Leadership Certified Community (LCC) Program
Certification Application

The Leadership Certified Community (LCC) Program is sponsored and administered by the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED).

The designation of LCC is reserved for communities that document strong community development efforts and have a strong leadership/volunteer-base to sustain the efforts. Each applicant community is evaluated on program standards related to their community's collaborative efforts, strategic planning, community planning, business resources, and uses of technology.

Program Purpose:
In today's competitive and challenging economic environment, it is vital for communities to demonstrate pro-active leadership, not only to earn the trust of citizens, but to open doors to the opportunities to become sustainable, remain viable and grow. The purposes of the LCC program are to provide a solid framework for communities to identify capacity, stimulate and enhance community based planning efforts, and utilize technology to provide a strong foundation to meet the challenges of the future.

Initial Certification Application Process:
Prior to submitting an application, the community must send a letter via US Postal Service and email to the NDED stating the intention to apply to the LCC program. The notification should include the anticipated timeline for application submittal, and contact information for the designated application. This notification allows the Department to set-up a visit with the community and offer assistance in the application process. The letter should be mailed to Kelly Gewecke, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, P.O. Box 94666, Lincoln, NE 68509-4666 and also emailed to Kelly Gewecke kelly.gewecke@nebraska.gov). If you have any questions about the LCC program call Kelly Gewecke at 308-627-3151.

Directions:
The LCC Certification Application must be submitted as one (1) file in a Portable Document Format (PDF) to Kelly Gewecke at kelly.gewecke@nebraska.gov. All links to documents or sites should be working links and attachments should be part of the PDF and bookmarked accordingly. Please do not use Dropbox as the Department is unable to access this program.

All applications are reviewed and evaluated by an internal committee of community and economic development professionals. A community will receive a letter from the Department approximately four weeks from the application submission date, notifying them of their certification and/or indicating necessary items that need to be addressed to obtain certification.

Program Requirements Summary:
To be successful in the LCC application process communities must have the following items completed:
- Section One: Community Collaboration
  - Have a strong collaborative relationship among organizations within the community.

- o Have a strong volunteer-base in the community that helps drive positive development efforts for the community.
  - o Have a strong Leadership building process within the community.
- Section Two: Strategic Planning
  Demonstrate community participation and engagement, including development of the following:
  - o Strategic Plan.
  - o Community Needs Assessment
- Section Three: Community Planning and Zoning
  Demonstrate commitment to ongoing community planning efforts, including development and adoption of the following:
  - o Comprehensive Plan.
  - o Capital Improvement Plan.
  - o Zoning Regulations.
  - o Subdivision Regulations.
  - o Building Codes
  - o Housing Codes.
  - o Nuisance Ordinances.
  - o Building Permit Process.
- Section Four: Business and Technology
  - o Establishment and implementation of an ongoing Business Retention and Expansion program.
  - o Develop and maintain presence on Location One Information System (LOIS).
  - o Established and up-to-date community website.
- Section Five: Business Resources
  - o Development of a resource list that includes Business and Entrepreneurial Assistance programs available to local business.
  - o Development of a listing of financing and incentive programs available to local businesses.

Recertification:
Certification will be valid for five (5) years, with annual reviews of the community's website and LOIS information.   Websites and LOIS portals not current and consistent with information will result in suspension of certification and the benefits associated with it.

Communities are required to apply for recertification prior to the end of their five-year designation period. A complimentary reminder notification will be sent out to the community prior to the recertification deadline.

Program Contact: Kelly Gewecke, (308) 627-3151, kelly.gewecke@nebraska.gov

LCC Certification Application Requirements

Section One: Community Collaboration

Part I. – Local Government Support
Provide a Resolution of Support from the applicant community (sample resolution provided).

Part II. – Letters of Support
Provide letters of support from relevant community and economic development entities (i.e. regional economic development agencies, local or regional chambers of commerce, development districts, service providers, utility providers, etc.).

Part III. – Letter of Intent
Provide a copy of the original letter of intent for the application. The letter should include the anticipated timeline for submittal, and contact information for the designated application. Please identify why the community is pursuing the Leadership designation.

Part IV. – Collaboration
Describe collaborative relationships with local organizations such as the ones listed below. If your community does not have an organization listed below, it is acceptable to list the organizations that are active within the community and describe how they work together to accomplish common goals.
   a.   Chamber of Commerce
   b.   Community Club/Booster Club
   c.   Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB) or Tourism Group
   d.   Housing organizations and/or developers
   e.   LB840 Committee
   f.   Downtown and/or main street organization
   g.   Community Redevelopment Authority
   h.   Other organizations involved in the community

Part V. -- Volunteerism
Describe how volunteerism is critical to the community's development efforts. Identify how organizations within the community recruit volunteers and how the community shows recognition to its volunteers. Identify the various types of volunteer opportunities available in the community. (Communities are highly encouraged to include a list of volunteer opportunities on their website.)

