

Scott County, Iowa

Strategic Plan Fiscal Year 2024-26

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**Scott County Iowa
600 W. 4th St.
Davenport, Iowa 52801**

www.scottcountyiowa.gov

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Strategic Planning Process:

Scott County completed the strategic planning process in the summer of 2023 with facilitation provided by Quad City Leadership Consulting, Inc.

The strategic planning process included:

- Conducting 23 interviews with all Department heads and selected management staff.
- Conducting individual interviews with all 5 Board of Supervisors.
- Submitting detailed reports from the interviews that outlined an environmental assessment for the County.
- Facilitating 2 strategic planning sessions with all Department heads and representatives along with the 5 Board of Supervisors.
- Facilitating 1 strategic planning session with all Department heads and representatives to draft strategies and actions steps for the County.
- Holding various meetings with County Administration to review the process and discuss results.

The entire strategic planning process truly reflected Scott County's PRIDE statement with **Involvement** and **Dedication** from many people along with **Professionalism, Responsiveness, and Excellence** in the conversations and decisions made by the group.

PRIDE Statement:

- **Professionalism** means **Doing it Right**
- **Responsiveness** means **Doing it Now**
- **Involvement** means **Doing it Together**
- **Dedication** means **Doing it with Commitment**
- **Excellence** means **Doing it Well**

Outcomes from the strategic planning sessions were 3 top strategic priorities along with strategies and action steps to support these initiatives.

Top Strategic Priorities:

- **Strategic Priority #1: Employees**
- **Strategic Priority #2: Facilities**
- **Strategic Priority #3: Organizational Efficiency**

Strategic Priority #1: Employees

How can we improve the recruitment, retention and compensation of our employees?

Top Strategies:

Strategy #1.1

Build systems to continuously monitor and address compensation packages for our current employees and recruitment to open positions.

Action Steps	Department
Review mandates, parameters and policies limiting flexibility on compensation and benefits packages for all employees.	HR
Gather information, such as benchmarks, from other organizations, about compensation and benefits' packages.	HR
Establish compensation philosophy policy for Board to consider for Fiscal Year 2026 Budgeting.	HR
Draft a proposal for the Board to consider adjusting compensation and benefits' packages accordingly for Fiscal Year 2026.	HR

Strategy #1.2

Implement an exit interview program to track and gather insights into why people leave the organization.

Action Steps	Department
Based upon research into exit interview templates from other organizations, develop an exit interview guide.	HR
Begin holding exit interviews no later than July 2024.	HR
Report major findings from exit interviews to the Board of Supervisors in Fiscal Year 2025.	HR

Strategy #1.3

Develop remote work guidelines and policies that best fit the needs of each Department and each position.

Action Steps	Department
Review each position for eligibility for remote work.	HR
Determine which positions are eligible for remote work.	HR
Develop a remote work policy based upon the findings by Fiscal Year 2026.	HR

Strategy #1.4

Embed the PRIDE statement into the hiring, onboarding, and annual performance appraisals systems.

Action Steps	Department
Frame interview questions around the five PRIDE principles.	HR
Incorporate PRIDE philosophy in organizational and departmental onboarding by Fiscal Year 2025.	All Departments
Frame performance appraisal system around PRIDE principles by Fiscal 2026.	HR
Explore other ways to use the PRIDE Statement by Fiscal Year 2025.	HR and All Departments

Strategy #1.5

Gather information from new employees and younger employees about what they seek from employment with our organization.

Action Steps	Department
Establish process for after onboarding feedback meetings with new employees no later than Fiscal Year 2025.	HR
Hold one-on-one onboarding meetings with new employees and communicate information to HR as outlined in established process.	All Departments
HR report on major findings from these interviews no later than Fiscal Year 2025.	HR

Other Strategies to Consider:

- Increase grassroots, “boots-on the ground” efforts to recruit new and younger employees.
- Investigate ways to provide productivity incentives (PIP) to employees who serve on special projects or who come up with creative ideas.
- Be consistent with the use of the Performance Improvement System (another PIP) when using it to discipline employees.
- Improve upon intrinsic, non-monetary motivators in the workplace.

Strategic Priority #2: Facilities

How can we optimize the current space of our facilities and plan long-term for a possible new facility?

