

Assessment of Collaborative Groups

Prepared For:
Engage & Empower Committee
Fund For Our Economic Future



*Public Services Institute
of
Lorain County
Community College*

Prepared By:
Public Services Institute
Lorain County Community College
Shara L. Davis
Dean of Research, Institutional Effectiveness, & Public Services

January 2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION.....	2
II. PROFILE OF COLLABORATIVE GROUPS.....	3
III. ALIGNMENT WITH ANEO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.....	4
IV. IMPETUS FOR COLLABORATIVE WORK	5
V. ROLE OF HOST ORGANIZATIONS.....	6
VI. SUCCESSES TO-DATE.....	8
VII. CHALLENGES TO-DATE & SUPPORT NEEDS GOING FORWARD.....	10
VIII. FAMILIARITY WITH ANEO & RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS.....	12
IX. SUMMARY.....	14
X. APPENDICES	
A. LETTER TO COLLABORATIVE GROUPS.....	17
B. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS.....	18
C. DISCUSSION GUIDE.....	19-20
D. ADVANCE NEO AGENDA (ANEO)	21-24

I. INTRODUCTION

This research was commissioned by the Fund For Our Economic Future (FFEF) to inform the work of it's Engage and Empower Committee which has been charged with:

- Identifying steps to ensure that ANEO is an efficient, sustainable framework with identity and ownership, not only within FFEF but across the region
- Identifying and supporting development of regional champions, beyond FFEF, to take ownership and accountability for ANEO
- Helping FFEF define more clearly its role in the region's economic competitiveness work throughout Phase 3 and begin to frame philanthropy's role in that work beyond Phase 3

Knowing that many collaborative groups have been formed to help advance our region's economic competitiveness as outlined by the four strategic priorities of Advance Northeast Ohio (ANEO), the overall intent of this research was to understand more about the impetus for these collaborative groups, the nature of their work, the challenges or hurdles they face, and the kind of support they need going forward. Specific research objectives were as follows:

- Understand how and why collaborative groups come together (including underlying motivations)
- Assess the relationship of collaborative work to the strategic priorities and goals of ANEO
- Document the successes of collaborative work throughout our region
- Understand the impediments or barriers experienced thus far
- Determine the type of support needed to move collaborative work forward
- Identify ideas for strengthening identity and ownership of ANEO across the region

In-depth-interviews (IDI's) were the research method employed to satisfy overall research objectives. A total of 31 collaborative groups were contacted from across the 16 county region of Northeast Ohio. A copy of the discussion guide is contained in Appendix C.

Information gleaned from the research will be used to identify gaps between what is currently being done to propel our region forward and those areas requiring more attention to achieve our regional goals. Recognizing that the fate of all who live and work in Northeast Ohio is tied to the strength of our region as a whole, the Engage and Empower Committee hopes to establish a stronger network of individuals and organizations who are making significant contributions towards achievement of ANEO strategic priorities.

This research was performed by the Innovation Alliance, a partnership of Lorain County Community College, the University of Akron, and Stark State Technical College. The Public Services Institute of Lorain County Community College conducted the content analysis and prepared this final report.

II. PROFILE OF COLLABORATIVE GROUPS

The Fund for Our Economic Future identified collaborative groups known through their regional work. The Fund also networked across its membership to identify additional collaborative groups at the sub-regional and local levels. The research team was involved in the networking and outreach effort.

The 31 collaborative groups for which in-depth-interviews were performed do not represent an exhaustive list of all initiatives throughout the region. For example, our colleagues at Kent State University have identified 142 collaborative initiatives focused on government collaboration and efficiency. Similarly, there are a variety of economic development partnerships throughout Northeast Ohio (i.e., Ashtabula Growth Partnership, Team Lorain County, and the like) which were not included in this work with the exception of the Geauga Growth Partnership since this particular collaboration is the planning versus action state and we wanted to better understand the difference in support needs between these two groups.

The goal of the research was to talk with a mix of collaborative “ready” groups and mature collaborating groups. Collaborative “ready” groups were identified as initiatives in the planning phase that have not yet moved into implementation while collaborating groups were defined as those initiatives already taking collective action to help advance our region’s economic competitiveness. The table below displays the collaborative “ready” groups interviewed along with those we talked with who are in full implementation (or the action stage).

Collaborative “Ready” Groups (Planning Stage)	Collaborating Groups (Action Stage)
Geauga Growth Partnership	Ag-Bio Cluster Development
Higher Education Compact	Alliance for Working Together*
Mahoning Valley Manufacturing Coalition	Broadway Village P-16 Council*
Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium	Cradle to Career Alliance
Oberlin Project	Efficient Gov Now
Public Health Lorain County	Federal Funding Partnership
Promise Neighborhood*	Innovation Alliance
Cuyahoga Falls-Summit County Dispatch*	Innovation Fund
Boardman/Austintown Joint Fire District*	Lake County Manufacturing Roundtable
Parma-Cuyahoga County Dispatch*	Mahoning Valley P-16 Council
Regional Innovation Institute	Minority Business Center*
Trumbull County 911 Dispatch Consolidation*	NOCHE Talent Dividend
	NEOTEC
	ReacHigher P-16 Council
	Regional Prosperity Initiative
	RITE Board
	Stark Education Partnership
	Westshore Corridor Transportation Partnership
	Young Professionals Network

* Limited information was provided by these collaborative groups after repeated attempts to make contact.

A sincere attempt was also made to talk with a mix of collaborative groups working towards different strategic priorities of ANEO (i.e., Business Growth, Talent Development, Growth Through Racial and Economic Inclusion, and Government Collaboration and Efficiency). Alignment with ANEO strategic priorities and goals is discussed in the next section of this report. Furthermore, attempts were made to ensure a mix from different geographic areas across the region (i.e., initiatives with a broad, regional footprint but also initiatives focused on the sub-regional or local levels).

