

MUSKOGEE FORWARD

A COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



PROJECT TEAM

Thank you to all the steering committee members, roundtable participants, and opportunity workshop participants who collectively represented a broad spectrum of the Muskogee community and brought a diverse set of skills and knowledge to the table that made this strategic plan possible.

City of Muskogee Foundation



city of muskogee
FOUNDATION

With a mission to make a real difference, the City of Muskogee Foundation was established in 2008 for the purpose of effectively developing, supporting, promoting, and improving programs and facilities relating to education, arts, culture, community revitalization and beautification, social services, healthcare, economic development, infrastructure, housing, and recreation for the City of Muskogee and surrounding areas and to improve the quality of life of residents of Muskogee.

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TIP Strategies, Inc., is a privately held economic development consulting firm with offices in Austin and Seattle. TIP is committed to providing quality solutions for public sector and private sector clients. Established in 1995, the firm's primary focus is economic development strategic planning.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Muskogee, Oklahoma, (the City) is at a crossroads. Population growth in the City and county have remained stagnant for over three decades, a period during which the state and the nation have grown significantly. Incomes and educational attainment levels lag national and state benchmarks and local housing options limit the ability to draw in needed talent. These challenges are balanced by Muskogee's many strengths, including unique assets such as the City of Muskogee Foundation, which offers the community a vital tool for investing in economic development. Other major assets include a strong base of private and public sector employers, desirable market access, and a committed group of leaders. Yet, despite its many positives, Muskogee has not seen the broad prosperity and economic growth experienced by some of its peers, including Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Recognizing the need for a strategic approach to ensure a more prosperous future, the City of Muskogee Foundation (the Foundation) initiated a community economic development planning process. This effort, called *Muskogee Forward*, brought together public and private sector leaders to build on the success of previous planning initiatives, including the 2012 *Action in Muskogee (AIM) Community Plan*.

The planning process was led by TIP Strategies, Inc., (TIP) and the Foundation, with a steering committee composed of 12 community stakeholders representing both public and private sectors. The project launched in mid-2021 and included a robust analysis of economic, demographic, and industry data, as well as extensive stakeholder input. Stakeholders were engaged through one-on-one interviews; roundtable discussions focused on specific target audiences; and an in-person workshop where community leadership from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors collaborated with one another to identify the future opportunities for Muskogee.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Insights gained from the data analysis and stakeholder engagement, along with a review of the region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis), were distilled into several themes. These takeaways informed the proposed framework and are reflected in the five goals that comprise *Muskogee Forward*.

Muskogee has the elements needed for success.

Muskogee has all the elements needed to achieve its desired future. Centrally located in the American Heartland, Muskogee provides rapid access to global markets. The region offers low transportation costs due to a diversity of transportation methods including highway systems, freight rail networks, air connections, and, most notably, port access. The Port of Muskogee (the Port) is situated at the confluence of the Arkansas, Verdigris, and Grand Rivers, offering multidirectional transportation. These geographic strengths attract major private employers to Muskogee such as OG&E Energy Corp., Georgia-Pacific, and Dal-Tile, among others. Muskogee also benefits from a large federal presence with public sector employers including the United States Attorney's Office, United States District Court, and various US Department of Veterans Affairs services. The region's strong employer presence, with concentrations in manufacturing and healthcare, translates to a constant demand for talent. To meet this need, Muskogee higher education providers, including Indian Capital Technology Center, Bacone College, Connors State College—Three Rivers Port Campus, and Northeastern State University Muskogee, offer everything from certificates to master's degrees. Coupled with its downtown appeal, special events and tourist destinations, arts and culture scene, and the potential of the riverfront, Muskogee is well-positioned for success.

In addition to these enviable community assets, Muskogee has an array of economic development partners who are invested in the community's future, as evidenced by the *Muskogee Forward* planning process. These partners include the City, the Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce, the Port of Muskogee, tribal entities,

workforce development institutions, Muskogee Redevelopment Authority, and more. However, the work of these groups and the highly capable individuals they encompass, is often siloed by organization. To ensure alignment and efficient use of resources, the roles for each organization operating in the economic development space must be clearly defined and closely coordinated. This coordination of roles should also extend to the local tribal entities. Despite the fact that the City of Muskogee is geographically central to the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Cherokee Nation, there is limited coordination currently between the City and these communities. There is an opportunity for economic developers from the City and tribal entities to build a relationship to ensure more economic success, both for the City of Muskogee and for the Muscogee (Creek) and Cherokee Nations.

Finally, Muskogee's prospects for success are greatly enhanced by the City of Muskogee Foundation, a unique organization that offers the community a significant tool for investing in economic development efforts. The Foundation is a major asset, both financially and as a convener of economic development partners, that most communities of Muskogee's size do not have the benefit of.

To compete for business investment and talent, Muskogee must address several challenges.

Declining birth rates and persistent net outmigration from Muskogee County have translated to generally stagnant population trends for 30 years, with a slight decline over the past decade. Just one in five residents 25 years and older (20.4 percent) hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with roughly one in three adults nationwide (32.2 percent). And roughly one-half of adults in the county (49.1 percent) have a high school education or less. Relatively low levels of educational attainment have likely translated into lower wages in the area, affecting median household income levels—which are more than \$10,000 below state or national medians—and moving more residents into poverty. Roughly one in four City residents (24.6 percent) live below the federal poverty line and a similar share (25.2 percent) receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, formerly known as food stamps. Investing in strategies focused on improving adult postsecondary outcomes could increase wages and household income levels and improve opportunities for advancement for Muskogee residents.

Along with these demographic challenges, Muskogee's housing availability and quality lag neighboring regions and limit the community's access to talent. Support for the idea that local housing is not meeting the needs of homebuyers and renters can be found in commuting patterns, which reveal that Muskogee has consistently drawn workers to the City from the surrounding area, including a large supply of professionals who commute into Muskogee for work but choose not to live there. Despite low housing costs relative to surrounding cities, Muskogee has a fairly high housing cost burden for residents, especially for renters, a situation that reflects the area's lower wages. Additionally, Muskogee has older housing stock, mainly built in the twentieth century, and limited internet access. Along with the challenge posed for lower-income residents by the area's low quality of housing and lack of affordability, there is also a gap in mid-range housing availability. Addressing that gap could support those individuals who currently hold jobs in Muskogee but choose to live in surrounding communities. Combined, these factors begin to explain the need for improved housing options as a lever to attract and retain talent in Muskogee, especially among a more educated demographic with work that is more likely to require at-home internet capabilities.

Investments in quality-of-place assets are essential to Muskogee's future.

Developing a thriving downtown is integral for improving the quality of place. Currently, Muskogee lacks liveliness in its downtown corridor. With a dearth of after-five activities, eating and drinking venues, shopping, transportation, and housing options, existing residents must resort to surrounding communities, such as Tulsa, to meet their entertainment needs. Leveraging existing efforts to grow Muskogee's quality of life and embracing new ideas to improve the community's attractiveness and livability downtown should be an integral part of Muskogee's economic development strategy. While there have been some efforts to

revitalize Muskogee's downtown area, there remains a need to redevelop and build downtown through investment, which the community has been relatively averse to making. These investments should extend to providing supports for small businesses and entrepreneurs, which are currently limited in Muskogee. Offering services and mentorship to this dynamic element of the local economy could reinvigorate downtown Muskogee.

Initiating development and redevelopment projects is a crucial tool to build the City's competitive advantage around economic centers and recreational attractions. Developing shovel-ready sites will translate to a stronger business presence in target industries. While Muskogee has an abundance of developable land for future new businesses to acquire, that land is largely undeveloped and lacking infrastructure. In order to increase the appeal of such land opportunities, Muskogee should have an inventory of shovel-ready properties for business recruitment purposes. Additionally, redeveloping existing assets downtown, along the river, and within blighted neighborhoods in Muskogee will create vibrant destinations for both visitors and residents. And, finally, as stated previously, addressing the area's housing and connectivity challenges must be a priority if Muskogee is to be successful in the retention and attraction of talent.

There is an opportunity to tell a more positive story about Muskogee.

Muskogee has self-esteem issues, struggling to overcome both internal and external negative perceptions. Individuals participating in interviews and roundtables often shared that Muskogee is poorly perceived in terms of its public school system, crime, and poverty rates. Yet, in reality, Muskogee has major assets in the education and workforce development spaces, offering residents educational opportunities from PreK through a master's degree. The gap between these offerings and the educational attainment levels of local residents is one that must be bridged if Muskogee is to succeed at retaining and attracting individuals and reverse the negative impacts of the outmigration of talent. Muskogee also needs better storytelling, both internally and externally, from the resident perspective of the community all the way to advocacy at the state government level. There is an opportunity for the City to launch a positive media campaign to better tell the Muskogee story, one that connects residents and visitors to the community and highlights its many assets and opportunities.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

With these takeaways in mind, *Muskogee Forward* sets out a strategic action plan that defines the role that traditional and nontraditional economic development partners can play in addressing the community's challenges while maximizing its many opportunities. The plan also seeks to leverage economic and community development work already underway throughout Muskogee. This focus enables the community to coordinate and collaborate around existing projects and integrate new distinct projects to increase the benefit to Muskogee residents. Muskogee has all the elements to achieve its desired future. The region's strengths in manufacturing and healthcare, robust workforce training network, and foundation resources are enviable. Coupled with its downtown appeal, special events and tourist destinations, arts and culture scene, and the potential of the riverfront, Muskogee is well-positioned for success.

VISION STATEMENT

Muskogee is a community committed to fostering collaboration among key partners to connect residents, visitors, and businesses with opportunities that help ensure a thriving economy for current and future generations.

GOALS

The *Muskogee Forward* vision is actualized via five goals designed to leverage existing strengths, mitigate challenges, and build on the momentum gained during the planning process.



1. Collaboration

To improve coordination across the multiple entities and resources contributing to Muskogee's economic development and align community goals resulting in more successful initiatives.



2. Business Development

To elevate Muskogee's competitive position by accelerating existing business development efforts, building support for small and large businesses, and facilitating high-wage and high-impact growth.



3. Talent Development

To build out Muskogee's education to career pipeline and ensure a steady stream of talent to support Muskogee's future industries.



4. Placemaking

To secure Muskogee's position as an attractive community for new and existing residents by focusing on quality-of-place assets including downtown redevelopment, housing, connectivity, and healthfulness.



5. Marketing

To shift internal and external perceptions of Muskogee as an attractive and livable community by focusing on the community's unique attributes and targeting key audiences.

OBJECTIVES

The following strategic objectives help connect the vision statement to the goals and strategies and delineate the desired outcomes.

1

Increase population.

2

Increase and diversify the tax base.

3

Increase the number of quality jobs available for all residents.

4

Raise educational attainment and income across all demographic segments.

5

Increase visitor spending.

CATALYST PROJECTS

Throughout the strategic plan, certain priority strategies are identified as catalyst projects. These large-scale, high-impact initiatives are intended to jumpstart development and have transformative effects throughout the community.



Develop a MAPS Muskogee Downtown initiative.

Spur additional private investment in downtown Muskogee by using public, private, and philanthropic funding to demonstrate collaborative interest in redevelopment, modeled after Oklahoma City's three-decades long Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) initiative.



Evaluate and prepare shovel-ready sites.

Evaluate and prepare shovel-ready sites for future business development, including a consideration of having sites that can accommodate large-scale, high-profile recruitment opportunities.



Establish an Accelerate Muskogee initiative.

Support and build an entrepreneurial ecosystem (including a coworking space in downtown, events, conferences, and programming targeting startups) and create an accelerator program for area startups to receive technical assistance and potential investment while growing their businesses.



Adopt an all-encompassing health and well-being strategy.

Leverage existing Muskogee assets to solve some of the community's most difficult health-related challenges. Interventions focused on health and well-being can reduce barriers to economic mobility for historically under-resourced communities.



Launch a positive media campaign.

Promote favorable community perceptions about Muskogee internally and externally.

MOVING MUSKOGEE FORWARD

Muskogee is well-positioned for success. The region's strengths in manufacturing and healthcare, its robust workforce training network, and unique foundation resources are enviable. The region's quality-of-place assets include an array of special events and tourist destinations, a vibrant arts and culture scene, and the potential for development in downtown Muskogee along the riverfront. The once-siloed economic development community has begun to break down barriers and work more collaboratively, as evidenced through the *Muskogee Forward* planning process.

Harnessing the momentum and building on the progress achieved through this collaborative endeavor will be an essential element of the plan's successful implementation. More important, leveraging the partnerships that were facilitated during the planning process and continuing to coordinate efforts across the network of organizations will be critical to the long-term advancement of the Muskogee community.



GOAL 1. COLLABORATION

To improve coordination across the multiple entities and resources contributing to Muskogee's economic development and align community goals resulting in more successful initiatives.

Building collaboration among Muskogee's economic development partners is essential for successful implementation of the *Muskogee Forward* plan. Aligning organizational agendas and resources with the plan goals will be a critical step in addressing Muskogee's most pressing issues. Coordinating the work of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors will be especially important in bringing the catalyst projects to fruition. These large-scale, high-impact initiatives are intended to jumpstart development and have a transformative effect throughout the community. Examples include creating a dedicated funding mechanism to drive reinvestment into Muskogee's downtown, modeled after Oklahoma City's long-standing MAPS initiative, which will require a highly coordinated approach to achieve success. In addition to facilitating the implementation of the *Muskogee Forward* plan, increasing collaboration and coordination across the partner network will help break down organizational silos and leverage funding sources, including the pursuit of grant opportunities. Finally, in carrying out the strategies, Muskogee's economic development partners must intentionally coordinate efforts and engage with tribal entities.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- 1.1. Formalize a *Muskogee Forward* steering committee to guide plan implementation as a mechanism for removing silos and enhancing collaboration across the economic development community.
 - 1.1.1. Review and make adjustment to the current steering committee membership to align with the goals, strategies, and projects outlined in this plan. Consideration should be given to the following entities and sectors.
 - City of Muskogee Foundation
 - City of Muskogee (to include tourism)
 - Port of Muskogee
 - Muskogee Redevelopment Authority
 - Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce
 - Muskogee (Creek) Nation
 - Additional Groups
 - School district representatives
 - Colleges and universities
 - Nonprofits and advocacy groups
 - 1.1.2. Assign the City of Muskogee Foundation to serve as the backbone organization, convener, and funder of staffing support for initial plan implementation. To achieve success, the approach requires a centralized infrastructure, a dedicated staff, and a structured process that leads to a common agenda, shared measurement, continuous communication, and mutually reinforcing activities among all participants.
 - 1.1.3. Meet on a monthly basis (at a minimum) for the first year, at the end of which the scheduling can be adjusted. At each meeting, the committee should address the following.
 - Prioritization of strategies and actions.
 - Task responsibilities.
 - Updates on progress.
 - Resourcing (personnel and funding).
 - Review and adjustment of schedules.
 - Communication of progress to stakeholders.

- 1.2. Create a broader community stakeholder group (using the *Muskogee Forward* opportunity workshop attendees as a start) to serve as champions for the plan and specific projects. This group is vital to the future implementation and should be convened twice a year for the first two years. And potentially more often if there is a specific project that merits it.
- 1.3. **CATALYST PROJECT** ▶ Develop a MAPS Muskogee Downtown initiative to spur additional private investment in downtown Muskogee by using public, private, and philanthropic funding to demonstrate collaborative interest in redevelopment. Targeting downtown development specifically will allow economic development leadership in Muskogee to move the needle toward economic growth, with citizen support and buy-in. This effort would be modeled after Oklahoma City’s three-decades long MAPS (Metropolitan Area Projects) initiative.
 - 1.3.1. Convene leaders from the Foundation and the City to evaluate the possible structure and funding mechanisms for a MAPS Muskogee Downtown initiative. Consideration should be given to the following potential funding sources.
 - City of Muskogee Foundation.
 - Sales tax.
 - Other funding/grants.
 - Private investments.
 - 1.3.2. Launch a public call for project ideas once the funding structure is determined. Through an online public portal, allow the public to submit project ideas, including details such as: project location, focus area, project type (capital or programming), description, anticipated outcomes, stakeholders, estimated timeline, budget, and sustainability plan.
 - 1.3.3. Establish a leadership group made up of the parties involved in the funding process to review and refine the publicly proposed projects.
 - Ensure the leadership group includes representation from the Foundation (to reflect the Foundation’s contribution) and City Council members (to represent the investment of public tax dollars).
 - Convene this group over a series of study sessions to evaluate and prioritize projects for possible funding.
 - Establish criteria for determining which projects are more immediate and can be achieved in the short term versus which projects require a MAPS-level long-term investment.
 - 1.3.4. Schedule an election once the refined projects are announced to the public, to allow residents to vote on a temporary sales tax that would last approximately the span of eight years to cover a portion of the MAPS funding.
 - 1.3.5. Create a MAPS Muskogee office, composed of City and Foundation-funded staff, to execute the planning, scoping, budgeting, and implementing of the MAPS Muskogee Downtown projects over the duration of the MAPS timeline.
 - 1.3.6. Appoint a citizens advisory board, who report to the leadership group established in Action 1.3.3, to oversee the program and submit recommendations to MAPS leadership. The board will be supported by resident subcommittees to oversee and provide recommendations to the board on MAPS-funded projects.

- 1.3.7.** Submit the MAPS implementation plan for approval by the MAPS leadership group.
- Include the program scope, project scheduling, and project budgeting in the plan as researched, created, and provided by the MAPS Muskogee office.
 - Develop a strategic investment plan to support long-term sustainable funding of MAPS Muskogee Downtown projects.

CASE STUDY

Oklahoma City MAPS | The Metropolitan Area Projects (MAPS) are capital investment initiatives to improve the quality of life in Oklahoma City, funded by a series of temporary penny sales taxes. Oklahoma City voters have approved four rounds of MAPS programming since 1993. Each program has been overseen by a volunteer board, which makes recommendations to the City Council. Read more: www.okc.gov/government/maps-4

- 1.4.** Establish a shared staff grant writer position to pursue funding opportunities for Muskogee projects.
- 1.4.1.** Focus initially on opportunities through the US Economic Development Administration (EDA).
- Become familiar with the Eastern Oklahoma Development District, the council of government (COG) that encompasses Muskogee and its surrounding area, develop relationships with COG leadership, and become familiar with its existing comprehensive economic development strategy (a US Department of Commerce EDA required document for any grant application).
 - Form a relationship with the economic development representative at the EDA's [regional office](#) (located in Austin, Texas, and covering a five-state region including Oklahoma) to explore future funding opportunities.
- 1.4.2.** Identify other potential funding sources, including state and federal programs (beyond EDA), as well as philanthropic organizations.
- Create an inventory of these sources and the types of projects they fund or consider investing in existing resources that compile this information.
 - Call directly on staff at these potential funders to share information about Muskogee, introduce core organizations, and learn details about funding opportunities.
- 1.4.3.** Prepare needed materials and ensure relationships are in place to respond quickly to funding opportunities.
- Convene Muskogee economic development partners to collaborate on federal grant applications and to show the community's coordination and consensus around development projects.
 - Establish an internal process for evaluating potential projects to ensure that projects submitted for funding are likely to be successful.
 - Create standardized language characterizing Muskogee's economic distress (a frequent requirement of federal funding sources) and the need to advance economic prosperity for use in future grant applications.



GOAL 2. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

To elevate Muskogee's competitive position by accelerating existing business development efforts, building support for small and large businesses, and facilitating high-wage and high-impact growth.

