

# Central Wisconsin Health & Economic Development Summit

## Summary Report



Submitted by Forward Community Investments to  
the Central Wisconsin Health Partnership

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# Central Wisconsin Health & Economic Development Summit Overview

In 2015, the Central Wisconsin Health Partnership (CWHP) convened partners to plan and host a Health and Economic Development Summit for the six counties of the Central Sands agricultural region of Wisconsin: Adams, Green Lake, Juneau, Marquette, Waupaca, and Waushara. The purpose of this Summit was to catalyze collaboration towards the development of regional strategies to improve the health and vitality of rural communities in Central Wisconsin (WI).

From the onset, the Summit presented an opportunity for regional partnership. The Central Wisconsin Health Partnership (CWHP) engaged partners from all six counties, with over 55 individuals contributing to the Summit's development and implementation. Acknowledgments and a full list of Summit Planning Committee member organizations are included as Appendices A and B, respectively.

As a result of these planning efforts, 155 people registered to attend the day long Summit on August 11, 2015 in Green Lake, WI. Participants from across the six counties represented a broad cross-section of stakeholder groups from the public, private, and community sectors. There were opportunities for networking and dialog with other attendees in breakout sessions organized by county and by issue area (community development, transportation, workforce development, business development, behavioral/mental health, and sustainability).

This report provides an overview of the Summit, key discussion highlights and regional themes, and concludes with recommended next steps.



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## Key Highlights

- 155 stakeholders registered to attend the Summit, with representatives from all six counties and a breadth of public, private, and community sectors.
- Across all sessions, the most common regional theme was workforce development, with a focus on linkages from education and skill building to jobs, regional economic development, and attention to early childhood support and lifelong learning.
- The main regional themes also included family and community development, and transportation and communication connectivity.
- While collaboration was identified as an asset for the region, there was a recognized need for better engagement, communication, aligned vision, and regional partnership.



## Summit Sectors

There were 155 Summit registrants, including representatives from government (e.g., local, state, and federal elected officials) and other public administration agencies (e.g., public health, courts, planning, and economic development) (41 percent), health care and social assistance services (e.g., hospitals, clinics, Community Action Programs, food banks) (26 percent), and educational services (e.g., early childhood, K through 12, post-secondary education systems, UW-extension) (14 percent), among other sectors (Table 1).<sup>1,2,3</sup> In many cases, participants attended both as a sector representative and as a community member. Seven percent of registrants attended as a community member only or as an observer, without representing an industry sector.

*Sectoral participation was broad, and can continue to expand.*

Identifying industry sectors with lower or no Summit representation will be useful to further outreach efforts and partnership. These sectors include utilities (3 percent); finance and insurance (3 percent); agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting (1 percent); manufacturing (1 percent); as well as mining; construction; wholesale trade; retail trade; transportation and warehousing; information; real estate rental and leasing; professional, scientific, and technical services; management of companies and enterprises; administrative and support and waste management and remediation services; arts, entertainment, and recreation; and accommodation and food services.

**Table 1. Industry Sectors Represented Among Summit Registrants (n=155)**

Percent of Summit Registrants	Industry Sector	
41 %	Public Administration (includes elected officials)	
26 %	Health Care and Social Assistance	
14 %	Educational Services	
7 %	No Sector <sup>4</sup>	
Expand outreach to these and other sectors	< 5 %	Other Services (except Public Administration)
	< 5 %	Utilities
	< 5 %	Finance and Insurance
	< 5 %	Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting
	< 5 %	Manufacturing
	< 5 %	Multisector

1 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS).

History of the NAICS Code. <http://www.naics.com/history-naics-code/> Accessed October 2015.

2 United States Census Bureau. North American Industry Classification System.

<http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/> Accessed October 2015.

3 Note that some individuals may have registered but not attended.

4 “No Sector” refers to those who attended only as a community member or as an observer, without sectoral representation.