III. ALIGNMENT OF COLLABORATIVE WORK WITH ANEO PRIORITIES & GOALS

While attempts were made to interview collaborative groups working in each of the four priority areas of ANEO, fewer groups were found in the area of Racial and Economic Inclusion. However, most of the initiatives focused on Talent Development did indicate that “expanding access for isolated populations” is among key emphasis of their work. It may be that Racial and Economic Inclusion is more of a cross cutting goal than a separate priority in and of itself (i.e., could be integrated within each of the other three strategic priorities much in the same way that engagement and empowerment have been integrated as goals within each strategic priority). It is also important to note that many of the Talent Development initiatives are difficult to separate from business growth. In fact, many of the Talent Development groups described “engagement and empowerment of individuals and institutions to support and sustain a business growth system that generates jobs, higher incomes and more investments” – which is a goal under Business Growth – as one of their primary areas of focus. At the same time, the interplay between strategic priorities suggests that all four areas culminate in a sound economic development plan for our region.

Advance Northeast Ohio (ANEO) Strategic Priorities

Business Growth	Talent Development
<p>Entrepreneurial Activity: Innovation Fund, Ag-Bio Cluster, Federal Funding Partnership, Geauga Growth Partnership,</p> <p>Targeted Industry Clusters: Lake County Manufacturing Roundtable, Mahoning Valley Manufacturing Coalition, RITE Board, Ag-Bio Cluster, Federal Funding Partnership</p> <p>Incumbent Businesses: Lake County Manufacturing Roundtable, Mahoning Valley Manufacturing Coalition, Federal Funding Partnership</p> <p>Attraction: Ag-Bio Cluster</p> <p>Engage & Empower: Cradle to Career, ReacHigher, Stark Education Partnership, Mahoning Valley P-16, Broadway Village P-16, Ag-Bio Cluster, Young Professionals Network, Innovation Alliance</p>	<p>Personal Accountability for Learning: All P-16 Councils, NOCHE Talent Dividend, Higher Education Compact</p> <p>Align Talent with Market Needs: RITE Board, Innovation Fund Internship Program, Innovation Alliance, All P-16 Councils, Mahoning Valley Manufacturing Coalition, Lake County Manufacturing Roundtable</p> <p>Engage & Empower: All P-16 Councils, NOCHE, Oberlin Project, RITE Board, Innovation Alliance, Higher Education Compact</p>
Racial & Economic Inclusion	Government Collaboration & Efficiency
<p>Minority Enterprises: The Minority Center</p> <p>Expand Access for Isolated Populations: All P-16 Councils; NEOSCC, Higher Education Compact, Westshore Corridor Transportation Partnership</p> <p>Engage & Empower: NEOSCC</p>	<p>Transparent Government: EfficientGov Now</p> <p>Sharing for purposes of efficiency: Oberlin Project, Innovation Alliance, Public Health Lorain County, Trumbull 911 Dispatch, Boardman/Austintown Joint Fire District, Cuyahoga Falls-Summit County Dispatch, Parma-Cuyahoga County Dispatch, Westshore Corridor Transportation Partnership</p> <p>Infrastructure Systems Planning: Regional Prosperity Initiative, NEOSCC, Oberlin Project, Lorain County Community Alliance, Westshore Corridor Transportation Partnership</p> <p>Engage & Empower: EfficientGov Now</p>

Key Finding: It appears as if a gap exists (i.e., more could be done) around the strategic priority of Racial & Economic Inclusion or this is a cross cutting function which could be imbedded in each of the other three strategic priorities much in the way that engagement is incorporated.

IV. IMPETUS FOR COLLABORATIVE WORK

Understanding the origins, or how and why collaborative groups come together, was among the primary objectives of this research. A better understanding of the underlying motivations like the extent to which “community influencers” or “champions” drive start-ups along with other factors that contribute to the development of these collaborative groups will help the Engage and Empower Committee support the development of new regional champions, beyond FFEF, where identifiable gaps or needs are apparent. Based on the content analysis, there seem to be three pervasive factors contributing to the development of collaborative groups or initiatives:

- Leaders/champions who are instrumental in conceptualizing the work and finding or providing a “home” for the initiative
- Philanthropic and government funding
- Identification of unmet needs by community leaders/champions

Clearly there are community influencers or champions who are instrumental in the conceptual development and initial planning of collaborative initiatives. The vision of Dr. David Orr for the Oberlin Project, the work of Dr. Bill Ravlin and Dr. Casey Hoy for the Ag-Bio Cluster, the work of Dr. Roy Church for the Innovation Fund, the work of Dr. Luis Proenza for the Regional Innovation Institute, the work of these two Presidents for the Innovation Alliance, the work of Brian Benyo for the Manufacturing Coalition in the Mahoning Valley, Mayor Currin for the Regional Prosperity Initiative, Mayor Frank Jackson for the Higher Education Compact, and many other influential leaders throughout our region have been critical to the start-up of collaborative groups. In fact, it is unlikely many of these initiatives would have been developed without the visionary and diligent work of these individuals.

Another key impetus for collaborative work centers around philanthropic and government funding. Many key informants admitted that the collaborative groups would not have come to fruition had it not been for financial support provided. For example, EfficientGov Now would not have come to fruition without FFEF support, nor would the Federal Funding Partnership (via NorTech and other grantees of the Fund). The same can be said for the Young Professionals Network which has been financed through Cleveland Plus. The Nord Family Foundation provided start up funds for the Lorain County Community Alliance. KnowledgeWorks Foundation paved the way for development of many P-16 Councils throughout the region. The Wean Foundation provided support for the establishment of the Mahoning Valley P-16 Council. The Cleveland Foundation is developing the Higher Education Compact. Sisters of Charity has spear headed the Promise Neighborhood initiative. The Rite Board was initiated with funding by the Ohio Skills Bank. A HUD grant provided the primary impetus for NEOSCC (even though it is often described as a spin off of the Regional Prosperity Initiative). The U.S. Department of Commerce has been instrumental in the development of NEOTEC.

