



Ocean State Accelerates

Five-Year Economic Development Vision and Policy

**RHODE
ISLAND**
COMMERCE

State and Federal Requirements

Long-Term Economic Development Vision and Policy

- Required by the General Assembly every new gubernatorial term (RIGL 42-64.17-1)
- Due to General Assembly by December 2023 (submitted)
 - Must receive public hearing

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

- Required by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) “at least” every 5 years
- Last updated 2014 (2019 “CEDS equivalent” was approved as bridge)
- Current CEDS allows for streamlined federal funding applications and access to increased federal dollars
- Approved by the EDA in December 2023

Strategic Planning Process

Builds on RI2030 with a focus on economic development

Roadmap for economic development/Commerce over next five years

PUBLIC PROCESS

- 27-member steering committee (5 meetings over 8 months)
- 12 Focus Groups
- 40+ 1:1 Interviews
- 3 Public Forums (2 in-person and 1 virtual)
- 12 Community-group Conversations
- 30-day public comment period

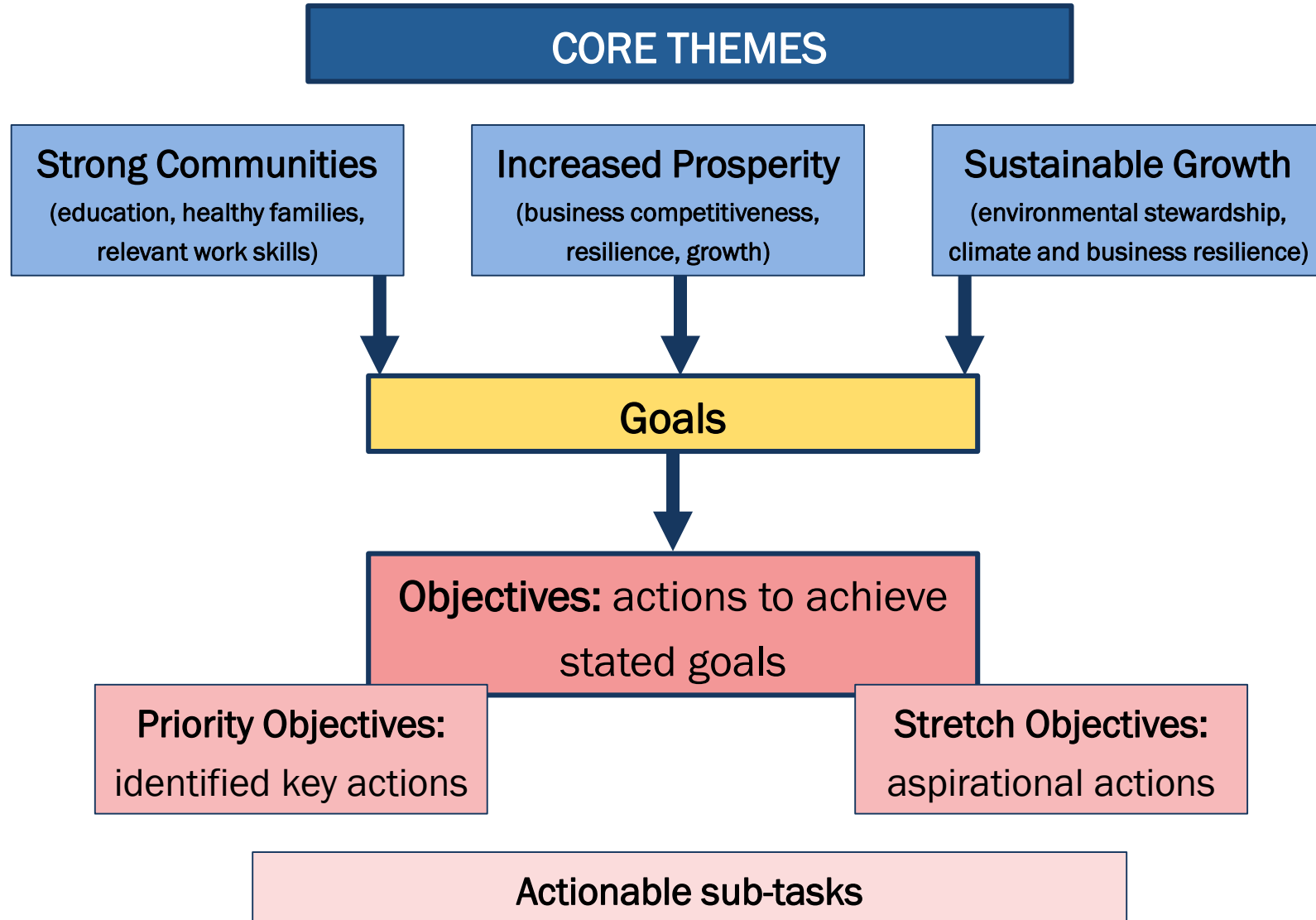
GROUNDING IN DATA

- 20 recent local reports/briefs/state-level plans reviewed and incorporated
- 6 new analyses conducted:
 - National Indicators Analysis; Economic Base Analysis; Workforce Analysis; Selected Industries Analysis; Small Business Analysis; Community Development Analysis; and Sustainable Growth and Economic Resilience Analysis

