needs of each community • Gallatin County Fiscal Court was awarded a CDBG grant to add a pharmacy to the existing Gallatin County Health Clinic. 2023 Ongoing • Lift Up is a partnership with St. Elizabeth, Life Learning Center, Brighton Center, and NKADD that provides those in recovery a no-wrong-door approach to employment • Expansion of rural county pharmacies to meet the needs of each community

Goal 4: Embrace All People				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
4. Ensure access to early childhood learning opportunities	• Provide access to quality childcare • Connect childcare opportunities to employment hubs	Local School Districts, Community Service Partners	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *United Way of Greater Cincinnati expanded its "Success by 6" initiative, providing additional funding and resources to early childhood centers to improve access and quality of care.* • *Brighton Center opened a new early childhood learning center in Newport, offering affordable childcare and educational programs for low-income families.* *Ongoing* • *EC LEARN (Early Childhood Learning Education Assessment Resource Network provides critical early childhood education resources to families, early childhood professionals, and employers in 12 Northern Kentucky counties (Boone, Bourbon, Campbell, Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Harrison, Kenton, Owen, Nicholson, Pendleton, and Scott).* • *Northern Kentucky University offers an early childhood education program to train more educators to meet the growing demand for quality early learning.* • *NKY Works Early Childhood Education focus area addresses three challenges critical to providing a vibrant early-childhood environment: Employer Incentives, Child Care Industry Talent Attraction and Retention, and Workforce Talent Attraction and Retention.* • *The Boone County Public Library, the Kenton County Public Library, the Pendleton County Library, Grant County Schools, Owen County Community Foundation, Gallatin County Family Resource, and Family Ties Resource Center (Carroll County) are Dolly Parton Imagination Library participants.* • *The Campbell County Imagination Library is a cooperative effort of the Campbell County Public Library, Campbell County Schools, and the independent school districts in Bellevue, Dayton, Fort Thomas, and Newport.* 2024 Completed • Enactment of the Certified Child Care Community Designation Program to help increase the supply of childcare and early childhood

				education services Ongoing • EC Learn partnership with CVG Airport to understand childcare needs on their campus and explore how to address them. • NKY Works focus area developed Early Childhood Education metrics. 2023 Completed • EC Learn continues to champion the importance of increased-quality childcare options. Ongoing • EC Learn partnership with CVG Airport to understand childcare needs on their campus and explore how to address them. • GROW NKY Pillar 1 developed Early Childhood Education metrics.
5. Reduce obstacles to services and resources for all in need	• Empower all residents to seek out assistance • Provide services and resources to those in need	Healthcare Providers, Community Service Partners, Local Governments	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *NKADD updated the NKY Coordinated Regional Transit Plan and released the NKY Coordinated Transit Study with OKI Mobility Management grant funding. The documents provide a comprehensive framework for enhancing mobility and coordination among transportation providers across the NKADD region.* • *NKADD, with funding from Horizon Community Funds, released the "Food Insecurity" report and data dashboard.* • *Brighton Center received a $300,000 grant to support sustainable employment through a three-pronged approach focusing on skills, credentials, and career pathways for individuals in recovery.* • *United Way of Greater Cincinnati expanded its 211 helpline services, providing more comprehensive support and resources for individuals and families in need, resulting in a 15% increase in calls and assistance.* *Ongoing* • *Community-based non-profits, such as Safety Net Alliance, Emergency Cold Shelter, and food pantries, work together to serve those in need.* • *Nonprofit partners, such as Fiesta and Kentucky Refugee Ministries, provide individuals with resources to gain sustainable employment.*

Goal 4: Embrace All People

Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				NKADD, the eight Northern Kentucky counties, and transportation providers are implementing the NKY Regional Coordinated Transit Study recommendation to offer transportation services across need-based programs while eliminating duplication of services, improving service efficiency, and lowering operating costs. *The City of Covington employment programs connect disadvantaged residents with employment opportunities.* *Welcome House launched a pilot program, in partnership with FwdSlash, to expand housing and medical access to 3,000 individuals and 170 families by providing innovative social services and healthcare education.* *NKADD, BAWAC, TANK, and Owen County Public Transit meet regularly to discuss how to implement the suggestions of the NKY Coordinated Transit Study.* *The City of Covington launched "Covington Connect" to expand access to free public Wi-Fi.* *United Way of Greater Cincinnati has prioritized digital inclusion for all and has provided funding through a new Digital inclusion Grant Program.* *TANK Plus, provides on-demand, curb-to-curb transportation or connection to a TANK fixed route transfer point.* *TANK Regional Area Mobility Program (RAMP) offers door-to-door paratransit service to disabled citizens in Boone, Campbell, and Kenton counties who are unable to use TANK's fixed-route bus service.* 2024 Ongoing • Community-based non-profits, such as Safety Net Alliance, Emergency Cold Shelter, and food pantries, work together to serve those in need • Dramatic increase of state-appropriated funding in programming through Life Learning Center to support recovering/formerly incarcerated individuals • NKADD and counties work to find transportation solutions to assist those in need to get to their medical appointments • The City of Covington has created employment programs to connect

Goal 4: Embrace All People				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				disadvantaged residents with employment opportunities 2023 Completed • Boone County Homelessness Task Force Study Ongoing • Community-based non-profits, such as Safety Net Alliance, Emergency Cold Shelter, and food pantries, work together to serve those in need • NKADD and counties work to find transportation solutions to assist those in need to get to their medical appointments • The City of Covington has created employment programs to connect disadvantaged residents with employment opportunities
6. Increase income self-sufficiency	• Work with employers to create policies related to Reentry/second-chance employment • Raise entry-level salary/wages	Chamber of Commerce, Workforce Development Board, Community Services Partners	Bi-yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *The Northern Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy (NKYODCP) received its second $1M award from KYOAAC (Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Committee) for continued funding of the NKY CAREs Program, which supports a "No Wrong Door" approach to entering treatment and recovery, expediting treatment, after-care, employment assistance, and transportation services.* • *Pounds of Plastic opened a new manufacturing facility in Owenton by leasing a building purchased by the Owen County Industrial Development Cooperation using Community Development Block Grant funds through the Owen County Fiscal Court. Over the years, Pounds of Plastic has created at least 39 jobs for Owen County residents, with at least 51% being LMI.* *Ongoing* • *The Lift Up program creates a one-stop job training and transition to employment for Northern Kentucky individuals in treatment for SUD (Substance Use Disorder). Lift Up is a partnership of St. Elizabeth, Life Learning Center, and NKWIB. Lift Up participants work on increasing independence and productivity by participating in pre-vocational training, substance use treatment, and transitional services to employment.*

Goal 4: Embrace All People				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• Expanding Naloxone access and training in Northern Kentucky. *• The NKADD Employment Connections (KY Works) program increased the number of adults receiving TANF and SNAP referred to education, employment, and work-based learning programs.* *• Gateway Community and Technical College continues to offer short-term training programs in high-demand sectors like advanced manufacturing and healthcare.* *• Organizations like the Life Learning Center in Kenton County continued their programs that provide training and support services to individuals re-entering the workforce after incarceration.* *• United Way of Greater Cincinnati supports local non-profit organizations that provide workforce development and support services specifically for underserved populations, aiming to increase their access to skilled jobs and improve retention.* *• Enzweiler Building Institute at the Building Industry Association of Northern Kentucky offers an apprenticeship model trade school for working adults, has introduced a 13-week afternoon program in collaboration with the Life Learning Center, and offers the Intro to Trades program for high school students. These programs are designed to serve as a pathway to career advancement and economic mobility for adults throughout the region.* 2024 Ongoing • Lift Up is a partnership with St. Elizabeth, Life Learning Center, Brighton Center, and NKADD that provides those in recovery a no-wrong-door approach to employment • The NKADD Employment Connections (KY Works) program is seeing an increase in referrals to get more adults receiving TANF and SNAP connected to education, employment, and work-based learning. 2023 Completed • Kenton Fiscal Court has a Recovery Grant with Transitions Ongoing

Goal 4: Embrace All People				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• The NKY Office of Drug Control Policy has been certified as a Recovery Ready Community by the Commonwealth, along with receiving $1M to expand treatment and recovery infrastructure in NKY. • Lift Up is a partnership with St. Elizabeth, Life Learning Center, Brighton Center, and NKADD that provides those in recovery a no-wrong-door approach to employment • The NKADD Employment Connections (KY Works) program is seeing an increase in referrals to get more adults receiving TANF and SNAP connected to education, employment, and work-based learning.

Economic Resilience

2025 Update – Economic Resilience

Over the past year, the NKADD has continued to strengthen regional resilience through collaboration with various community stakeholders, elected officials, and regional industries.

- As part of a regional effort to enhance mobility and access to opportunity, the NKADD completed the Coordinated Transit Plan, which outlines strategies to improve mobility across the region. By identifying ways to better connect residents to jobs, education, and essential services, the plan supports workforce participation and economic inclusion, both key components of economic resilience.
- NKADD's Community Development Planning team has partnered with local governments, the EPA, and the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet to improve water quality infrastructure throughout the region. Reliable, clean water systems are critical to business retention, public health, and sustainable growth.

Through these and other regionally focused initiatives, NKADD continues to support collaboration and strategic alignment across Northern Kentucky to ensure residents and communities are prepared for disruptions and positioned to grow resilient, together.

2024 Update – Economic Resilience

Over the last year, the NKADD partnered with a number of community stakeholders, elected officials and regional non-profits to better understand the preparedness of our communities.

- In partnership with the Kentucky Office of Energy, the NKADD Community Development Planning team submitted an energy resilience plan to help jurisdictions, employers and community lifelines address backup power needs in cases of natural and man-made disasters.
- Led by OneNKY Alliance, a collaboration of key regional leaders and organizations, work started on creating a unified community vision and strategic alignment of top goals.
- After a hiatus, the Northern Kentucky Economic Development Group started meeting monthly to share information, best practices and make connections within the regional business community.

2023 Update – Economic Resilience

The NKADD staff spent 2023 revising the multi-jurisdictional Regional Northern Kentucky Hazard Mitigation Plan. The eight counties included in the Northern Kentucky CEDS are the same eight counties

in the Northern Kentucky Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. As staff worked on the hazard mitigation plan, the plan's goals, objectives, and a number of the plan's actions identified how mitigation efforts are connected and related to economic resilience. For the 2023 CEDS Update, staff incorporated additional touchpoints into the NKY CEDS's Strategies for Economic Resiliency.

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) states, "CEDS provides a critical mechanism to help identify regional vulnerabilities and prevent and respond to economic disruptions. Therefore, embracing economic resilience must be a key component of the CEDS document." The EDA recognizes that the prosperity of a regional economy depends on the region's ability to withstand, prevent, and quickly recover from significant disruptions or shocks to its economic base. An economic shock may be in the form of economic shifts or changes within the local, state, and federal economic base or a natural or man-made hazard (environmental hazard).