Regardless of whether or not initiatives were driven by the work of visionaries or philanthropic and government funding, most mature collaborating groups could easily describe unmet needs throughout the region as a primary motivation for their work. Need for mayors throughout the region to consider their role in economic development; young professionals not utilized as regional assets; no federal funding strategy or approach to federal government engagement; little access to capital for young, start-up technology companies, entrepreneurs with promising technology ideas struggling to find financial resources at proof of concept stage; mismatch between employer needs and workforce skill sets; low educational attainment; and many other needs were clearly articulated. There were some, however, who struggled to describe the unmet needs they were trying to satisfy.

Key Finding: *Community influencers are instrumental in the conceptual development and initial planning of collaborative initiatives. However, some are driven primarily by availability of philanthropic or government funding. Most, but not all, describe an unmet need as a primary motivation for their work. Those who could not describe an unmet need are also struggling to sustain their collaborative work.*

V. ROLE OF “HOST” ORGANIZATIONS

While it is easy to identify community influencers or visionaries who have been instrumental in the conceptual development and planning of collaborative initiatives, implementation or action seems to rest more with “host” organizations or those entities providing dedicated space, taking responsibility for convening partners, dedicating their own human resources to carry out the work, and sometimes providing financial support to move the work forward. Throughout the conversations we found some common characteristics of host organizations.

Common Characteristics of Host Organizations (i.e., Success Factors)

- See the collaborative work as directly tied to their core mission
- Strongly recognize that more can be accomplished collectively than through one organization alone. They are also less likely to be territorial in their approach
- Have an entrepreneurial culture (i.e., they are already thinking differently and bigger; some risk taking is evident)
- Demonstrate a keen willingness to invest their own resources in the collaborative work (particularly human resources with significant effort put into ongoing partnership development)
- Invest enormous time and effort in partnership development and see relationship building as key to their success
- Often serve as intermediaries or facilitators among partners
- Have strong credibility and are sometimes perceived as neutral entities

We were able to profile host organizations through a variety of different avenues. We derived this information, in part, by asking about the kind of future work envisioned for the collaborative group that might help achieve ANEO strategic priorities and goals. We also listened to the language used when key informants described the greatest accomplishments of their work. Groups with strong host partners (i.e., strong relative to the characteristics described above and a willingness to dedicate formal resources to the work) are very clear about the future direction of their work and how it relates to achievement of regional goals. However, those without strong host organizations are re-thinking their overall charge, some have had turn-over in leadership, and they tend to have difficulty describing their future role as articulately. In fact, some stated that staffing and “operationalizing” their work has been difficult. These tend to be the same initiatives that had difficulty identifying the unmet needs they were trying to tackle. Furthermore, some groups with strong host organizations questioned sustainability of the work should that organization cease to exist.

The importance of strong host organizations is further evidenced by the fact that many of the groups initiated primarily as a result of philanthropic or government funding, are also among those initiatives struggling to sustain. This includes the P-16 Councils, many of which said they have had turn over in leadership and staffing, and some of which are currently in the midst of re-framing their primary charge. Interestingly, it is also these groups who do not have a strong host organization. While many successes can be identified as a result of the Regional Prosperity Initiative, it too is a collaborative venture that lacked a strong host organization (even though three mayors dedicated enormous amounts of time/energy to the effort). The Westshore Corridor Transportation Partnership and its’ host organization, the Lorain County Community Alliance, are yet another collaborative group struggling to sustain. While there are likely a variety of contributing factors, this organization lost its host organization twice. On the flip side, without a strong host organization like Lorain County Community College, the RITE Board may have been terminated when initial government funding ran out.

While the groups interviewed are certainly not exhaustive of all collaborative groups in existence throughout our region, there do seem to be three sectors stepping up to serve as host organizations: higher education, philanthropy, and the business community.

Host Organizations		
Higher Education	Philanthropy	Business Community
OSU: Ag-Bio Initiative	FFEF: EfficientGov Now	Brian Benyo Company: Mahoning Valley Manufacturing Coalition
LCCC/UA: Innovation Alliance	Cleveland Foundation: Higher Education Compact	Cleveland Plus: Young Professionals Network
LCCC: Innovation Fund	Sisters of Charity: Promise Neighborhood, Stark Education Partnership	Lake County Manufacturing Roundtable
Oberlin College: The Oberlin Project	Wean Foundation: Mahoning Valley P-16 Council	Geauga Growth Partnership
LCCC: ReacHigher P-16 Council		NorTech: Federal Funding Partnership
LCCC: RITE Board		
LCCC: Public Health Lorain County		
LCCC: Lorain County Community Alliance		
UA: Regional Innovation Institute		
KSU: NEOTEC		

The role of higher education may not be surprising given that these are typically large institutions, with strong support and wrap around services (e.g., marketing offices), and they tend to have a large base of human resources compared to other types of host organizations. However, the profile (or common characteristics of good host organizations) should not be underestimated. The individuals we talked with who are housed or employed by these institutions seemed to have a unique set of values (for collaboration, innovation, risk taking, etc.).

The business community seemed most willing to dedicate financial resources to the start-up of collaborative initiatives. Often, a few business leaders pooled money to hire a director and they are sustaining the work (or plan to) as a membership organization. The role of philanthropy is evident, yet most philanthropic organizations will house or incubate an initiative for a period of time before the collaborative must find new resources to sustain itself. It is not clear whether philanthropy, as host organizations, are the best route to go in the future. This is similar to the very charge of the Engage & Empower Committee which was put in place within FFEF to ensure identity and ownership of ANEO beyond philanthropy. Again, many initiatives originally driven by philanthropic or government funding are also among the collaborative groups struggling to sustain (unless foundation support is still provided).

