

Afternoon Issue Area Conversations

How can we build communities that better support stable and resilient families and a vibrant economy?

Come share what you, your agency, and community are doing. Learn what others in the region are doing, and join in a discussion of how we can work together to improve on our successes. Afternoon conversations are organized around issue areas. The purpose of each discussion is to explore “what exists today?”, “what is possible and who cares?”, and “what would it take to create change on the issue?” through an engaging process of group discussions.

Brief descriptions of the issue area conversations and a focusing question to start each discussion are listed below:

Community and Family Development

Families carry out many functions for their members and for society. Programs and policies that strengthen families can help families to perform these many functions efficiently and effectively including: generating productive workers, raising caring and committed members of society, and caring for those who cannot always care for themselves, both young and old. In this breakout session, we will explore how family life impacts a community’s health and economy. We will look at ways a community can increase its capacity for economic development.

Focusing question: How can we better support stability and growth for our families and communities?

Workforce Development and Education

A community’s economic development depends on the skills and talent of its workforce. This workforce can be developed with pre-k through high school and postsecondary education for traditional and nontraditional pathways. This breakout session will seek out innovative ways to increase education and workforce development opportunities in rural areas to build success.

Focusing question: How can we connect our current and future workforce with the tools, skills and information to be successful?

Funding and Sustainability

Central Wisconsin is a melting pot of many organizations with overlapping regions and interests. The boundaries of regions vary by organization and entity, creating a unique (and often blurry) mix of assets and resources.

Focusing question: How can we maximize our resources and leverage each other’s efforts to achieve shared success?

Industry and Business Development

Health matters in the workplace: A healthier workforce brings higher productivity, fewer work days missed and lower health insurance costs. In this breakout, we will explore the effects of health on business operations and ways to foster a healthier population and stronger business sector.

Focusing question: How can improve health in our workforce and community?

Behavioral Health; Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Mental illness and addictions are treatable conditions from which people can recover. The best outcomes occur when services are accessed early, with a good match between the service and the person in need. Mental illness and addictions, when not adequately treated, impact a person's functioning on many levels and compromise their ability to make healthy choices. In addition, the health of our workforce is directly impacted by behavioral health issues. All parts of our community are impacted by behavioral health, and all sectors can play a part in supporting recovery. This session will explore how we can make treatment services available to people early on, and hopefully to prevent an escalation of problems for the individual, their families and community.

Focusing question: How can we create the environments and conditions that support improved behavioral health throughout our community?

Connectivity- Transportation and Communication

Access to resources, and to each other, are primary components that define community. Transportation and communication infrastructure are two means of creating connections to resources.

Focusing question: How can we develop opportunities to improve the connections that exist today and create new ones for the future?