Home to companies like OG&E Energy Corp., Dal-Tile, and Georgia-Pacific, Muskogee has clearly leveraged its geographic location and transportation assets. With the Port of Muskogee as a dedicated business partner, these logistical advantages offer a nationally competitive business landscape. To build on these advantages, Muskogee economic development partners must continue to enhance their business development activities, with the Port taking the lead on business retention, expansion, and attraction. While recruitment initiatives are often emphasized, supporting the existing employer base and fostering new business formation are often the most effective paths for driving economic growth and creating economic opportunity for residents. Strategies in support of these objectives include marketing to specific target industries, developing a more robust inventory of shovel-ready industrial and business sites, and expanding the supports offered to small businesses and entrepreneurs.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS



- 2.1. Enhance the Port's existing business retention and expansion (BRE) efforts to monitor and address the needs of major employers.
 - 2.1.1. Maintain a database of existing businesses in Muskogee using customer relationship management (CRM) software.
 - Build a geographic information system (GIS) component into the database so that it can be map-based and easily understood spatially by internal and external partners.
 - 2.1.2. Structure the business visits to achieve several outcomes.
 - Keep employers up to date on current Port and community services.
 - Collect answers to a standard set of questions about the employer's challenges and identify ways the Port/City can help address those challenges.
 - Identify employers who are expanding their operations in the area or are considering a relocation outside the community.
 - Uncover supplier recruitment opportunities that would benefit existing employers.
 - Capture testimonials from employers about why they chose Muskogee as their business location.

FIGURE 1. CORE TARGET INDUSTRIES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  <p>Material Processing & Shipping</p> |  <p>FOOD & AGRICULTURE</p> |  <p>HEALTH & COMMUNITY ANCHORS</p> |
| <p>Its central location and easy access to transportation (air, water, and ground) positions the City to target subclusters in distribution and commerce, transportation and logistics, and vulcanized and fired materials.</p> | <p>Muskogee's rural surroundings contribute to a strength in subclusters in food processing and manufacturing, livestock processing, and local food and beverage processing and distribution.</p> | <p>With a strong presence from hospitals, healthcare provider offices, social service organizations, and the federal government, this is an important sector for Muskogee to promote and support.</p> |

- 2.2.** Expand efforts to pursue domestic and international business recruitment with an emphasis on the set of core and emerging target industries outlined. (A summary of the targeting analysis for core industries is provided in Appendix B.)
- 2.2.1.** Develop relationships with site selectors, location consultants, and stakeholders who specialize in Muskogee’s target industries.
- 2.2.2.** Continue to develop the Port’s analytical and reporting capabilities to inform business development efforts and build industry intelligence around Muskogee’s core and emerging target industries.
- Maintain an inventory of sites and buildings that serve as focus for business recruitment efforts.
 - Continue to identify and draw on resources for monitoring industry and company trends within the target sectors.
 - Create a database to gather a comprehensive list of potential projects connected to emerging target industries.
 - Conduct site visits to other communities and/or business parks that have grown their strengths in these industries.
 - Continue to track metrics related to the strategic incentive program.
- 2.2.3.** Increase marketing tactics for business attraction within the target sectors and leveraging the port and other assets.
- Engage major employers and target sectors in this vision for Muskogee through incorporating business leaders, when appropriate, into recruitment activities to help sell Muskogee as an ideal business location to prospects.
 - Partner with the chamber and the port to enhance external marketing efforts pursuing businesses related to Muskogee’s emerging target industries: aviation and aerospace, battery storage and electric vehicle parts, energy technology, and agricultural technology.
- 2.2.4.** Re-evaluate the incentives policy to reflect specific needs within the emerging targets.

FIGURE 2. EMERGING TARGET INDUSTRIES

| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>Aviation & Aerospace</p> | <p>With Muskogee’s central location in the nation and with the City-operated Muskogee-Davis Regional Airport, Muskogee is well positioned to pursue aviation and aerospace businesses. The airport has 1,622 acres of land, including areas designated for future aviation or non-aviation development. Both industries require the design and manufacturing of different forms of aircraft and require a workforce with higher educational attainment and a focus on engineering.</p> |
|  <p>Battery Storage & Electric Vehicle Parts</p> | <p>Growing investments in electric vehicles (EV) in the past few years, with \$13.2 billion global venture funding raised in 2021, indicate this is an industry that continues to grow in demand. Tesla’s recent investment in Austin, Texas; DeLorean’s investment in San Antonio, Texas; and Canoo’s investment in Pryor, Oklahoma, all speak to the growing industry and its impact on local economies and jobs. In addition to car manufacturers, companies such as Wallbox, which is a global vehicle charger manufacturer, recently invested in a site for its first US plant in Arlington, Texas. The skill set for the energy storage industry requires technical training and is often in short supply. Targeting this industry would open Muskogee to attract innovating companies in the EV and battery storage space.</p> |



Energy Technology

Energy technology includes alternative renewable energy sources such as wood pellets, which are classified as a carbon-neutral form of renewable energy that has begun to replace coal plants as they are converted to burn wood pellets for energy instead. This is an appealing industry to the Muskogee community considering the prominence of material processing and shipping.



Agricultural Technology

As demonstrated in the food and agriculture target industry analysis, Muskogee has a strong agricultural presence. This is further supported by community partners such as the Oklahoma State University Extension, which provides programs, resources, and information about agriculture, production, and management within Muskogee County and the surrounding areas. These strengths open Muskogee to agricultural technology businesses aimed at making farming more efficient and sustainable, responding to variability in crops, and developing vertical farming techniques. This digitalization of agriculture requires a connectivity infrastructure, which means there is a growing space for internet providers and telecommunications companies in the industry.

- 2.3. CATALYST PROJECT ►** Evaluate and prepare shovel-ready sites for future business development, including a consideration of having sites that can accommodate large-scale, high-profile recruitment opportunities.

DETAIL: According to *Business Facilities* magazine, “Shovel-ready generally refers to commercial and industrial sites that have all of the planning, zoning, surveys, title work, environmental studies, soil analysis and public infrastructure engineering completed prior to putting the site up for sale and are under the legal control of a community or other third party.”¹ In addition to signaling a community’s ability to accommodate prospects, shovel-ready sites can also draw the attention of a variety of businesses that may end up selecting other sites in the area.

- 2.3.1.** Establish a program for specific shovel-ready project development that complies with the Oklahoma Department of Commerce’s Site Ready certification program. As part of this strategy, identify at least one large-scale, priority site to be ready for major projects and to serve as a marketing draw for other investment opportunities.
- 2.3.2.** Maintain an inventory of available sites, including privately held sites. The inventory should catalog preferred properties suitable for industrial, commercial, and retail development in Muskogee, including location, size, ownership, zoning, environment, planning, shovel-readiness, and infrastructure requirements. Pay special attention to identifying sites that would meet the basic requirements of companies in the target industries.
- List available sites on the Port of Muskogee’s website and cross-list them on other regional economic development websites and broker sites, such as [LocateOK.com](https://www.locateok.com).
- 2.3.3.** Evaluate infrastructure availability and quality in existing and future business and industrial parks.
- Prioritize infrastructure projects based on which development areas and sites are most suitable for expanding businesses and prospective businesses from the target industries.

¹ “Shovel-Ready Sites: Certified and Ready to Go.” *Business Facilities*, (February 24, 2021).

CASE STUDIES: SHOVEL-READY PROGRAMS

State of Oklahoma Site Ready Certification program | Oklahoma Site Ready certification helps communities meet the demand for project-ready sites and provides a competitive advantage over other properties. This can translate to economic growth and job opportunities. To earn Site Ready certification, site owners and/or community leaders must complete the application process. Read more:

www.okcommerce.gov/community-development/local-governments-edos/promote-buildings-sites

Tennessee Valley Authority | TVA Economic Development works to attract new companies and to engage existing businesses and industries to help them grow in a sustainable way. Working with regional, state, and community partners, TVA offers site selection services, incentives, research, and technical assistance to help companies locate, stay, and expand operations in the Tennessee Valley. Read more:

www.tva.com

Minnesota Shovel-Ready Site Certification | The state of Minnesota offers a shovel-ready site certification to give its communities a competitive edge in attracting business startups, expansions, or relocations by completing the most time-consuming technical and regulatory aspects of development. Read more:

mn.gov/deed/government/shovel-ready

- 2.4. CATALYST PROJECT** ▶ Launch an Accelerate Muskogee initiative that supports and builds an entrepreneurial ecosystem (including a coworking space in downtown, events, conferences, and programming targeting startups) and creates an accelerator program for area startups to receive technical assistance and potential investment while growing their businesses.
- 2.4.1.** Map the entrepreneurial ecosystem and resources, such as funding, in Muskogee to identify gaps in the system and facilitate mentorship between entrepreneurs. Provide an ecosystem that brings together entrepreneurs, large corporations, educational institutions, nonprofits, and students through networking events, coworking space, and skills training (see Emerging Prairie case study).
 - 2.4.2.** Give special consideration to cohorts of entrepreneurs that are typically underrepresented in funding opportunities for startups, including Black or of African descent, Indigenous, or woman-owned startups.
 - 2.4.3.** Sustain the program through a mixed model of philanthropy and earned income (example income sources could be consulting services, membership to the coworking space, and paid partnerships).
 - 2.4.4.** Identify a pilot location using existing space in downtown. This could be an already operating coworking space.
 - Consider using the MAPS Muskogee Downtown initiative as a funding tool to build this ecosystem and expand the physical space downtown if the pilot is successful.
 - 2.4.5.** Establish connections with entrepreneurship ecosystems in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.
 - Formally connect with the 1 Million Cups initiatives in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.
 - Send a visitor from the Muskogee coworking entrepreneurship space to visit Tulsa and Oklahoma City's entrepreneurial communities on a regular basis to make connections and promote Muskogee's entrepreneurship offerings and supports.

CASE STUDIES: ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Emerging Prairie | Emerging Prairie opened in 2013 with the mission of growing the entrepreneurial community in North Dakota and furthering economic growth for the state. Its revenue model is a mix of philanthropy and earned income, which is generated through consulting services, membership to the coworking space (the Prairie Den), and paid partnerships. Read more: www.emergingprairie.com

1 Million Cups | 1 Million Cups offers monthly event programming designed to highlight entrepreneurship in the community and connect entrepreneurs with potential customers, peers, and investors. Read more: www.1millioncups.com/tulsa

Stoke | Stoke provides workspace, office amenities, and a supportive, resourceful community for startups, entrepreneurs, remote workers, freelancers, small businesses, and tech-enabled companies in the heart of Denton, Texas. Read more: stokedenton.com

TX Women Owned Incubator Program | The TX Women Owned Incubator Program cohort of six Dallas-area woman-owned businesses are provided 24/7 access to a private dedicated workspace at The Slate in Dallas, direct access to a business advisor and mentors, intensive entrepreneurial training from industry experts, and video and photography support to include an updated media kit. Read more: twu.edu/institute-womens-leadership/news-and-successes/new-tx-women-owned-incubator-program-for-entrepreneurs-comes-to-dallas

- 2.5. Increase supports for small businesses and offer intentional services to proprietors.
 - 2.5.1. Increase offerings and visibility of tools, incentives, and regulations benefiting small businesses.
 - 2.5.2. Dedicate a staffer from the economic development community to help small businesses navigate opportunities for resources and grants, as well as serve as a point of contact for small businesses to reach out regularly to understand business challenges and needs and consider how these can be addressed.
 - 2.5.3. Build a small business ecosystem that will allow for warm referrals and ensure small business owners' needs are met.



GOAL 3. TALENT DEVELOPMENT

To build out Muskogee's education to career pipeline and ensure a steady stream of talent to support Muskogee's future industries.

With Muskogee's strong employer presence comes a steady stream of high-demand, high-growth career opportunities. However, Muskogee's high rate of inbound commuting suggests a large portion of these desirable career opportunities are occupied by non-Muskogee residents. In order to allow Muskogee residents to fill these roles—and potentially raise income levels—there must be an emphasis on talent development, including connecting community members to existing pipelines through local education providers in ways that are accessible and affordable. Existing efforts, such as the Muskogee Dream it. Do It. initiative, the Muskogee County Center of Workforce Excellence, and the Muskogee MFG Jobs initiative should continue to feature prominently in the community's talent strategy to fill manufacturing positions. Talent availability is the number one site selection factor for business retention, expansion, and location decisions.² But providing a workforce to meet existing needs is not enough. Competitive communities must demonstrate a commitment to building a pipeline of talent. Demonstrating this commitment means putting in place education and training programs to meet both current and future demand. If Muskogee is to differentiate itself from competing markets such as Tulsa, Oklahoma City, and Dallas-Fort Worth it must take bold steps.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- 3.1. Establish sector partnerships in leading sectors to build awareness of career opportunities in the region, beginning in middle school through adulthood.
 - 3.1.1. Develop healthcare industry-led, community-supported partnerships that strengthen Muskogee's regional economy and connect community members to jobs in the healthcare industry.
 - Launch a healthcare specific workforce survey to distribute to area healthcare-related businesses to understand their demands for talent, skills required of workers, and challenges to meet the workforce needs. This should build from the City of Muskogee and Muskogee County workforce needs survey conducted by the Port of Muskogee in 2022.
 - Support higher education institutions in pursuing new expedited degree programs. Advocate with local higher education institutions at the state level to ensure programs that help serve as future pipelines available to filling employment gaps in high-demand sectors such as healthcare.
 - 3.1.2. Enhance the existing manufacturing sector partnership, Muskogee County Center of Workforce Excellence.
 - Grow learning opportunities such as paid internships and apprenticeship programs to raise awareness of the region's manufacturing career pathways, especially among young students and those from underserved communities.
 - Focus on enhanced support of the Muskogee Dream it. Do it., Muskogee County Center of Workforce Excellence, and the Muskogee MFG Jobs initiatives.

² Alexandra Segers. "[35th Annual Survey of Corporate Executives Commentary: Change in Site Selection Priorities and Plans over the Short and Long Term.](#)" *Area Development*, (Q1 2021).

DETAIL: The Muskogee Dream it. Do it. initiative was established in 2016. This coalition of workforce partners helps area youth gain valuable exposure to local manufacturing career opportunities through programs such as plant tours, classroom visits by manufacturers, and scholarships, as well as offering unique experiences to engage with and learn about future employment opportunities through internships, career awareness videos, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics summer camps.

CASE STUDIES: SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

Next Generation Sector Partnerships | The *Next Generation Sector Partnerships Training Manual* includes step-by-step guidance for regional teams to work together to build successful industry-led sector partnerships that are applicable for both rural and urban regions alike. Read more:

www.nextgensectorpartnerships.com/toolkit

US Chamber of Commerce Foundation Talent Pipeline Management | The Talent Pipeline Management strategy aims to narrow the skills gap that employers face by developing critical partnerships with educators, shortening the time from classroom to career, and increasing the number of skilled applicants entering the workforce. Read more: www.uschamberfoundation.org/talent-pipeline-management-case-studies

CASE STUDIES: PRIVATE SECTOR AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

Fayetteville Chamber of Commerce | The chamber has invested in two significant workforce development initiatives: (1) The chamber and nearly 30 local employers have produced and distributed a textbook to 8th through 12th graders and are heavily involved in crafting career and technical education curriculum and other on-school activities, and (2) the chamber created the Northwest Arkansas Regional Robotics Training Center offering Industry 4.0 training for incumbent workers at local manufacturers. Read more: www.fayettevillear.com

Broken Arrow Economic Development Corporation | The Broken Arrow Economic Development Corporation regularly creates and facilitates public-private partnerships to advance its mission and improve the lives of its business owners and citizens. Recently, the city invested \$6 million in a jobs creation package to assist a local company in the construction of a new 375,000 square-foot facility that included additional public infrastructure. Read more: www.brokenarrowedc.com

- 3.2. Improve the PreK-12 experience at Muskogee and Hilldale Public Schools for teachers, students, and families.
 - 3.2.1. Conduct a community survey, targeting teachers, parents, and high school students, to understand where improvements are needed for each demographic. (Some examples might include more competitive pay for teachers or increased professional development opportunities.)
 - 3.2.2. Build a college-going community culture by incorporating GO Centers on high school campuses to help students explore college and career pathways and training teachers in college and career readiness curriculum.
 - 3.2.3. Market Muskogee and Hilldale Public Schools' innovative initiatives to help shift the image of the community. This should include the district's participation in Teach For America, Fab Lab, Muskogee Early College High School, and recent school bonds.

- 3.2.4.** Initiate a Muskogee Promise program, offering college scholarships to high school graduates in order to improve educational outcomes in Muskogee. Additional benefits of these high-profile initiatives include attracting new residents and changing perceptions by demonstrating a commitment to education.
- Utilize the existing Muskogee education consortium to launch support for the Muskogee Promise program that supports Muskogee’s youth in their educational endeavors.
 - Ensure partnership between educational institutions and area employers to build and fund the Muskogee Promise program as a cradle-to-career pipeline available to residents.
 - Leverage funding support from the City of Muskogee Foundation, as well as other funding partners, to launch the Muskogee Promise program.
 - Promote the objectives and efforts of the education consortium publicly so residents are in the know about the Muskogee Promise initiative and take pride in the level of collaboration that exists between education partners and the investment they make in local Muskogee residents and their educational and professional success.

CASE STUDIES: QUALITY EDUCATION

Greater Louisville Project | The Greater Louisville Project prioritizes education as the foundation on which a greater Louisville will be built. Therefore, the project invests in increasing the high school graduation rate, improving college readiness, and ensuring access to high-quality early childhood education. Read more: greaterlouisvilleproject.org/deep-drivers-of-change/education

El Dorado Education Foundation | In conjunction with the El Dorado Promise program, the El Dorado Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization that recognizes and promotes excellence in public school education in El Dorado, in order to improve educational outcomes. Read more: goeldorado.com/education/El-Dorado-Education-Foundation-EEEDF

CASE STUDY: COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

GO Center | A GO Center is a college and career information center primarily located in high schools. The center focuses on creating a college-going culture and promotes college awareness and accessibility. Read more: twu.edu/go-program/go-center

CASE STUDIES: COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

El Dorado Promise | The El Dorado Promise provides area high school graduates with a scholarship to cover tuition and fees at any accredited two- or four-year institution in the US. This program aims to attract talent to the town with a commitment to families and education. Read more: eldoradopromise.com

Kalamazoo Promise | The Kalamazoo Promise offers students who graduate from the Kalamazoo Public Schools and who meet the basic requirements up to 100 percent of tuition and mandatory fees paid for at any in-state public community college or university. Read more: www.kalamazoopromise.com

- 3.3.** Increase the equitable access to wraparound services, as they are integral to the economic success of individuals from lower-income households. Incorporate actions around transportation, housing, and childcare, as these issues impact the City’s ability to leverage existing talent located in Muskogee.

- 3.3.1.** Identify barriers that make it challenging for underrepresented populations to access high-paying jobs in Muskogee’s target sectors.
- Collaborate with local and regional nonprofits in gathering information about what challenges residents are facing.
 - Build on the 2020 Green Country Behavioral Health Services, Inc., *Community Needs Assessment* and the 2015 *Muskogee County Community Health Assessment*.
 - Disaggregate social and economic indicators by race and income levels to show how vulnerable populations are faring in comparison to other segments of the population.
 - Develop housing options for people in Muskogee experiencing chronic homelessness.