Key Finding: *While individual champions or visionaries are instrumental in the conceptual development and planning of collaborative groups, strong host organizations with a variety of specific characteristics appear to be vital for implementation (i.e., action) and overall sustainability of work.*

VI. SUCCESSES TO-DATE

When asked about successes to-date a variety of responses secured. A few pointed to measurable outcomes related to a very specific program or area of focus for the collaborative group while others focused on the spin-offs of their work, and still others referenced growth of the collaborative group or other similar initiatives across the region. Changes in mind-set and a growing recognition about the importance of working together as a region were common. However, there was one strong recurring theme – connectivity and networking – or what some described as “coming together” which was perceived as the greatest single accomplishment related to the work.

Coming Together!

- “Buy in from leadership of young professional organizations and stronger engagement in regional events”
- “Coming together of partner organizations with strong relationships and more partners have leveraged more funding”
- “Partners becoming an ecosystem. They are working together in new ways, trust is building”
- “Bringing 4 counties together regularly”
- “Engagement of numerous leaders and organizations to focus on issues and solutions for an entire continuum or learning”
- “Meaningful conversations”
- “Stronger network of government officials region wide”
- “Engagement of employers with provosts, faculty, career services personnel and the continuous feedback loop”
- “Coming together to talk with one another, admitting our deficits, identification of common goals, learning more about how interdependent we are, and recognizing common good versus traditional turf”
- “Bringing together a group of thought leaders and community stakeholders that have the capacity to improve NEO innovation ecosystem”

Other successes related specifically to the nature of the work on behalf of the collaborative group:

- Buy-in from leadership of young professional groups; evolution of social events into formal networking and stronger engagement in regional events
- Extremely talented core planning group, hiring of a managing director, and attraction of initial seed money to move forward
- Infrastructure development (software to monitor business activity and linkages within ag bio industry) and enhance networking occurring within agriculture
- Information gathering and sharing around government efficiency; efficiency initiatives are growing
- HUD grant top Northeast Ohio; more and more discussions about mergers among local governments; state incenting collaboration - growing recognition that fragmentation is not sustainable
- Bringing 4 counties together regularly; starting to do more targeting (like 8th graders). Will see results in 5 years
- Good programmatic outcomes via external evaluation (e.g., SPARK program worked with parents to help ensure kids are ready for kindergarten; Destination College Program another example)

- Community’s profound and overwhelmingly positive response to Mayor Jackson’s charge to promote student success and increase educational attainment through collaboration and collective impact
- Early and further development of a strong regional Consortium for collaborative, common ground for action
- Federal earmark from Congresswoman Sutton in support of the Alternative Analysis Phase One completion
- Moving beyond the “lone wolf” tendency of natural competitors and creation of a single voice for industry. Instead of stealing from one another, members now recognize the need to expand the talent pool for future prosperity of individual businesses and overall competitiveness of the region as a whole

Key Finding: *“Coming together” for collective, meaningful action was the number one theme of success to-date demonstrating that progress is being made towards thinking and acting as a region. When asked about future contributions to ANEO, stronger “connections”, “networking”, “collaborations”, “ecosystems” and “new cultures” were common responses. This corroborates a new set of values for our region consistent with ANEO.*

VII. CHALLENGES TO-DATE & SUPPORT NEEDS GOING FORWARD

Challenges To-Date:

A variety of challenges were identified for collaborative groups:

- **Change/Turn Over in Leadership**
 - Young professionals age – turn over is constant; region needs more companies to form young professional groups – while there is currently a large number of groups across the region, there is a need to grow these groups and bring their leadership together
 - Continuous change in leadership (school superintendents, principals and will get worse with Senate Bill 5)

- **Lack of Resources**
 - Staffing resources are a problem; operationalizing the work is difficult
 - Continued financing (RITE Board, Mahoning Valley P-16, Westshore Corridor Transportation Partnership)

- **Other**
 - System established can't handle volume (Innovation Fund)
 - Diversity of employers in need of IT talent; bandwidth of employers (i.e., lack of time to participate, communicate, support through work based learning or other avenues, and provide feedback in efficient and effective ways); institutional centric ideas and thinking; need for continuous learning – IT talent development industry is complicated; funding for leadership and staffing of the RITE Board
 - Garnering community support for the project given that it is a transformation of culture and may be met with some resistance. Other challenges include changes to governing policies and policies regarding energy consumption. (The Oberlin Project)
 - Open source versus competitive business development – networking occurs differently within agriculture (OARDC)
 - State of Ohio taxation policies (RPI).
 - How and what is proper structure to get community members together and get something accomplished; sometimes people are too anxious to get something done yet we need more focus; what is the best way? (P-16 Council)
 - Time – will take time. Delivery is a tapestry not a patch work quilt. Can slow the momentum.
 - Developing and maintaining collaborative, open and ongoing communication with regional organizations (Regional Innovation Institute)
 - Magnitude of this undertaking is in and of itself challenging. Balancing the need for solid planning with the urgency of the issues and need for action. The work is multi-faceted and will require the coordination of many organizations and volunteers in order to ensure progress (Mahoning Valley Manufacturing Coalition)
 - Changing the mindset and overall image of public transportation (Westshore Corridor Transportation Partnership)
 - The embedded structural fragmentation of NEO's capital planning systems makes actualizing regional planning and development extremely challenging. By way of example, Cincinnati and Columbus do their regional transportation planning through single region-wide Metropolitan Planning Organization. NEO does identical work through four independent MPOs, each serving one of the region's four metropolitan areas. Such structural fragmentation limits the capacity of the region to act regionally (NEOSCC)

Support Needs Going Forward:

Similar to successes to-date, when asked about support needed going forward, many reiterated the need to build on current success and make further connections. Common themes included:

Making Further Connections:

- Assistance connecting young professionals with colleges/universities
- Need more partners in specific technology areas to grow
- Connections with industries to accelerate/catalyze/speed up supply chains and cluster development
- Connections with funding networks (like national foundations)
- Active engagement of chambers and other industry groups to adapt and endorse deliberate engagement with the talent development network
- Building a network of support around the region

Access to Quality Data/Information & Metric Development

- Real time availability of quality industry and labor market data (government sources are outdated; new and emerging industry and occupation data are not included)
- Common metric development among P-16 Councils

Advocacy through state legislature

All other support needs were very tailored or specific to the collaborative initiative.