Although the term resilience can be defined in multiple contexts, in the context of economic resilience, it can be defined as the ability to:

- recover quickly from a shock
- withstand a shock
- avoid a shock altogether

Often, the shocks/disruptions to the economic base of a region are impacted in three ways:

- Downturns or other significant events in the national or international economy which impact demand for locally produced goods and consumer spending
- Downturns in particular industries that constitute a critical component of the region's economic activity
- Other external shocks such as natural or man-made disasters; environmental hazards; exit of a major employer; etc.

Using FEMA's National Risk Index (NRI), the Northern Kentucky region has very low to low exposure to national hazards[17]. Kenton County is the only county that is at moderate risk.

Overall National Risk Index Rating

Boone	Low
Campbell	Low
Carroll	Very Low
Gallatin	Very Low
Grant	Very Low
Kenton	Moderate
Owen	Very Low
Pendleton	Low

Source: National Economic Resilience Data Explorer

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[17] https://www.anl.gov/dis/nerde-economic-development-district-dashboard

Possible Disruption

Northern Kentucky identified high to moderate natural hazards, including flooding, thunderstorms/hail/straight-line winds, tornadoes, severe winter storms and landslides. In addition, there is a possibility that the region could be affected by the aftermaths of large hurricane systems and earthquake aftershocks from the New Madrid Fault line.

The COVID-19 pandemic illustrated how the region could pivot to continue to provide services and meet community needs during unexpected disruption. In addition, the lessons learned during the beginning of the pandemic have created stronger resiliency plans for local governments, community stakeholders, educational institutions, and businesses.

Strategies for Economic Resiliency

Goal 1: Expand broadband throughout the region

- Ensure equitable access to high-speed internet throughout the region
- Partner with utilities to provide dependable alternatives to traditional broadband infrastructure

Goal 2: Develop Strategies for Business and Community Resilience

- Develop preparedness plans to address scenarios that could create business disturbances
- Collaborate with community stakeholders and businesses to establish redundancy plans that address potential future disasters (natural and man-made)
- Encourage business adaptability to allow for quick response to changing business atmosphere

Goal 3: Promote the retention and attraction of employers and skilled talent

- Increase the number of visitors to the region through earned media
- Maximize regional arts and culture opportunities to create a sense of place
- Maintain a business-friendly environment to support economic growth

Strategies for Economic Resiliency

Items in italics have been added to the 2025 Northern Kentucky CEDS update. Items added in previous years are shown in gray.

Goal 1: Expand broadband throughout the region				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
1. Ensure equitable access to high-speed internet throughout the region	• Increase the number of residential and commercial establishments with access to high-speed broadband.	Local Governments	Yearly	*2025* *Ongoing* • *Broadband expansion increased with support from the Kentucky Office of Broadband Development. Boone, Carroll, and Gallatin Counties received $2.5 million from KY BEAD (Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program) for 2,730 unserved locations.* • *United Way of Greater Cincinnati has prioritized digital inclusion for all and has provided funding through a new Digital inclusion Grant Program.* • *City of Covington launched "Covington Connect" to expand access to free public Wi-Fi.* 2024 Ongoing • Through a contract with the Commonwealth of Kentucky, work was conducted with local communities to determine underserved areas in the region. 2023 – New
2. Partner with utilities to provide dependable alternatives to traditional broadband infrastructure	• Expand existing and potential hotspot locations throughout the region. • Ensure digital inclusion by expanding existing free Wi-Fi network	Local Governments, Utility Providers Commonwealth of Kentucky, Local School Boards	Yearly	*2025* *Ongoing* • *Work continues with community partners and utilities to extend the existing free Wi-Fi network in the urban core.* 2024 Completed • Contracted with the KY Office of Broadband to work with

Goal 1: Expand broadband throughout the region				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				counties to survey the broadband services in the region Ongoing • Work continues with community partners and utilities to extend the existing free Wi-Fi network in the urban core 2023 – New

Goal 2: Develop Strategies for Business and Community Resilience				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
1. Develop preparedness plans to address scenarios that could create business disturbances	• Expand high-speed broadband availabilities to promote remote work opportunities throughout the region. • Create a network of community partners to identify potential needs and align resources to assist employers when possible disturbances arise • Collaborate with local economic development organizations to create an outreach plan using existing	Local Governments, Utility Providers, Emergency Managers, Floodplain managers, Economic Development Non-Profits, Local Human Resource Associations	Yearly	*2025* *Ongoing* • *The Northern Kentucky Economic Developers Group continues to share information and make connections with the business community.* • *Other organizations that provide business continuity information and collaborations include: BE NKY, NKY Chamber, Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, Gallatin County Chamber of Commerce, Grant County Chamber of Commerce and Industrial Development Association, Owen County Chamber of Commerce, Pendleton County Chamber of Commerce, Covington Business Council, United Way of Greater Cincinnati, OneNKY Alliance, NKY Works, other economic and community development partner organizations, and city and county governments.* • *The City of Covington continues its Small Business Program to help fledgling businesses with first-year rent and façade improvements of commercial buildings.* • *Owen County Chamber of Commerce launched a small business grant program.* • *NKY Works continues as a regional workforce development initiative to provide a single point of contact for employers to*

Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
	communication platform to keep community leaders and the business community informed about potential disturbances and available resources			*find data, best practices, partners, and resources that enable them to attract, grow, and retain talent.* • *Counties operate emergency management functions to prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters.* • *Area 6 Burlington Readiness Center of the Commonwealth of Kentucky Division of Emergency Management covers the NKADD region.* 2024 Completed • The NKADD completed an Energy Resilience Plan that identified all critical facilities and community lifelines throughout the region. The plan detailed the region's backup power needs. Ongoing • Revived the Northern Kentucky Economic Developers Group to share information and make connections to the business community. 2023 – New
2. Collaborate with community stakeholders and businesses to establish redundancy plans that address potential future disasters (natural and man-made)	• Complete an energy resilience survey to identify all critical facilities and community lifelines • Develop an energy resilience mitigation strategy to include energy needs priorities, available fixed and portable alternative energy sources, and a	Local Governments, Utility Providers, Emergency Managers, Floodplain Managers, Local Human Resource Associations	Yearly	*2025* *Completed* • *BE NKY released the report "Navigating Change & Charting a Course to a More Competitive Northern Kentucky."* • *The OneNKY Alliance annual summit, "Changing It Up in OneNKY: A Systemic Focus on Excellence," brought together representatives from the eight Northern Kentucky counties and key industry leaders to discuss strategies for attracting tech companies and fostering innovation in the region.* • *The Duke Energy Foundation and Blue North sponsored the 2024 NKY Small Business Grants program to allocate $1,000 to $10,000 to businesses with 50 or fewer employees.* *Ongoing*

Goal 2: Develop Strategies for Business and Community Resilience				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
	purchasing schedule for new and outdated alternative energy sources. • Increase awareness of water intakes along the Ohio River and how they are prepared for events along the river. • Integrate the NKY CEDS into other community and regional plans (hazard mitigation, comprehensive plans, energy resilience, transportation, etc.)			*• Groups such as the Northern Kentucky Port Authority, Commonwealth of Kentucky, Kenton County Fiscal Court, City of Covington, and private developers collaborate to leverage Northern Kentucky's strategic advantages, including lower business costs and robust infrastructure, and use various incentives, such as tax credits and grant reimbursement programs, to attract and retain biomedical research companies.* 2024 Completed • The NKADD completed an Energy Resilience Plan that identified all critical facilities and community lifelines throughout the region. The plan detailed the region's backup power needs. Ongoing • Submitted the draft 2024 NKY Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan that incorporated elements of the CEDS to the state for review. 2023 – New
3. Encourage business adaptability to allow for quick response to changing business atmosphere	• Partner with local and regional business organizations to promote resilience plan development to anticipate future disturbances • Work with employers and post-secondary educational institutions to design career pathways that	Local Governments, Economic Development Non-Profits, Post Secondary Educational Institutions	Bi-yearly	*2025* *Ongoing* *• NKADD, in partnership with OKI, is creating a new data dashboard to track the progress of the objectives presented in the report "Home for All: Northern Kentucky Housing Strategies."* *• The Center for Economic Analysis and Development at Northern Kentucky University engages in economic analysis and business research related to the current and future economic well-being of businesses and communities throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky.* *• The Northern Kentucky Atlas is a data dashboard for Boone, Campbell, and Kenton counties. This initiative by BE NKY Growth Partnership provides easily attainable data on eight*

Goal 2: Develop Strategies for Business and Community Resilience				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
	can serve multiple industries • Explore opportunities to link existing data sources together to gain a better understanding of the current and allow for better data-driven decisions on future development			*categories: Demographic, Housing, Workforce, Infrastructure, Economic, Quality of Life, Health, and Education.* 2024 Ongoing • The NKADD completed an Energy Resilience Plan that identified all critical facilities and community lifelines throughout the region. The plan detailed the region's backup power needs. • In completing the NKY Housing Menu of Options, instead of creating a new data dashboard, existing housing dashboard from OKI and BE NKY Growth Partnership Data Atlas to evaluate metrics. 2023 – New

Goal 3: Promote the retention and attraction of employers and skilled talent				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status

1. Increase the number of visitors to the region through earned media	• *Collaborate with economic development partners to develop a unified approach to increasing visitors to the region*
	• *Work with local agencies to present a unified region and increase awareness of the region.*
		Local CVBs (MeetNKY), regional Chamber of Commerce	*Monthly*	*2025*
				Completed
				• *The NKY narrative for business, tourism, and talent attraction was created through the collaboration of MeetNKY, BE NKY, and the NKY Chamber.*
				• *Per MeetNKY, collaboration with national and international journalists resulted in more than 125 stories about the Cincy Region.*
				• *Examples of earned media include:*
				  o *"Goodbye y'all: Florence mayor reflects on 24 years of leadership," soapboxmedia.com*
				  o *"Living in Union, Kentucky: Fastest Growing Area?," a YouTube video by Northern Kentucky Living*

