



BLUEPRINTS FOR TOMORROW

“As residents indicate their readiness for new economic development strategies, we recognize that many local institutions need contemporary knowledge and new skills to engage in development for a local, inclusive, sustainable economy. By combining training, coaching and community knowledge with evolving design and finance tools, *Blueprints* is helping our community's institutions do business in new and different ways, ensuring that they are prepared to support an entrepreneurial culture shaped by resident participation.”

Kelly Ryan,
Incourage CEO &
President



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Overview

Blueprints for Tomorrow is a 25-month Incourage-led and USDA-supported program that is designed to build networks, vision and skills to lead a new regional economy based upon the values of equity, opportunity and shared stewardship.

Incourage has learned that striking a balance between long-term systemic approaches and the need for immediate change is necessary when shaping economic strategies and infrastructure decisions that work for the 21st century. As is a holistic approach, where work is done with a whole view of the community and attention is given within the whole to all levels – with individuals, institutions, and in the relationship each has to one another. Only then can sustainable change occur.

In working to create a more participatory culture and grow our economy, Incourage learned that residents have an appetite for change and are ready to help shape our community's future. This was affirmed in the 2012 Community Survey conducted by Edge Research, when residents identified four community priorities:

Strong local economy

Opportunities for young adults & families

Openness to new ideas & change

Nature & recreation

Through *Blueprints*, participating organizations will build state-of-the-art field knowledge, while applying new insights and techniques to collaborative projects that support community priorities. The curriculum consists of four integrated tracks of learning that have been designed in partnership with national thought leaders. These include adaptive leadership; impact investing and financing; collaborative development practices; and local, inclusive, sustainable economies, presenting lessons for communities nationwide. The six organizations participating in this initial group include: City of Wisconsin Rapids; Wood County; John E. Alexander South Wood County YMCA; Wisconsin Rapids Housing Authority; Central Rivers Farmshed; and through additional organizational investments, Incourage.

Incourage's investment in *Blueprints* demonstrates its commitment to accelerate community change and an ongoing interest in learning with and from others. Inter-organizational relationships across sectors that are characterized by trust, shared norms and alignment of priorities for greater impact are critical to community change.