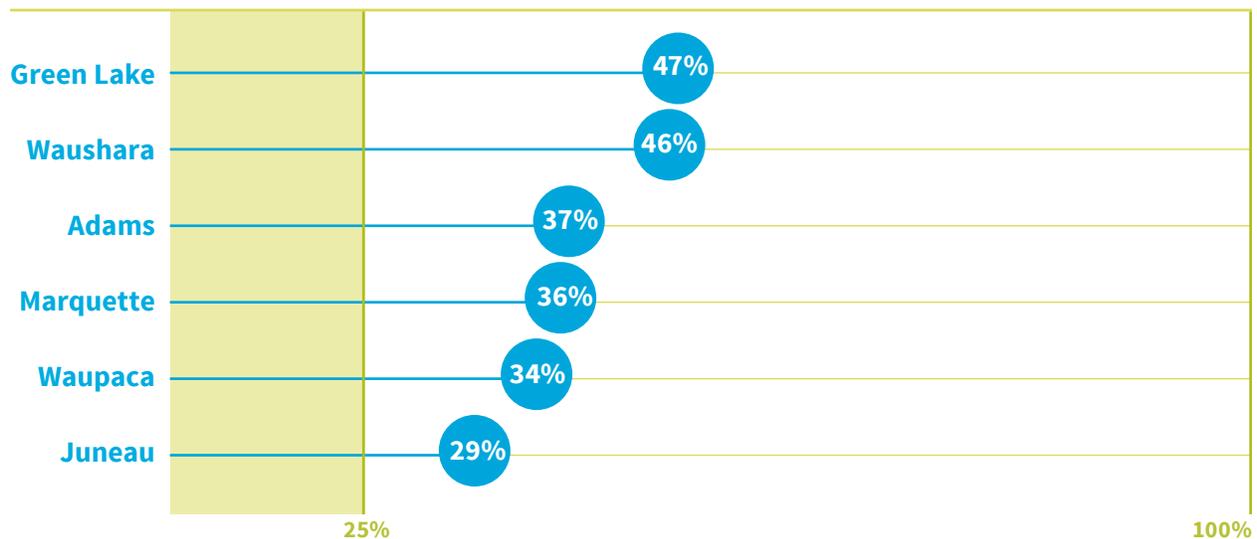
## Summit Counties

Among Summit registrants, there was broad representation across all counties (Figure 1), with each county represented by at least a quarter of participants. Summit registration data reveal that regional work is already taking place. Nearly forty percent of registrants were from agencies serving more than one county in the region (39 percent), including many already working region-wide (14 percent) (n=140). A map of the six counties of the Central Sands region is shown in Figure 2.

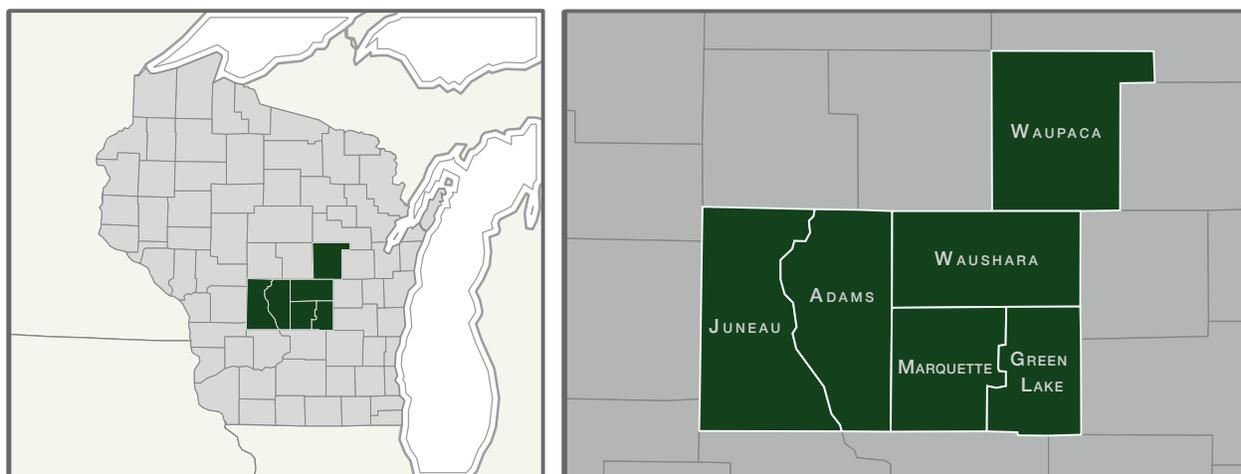
Nearly 40%  
of Summit registrant  
agencies serve more  
than one county

**Figure 1. County Representation among Summit Registrants (n=140)<sup>5,6</sup>**

Each county was represented by at least a quarter of participants.