CASE STUDY: HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT

Community First! Village | Community First! Village is a 51-acre master planned community in Austin, Texas, that provides affordable, permanent housing and a supportive community for men and women coming out of chronic homelessness. Read more: mlf.org/community-first

- 3.3.2.** Convene public and private partners around early childhood education issues, including infant care, to address barriers facing providers and families.
- Launch a survey to understand childcare needs in Muskogee, including public and private sector leaders and underserved communities.
 - Explore grant and funding opportunities for childcare facility development and expansion and ensure such opportunities are also available to home-based childcare programming.
- 3.3.3.** Engage the Muskogee County Transit office, utilizing the *Connect Muskogee Trails* plan, to ensure transportation needs for underrepresented populations are met in Muskogee, allowing for access to and from job centers.
- 3.3.4.** Ensure workforce and affordable housing is available for Muskogee’s population. Despite relatively low housing costs in Muskogee, the housing burden remains steep. This must be curbed to reduce obstacles for economic success to all Muskogee residents (cross-reference with Strategy 4.4).
- Preserve existing housing by offering financial assistance for repairs or retrofitting to maintain naturally occurring affordable housing.
 - Identify opportunities for adaptive reuse of existing buildings that can be converted into multiunit housing and preserve existing structures and utility connections.
 - Improve the development review process to decrease costs for those committed to building workforce housing.
- 3.3.5.** Support opportunity youth in returning to school and finding full-time employment through offering college and career support in a program like cafécollege (see case study). Opportunity youth are defined as young people between the ages of 16 and 24 years old who are disconnected from school and work. Life circumstances can hinder a young person’s ability to explore and pursue educational and career opportunities.

CASE STUDIES: COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Comal County Needs Assessment | United Way of Comal County (UWCC), in partnership with the University of Texas, School of Public Health, conducted a needs assessment that offers a baseline of needs and resources allowing UWCC to be more precise with fund allocations, with regular assessments conducted every three to five years. Read more: uwcomal.org/comal-county-needs-assessment

United Way THRIVE | United Way THRIVE, a collaborative launched and led by United Way of Greater Houston, leverages more than 20 nonprofit partners and partnerships with employers, community colleges, financial institutions, and city and state agencies to provide families with the best and most comprehensive resources, wraparound support, and the services they need to reach real and lasting financial independence. Read more: www.unitedwayhouston.org/work/family-stability/thrive

CASE STUDY: CHILD CARE

Southwest Washington Child Care Consortium | The Southwest Washington Child Care Consortium is a public-private partnership offering community-run childcare facilities built on-site at private companies and operated by school districts. Although these facilities are open to the public, companies often subsidize employees' costs for childcare. Read more: www.esd112.org/ece/child-care

CASE STUDY: OPPORTUNITY YOUTH

Cafécollege | The cafécollege model originated in San Antonio, Texas, and offers free services to help community members of all ages decide on a career, apply to college, and find financial aid. Whether attending college to get a degree or work on a certificate in a professional trade, the café model is designed to support those who are motivated but need guidance in accessing higher education. Read more: cafecollege.org

- 3.4. Engage young professionals in the Muskogee community through leadership opportunities to build a foundation of residents from this specific demographic who are invested in Muskogee's community success. Create a young professional leadership group to cultivate the next generation of Muskogee professionals and community leaders. This would be in conjunction with the marketing effort (see Strategy 5.2).



GOAL 4. PLACEMAKING

To secure Muskogee's position as an attractive community for new and existing residents by focusing on quality-of-place assets including downtown redevelopment, housing, connectivity, and healthfulness.

The notion of quality of place means viewing local assets in terms of their ability to meet the needs of existing residents, as well as visitors, newcomers, and potential future residents. Under this framework, amenities play a dual role: as a benefit for residents and as a means to entice others to the area. The concept of placemaking refers to the process of creating and shaping quality places through a series of intentional investments and actions. Muskogee is home to a range of assets and amenities that contribute to its quality of place, including downtown attractions such as the Depot District, Roxy Theater, Muskogee Little Theatre, and the Oklahoma Music Hall of Fame. With strategic emphasis on additional placemaking efforts, Muskogee can further grow its downtown attractions and enhance the community's appeal. *Muskogee Forward* speaks to specific investments that will secure the community's future. In addition to redeveloping downtown Muskogee, these placemaking strategies within this goal include ensuring community-wide access to high-speed internet and providing a strong mix of housing options—including single family, multifamily, townhomes, and downtown living—at a range of price points. If local leaders want to be successful in attracting and retaining talent and showcasing all that the community has to offer, a focus on placemaking will be critical.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

- 4.1. Elevate redevelopment and development opportunities downtown for investment by key stakeholders in the community.

CASE STUDIES: MALL REDEVELOPMENT

Highland Mall | Highland Mall was built in Austin, Texas, in 1971 but declined in the early 2000s. A public-private partnership was formed between RedLeaf Properties and Austin Community College to acquire the mall and devise a master plan to transform the site including a high-tech education space, multifamily housing, public spaces, and the relocation of Austin's community licensed public television station and Austin's permitting and development services. Read more: highlandatx.com/a-rich-history

Gulfgate | A tax increment reinvestment zone was created with the purpose of acquiring the Gulfgate Shopping Center in Houston, Texas, for redevelopment. In so doing, a joint venture partnership was formed, giving Houston Redevelopment Authority an ownership share in the mall. Read more: www.houstontx.gov/ecodev/tirz/8.html

Belmar Master Plan | Belmar is the redevelopment of a failed 1960s 100-acre enclosed shopping mall into a vibrant urban village. The purpose of this master plan was to build a downtown with a sense of community, reconnect the site to the surrounding area, and celebrate the public rather than the private realm. Read more: www.vmw.com/projects/belmar-master-plan

- 4.1.1. Promote downtown redevelopment projects that enhance business growth, such as storefront revitalization and small business high-speed internet access.
- 4.1.2. Activate public spaces and provide equitable access to amenities, including parklets and public art installments.
- 4.1.3. Promote and expand downtown development efforts, including business and housing developments.

- 4.1.4.** Work toward downtown redevelopment and vitality goals, using the 2016 *Downtown Muskogee: A Landscape of Hope* plan. This work includes improved walking and biking routes, historic building preservation, and green spaces, with special attention to the Arrowhead Mall redevelopment.
- Develop a public-private partnership to accomplish the redevelopment of the Arrowhead Mall to repurpose the area as a public use space (reference mall redevelopment case studies).

- 4.2.** Coordinate redevelopment efforts to accelerate investment and community improvements in blighted areas and target corridors.

- 4.2.1.** Consider the following corridors for redevelopment.

- Redevelop the ninety acres in the northwest corridor of the City, as identified in the 2014 *Urban Renewal Plan: The Blight Study*. This corridor is located between Shawnee Avenue, Talladega, 11th, and Chicago Street.
- Redevelop the gateway corridor into the Muskogee community from Tulsa along Highway 69. This corridor has high visibility as visitors enter Muskogee and has several assets including the Love Hatbox Sports Complex, Saint Francis Hospital Muskogee, Honor Heights Park, and Veterans Affairs services.

- 4.2.2.** Establish a reinvestment/infill policy to promote growth in underserved real estate markets through the coordination of public incentives and initiatives that stimulate private investment. Areas of focus for this policy should include the following.

- Increasing new development, both housing and commercial on vacant lots (see Strategy 4.4).
- Increasing redevelopment of underused buildings and sites.
- Increasing rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Improving maintenance of existing buildings and sites.
- Increasing business recruitment and assistance.

- 4.3.** Initiate an expansion of high-speed internet infrastructure and address barriers to internet access and affordability. Ultimately, ensure digital inclusion so all Muskogee residents and businesses have access to high-speed internet and are able to use it meaningfully.

- 4.3.1.** Create a taskforce, engaging public and private partners, to address concerns about high-speed internet access in Muskogee, including access, affordability, and training.

- Identify which residents and businesses have access to high-speed internet and determine whether the service is affordable for vulnerable populations.
- Evaluate whether residents and businesses have access to internet-enabled devices that meet their needs, as well as access to the necessary training to be tech-savvy.

- 4.3.2.** Collaborate with external entities, including providers, institutional partners, foundations, and federal agencies to map out a rapid response for ensuring that the high-speed internet project moves quickly toward completion.

- Produce a comprehensive review of potential outside funding sources, such as the American Rescue Plan Act and federal infrastructure funding to support the expansion of high-speed internet.
- Coordinate with local internet service providers to create a 5G strategy for Muskogee, resolving weak service zones and facilitating last mile service to rural areas.

- Work with internet service providers to underwrite affordable device options for low-income households.
 - Facilitate rapid deployment of telecommunications and network lines across Muskogee, especially in major employment areas and commercial corridors to support business growth and e-commerce.
- 4.3.3.** Consider policy changes to ensure new structures have high-speed internet access.
- 4.3.4.** Market the initiative for high-speed internet actively, signaling nationally that Muskogee is bold and determined to engage all of its residents digitally and is open to the recruitment of tech-based companies, such as the recently established data centers in Muskogee.

CASE STUDY: BROADBAND ACCESS

Chattanooga Gig City | In an effort to minimize power outages and create a smart grid for the city, Electric Power Board (EPB), Chattanooga's city-owned electric utility company, began to update its electrical grid with fiber optic cables. EPB and city officials quickly realized that if all residents and businesses alike had access to the fastest internet connection in the nation, they would not only slow the outflow of talent but also attract businesses. Read more:

www.vice.com/en/article/ezpk77/chattanooga-gigabit-fiber-network

- 4.4.** Increase the number of and the access to housing units, owner and rental, across the spectrum of affordability and density (cross-reference with Action 3.3.4 and Action 4.2.2).
- 4.4.1.** Create a land bank through a public entity, such as the City of Muskogee, to target renovation and redevelopment of homes and neighborhoods.
- Inventory City and county-owned vacant, abandoned, or tax-delinquent properties.
 - Acquire land strategically in underdeveloped areas so that it might be purchased at a relatively lower price and preserved for future development of affordable housing.
 - Focus on acquiring land in areas that have the necessary infrastructure, including water, sewer, electricity, and roads.
 - Give special redevelopment attention to historically under-resourced communities. Establish different standards for infill housing development to ensure older neighborhoods are not at a disadvantage for redevelopment.
 - Leverage housing efforts by the Founders' Place Historic District and Kendall Place District.
- 4.4.2.** Develop new and align existing policies and programs to support additional housing.
- Establish a regularly occurring housing solutions forum to begin developing a knowledge base of housing opportunities and funding strategies.
 - Utilize opportunities for infill and redevelopment of existing buildings and sites to encourage housing development downtown.
- 4.4.3.** Encourage master planned communities that include a spectrum of housing prices.
- 4.4.4.** Create a housing strike fund to offer low-cost loans to affordable housing developers with money from private investors, nonprofits, and community partners as a way to help developers leverage additional funding sources.
- Identify private entities with an interest in and financial ability to participate in a strike fund.

- Establish a managing organization and board for the strike fund.
- 4.4.5.** Offer options for direct financial support to homeowners, buyers, and multifamily unit owners.
- Work with area employer to incentivize homeownership in Muskogee.
 - Contact local bankers and mortgage lenders about the possibility of creating mortgage programs for public sector employees.
 - Preserve existing housing by offering financial assistance for repairs or retrofitting to maintain naturally occurring affordable housing.

CASE STUDY: HOUSING STRIKE FUND

Austin Housing Conservancy | The conservancy is the most agile solution to stabilizing housing expenses for the working class who are at risk of being priced out of Austin, Texas. The fund invests and preserves rapidly disappearing multifamily properties currently affordable to moderate and middle-income individuals and families by maintaining affordable rental rates that increase proportionally with wage growth. Read more: www.austinhousingconservancy.com

- 4.5. CATALYST PROJECT** ▶ Launch an all-encompassing health and well-being strategy across Muskogee, leveraging existing Muskogee assets, such as the well-established healthcare sector and spaces like Love-Hatbox Sports Complex, Honor Heights Park, River Country Water Park, and Centennial Trail to solve some of the community's most difficult health-related challenges. Interventions focused on health and well-being can reduce barriers to economic mobility for historically under-resourced communities.
- 4.5.1.** Pilot a partnership between Muskogee anchor institutions and the tribal entities to offer more robust healthcare services to Muskogee-area residents.
- 4.5.2.** Prioritize Muskogee's community interest in supporting residents' mental health and well-being.
- Market local events through a lens of mental health and well-being.
 - Partner with the local Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center to offer more robust services to the veterans community.
 - Build off of the 2020 Green Country Behavioral Health Services, Inc., *Community Needs Assessment* and the 2015 *Muskogee County Community Health Assessment*.
- 4.5.3.** Encourage waterfront development for recreational activities on the river.
- Support efforts to develop water sports and other tourist attractions along the river and the surrounding area.
 - Continue developing and improving trail systems throughout the City and along the river to encourage outdoor recreation.
 - Coordinate quality-of-life investments along the river with tourism and marketing entities in Muskogee to promote these assets to residents and visitors.

CASE STUDY: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Blue Zones Project: Albert Lea | After the 2008 economic downturn, the community of Albert Lea, Minnesota, was determined to transform its situation and improve its health outcomes. In partnership with Blue Zones, the community was able to address its built environment, tobacco policy, citizen engagement, and bringing back the downtown. These community improvements sparked a chain reaction of economic development. Read more: www.bluezones.com/blue-zones-project-results-albert-lea-mn

CASE STUDY: ANCHOR INSTITUTION AND TRIBAL COLLABORATION

Alaska Pacific University | Facing closure, the Alaska Pacific University (APU) president began meeting with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), a nonprofit health organization that provides services to all Native peoples in Alaska, to explore a possible partnership. For ANTHC, a partnership with APU presented an unprecedented opportunity not only to build a new Indigenous healthcare workforce, but also to shape the future of Alaska Natives' health. Read more: tribalcollegejournal.org/the-next-tribal-university-alaska-pacific-university-is-taking-steps-to-become-a-fully-established-tcu

CASE STUDY: WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

Oklahoma River | As part of Oklahoma City's MAPS 3 capital improvement initiative, a seven-mile stretch of the North Canadian River was transformed into a series of river lakes bordered by landscaped areas, trails, and recreational facilities now known as the Oklahoma River. Read more: www.okc.gov/government/maps-3/maps-history/original-maps/oklahoma-river



GOAL 5. MARKETING

To shift internal and external perceptions of Muskogee as an attractive and livable community by focusing on the community's unique attributes and targeting key audiences.

In order to position Muskogee as a place that has an innovative business community, a pipeline of skilled talent, and a strong sense of place, Muskogee must utilize *Muskogee Forward* as a marketing process. The most important aspect will be ensuring coordination among stakeholders. As described in the first goal of this plan, collaboration and resource alignment will help build consensus around a singular and clear marketing message for the Muskogee community. This message must be embraced by local residents to shift the internal perceptions of the community, as well as marketed externally to those living beyond the City of Muskogee. In addition to creating and conducting formal marketing campaigns, areas that play a pivotal role in how the community is perceived internally and externally include tourism, state-level advocacy, and supports for young professionals.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

5.1. CATALYST PROJECT ▶ Launch a positive media campaign to enhance community perceptions about Muskogee internally and externally.

5.1.1. Target professionals who commute to Muskogee. Create and launch a digital marketing campaign, known as “I Am Muskogee.” This campaign is aimed toward professionals and families who currently commute to Muskogee for work, branding Muskogee as an ideal relocation destination.

- Capture and post videos of Muskogee residents telling the stories of their local businesses, attractions, school programs, and arts and culture communities in order to attract new residents to the community.
- Launch social media campaigns, including a focus on LinkedIn, to drive traffic to the City of Muskogee website.
- Pursue digital marketing efforts focused on attracting remote workers.
- Actively manage other online sources with local information—such as Wikipedia pages for the City of Muskogee—to ensure they depict an accurate and positive image of the City as a place to live and do business.

5.1.2. Target Muskogee residents. Highlight specific catalyst projects from *the Muskogee Forward* plan that can energize the community.

- Promote the advancement of the MAPS Muskogee Downtown process and adoption, especially the coordination between various community stakeholders and taxpayers.
- Market Muskogee’s efforts to become Oklahoma’s first and only City with all high-speed internet access.
- Spotlight the ethnic diversity of Muskogee and the community’s inclusive and welcoming atmosphere.
- Embolden Muskogee residents, business owners, and stakeholders to promote the *Muskogee Forward* plan through concise talking points found in the Executive Summary to promote Muskogee’s new initiatives and collaboration.

- 5.1.3. Target prospective businesses.** Elevate the brand and image of Muskogee as a destination for business at the regional and national levels, aligning messaging between Muskogee partners.
- Enhance Muskogee’s online economic development presence to effectively communicate desired messages to target audiences.
 - Review the websites for all Muskogee economic development stakeholders (e.g., City of Muskogee, Muskogee Redevelopment Authority, Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce, Muskogee Tourism Authority) to ensure each online presence communicates consistent positive messages and marketing themes.
 - Focus on aligning messages to portray Muskogee as a competitive and desirable place to live, work, visit, invest, and conduct business.
 - Present in-depth profiles of local business success stories and workforce strengths. Include testimonials from area business executives who endorse Muskogee as a great place to do business.
 - Coordinate regularly with partners to maintain up-to-date, consistent messages and marketing themes focused on business development and talent attraction and retention.
- 5.1.4. Target elected officials, agencies, and decision-makers.** Advance Muskogee’s growth and development agenda through advocacy at the state level and the federal government. Utilize community assets, such as those found in Action 5.2.1, to promote Muskogee as spokespeople and ambassadors with officials and utilize strategies, such as Strategy 1.4, to build a rapport with federal agencies.
- 5.1.5. Target visitors.** Leverage tourism marketing to improve Muskogee’s image as a destination, drive more visitors to the City, increase visitor spending and the tax base, and raise the profile of the City, changing perceptions internally and externally.
- Support the Tourism Advisory Committee and the Tourism Board in efforts to leverage what different entities are doing in the community and to creatively tackle attracting and retaining individuals to Muskogee.
 - Take an inventory of Muskogee’s tourism offerings and categorize them by special interests such as outdoor recreation, historic tourism, arts, festivals, and events.
 - Use Muskogee’s arts scene as a marketing tool. Coordinate various art-related events and attractions through a single promotional entity.

CASE STUDIES: POSITIVE MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Make It Tampa Bay | Wanting to capitalize on its status as a popular tourist destination, the Tampa Hillsborough economic development corporation, in partnership with Visit Tampa Bay and Hillsborough County, created a cohesive marketing campaign to entice tourists and businesses alike into staying permanently. The Make It Tampa Bay initiative specifically targets millennial job seekers and business owners who had previously traveled to the region. Read more: makeittampabay.com

Make It. MSP. | Make It. MSP. is a Greater Minneapolis-Saint Paul (MSP) talent initiative focused on three target talent groups: MSP newcomers, professionals of color, and tech workers. The initiative is organized by four teams that focus on welcoming newcomers to the area, increasing the tech talent pool through attraction and retention efforts, creating a culturally inclusive community, and connecting interns and recent graduates with professional opportunities throughout the region. Read more: makeitmssp.org

- 5.2.** Create support systems for young professionals and expats to reattract and retain talent (see Strategy 3.4).
 - 5.2.1.** Develop an ambassador program for Muskogee. Ambassadors should include young professional residents who chose to stay in Muskogee, relocated to Muskogee, or chose to return to Muskogee. Ensure that ambassadors reflect the diverse population of Muskogee.
 - 5.2.2.** Host networking events with content specifically developed for mid-career level professionals, including community stewardship and volunteer opportunities to connect new residents with the community.

