

Partnership For Success



*Lincoln and Minnehaha County
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What does it take to **INSPIRE** community growth?

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Building vibrant communities is a goal shared by all of us who support economic development. To put community growth into perspective, it's good to step back and look at what **inspires** that growth.

Growth is a real “What comes first, the chicken or the egg?” issue. Does community growth get people fired up to make more exciting things happen, or do local residents get excited about the possibilities and pitch in to get things started? Most of the time, it's a feedback loop in which communities stimulate volunteers who work hard to grow their hometowns. Once we create momentum, we inspire sustainable community development.

Community development usually requires three things. First, there needs to be a plan. It might be a local visioning process that creates a roadmap for the future, a comprehensive plan, or a set of goals laid out by local government. Next, community growth needs ways for local residents to get involved—activities that allow each resident to contribute—so they are invested in the future of their town. Finally, a community must find ways to bring all the stakeholders together to celebrate progress, brainstorm new ideas and **inspire** the growth everyone is aiming for.

You can see that it's all about **people**. The plan is just a set of ideas. Without individuals willing to breathe life into those concepts and make them possibilities they remain just ideas. Action steps are only assignments until someone takes the lead, gets neighbors involved and achieves results. Community meetings need local residents representing every age group and occupation to combine their voices and their energy in each community's unique vision of the future.

Community growth is not just about dollars or programs or statistics—it's about people who want to make something happen for the future of the community they call home.