VIII. FAMILIARITY WITH ANEO & RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

Familiarity with ANEO:

All key informants were asked about their familiarity with Advance Northeast Ohio (ANEO), Voices & Choices, and the Fund for Our Economic Future. Many of the collaborative groups had strong familiarity with ANEO, but, only if the original regional champion or host organization was (or is currently) a member of the Fund for Our Economic Future (i.e., Ag-Bio Cluster Initiative, Regional Prosperity Initiative, Federal Funding Partnership, EfficientGov Now, Young Professionals Network, RITE Board, Innovation Fund, Innovation Alliance, The Oberlin Project, Northeast Ohio Sustainable Communities Consortium, Regional Innovation Institute, etc.). However, if there was no formal association with FFEF, there was very limited familiarity or knowledge of ANEO (i.e., Higher Education Compact, P-16 Councils, Public Health Lorain County, Cuyahoga Falls-Summit County Dispatch, Parma-Cuyahoga County Dispatch, Mahoning Valley Manufacturing Coalition, etc.). What was interesting was the fact that almost everyone remembered Voices & Choices (with only a couple of individuals who were newer to the region). But even some who participated in, or were aware of Voices & Choices didn't make the connection to ANEO (i.e., did not realize Voices & Choices culminated in ANEO or a strategic plan for economic development for the Northeast Ohio region). This means there is opportunity to take additional steps to ensure that ANEO has identity and ownership, not only within FFEF but across the region.

Recommended Strategic Goals to Add to ANEO:

After having the opportunity to review the strategic priorities and goals in greater depth (for those who were not familiar with ANEO), key informants were asked to describe any goals they believe should be added to the agenda. The most common response was “retention and attraction of young talent” which was mentioned by 7 different collaborative groups.

Recommendations to Refine ANEO Strategic Goals:

- Overarching Recommendations:
 - Expand state and federal funding in support of ANEO goals (3)
 - Recommend policy changes at the state level in support of ANEO goals (4)
- Consider Adding to Business Growth:
 - Stimulate innovation within existing companies (1)
 - Connect natural and business ecosystems to promote environmental and economic sustainability (2)
 - Strengthen international trade support for entrepreneurial ventures and existing businesses (i.e., more emphasis on global trade programs versus domestic opportunities only) - 1
- Consider Adding to Talent Development:
 - Retention and attraction of young talent (7)
- Consider Adding to Government Collaboration & Efficiency:
 - Add the word “effectively” in addition to “efficiently” (3)

Recommendations to Strengthen Identity & Ownership of ANEO:

When asked about ways to strengthen identity and ownership of ANEO, many recommended that the agenda be translated:

- “Be more succinct about what people can do; people can't relate to the agenda”
- “People need to become participants in carrying out the agenda”
- “ANEO doesn't characterize things people have passion around”

- “Clarity on how people can help”
- “I need to better understand the purpose of ANEO before I can help promote it”
- “It is important that ANEO continue to reach out to communities with its successes and goals, as the Voices & Choices initiative started”

Interestingly, the conversations were much different when people were asked to think about what they do to contribute to the goals of ANEO. People became much more enthusiastic and proud about their contributions. This means strategies to help people feel excited about their contributions to regional goals will likely generate more identity and ownership of ANEO into the future. For example, one individual recommended that FFEF request collaborative groups include a link to ANEO on their websites along with a statement of support like, “We proudly promote the priorities and goals of ANEO, our region’s economic competitiveness agenda”.

Other suggestions to strengthen identity and ownership of ANEO included:

- Creation of tool kits (to promote ANEO and participate in it)
- Video contests (e.g., why you like working in NEO)
- Share concrete examples of success
- Present ANEO face-to-face, talk about it – don’t send brochures
- Promote ANEO first, not FFEF (“powered by ANEO, not driven by FFEF”)

Target audiences to concentrate on included:

- Communicate through employers (HR directors)
- Promote to Chambers so they can promote to their members
- FFEF Grantees/members: put ANEO on their websites
- Identify sub-regional supporters and brand through them at the community level
- Focus on local and state government officials then to their constituents

Regional Engagement:

When asked if collaborative groups would be willing to come together periodically with other initiatives around the region who have similar goals, responses were mixed. Many indicated they would not necessarily come together at the sub-regional level and in fact, saw this as a direct duplication of their work/role. Many also indicated they would not come together if no clear agenda or intended outcomes were established. Some asked the question, “come together to do what?” Others cautioned the Fund that convening and reconvening too much will “confuse people” and make folks “disinterested”. However, many indicated they would be willing to come together for specific purposes such as P-16 Councils to build on the work of Sherrod Brown’s office, develop a common metric system and pursue joint funding applications. Some of the talent development initiatives talked about “real” engagement of the business community with the talent development system by industry cluster. Others said they would come together if it helped them make the “meaningful” connections they need to make or if other participants have similar goals.

