

# Winnebago County 2018 Strategic Planning and Goal Development Executive Summary



# WINNEBAGO COUNTY

— ILLINOIS —

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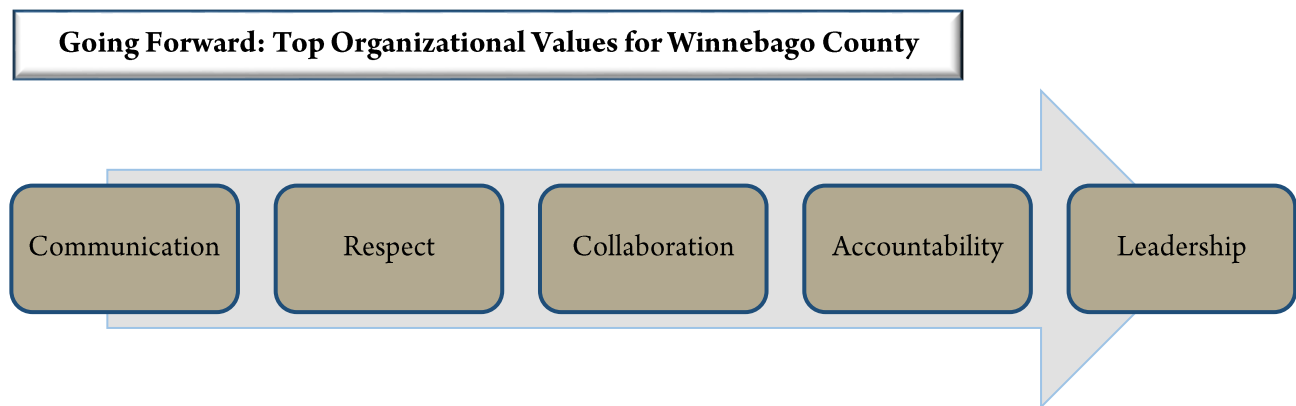
*Outreach, Engagement, and Regional Development*

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Strategic planning is a preferred approach to expressing and guiding an organization’s future. Rather than making decisions issue by issue, a holistic strategic planning process serves as a designed conversation to provide a forum for a methodical exchange of ideas and development of strategic goals. Winnebago County (“the County”) engaged the Center for Governmental Studies (CGS) at Northern Illinois University (NIU) to facilitate a strategic planning process and workshop with Board members. Prior to the 2018 workshop, several focus groups were held with community stakeholders to gather input on their vision for the County. With the focus groups as a starting point for discussions, the workshop provided a collaborative atmosphere for the Board and management staff to work together to explore the future, develop strategic goals and determine where it is the County wants to go as an organization. As was discussed and reviewed during the workshop, executive-level strategic planning sessions are a staple of good governance and leadership for progressive organizations.

## ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

In early 2018, County Administration officials leveraged a partnership with Rockford University graduate students to survey employees on the organization’s values. Research began with an exploratory phase to determine best practices in the identification of organizational values that included a review and analysis of 37 organizations. The official survey of Winnebago County employees began on March 21, 2018 and closed on April 12, 2018. The questions focused on the top five organizational values currently seen in the **ORGANIZATION**, in their **DEPARTMENT**, and **GOING FORWARD**. Below are the top five values that survey participants want to see in the organization going forward.



## STRATEGIC PRIORITY AREAS

Ultimately, five key strategic priority areas were identified as an outcome of the 2018 planning process and workshop. These five strategic priority pillars highlight the key activities and initiatives that the County should focus its resources on in both the short- and long-term. The strategic priority areas identified during the workshop sessions [in no particular order] are financial sustainability and stewardship, organizational efficiency and collaboration, community health and public safety effectiveness, 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure and dynamic economic development.



## STRATEGIC GOALS

Another outcome of the process was the creation of key organizational goals helping to ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common priorities. After all of the goals were shared and discussed during the workshop, participants were asked to classify each goal according to a matrix model of time and complexity. The goals were classified as short- or long-term and as complex or routine. In total, the group developed 4 short-term routine goals, 6 short-term complex goals, 3 long-term routine goals, and 6 long-term complex goals. Following the classification exercise, the Board was asked to delineate, via an online ranking exercise, which goals should be given a higher priority than others should. The top goals based on the Board’s average scores from each category are offered here as a process “snapshot” representing the most important strategic goals or priority areas for the Board and staff to address in the months and years ahead. For a full review of all the strategic goals presented, discussed and ranked, please refer to the full report.

### Goal Snapshot: Highest Ranked Goals within each Time and Complexity Quadrant

<b>SHORT-TERM ROUTINE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote fiscal soundness and take steps to create and maintain a balanced budget for the County Government</li> <li>• Analyze and review the short- and long-term operations of the County's nursing home at River Bluff</li> <li>• Evaluate County public safety facilities and operations</li> <li>• Examine organizational human resource system and policy reforms</li> </ul>
<b>SHORT-TERM COMPLEX</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve/create intergovernmental partnerships and collaborations to create and capitalize on economies of scale</li> <li>• Enhance economic growth and activities in and across the County</li> <li>• Review, analyze and reform/redesign animal services policies and operations</li> </ul>
<b>LONG-TERM ROUTINE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a long-term capital improvement plan (CIP) for highways, major equipment, building maintenance and other essential capital improvements</li> <li>• Invest in infrastructure maintenance and improvement to protect, conserve, restore and properly manage County assets</li> <li>• Explore innovative alternatives to incarceration</li> </ul>
<b>LONG-TERM COMPLEX</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote, facilitate and take an active role to encourage outside economic investments in the County</li> <li>• Take steps to establish/improve mental health support and care systems</li> <li>• Capitalize on the County's unique natural assets and features (i.e., river)</li> </ul>