

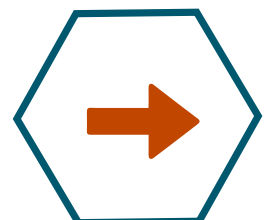
Year One of Our 2025-2030 Strategic Plan: A Vision for Our First Steps

As we stand at the beginning of the five-year journey envisioned in our Strategic Plan, we're preparing to strengthen connections and partnerships that can reshape our region, support the businesses we serve, and create opportunities for everyone. Our work this year will begin with listening to our members and regional partners, laying strong foundations, and sparking connections across the Canton area and beyond. We're working to create value, not just for individual members, but for our whole community—working together to make our region a place where everyone has a stake in our shared future.

The 2025 Business Plan that follows is structured to mirror our Strategic Plan for the entire organization, laying out our year-one goals and tactics for each Strategic Priority. Rather than splitting the Business Plan into individual Chamber department plans, we have identified lead and supporting roles for each major tactic. This will help avoid a siloed approach to our work and facilitate collaboration across the organization while retaining accountability for outcomes.

Our Business Plan also includes the specific metrics by which we will measure our progress, further embracing accountability. To ensure transparency, we will report results against these metrics to the Chamber Board at each meeting and semi-annually to our members and the broader community.

In all we do this year, we will be guided by our refreshed Mission and Vision statements and our new Core Values – Service, Team, Collaboration, Innovation and Integrity. We look forward to engaging with the Canton Regional Chamber's Board of Directors as we serve our members and cultivate economic growth and community vitality in line with our new Strategic Plan.





[1] Member Value: Setting the Foundation for Impact

Goal: This year, we'll help our members achieve their business goals through tailored support, a deeper focus on advocacy, and expanded networking that inspires meaningful connections.

Our Approach:

- **Personalize support through Member Success Plans** using an AI tool to tailor member engagement help them achieve strong return on their investment in Chamber membership. *(Lead: Membership & Marketing; Support: Development & Partnership Relations)*
- **Foster connections** with monthly networking events, including industry-specific gatherings and leadership forums where members can exchange ideas. *(Lead: Membership & Marketing; Support: Events & Enshrinement Festival)*
- **Enhance advocacy** through the Akron-Canton Advocacy Alliance, amplifying member voices on key policy issues. *(Lead: Akron-Canton Advocacy Alliance; Support: Membership & Marketing)*
- **Connect members to professional development resources** in partnership with local colleges and subject-matter experts to address members' learning needs. *(Lead: Leadership Stark County; Support: Development & Partnership Relations)*
- **Initiate a foundational marketing strategy** to communicate the Chamber's value and highlight member benefits to current and potential members. *(Lead: Membership & Marketing; Support: Development & Partnership Relations)*

Year-One Metrics to Track Progress:

- **Member Retention Rate:** Track renewal rates, aiming for higher than 90 percent retention.
- **Membership Growth:** Track new member acquisitions, with an increase of 10 percent over 2024.
- **Member Satisfaction Scores:** Conduct quarterly surveys targeting satisfaction with services, events, and support, setting a baseline to begin tracking improvement.
- **Member Engagement:** Monitor attendance at networking events, workshops, and professional development programs, establishing baseline targets.
- **Advocacy Engagement:** Measure the number of members participating in public policy initiatives, establishing a Year 1 baseline and setting annual growth targets in subsequent years.

Our member-focused efforts in 2025 will establish a strong foundation of value and engagement, setting the stage for sustained growth and advocacy in years 2-5 of the Strategic Plan.



[2] Regionalism: Building Relationships, Building Bridges

Goal: In 2025, we're opening doors to partnerships across Stark County and beyond. By creating these connections, we're building the foundation for regional growth that serves us all.

Our Approach:

- **Initiate meetings with regional stakeholders** to discuss collaboration opportunities and alignment of goals. *(Lead: Development & Partnership Relations; Support: Akron-Canton Advocacy Alliance)*
- **Establish partnerships with other chambers** to expand programs like the Chamber Health Fund and initiate joint projects. *(Lead: Membership & Marketing; Support: Development & Partnership Relations; Finance & Administration)*
- **Engage township** leaders across Stark County, strengthening local economic ties. *(Lead: Akron-Canton Advocacy Alliance; Support: Development & Partnership Relations)*
- **Incorporate regional elements** in all Chamber programs, ensuring a broad and inclusive approach to activities and initiatives. *(Lead: All Chamber Departments)*
- **Host a regional summit** with business, nonprofit, and government leaders to identify shared priorities and opportunities. *(Lead: Events & Enshrinement Festival; Support: All Other Chamber Departments)*

Year-One Metrics to Track Progress:

- **Number of Partnerships Established:** Track partnerships with chambers, business associations, and government entities, with a target of four new partnerships in 2025.
- **Collaborative Projects Launched:** Count the joint initiatives and regional projects initiated with partners, aiming for four new initiatives or project during the year.
- **Regional Summit Attendance and Participation:** Record attendance and collect feedback to gauge stakeholder engagement, setting a baseline for future summit goals.
- **Shared Resource Utilization:** Monitor the use and impact of regional directories, event calendars, and other shared resources.
- **Stakeholder Satisfaction Scores:** Collect feedback from regional partners to ensure alignment on collaboration effectiveness and objectivenessetting a first-year baseline to gauge future improvement.

