

Is your community ready for Three-Star?

The Three-Star program of work is not without risk or hard work. Developing a strategic plan will provoke debate, but communities must build consensus and determine the best development issues to tackle. This process will require compromise at all levels and an honest assessment of your community, which may uncover a hidden gem or something undesirable.

Communities that participate in the Three-Star program are “raising the bar” for economic development issues in the state of Tennessee and are committing to answering their development questions with “new” answers instead of doing the same remedies of the past.

Join ECD’s Three-Star program and make the decision to aggressively address your community’s economic and community development future.

Building the Foundation:

Best Practice: Develop a Three-Star Committee

The Three-Star program is most effective when facilitated through an organization that is committed to their community’s future economic and community development health. To achieve maximum benefit, the program should be facilitated, developed, monitored and measured by one of two local organizations: the Joint Economic and Community Development Board (JECDB) or a broad-based formally-structured Three-Star committee with a chair person and sub-committee chairs.

Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence:

Over the past 15 years, more than 1,000 businesses and organizations have participated in the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE) Award Program. While recognizing the region’s world-class organizations, the TNCPE Award Program also provides a framework for developing effective systems improvements.

In short, TNCPE helps organizations run faster, smarter and with better results. This infuses our communities with increased revenue and job opportunities, as well as better educational, government and health care services. Along with their award program, TNCPE provides educational opportunities through peer learning, conferences, workshops and hands-on assistance for organizations that want to implement performance improvement methods.

Through a partnership with the Department of Economic and Community Development's Three-Star program, TNCPE will be providing services to qualified communities in order to assist communities in performance excellence in strategic plan implementation.

TNCPE was established in 1993 through the cooperative efforts of the Tennessee governor’s office, the Tennessee Department of Economic Development and the business community as an independent nonprofit corporation governed by a board of directors. It functions as a public-private partnership modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards Program. For more information about our mission and history, please visit the TNCPE Web site: www.TNCPE.org.

The Three-Star Program of Work

The Three-Star program of work is the foundation for success. Each community agreeing to participate must complete the following annual program of work:

STEP ONE: Five-Year Asset Based Strategic Plan

Who are we and where do we want to go?

Strategic planning is a planning process that should include key leadership determining community perception through assessment tools and surveys. These tools are available from your Regional Economic Development Specialist.

The strategic plan must include the following:

- Address ALL development issues in the community. These are to include, but not limited to the following: education, work force development, business recruitment, business expansions, business retention, infrastructure, etc.
- Participation from, information about and responsibilities of the active economic development organizations in the community. These include the JECDB, industrial development organizations, tourism development organizations, etc.
- Timeline to annually review, adjust and update the strategic plan. Three-Star Planning Workshop agenda provided by ECD.

STEP TWO: Establish Development Priorities

What do we need to take care of now so we can get there?

A community should determine their top five priorities to work on each year. This helps community's focus on their projects and set practical goals so that accomplishment is not difficult to measure.

Communities should remember the following when completing this task:

- The Three-Star program will hold an annual **Three-Star Planning Workshop** to identify development issues from your strategic plan and determine action priorities for the year.
- The Community prioritization process is conducted to review, to determine need and to build consensus regarding issues.
- Priorities should be realistic and measurable and should be assessed annually.

STEP THREE: Prepare Effective Measurable Actions, Responsibilities & Timeline

How do we get to where we want to go?

Strategic actions are generated from creative brainstorming, researching various programs and other communities, and utilizing the expertise of outside professionals. In other words, there must be NEW answers to the development issues of today's economic environment. This document is objective-oriented, creates improvement in existing development issues and becomes the one-year work plan for sustainable economic and community development.

Effective strategic actions should do the following:

- Create maximum positive impact on a local economy and solve development priority issues.
- Consider the amount of resources available, the level of commitment of local leadership and the potential benefits. These should be reviewed annually in order to measure accomplishments, to reallocate resources and to modify procedures as needed.
- Identify responsibilities and timeline in order to achieve success.

STEP FOUR: Share, Endorse & Implement the Plan & Measure the Outcomes

Did we achieve our desired outcome?

After implementation, a community must be able to track and monitor their outcomes and accomplishments.

Steps to Share and Endorse the Plan:

- The **Three-Star program Annual Report** will be presented to the local legislative body. This report is to be presented with the strategic plan and include accomplishments, priorities, action plan and any other committee reports for the year. For maximum benefit, the Three-Star Annual Report should also be presented to the Joint Economic and Community Development Board (JECDB).
- There should be a resolution by the local legislative body adopting the Five-Year Asset Based Strategic Plan – annually.
- There should be a resolution confirming compliance and an implementation plan for Federal Title VI Regulations – annually.
- There should be compliance by the JECDB as per Public Chapter 1101.
- New Three-Star programs must have a resolution to participate and a letter of intent to the commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development.

Steps to Implement and Measure the Plan:

- The Three-Star committee is the overview group that monitors and coordinates implementation of the action plan.
- The **Three-Star Annual Report**, which includes priorities, action steps and accomplishments, is due to the Regional Economic Development Specialist two weeks prior to Three-Star review and certification.

STEP FIVE: Maintain the Basics

There are five foundation initiatives that are required of every Three-Star Community, encompassing the ‘back-bone’ of the Three-Star organization. Before a community can tackle other development issues, they must maintain the following:

- Adult Leadership Program
- Health Care Committee
- Web Site Development
- Existing Industry Program
- Education Committee

Targeted and Strategic Actions:

Once a community has completed its strategic plan, it must determine a timeline for completing its goals. Creating a timeline requires communities to evaluate its first-hand needs and determine what goals must be completed within the year versus goals that will take an extended period of time. Since each community has different needs and resources, the Three-Star program provides optional targeted actions for communities to complete. The optional targeted actions include five key areas of development:

- I. Planning and Infrastructure Development
- II. Community Development
- III. Leadership Development
- IV. Economic Development
- V. Education and Workforce Development

Innovative Actions – The Three-Star Benchmark System:

Upon establishing the Three-Star foundation initiatives and working through the appropriate Targeted and Strategic Optional Actions, the Three-Star program of work moves to benchmarking economic development activities. In order to receive incentives from the Department of ECD, each Three-Star community must meet minimum benchmarks for each of the five key areas of development. These benchmarks are progressive and establish a standard of progress required for greater incentives.