Goal 3: Promote the retention and attraction of employers and skilled talent				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				o *"'Bridging Back Business': NKY businesses to offer weeks of deals after bridge reopening," msn.com* *Ongoing* • *MeetNKY is utilizing the NKY narrative, developed in collaboration with BE NKY and the NKY Chamber, for business, tourism, and talent attraction.* • *OneNKY Alliance launched its "OneNKY Building Community Unity" initiative to focus on resident pride and present a unified narrative that reflects who we are and where we aspire to go, together as a community.* • *Organizations that work to increase the number of visitors to the region include Kentucky Department of Tourism, Pendleton County Tourism, Carrollton/Carroll County Tourism, Owen County Visitors Center & Artisan Gift Shop, Grant County Tourist & Convention Commission, MeetNKY, the B-Line (Bourbon Line), Ark Encounter, the Creation Museum, Elk Creek Vineyards, Elk Creek Hunt Club, Big Bone Lick State Historic Site, General Butler State Resort Park, Kincaid Lake State Park, Boone Cliffs and Dinsmore Woods State Nature Preserves, Gunpowder Creek Heritage Land, St. Anne Woods and Wetlands, Hawthorne Crossing Heritage Land, Morning View Heritage Land, Licking River Historic District, Vent Haven Museum, Behringer-Crawford Museum, Cedar Line Nature Preserve, A.J. Jolly Park, and Williamstown Lake.* 2024 Ongoing • MeetNKY, along with the NKY Chamber of Commerce, BE NKY Growth Partnership, and OneNKY Alliance, have been working to create an external narrative for the NKY Regional Identity that creates a brand identity for the region, including a tourism standpoint, a business attraction standpoint, and a talent development standpoint, along with quality of life. • OneNKY Alliance has started working towards achieving a

Goal 3: Promote the retention and attraction of employers and skilled talent				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				unified community vision and strategic alignment of top goals. The areas of focus include capital support (public and private), workforce and talent, infrastructure, and transportation. 2023 – New
2. Maximize regional arts and culture opportunities to create a sense of place	• *Collaborate with local and regional art organizations to design community spaces that become gathering spots* • *Emphasize cultural vibrancy in talent retention and attraction planning* • *Create arts and cultural opportunities at the various regional entrance points*	*Local Governments, Art/Culture Non-Profits*	*Semi-Annually*	*2025* *Completed* • *BLINK, the nation's largest art and projection mapping festival, was held for four nights in the urban core of Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky.* • *America's River Roots Festival, October 8 through 12, 2025, is not only a celebration of the country's 250th anniversary, but also of the Ohio River Valley and its food, music, and culture.* • *The City of Newport created a new website, Meet on Monmouth, and a monthly business spotlight to attract more attention and increase foot traffic to Monmouth Street.* *Ongoing* • *City of Covington Quality of Place grants, from $1,000 to $30,000, support creative, place-based projects to improve neighborhoods that align with the city's Economic Development Department's strategic focus on "Experiencing Covington."* • *The City of Covington, partnering with the Carnegie Visual and Performing Arts Center, The Center for Great Neighborhoods, ArtsWave, and the Carol Ann and Ralph V. Haile, Jr. Foundation, is undertaking a national design competition to install a landmark piece of art at a prominent location in the developing Covington Central Riverfront neighborhood.* • *Initiatives by Southbank Partners and MeetNKY to create regional destinations and experiences.* • *The B-Line (Bourbon Line) continues to bring visitors and international recognition to the region while adding new*

Goal 3: Promote the retention and attraction of employers and skilled talent				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				distilleries. • *The Purple People Bridge Company is working collaboratively with the Cities of Newport and Cincinnati, as well as the regional public, private, and philanthropic community to maintain, preserve, and enhance the bridge for public multi-modal transportation and creative placemaking with the repainting and lighting of the bridge as a regional asset and destination.* • *The expansion and enhancement of Riverfront Commons, a planned 20-mile scenic multi-use path from Devou Park to Pendery Park along the Ohio River.* • *River cities' efforts attract and drive populations to the region.* • *Local community newspapers and online publications (serving various cities and counties in the region, such as the NKY Tribune and LINK nky) highlight local events, community initiatives, and public service announcements.* • *MeetNKY and ArtsWave announced a new partnership designed to increase cultural vibrancy in Northern Kentucky (NKY) through art and creative placemaking.* • *MeetNKY is utilizing the NKY narrative, developed in collaboration with BE NKY and the NKY Chamber, for business, tourism, and talent attraction.* • *OneNKY Alliance launched its "OneNKY Building Community Unity" initiative to focus on resident pride and present a unified narrative that reflects who we are and where we aspire to go, together as a community.* 2024 Ongoing • In 2024, BLINK, the nation's largest art and projection mapping festival, was held for the third time and included installations in Covington again and has also expanded into the City of Newport.

Goal 3: Promote the retention and attraction of employers and skilled talent				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• MeetNKY, along with the NKY Chamber of Commerce, BE NKY Growth Partnership, and OneNKY Alliance, have been working to create an external narrative for the NKY Regional Identity that creates a brand identity for the region, including a tourism standpoint, a business attraction standpoint, and a talent development standpoint, along with quality of life. • OneNKY Alliance has started working towards achieving a unified community vision and strategic alignment of top goals. One of the focus areas is workforce and talent, with goals of promoting and supporting work-based learning experiences, initiating and supporting a regional talent attraction campaign and increasing the percentage of Northern Kentuckians with a postsecondary credential. • The expansion of Riverfront Commons, a planned 20-mile scenic multi-use path from Devou Park to Pendery Park along the Ohio River, was announced. • Riverfront Commons was re-introduced to include and waypoints 2023 – New
3. Maintain a business-friendly environment to support economic growth	• *Align with workforce development, community development and economic development non-profits to foster a business-friendly community* • *Work with employers to understand their needs and work to*	*Local Non-Profits*	*Semi-Annually*	*2025* *Completed* • *BE NKY released the report "Navigating Change & Charting a Course to a More Competitive Northern Kentucky."* • *The "Bridging Back Business" initiative was launched to revitalize the economy of river cities like Dayton, Bellevue, Newport, Covington, and Fort Thomas following a fire that closed the I-471 bridge connecting Northern Kentucky and Cincinnati.* • *The OneNKY Alliance annual summit, "Changing it Up in OneNKY: A Systemic Focus on Excellence," convened representatives from the eight Northern Kentucky counties*

Goal 3: Promote the retention and attraction of employers and skilled talent				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
	address those needs. • *Create partnerships between economic development organizations (BE NKY Growth Partnerships (formerly Tri-NKY) and the Port Authority of NKY) and other local Non-Profits to encourage growth.*			*and key industry leaders to discuss strategies for attracting tech companies and fostering innovation in the region.* Ongoing • *Per MeetNKY, tourism supports close to 13,000 jobs in Northern Kentucky.* • *MeetNKY is utilizing the NKY narrative, developed in collaboration with BE NKY and the NKY Chamber, for business, tourism, and talent attraction.* • *OneNKY Alliance launched its "OneNKY Building Community Unity" initiative to focus on resident pride and present a unified narrative that reflects who we are and where we aspire to go, together as a community.* • *Groups such as the Northern Kentucky Port Authority, Commonwealth of Kentucky, Kenton County Fiscal Court, City of Covington, and private developers collaborate to leverage Northern Kentucky's strategic advantages, including lower business costs and robust infrastructure, and use various incentives, such as tax credits and grant reimbursement programs, to attract and retain biomedical research companies.* • *Pendleton County Economic Development is a participant in the 2025 Duke Energy Site Readiness Program for the Commonwealth Commerce Center industrial park located south of Falmouth.* • *NKY Chamber hosts a quarterly Inclusive Business Strategies event series for businesses committed to enhancing their talent pool, driving innovation, and gaining a competitive advantage through diversity.* • *NKWIB and NKY Works partners continue to work at attracting and retaining new talent to the region.* • *Blue North and entrepreneurship partners are working together to grow businesses in the region.*

Goal 3: Promote the retention and attraction of employers and skilled talent				
Action Step	Performance Metric	Responsible Entities	Update Frequency	Status
				• *Redevelopment continues of the Simms Building as SparkHaus business incubator; eGateway Partners is the first tenant.* 2024 Ongoing • GrowNKY was reimaging into WorkNKY with a continued focus on talent attraction and retention • The Northern Kentucky Economic Development Group was re-established in 2024 to promote collaboration amongst local economic development professionals and better understand future community and economic development needs. • MeetNKY, along with the NKY Chamber of Commerce, BE NKY Growth Partnership, and OneNKY Alliance, have been working to create an external narrative for the NKY Regional Identity that creates a brand identity for the region, including a tourism standpoint, a business attraction standpoint, and a talent development standpoint, along with quality of life. • OneNKY Alliance has started working towards achieving a unified community vision and strategic alignment of top goals. One of the focus areas is workforce and talent, with goals of promoting and supporting work-based learning experiences, initiating and supporting a regional talent attraction campaign and increasing the percentage of Northern Kentuckians with a postsecondary credential. 2023 – New

Opportunity Zone

Opportunity Zones were created under the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act as a federal economic development tool focused on improving the outcomes of communities across the country, especially in areas that have suffered from long-term disinvestment. Opportunity Zones are designated low-income census tracts where tax incentives are available to groups or individuals who invest in an Opportunity Fund and hold their capital gains in Opportunity Zone-related assets or property. Investments in Opportunity Zones allow investors to gain a temporary deferral on capital gains taxes if investments are retained for at least five years and a permanent exclusion from a tax on capital gains from the Opportunity Zones investments if the investments are retained for ten years. Eleven Census tracts in the NKADD region have been designated as Opportunity Zones[18].

County	Census Tract	Census Tract Type
Boone	21015070311	Low-Income Community
Campbell	21037050500	Low-Income Community
Carroll	21041950200	Low-Income Community
Gallatin	21077960101	Low-Income Community
Grant	21081920300	Low-Income Community
Kenton	21117060700	Low-Income Community
Kenton	21117060900	Low-Income Community
Kenton	21117063800	Low-Income Community
Kenton	21117067000	Low-Income Community
Kenton	21117067100	Low-Income Community
Owen	21187970200	Low-Income Community

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[18] https://www.kyoz.org/

Northern Kentucky COVID-19 Disaster Resiliency Plan

December 2022

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Multi-jurisdictional Planning

Introduction

In the summer of 2020, the Northern Kentucky Area Development District was charged with creating a disaster resiliency plan to highlight the region's response to the COVID-19 pandemic through the 2020 CARES Act. The plan will highlight how the region responded to the challenges of the pandemic, including schools, businesses and local governments, and the lessons learned to better prepare the region for future challenges. In each challenge preset by the pandemic, the regional stakeholders had to adapt quickly to limit the impacts of COVID-19. Multi-jurisdictional cooperation, economic or legal creativity, and a pooling of resources all impacted how Northern Kentucky responded to varying degrees of effectiveness. It is essential to understand these to move forward from the pandemic and prepare Northern Kentuckians for future challenges.

What is NKADD?

The Northern Kentucky Area Development District (NKADD) is an Economic Development District (EDD) operating under the United States Economic Development Administration (EDA). NKADD serves eight (8) counties (Boone, Campbell, Carrol, Gallatin, Grant, Kenton, Owen, and Pendleton) and forty-four (44) additional municipalities across Northern Kentucky.