**Figure 2. Six Counties of the Central Sands Region in Wisconsin**



5 In many cases, Summit registrants represented more than one county so percentages across counties will not sum to 100.

6 Not all registrants indicated their county. These data were missing data for 15 registrants.



## Summit Format

The Summit breakout sessions used a World Café format, where a table host facilitated small group conversations with the aim of eliciting genuine input and broad perspectives.<sup>7</sup> The final take-aways, referred to as “aha’s,” were shared together as a large group. At the Summit, these breakout sessions were organized by county and by issue area.

### County Breakout Sessions

In the morning, attendees met by county to discuss the greatest needs in their communities and strategies to address those needs.

### Issue Area Conversations

The afternoon focus was regional with participants selecting one of six issue area conversations to consider: “*How can we build communities that better support stable and resilient families and a vibrant economy?*” The issue areas included:

- Community and Family Development;
- Connectivity: Transportation and Communication;
- Workforce Development and Education;
- Industry and Business Development;
- Behavioral Health, Mental Health, and Substance Use; and
- Funding and Sustainability.

These sessions aimed to identify and document shared concerns in the region. The themes from these conversations are detailed in the next section and will lay the foundation for building a collective impact approach to address issues of interest in Central Wisconsin. The collective impact framework may prove particularly useful given limited resources in the region and its focus on leveraging assets and aligning efforts to maximize impact.

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### *What are the key elements of Collective Impact?<sup>8</sup>*

- *Common agenda*
  - *Shared measurement*
  - *Mutually reinforcing activities*
  - *Backbone support*
  - *Continuous communication*
- 

7 The World Café. “The World Café Method” <http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/> (Accessed September 2015).

8 Kania, John and Mark Kramer. “Collective Impact” Stanford Social Innovation Review. Winter 2011. [http://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact/](http://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact/) (Accessed September 2015).



# Summit Themes

The key themes that emerged from Summit conversations and were echoed across all counties include workforce development, family and community development, transportation and communication connectivity, and the overarching theme of collaboration.<sup>9</sup> This section provides an overview of the findings and detailed discussions of each theme. *Additional Themes* – ideas of note but not prioritized across counties – concludes the section. Alignment in the region will center on further integration and partnership around each of these themes moving forward to leverage assets for collective impact.

## Summit Theme Overview

### Workforce Development

There is momentum to support workforce development with better linkages from education and skill building to living wage jobs, regional economic development, and attention to early childhood support and lifelong learning.

### Family and Community Development

Summit stakeholders can move toward the development of shared goals that support families, engage community partners, provide a means of social connectedness, create opportunities to stay in the community across generations, and build a sense of both place and purpose.

### Transportation and Communication Connectivity

To better connect rural residents, regional workgroups can identify and develop inclusive, non-restrictive transportation options, document and market the transportation options that do exist, and increase broadband and cellular access.

### Collaboration

The collaborative nature of the region was identified as an asset, alongside the need for better engagement, communication, aligned vision, and regional partnership.

<sup>9</sup> Note that to some extent there is overlap across and between themes. For example, employment options for many are limited by child care and transportation accessibility (including both affordability and availability). As such, the overarching theme of collaboration provides a framework to support linkages of these issues.



## Workforce Development

The regional economy and related education and employment opportunities are of utmost concern to Summit stakeholders. In a survey completed before the Summit, the greatest number of respondents identified economic development (including jobs and increased wages) as the issue needing the most attention moving forward. To put this in context, these six contiguous central Wisconsin counties are among the poorest in the state, with an average per-capita income of \$23,500. Workforce development was confirmed as a priority during the Summit, where it emerged as the most common theme across all county and issue area sessions.

### Link education, skill development, and employment

Throughout the day, there was a strong emphasis on aligning education, skill development, and employment for the region. Many suggested connecting high schools to local industry, technology, trades, and business, as well as to Community Action Program (CAP) agencies. Through these relationships, youth may learn about options available to them before graduation and gain relevant experience, and employers can learn more about what youth need and want as they enter the workforce. By providing opportunities for mentorship, learning, and entrepreneurship for youth, these partnerships can help youth build a sense of connectedness, purpose, self-esteem, and an awareness of local employment options. Summit attendees noted the importance of training for the jobs that are available and graduating employable youth, while also recognizing the dynamic nature of the job market and the ongoing need to retrain as the jobs available in the community shift over time.