Key Finding: *Currently, ANEO is recognized as an initiative of the Fund for Our Economic Future and those who have no association of affiliation with fund also have limited knowledge, identity and ownership of ANEO. However, the conversations changed when people were asked to think about what their collaborative groups currently do to contribute to the goals of ANEO. Strategies to help people feel excited about their contributions to regional goals will likely generate more identity and ownership of ANEO (versus trying to “sell” or garner buy-in for ANEO as an FFEF initiative).*

IX. SUMMARY

➤ **Steps to ensure that ANEO is an efficient, sustainable framework with identity and ownership, not only within FFEF but across the region**

Enhance Awareness of ANEO

- Employ strategies that get people excited about their contributions to ANEO goals. For example, request collaborative groups include a link to ANEO on their websites along with a statement of support like, “We proudly promote the priorities and goals of ANEO, our region’s economic competitiveness agenda”
- Create tool kits to promote ANEO and help others participate in it
- Continue to help publicize successes and sanction public support (especially for government collaboration and efficiency initiatives)
- Translate the agenda for targeted audiences (i.e., there is a need for greater clarity about what people can do to help carry out the agenda)
- Continue to present ANEO face-to-face and talk about it (i.e., larger speakers bureau – beyond work of FFEF staff)

➤ **Possible ways to develop and strengthen regional champions, beyond FFEF, to take ownership and accountability for ANEO**

Proactively “check back in” with existing collaborative groups to help ensure their success (i.e., ensuring strong host organizations with the characteristics described herein that contribute to success).

Identify and work with new collaborative groups to help ensure the characteristics of successful work are in place.

Strengthen Connectivity Among Collaborative Groups

Partnership development or networking and connectivity are not only touted as the greatest successes to date, there seems to be much opportunity to connect collaborating groups which might be a reasonable task for the Engage and Empower committee given its charge. The following connections among collaborative groups are good examples:

- Ag Bio Cluster Initiative with Oberlin Project
- NEOSCC with Oberlin Project
- Young Professionals Network with Oberlin College & The Innovation Alliance
- RITE Board with Lake County and Mahoning Valley Manufacturing Coalitions/Roundtables
- Geauga Growth Partnership with Innovation Fund
- NEOTEC with FFEF Grantees (i.e., first order economic development organizations)
- Higher Education Compact with Sub-regional P-16 Councils
- Sub-regional groups working on consolidation of dispatch services, public health, and other government services (only some of these groups are making the connections on their own)

Target Regional Engagement Efforts

- **Business Growth**
 - Host targeted sessions on emerging technologies for both Business Growth and Talent Development Groups (what are the emerging opportunities and how can we approach more strategically for our region?)
 - Forum for collaborative group updates with regional economic development leaders
- **Talent Development**
 - Bring P-16 Councils together to help create a common system of metrics
- **Government Collaboration & Efficiency**

- Engage mature collaborating groups with those in thinking/planning stages *by subject matter* (i.e., more targeted than recent Efficient Gov Now convenings). For example, bring 911 dispatch initiatives together (Trumbull 911, Lorain County 911 with Westshore Corridor group), or public health initiatives together (Portage and Lorain county initiatives with Summit County), etc.
- Forum for government collaboration initiatives on state government Innovation Fund dollars to be available in March 2012.

➤ **Possible roles for FFEF in the region’s economic competitiveness work throughout Phase 3 and philanthropy’s role in that work beyond Phase 3**

Grow Capacity for State Advocacy Relative to ANEO Goals (and for those collaborative groups contributing to goal attainment)

Enhance Access to Quality Data/Information Around Emerging Technologies (i.e., government labor market sources are outdated; new and emerging industries and occupations not included). Maybe a role for the Regional Innovation Institute (a new collaborative initiative in the planning stage now)?

Consider the feasibility of a regional pool of funds to support government collaboration and efficiency initiatives (within FFEF similar to EfficientGov Now or external to FFEF)

Develop a Strategy to Strengthen Regional Inclusion Work (i.e., where collaborative groups appear to lacking).

Refine ANEO Strategic Goals

- Overarching Recommendations:
 - Expand state and federal funding in support of ANEO goals
 - Recommend policy changes at the state level in support of ANEO goals
- Consider Adding to Business Growth:
 - Stimulate innovation within existing companies
 - Connect natural and business ecosystems to promote environmental and economic sustainability
 - Strengthen international trade support for entrepreneurial ventures and existing businesses (i.e., more emphasis on global trade programs versus domestic opportunities only)
- Consider Adding to Talent Development:
 - Add retention and attraction of young talent
- Consider Adding to Government Collaboration & Efficiency:
 - Add “effectively” in addition to “efficiently”

APPENDICES

- A. LETTER TO COLLABORATIVE GROUPS**
- B. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**
- C. DISCUSSION GUIDE**
- D. ADVANCE NEO AGENDA (ANEO)**



March 11, 2011

«Salutation» «First_Name» «Last_Name»
 «Title»
 «Organization_Name»
 «Street»
 «City», «State» «Zip_Code»

Dear «Salutation» «Last_Name»,

You have been identified by the Fund for Our Economic Future as a key contact for a collaborative initiative that is helping to advance our region's economic competitiveness as outlined by the four strategic priorities of Advance Northeast Ohio (ANEO). Enclosed for your convenience is an updated version of ANEO. When the Fund launched the Voices & Choices initiative in 2005 to engage tens of thousands of people in the creation of this agenda, the hope was that people would help support that which they helped create. We fully recognize that achieving the economic development goals of our region will require many people and organizations, and that the Fund is but one small piece of the overall equation. We know you and many others are working diligently to help realize the goals set forth within ANEO.

The Fund for Our Economic Future is at a point where it would like to better understand more about the impetus for collaborative groups and initiatives, the nature of the work, how it relates to – or helps advance – the strategic priorities and goals of ANEO, the challenges or hurdles you have faced, and the kind of support needed to help strengthen your efforts going forward. To this end, two of our members, Lorain County Community College and the University of Akron, are assisting us with identification and mapping of collaborative groups and initiatives region-wide. Over the next couple of weeks, you will be contacted by a representative of these institutions to schedule a time and location that is convenient for you to discuss your work. We anticipate the discussion to last approximately one hour and the discussion guide will be provided to you ahead of time. Attached is an informational piece which describes this effort in greater detail.

It is very important that we understand and embrace all that is being done to propel our region forward. We will use information gleaned from this effort to identify the gaps between what is currently being done and those areas requiring more attention to achieve our regional goals. Because the fate of all who live and work in Northeast Ohio is tied to the strength of our region as a whole, we also hope to establish a stronger network of individuals and organizations who are making significant contributions to Northeast Ohio so that you may learn from each others efforts. Thank you in advance for your consideration and assistance.