Background

In March 2020, the COVID-19 CARES Act was passed with the primary goal of economic relief. Economic relief is defined as the ability to recover quickly from a shock, the ability to withstand a shock, and the ability to avoid the shock altogether[19]. To reach this goal, the Economic Development Agency tasked Area Development Districts with creating a COVID-19 Disaster Resiliency Plan that would review how

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[19] https://www.eda.gov/ceds/content/economic-resilience.htm#:~:text=However%2C%20in%20the%20context%20of,to%20avoid%20the%20shock%20altogether.

COVID-19 impacted their regions and how they could further recover in the years following the pandemic. In addition, this plan aims to identify "best practices" to aid in future disasters and help recovery.

Data Collection

The Disaster Resiliency Report intends to document what went wrong and what went right during the COVID-19 pandemic. NKADD collected data and community input through several methods, including:

- Community Meetings
  In June 2021, NKADD staff met with elected officials to identify local communities' needs while learning how communities adapted to the challenges of COVID-19. Each community discussed its varying challenges in an open atmosphere, allowing staff to identify their needs and visualize their experiences.

- Business and Community Services Interviews
  Local business representatives and community service providers were interviewed during socially distanced and masked meetings, virtual meetings, or telephone calls.

- Research
  NKADD staff collected data and stories from diverse sources, including state and national archives, online databases, the US Census Bureau, local newspapers, national articles, national associations, and federal partners.

- Public Surveys
  Two public online surveys were conducted to gather information about how governments and businesses were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. These surveys gave NKADD staff insight into how Northern Kentucky's employers and governments addressed the constantly evolving and challenging environment of COVID-19.

- Kentucky State Disaster Resiliency Coordinators Round Tables
  On January 11, 2021, the first monthly meeting was held with other Kentucky Area Development Districts to share knowledge, best practices, and challenges regarding creating the Disaster Resiliency Report.

The research conducted over the past two years has highlighted the region's strengths. COVID-19 often brought out the very best in Northern Kentuckians. They learned new ways of doing things and implemented these ideas that will impact the region in the future.

COVID-19 Arrives in the Region

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a pandemic is an event in which a disease spreads across several countries and affects many people. Widespread viruses and infections begin as epidemics. These are contained in large populations within a community, population, or region. An epidemic becomes a pandemic when that virus or disease spreads to additional countries or continents.

The fight against COVID-19 in the US began in Washington State on January 21, 2020. Since that day, COVID-19 would become the third leading cause of death, just behind heart disease and cancer[20]. It has forced businesses, nonprofits, and virtually all sectors to change their operations. Schools had to quickly redesign how to educate their students from 1st grade to college-level seniors. Many non-essential companies had to shift from "normal" in-person operations to minimal in-person staff, with non-essential staff working from home. Restaurants were required to switch from in-person services to curbside. Evictions were suspended, as were all non-essential government functions at the state, county, and local levels. With so much that changed in Northern Kentuckians' life, from work to personal life, multiple challenges were presented.

Governor Beshear provided daily updates on the state of the virus in Kentucky, including infection rate, deaths, and efforts taken to curb the virus. In addition, he would highlight stories of everyday Kentuckians who were thriving in the COVID-19 environment, making sure to discuss how they were adapting. The daily updates continued until the first week of June 11, 2021, when they were limited to once a week.

Early Pandemic Timeline in Northern Kentucky

- Jan 21 – First Confirmed Case in the US[21]
- January 31 – President Trump declares a National Public Health Emergency [22]
- March 6 – Governor Beshear declares the State of Emergency
- March 13 – President Trump makes an emergency declaration for COVID-19 under Sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act.[23]
- March 16 – Northern Kentucky had its first case of COVID-19 [24]
- March 16 – President Trump invoked emergency powers via Executive Order under the Defense Production Act[25]
- March 19 – Federal Emergency Management Agency assumes the lead for the federal response to COVID-19 [26]
- March 25 – Governor Beshear ordered all "non-life essential" businesses to halt in-person business

Northern Kentucky began its fight against COVID-19 on March 23 when the Northern Kentucky Health Department reported cases in the three northern counties (Boone, Campbell, and Kenton). The first case was a Kenton County woman, 66 years old, who was admitted into St. Elizabeth at Ft. Thomas. Boone County would follow on March 23. Campbell County's first case was on March 27,[27] and Grant County's first case was on March 28. After that, the virus would continue to spread to the Three Rivers Health

[20] https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2022/s0422-third-leading-cause.html
[21] https://www.npr.org/2020/01/22/798392221/1st-u-s-case-of-coronavirus-confirmed-in-washington-state
[22] https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/03/18/2020-05794/declaring-a-national-emergency-concerning-the-novel-coronavirus-disease-covid-19-outbreak
[23] https://www.ncsl.org/ncsl-in-dc/publications-and-resources/president-trump-declares-state-of-emergency-for-covid-19.aspx
[24] https://www.wlwt.com/article/34-confirmed-cases-of-covid-19-reported-in-kentucky-including-one-in-kenton-county/31755510
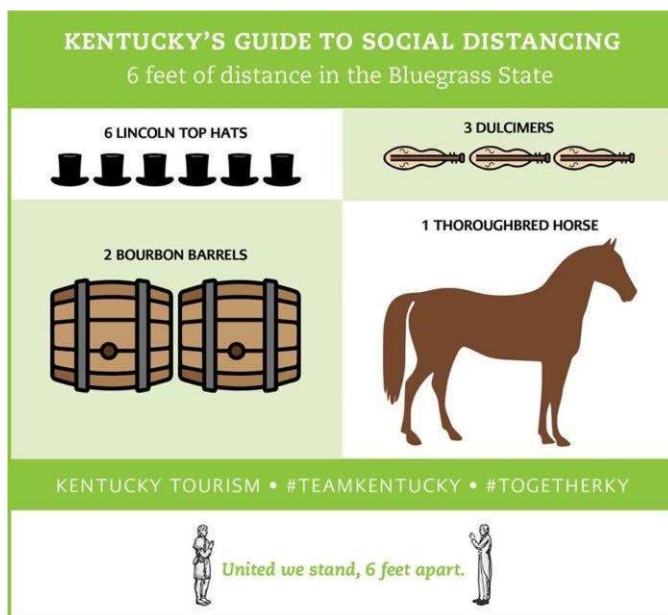[25] https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/DCPD-202000365/pdf/DCPD-202000365.pdf
[26] https://www.fema.gov/sites/default/files/documents/fema_covid-19-initial-assessment-report_2021.pdf
[27] https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/campbell-kentucky-covid-cases.html?auth=linked-google1tap

Department region, with Carroll County (March 28), Gallatin County (April 11), and Pendleton County (April 5) each getting their first cases. Owen County was the last to have a confirmed case in April 2020[28].

The Kentucky Public Services Commission ordered utilities to cease disconnections for nonpayment, waive late fees, and offer payment plans for delinquent customers on March 16 through October 20, 2020. Governor Beshear also issued an executive order to support the Kentucky Public Service Commission's order in May 2020[29]. He signed another in October that extended the cutoff ban through November 6, 2020[30].

KENTUCKY'S GUIDE TO SOCIAL DISTANCING
6 feet of distance in the Bluegrass State

6 LINCOLN TOP HATS

3 DULCIMERS

2 BOURBON BARRELS

1 THOROUGHBRED HORSE

KENTUCKY TOURISM • #TEAMKENTUCKY • #TOGETHERKY

United we stand, 6 feet apart.

Source: River Management Society

The CARES Act put in place an eviction moratorium beginning March 27 and extending 30 days past the July 24 deadline on August 23, 2020. Further eviction moratoriums were put in place by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) beginning on September 4 and ending with the most recent extension on August 26, 2021. In addition, community service providers such as EC Learn helped families provide childcare for those who still must work and enabled families to find vital resources like milk through milk drives[31].

The state response would gradually shift away from lockdowns beginning in May 2020 with an executive order allowing businesses to reopen to 50 percent[32]. The executive order allowed firms to reopen to limited in-person services, building occupation limitations, and heavily encouraging social distancing. Many companies opted to retain pick-up or delivery as 50% capacity restrictions became difficult, limiting their overall costs[33]. The state would remain at 50% maximum building occupancy until May 2021 and continue to restrict events and venues until June 2021[34,35].

After June 2021, when mask mandates and capacity restrictions were lifted, Northern Kentucky found opportunities to rebuild and revitalize itself. New investments in things like broadband in NKY's rural counties while expanding in the three more urban counties of Boone, Campbell, and Kenton allowed

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[28] https://www.fox19.com/2020/04/28/last-county-region-reports-first-confirmed-case-covid-/

[29] https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20200508_Executive-Order_2020-323_Reopening.pdf

[30] https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20201019_Executive-Order_2020-881_Utilities.pdf

[31] https://www.facebook.com/events/GOTMILK

[32] https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20200508_Executive-Order_2020-323_Reopening.pdf

[33] https://www.wkyt.com/2020/09/29/ky-restaurants-continue-to-struggle-with-reduced-capacity-as-other-states-fully-reopen/

[34] https://www.weku.org/coronavirus/2021-05-07/governor-announces-plan-to-raise-capacity-limit-to-75-later-this-mon

[35] https://www.kentucky.com/news/coronavirus/article251412238.html

Northern Kentuckians to become more connected to a growing region[36,37]. Tourism in Northern Kentucky was growing in 2019 to record highs, and after the pandemic, hotels were only able to reach 24.6% of their occupancies, rebounding to 64.5% late[38]. While Northern Kentucky has not fully recovered yet, the region continues to reinvest in the region's key economic sectors and showcase the region's unique character.