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### Rural Poverty Initiative

*The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families recently identified rural poverty as a priority goal. The Rural Poverty Initiative, led by the Department will develop a transitional jobs program through public/private partnerships to assist those unemployed long-term and those with the greatest barriers to employment in the 16 counties, including Juneau and Adams, with the highest percent of rural residents in poverty.*

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### Consider options for regional economic development

Session participants described the importance of strengthening the regional economy and supporting economic stability. In particular attendees described the need to grow jobs within the community, attract businesses, ensure workers were paid a living wage, support local entrepreneurs, keep investments local, and again provide educational opportunities so that those living in the region are trained for available jobs. The need for broadband internet access and transportation to employment was also noted, and is highlighted in greater detail in the subsection on *Transportation and Communication Connectivity*. In addition, the Rural Poverty Initiative presents an opportunity to connect these regional concerns with state poverty alleviation efforts (see Rural Poverty Initiative text box).

### Incorporate early childhood systems, provide options for quality child care, and foster lifelong learning

Across county sessions, participants described the importance of intergenerational and lifelong learning. This includes early intervention to support school readiness, engaging family members and encouraging involvement in their child's education, and opportunities for adult education (e.g., financial literacy). As one attendee explained, "workforce development starts at home." In addition, the availability and affordability of child care options can be a barrier to employment for many and there is need for quality, accessible child care that nurtures child development.



## Family and Community Development

Across county and issue area conversations, Summit participants recognized support for families and community collaboration as priority focus areas. Many of these conversations noted the importance of building intergenerational relationships and fostering a sense of both place and purpose in order to connect residents of all ages to possibilities and opportunities in Central Wisconsin.

### Provide support for families

Building on the central theme of family support, attendees of the afternoon *Family and Community Development* session detailed strategies to better support stable and resilient families in the region. Primary suggestions included connecting families to existing services; providing child care options, leave time, and family-friendly worksite policies; forming parent or family support groups; and empowering families with both capacity building strategies (e.g., tools, access, and programs) and leadership opportunities.<sup>10</sup>

### Engage all partners through community collaboration

Summit sessions noted the importance of connecting as a whole community and building broad community collaboration. As the Green Lake session highlighted, this work “requires partnership of all parts of the community.” Through community connections, residents can build understanding and develop common goals and solutions. Specific examples emphasized include engaging schools, businesses, and county services; hosting community and parent cafes; and developing shared learning events that bring together parents, community leaders, and local organizational leadership.

### Build intergenerational connections with opportunities for residents across the lifespan

Not only do data show that the aging population of the region is increasing over time but opportunities for young families remain limited. Those in the Waupaca session described the need to “build a community that [youth] will want to come back to after high school and college, including well-paying jobs, cultural activities, and recreation.” By connecting generations, assets that exist within this demographic shift can be realized and social connectedness improved. For example, older residents have a wealth of experience and knowledge and can serve as mentors and volunteers to support younger families. In addition, there is a growing economy around elderly and nursing care that may create new employment opportunities for younger residents.

### Foster a sense of both place and purpose

Attendees recognized the need for residents to establish connectedness to each other, the local geography, and the surrounding social service environment. There was a strong emphasis on supporting local identity formation, developing skills, and nurturing a sense of belonging so that young residents would feel grounded locally. The Green Lake session suggested the formation of parent and youth leadership teams to engage the family in developing youth as leaders and stakeholders in the community so that their sense of connection and responsibility takes root.

<sup>10</sup> Other suggestions such as developing skill enhancement opportunities and improved transportation networks are detailed further in the respective sections on *Workforce Development* and *Transportation and Communication Connectivity*.



## Transportation and Communication Connectivity

Across all county breakout sessions, participants identified the lack of transportation options as an area of need. Participants highlighted not only the necessity of transportation in order to access jobs, health care, food, and support networks, but also the relationship between this connectivity and a sense of community. As one attendee explained,

*“We are one hour from everything - which may imply ‘go somewhere else to shop, play, and be social.’ What does this do to our community?”*

The relationship between business and transportation was also emphasized, with some expressing concern for workers challenged to sustain employment with limited transportation options, and others noting that regional business could grow by improving or making better use of transportation services.