Part VI – Leadership
Describe how strong Leadership is vital to the growth of the community. Identify what Leadership programs, organizations, or training opportunities that are available within the community and list them on the community website. Is your community considering starting a local Leadership program? Does your community have folks who have participated in Leadership Programs outside of the community such as but not limited to UNL –Lead, Nebraska State Chamber Leadership Program, Nebraska Diplomats, Sherwood Foundation, Young Professionals, etc…? Please list who has participated, in what program they participated and how they have brought the Leadership skills they learned in these outside programs back to assist with the development of the community.
Youth Engagement
Describe what youth leadership programs are available within the community such as but not limited to the following: 4-H, Future Farmers of America FFA, Future Career and Community Leaders of America FCCLA, Future Business Leaders of America FBLA, Student Council, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Church

Youth Groups, Youth Leadership Academy and Junior Achievement. Describe how your community encourages Youth to participate on traditional councils and boards by either being a voting member or advisory positions within the community? What strategies does your community use to encourage young leaders to be a part of the community after they graduate from high school and/or college? How does your community stay in touch with Alumni to encourage them to move back to the community?

Section Two: Strategic Planning

Part I. – Strategic Plan

Within the last five-years the applicant community must have participated in a long-range strategic planning process involving their community development efforts. This strategic planning process should include:

- Assessment of the community's assets and liabilities.
- Identification of key local issues.
- An outline of goals and objectives (objectives should describe key results to be achieved, measures of progress, and target dates for achievement).
- Development of strategic actions that will accomplish the community's development goals and objectives.
- An implementation plan that includes organizational responsibilities, resource allocation (how will the community fund the strategy) and a one-year work program (annual action plan).
- Evaluation methods that enables the community to determine if it is achieving expected results. The plan should be flexible enough to allow for emerging opportunities.

Attach or provide a link to the community's most recent strategic plan for community development.

Include a one-page summary outlining the community's strategic plan and bulleted items listed above. The plan must be developed in the last five years and reviewed and/or evaluated in the past 12 months.

Part II. – Community Assessment/Public Participation

As part of the community's strategic planning process a community needs assessment should be completed to assess the community's assets, liabilities, opportunities and threats along with encouraging resident involvement and feedback. Describe the process and tools used to conduct the community assessment. Identify the involvement of stakeholders and the community at large. Provide the results from the assessment process. Specifically address findings of the resident's satisfaction with the community services including but not limited to the following:

a. Communication Systems
    a. Cell Phone Coverage
    b. Broadband Capabilities
b. Healthcare Services
c. Housing Availability
d. Education System
e. Employment Opportunities
f. Recreation and Tourism Opportunities
g. Community Infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, streets, public facilities, utilities etc.)
h. Community Services (i.e. public library, senior citizen center and services, youth programs, community action agency programs and services, etc.)

Provide a copy of any reports developed as a result of the community assessment.

Section Three: Community Planning and Zoning

Part I. – Comprehensive Plan

A comprehensive plan, also known as a general plan, master plan or a land-use plan is a document designed to guide the future actions of a community. It presents a vision for the future, with long-range goals and objectives for all activities that affect the local government. This includes guidance on how to make decisions on public and private land development proposals, the expenditure of public funds, availability of tax policy (tax incentives), cooperative efforts and issues of pressing concern, such as farmland preservation or the rehabilitation of older neighborhoods areas. Most plans are written to provide direction for future activities over a 10- to 20-year period after the plans adoption. Plans should receive a review and possible update every five years, more often if the needs of the community require revision (i.e. a major employer has left or entered the community).

Provide a one-page summary of the community's most recent comprehensive plan. This should include when the plan was completed and by whom, as well as how the planning process was carried out at the local level including the process used for its development. Please include reference as to when and how the comprehensive plan is being reviewed, updated and utilized as a living document for community development.

Attach or provide a link to the community's most recent comprehensive plan.

Part II. – Capital Improvement Plan

A Capital Improvement Plan (Program), or CIP is a short-range plan, usually four to ten years, which identifies capital improvement projects and equipment purchases necessary for a municipality. The plan also typically provides a planning schedule and identifies options for financing the plan. The plan oftentimes provides a link between a municipality, school district, parks and recreation department and/or other local government entities and a comprehensive and strategic plan and the entity's annual budget.

Attach or provide a link to the community's most recent capital improvement plan.

Part III. – Zoning Regulations

Zoning regulations govern the use of land, and the location, size and height of buildings. Zoning divides a jurisdiction into multiple districts, with each district containing a distinct set of regulation that are uniformly applied to all property, within the district. Zoning ordinances consist of text specifying the regulations and a map defining the location of the districts.

Attach or provide a link to the community's zoning regulations.

Part IV. – Subdivision Regulations

Subdivision regulations govern the division of land into two or more parts. The regulations specify the standards for drawing and recording a plat and requirements for public improvements necessary to make the property suitable for development.

Attach or provide a link to the community's subdivision regulations.

Part V. – Building Codes
Building codes are sets of regulations governing the design, construction, alteration and maintenance of structures. They specify the minimum requirements to adequately safeguard the health, safety and welfare of building occupants.