Socioeconomics

Economic Vulnerability

In May 2020, the research company Chmura[39] released data detailing the economic vulnerability index across Kentucky. This vulnerability index measures how the COVID-19 pandemic could negatively impact a county's employment due to the county's mix of industries. With a national average of 100, Northern Kentucky saw numbers between 64.45 and 121.77. Boone, Campbell, and Grant Counties were above the national average due partly to COVID-19 -impacted positions. In contrast, Carroll, Grant, Gallatin, Owen, and Pendleton Counties were below the national average.
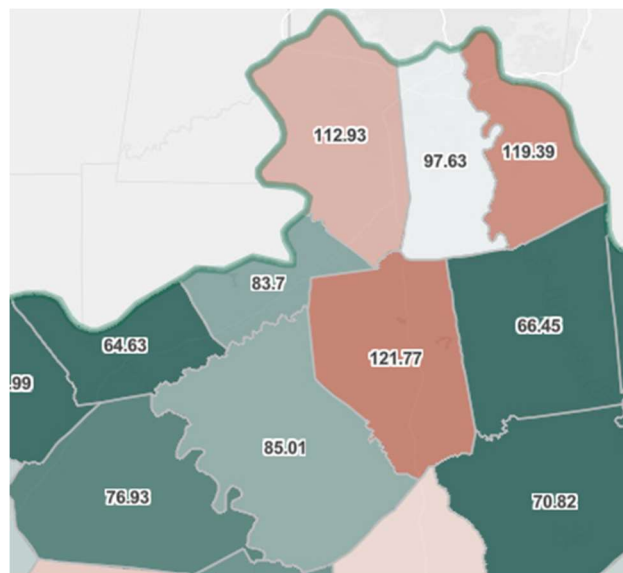
Source: Kentucky COVID-19 Economic Impact Dashboard

Kentucky, in general, weathered the economic impacts of COVID-19 relatively well. However, according to Kentucky's Economic Impact Dashboard, several state and local leaders across Kentucky have used it to evaluate their regions' needs[40]. The Kentucky COVID-19 Economic Impact Dashboard map reveals the economic toll that COVID-19 had on Northern Kentucky. The toll was due to a heavy economic reliance on COVID-19 -impacted businesses like tourism and other industries reliant on person-to-person services. This dependence made Northern Kentucky struggle more than the rest of the state[41].

COVID-19 was also felt in the I-71 corridor and the counties of Carroll, Gallatin, and Owen. The Kentucky I-71 Economic Development Agency (KIEDA), where these counties dealt with many economic challenges. Most of its major employers, primarily in the manufacturing sector, were deemed essential jobs. But due to the supply chain restrictions that the pandemic brought, auto manufacturers could not find critical components like semiconductors and other components vital to manufacturing[42]. In

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[36] https://linknky.com/news/2022/02/28/owen-county-based-internet-provider-rolling-out-new-fixed-wireless-access-network-to-rural-nky/

[37] https://www.bbcmag.com/community-broadband/cincinnati-bell-three-kentucky-counties-collaborate-on-ftth-plan

[38] https://www.meetnky.com/about-us/2022-annual-report/

[39] https://www.chmura.com/blog/the-covid-19-economic-vulnerability-index

[40] https://datasmart.ash.harvard.edu/news/article/kentuckys-covid-19-economic-impact-dashboard-enabling-cross-state-communication-and

[41] https://www.esri.com/about/newsroom/blog/covid-19-kentucky-maps-economic-recovery/

[42] https://www.areadevelopment.com/Automotive/q1-2022/US-automakers-look-to-semiconductor-partners.shtml

addition, supply chain shortages often cause the region to look for ways to store its goods. So, the employers of KIEDA reevaluated how they could use unused assets like the Kentucky Motor Speedway, allowing them to transition the speedway into a Ford Motor's storage location for thousands of trucks awaiting their microchips.

Unemployment

Unemployment was one of the main challenges in Northern Kentucky. The situation was made more complicated due to the pandemic and how COVID-19 impacted businesses like tourism, retail, and in-office jobs. The three urban counties (Boone, Campbell, and Kenton) had early complications, with some industries showing increased unemployment. In Boone County, unemployment initially peaked in May 2020 at 13%. Campbell and Kenton would peak at just above 13%. These three counties would further match each other by returning to the pre-covid rate of around 3% by May 2021[43].
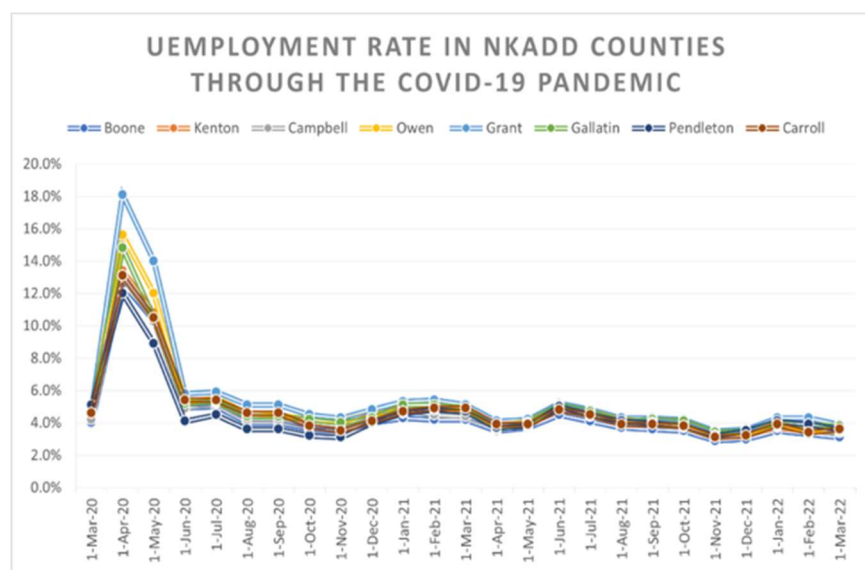
Source: KYStats

In the more rural counties of Northern Kentucky, the pandemic had slightly more varied impacts on unemployment. The highest of the five counties, Grant, experienced a nearly 13% swing in unemployment, recovering back to pre-covid rates in Feb 2021. While not as drastic, the other counties would experience 8.7% (Carroll), 9.9% (Gallatin), 11.4% (Owen), and 7.4% (Pendleton) swings in their respective rates.

Northern Kentucky's unemployment rate was similar to the rest of the Commonwealth. Kentucky's unemployment rate would peak as high as 16.2%, an almost 12% increase from February 2020 and wouldn't recover until November 2021. Just as in the rest of Kentucky, the diverse economy of Northern Kentucky was important in limiting the impacts felt by COVID-19. With several large employers across the eight counties, no single business or industry was responsible for most job opportunities. Many entities employing large numbers of people were deemed essential during the pandemic. Employers such as St. Elizabeth Hospital, Kroger, and Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport, among others, provided goods and services necessary to the pandemic response, like healthcare, food, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). St. Elizabeth kept all employees on the payroll despite the temporary discontinuation of several services on March 23, 2020[44]. They would go on to increase both employment and pay in June 2020[45].

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[43] https://data.cincinnati.com/unemployment/campbell-county-ky/CN2103700000000/2021-may/
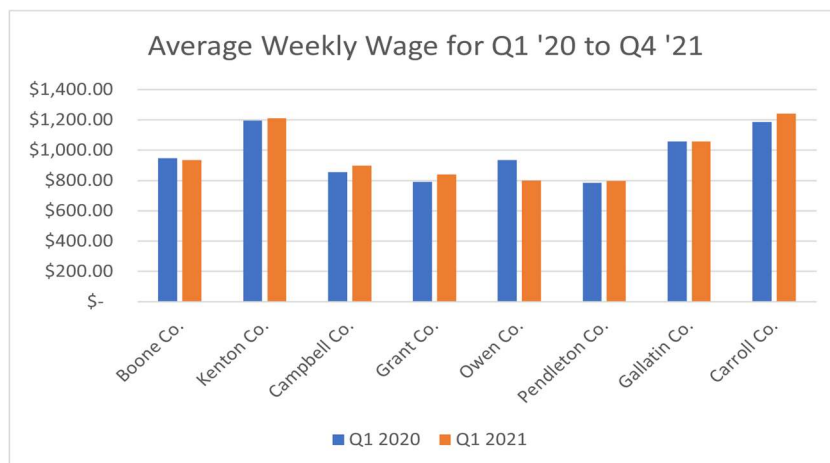[44] https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20200323_Directive_Elective-Procedures.pdf
[45] https://www.stelizabeth.com/news/article/2020/06/05/exclusive-greater-cincinnati-hospital-system-raising-pay-for-thousands-of-workers

Unemployment Insurance

Previous staff cuts, location closures, and an outdated Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Information Technology systems made handling the unemployment brought on by COVID-19 challenging. For some individuals, it took months or more than a year to receive aid. Changes were made throughout the pandemic to the User Interface system, including new user interfaces and heightened digital security. In April 2021, Governor Beshear created the Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Fraud and Prevention Task Force[46] to investigate the surge in fraudulent unemployment insurance claims.

Weekly Wages

As the economic impacts of the pandemic were felt throughout the country, wages fell as businesses were impacted. Throughout the pandemic, Northern Kentucky's wages remained more stable than most of Kentucky. However, that does not mean Northern Kentucky counties did not feel the economic strain. In three of the eight Northern Kentucky

Average Weekly Wage for Q1 '20 to Q4 '21

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

counties, with Owen County representing the most significant change, salaries decreased from $935 to $799 in the given period.

Small Business Revolving Loan Fund

The NKADD operates a Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) with the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) that has been de-federalized. The EDA provided flexibility to recipients of EDA-funded RLF awards in light of the impact of COVID-19 on small businesses, the increasing demand for RLF loans, and the need for RLFs to provide credit quickly and efficiently to their communities. As a result, the NKADD could give loans to six (6) businesses for a total of $338,000.

Homelessness

Northern Kentucky's homeless population was already facing many challenges before COVID-19. According to the Northern Kentucky Homelessness Working Group, the number of Northern Kentuckians that experienced homelessness totaled 1,530 individuals composing 829 households. Of these people, 52% (792) have one or more disability/s, 44% (674) were adult males, 60% (829) of households did not include children, and 3% (40) were veterans[47].

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[46] https://governor.ky.gov/attachments/20210405_Executive-Order_2021-230_UI-Fraud-Detection-and-Prevention-Task-Force.pdf
[31] https://www.klc.org/userfiles/Understanding_Homelessness_Feb2021-revised20210216100330.pdf

The pandemic saw shelters close that couldn't support COVID-19 living requirements, and many lost their stable food providers. As a result, more than 1,530[48] were left unhoused. Northern Kentucky's response was multifaceted and looked to help retain essential resources. Northern Kentucky cities and counties work to understand why people were homeless or becoming homeless and then address it. The most recent statistics[49] show a complicated story of social and human issues, a possible housing shortage, and a confusing and cumbersome local service provider system. Many people/households with full-time employment qualify for necessary housing assistance programs, with more people already housing insecure as "one paycheck away" from becoming homeless[50]. Because of this, some who were on "the edge" of homelessness before the pandemic found themselves unable to maintain their rent or mortgage while also being able to afford meals for their family.

Northern Kentucky tried to help the problem by opening the Northern Kentucky Convention Center[51] as housing for the homeless. However, this was a temporary solution as it would close in August 2020,[52] so other arrangements had to be made for them. This came in the way of utilizing hotels that could provide access to food, baths, and shelter in a COVID-19-safe environment.