METRICS

A fundamental component of a successful strategic plan is the set of metrics by which the community tracks implementation of the plan. The following metrics are not intended to replace any metrics already tracked by the Muskogee economic development community. Rather, these metrics supplement existing measures of success and offer *Muskogee Forward's* executive leadership to track success toward a single set of specific metrics over the duration of plan implementation.

| Category | Measure |
|------------------------------|---|
| Jobs | New jobs created/retained |
| Investment | Growth in capital investment from both existing and new businesses |
| Wages | Average wages of jobs created/retained and share of new jobs created that pay living wages |
| Businesses | Retention and expansion of existing companies |
| Industrial Sites | Amount of new industrial space added to the City's industrial market |
| Population | Rate of population growth |
| Domestic Migration | Net migration to the City of Muskogee |
| Commuting | Increase in the net number of workers who live and work in the City |
| Credential Attainment | Percentage of population with an industry-recognized credential or degree |
| Employment | Employment, unemployment, and labor force participation rates of working-age residents |
| Income | Median household income |
| Housing | Number of affordable housing units developed across the affordability spectrum |
| Housing Affordability | Rate of cost-burdened households spending more than 30 percent of their income on rent or mortgage payments |
| Internet | Rate of high-speed internet connectivity for residents and businesses |

APPENDIX A: PLANNING CONTEXT

The *Muskogee Forward* plan is informed by current events, quantitative analysis and trends, and stakeholder contributions. The common themes that emerged from these activities are summarized below and shaped the SWOT analysis, goals, strategies, and actions shared throughout this plan.

RELEVANT TRENDS

No long-term planning effort would be complete without the consideration of past and future trends from a national to local level that have informed the plan's recommendations and will influence the plan's implementation. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated many economic development trends that indirectly and directly affect the Muskogee market. These trends are cataloged below.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had widespread effects on the national economy.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an uneven impact on different workers, for example, regarding the location of daily work. There has been a steady rise in the percentage of employed persons working from home over the past several years. This trend was of course accelerated with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, while certain workers now have the flexibility to work from home, that is not the case for all. Higher-wage workers are six times as likely to be able to work from home as lower-wage workers.³ Despite the lingering negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the workforce, the US is experiencing a golden age of industrial development. There is an unprecedented demand for industrial space due to supply chain restructuring, vertical integration of multiple industries, and the just-in-time delivery model. At the same time industrial development is surging, the crisis around affordable and attainable housing is nationwide. And while it is often attributed to households with lower incomes, housing availability and affordability extend well beyond that. These national trends, from workforce flexibility, workforce shortages, industrial development, and housing shortages, each have a direct effect on Muskogee's economy and residents.

COVID-19 pandemic-related workforce impacts have compounded existing demographic challenges.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the US has undergone a number of demographic shifts that have contributed to worker shortages including the aging of the baby boomer generation, lower labor force participation rates among working-age populations, and a reduction in net immigration rates. Comparison of long-term job supply (new entrants to the labor market) and demand (average annual job creation for the past 75 years) reveals the workforce shortage preceded the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has created new barriers for workers, including concerns over health risks in the workplace and the availability of childcare, which only exacerbate the situation.

Regional challenges include a stagnant population, low educational attainment, and low income levels.

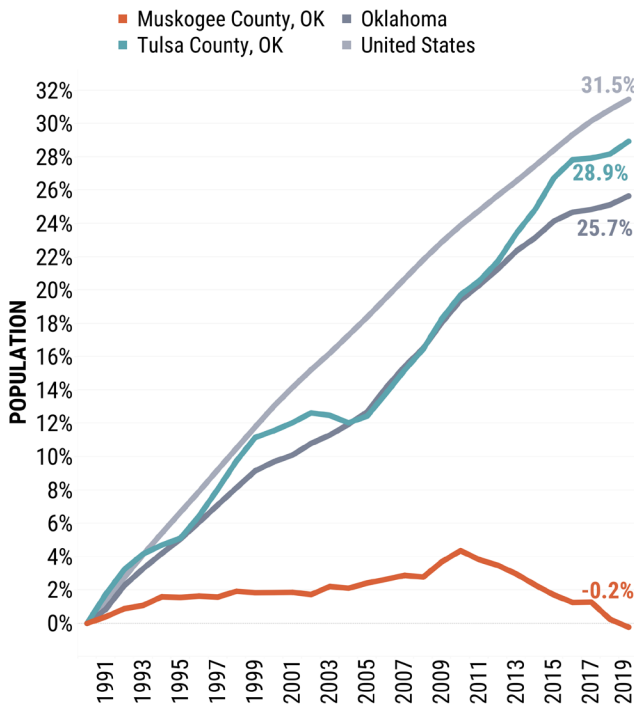
Muskogee County's population has experienced a lack of momentum, with generally stagnant population trends that are on a slight decline over the past decade. Meanwhile, nearby Tulsa County has grown on par with state and national rates. A combination of factors contributes to this trend, such as the overall slowing of natural population change (i.e., fewer births) and consistent negative net migration out of the county. The Muskogee region also tends to have a smaller share of residents with a bachelor's degree or higher. Only about 20 percent of Muskogee County residents age 25 and over have attained this level of education, with almost one-half (49 percent) having a high school education or less. Lower overall educational attainment may have translated into lower wages as the City's and the county's median

³ "Job Flexibilities and Work Schedules—2017–2018 Data from the American Time Use Survey." US Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, (September 24, 2019).

household incomes are both substantially lower (more than \$10,000 less) than state or national medians. Lower overall incomes also mean higher poverty rates with almost one-quarter (24.6 percent) of City residents living below the federal poverty line and more than one-quarter (25.2 percent) receiving SNAP benefits.

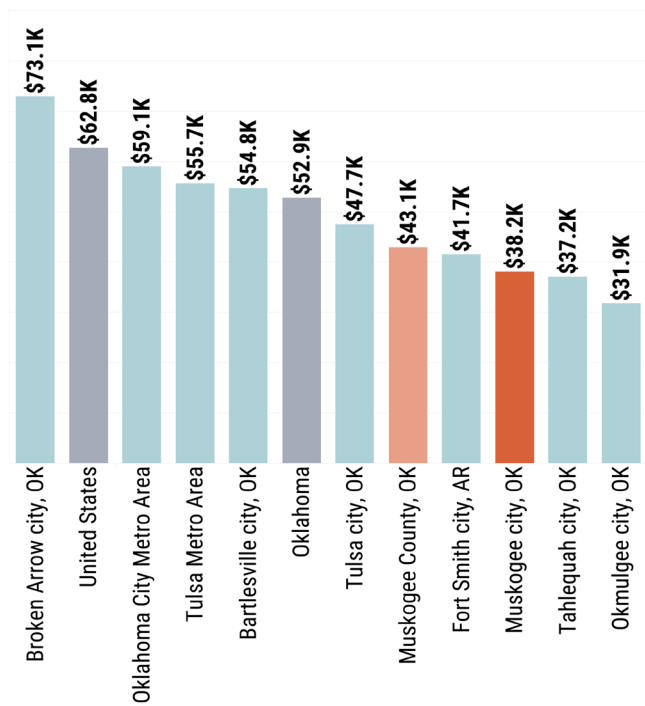
The City of Muskogee tends to have a more diverse population than most nearby regions with a near even split between White and non-White residents; 31 percent of non-White residents identify as Native American or Indigenous peoples and another 30 percent identify as Black or of African descent. Additionally, the City also has a higher share of single-parent households (11.9 percent) compared to state (7.4 percent), national (6.6 percent), or even regional levels (7.6 percent for the Tulsa metro). The City and the county also see high uninsured rates with more than 16 percent of the population without health insurance in 2019. Though this is on par with Oklahoma, which has a high uninsured rate of 14 percent, the rates in Muskogee are about double that of the nation overall (8.8 percent). Additionally, the City and the county have higher shares of residents with a disability (19 percent of City residents, 18 percent of county residents) compared to state (16 percent) and national (12.6 percent) levels.

FIGURE 3. POPULATION CHANGE: MUSKOGEE COUNTY AND COMPARISON REGIONS



Sources: US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program; Moody's Analytics; TIP Strategies, Inc.

FIGURE 4. MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME, 2019



Sources: American Community Survey, 2019 five-year sample; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Aging housing stock, low home values, and poor connectivity pose opportunities.

The City of Muskogee has substantially lower home values than neighboring regions. With a median home value of \$92,000, the distribution of home values is skewed low—more than 16 percent of homes are valued under \$50,000, compared to 12 percent of homes in Oklahoma, 9 percent of homes in the Tulsa metro, and 5 percent of homes in nearby Tahlequah city. Even with low housing costs compared to other regions, low incomes can make affordability a challenge to many residents. More than 22 percent of homeowner households and 50 percent of rental households are housing-cost burdened (pay more than 30 percent of income on housing costs).

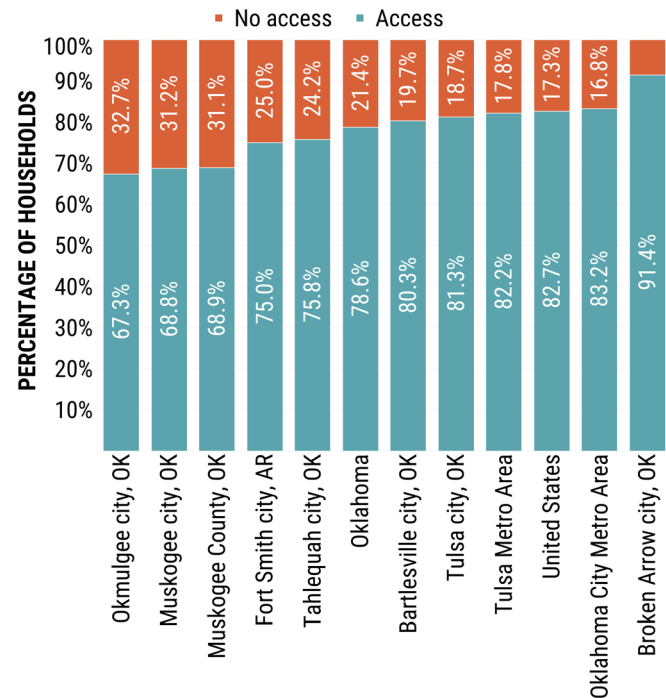
Moreover, the housing structures in Muskogee tend to be older with less than 9 percent of housing units built since 2000 and less than 30 percent built since 1980, compared to 20 percent and 47 percent, respectively, of housing units in Oklahoma.

Muskogee is also behind neighboring regions, the state, and the nation in the number of households that have computer access and are connected to the internet. The City and the county share similar rates of more than 16 percent of households without a computer and about twice as many (31 percent) without basic internet access at home. These rates are higher than the state (11 and 21 percent, respectively), which are also above national connectivity benchmarks (9 and 17 percent, respectively). The rate of households with computers or basic internet access is lower in the City and the county than the state and the nation. The state's rates of individuals without computer or basic internet access are 11 percent and 21 percent, respectively, and the national connectivity benchmarks are 9 percent and 17 percent, respectively. Having a technologically connected populace is a necessary precursor to a modern, productive workforce. Though migration trends may not signal sufficient demand to build new housing in Muskogee, upgrading and updating existing housing to be more attractive, valuable, and connected could position the City as a regional hub of opportunity.

Muskogee's workforce was vulnerable before the COVID-19 pandemic.

The City of Muskogee has a relatively small labor force of about 16,000, and the county adds another 12,000 labor participants outside the City for a total of 28,300 in 2019. However, labor participation rates under 55 percent (lower than state or national levels, which reached at least 60 percent in 2019), elevated regional unemployment between 6 and 7 percent, and flat or declining employment since 2005 may have left the region vulnerable to the coming economic shock. The City saw an employment contraction of about 3 percent in 2020 (a loss of about 800 jobs), and the county realized a larger decline of more than 4 percent (more than 1,400 jobs)—both losses were much more substantial than the regional effect of the Great Recession (2007–2009) and are comparable to

FIGURE 5. INTERNET ACCESS
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH ACCESS TO BROADBAND INTERNET AT HOME

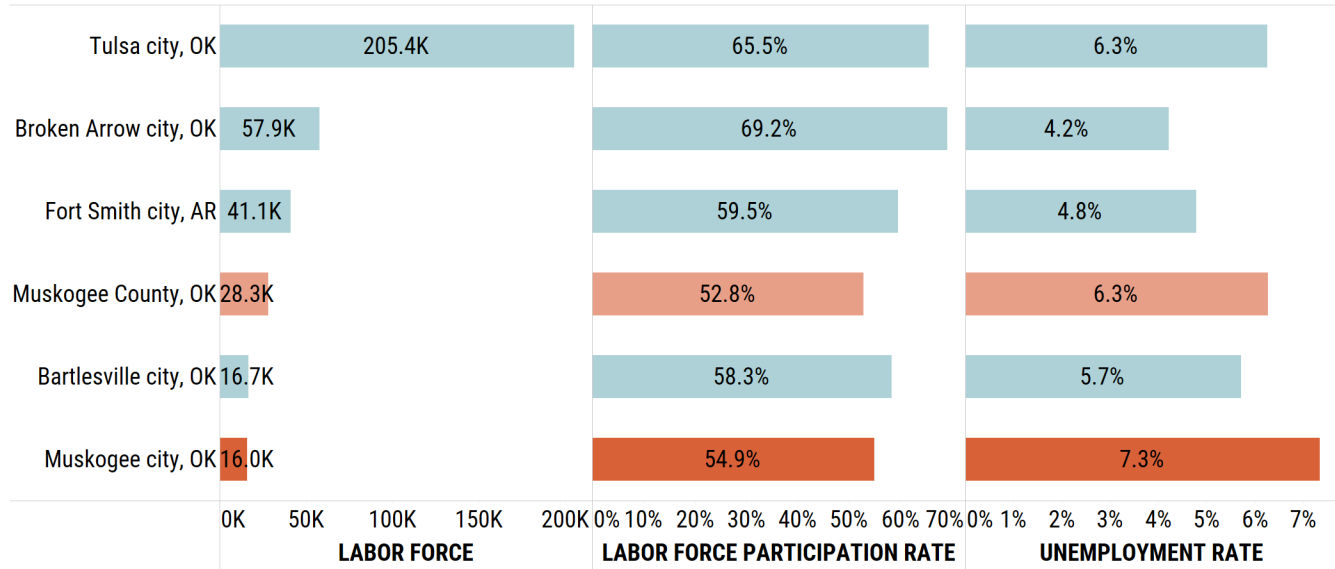


Sources: American Community Survey, 2019 five-year sample; TIP Strategies, Inc.
Notes: Internet access refers to whether or not someone in the household uses or can connect to the internet, regardless of whether or not they pay for the service. This includes housing units where someone pays to access the internet through a data plan for a smartphone; a broadband internet service such as cable, fiber optic or DSL; satellite; dial-up; or other type of service. Others may live in a city or town that provides free internet service for their residents or in a college or university that provides internet service.

the declines seen in the early 2000s. Additionally, less than 3 percent of workers worked from home in 2019, and with more than 31 percent of households without internet access, connectivity could have been a barrier to many residents' abilities to continue participating in the workforce through 2020.

FIGURE 6. LABOR FORCE INDICATORS, 2019

LABOR FORCE SIZE, LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE, AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE FOR SELECTED GEOGRAPHIES



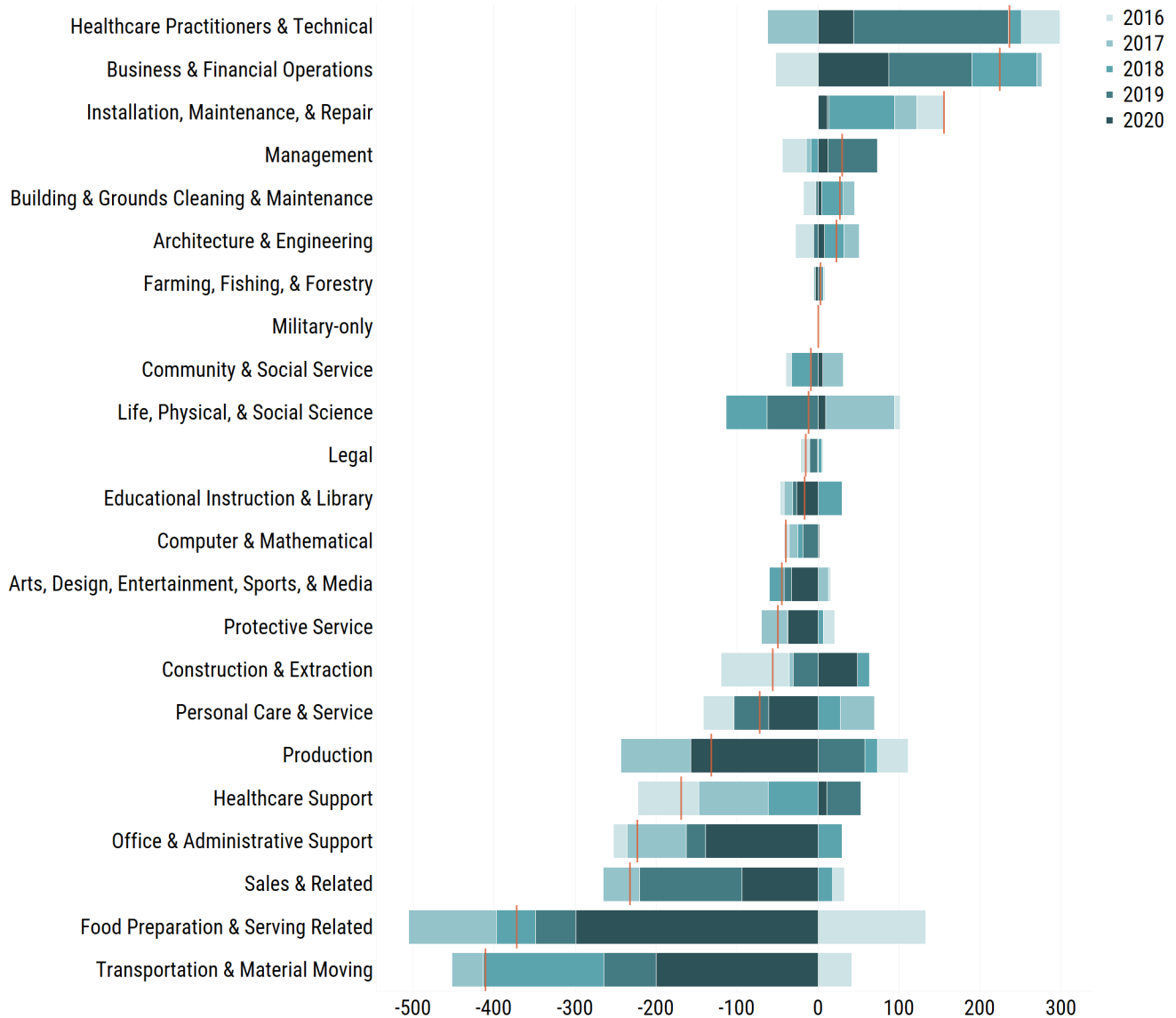
Sources: American Community Survey, 2019 five-year sample; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Notes: Labor force participation rate (LFPR) is estimated as the quotient of the civilian labor force and the population over 16 years of age. The labor force comprises all employed and unemployed persons.

Overall employment decline trickles down to key sectors with few exceptions.