Top Strategies:

Strategy #2.1

Create a written plan for unusual situations that could impact the routine functions of each Department from a facilities perspective.

Action Steps	Department
Review COOP / COG Plan; communicate review to FSS by Fiscal Year 2025.	
List new and plan for situations not in COOP / COG that could impact customer service for specific Departments (elevator breakdown, power outage, etc.).	
Develop alternative methods to deliver services by Fiscal Year 2026.	
Communicate how these plans will be implemented by Fiscal Year 2026.	

Strategy #2.2

Develop an intermediate, three-year facilities, parks, and other physical infrastructure, space plan by October 2024.

Action Steps	Department
Gather input from Departments on each of their unique needs for long-term and immediate space / facility uses.	
Consider possible uses for former downtown YJRC space.	
Negotiate with State of Iowa about future needs for the use of state offices.	
Develop plan for east side of warehouse.	
Ease the pressure for courtroom space.	
Ease the pressure for Boardroom space.	
Increase and scheduling of the space available for “flex” and common purposes, such as conference rooms, board rooms, convert to virtual meetings.	

Strategy #2.3

Create a master plan for the next generation, matching plan to projected funding solutions by Fiscal Year 2025.

Action Steps	Department
Based on the information gathered in Strategy 2.1 (above), and the work done on Strategy 2.2, develop a long-term plan for facilities for Scott County.	
Establish a Scott County “facilities savings account” for major improvements and long-term planning.	

Other Strategies to Consider:

- Consider how technology advancement could impact the utilization of physical space in our facilities (example: remote work, online).
- Address current space needs and utilization from other agencies the County houses.

Strategic Priority #3: Organizational Efficiency

How can we improve organizational efficiencies, including technology, to enhance internal operations and customer service?

Top Strategies:

Strategy #3.1

Integrate technology and web-based services to enhance interactions with our customers by Fiscal Year 2026.

Action Steps	Department
Present IT Technology Assessment Plan to Board by December 2023; develop action plan with individual departments by Fiscal Year 2025; enact action plan by Fiscal Year 2026.	IT and All Departments
Explore ways to provide more community services virtually (website, web chats, video, “virtual drive thru”) for increased citizen engagements. Test methods and implement within departments by Fiscal Year 2026.	IT and All Departments

Strategy #3.2

Explore adding specialized skill positions to the organization (example: business analyst, public relations, grant writer).

Action Steps	Department
Form an internal project team, including HR, Admin and requesting department to consider the unique needs of each Department.	Project Team
Develop a rationale, with budget considerations, for each new position to be proposed.	Project Team
Draft a proposal to present to the County budget process, and eventually, to the Board of Supervisors by Fiscal Year 2025.	Project Team

Strategy #3.3

Develop processes and procedures for departments to internally evaluate their efficiencies for process improvements.

Action Steps	Department
Have Departments visit similar organizations, or internally consult, to gather insights on operations and potential efficiencies; define outcomes sought and measurement of efficiency.	All
Each department reports findings on possible efficiencies to project team for internal feedback, cross departmental learnings and implementation; develop action plan identifying resources, restrictions and expectations.	All
Each department implements efficiencies discovered.	All

Other Strategies to Consider:

- Centralize some general processes for Departments (example: P-card processing, clerical responsibilities, accounts payable functions, etc.).

Appendices

Environmental Assessment:

Results from 23 interviews conducted with all departments and Board Supervisors. Updated from Strategic Planning Sessions.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departments collaborate well on projects. • A teamwork approach and attitude. • Management staff works well with each other. • Strong fiscal management. • Limited to no debt. • Lots of institutional knowledge on staff. • Strong leadership from County Administrator. • Cohesive Board of Supervisors. • PRIDE philosophy is generally followed and acknowledged. • Positive working atmosphere and morale. • The County is transparent with the public. • Cross-training of employees is good. • We invest in our employees with training and development. • The County has good amenities to offer to the public. • Building relationships with external customers and partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical spaces issues and challenges for most departments. • Compensation for many positions is low and this impacts employee recruitment and retention efforts. • Perception of inconsistencies between “elected run” departments and “hired staff run” departments in regard to procedures and decision-making. • Lack of a clear and comprehensive remote work policy. • Employee evaluations have become less useful or important. • PRIDE philosophy is not as relevant or impactful with new employees as it with the seasoned veterans. • County administration building is not optimal for the public. • Still struggle with paper vs. digital file retention practices.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search for new County property. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Old Clarion Hotel site on Brady & 53rd. ○ Old Hobby Lobby site in Bettendorf. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State legislation decisions impacting all areas of our organization. • State legislation and restrictions on property value growth.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NorthPark Mall area. ● Successful integration of MEDIC into the County (operationally and culturally). ● Move more services online. Reduce staff time. ● Re-evaluate the current physical space usage by HHS. ● Address future vacancy of juvenile detention center. ● Rethink and get creative with employee recruitment packages. ● Review our formal external communication procedures. ● Address Park View incorporation. ● Find ways to be more proactive on technology changes and advancements (ex. Artificial Intelligence). ● How can we serve our citizens better and more? ● How to be more efficient with all of our communication efforts and platforms? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of full staff impacts workload and morale for existing staff members. ● Employees want more flexibility in their work life (remote work and flexible hours). ● Competitions for new employees from other employers. ● Technology security threats/risks. ● Increase in community needs that we currently don't have funding for. ● Park View needing more and more County resources. ● Climate change projects impacting County residents (wind, solar, pipeline). ● Mental health challenges in our community and how we address them. ● Security regulations limits access to all parts of the building. ● Fiscal situation limits or restricts what we can or cannot do.
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PRIDE Statement Reflection:

Comments regarding the Scott County PRIDE Statement (7/27/2023)

“The PRIDE Statement is very comprehensive and provides a great way to illustrate how we can and should conduct ourselves, and also treat others, both in the workplace and in our daily lives.”

“We can effectively utilize the PRIDE Statement to recognize the values we represent, to the Board of Supervisors and the community at large.”

“It is about being proud of what we do and how we do it!”

“The two key elements in the PRIDE Statement that reflect how we serve the community are responsiveness and involvement.”

“The PRIDE Statement of our core values helps to create a productive culture.”

“The professionalism aspect of the statement is crucial and basically informs others of how we conduct business and who we are in Scott County.”

“The PRIDE Statement is an ideal with which we can aspire to excellence.”

“Not a single day goes by when I don’t reflect on the philosophy of the PRIDE statement and think about how I can best apply it.”

“In our area, the Scott County budget is not close to the largest, but when people think of service, professionalism and excellence, they think of Scott County.”

“PRIDE connects us, as individuals and teams; to our community, to our past and to the future.”

“The principles of our PRIDE Statement are ever present. Whenever I’ve needed assistance from any department within our system, even or especially from people who don’t know me and I don’t have a working relationship with, the response has been timely, helpful, and professional.”

Three Strategic Priorities

Notes from Strategic Planning Session of 7-27-23

1. Employees – How can we improve the recruitment, retention and compensation of our employees?

- Build on the PRIDE principles that create the environment to attract people.
 - Infuse PRIDE culture in first three years, and people will stay after that.
 - From a recruitment and retention perspective, we need to continue to build the professionalism and accountability that creates an environment where people will desire to work for us.
- Increase intrinsic, non-monetary motivators for staff.
 - Find positive ways to improve the organizational culture.
- To attract and retain employees in different life stages, our total compensation package should provide a smorgasbord of benefits, especially time off and the use of vacation and sick leave. For example, a younger employee may choose a minimal health insurance plan in exchange for additional time off, and an older employee may opt for the opposite, less time off and better health insurance.
 - Offer some flexibility on vacation, e.g., some are willing to take less money for more vacation or take vacation in place of sick leave.
- An annual review of hourly rates and salaries at all levels, along with PTO and benefits packages, with information from both the public and private sectors, which will help us to become more competitive.
 - Continuous benchmarks for compensation, e.g. look at other counties (Johnson, Rock Island), or regions.
 - An examination of our salary and benefits system will tell us if we are on the cutting edge of wages and compensation, and the system needs to be regularly reviewed.
- We need to find ways to retain young employees, because many seem to stay an average of three years or less, and we waste too many resources on short term employees.
 - Younger employees value different aspects of our compensation package than older employees. For example, young people want more flexibility in their scheduling, and care less about health insurance and retirement.
 - Many young people don't want to pay insurance premium as they are covered by their parents. They work short term, 3-years or so, don't think about retirement, overtime, etc.
- Working remotely is not something that fits with many of our positions and departments but should be studied for departments where it could be adopted.