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*“Transportation relates to everything.”*

*–Marquette County stakeholder*

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Given the resonance of the connectivity theme across counties, key take-aways and strategies from the afternoon session on *Connectivity: Transportation and Communication* are described here:

### Develop transportation options without access restrictions

There was broad consensus in this session that developing inclusive, rather than exclusive, transportation options that could be utilized by anyone is a priority. Many of the existing services are restricted and not open to everyone for any purpose (e.g., restrictions by age or affiliation), even though there is need throughout the community.

### Inventory and publicize existing transportation resources

All groups from this session highlighted the importance of greater documentation, awareness, and communication of existing services. Once resources are inventoried, a promising strategy suggested would be to consider the multi-use possibilities of existing vehicles such as school buses and vans, and the potential of public/private partnerships to expand access to existing resources.

### Increase broadband/cellular access

In addition to the need for transportation connectivity, the afternoon session described the importance of communications connectivity, including cellular and broadband access. This theme was emphasized in some, but not all of the county conversations from the morning.

Some additional strategies proposed in the *Connectivity* session included engaging a regional mobility manager to help create a coordinated response to the transportation needs common across the region, promoting bicycling options (e.g., paths, trails, safety considerations), and adapting innovative solutions to rural areas (e.g., Vanpools, Uber, Lyft, bussing system, regional transportation network).



## Collaboration

Across county and issue area conversations, Summit participants noted the importance of collaboration and partnership, specifically highlighting the need for inclusive engagement, improved communication, common vision, and regional partnerships. The collaborative nature of the region was identified as an asset, but the need for a broader more aligned partnership was noted. There is a desire to form collaborative partnerships across generations, agencies, sectors, and counties.

### Expand inclusive engagement

Throughout sessions, Summit participants emphasized the need to bring more stakeholders to the table (e.g., individuals directly affected by social services, youth, and low-income families). Attendees described community buy-in and leadership as essential, and noted that efforts for greater inclusivity must reach those not typically engaged and populations underserved by traditional social service models. As one session attendee stated, “We are not as inclusive as we think.”

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*“Everyone [can be] included in the process. Invite those who may not view themselves as stakeholders.”*

*–Green Lake County stakeholder*

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### Improve communication

Participants also described the need for better communication to support collaboration. This includes sharing information and ideas, creating open lines of communication, and treating each other with “total respect” and “non-judgement.”

### Develop a common vision

To further collective impact efforts, regional stakeholders identified the need for a common vision that is cross-cutting, aligns goals across counties, and coordinates efforts around the same issue or focus area. With a shared purpose and collective problem solving, there can be targeted impact and shared successes.

### Explore regional partnership possibilities

Stakeholders across counties described the possibility and potential of regional partnership, particularly around transportation. While some existing regional partnerships were noted, especially related to health and wellness, Summit participants recommended further partnership and better alignment of goals across counties.

## Additional Themes

Other themes that surfaced in some, but not all, county conversations, as well as many of the issue area sessions, include the need for improved food security, affordable housing, and better support for mental health and substance use.<sup>11</sup> Several counties also highlighted the need to recognize existing natural resources as assets, and consider the opportunities these resources present for tourism and recreation.

<sup>11</sup> To further regional work, this report focuses on the most common themes across all county conversations. Although not detailed here, behavioral health – including mental health and substance use – was explored in depth during one of the afternoon issue area conversations. Notes from this issue area conversation, as well as the others (e.g., sustainability) will be available on the CWHP website later this year. [www.cwhpartnership.org](http://www.cwhpartnership.org)



# Recommended Next Steps

The Summit served as a catalyst to bring diverse agencies and community members together across the six counties: Adams, Green Lake, Juneau, Marquette, Waupaca, and Waushara. CWHP partnered with Forward Community Investments (FCI), a Community Development Financial Institution serving Wisconsin, to support the facilitation of the Summit, with a focus on using collective impact as a model for collaborative partnerships across the six counties and core issues. As emphasized by Summit participants, regional collaboration and system coordination are a necessity to further this work. The following initiatives would build on the momentum from this Summit and maximize the collective impact of participants' efforts across the Central Wisconsin region.

## Identify backbone support

CWHP and the Summit Planning Committee members will lead efforts to identify and develop a backbone organization. The aim will be to establish independent, dedicated staff that can mobilize and support ongoing regional strategy efforts.

## Convene post Summit workgroups

In consultation with FCI, the CWHP and the Summit Planning Committee will review Summit evaluation materials (pre- and post- survey responses), as well as the highlights and regional themes from the Summit to identify one or two issue areas where there is strong stakeholder interest to address as a region. Stakeholders will convene as workgroups around these initial focus areas and develop a plan for coordinated action.