Muskogee's largest industries between 2001 and 2020 have been the healthcare, manufacturing, and retail trade sectors. However, all three experienced a downward trend in the number of jobs in the City for most of the past decade, though this decline is most pronounced in the manufacturing sector, which saw a net loss of nearly 300 jobs in 2020. In contrast to these trends, the number of civilian federal government jobs has grown steadily in the same period, adding a net of more than 600 jobs since 2009 for a total of over 2,500 jobs in 2020. However, after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of those civilian federal government jobs are currently working remotely, rather than commuting to work on a daily basis. The wholesale trade sector has also expanded over the past 10 years, adding a net total of more than 250 jobs for a total of nearly 1,000 in 2020. More than 3,100 workers (12 percent) in Muskogee were in office and administrative support occupations in 2020 with median earnings of about \$15 per hour. However, the long-term trend for these types of jobs is a slow, steady decline—since 2015 there has been a net loss of over 200 jobs. Most other large occupations with similar median earnings (\$11 to \$17 per hour), such as production, sales, and transportation jobs, follow the overall downward employment trend, but there are some exceptions. The number of healthcare practitioners and business and financial operations workers both saw net increases of more than 200 jobs since 2015. Moreover, the median earners in both of these growing occupations tend to earn much more (about \$27 per hour) than their counterparts, though these jobs also tend to have higher education requirements.

FIGURE 7. NET EMPLOYMENT CHANGE BY OCCUPATION: CITY OF MUSKOGEE



Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Emsi Burning Glass (Emsi) 2021.3—Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

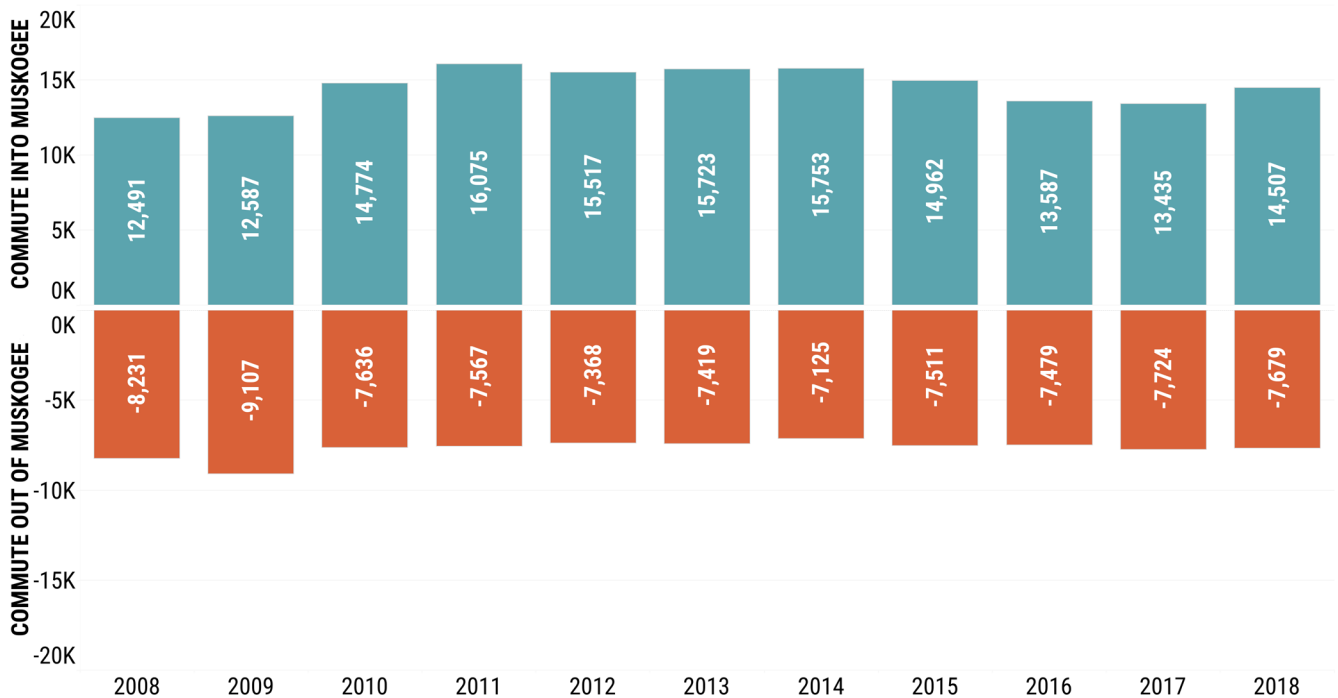
Notes: Red bars indicate the total net change for the occupational group during the five-year period (i.e., 2016 to 2020). City-level jobs are estimated by ZIP Codes approximating the geography of the City. City of Muskogee is approximated by ZIP Codes 74401, 74402, and 74403.

Strong labor connections with the workforce from surrounding areas.

Just over 6,600 more workers commuted into Muskogee from outside the City than commuted out in 2018, the most recent year for which data are available, continuing a stable trend that has persisted for at least a decade. These commuters tend to work in the healthcare, manufacturing, or public sectors, which align with the major employment sectors in the City. In contrast, workers in the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector have consistently tended to commute out of Muskogee for work. Though many Muskogee residents commute to Tulsa for work (more than 1,800 in 2018), many more residents tend to live and work in the City—over 7,700 in 2018. Additionally, more than 2,400 workers who commuted to Muskogee for work in 2018 came from unincorporated parts of the county with another 2,100 workers from unincorporated parts of Wagoner, Cherokee, McIntosh, or Rogers Counties. The tendency of Muskogee residents to work close by is also reflected in shorter average commute times—about 17 minutes in 2019, compared to nearly 22 minutes for the Tulsa metro and nearly 27 minutes for the average US worker.

FIGURE 8. COMMUTING TRENDS TO MUSKOGEE, 2008 TO 2018

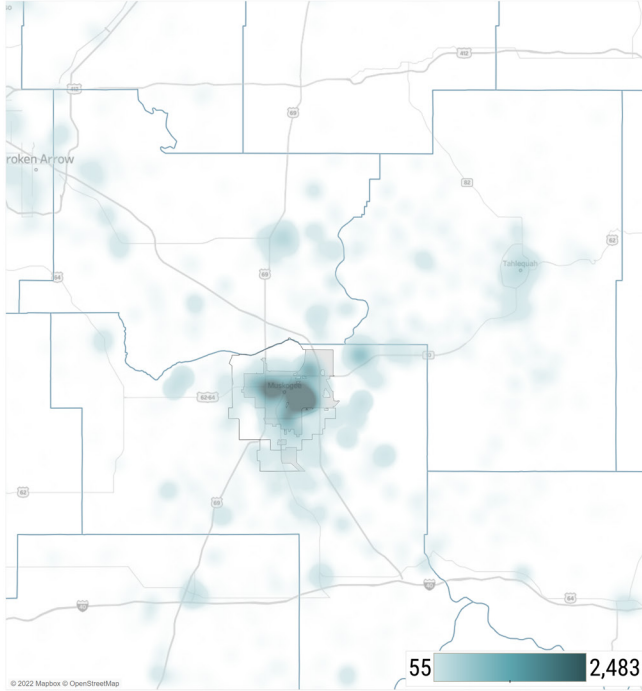
Commuting **into** the City means a person lives outside of the City and works inside of the City. Commuting **out of** the City means a person lives inside of the City and works outside of the City.



Sources: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES); TIP Strategies, Inc.

FIGURE 9. WHERE MUSKOGEE WORKERS LIVED IN 2018

The map shows where workers live by census block group. Darker, larger circles indicate more workers live in the census area, and lighter, smaller circles indicate fewer workers live in that area. The City boundary (the shaded gray region) shows the total number of workers in the City.



| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---|--------------|--|-----|
| 2,483 Other location in Muskogee County, OK | | 877 Tulsa city, OK | 842 Other location in Wagoner County, OK | | 737 Other location in Cherokee County, OK | |
| 557 Fort Gibson town, OK | 413 Broken Arrow city, OK | 225 Other location | 186 | 179 Other | 142 | 131 |
| 509 Tahlequah city, OK | 367 Other location in McIntosh | 131 | 104 | 102 | 101 | 96 |
| | 301 Oklahoma City | 126 | 94 | 83 | 75 | 71 |
| 437 Wagoner city, OK | 239 Other location | 121 | 93 | 65 | 64 | 59 |
| | | 121 | 92 | 65 | | |
| | | 106 | 84 | 64 | 55 | 55 |

Sources: LEHD, LODES; TIP Strategies, Inc.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Ensuring that stakeholders had a voice in the creation of the community economic development strategy was an essential component of the planning process. To accomplish this objective, the engagement was guided by a 12-member steering committee comprised of thought leaders representing industry, government, and workforce and economic development.

Stakeholder engagement allowed for validation of the insights already received from the steering committee, ideation of possible solutions to Muskogee's challenges, and engagement with the community stakeholders to understand their excitement and concerns about the planning process.

TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT

In addition to regular meetings with this oversight group, insights were gained via the following means.

- **One-on-one interviews** with steering committee members and community stakeholders.
- **Ten roundtable discussions** each with a specific target audience, engaging over 70 individuals. These groups included tourism, downtown, small business, workforce, manufacturing, young professionals, housing, education, and healthcare. Additionally, the Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce Muskogee Vision Committee served as a roundtable group at its November meeting.
- **Opportunity Workshop**, held on February 15, 2022, where a group of over 70 leaders from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors collaborated with one another and the consultants from TIP to identify the opportunities that lay ahead for Muskogee through leveraging the community's many assets. The half-day session resulted in specific ideas related to business development, talent, and placemaking that informed the strategies and actions mapped out in the *Muskogee Forward* report.

ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS

Several themes emerged from the interviews, roundtables, and workshop. These themes are addressed in the goals, strategies, and actions included in *Muskogee Forward*.

MUSKOGEE ASSETS

- The Muskogee community has the assets for economic success, including a strong industrial sector, healthcare sector, workforce training network, downtown appeal, special events, tourist destinations, arts and culture scene, riverfront potential, and foundation resources.
- In addition to strong community assets, Muskogee has highly capable individuals working in the economic development space, but their work is siloed by organization, such as the City, the Greater Muskogee Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Port of Muskogee. The roles for each organization touching economic development must be clearly defined and coordinated among one another to ensure alignment and efficient use of resources.
- Muskogee has the advantage of possessing a large presence of federal employees, with Muskogee serving as the home base for the United States Attorney's Office, United States District Court, and various Veteran Affairs services.
- Muskogee is centrally located for the Muskogee (Creek) and Cherokee Nations but there is limited coordination between the City and the local tribal entities. There is an opportunity for economic developers from the City and the tribal entities to build a relationship to ensure more economic success both for the City of Muskogee and for the Muskogee (Creek) and Cherokee Nations.

MUSKOGEE BUSINESS NEEDS

- While Muskogee is often a shortlist site for several industrial employers, the City frequently comes in second place, ultimately losing the deal.
- In order to increase Muskogee's chances for future business sites, the City's economic development stakeholders must gain insight on what the best potential target industries are for business recruitment, allowing the City to appeal more deeply to specific employers rather than casting a large net across all industries.
- While Muskogee has an abundance of developable land for future new businesses to acquire, that land is largely undeveloped and lacking infrastructure. In order to increase the appeal of such land opportunities, Muskogee should have an inventory of shovel-ready properties for business recruitment purposes.
- While there have been some efforts to revitalize Muskogee's downtown area, there remains a need to redevelop and build downtown through investment, which the community has been relatively averse to making. There are limited supports for small businesses and entrepreneurs in Muskogee. Offering services and mentorship to small business owners and entrepreneurs could reinvigorate downtown Muskogee.
- In addition to the need to attract more businesses to Muskogee, the City would also benefit from increasing interest in primary sectors, such as manufacturing, and offering more supports to shift workers, ultimately filling labor shortages.

MUSKOGEE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Muskogee has struggled with a stagnant population over the past several years. In order to grow the community's economy, Muskogee must also begin to grow its population.
- A factor in Muskogee's stagnant population is outside perceptions of the community. Individuals participating in interviews and roundtables often shared that Muskogee is poorly perceived in terms of its public school system, crime, and poverty rates. Opportunity workshop participants repeatedly mentioned the need for more childcare and mental health services to support Muskogee residents.
- Muskogee has a large supply of professionals who commute into Muskogee for work but choose not to live there. This mismatch of employees versus residents is related to the need for more homebuilding and housing options. The housing stock is relatively older and is not meeting the needs of home buyers or renters and Muskogee is challenged with home and business access to broadband. Despite the housing shortage in Muskogee, the City remains overall affordable compared to surrounding cities and the state.
- Muskogee needs better storytelling, both internally and externally, from the resident perspective of the community to advocacy at the state government level. There is an opportunity for the City to launch a positive media campaign to better tell the Muskogee story. Muskogee has many destinations and assets to enjoy, creating a resource to connect residents to the community and opportunities around town.

SWOT ANALYSIS

A review of Muskogee’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) was informed by findings from the data analysis and insights gained from stakeholder engagement. The resulting assessment identifies internal and external factors that influence Muskogee’s competitive position. Findings were mapped in a manner that gives a visual representation of the degree of control Muskogee has over identified issues.

The following SWOT diagrams can be read from left to right, displaying the local and regional trends on the left side and moving toward global trends on the right side. Those local and regional trends concentrated near the left side are what Muskogee has the most control over to affect change.