Attach or provide a link to the community's building codes. Identify who is responsible for building code enforcement and how it is enforced.

Part VI. – Housing Codes
Housing Codes are sets of regulations enacted and enforced by local government that set minimum standards for all dwelling units. It provides minimum requirements for bath and kitchen facilities, heating systems, floors, walls, ceilings, windows, and acceptable door requirements to safeguard residents.

Attach or provide a link to the community's housing codes. Identify who is responsible for housing code enforcement and how it is enforced.

Part VII. – Nuisance Ordinances
Nuisance Ordinances are a set of regulations that identify unlawful acts or situations that endanger the lives, safety, health, property or comfort of the public.

Attach or provide a link to the community's nuisance ordinances. Identify who is responsible for the nuisance ordinance enforcement and how it is enforced. Identify the number of violations within the community in the past 12 months.

Part VIII. – Building Permits
A construction or building permit is a permit required in most jurisdictions for new construction, or adding onto pre-existing structures, and in some cases for major renovations.

Identify the process for issuing building permits in your community. Identify the number of building permits issued within the community in the past 12 months and how many of those were for new houses.

Section Four – Business and Technology

Part I. – Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) Program
Provide detailed information on the community's BR&E program. Include:
- How many businesses are in your community?
- How are businesses identified or targeted for visits?
- How visits are conducted and who is involved?
- How the community uses the information collected from each visit?
- How visit follow-up is initiated and tracked?
- How businesses are communicated with informally?
- An explanation of any recognition program for local industries/business.

Communities are required to complete business visits annually based on population size. Refer to the table below for a guideline on the number of visits a community should conduct annually to meet the LCC program requirements. Provide a listing of visits that have been conducted during the past 12 months.

Guideline for BR&E Visits Conducted Annually

Population:	Number of Interviews
Less than 1,000	10
1,000 – 3,000	15
3,000-5,000	20
5,000- 7,000	25
7,000-10,000	30
Over 10,000	35

Part II. – Location One Information System (LOIS)

The community must have LOIS fully integrated or linked into their website. In LOIS the applicant must have their Community Profile Information fully populated with current information (i.e. all printable flyer fields must be completed and at least one community photo uploaded).

Part III. – Website

The community must have a working and updated website. Provide a link to the community's website and identify who is responsible for keeping the website content updated. Note: all links must be working.

The review committee will ensure the applicable website includes:
  A. Identification
        1. Name of community or organization.
        2. Name of State – Nebraska clearly shown.
        3. Map showing location of community within Nebraska.
        4. Location identification found on every page.
        5. Action photos show casing the community.

  B. Contact Information
        1. Complete information (i.e. physical address, telephone with area code, email address, etc.).
        2. Contact information found clearly on home page and in the footer/header/sidebar of every page of the site.
        3. Emails should be "hot" or working, and spelled out – not somebody's name underlined, or a sentence saying "email us."
        4. If the page features a "Contact Us" button or tab – it should open up another page on the website with the same look and feel and should contain contact information. This should NEVER be a link that automatically opens as an email.

  C. Navigation
        1. Should be intuitive and easy to follow.
        2. Easy to identify where you are within the site at all times.
        3. Provides a way back to the home page without having to use the "back" button

  D. Community information should include but not be limited to:
        1. Employment Opportunities

2. Housing
3. Utility Information
4. Existing Businesses Information
5. Tourist Opportunities (i.e. local attractions, recreation, lodging, restaurants, etc.)
6. Local Volunteer and Leadership Opportunities
7. Community Calendar (featuring local events and celebrations)
8. Community Profile. Website must have Location One Information System integrated <u>or</u> linked to website, so the Community Profile is accessible to the viewer.

Section Five: Business Resources

Part I. – Business and Entrepreneurial Assistance
Submit a summary of local, regional and state business and entrepreneurial assistance programs available to your business community along with contact information. The summary should include technical support, business mentoring/coaching services, financial support, etc. These resources should also be available on the community's website.

Part II. – Financing and Incentive Resources
Provide a summary of local and regional financing and incentive programs available to your business community. The summary should include contact information and a brief description of local and regional revolving loan funds, LB840 program guidelines, Community Development Block Grant reuse funds, investment clubs, community bonding authority, etc. Do not include state financing and incentives in your response. These resources and or links should also be available on the community's website.

Sample Resolution of Support

WHEREAS, local municipal government, county government, and regional economic development entities must provide leadership and coordination for community development efforts; and

WHEREAS, community development needs can best be solved through a cooperative effort between local, county, regional and state economic development organizations and entities; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to recognize and promote our community's organizational readiness, infrastructure investment, ability to respond to business needs, and

WHEREAS, the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's Leadership Certified Community Program has been reviewed and found to be a resource promoting our community's economic development preparedness;

THEREFORE, the village board or city council of _____ do herewith pledge their full support, endorsement, and cooperation for participation in the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's Leadership Certified Community Program.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 20___

Signed _____

Title _____

Entity Represented _____