



## ***Intercounty Coordinating Committee***

Adams, Columbia, Dodge, Green Lake, Jefferson,  
Juneau, Marquette, Sauk & Waushara Counties

# Local Government Strategic Planning

## *Approaches, Benefits & Challenges*

### June 16, 2025

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# Agenda

- What is a strategic plan?
- Why and why not create a strategic plan?
- Types of strategic planning processes
- Strategic Plan benefits
- Key elements of a strategic plan
- Draft strategic plan process
- Next steps & timetable



# ICC Members With Strategic Plans

County	Strategic Plan Date
Adams	2019
Columbia	
Dodge	2023?
Green Lake	2024
Jefferson	2023
Juneau	
Marquette	2023
Sauk	2016
Waushara	2023



# What is a Strategic Plan?

- Strategy is the process of making choices about the County (local government), what services to deliver, the populations served, and what not to provide.
- Develops the future big picture goals and formal plans
- Strategy is a framework for making decisions about how goals will be accomplished and deliver value and competitive edge, for which County taxpayers and residents are funding.



*Adapted from: Dr. Carol Poore, **Strategic Impact: A Leader's Three-Step Framework for the Customized Vital Strategic Plan**, as noted in **6 Reasons Why Every Organization Needs a Strategic Plan**, Carol Williams, Strategic Decision Solutions, August 25, 2023*



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# Why a Strategic Plan?

An organization can only perform effectively and efficiently when there is clear and common agreement on the tasks and objectives it seeks to accomplish (vision and mission) and how to realize (strategy). Strategic planning is not an end, but merely a tool to improve an organization's performance.



*Adapted from:* Strategic Planning in a Local Government Association (LGA), VNG International, 2005



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# Reasons to Create a Strategic Plan

1. Allows the Board and Staff to consider the future in building and delivering services that meet constituent needs
2. Provides direction for increased effectiveness and efficiency.
3. Encourages fact-based discussions of politically sensitive issues.
4. Create a framework for allocating resources.
5. Provides a proper context for evaluating employee performance.
6. Fosters a culture of informed decision-making.
7. Enhanced organizational capabilities.
8. Increases public confidence in the County's mission, vision, and values.



*Adapted from: **Creating and Implementing Your Strategic Plan**, John M. Bryson and Farnum K. Alston, 1996; **6 Reasons Why Every Organization Needs a Strategic Plan**, [Carol Williams](#), Strategic Decision Solutions, [August 25, 2023](#), and GovPilot, **Government Strategic Planning 2023: Examples & Helpful Tips**, 2023*



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# Is A Strategic Plan Needed?

## Not all organizations need

- **Small or simple organizations:**
  - If your local government is small with a limited number of services, a formal strategic plan may be unnecessary.
- **Stable, unchanging environments:**
  - Small governments with very predictable services and minimal external pressures, a formal plan might be overkill.



# Why Not A Strategic Plan?

## **Strategic plans can create unnecessary bureaucracy:**

- **Overly complex:**
  - Some strategic plans become lengthy and detailed, consuming excessive resources and time.
- **Focus on paper:**
  - The plan might be seen as a document on a shelf rather than a guide for action.



# Strategic Planning Challenges

- Leadership support
- Board and staff support
- Getting people to participate for 2-3 days
- Getting people to focus during strategic planning sessions
- Implementation – by whom, when and how
- Continued commitment to the Strategic Plan



# Strategic Planning Challenges

## Strategic plans can be ineffective if not properly implemented:

- **Lack of buy-in:**
  - Without support from key stakeholders, including leadership, a strategic plan is unlikely to be successful.
- **Poor communication:**
  - A poorly communicated message throughout the organization will likely be misunderstood or ignored.
- **Unclear goals or objectives:**
  - Vague or poorly defined goals can make it difficult for employees to know what actions to take.
- **Lack of flexibility:**
  - A rigid plan might not be able to adapt to changing circumstances.



*Google AI Adapted*



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# Alternative approaches might be more suitable:

- **Strategic Doing**
  - Focus on one or two specific areas.
- **Adaptive or agile planning:**
  - In dynamic environments, a more flexible and iterative approach might be more effective.
- **Focus on core strengths and values:**
  - Some organizations might benefit more from a more informal approach that focuses on their unique strengths and values.
- **Continuous improvement:**
  - Rather than a formal plan, ongoing efforts to improve processes and adapt to new information can be more effective.



*Google AI Adapted*



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# Types of Strategic Planning Processes

- Bryson - Comprehensive approach – 6 to 18 months
- Strategic Doing – focus on one or two major issues only
- Simplified approach
  - All County departments and operations (mandates and discretionary)
  - Only county discretionary funded operations



# Strategic Planning Cycle



# Key Elements of a Strategic Plan

- Development of:
  - SWOC Analysis – Current State of the County
    - (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges)
  - Review/update the County's Mission, Vision, & Guiding Principles
  - Long-term aspiration goals (**3 or 5 Years out**)
  - Short-term goals (next 12-18 months)
  - Implementation Plan - organization and financial policies (Board Committees, County Executive and Staff)
  - Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (County Executive/Administrator and Board)



# My Strategic Plan Approach

- Pre-planning
  - Create County SWOC(strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges) information (department template)
- Day One (6-hour session)
  - Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles review/update
  - 3 or 5-year goals development
- Day Two (6-hour session)
  - Next 12-18 month goals development (from 3 or 5-year goals above)
  - Implementation plan development
- Day Three (2 to 3-hour session(s))
  - Review plan with the Community and receive input
- Final Board approval
- Implementation, monitoring, and evaluation



# Getting Started

- Do you need a strategic plan?
  - Board and staff support
  - Community support
- If yes, how to accomplish?
  - Use an internal resource(s)?
  - Use an external facilitator?
    - Consultant
    - Regional Planning Commission
    - Extension
    - Community Leader(s)
- When?