Respectfully,

Brad Whitehead
 President

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Advance Northeast Ohio?

- Advance Northeast Ohio is often referred to as our region's economic competitiveness agenda.
- ANEO was shaped by more than 20,000 people who participated in Voices & Choices, as well as economic research (the Dashboard of Economic Indicators) and the review of scores of various plans from cities, counties, chambers and others.
- In essence, ANEO is a strategic plan to help guide and focus our efforts to make Northeast Ohio even more competitive in the global economy.
- ANEO is comprised of a vision for our region, a set of core values that guide how we should think and act, and specifies strategic priorities and goals informed by careful research and the civic engagement process mentioned above.

What constitutes a “collaborative” group or initiative?

- For the purpose of this work, “collaborative groups” involve groups of individuals or organizations coming together around a common agenda or purpose – in this case, helping NEO be more competitive in the global economy as defined by the strategic priorities and goals of ANEO.
- Collaborative groups often take the form of initiatives or partnerships and are typically convened and coordinated by an existing organization which provides resource support including administrative services, staffing, etc.
- There are different levels of collaborating groups:
 - Collaborative Groups: are already taking some kind of collective action to help advance our region's economic competitiveness.
 - Collaborative Ready Groups: are typically in the planning phase but have not yet moved into implementation (or aren't yet taking action).
 - Emerging Collaborative Groups: consist of individual organizations or groups of organizations that could be activated to begin collaborating with others.

How were you identified as a key contact of a collaborative group?

- The Fund for Our Economic Future identified collaborative groups known through their regional work.
- The Fund also networked across its membership to identify additional collaborative groups at the sub-regional or local level.
- We are also interested in any insights you may have about additional collaborating groups.

What are the objectives of the assessment and mapping of collaborative groups?

- Assess the relationship of collaborative work to the strategic priorities and goals of ANEO.
- Identify both the nature and extent of collaborative work thus far as well as planned or new initiatives going forward.
- Document the successes of collaborative work throughout our region.
- Understand the impediments or barriers experienced thus far.
- Determine the type of support needed to move the collaborative work forward.
- Determine broader lessons about what is required for future collaborative groups to mobilize and be successful.

How will this information be used?

- To identify the gaps between what is and is not being done relative to ANEO strategic priorities and goals.
- To strengthen efforts where gaps exist.
- To determine the type of support needed to strengthen the work of collaborative groups.
- To strengthen the network of collaborative groups so they can help monitor progress, learn from each others efforts, and help strategize to make our regional efforts stronger.

Will results be readily available?

- YES! We would be delighted to share the results with your collaborative group.
- In fact, not only do we need you to share information with us, we are interested in your reactions to the results and very much want your help determining implications of the information for our regional work.

Contacts:

- Chris Thompson, Fund for Our Economic Future, cthompson@futurefundneo.org, 216.456.9802
- Shara L. Davis, Lorain County Community College, sdavis@lorainccc.edu, 440.366.7928
- Holly Harris Bane, University of Akron, harrisb@uakron.edu, 330.972.7508

Discussion Guide
(Assessment of collaborating groups)

Nature & Support of the Initiative/Collaborative

1. I'd like to start by talking about the impetus for this initiative. How did it begin? Who initiated the work of this collaborative venture?

2. Could you describe the nature of this initiative/collaborative?

Probes:

- a) What is it intended to do or accomplish?
- b) How is the work carried out?
- c) To what extent is collaboration a part of this initiative? Why or how is it important?

3. Is there an organization or set of organizations that provide administrative, convening, staffing, and other support to this initiative? [If Yes, what organizations and what kind of support do they provide?]

Familiarity & Relationship to Advance Northeast Ohio Priorities/Goals

4. Describe your familiarity with Advance Northeast Ohio – or what is also known as our region's economic competitiveness agenda.

Probes:

- a. Were you a part of Voices & Choices?
- b. Have you heard of ANEO?
- c. What do you know about ANEO?
- d. How familiar are you with the work of the Fund for Our Economic Future?

5. [Share and review ANEO brochure] We are interested in learning more about the kinds of things your initiative/collaborative is currently involved in that might help advance the strategic priorities and goals of ANEO? Which of the priorities/goals are applicable to the work of your initiative and what kind of work are you doing in relation to these priorities/goals?

Applicable Strategic Priority	Applicable Goal	Nature of work to help advance priority/goals

6. What kind of work is envisioned for the future of this initiative?

7. How might some of your future work help advance the region's economic competitiveness goals?

8. Having had the opportunity to review the strategic priorities and goals in greater depth, can you describe any goals you believe should be added to the ANEO agenda?

Probes:

- a. What kind of goals do you think are missing that are worth striving for to make our region more competitive in the global economy?
- b. Why do you think it is important to add this goal(s)?
- c. What difference would this make for our region?

Developing Shared Outcome Measures

9. Many strategic plans or agendas have some kind of outcome measures or metrics from which to monitor progress towards strategic priorities and goals.
- Do you currently have a set of outcome measures or metrics used to monitor the progress of your work? [If yes, ask for a copy of outcome measures used]
 - To what extent might these metrics be used to monitor progress region-wide (as it relates to the goals of NEO)?
 - Do you have any further recommendations regarding a common set of outcome measures for ANEO?

Support Needed to Move Collaborative Work Forward

10. What would you describe as the greatest successes related to your initiative/collaborative effort? How might these successes help make our region more competitive?
11. What kind of support might help your initiative strengthen or build upon your successes?
12. Other than funding, what are some of the greatest challenges or barriers that limit the success of your initiative?
13. Other than funding, what kind of support could your initiative benefit from most to help overcome these barriers?
14. If you had access to this kind of support, what difference do you think it would make for your initiative and the region's economic competitiveness work?