FIGURE 10. SWOT ANALYSIS OVERVIEW DIAGRAM

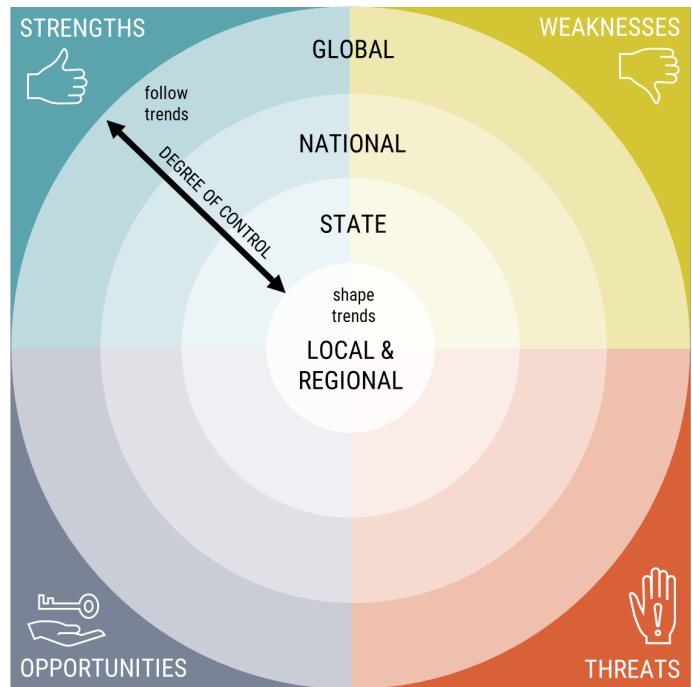


FIGURE 11. MUSKOGEE’S STRENGTHS

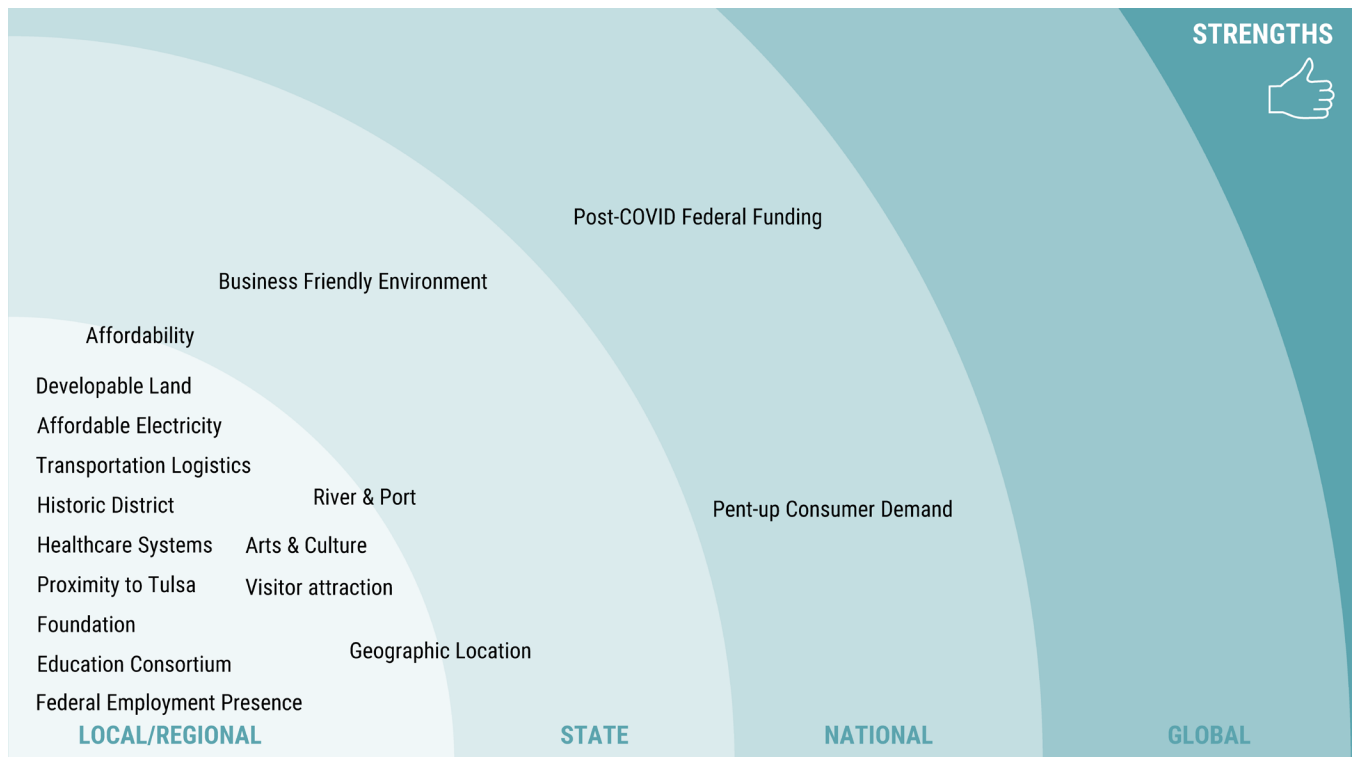


FIGURE 12. MUSKOGEE'S WEAKNESSES

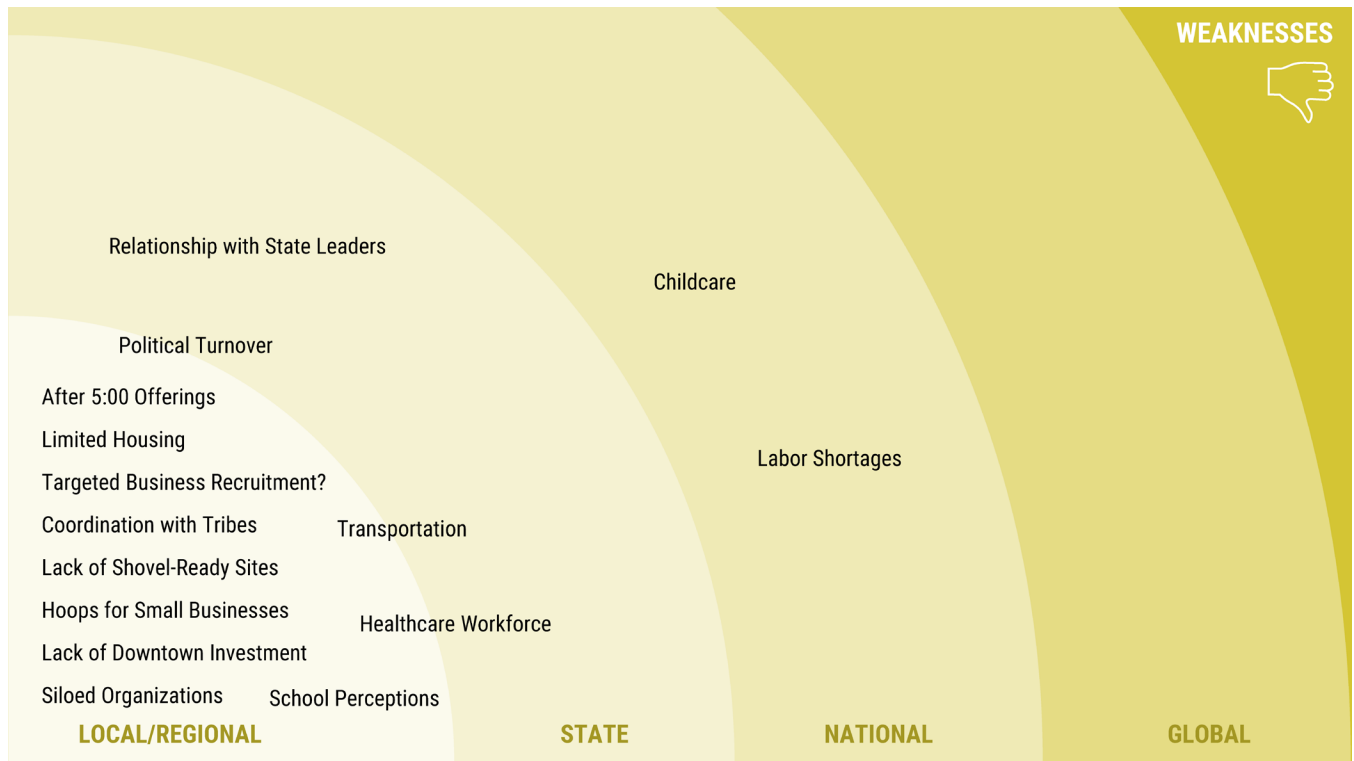


FIGURE 13. MUSKOGEE'S OPPORTUNITIES

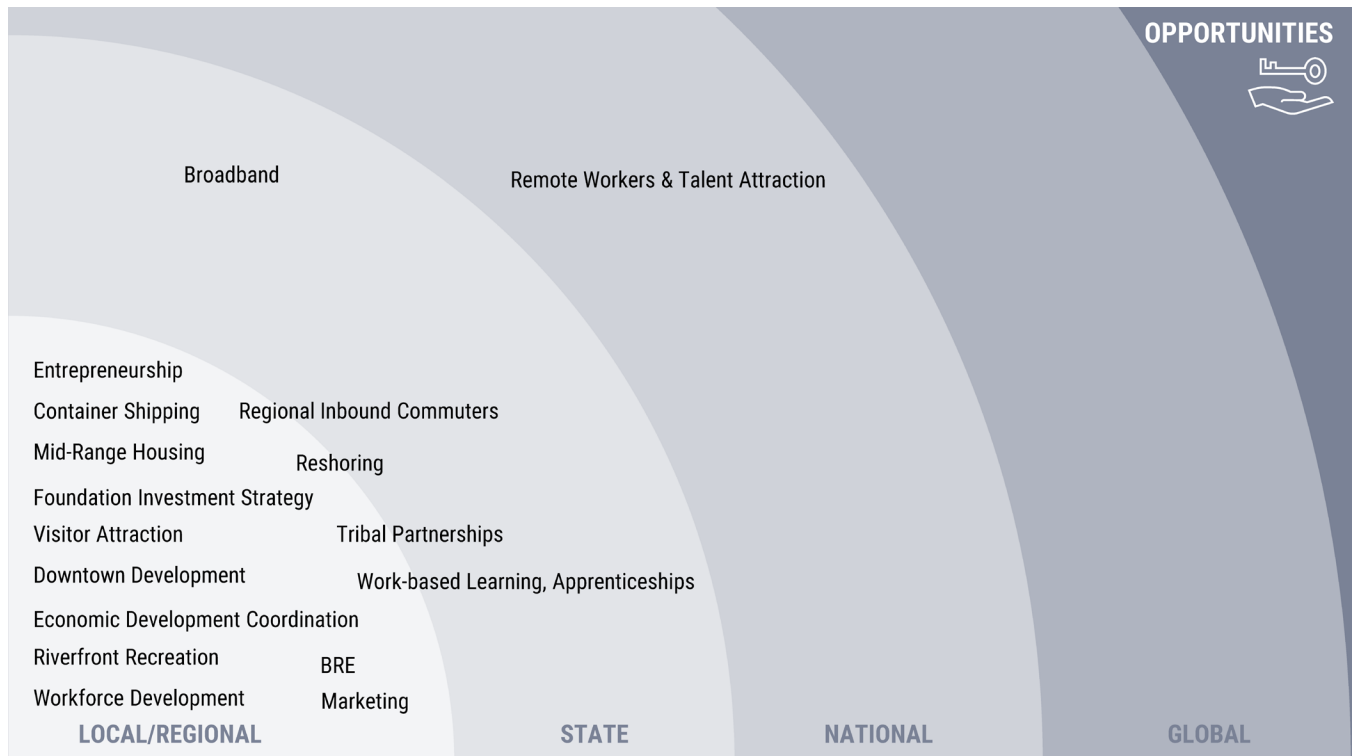
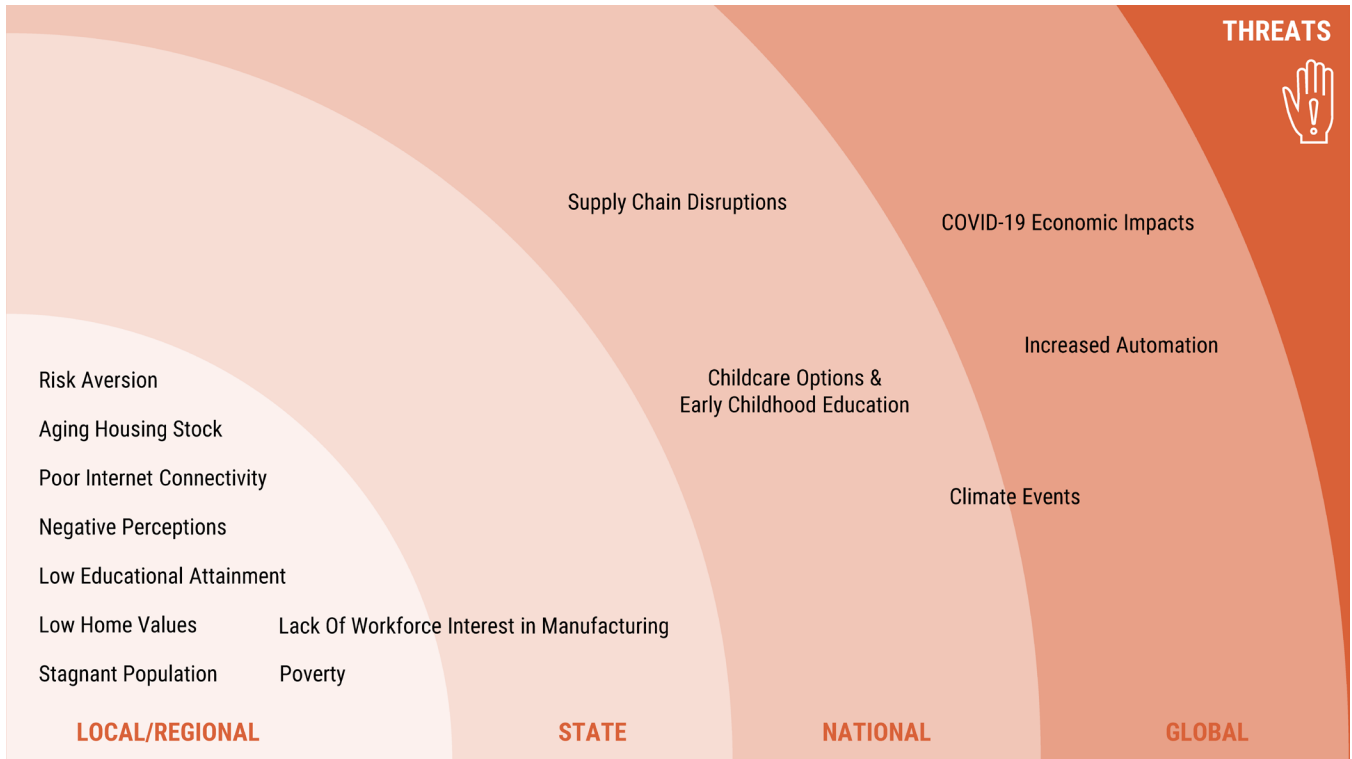


FIGURE 14. MUSKOGEE'S THREATS



APPENDIX B: TARGET INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

With Muskogee's prime location in the middle of the nation and with its easy access to transportation, whether air, water, or ground, it is no surprise that **Material Processing and Shipping** is one of Muskogee's three target industry areas. This target sector includes subclusters in distribution and commerce and transportation and logistics, and also includes vulcanized and fired materials, likely because of the presence of Dal-Tile. In Muskogee's 2015 identified targets, Manufacturing of Construction Materials and Products and Heavy Vehicle Manufacturing were considered two separate target areas. For the purpose of this plan and expanding Muskogee's targets to include other areas with major employment assets, these two target areas were consolidated into the single target sector of Material Processing and Shipping.

Much like the 2015 Muskogee targets, which identified Food Processing as a key sector, this plan recognizes **Food and Agriculture** as a primary target for Muskogee. This target sector includes subclusters in food processing and manufacturing, livestock processing, and local food and beverage processing and distribution, with companies such as Love Bottling Company having a major presence in the community.

Finally, this plan identifies **Health and Community Anchors** as a new target sector for focus by the community. With a strong presence from hospitals, healthcare provider offices, social service organizations, and the federal government, this is a logical sector for Muskogee to promote and support. Muskogee is the site for several US Veterans Affairs services through the federal government and these community anchors are important to preserve in Muskogee.

While the three areas listed above are the target industry areas for Muskogee, based on an analysis of the community's current economy, there are additional assets to be considered for pursuit of other strategic sectors. These emerging sectors are captured in the recommendations and include aviation and aerospace, battery storage and electric vehicle parts, energy technology, and agricultural technology.

FIGURE 15. THE APPROACH



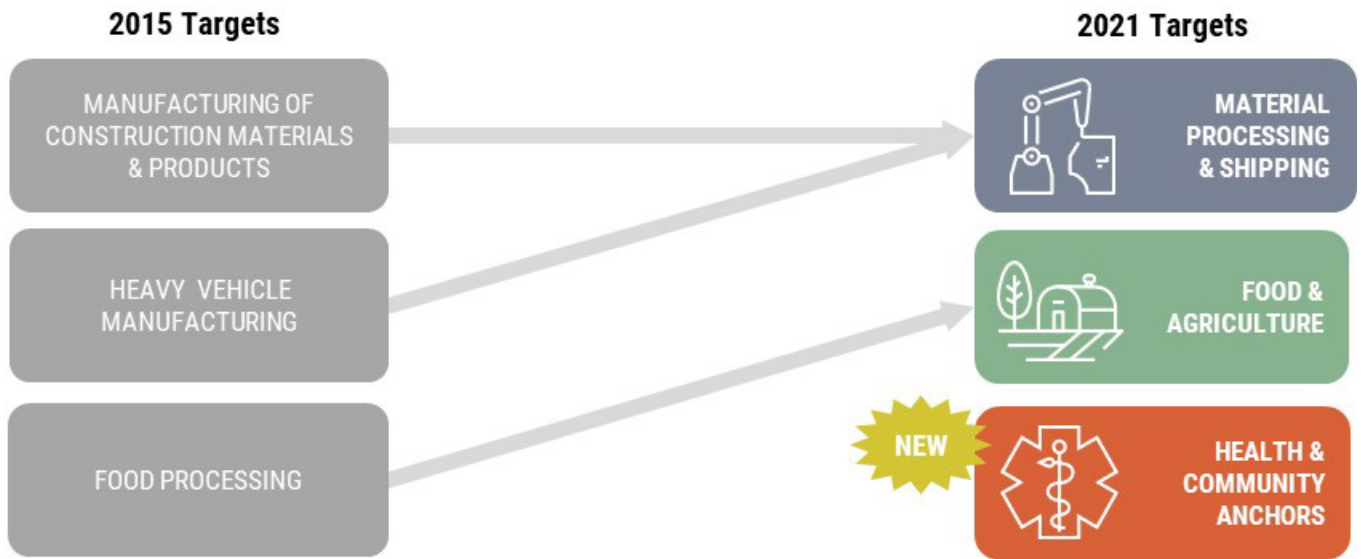
In identifying target sectors, our team examined detailed data to identify which industries are well-established in the region, how they performed in recent years, and how they are expected to perform in the near term. For this analysis, we looked at factors including strategic assets, existing initiatives, critical mass, competitive advantage, growth prospects, and cross-sector synergies.

About the Data

In the first phase of this project (the economic assessment) TIP reviewed employment using standard NAICS industry classifications. For the targeting analysis, TIP took this a step further by filtering employment within an industry "cluster" framework developed by the US Economic Development Administration in conjunction with the Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School (www.clustermapping.us).

Source: TIP Strategies, Inc.

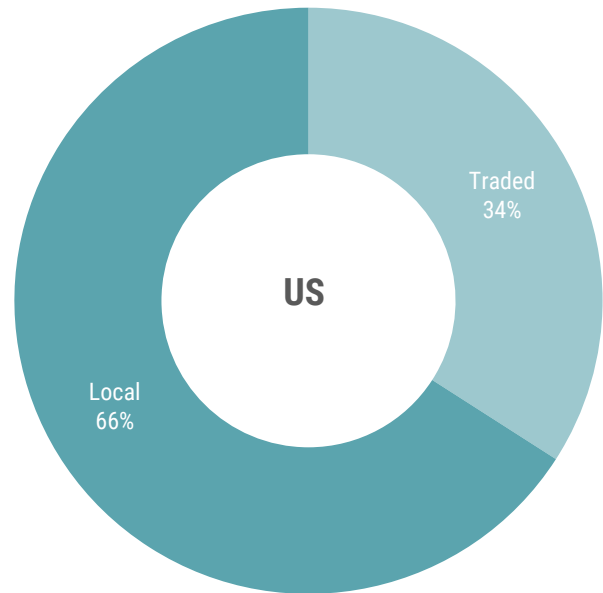
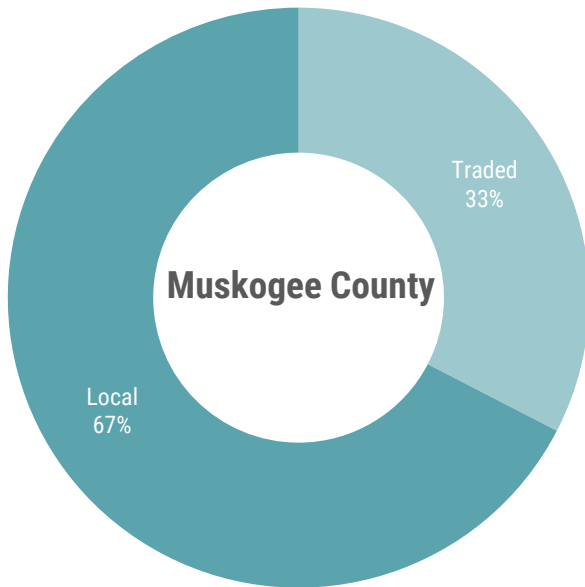
FIGURE 16. TARGETING FRAMEWORK
REALIGNMENT OF EXISTING TARGETS



Sources: Muskogee Target Industry Analysis, Tadzo with Applied Economics, June 2015; TIP Strategies, Inc., 2021.

FIGURE 17. EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS—TRADED VS. LOCAL EMPLOYMENT IN 2020 BASED ON CLUSTER TYPE

| LOCAL CLUSTERS | TRADED CLUSTERS |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primarily serve local markets. • Present in virtually every market. • Location is not dependent on competitive advantage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve outside markets. • Free to choose where they locate. • Tend to be highly concentrated in a few regions that have specific advantage. |



Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Emsi 2021.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; US Economic Development Administration; Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, Harvard Business School; TIP Strategies, Inc.
 Note: The cluster methodology developed at Harvard Business School has been adjusted by TIP Strategies, Inc., to align with the 6-digit North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) used by Emsi.

WHY IT MATTERS

Increasing the ratio of traded-to-local clusters is a common strategy for enhancing economic prosperity. Traded clusters are emphasized by economic developers because they include industries and firms that typically produce goods and services for customers beyond the local region. These traded activities are thus more likely to produce externally generated revenues, which can, in turn, help boost local tax coffers. As an example, a dental office might serve local customers exclusively, while a manufacturing plant, a data center, or a hotel would typically serve paying customers beyond the local area. The ability of traded clusters to serve larger markets also presents greater opportunity for employment growth, whereas a dental office might face more finite geographic limits to expansion.

FIGURE 18. EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS—WEIGHT (SIZE AND CONCENTRATION)
 TRADED CLUSTERS EMPLOYING THE MOST WORKERS LOCALLY IN 2020

LOCATION QUOTIENTS ←BELOW AVG → AVERAGE → ABOVE AVG→

| | US | | MUSKOGEE COUNTY | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|-----------------------|------|
| | % of national employment | | % of local employment | LQ |
| Federal Government (civilian) | 1.5% | | 10.0% | 6.55 |
| Distribution & E-commerce | 3.9% | | 3.2% | 0.81 |
| Business Services | 6.3% | | 2.3% | 0.37 |
| Food Processing & Mfg. | 0.7% | | 1.7% | 2.36 |
| Paper & Packaging | 0.2% | | 1.5% | 6.56 |
| Construction Products & Services | 0.6% | | 1.4% | 2.41 |
| Transport. & Logistics | 1.3% | | 1.3% | 1.03 |
| Vulcanized & Fired Materials | 0.2% | | 1.3% | 8.78 |
| Prod. Tech. & Heavy Machinery | 0.6% | | 1.1% | 1.87 |
| Education & Knowledge Creation | 4.2% | | 1.0% | 0.25 |
| Oil & Gas Production & Transport. | 0.3% | | 0.8% | 2.37 |
| Federal Government (military) | 1.2% | | 0.7% | 0.58 |
| Hospitality & Tourism | 1.6% | | 0.6% | 0.41 |
| Agricultural Inputs & Services | 1.2% | | 0.6% | 0.55 |
| Automotive | 0.6% | | 0.6% | 1.06 |
| OTHER TRADED CLUSTERS | 9.6% | | 4.2% | |
| ALL LOCAL CLUSTERS | 65.9% | | 67.4% | |
| Total | 100.0% | | 100.0% | |

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Emsi 2021.3—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; US Economic Development Administration; Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, Harvard Business School; TIP Strategies, Inc.
 Note: The cluster methodology developed at Harvard Business School has been adjusted by TIP Strategies, Inc., to align with the 6-digit NAICS classifications used by Emsi.

WHY IT MATTERS

While local clusters (such as dentist offices) typically account for a similar share of employment across communities of varying size, the share of total employment represented by traded clusters (such as automotive assembly plants) may differ dramatically from one community to the next. Traded clusters that account for a larger-than-average share of total employment can suggest areas of competitive advantage. Figure 16 compares the distribution of employment by cluster in the US (first column) with the local area (second column). The third column uses location quotients (LQs) to convey the intensity of employment locally relative to the US. If a traded cluster represents 1 percent of US employment and 5 percent of local employment, its LQ would be 5.0, meaning that the traded cluster in the local area is five times as large as would be expected based on national patterns.