- Transitioning to new systems, such as ERP accounting system, takes extra time and getting it up and running requires overtime and those workers should get extra compensation.
- Grass roots, boots-on-the-ground recruiting is an effective and necessary strategy, especially in recruiting younger employees. For example, speaking to college classes about the advantages of making a Scott County position a career, look for potential employees at the gym or in other social settings.
 - We should consider or reconsider an apprenticeship program that involves high school students and interfaces with area schools.
- Apply PIP (Performance Improvement Program) system when necessary and be consistent across organization.

2. Facilities – How can we optimize the current space of our facilities and plan long-term for a possible new facility?

- Conduct a thorough assessment of facility needs that involves input from employees from all levels. The community and other stakeholders would provide a better understanding of our needs and buy-in from those stakeholders.
 - Front-line employees should be involved in facility planning. The people who actually do the work, and their needs, should be prioritized.
- Customer-facing offices should be on the main floor or lowest floors where possible.
 - Community access to all Scott County services is essential and should be the highest priority.
 - Services should be delivered as close as possible to where they are needed.
- Create a master plan for the next generation. For example, we expanded facility A without consideration for impact on facility B or new parking requirements.
 - We need a proactive approach: plan, identify, commit and execute.
 - What can we do to centralize /organize all of our functions and services?
- We need a proactive approach to the future, one which depends on approximations.
- A key question is whether related organizations that are not a part of the county structure need all the space they currently occupy.
 - Does DHHS need all their space?
- We not only should address the needs of independent departments, but also ways in which we can create better communication and connection among departments.
 - Different offices have unique facility needs but should strive to stay connected as well so we can know each other.

- We need more flex space which can accommodate work-from-home if implemented.
- One of our greatest needs from a facilities standpoint is the need for additional courtrooms. In the county jail, we have inmates who have waited three years for their trials to be scheduled and that is unacceptable.
 - We should consider utilizing the former Juvenile Justice Center (Downtown YJRC) facility as space for the county attorneys and their staff, which could create needed courtroom space as well.
- We must also take into account how remote work impacts facility planning.
- Technology is not only vital but should be the driver of facility planning. How does technology impact the future of facility needs?
 - We need to stay ahead of tech impact (A.I., etc.) on space as well as regional opportunities for consolidation. We should minimize or eliminate foot traffic where possible by using IT.
- Where can we implement consolidation of functions and services in our long-range facility planning?

3. Organizational Efficiency – How can we improve organizational efficiencies, including technology, to enhance internal operations and customer service?

- All of our customer service functions must be web-focused.
 - Everything we do should be paperless.
 - Data needs to be easily retrievable.
- An A.I. Bot on our website will help us to move as much as possible to online service capability. For example, online forms currently must be printed, completed and mailed, and to convert the process to wholly online should be a high priority.
 - Artificial Intelligence can be helpful for the writing of reports, filling out documents and grant writing.
- Updated planning and budgeting software.
 - Department specific software.
- Technology assessment is the first step, followed by strategic investment in IT.
 - IT should also have an embedded project manager.
 - More IT staff to help departments meet customer needs and allow customers to readily find, access, complete, and submit forms.
 - Each department should have an IT liaison person.
- A study to examine overlapping responsibilities among departments could help us to centralize services and better serve the community.
 - Rationalize clerical staff, some are serving 15 and others 50.
 - Multi-service clerk positions across departments are an option.
- More centralized positions such as grant writers, business analysts, PR, media etc.

- A public relations, graphic artist person or firm could help us to create better consistency and continuity.
- Input from employees at all levels is needed to single out efficiency issues, and, the public should be asked to evaluate and comment on our efficiency efforts.
- There are training opportunities available to help all departments to identify efficiency problems and issues and create solutions.
- A great idea would be for each department to incentivize innovation, perhaps assign an innovator on a rotating basis to look for ways to create constructive change, and reward innovative thinking and action.
- Each department should appoint a liaison that focuses on Information Technology, interdepartmental cooperation and efficiency.
- Collaboration with area people who have similar challenges. Engage a department innovator, analyze service delivery quality and efficiency, streamline the website, and expand online services. This may require a third-party monitor who flags false data such as fake building permits.