## Encourage further participation across sectors and consider collaboration strategies

The most common regional theme from this Summit, workforce development, is particularly relevant across industry sectors. Data in this report show the need to further outreach to sectors such as agriculture and trade, among many others. Alongside this outreach, it is recommended to consider the collaboration strategies identified by Summit attendees, as noted in this report.

## Create opportunities for continuous communication

To facilitate ongoing collaboration, CWHP and the Summit Planning Committee will connect with Summit participants who indicated interest in further involvement, identify avenues for ongoing communication, and create opportunities for participation of diverse stakeholders. Further development and management of a communication system may be a role for the future backbone organization.

## Begin identifying data that can be used to track progress

Establishing common goals and developing a system of shared measurement to assess progress towards those goals is a possible long-term endeavor for the region. Initial steps can be taken to help monitor and assess progress of collaborative efforts thus far. These steps may include identifying relevant data and existing data sources.



### **Incorporate a broad approach to sustainability.**

Sustainability is a necessary post-Summit consideration. For example, it may be helpful for stakeholders to inventory, maximize, and leverage funding and resources. Not only are resources important, but shared purpose and community buy-in, as identified by Summit participants, are key for the sustainability of collaborative efforts.

Once these initiatives are established, a collective impact framework may provide a foundation for creating a common or shared agenda, supporting mutually reinforcing activities across the region, and developing meaningful outcomes and data. Applying this framework, regional stakeholders can work together to define and achieve shared success.

## Join this Effort!

Interested in learning more?

Please visit our website at [www.cwhpartnership.org](http://www.cwhpartnership.org)

If you would like to get involved and contribute to the next steps of this regional work, please contact the co-chair of CWHP, Sarah Grosshuesch, by phone or email:

### **Sarah Grosshuesch**

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(608)-339-4505.



## Appendix A: Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the participants of the 2015 Central Wisconsin Health and Economic Development Summit. The ideas shared during engaged conversations at this Summit form the foundation for the summarized themes presented in this report. The work of CWHP, FCI, and all the agencies that contributed as Summit Planning Committee Members (Appendix B) brought together stakeholders from diverse sectors across counties. The skilled facilitation and note-taking from local and regional leaders made these conversations possible. This report was prepared by FCI with contributions from Sarah Grosshuesch, Public Health Officer of Adams County Health and Human Services Department. Many thanks to all the agencies, organizations, community members, and individuals who have made this regional work possible.



# Appendix B: Summit Planning Committee Members

More than 55 individuals from organizations representing all six Central Wisconsin counties participated as part of the Summit Planning Committee. This committee represented local business leaders, cooperative organizations, school districts, regional planning, economic and community development, health systems, University Extension, Community Action Agencies, Workforce Development Boards, local Chambers of Commerce, the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, the University of Wisconsin (UW) - Madison School of Medicine and Public Health, and the UW - Oshkosh College of Education and Human Services.

## Summit Planning Committee Members

Adams County Board	Juneau County Economic Development Corporation
Adams County- CESA 5	Juneau County Public Health Department
Adams County Chamber of Commerce & Tourism	Juneau County, UW-Extension
Adams County Health and Human Services	Marquette County Department of Human Services
Adams County Promise Neighborhood	Marquette County Tourism and Visitors Bureau
Adams County Rural & Industrial Development Commission	Marquette County, UW-Extension
Adams County, UW-Extension	Mauston School District
Adams-Columbia Electric Cooperative	Rural Wisconsin Health Cooperative
Adams-Friendship Area Schools	Tri-County Economic Development
ADVOCAP	UW-Madison, Applied Population Lab, Department of Community and Environmental Sociology
CAP Services	UW-Madison, Population Health Institute and School of Medicine and Public Health
Central Wisconsin Community Action Council	UW-Extension, Cooperative Extension, Family Living Programs
Community Health Network	UW-Oshkosh, College of Education and Human Services
East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission	Waupaca County Department of Health and Human Services
Family Health / La Clinica	Waupaca County, UW-Extension
Forward Community Investments	Waushara County Department of Human Services
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board	Waushara County Health Department
Green Lake Department of Health and Human Services	Waushara County, UW-Extension
Green Lake County, UW-Extension	
Juneau County Department of Human Services	



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