FIGURE 19. EMPLOYMENT CLUSTERS—PROJECTED GROWTH
TRADED CLUSTERS WITH THE HIGHEST PROJECTED LOCAL JOB GAINS, 2020–2025

| | US | | MUSKOGEE COUNTY | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|----------|
| | 5-year % change in national employment | | 5-year % change in local employment | | net gain |
| Construction Products & Services | 3.3% | | 48.5% | | +221 |
| Business Services | 9.3% | | 20.9% | | +155 |
| Federal Government (civilian) | 1.5% | | 4.7% | | +153 |
| Distribution & E-commerce | 5.3% | | 9.8% | | +100 |
| Plastics | -0.6% | | 48.4% | | +78 |
| Hospitality & Tourism | -4.2% | | 37.2% | | +76 |
| Food Processing & Mfg. | 5.6% | | 6.4% | | +36 |
| Transport. & Logistics | 2.9% | | 7.3% | | +32 |
| Upstream Chemical Products | 4.9% | | 34.4% | | +28 |
| Livestock Processing | 4.0% | | 22.1% | | +20 |
| Automotive | 2.5% | | 8.3% | | +17 |
| Lighting & Electrical Equip. | 2.4% | | 11.3% | | +16 |
| Insurance Services | 3.3% | | 39.1% | | +14 |
| Performing Arts | 1.7% | | 18.9% | | +7 |
| Apparel | -11.6% | | 50.0% | | +5 |
| Marketing, Design, & Publishing | 4.2% | | 9.5% | | +5 |
| Communications Equip. & Services | -7.8% | | 4.2% | | +4 |
| Nonmetal Mining | 8.5% | | 15.6% | | +3 |
| ALL TRADED CLUSTERS | 3.9% | | 5.7% | | +604 |
| ALL LOCAL CLUSTERS | 3.4% | | 0.3% | | +62 |
| Total | 3.6% | | 2.1% | | |

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Emsi 2021.3—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; US Economic Development Administration; Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, Harvard Business School; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note: The cluster methodology developed at Harvard Business School has been adjusted by TIP Strategies, Inc., to align with the 6-digit NAICS classifications used by Emsi.

WHY IT MATTERS

Understanding anticipated job growth in traded clusters is an essential element of the targeting process. Figure 17 compares projected net job gains in percentage terms over a five-year horizon for the US (first column) and the local area (second column). The column on the far right shows projections (in numeric terms) for local net job gains in traded clusters in descending order. The last three rows of the exhibit—showing projected job growth aggregated for traded clusters, local clusters, and total employment—can help inform strategic discussions and refine goals for the future.

FIGURE 20. TALENT DEMAND INDICATORS

ANALYSIS OF UNIQUE LOCAL JOB POSTINGS DURING CALENDAR YEAR 2020

INTENSITY OF JOB POSTINGS RELATIVE TO US ←BELOW AVG →  ABOVE AVG →

| HIGH-DEMAND LOCAL OCCUPATIONS | | HIGH-DEMAND LOCAL SKILLS | |
|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| | <i>location quotient</i> | | <i>location quotient</i> |
| Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 2.01 | Intensive Care Unit | 2.96 |
| Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses | 1.93 | Over-the-Road Driving | 2.32 |
| Registered Nurses | 1.90 | Reefer Truck Operation | 2.21 |
| Driver/Sales Workers | 1.51 | Dry Van Truck Operation | 2.08 |
| Nursing Assistants | 1.48 | Flatbed Truck Operation | 2.08 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers | 1.44 | Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) | 2.03 |
| Customer Service Representatives | 1.41 | Stocking Merchandise | 1.92 |
| Cashiers | 1.36 | Cash Register | 1.82 |
| Light Truck Drivers | 1.32 | Basic Life Support | 1.77 |
| Secretaries & Admin. Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, & Executive | 1.30 | Deposit Accounts | 1.56 |
| Retail Salespersons | 1.22 | Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) | 1.48 |
| Security Guards | 1.22 | Visual Merchandising | 1.45 |
| Fast Food & Counter Workers | 1.16 | Nursing | 1.42 |
| Insurance Sales Agents | 1.13 | Home Health Care | 1.37 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation & Serving Workers | 1.06 | Merchandising | 1.28 |
| Social & Human Service Assistants | 1.05 | Personal Protective Equipment | 1.28 |
| Home Health & Personal Care Aides | 1.00 | Cash Handling | 1.28 |
| Maintenance & Repair Workers, General | 0.97 | Restaurant Operation | 1.10 |
| Stockers & Order Fillers | 0.83 | Food Safety | 1.09 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Office & Administrative Support Workers | 0.77 | Food Services | 1.06 |

Sources: Emsi 2021.3—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; TIP Strategies, Inc.

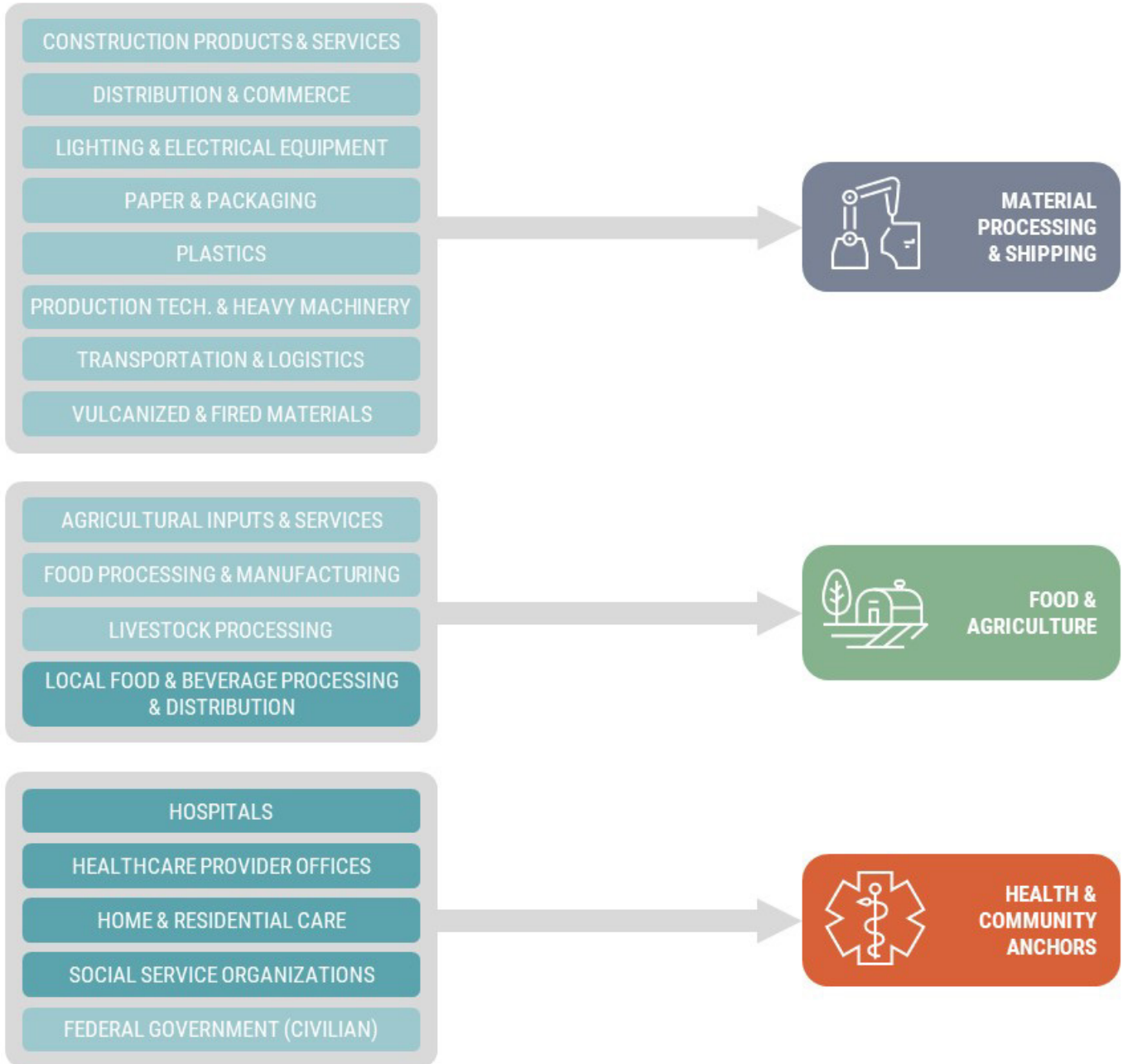
WHY IT MATTERS

An analysis of job postings can help reframe an understanding of the local job market from the employer's perspective rather than simply through the lens of government statistics. This back-of-the-envelope analysis uses job postings from the prior calendar year to identify the most sought-out occupations (first column) and the most frequently occurring words and phrases (second column). LQs are used to approximate the local intensity of recruiting efforts and illustrate employer demand for specific hard skills. A help wanted ad that appears locally at five times the relative rate as the US would have an LQ of 5.0. Likewise, a specific skill that appears more frequently in local postings than the national average would have an LQ greater than 1.0, suggesting higher demand in the local market. The results should prompt strategic questions about the alignment of the region's talent pipeline with the needs of employers and with target (traded) clusters.

FIGURE 21. TARGETING FRAMEWORK
REALIGNMENT OF EXISTING TARGETS

TRADED and **LOCAL** clusters and subclusters emerge from the analysis...

...to provide a foundation for **TARGET SECTORS**



Sources: US Economic Development Administration; Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness, Harvard Business School; TIP Strategies, Inc.



MATERIAL PROCESSING AND SHIPPING

FIGURE 22. TARGET SNAPSHOT

| MUSKOGEE COUNTY | TOTAL | TARGET |
|----------------------|--------|--------|
| 2020 Establishments | 1,532 | 127 |
| 2020 Employment | 32,094 | 3,460 |
| Net Chg., 2010–2020 | -662 | -268 |
| Pct. Chg., 2010–2020 | -2.0% | -7.2% |

FIGURE 24. EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

| US OVERALL | TOTAL | TARGET |
|----------------------|------------|----------|
| Net Chg., 2020–2025 | +5,652,930 | +433,818 |
| Pct. Chg., 2020–2025 | +3.6% | +3.7% |

| MUSKOGEE COUNTY | TOTAL | TARGET |
|----------------------|-------|--------|
| Net Chg., 2020–2025 | +565 | +306 |
| Pct. Chg., 2020–2025 | +1.8% | +8.9% |

FIGURE 25. TARGET COMPONENTS

ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT

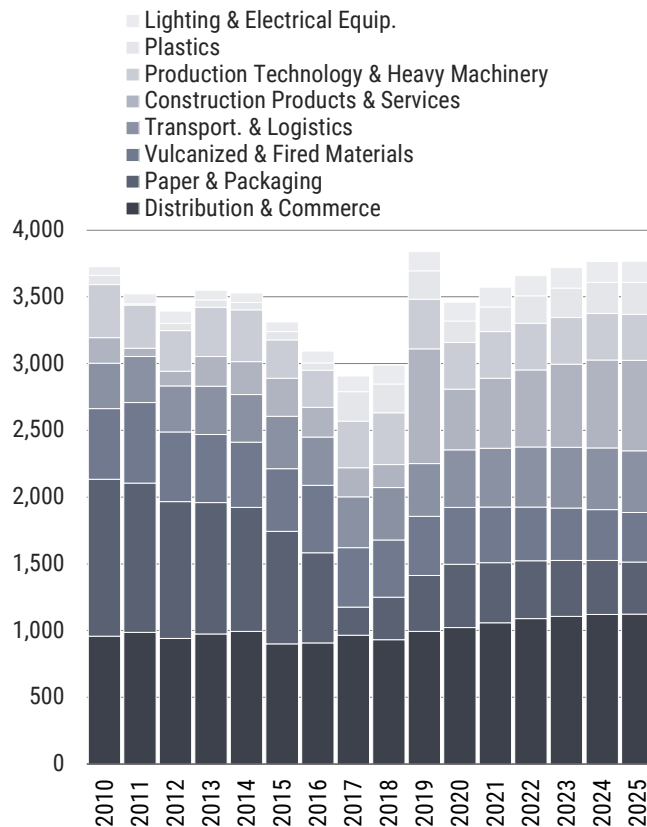


FIGURE 23. TARGET CONCENTRATION

LOCATION QUOTIENT TREND

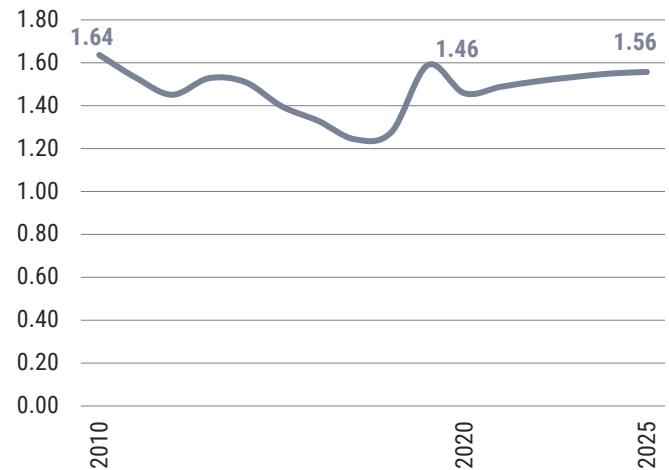
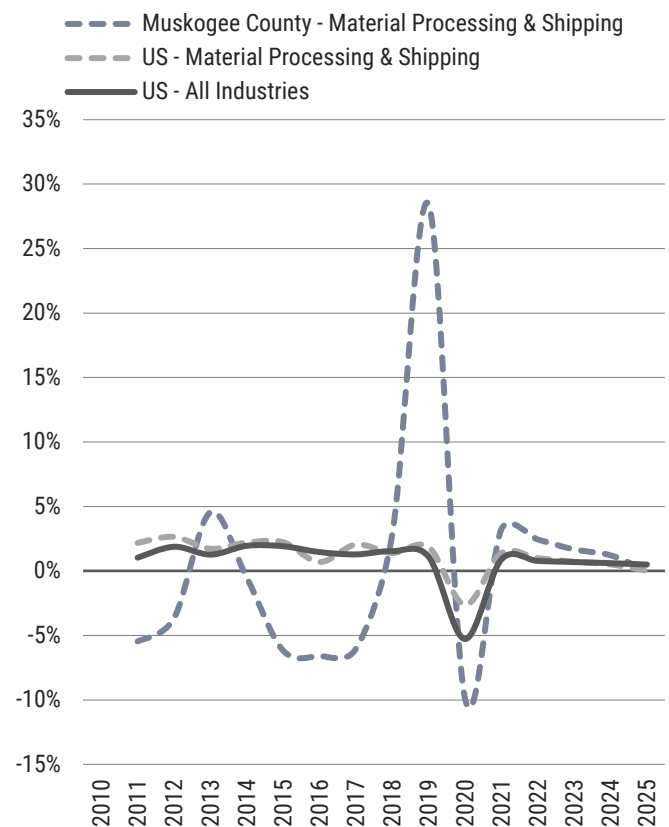


FIGURE 26. TARGET GROWTH

ANNUAL PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT



Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Emsi 2020.3–QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; US Economic Development Administration; Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note: The cluster methodology developed at Harvard Business School has been adjusted by TIP Strategies, Inc., to align with the 6-digit NAICS classifications used by Emsi.

FIGURE 27. TARGET STAFFING PROFILE

LQs & RELATIVE EARNINGS: **BELOW AVG** →  ← **ABOVE AVG**

| STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION | | EMPLOYMENT | | | EARNINGS | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Code | Description | 2020 Jobs | % of Target | LQ (US=1.00) | Local Hourly Median | Relative to US (US=1.00) |
| 53-3032 | Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 265 | 7.8% | 1.14 | 20.48 | 0.91 |
| 53-7062 | Laborers & Material Movers, Hand | 144 | 4.2% | 0.56 | 11.88 | 0.79 |
| 53-7051 | Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators | 140 | 4.1% | 1.39 | 14.90 | 0.83 |
| 41-4012 | Sales Reps, Non-Technical and Scientific Products | 126 | 3.7% | 0.62 | 22.05 | 0.75 |
| 47-2061 | Construction Laborers | 103 | 3.0% | 2.73 | 15.66 | 0.90 |
| 51-9196 | Paper Goods Machine Operators | 100 | 2.9% | 3.91 | 25.72 | 1.34 |
| 51-2098 | Miscellaneous Assemblers & Fabricators | 95 | 2.8% | 1.11 | 13.19 | 0.82 |
| 53-7065 | Stockers & Order Fillers | 92 | 2.7% | 0.68 | 11.71 | 0.83 |
| 49-9043 | Maintenance Workers, Machinery | 90 | 2.6% | 15.57 | 29.13 | 1.21 |
| 51-1011 | First-Line Supervisors, Production & Operations | 81 | 2.4% | 2.10 | 26.86 | 0.89 |
| 51-4121 | Welders, Cutters, Solderers, & Brazers | 80 | 2.3% | 2.55 | 18.00 | 0.85 |
| 11-1021 | General & Operations Managers | 64 | 1.9% | 0.77 | 35.77 | 0.72 |
| 43-5071 | Shipping, Receiving, & Inventory Clerks | 63 | 1.9% | 0.90 | 14.07 | 0.83 |
| 43-4051 | Customer Service Representatives | 60 | 1.8% | 0.58 | 14.42 | 0.84 |
| 47-2073 | Construction Equipment Operators | 58 | 1.7% | 3.34 | 19.04 | 0.80 |
| 51-9195 | Molders, Shapers, & Casters, Except Metal & Plastic | 56 | 1.7% | 8.50 | 13.75 | 0.81 |
| 43-3031 | Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks | 55 | 1.6% | 1.22 | 16.33 | 0.80 |
| 51-9161 | Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators | 49 | 1.4% | 5.10 | 12.55 | 0.62 |
| 49-9041 | Industrial Machinery Mechanics | 46 | 1.3% | 1.41 | 26.90 | 1.01 |
| 49-9071 | Maintenance & Repair Workers, General | 44 | 1.3% | 1.31 | 14.82 | 0.76 |
| 51-9061 | Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, & Weighers | 44 | 1.3% | 1.26 | 20.74 | 1.07 |
| 43-9061 | Office Clerks, General | 43 | 1.3% | 0.64 | 12.70 | 0.75 |
| 49-3042 | Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines | 42 | 1.2% | 2.30 | 21.56 | 0.82 |
| 43-1011 | First-Line Supervisors, Office & Administrative | 41 | 1.2% | 0.99 | 21.44 | 0.76 |
| 43-5061 | Production, Planning, & Expediting Clerks | 35 | 1.0% | 1.63 | 22.06 | 0.93 |

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Emsi 2020.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; US Economic Development Administration; Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note: The cluster methodology developed at Harvard Business School has been adjusted by TIP Strategies, Inc., to align with the 6-digit NAICS classifications used by Emsi.

WHY IT MATTERS

Each target industry is underpinned by its workforce, making the occupational composition of each target worthy of further analysis. Figure 25 shows each target's largest occupational contributors. The number of local jobs for each occupation is shown along with the occupation's weight (in percentage terms) within the target. The LQ compares the occupation's local weight to its national weight within this target. An LQ that exceeds 1.00 indicates a local occupation employed more heavily by the local target industry than national patterns might imply, while an LQ below 1.00 indicates relatively lighter local reliance on the occupation. Median local hourly earnings accompany the occupations shown in the exhibit. Wage ratios exceeding 1.00 indicate higher pay than the same occupation might expect nationally, while ratios below 1.00 suggest relatively lower compensation than the national level.