Consumer Spending

Consumer spending in the United States went down 9.8 percent from the same period in 2019[53] and 0.9 percent in Kentucky[54]. Like the rest of the state, Northern Kentucky suppressed consumer spending due to COVID-19 mandates. Expenditures on food services and accommodations, recreation services, and health care were the leading contributors to the decrease in consumer spending. Northern Kentucky is among the state's leading economic engines and held unmatched economic momentum. The region saw slow economic momentum due to these factors but was further impacted by inflation.

The inflation that came with the pandemic further complicated the situation. As workers see their earnings increase, they are also facing higher prices. The Consumer Price Index (CPI), a broad measure of US inflation, had risen during the pandemic. The change in the CPI was exceptionally high in June 2021, 0.9% higher than in May 2021 and 5.4% higher than in June 2020. Price increases eased somewhat in July 2021. The CPI for July was 0.5% higher than in June and 5.4% higher than in July 2020[55].

The increase in inflation was due to temporary supply chain constraints. The pandemic significantly changed consumer spending patterns, and businesses had trouble keeping up with these changes. The changes led to shortages of inputs for many goods, such as computer chips for automobiles, and has driven price increases. Prices for new automobiles increased by 6.4% from July 2020 to July 2021, and prices for used cars increased by 41.7%. The labor shortage experienced early in the pandemic also

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[48] https://www.kentoncounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/1523/Report-on-Unsheltered-Homeless-in-Northern-Kentucky-PDF?bidId=

[32] https://www.klc.org/userfiles/Understanding_Homelessness_Feb2021-revised20210216100330.pdf

[33] https://www.wcpo.com/news/our-community/northern-kentucky-convention-center-housing-people-who-are-homeless-during-covid-19-pandemic

[34] https://www.nkytribune.com/2020/04/homeless-leave-temporary-nky-convention-center-shelter-welcome-house-moves-more-than-40-to-hotel/

[53] https://www.bls.gov/opub/ted/2022/changes-to-consumer-expenditures-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.htm

[54] https://www.bea.gov/news/2021/personal-consumption-expenditures-state-2020

[55] https://www.kychamber.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/Kentucky%27s%20Economic%20Recovery%20Report%20September%202021_0.pdf

played a role. As employers gave raises and increased benefits to retain employees, prices for goods also went up to adjust for the cost.
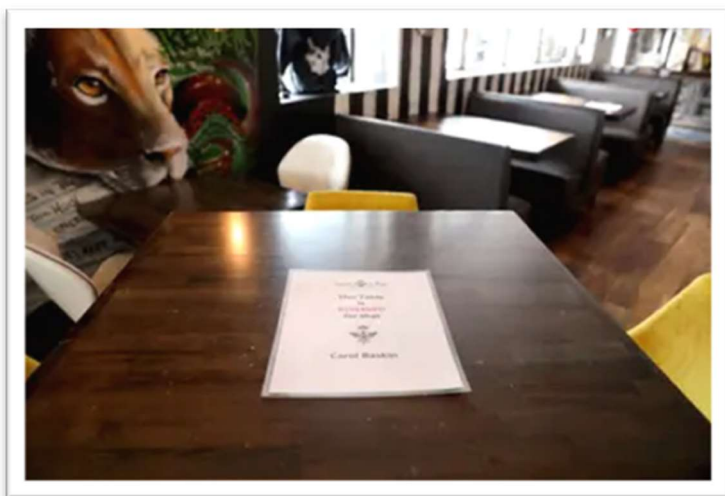
Businesses

Closing the doors

Northern Kentucky businesses were told to close their doors to in-person services beginning on March 25, 2020. Until "reopening," Northern Kentucky businesses would have to re-invent how they did business. The immediate issue many faced was how they would continue operations; for those who were deemed "essential," they stayed open and staffed. For those who weren't as essential, closing created many problems. None is more critical than how they would continue the business, especially for industries dependent on "in-person" services. Restaurants, bars, and hair salons all shared this problem, and the approach for some wasn't as viable for others. Restaurants and bars often switched to delivery services through third parties. They also benefitted from restructured laws, such as liquor purchase and delivery laws, which allowed them to sustain business operations that might otherwise have been unattainable.

Reopening

When in-person services were open on May 11, 2020, businesses across the region created signs and floor markers to remind customers to social distance and wear masks. Of course, not every business required or enforced mask-wearing, but most encouraged it.

Locally owned businesses had to create systems for online ordering to have any hope of surviving pandemic impacts. Some had to develop a brand-new

Source: Kareem Elgazzard/The Enquirer

website or adapt existing ones to suit customer needs better. With a lack of broadband access in some of the Northern Kentucky region, this shift was difficult for businesses and consumers.

Reducing the Impact

Local businesses in the region that did not survive the pandemic tended to be already struggling or close to closing. For many, the pandemic was the final straw, leading owners to their decision to close. The businesses that survived faced challenges but often met those challenges with creativity. Utilizing technology like QR codes to replace menus was common, but others combined that with increasing outdoor seating.

While a few businesses in the area were seeing the end of their business, some were able to limit the impact through various government initiatives that came about because of the pandemic. Many cities from Owenton to Dayton could use these key funding sources to give to restaurants to slow the

economic impact and reimagine how to operate. For example, COVID restrictions prevented large crowds from forming indoors, so many restaurants shifted to outdoor seating. This presented complications with laws that prevented alcohol sales on sidewalks. To deal with this, some communities redesigned the rules and extended storefronts to include the sidewalks in front of bars and restaurants, helped Businesses acquire heating equipment, and many other tools that helped companies stay open for business for outdoor seating.

Education

Impacts on pre-K through 12

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, families relied on schools to perform various vital tasks in addition to educating their children, such as early childcare and a dependable daily meal. When the schools in the area were temporarily closed, many families wondered how they could fill these gaps while working from home and, in some cases, still on-site. How the region would respond to the growing concerns of students and their families was not unique to our area, but still very important to limit the long-term impacts of COVID-19 on our regional economy.

The three urban counties of Boone, Campbell and Kenton had unique challenges compared to other regional education centers. From privatized institutions in Campbell County to public schooling in Boone County, each had difficulties they may not have experienced otherwise. On March 12, 2020, Governor Beshear recommended that schools temporarily close due to COVID-19. All school districts needed to find ways to keep students engaged.

Boone County School Buses helping deliver food

Many primary concerns felt across the country as the switch to fully online education became common. These were: How could everyone stay connected, and how could school districts maintain essential services for their students? The urban counties of Northern Kentucky reached an average of 87.12% of their collective student bodies[56], above the state average of 81.5%. The more rural counties of Carroll, Gallatin, Grant, Owen, and Pendleton had similar experiences to those of the urban ones but had to address them differently. Combined, these five counties came below the state average at 77%.

While the urban counties maintained relatively high internet access/connectivity rates for education, with a difference of 10% in rural areas, the urban/rural gap was evident. The rural areas of Northern Kentucky had many challenges to overcome to reach as many students as possible. They relied on

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[56]https://kcewsreports.ky.gov/t/KCEWS/views/2020_Family_Survey/AccesstoTechnologyTab?%3Aorigin=card_share_link&%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y

critical governmental services like libraries and school parking lots that offered extended wi-fi. In other places, churches were able to provide these services.

Many students were technologically able to adapt to the growing need for reliable internet access, but many families lost a guaranteed meal for their children. Schools across the region adapted to their needs by providing meals to students at home[57]. This effort was aided by the willingness of both state and federal aid—such as Emergency food benefits through the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT). The P-EBT provided a transfer card with benefits equal to the value of breakfasts and lunches a student could not receive during the day while schools were closed. Households could also use these benefits for grocery items eligible under the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)[58].

Higher Education

Some of the problems experienced in K-12 education extended to the regions' universities and colleges. The area's universities had to switch to remote learning, and key disciplines that depended on in-person instruction were forced to adapt, which continues to influence the post-COVID-19 world.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the critical education centers of Northern Kentucky University (NKU), Gateway Community Technical College, and Thomas More University have had to figure out how to address the needs of their collective student bodies while also considering the work and personal needs of their faculty. Ensuring stable network access for their faculty to deliver the system to students and regular network access for students to attend virtual courses was a continuing concern. Higher education institutions could get around this problem by keeping key institutions open while following national and state social distancing guidelines. By keeping these institutions open, students could access databases with stable broadband access, allowing them to maintain a relatively normal level of educational tool access. The impact of keeping these resources open was also extended to the faculty, with many still working in their offices at a reduced capacity. In the case of Gateway Community and Technical College, they could stay fully staffed through the pandemic.

Jenna Reliford Working on NKU's Campus (Spectrum News 1/Katie Forcade)

Higher Education Institutions also met with complications in reopening. Knowing when and how to reopen was a concern of faculty and students alike, with many opting to stay home as others returned

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[57] https://www.wlwt.com/article/boone-county-school-buses-help-roll-out-new-plan-to-deliver-meals-to-students/31754858
[58] https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=CHFS&prId=273

to in-person courses[59]. Gateway estimated that around half of classes were 50/50 at best, and Northern Kentucky University had around 4,800 students who opted for online courses[60].

For those who chose to return to in-person education, following guidelines and keeping classrooms safer were paramount concerns. Schools could address these concerns by utilizing tools used in the past but placed in uniquely essential roles in the pandemic environment. Gateway Community and Technical College used a combination of questionaries and Microsoft SharePoint to identify those with COVID-19 and better track when those students could come back to in-person classes.

Upon reopening, some institutions struggled to stay open consistently. After reopening for the 2020 fall semester, NKU moved back to small classes as the region's counties saw an increase in COVID-19 cases[61]. Many struggled to stabilize class attendance despite all the necessary efforts to remain open. NKU, like many Kentucky universities, saw a decrease in enrollment during COVID-19 [62].

Addressing the Impacts

A major initial factor in adaptation was realizing how important online education services were. Keeping important educational and Wi-Fi-related areas of schools open for students to use allowed those without reliable broadband access a means to attain that. Furthermore, using key government funding sources, such as the CARES ACT, allowed schools to purchase laptops and wireless "hot spot" adapters. This better-supplied students with the necessary tools to attain educational goals. Optimizing online services would allow administration and students to work/learn from home while prioritizing a better work-life balance that would not have been attainable otherwise.

Community Service

Public Health

Northern Kentucky health departments and healthcare systems worked together to address the unknowns, find solutions to the rapidly changing and evolving medical landscape and serve the community. They addressed closures, in-person hospital service restrictions, and misinformation while aiding the region through various initiatives. They relied on relationships to work through misinformation and confront new challenges.

