



June 2018

Stark's Plan for Prosperity

Seven thousand is a big number. And according to [Stark Economic Development Board](#) President Ray Hexamer, that is the estimated number of jobs currently open in Stark County.

Hexamer sees this as a positive sign. At the Sisters of Charity Foundation's May 23rd Board meeting, he discussed the Economic Development Board's recent efforts. While Stark County is facing many challenges, there are also many clear opportunities for growth.

Since 2010, the Foundation has supported the Economic Development Board's work as a part of its efforts to support economic and workforce development throughout Stark County.



Hexamer outlined the challenges covered in the recent report, entitled *Strengthening Stark*, which was commissioned by Stark Community Foundation—namely, that our local workforce is getting older, smaller, and poorer. By 2040, Stark County's population is expected to drop by 6%, with seniors (age 65 or older) the only group projected to increase. The percentage of residents living in poverty continues to increase: it's risen from 9% to nearly 15% just since 2000.

At the same time, 40% of Stark County's workforce travels to another county each day for work. In this, Hexamer sees a clear opportunity. A Cleveland State study revealed that more than 100 (and perhaps as many as 600) Stark County companies are experiencing rapid growth. These local businesses need well-trained workers. With the local unemployment rate at 3.9%, creative strategies are needed.

The Economic Development Board is currently completing a county-wide plan to address these needs, by offering training opportunities and tailored supports that can help job seekers find and keep jobs, and by helping businesses meet their workforce needs. Working with local residents, schools, community organizations, government entities, and businesses, the Economic Development Board plans to:

- **Strengthen the supply of talent** by working with schools, businesses, and job-seekers, and celebrating companies that attract and retain local talent.
- **Retain and grow existing businesses** by connecting them to the resources and services needed to accelerate growth.

- **Grow targeted industries** by attracting companies in the manufacturing, petrochemicals, food processing, and tourism fields.
- **Catalyze entrepreneurship** by making mentorship, talent, and capital available to entrepreneurs.
- **Improve connective infrastructure** by improving bike trails, roadways, rail lines, and fiber optic networks, and advocating for investment in infrastructure.

Together, Ray Hexamer and his partners intend to revitalize Stark County for all residents.

Grant Application Process Workshop

The Foundation holds grant application process workshops twice each year. All nonprofit organizations who intend to apply for funding and who have not completed an application on the Foundation's online grant system instituted in 2015, are encouraged to send a representative to the workshop. Participants will learn about the Foundation's grantmaking structure, guidelines, and online grant application process. Grant seekers will have an opportunity to ask questions and get answers from Foundation staff to help them with the grant application process.

The next workshop is scheduled for: Tuesday, September 11, 2018 The workshop will be held from 9:00-10:30 a.m. at the Foundations Centre, First Floor Conference Room, 400 Market Avenue North, Canton, Ohio 44702

To register for the workshop please contact: Trudy Brown, Office Assistant
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