



**COUNTY OF NEVADA
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
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Trisha Tillotson
Community Development Agency Director

**NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BOARD AGENDA MEMO**

MEETING DATE: January 9, 2024
TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Trisha Tillotson, Community Development Agency Director
SUBJECT: Informational presentation on the draft two-year Economic Development Action Plan

RECOMMENDATION: Receive a presentation about the research findings and recommendations for a two-year Economic Development Action Plan by Bill Mueller and Jerry Azevedo of Integrated Communications Strategies, LLC. Provide feedback to staff and consultants.

FUNDING: N/A

BACKGROUND:

Consistent with your 2023 Board objectives which prioritized economic development, the County contracted with Integrated Communications Strategies, LLC (ICS) this summer to formulate a new two-year Economic Development Action Plan to be enacted starting in the second quarter of the 2024 calendar year.

The objective of this seven-month project was to deliver a set of realistic and actionable economic development strategies and tactics that will (1) guide the actions and investments of the County, its elected officials, department leadership and staff; and (2) increase alignment in the actions between the County and its various economic development partners to improve economic efficiency and impact.

Because Nevada County's Economic Development Office is still new, this two-year Action Plan is intended to provide interim strategic direction for economic development actions in Nevada County. A longer-term goal will be to consider a comprehensive, long-term economic development master plan for Nevada County in the years ahead, based on the learnings from the two-year Action Plan.

ICS is utilizing its experience in the theory and practice of sustainable and inclusive

economic development strategy, combined with 1:1 interviews and small group facilitated discussions with a wide range of stakeholder groups, as well as interviews of and consultation with the County's elected and department leadership. The end product will feature a narrow set of economic development strategies, tactics, and performance measures starting in the first half of 2024 and ending in first half of 2026 for which there is alignment, justification, and support. The desired outcomes from this two-year action plan include, but are not limited to:

- Increased economic activity
- Increased tax revenues
- Improved business retention and expansion
- Improved County competitiveness and win rate for federal and state investments and grants
- Improved branding and awareness inside and outside the County about Nevada County assets and advantages
- Stepped up communication and knowledge-sharing between the County and local businesses
- More support for entrepreneurs and local small business
- Increased alignment between the County and economic development stakeholders on a shared set of measurable priorities

ICS worked closely with Kimberly Parker and the County's leadership to identify a list of key informants/stakeholders for ICS to interview about the economic priorities, demands and limitations facing the County today and over the next two years; priority investment areas; key socio-economic and industry trends based, and general advice. ICS conducted single person and group interviews, synthesizing the findings to identify common themes, gaps, and assets.

On November 17th, ICS organized a two-hour workshop at the County's offices in which the leadership from ERC, SBC, the four chambers, Sierra Commons, the two contractors' associations, the Realtors, the Alliance for Workforce Development, and the Arts Council met together in person and online to hear and offer reaction to the preliminary research findings and emerging focus areas of the Action Plan now in formulation. The presentation to the Board on January 9th reflects their many contributions and perspectives.

During this informational item the Board will be asked to provide their initial feedback and questions on elements of the draft Economic Development Action Plan and proposed areas for new County investment to drive increased economic activity in step with Nevada County's values and priorities. ICS will revise the draft plan to incorporate Board feedback in order to complete a semi-final draft to be heard as part of your Board of Supervisors meeting on February 27, 2024.

Item Initiated by: Kimberly Parker, Economic Development Office, Program Manager

Approved by: Trisha Tillotson, Community Development Agency, Director

Submittal Date: 12.21.23