Recommendations to Strengthen Identity & Ownership of ANEO

15. The more people and organizations working towards a common agenda or set of strategic priorities and goals, the stronger the outcome is likely to be. What thoughts or ideas do you have regarding broader dissemination of ANEO so that our region has a common agenda to work from?
- Probes:
- What audiences should be targeted?
 - What mediums should be used to reach these audiences?
16. Overall, what thoughts or ideas do you have to help develop greater identity and ownership of ANEO across the region?
17. Would you be willing to come together periodically with other initiatives around the region who have similar goals?
- Probes:
- What, if anything, do you think could be gained by bringing collaborative groups/initiatives together?
 - What about connecting mature collaborating groups (or those who are further along in their work) with younger collaborating groups who are just getting started? Might there be any benefit in this approach?



ADVANCE
NORTHEAST OHIO

Changing Connected Competitive

www.AdvanceNortheastOhio.org



Dear Northeast Ohio Resident,

We are pleased to share with you this update on Advance Northeast Ohio, our region's economic competitiveness agenda. Launched in 2007 by the Fund for Our Economic Future, Advance Northeast Ohio is based on the ideas and priorities that tens of thousands of you shared through your participation in Voices & Choices.

Our regional community of 16 counties, five metropolitan areas, and hundreds of cities, towns and villages is home to more than four million people and a \$170 billion economy. We have come to understand that the fate of all who live and work in Northeast Ohio is tied to the strength of our region as a whole. Advance Northeast Ohio articulates a vision for our region; identifies a set of values and beliefs that guide how we need to act; and specifies strategic priorities and

goals that we must collectively pursue to make Northeast Ohio more competitive in the global economy.

Our regional community is making strides, but there is much work ahead. As you review this updated agenda, we hope it inspires you to help advance our region further.

It is important that we understand and embrace the work you are already doing to help achieve the strategic goals set forth in Advance Northeast Ohio. Please visit www.AdvanceNortheastOhio.org to share your work, additional ideas you have for strengthening our region and what you think success will look like.

*One region, one future.
The Fund for Our Economic Future*

Vision: Northeast Ohio will be the most vibrant economic region in the country.

A vibrant economic region includes:

- Empowered individuals fully engaged in the work of creating a healthy, growing regional economy
- Established and emerging employers grow through innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Growing, interconnected core communities and prosperous rural communities that are enhanced by thoughtfully preserved working lands, natural habitats, green spaces and recreational amenities
- Residents who participate fully in learning and economic opportunities
- Collaborative local governments that support sustainable growth

The Advance Northeast Ohio agenda as of October 2010



ADVANCE NORTHEAST OHIO

Regional Values and Beliefs



Achieving the region's vision demands shared regional values and beliefs that are embedded into all of our efforts to revitalize our region's economy. Northeast Ohio embraces and encourages:

Collaboration:

Collaboration among individuals, organizations, sectors and communities makes our region stronger and more productive. Together, we can compete successfully with other regions of the United States and the world in the global economy.

Innovation:

Creativity and innovation foster regional economic development and growth, as well as hope and optimism for the future.

Inclusion:

We embrace all persons and believe engagement will contribute to the success of our region's economic transformation. We strive to be a welcoming community.

Engaged, Empowered Individuals:

Residents have an invaluable role to play in shaping the region's vision and priorities for the future. Northeast Ohio empowers residents to take actions that transform their own and the region's economic futures.

Continuous Learning:

Northeast Ohio values continuous preparation for the challenges of the future and residents have easy access and clear paths to learning that elevate their educational attainment and strengthen their economic future.

Sustainable Systems:

We strive for change that is both systemic and sustainable into the future.

Strategic Priorities and Goals



The Advance Northeast Ohio agenda has four strategic economic priorities and related goals focused on growing jobs, incomes and investments. Together, these priorities and goals serve as a roadmap for all partners in the shared implementation and achievement of the vision.

BUSINESS GROWTH

Goals:

- Accelerate entrepreneurial activity
- Grow targeted industry clusters through research, innovation and commercialization
- Transition manufacturers to serve growing industry clusters
- Grow and retain incumbent businesses
- Attract growing companies
- Engage and empower individuals and institutions to support and sustain a business growth system that generates jobs, higher incomes and more investments

TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Goals:

- Build confidence and personal accountability for continuous learning so residents have the skills, training and education needed to support a vibrant economy
- Align the region's talent development system so it is market driven and meets the needs of the region's targeted industry clusters
- Engage and empower education, workforce and economic development providers to support and sustain a system that increases educational attainment, continuous learning and the confidence and quality of the workforce of the region

GROWTH THROUGH RACIAL & ECONOMIC INCLUSION

Goals:

- Grow the number and size of minority-owned enterprises
- Expand access for racially and economically isolated residents to educational, training and business opportunities
- Engage and empower minority leaders and others to support and sustain a system that generates economic access and opportunities for all residents, particularly historically isolated populations

GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION & EFFICIENCY

Goals:

- Encourage transparent local government expenditures and service delivery
- Expand local government cooperation, collaboration and sharing to efficiently deliver services and promote regional business growth
- Implement infrastructure systems planning and investments based on integrated regional data and public engagement
- Inform, engage and empower residents to advocate and advance more responsive, effective local governments

What does success look like?

You tell us. Visit us at: www.AdvanceNortheastOhio.org

Be part of
our region's
progress.

Visit www.AdvanceNortheastOhio.org and:

- Add your vision for a vibrant Northeast Ohio
- Include your work, as an individual or an institution, that addresses the goals of Advance Northeast Ohio
- Learn how to become more involved in the work to Advance Northeast Ohio
- Help define success for Advance Northeast Ohio

Stay connected with Advance Northeast Ohio



AdvanceNEO



Advance Northeast Ohio



www.AdvanceNortheastOhio.org

Advance Northeast Ohio is supported by:



FUND FOR OUR
ECONOMIC FUTURE

www.FutureFundNEO.org