The two health departments in Northern Kentucky, Three Rivers District Health Department (TRDHD) and the Northern Kentucky Health Department (NKYHealth), were confronted with similar challenges but dealt with them differently. During the early stages of the pandemic, the uncertainty or "not knowing" strained the existing public health care system. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was hard to find early on, so the health departments and hospitals had to pool resources together. Staff shortages

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[59] https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/northern-ky/news/2022/04/27/college-enrollment-decline-in-ky

[60] https://inside.nku.edu/nkumagazine/2022/April/winter2022printissue/mattcecil.html

[61] https://local12.com/news/local/nku-moves-to-remote-learning-after-campbell-county-goes-red-cincinnati-northern-kentucky-university

[62] https://inside.nku.edu/nkumagazine/2022/April/winter2022printissue/mattcecil.html

in one health department further strained staff as they still pushed to provide essential tools, like call centers, with a smaller employee footprint.

Northern Kentucky Health Department covers the four counties of Boone, Campbell, Grant, and Kenton. Serving 392,000 plus residents, NKYHealth relied on many partnerships formed before 2020 to provide direction forward. For example, their relationships with county judge executives, city administration, and local Emergency Management teams played an early role in standing up COVID-19 testing sights and, later, vaccine locations. These cross-jurisdictional relationships also allowed the region to staff sites with all three counties providing personnel, distributing the burden more evenly.

The relationships built before COVID-19 would further play a role in the information campaign for NKYHealth. The ability of health departments to get reliable, timely information played a crucial part across the country. For NKYHealth, this meant a reliance on a public information team that would transmit data to counties. This allowed the counties to access all available information and provide that to their collective populations.

Three River District Health Department experienced similar problems to NKYHealth and often found similar solutions in cross-jurisdictional cooperation. For TRDHD and its 45,000 residents, partnerships with state and local governments also helped distribute the strain of COVID-19. TRDHD did this by working with county and local governments using their collective "manpower" to staff critical resources like NKYHealth. For example, unlike NKYHealth, TRDHD had to switch nearly all staff to testing, with all call centers being staffed by those who could work from home.

TRDHD was able to staff regional testing events and simultaneously fight misinformation, according to one TRDHD official, by using extensive social media campaigns. This was done similarly to NKYHealth by sharing all available information with county and city-level officials who could better reach their citizens. As a result, together with local and county administrators, TRDHD officials felt they were able to fight back against misinformation effectively.

Health Crisis Information

The primary medical facilities of St. Elizabeth Hospitals, with locations in Boone, Kenton Campbell, Grant, and Pendleton counties, provided COVID-19 medical care. This would expand to St. Elizabeth's urgent care facilities, converting three of their five urgent care centers to COVID-only facilities with an option to include more based on needs[63]. Elective procedures were temporarily ended on March 18, 2020, to limit traffic in hospitals and to free up healthcare workers to treat COVID patients. Some people choose not to see their doctors for regular appointments or non-emergency health issues for fear of being exposed to the virus. When people went in for meetings, no matter the severity of their condition, no more than one guest was allowed inside with a patient. At times, no guests were allowed. This rule made going to the doctor even more stressful than usual. COVID patients were not allowed any visitors. Their only human interaction was with healthcare workers dressed in head-to-toe PPE. Studies have

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[63]https://www.wlwt.com/article/st-elizabeth-converts-three-of-five-urgent-care-centers-into-covid-only-facilities/34864393#

already shown that COVID patients who spend time in intensive care often come home with mental health issues, with some even showing evidence of post-traumatic stress disorder[64].

NKHD and TRDHD Case Summary as of May 20, 2022			
County	Confirmed Cases	Ever Hospitalized	Deaths
Owen	2,377	63	34
Pendleton	3,502	116	39
Gallatin	2,222	83	51
Carroll	3,506	78	45
Campbell	23,506	447	181
Boone	37,820	741	299
Kenton	42,830	955	420
Grant	7,215	202	62

Data for the chart from the Kentucky Department of Public Health

Telehealth

Many doctors conducted telehealth appointments to reduce the potential for exposure to COVID. Telehealth was not unheard of before the pandemic but was not widely utilized. In the last week of March 2020, there was a 154% increase in telehealth visits compared with the same week in 2019. While telehealth appointments can be conducted over the phone, internet access is often preferred so a doctor can see the patient. This situation poses a problem in some areas of the NKADD region where broadband is either unreliable or unavailable. With telehealth to receive care while avoiding going to a hospital and reducing chances of exposure to COVID, those who cannot participate in it due to lack of broadband had to risk exposure to see a doctor or forego care.

Financial Impact

St. Elizabeth hospitals, the largest employer in the region with just over 10,000 employees, did not have to lay off or furlough a single employee[65]. While non-emergency medical services were postponed due to state mandates, employees working in those departments were reassigned to other departments still providing services[66]. Despite losing significant revenue through the pandemic, every employee remained on the payroll. In between virus surges, when more non-emergency services were able to resume, much of that revenue loss was recovered. CARES Act funding also played a crucial role in continuing payroll and recovering lost revenue[67]. Both Carroll County Memorial Health and St. Elizabeth Grant in Williamstown received a share of $3.88 million for the CARES Act. These funds allowed for purchasing Personal Protective Equipment for testing and laboratory services.

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[64] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/feb/09/a-third-of-covid-patients-put-on-ventilator-report-ptsd-symptoms
[65] https://www.stelizabeth.com/care/about/#:~:text=Our%20People,our%20family%2C%20friends%20and%20neighbors.
[66] https://www.stelizabeth.com/news/article/2020/06/05/exclusive-greater-cincinnati-hospital-system-raising-pay-for-thousands-of-workers#:~:text=Unlike%20other%20local%20hospital%20systems,ban%20on%20lucrative%20elective%20procedures.
[67] https://medicine.uky.edu/news/mcconnell-announces-uk-receive-38-million-cares-2020-04-28t12-45-01

The first hospital in the NKADD region to receive early vaccine doses was St. Elizabeth Edgewood in Kenton County. In February 2021, introducing more local vaccination sites allowed Covington, Owenton, Dry Ridge, Crittenden, and Carrollton to open locations at local pharmacies[68].

Senior Care

Amongst some of the hardest impacted communities during COVID-19 were senior communities. Northern Kentucky's senior centers were told to close their doors to respond to the crisis. They were losing a means to socialize with other seniors and access resources. Northern Kentucky's response saw major innovations that allowed for services to continue. This was due in part to pre-covid partnerships, volunteers, and resource reimagination, among other things that let the region's centers respond appropriately to COVID-19.

During the first year of the pandemic, senior centers were forced to keep their doors closed. This caused many issues for Northern Kentucky's seniors who needed continued access to food. To confront this challenge, Northern Kentuckians utilized organizations like Meals on Wheels, which were already providing services before COVID-19, to continue a steady flow of meals for seniors. This effort was further boosted by the actions of regional volunteers who would come to help distribute food through delivery and parking lot/ drive-through services. The region's senior service providers were also forced to think outside of the box. Detention centers in Pendleton County were used to deliver food to people, whereas before COVID-19 they were only used for cooking food. Food services were divided into a rural and urban response where urban senior care providers could maintain a level of coordination due to more personnel. In contrast, rural counties relied much more heavily on volunteers to help with staffing at food delivery and stocking events.

Many opened virtual options to provide social and health services. Holding virtual events like bingo, movies, and exercising through Facebook Meet and other virtual telecommunication services. All these options allowed seniors to find ways to stay connected during COVID-19. Virtual outreach also allowed families to find critical COVID-19 services, vaccine centers, and other COVID-19 resources, to continue being that focal point for their communities.

The region's senior centers closed at the onset of the pandemic, in March of 2020, and would not start opening to in person services until July 2021[69]. There were many complications with coming back; reservations had to be made to come back due to reduced capacity, which frustrated many seniors. They were excited to come back, but critical changes were present. Urban counties tended to focus more on those actively in the building, reducing virtual use, but this wasn't the case in rural counties. Rural senior centers have launched pilot programs, like in Pendleton County, which provide I-Pads to seniors to stay connected. They have also sought to develop many virtual services used during the pandemic that can impact senior health and wellbeing long-term. Resources like Share Bright and Senior Center without Walls allow participants to participate in senior events anywhere they have a broadband connection.

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[68] https://www.fox19.com/2021/02/11/live-gov-beshear-updates-weather-conditions-vaccine-distribution-sites-kentucky/
[69] https://www.nkytribune.com/2021/06/nky-senior-centers-operated-by-add-will-reopen-beginning-july-1-after-a-covid-imposed-hiatus/

Nonprofits Provide Support

Northern Kentucky's nonprofit organizations played many important roles throughout the pandemic. Critical operations like day care services, food insecurity, medical cost aid, and law services all played a factor in alleviating some of the strain COVID-19 placed on Northern Kentuckians. These resources allowed stability and access to other things that wouldn't have been available otherwise.

A significant concern for many families struggling with the economic impacts of COVID-19, especially those with children, was access to childcare facilities. Schools were often the primary childcare provider. The effects of schools and childcare facilities closing on March 20, 2020, were felt immediately. According to an EC Learn[70] spokesperson, an estimated 65% of women in the EC Learn area left their jobs due to a lack of childcare facilities. This strained businesses more, which were already struggling to stay fully staffed. Due to class size restrictions and pay issues, childcare organizations found it hard to remain staffed or hire new employees. Even then, by helping families find childhood care facilities and resources, EC Learn sought to alleviate some of this stress.

COVID-19 also influenced families who cannot afford life-sustaining medicines. Faith Community Pharmacy is one key organization that seeks to help with this problem[71]. For Faith Community Pharmacy, many challenges faced by the people they served were exacerbated by the pandemic. This was due to several factors, but the most significant reason was the increased population they served. Before COVID-19, they mainly served those who had a referral from an insurance provider or a doctor. Due to so

Source: Northern Kentucky Area Development District Twitter

many people losing their jobs and health insurance during COVID-19, they accepted anyone who needed help without a referral. To meet the growing need, they employed five full-time staff members, up from less than three in pre-covid years, and provided $ 5 million worth of medications on a $500,000 budget.

As people struggled with the economic implications of COVID-19, many were in danger of becoming homeless through loss of household income. People used Legal Aid of the Bluegrass (LABLAW) as a regional resource to confront the issue. They helped resolve the most critical problems of low-income and vulnerable people by providing high-quality legal assistance through direct representation, education, advice, assistance, and coordination[72]. This allowed Northern Kentuckians a good resource as

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[70] https://eclearn.org/about/
[71] https://www.faithcommunitypharmacy.org/
[72] https://lablaw.org/

evictions peaked. To help those affected by COVID-19, they created eviction fact sheets[73], a blanket letter for tenants to send to landlords, and legal aid for tenants experiencing "illegal lockouts."

Moving Forward

The way Northern Kentucky pushes forward in a post-pandemic world can help reduce the impact of future natural and manmade disasters. Many factors of Northern Kentuckians' lives had to change to be more productive and sustain a sense of normalcy in their day-to-day lives. While life, in many cases, has returned to normal, there are still many things' people can take that can play positive roles in Northern Kentucky's future. For health departments and nonprofits, this could allow them to reach "at-risk" populations better or make day-to-day tasks more productive.