Strategy is Designed to be:

- **Comprehensive:** Aligns to local, state, federal economic development priorities
- **Representative:** Leaders in fields ranging from education to housing to retail to life sciences were involved in the process
- **Prosperity-focused:** Focuses on cross-cutting efforts to lift household incomes
- **Data-driven:** Leverages primary economic and workforce trend analyses as well as over 20 recent local reports
- **Equity- and inclusivity-centered:** Unified in commitment to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion

Framing



Goal 2: Address family care issues that present barriers to education and employment for many.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE: 2.1. Improve the infrastructure and programming for childcare, out-of-school learning, eldercare, and care for individuals with disabilities. Ensure that it is safe, reliable, inclusive, and engaging.

- a. Evaluate the feasibility, viability, and sustainability of expanded childcare options from infancy through kindergarten.
- b. Enhance non-emergency transportation and paratransit services by collaborating across public transportation departments, rideshare companies, and advocacy organizations to help seniors and residents with disabilities accomplish daily activities.
- c. Support the development of multipurpose community centers in each municipality that can offer after-school care and programming for older adults.

Goal 2: Address family care issues that present barriers to education and employment for many.

OBJECTIVE: 2.2. Provide early childhood education that offers experiential learning opportunities for all children.

- a. Embed Rhode Island’s cultural diversity, landscape, and community assets into learning activities with input from families, children, and organizations to ensure that experiential learning adapts to the state’s evolving population.
- b. Facilitate professional development, continuing education, and career pathways for early childhood educators to support them in accessing greater economic opportunities in the state. Expand registered apprenticeships for early childhood educators.
- c. Ensure that state quality standards for early childhood - as defined in the Quality Rating and Improvement System - are regularly updated to align with national best practices. In addition, grow the number of providers that engage with the QRIS system, guaranteeing that all children receive exception care and educational experiences in their earliest years

OBJECTIVE: 2.3. Support health equity that includes preventive health training, screening, and access to available services.

- a. Increase awareness and availability of public services available to families for healthcare, social services and supports, behavioral health, and other social and environmental factors that impact health equity such as food insecurity, financial literacy, healthy housing, and more.
- b. Co-locate community health services at community hubs, transportation hubs, and workplaces to make it easier for families to access care and resources.
- c. Support the development and sustainability of community capacity to improve health equity, through hard and soft infrastructure investments, to support individual, firm, and community success

OBJECTIVE: 2.4. Incentivize and invest in early childhood and adult education that fosters dual-language learning at every level and economic mobility opportunities for the immigrant and refugee community.

- a. Develop a list of federal funding sources and help school districts secure funds that support dual language learning programs.
- b. Offer benefits and professional development resources to teachers with dual language skills to attract and retain qualified professionals across the education system.

Implementation Example: Minority Business Accelerator

- Minority Business Accelerator is a \$5.2M program to support Rhode Island minority-owned businesses with technical assistance and direct grants.
- First round of program for technical assistance was general. Second round focused on targeted industries based on stakeholder feedback on need.
- \$480k awarded to four intermediaries dedicated to support minority-owned businesses specifically in the child care, construction, and food and beverage industries in January 2024. Two focused explicitly on supporting the growth of quality child care businesses owned and operated by people of color:
 - Urban Ventures
 - Fuerza Laboral

Additional Ongoing Implementation

Overall:

- Metrics Tracking available at: commerceri.com/long-term-economic-development-planning. More specific child care metrics can be found on: <https://dhs.ri.gov/programs-and-services/child-care/research-reports-surveys-news>

2.1A: Expanding early learning options

- Family Child Care Start-up Grants (DHS)
- Early Learning Facilities Bond (DHS)
- RI Pre-K Pipeline Supports (RIDE)

2.2A: Culturally relevant and equitable education

- Multilingual Learner Needs Assessment for Early Childhood (RIDE)
- Continued investments in Early Intervention & focus on Kids Connect (EOHHS)

2.2B: Professional Development & Career Pathways

- Step Up to WAGE\$ program (DHS/RIAEYC)

- Pandemic Retention Bonus program (DHS)
- Early Educator Compensation Study (DHS)
- ECCE Workforce Registry (DHS)
- New higher education pathways (OPC/RIDE/DHS)
- T.E.A.C.H. (DHS/RIAEYC)

2.2C: Increased quality of early learning

- LearnERS (DHS/RIDE)
- BrightStars Advisory & Steering Committee (DHS/RIDE/RIAEYC)