Our Year-One regionalism efforts will build a network of collaborative relationships that drive regional prosperity and deepen community bonds across Stark County and beyond.



[3] Workforce Development: Building a Foundation for Long-Term Success

Goal: *Attracting, retaining, and developing the workforce our members need starts with understanding the most urgent needs and securing resources to act on them.*

Our Approach:

- **Conduct a Chamber member workforce needs assessment** to gather essential insights on skills gaps and talent challenges in our region. *(Lead: Membership & Marketing; Support: Leadership Stark County)*
- **Cultivate partnerships with educational and workforce organizations** to identify future program collaboration and funding opportunities. *(Lead: Development & Partnership Relations; Support: Leadership Stark County)*
- **Develop and implement a fundraising plan** to secure resources for workforce initiatives, including grants, sponsorships, and contributions. *(Lead: Development & Partnership Relations; Support: Finance & Administration)*
- **Advocate for workforce-friendly policies** at the local and state level to encourage investment in training and retention programs that support regional employers. *(Lead: Akron-Canton Advocacy Alliance; Support: Membership & Marketing)*

Year-One Metrics to Track Progress:

- **Survey Completion Rate:** Track completion of workforce needs surveys from member businesses, targeting a minimum of 200 surveys completed and 10 industry sectors represented.
- **Educational Partnerships Formed:** Count the initial partnership agreements with local colleges, training centers, and workforce development agencies, securing a minimum of two partnerships in 2025.
- **Funding and Resource Generation:** Secure \$50,000 or more of grants, sponsorships, and contributions raised for workforce initiatives.
- **Baseline for Program Demand:** Measure employer interest and engagement to inform future workforce programs.
- **Advocacy Engagement in Workforce Development:** Track the number of members engaged in advocacy related to workforce development policies.

This approach allows us to build foundational relationships, secure funding, and advocate for policies that support workforce needs in line with the Chamber's five-year Strategy.



[4] Economic Development: Mapping Resources and Securing Support

Goal: Support the resilience and growth of local businesses by connecting them with resources and establishing a foundation for sustained economic development support.

Our Approach:

- **Map available resources** such as grants, incentives, and financing options, particularly for non-traded-goods sector businesses, with regional allies like the Stark Economic Development Board. *(Lead: Development & Partnership Relations; Support: Finance & Administration)*
- **Organize workshops to introduce economic development resources** to members, assessing interest and refining future programming. *(Lead: Development & Partnership Relations; Support: Membership & Marketing)*
- **Develop a funding plan** to secure dedicated resources for economic development support by identifying potential sponsors, grants, and external funding sources. *(Lead: Development & Partnership Relations; Support: Finance & Administration)*
- **Advocate for economic incentives and small business support policies** to make resource access easier for local businesses. *(Lead: Akron-Canton Advocacy Alliance; Support: Development & Partnership Relations)*

Year-One Metrics to Track Progress:

- **Resource Utilization Awareness:** Track the number of members participating in workshops and accessing economic resources, setting a Year-One baseline.
- **Funding Raised for Economic Development Initiatives:** Secure \$50,000 or more to support future economic development efforts.
- **Partnership Development:** Count partnerships established with financial institutions and regional agencies to facilitate member access to funding and resources, setting a year-one baseline to gauge future growth.
- **Member Feedback on Resource Needs:** Collect feedback to ensure economic support initiatives meet members' most pressing needs.
- **Advocacy Engagement in Economic Development:** Monitor member engagement in advocacy activities related to economic development policies.

These 2025 initiatives will lay essential groundwork, connect members with vital resources, and advocate for supportive policies to sustain and expand economic development services in the years ahead.



[5] Enshrinement Festival: A New Look at an Old Tradition

Goal: Innovate the Enshrinement Festival to bring more people into the Canton area, deepen community involvement, and elevate this event as a pillar of our local identity.

Our Approach:

- **Collaborate with the Pro Football Hall of Fame** to review and renew the Enshrinement Festival's goals, focusing on innovations that draw diverse audiences and bring economic benefits to our region. *(Lead: Events & Enshrinement Festival; Support: Development & Partnership Relations)*
- **Develop a marketing and sponsorship strategy** to increase visibility, build community pride, and drive economic growth. *(Lead: Membership & Marketing; Support: Development & Partnership Relations; Events & Enshrinement Festival)*
- **Identify cost-saving measures** by reviewing festival expenses to improve efficiency and enhance sustainability. *(Lead: Events & Enshrinement Festival; Support: Finance & Administration)*
- **Develop volunteer strategy** to increase volunteer opportunities and community involvement.

Year-One Metrics to Track Progress:

- **Attendance Growth:** Set attendance baselines in 2025 for non-ticketed events and target a 2 percent increase in ticket sales for ticketed events year-over-year.
- **Economic Impact on Local Businesses:** Measure the economic impact on Canton-area businesses by working with local partners to update the economic impact study of the Enshrinement Festival.
- **Community Volunteer Engagement:** Track the number of new and returning volunteers and with a targeted goal of 10 percent increase of new volunteers and 5 percent net increase of volunteers.
- **Revenue Growth from Festival Activities:** Measure revenue generated from the festival, including ticket sales, sponsorships, and merchandise, based upon a three year average and target 3 percent growth annually.
- **Expense Management:** Monitor expenses across all festival events, targeting cost savings that enable break-even or better financial performance.

Our focus this year is to refresh and strengthen the Enshrinement Festival, enhancing its role in our community's economic and social life.