Northern Kentucky's health departments played a significant role in the COVID-19 response. Coordinating state and local aid, they helped Northern Kentuckians respond to a health crisis that would see many families in the region's hospitals. Moving forward, some things that COVID-19 made them adjust to can be used to improve health departments. Three River District Health Department and Northern Kentucky Health relied heavily on county cooperation throughout the pandemic. Counties allowed health departments to better aid in the fight against misinformation, get updates out faster, and better staff events like testing and vaccine rollouts.

Further developing these relationships will better position health departments in the future. As the pandemic progressed, supplies of personal protective equipment and other vital resources were stretched thin. One way health departments were able to combat this was by constructing local stockpiles that weren't heavily supplied before COVID-19.

A further pooling of private partnerships also allowed health departments to provide services that may not have been provided otherwise. Northern Kentucky's nonprofit community service providers have played a key role in how things are done. They helped the Northern Kentucky community better themselves through adult education or providing cheap affordable medication for those in need. Many of these organizations could adapt and change for the better by utilizing regional broadband services. This service allowed Northern Kentucky's nonprofit organizations to help those they serve to access services throughout the pandemic. Moving forward, prioritization of services that provide both in-person and virtual options will enable service providers to access more and more people in any way these people choose.

Tourism

Shutting Down

Tourism in the greater Cincinnati area is a $5 billion industry that attracts 26.2 million visitors annually and employs 77,000 people[74]. Northern Kentucky, in the years before COVID-19, developed a diverse tourism market where all the counties felt economic benefits. Many valued tourist attractions were

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[73] https://lablaw.org/sites/default/EvictionFactSheet.pdf
[74] https://www.meetnky.com/industry-partners/

temporarily shut down that could not support outdoor operations or adapt to COVID-19 guidelines quickly. For some, this meant suspending operations and waiting for COVID-19 restrictions.

The travel industry in the United States and regionally in Northern Kentucky was among the first industries affected by COVID-19. Because of the impacts of COVID-19, meetNKY, the region's primary tourism board, was unable to sustain much of their employed staff and had to furlough many of them. This further complicated Northern Kentucky's tourist industry, reducing event capacity and leading to a smaller footprint than prior to COVID-19. Altogether, many of the region's tourist attractions chose to remain closed until further guidance from Governor Andy Beshear.

Reopening

Governor Andy Beshear notified Kentucky's parks and recreation hubs that they could reopen on May 15, 2020. Northern Kentucky's parks would soon open to the public. Many of the region's tourist attractions used the time to adjust to COVID-19 guidelines to help ensure guest safety. This adjustment took time, and many places didn't open right away. Northern Kentucky's Newport Aquarium did not open until June 22, 2020, after adding necessary health and safety measures for guests and employees[75]. Other locations like Northern Kentucky's state and regional parks could open quicker and had to adhere to social distancing and other COVID-19 guidelines.

Of those who chose to stay closed a little longer, Newport Aquarium opted to renovate facilities with a million-dollar investment[76]. Many regional restaurants that weren't being renovated were just as subject to COVID-19 restrictions as anywhere else. Many places on the B-Line, Northern Kentucky's self-guided Bourbon Trail, opted to provide both delivery and in-person services. Attempting to do both allowed these popular restaurants and bars a way of meeting more favorable economic outcomes by limiting the impact of in-person service restrictions. Northern Kentucky's Arc encounter opened on June 8, 2020, following the health and safety guidelines[77].

Credit: Cincinnati Enquirer

Moving Forward

Kentucky saw a loss of $2-3 billion in revenue from tourism[78]. In the years following COVID-19, Northern Kentucky's tourism industry began the process of recovery. As travel businesses began reopening in

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[75] https://www.newportaquarium.com/media/reopening-announcement/
[76] https://www.nkytribune.com/2020/07/newport-aquarium-emerges-from-long-shutdown-as-a-safe-and-entertaining-favorite-family-destination/
[77] https://arkencounter.com/reopening/
[78] https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/in-focus-shows/2021/08/10/tourism-on-the-rebound-in-ky

August 2021, the optimism of Kentucky's Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet increased. Northern Kentucky did many things to help push tourism forward once the COVID-19 pandemic ended. COVID-19 damaged all facets of the tourism industry in Northern Kentucky. So, the immediate years following were vital. By leveraging the more than $800,000 in tourism economic relief from the state, meetNKY sought to help bring new visitors to the community and further help those that weren't yet recovered[79]. The primary focus of these funds will go to the Kentucky pillars of bourbon, food, and horses.

Expanding the virtual footprint of Northern Kentucky tourism can provide a path for the industry's future growth. Ensuring the development of location-specific and regional tourist board websites can allow the continued increase in online traffic to pre-COVID numbers[80]. Many of Northern Kentucky's visitors travel an average of 288 miles. Good use of broadband to inform future visitors can provide new opportunities for signature attractions and local gems.

With Northern Kentucky's location between the two important rivers of Kentucky and the Licking rivers, outdoor parks are vital to many of the region's communities. Places like General Butler State Park, Big Bone Lick State Park, and Kincaid Lake State Park all played crucial roles in relieving the pressures of COVID-19. With the importance recognized, Governor Beshear would announce a $75 million investment into them[81].

Local and Regional Government

Providing Services

While the Northern Kentucky people were busy showing their creative side, so were its governing bodies. The key challenge was to continue providing vital administrative services while facilitating economic success in a challenging environment. The county and city administrations took ideas from partners or sought new and creative ideas from within.

One of the major concerns by many during the pandemic's early phases was how services that were reliant on human interaction overcome reduced capacity. Places like bars and restaurants had to rethink how to operate; in some cases, legal restraints hindered innovation. Northern Kentucky cities would help by expanding business resources and providing small grants through CARES ACT funding, with Dayton and Owen County as examples. The Kentucky Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) would also reimagine laws to allow businesses to sell alcohol on sidewalks, which had been previously restricted. Local jurisdictions would go even further and return ABC funds to companies. All these combined helped keep many of Northern Kentucky's bars and restaurants afloat.

Other than local business aid, some governing bodies elected to use CARES funding to expand broadband. When the pandemic began in March 2020 in Kentucky, critical shortcomings in broadband for many communities were apparent. The necessity to switch to broadband services in almost every

[79] https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/news/2022/03/25/kentucky-investing-in-tourism
[80] https://www.meetnky.com/about-us/2022-annual-report/
[81] https://www.whas11.com/article/news/local/kentucky-tourism-75-million-dollars-governor-andy-beshear-economy-recovering-after-pandemic/

organization across the region revealed obvious weaknesses that affected everyone's ability to respond appropriately.

Communities like Owenton saw themselves using churches in their community to supply broadband services that gave its citizens access to critical resources like doctors who had switched to online consulting only. Other communities used schools to provide similar services. One thing became apparent through these challenges with broadband. Now is the time to invest in it. Boone, Kenton, and Campbell counties used CARES funding to expand broadband access countywide. They partnered with Cincinnati Bell, a regional broadband provider, in 2021 to develop access to all their 207,000 addresses[82]. Many rural communities were able to use CARES funding to offset the overall costs of new broadband infrastructure. However, there are still imbalances in broadband access that can be further addressed in the future.

Other Challenges

Local Governments also had issues with rehiring people. Organizations like local law enforcement were often shorthanded, causing them to reach out to federal initiatives to fill essential roles[83]. In addition, the pandemic saw many government bodies lose people to early retirement. These were typically older people who were later in their careers. This caused a loss of knowledge because they needed more time to train personnel to fill these roles. To address this issue, communities could use CARES funding to hire full-time temporary positions to reduce the impact of long-time employees leaving.

Elections

The 2020 primary election in Kentucky was postponed from May 19 to June 23 in the hopes that the severity of the pandemic would decrease. Many counties made mail-in ballots available for all registered voters and opened a few centralized polling locations in the courthouses and select communities from June 1-23 by reservation only.

A pandemic during a presidential election year brought unprecedented changes to voting. Although Kentucky usually requires a reason for absentee voting, that was not the case in 2020. No-excuse absentee and early voting had a high turnout of votes cast. Early voting began a month before election day. Mail-in ballot rules had to be changed to accommodate arrivals as late as November 6.

ARPA Allocation and CARES funding

Northern Kentucky's cities and counties received CARES and ARPA funding both directly and indirectly from various sources and for various purposes.

Entitlement communities in KY, which is only the City of Covington in the NKADD area, collectively received over $607 million in ARPA funds directly through Treasury.

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[82] https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210729005977/en/Cincinnati-Bell-Announces-Partnerships-in-Northern-Kentucky-to-Invest-181M-and-Deliver-Fiber-Based-Gigabit-Internet-to-All-207000-Campbell-Kenton-and-Boone-County-Addresses-in-24-36-Months
[83] https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/local/northern-ky/2022/05/22/midst-shortage-covington-polic-federal-program-recruits/9482869002/

Non-entitlement communities in KY collectively received about $324 million total, which they accessed through the Department for Local Government (DLG).

One CARES-funded program through DLG was the CDBG-CV Utility Assistance. Cities and Counties could apply to DLG for this funding and those who completed the process received $50,000 allocations to work with partner agency NKCAC to provide utility assistance to residents in need.

Northern Kentucky's Next Steps

COVID-19 forced Northern Kentucky's governments, businesses, nonprofits, schools, and community organizations to pivot and reimagine how services were provided. Through innovative thinking and collaboration, the Northern Kentucky region was able to address any unforeseen challenges in a holistic wraparound approach.

Strategies for Northern Kentucky Economic Resiliency incorporate goals and objectives that will ensure economic vitality and resiliency in the future when faced with pandemic and disaster situations:

Strategies for Economic Resiliency

Goal 1: Expand broadband throughout the region

- Ensure equitable access to high-speed internet throughout the region
- Partner with utilities to provide dependable alternatives to traditional broadband infrastructure

Goal 2: Develop Strategies for Business and Community Resilience

- Develop preparedness plans to address scenarios that could create business disturbances
- Collaborate with community stakeholders and businesses to establish redundancy plans that address potential future disasters (natural and manmade)
- Encourage business adaptability to allow for quick response to changing business atmosphere

Goal 3: Promote the retention and attraction of employers and skilled talent

- Increase the number of visitors to the region through earned media
- Maximize regional arts and culture opportunities to create a sense of place
- Maintain a business-friendly environment to support economic growth

These strategies will play a vital role in addressing unforeseen problems. By working together and rethinking the expected, the region will be better prepared to tackle future occurrences with innovative and creative solutions.