Extension

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# Wisconsin Certified Public Manager<sup>®</sup> Program

Next Hybrid Cohorts (Virtual/In-person)

Kenosha– March 2023

Madison or West Allis, WI – Fall 2023





# WI-CPM Program Overview



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An 18-month program (2 days per month) and learning community that will enhance your administrative, technical, analytical, management, and communication skills.

PHASE 1  
**Supervisory**

72  
HOURS

PHASE 2

**Management**

130  
HOURS

PHASE 3

**Executive**

98  
HOURS

**300 total instructional hours**

Hybrid Program in-person and virtual classes as designated



# Who Should Attend?

Public staff,  
managers and  
supervisors ready to  
move their careers  
to the next level

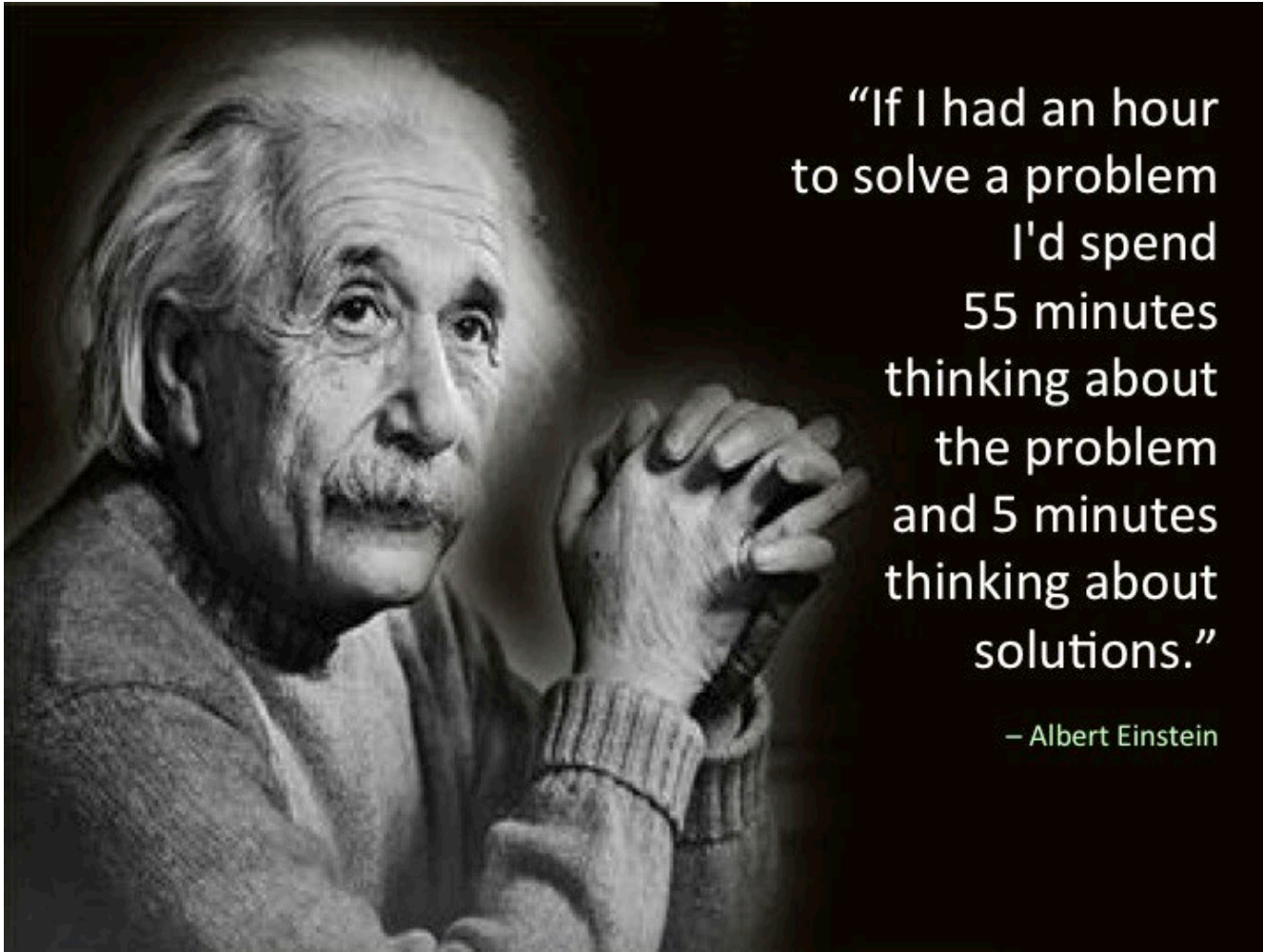


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## Current and past participants include:

- State, County, City, Village, Town, Tribe, Regional, Special District managers, administrative and program staff
  - Including administration, program, police, fire, EMS, parks, public works, IT, planners, clerks, finance, and utilities
- Municipal decision-makers and program leads
- Nonprofit leadership

# Questions?



“If I had an hour  
to solve a problem  
I'd spend  
55 minutes  
thinking about  
the problem  
and 5 minutes  
thinking about  
solutions.”

– Albert Einstein



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# *Thank You!*

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