



Organizing a County Prosperity Summit

ESTABLISH A LEADERSHIP TEAM

We suggest you use a “Leadership Team” to organize your summit. The work of the leadership team includes:

1. Selecting a sector(s) for the Summit to focus on
2. Identifying individuals and organizations to be invited and conducting outreach
3. Ensuring logistics for the event are covered and welcoming participants to the Summit
4. Compiling a summary report on the outcomes of the summit
5. Sharing the results of the summit with stakeholders and the broader community

This document covers #1-3 above. The fourth and fifth tasks are covered in a separate document: “Capturing and Sharing Prosperity Summit Outcomes.”

We know you will engage just the right people on the leadership team! We encourage you to include 3-7 individuals who:

- Have credibility and influence in the community and the *chosen sector*
- Have passion and are able to light a fire under potential participants (Maybe the person who completed the application!)
- Will provide sweat equity and get the work done

SELECT A SECTOR(S) FOR THE SUMMIT

So often, community development focuses on inviting *all* the support organizations acting in a community who might *possibly* contribute to addressing a wide-reaching problem. While this “big tent” approach has its merits, WealthWorks is an approach to economic development that focuses on building community resilience and livelihoods by applying particular principles and tools ***within a specific sector***. We believe you will be able to better apply these principles and understand the tools shared at the Summit if you identify your sector(s) before the Summit. That way, you can invite the folks who really have self-interest in participating *in that sector*.

When we talk about sectors, we are referring to the assets and entrepreneurial talent focused on meeting demand for specific and related products and services. For example, your local food system is an example of a sector, as are the organizations providing health care or local textile manufacturers or artisans. Identification of a sector is a complex task. You will need to gauge where there is already excitement and momentum, such as businesses working together, institutions providing financial, training or other support, and new ideas and innovation. But, you also want to consider where there are real opportunities, emerging markets, and the potential to sell products and services outside your local area. It is likely that you will identify more than one sector as a starting point. Here are five questions that might help you narrow down to one sector that offers the best opportunity in your region:

- 1) Which sector has the most energy or offers the best opportunity to impact the local or regional economy?
- 2) Which sector creates the most opportunities for local ownership, such as local business development?
- 3) Which sector has the potential to impact the greatest number of people in the region by providing employment or business opportunities, by reducing costs for essential products and services, or by improving quality of life?
- 4) Which sector has the greatest potential to meet demand at scale, for example, by partnering with regional and national buyers?
- 5) Which sector fits best with your community's development goals and preferences?

ENGAGE INDIVIDUALS/ORGANIZATIONS

Once you have identified your sector, your Leadership Team will have great ideas on who to invite to the Summit, including elected officials, municipal governments, non-profit organizations, the community college, and others. But we want to push you further! Who would be needed to actually deliver products and/or services in your chosen sector? What retailers, suppliers, businesses, etc.? What investors would you need to support your sector (we have found it is better to include them early in the process)? What community foundations, development agencies, angel investors, etc.? Who are the risk-taking, entrepreneurial, open-minded folks in your community? Who has self-interest in the benefits that can be delivered through your efforts?

A similar list could be developed for any sector of interest. The basic categories to consider include suppliers, producers, aggregators, processors, packagers, distributors, wholesale buyers and retail buyers. In addition, think about the organizations that support a sector, such as those that provide workforce training, financing and regulation.

MASTER LOGISTICS AND WELCOME PARTICIPANTS TO THE SUMMIT

The best room set-up will be round tables with 5-7 people at each table. This will allow for people to do their small-group work at a table, without much moving around.

It is best if you pre-assign participants to two sets of small groups. You know the actors and can think about where the most productive conversations can occur.

- 1) For the morning, create small groups of 5-7 people who focus on building different kinds of capital or assets. For example, a group might include an educator or trainer who works on skill development, a health care provider, a banker, an environmental scientist, a community leader and networker, the mayor, and a local builder. These are just examples and we know you won't have every area represented in each small group, but a diversity of interests will enrich the conversation. Try to avoid having all the educators or elected officials sit at one table. If your summit will address more than one sector, have everyone at the table be prepared to speak to the same sector. Assign a color to each group and put a dot of the corresponding color onto the nametags. This will expedite moving into small groups.
- 2) For the afternoon, create small groups of 5-7 people, where each group includes a range of organizations and backgrounds, for example: non-profit, for-profit, municipal government,

agency, education, and investors, among others. If your summit will address more than one sector, have everyone at the table be prepared to speak to the same sector. Assign a letter and write the corresponding letter on nametags.

The Leadership Team should also prepare the following materials:

- Pre-Printed Nametags (with colored dots/letters for small groups)
- Table tents with the colors/letters for small groups
- White Index Cards
- Sharpies/pens (1/person)
- Markers (enough for 3-4 colors for each table)
- 1 Flip chart paper pad/Stand
- Masking Tape or Blue Tape
- Pink, Yellow, Blue, Green index cards
- Final participant list

It will also be necessary to have a registration table where people can pick-up their nametags and folders. This will be a great time to ask people to verify their information on the participant list and/or add missing folks.

Finally, the Leadership Team should provide a short welcome to everyone at the beginning of the day. Perhaps you could share why you decided to host a summit, what you hope will result from everyone's investment of time, today and in the future, what excites you about this approach and what you hope to learn from everyone in the room.

NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING THE SUMMIT

At the end of the Summit, folks will want to know what is next. While many of the next steps will be identified on the day of the Summit, it is great to think about what the Leadership Team will commit to going forward. For example:

- Short report on the Summit
- Electronic copies of handouts
- Participant list
- Possible follow-up meeting
- Additional outreach
- Other