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

FIGURE 28. TARGET SNAPSHOT

| MUSKOGEE COUNTY | TOTAL | TARGET |
|----------------------|--------|--------|
| 2020 Establishments | 1,532 | 59 |
| 2020 Employment | 32,094 | 1,594 |
| Net Chg., 2010–2020 | -662 | +230 |
| Pct. Chg., 2010–2020 | -2.0% | +16.8% |

FIGURE 30. EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

| US OVERALL | TOTAL | TARGET |
|----------------------|------------|----------|
| Net Chg., 2020–2025 | +5,652,930 | +175,997 |
| Pct. Chg., 2020–2025 | +3.6% | +2.2% |
| MUSKOGEE COUNTY | TOTAL | TARGET |
| Net Chg., 2020–2025 | +565 | +100 |
| Pct. Chg., 2020–2025 | +1.8% | +6.3% |

FIGURE 31. TARGET COMPONENTS

ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT

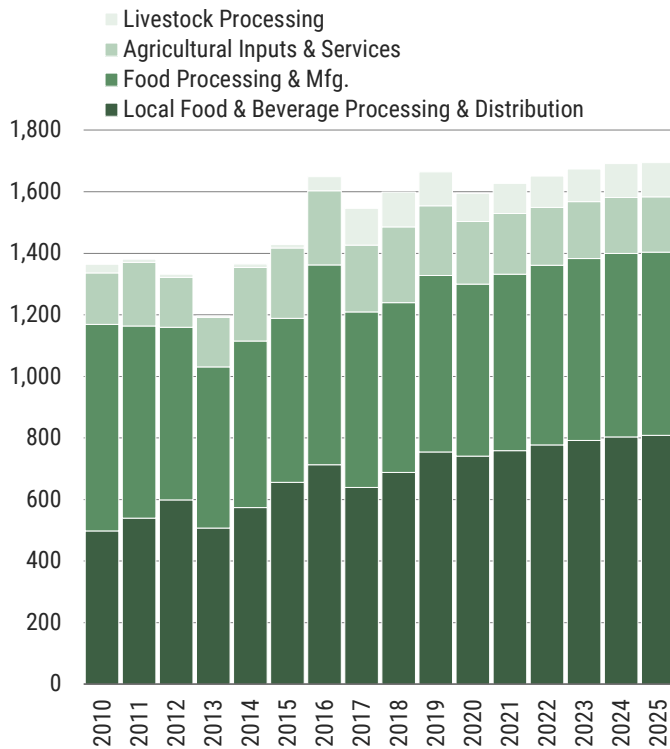


FIGURE 29. TARGET CONCENTRATION

LOCATION QUOTIENT TREND

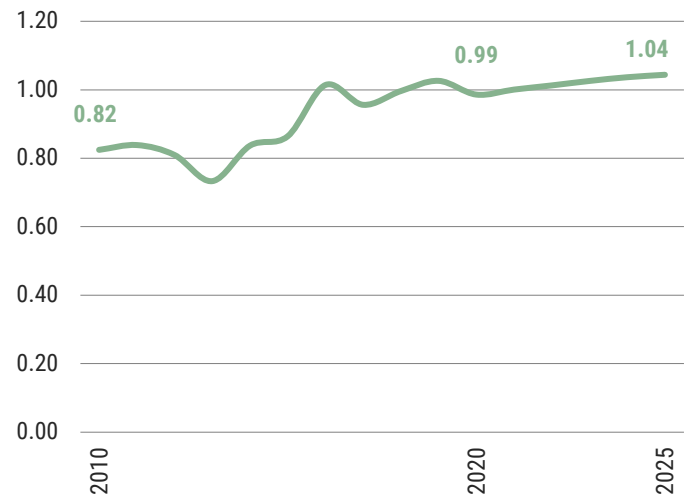
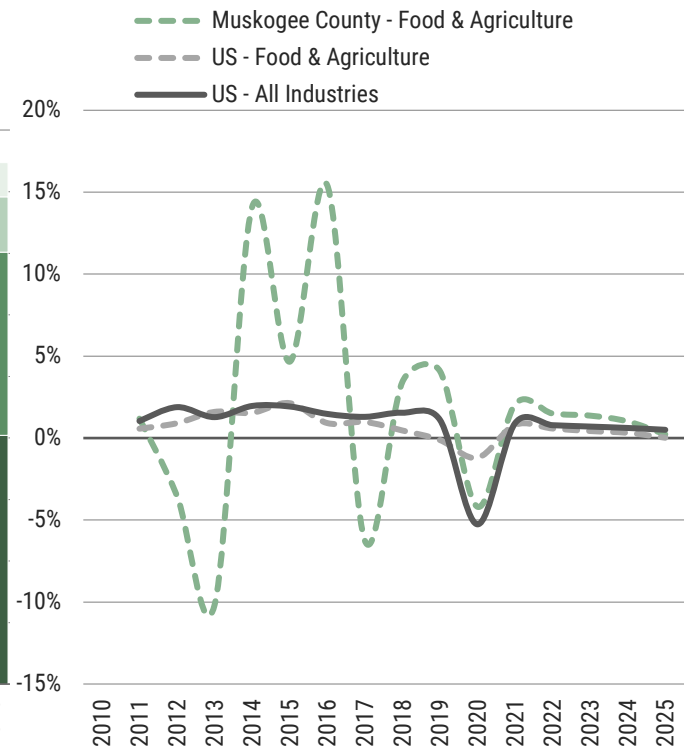


FIGURE 32. TARGET GROWTH

ANNUAL PERCENT CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT



Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Emsi 2020.3–QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; US Economic Development Administration; Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note: The cluster methodology developed at Harvard Business School has been adjusted by TIP Strategies, Inc., to align with the 6-digit NAICS classifications used by Emsi.

FIGURE 33. TARGET STAFFING PROFILE

LQs & RELATIVE EARNINGS: **BELOW AVG** →  ← **ABOVE AVG**

| STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION | | EMPLOYMENT | | | EARNINGS | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Code | Description | 2020 Jobs | % of Target | LQ (US=1.00) | Local Hourly Median | Relative to US (US=1.00) |
| 41-2011 | Cashiers | 126 | 8.0% | 0.66 | 9.72 | 0.81 |
| 11-9013 | Farmers, Ranchers, & Other Agricultural Managers | 89 | 5.6% | 0.85 | 17.13 | 0.83 |
| 53-7065 | Stockers & Order Fillers | 81 | 5.1% | 0.62 | 11.71 | 0.83 |
| 53-7062 | Laborers & Material Movers, Hand | 74 | 4.7% | 1.57 | 11.88 | 0.79 |
| 53-3032 | Heavy & Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 60 | 3.8% | 2.38 | 20.48 | 0.91 |
| 41-4012 | Sales Reps, Non-Technical and Scientific Products | 58 | 3.7% | 1.95 | 22.05 | 0.75 |
| 35-2021 | Food Preparation Workers | 55 | 3.5% | 1.31 | 9.30 | 0.74 |
| 45-2092 | Farmworkers, Crop, Nursery, & Greenhouse | 53 | 3.4% | 0.43 | 13.96 | 1.01 |
| 51-3092 | Food Batchmakers | 49 | 3.1% | 1.76 | 17.05 | 1.09 |
| 41-1011 | First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers | 47 | 3.0% | 1.03 | 14.40 | 0.74 |
| 53-7051 | Industrial Truck & Tractor Operators | 34 | 2.2% | 2.19 | 14.90 | 0.83 |
| 51-9111 | Packaging & Filling Machine Operators & Tenders | 33 | 2.1% | 0.87 | 12.34 | 0.79 |
| 41-2031 | Retail Salespersons | 33 | 2.1% | 0.66 | 11.69 | 0.90 |
| 51-1011 | First-Line Supervisors, Production & Operations | 31 | 2.0% | 1.75 | 26.86 | 0.89 |
| 45-2093 | Farmworkers, Farm, Ranch, & Aquaculture | 29 | 1.8% | 0.90 | 10.62 | 0.77 |
| 49-9091 | Coin, Vending, & Amusement Machine Servicers | 28 | 1.7% | 11.01 | 14.75 | 0.81 |
| 11-1021 | General & Operations Managers | 26 | 1.6% | 1.26 | 35.77 | 0.72 |
| 43-3031 | Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks | 24 | 1.5% | 2.07 | 16.33 | 0.80 |
| 51-9023 | Mixing & Blending Machine Operators | 23 | 1.4% | 4.40 | 19.42 | 1.04 |
| 43-4051 | Customer Service Representatives | 22 | 1.4% | 0.83 | 14.42 | 0.84 |
| 51-3093 | Food Cooking Machine Operators & Tenders | 22 | 1.4% | 4.31 | 13.84 | 0.87 |
| 43-9061 | Office Clerks, General | 21 | 1.3% | 1.48 | 12.70 | 0.75 |
| 53-3033 | Light Truck Drivers | 20 | 1.3% | 1.42 | 15.50 | 0.87 |
| 51-9195 | Molders, Shapers, & Casters, Except Metal & Plastic | 20 | 1.3% | 95.75 | 13.75 | 0.81 |
| 43-5071 | Shipping, Receiving, & Inventory Clerks | 19 | 1.2% | 1.30 | 14.07 | 0.83 |

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Emsi 2020.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; US Economic Development Administration; Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School; TIP Strategies, Inc..

Note: The cluster methodology developed at Harvard Business School has been adjusted by TIP Strategies, Inc., to align with the 6-digit NAICS classifications used by Emsi.

WHY IT MATTERS

Each target industry is underpinned by its workforce, making the occupational composition of each target worthy of further analysis. Figure 31 shows each target's largest occupational contributors. The number of local jobs for each occupation is shown along with the occupation's weight (in percentage terms) within the target. The LQ compares the occupation's local weight to its national weight within this target. An LQ that exceeds 1.00 indicates a local occupation employed more heavily by the local target industry than national patterns might imply, while an LQ below 1.00 indicates relatively lighter local reliance on the occupation. Median local hourly earnings accompany the occupations shown in the exhibit. Wage ratios exceeding 1.00 indicate higher pay than the same occupation might expect nationally, while ratios below 1.00 suggest relatively lower compensation than the national level.



HEALTH AND COMMUNITY ANCHORS

FIGURE 34. TARGET SNAPSHOT

| MUSKOGEE COUNTY | TOTAL | TARGET |
|----------------------|--------|--------|
| 2020 Establishments | 1,532 | 234 |
| 2020 Employment | 32,094 | 7,461 |
| Net Chg., 2010–2020 | -662 | +290 |
| Pct. Chg., 2010–2020 | -2.0% | +4.0% |

FIGURE 36. EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK

| US OVERALL | TOTAL | TARGET |
|----------------------|------------|------------|
| Net Chg., 2020–2025 | +5,652,930 | +2,107,087 |
| Pct. Chg., 2020–2025 | +3.6% | +9.2% |
| MUSKOGEE COUNTY | TOTAL | TARGET |
| Net Chg., 2020–2025 | +565 | +434 |
| Pct. Chg., 2020–2025 | +1.8% | +5.8% |

FIGURE 37. TARGET COMPONENTS
ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT

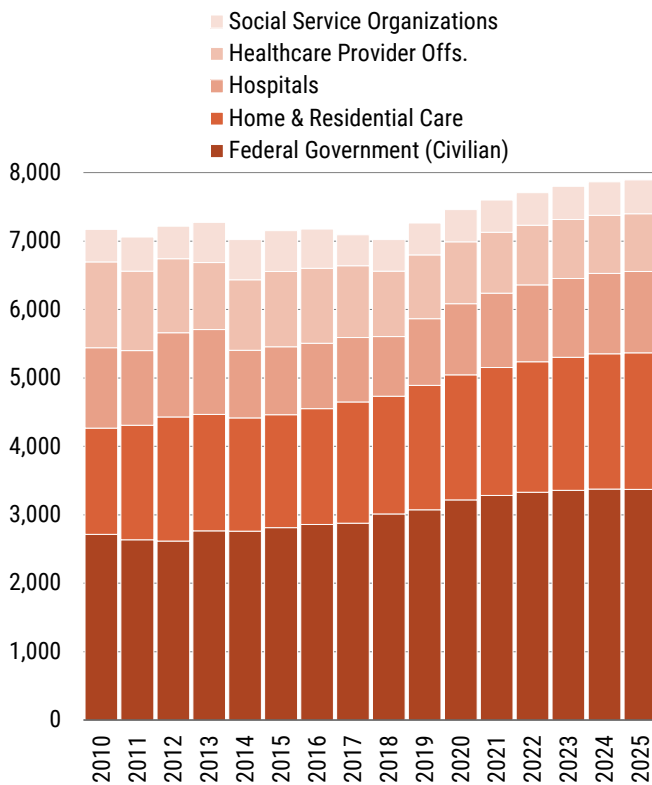


FIGURE 35. TARGET CONCENTRATION
LOCATION QUOTIENT TREND

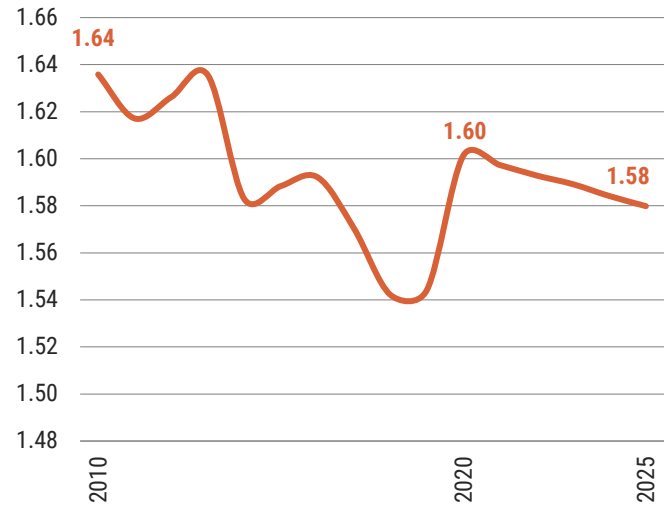
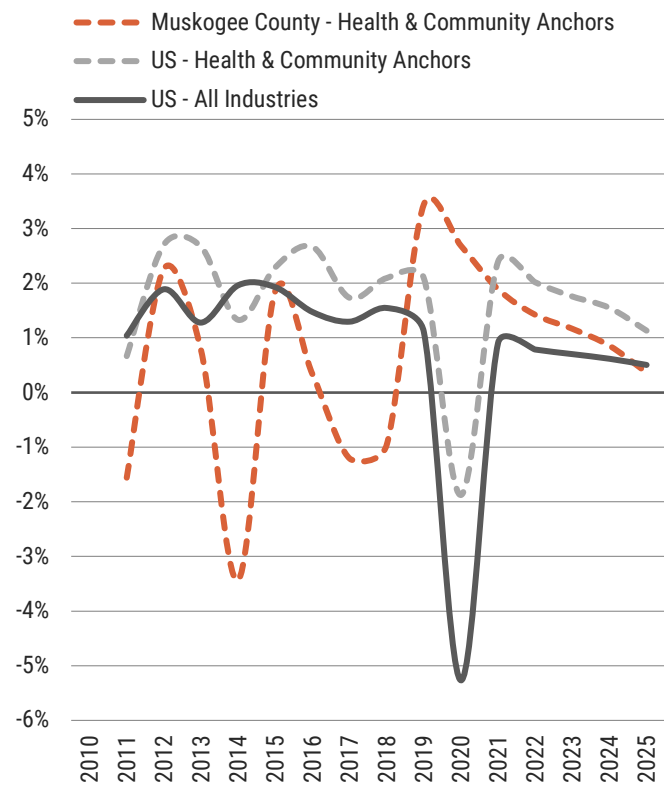


FIGURE 38. TARGET GROWTH
ANNUAL PERCENT CHANGE IN EMPLOYMENT



Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Emsi 2020.3–QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; US Economic Development Administration; Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note: The cluster methodology developed at Harvard Business School has been adjusted by TIP Strategies, Inc., to align with the 6-digit NAICS classifications used by Emsi.

FIGURE 39. TARGET STAFFING PROFILE

LQs & RELATIVE EARNINGS: **BELOW AVG** →  ← **ABOVE AVG**

| STANDARD OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION | | EMPLOYMENT | | | EARNINGS | |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Code | Description | 2020 Jobs | % of Target | LQ (US=1.00) | Local Hourly Median | Relative to US (US=1.00) |
| 13-1031 | Claims Adjusters, Examiners, & Investigators | 809 | 10.9% | 48.85 | 29.92 | 0.91 |
| 29-1141 | Registered Nurses | 759 | 10.2% | 0.86 | 31.11 | 0.86 |
| 31-1131 | Nursing Assistants | 602 | 8.1% | 1.43 | 12.75 | 0.86 |
| 31-1128 | Home Health & Personal Care Aides | 503 | 6.8% | 0.48 | 10.38 | 0.80 |
| 29-2061 | Licensed Practical & Licensed Vocational Nurses | 425 | 5.7% | 2.14 | 21.14 | 0.90 |
| 43-6013 | Medical Secretaries & Administrative Assistants | 177 | 2.4% | 1.00 | 15.03 | 0.84 |
| 11-9111 | Medical & Health Services Managers | 174 | 2.3% | 1.56 | 41.17 | 0.83 |
| 31-9092 | Medical Assistants | 128 | 1.7% | 0.58 | 12.59 | 0.73 |
| 37-2012 | Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners | 118 | 1.6% | 1.54 | 10.08 | 0.81 |
| 13-1198 | Business Operations Specialists, All Other | 100 | 1.3% | 0.97 | 27.70 | 0.75 |
| 35-2012 | Cooks, Institution & Cafeteria | 86 | 1.2% | 1.77 | 10.34 | 0.75 |
| 13-1041 | Compliance Officers | 84 | 1.1% | 2.68 | 25.92 | 0.76 |
| 21-1018 | Substance Abuse & Mental Health Counselors | 82 | 1.1% | 0.99 | 21.76 | 0.94 |
| 43-4199 | Information & Record Clerks, All Other | 79 | 1.1% | 3.41 | 21.59 | 1.05 |
| 29-2018 | Clinical Laboratory Technologists & Technicians | 69 | 0.9% | 0.94 | 21.74 | 0.83 |
| 43-9061 | Office Clerks, General | 68 | 0.9% | 0.54 | 12.70 | 0.75 |
| 29-2034 | Radiologic Technologists & Technicians | 66 | 0.9% | 1.07 | 24.36 | 0.82 |
| 31-9091 | Dental Assistants | 59 | 0.8% | 0.58 | 18.30 | 0.92 |
| 11-1021 | General & Operations Managers | 59 | 0.8% | 1.03 | 35.77 | 0.72 |
| 43-3031 | Bookkeeping, Accounting, & Auditing Clerks | 59 | 0.8% | 1.45 | 16.33 | 0.80 |
| 13-1028 | Buyers & Purchasing Agents | 58 | 0.8% | 3.19 | 25.45 | 0.80 |
| 13-1071 | Human Resources Specialists | 57 | 0.8% | 1.67 | 22.79 | 0.75 |
| 37-2011 | Janitors & Cleaners, Except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners | 54 | 0.7% | 1.05 | 11.33 | 0.81 |
| 29-2098 | Medical Records & Health Technicians, All Other | 53 | 0.7% | 0.65 | 20.34 | 0.96 |
| 43-4171 | Receptionists & Information Clerks | 51 | 0.7% | 0.32 | 13.12 | 0.88 |

Sources: US Bureau of Labor Statistics; Emsi 2020.2—QCEW Employees, Non-QCEW Employees, and Self-Employed; US Economic Development Administration; Institute for Strategy and Competitiveness at Harvard Business School; TIP Strategies, Inc.

Note: The cluster methodology developed at Harvard Business School has been adjusted by TIP Strategies, Inc., to align with the 6-digit NAICS classifications used by Emsi.

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city of muskogee
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