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INSTITUTE

Creating Resilient Communities through the Entrepreneurial Communities Activation Process (ECAP)



What is ECAP?

Entrepreneurial Communities Activation Process

- **ECAP is a holistic approach**
- **ECAP helps communities understand**
 - *unique characteristics,*
 - *community assets*
 - *potential opportunities for growth*





Why ECAP?

- **Communities**

- *Visionary thinking*
- *Entrepreneurial leadership*
- *Build synergistic relationships*
- *Increased ability to leverage resources*
- *Attract and retain a working age population*
- *Empower community economic growth*





Background

- Eight pilot communities
- Funded by the Rural Futures Institute
- Four facilitated conversations focused on eight characteristics
- The Discovery Tool gathers input from the entire community on these characteristics





The Process





Discovery Tool



New ECAP Discovery Tool 2015

Community Characteristics

If there are some questions you aren't familiar with or if you can't answer them, you can leave them blank and move on to the next question.

1. To what extent do the following items describe your community?

My community...

	Not at all	A little	Moderately	Mostly	Completely
Has a strong identity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is open to new ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has leaders who engage and empower citizens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Includes a majority of residents who strongly identify with the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provides and maintains adequate infrastructure for agriculture, business, manufacturing and industry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has leaders who use technology for governing and managing the community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Community Conversations

- **Focus on the Eight Characteristics**
 - *Evidence, Build Vitality and Strengthen*
- **Discovery Tool Results**
 - *Conversation on results and their implications*
- **Priorities**
 - *Discuss initial priorities*
- **Action Plan**
 - *Community members create an action plan*



ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

LEADERSHIP



- The community environment is open and creative
- Leaders are motivated to improve the economic and social well-being in the community
- Collaboration exists between elected officials, business leaders, schools, community organizations and others to address challenges and establish goals
- The community trusts its leaders
- Potential leaders are identified, developed and nurtured
- Policies are established which support entrepreneurial development



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Conversation Example

Entrepreneurial Communities Activation Process

- **Evidence**
 - *Where do you see evidence that the characteristic is in your community?*
- **Build Vitality**
 - *How can the characteristic build vitality?*
- **Strengthen Your Community**
 - *How can characteristic be strengthened in community?*





What Participants Said

“I was new to the community when the ECAP process began, and I frankly can’t imagine a better way to get to know a community in a hurry. I feel a sense of connection to and investment that it might have taken me months or years to achieve without this process.” Community Participant



Benefits

Entrepreneurial Communities Activation Process

- Engagement
- Increased Communication
- Shared Vision
- Empowerment of Community Members
- Motivation to Take Action





Outcomes

Entrepreneurial Communities Activation Process

- Economic Development Corporation Formed
- Young Professional Group Organized
- Community Vision Statement Developed
- Community Calendar Created





Keys to Success

- Forming a Steering Team
- Using an Outside Facilitator
- Getting People to the Conversations
- Creating and Sharing a Vision
- Keeping People Engaged
- Documenting the Process
- Maintaining the Momentum
- Celebrating Success



Nebraska CEC Conference

- McCook, Nebraska – April 19 and 20, 2017





Join Us In McCook!





More Information

Entrepreneurial Communities Activation Process

- Go online to:
<http://communityvitality.unl.edu/ecap>

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