

The American Manufacturing
Communities Collaborative's
Strategic Plan

STRATEGIC PLAN

September 2021



The American Manufacturing
Communities Collaborative

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Introduction

A foundation of America's strength has always been our ability to invent and make products that people need: products that solve problems and make life better. We call this the "manufacturing sector" for short. The manufacturing sector is not simply the companies that drive the American economy. It is a full and robust ecosystem that includes manufacturers and the support systems manufacturers need to thrive: a strong workforce, robust supply chain networks, new infrastructure and site development, research and innovation, favorable trade, investment, operational improvement, and capital access.

Every American community has an important stake in understanding and integrating their public and private stakeholders that make up their regional manufacturing ecosystem team. Regional leaders need to build their regional strengths into an ever-improving manufacturing ecosystem of support that produces good jobs and sustainable prosperity. We call these "American manufacturing communities", and we are finding that to succeed in this hyper-connected world, almost every American region needs to focus on this work and will benefit greatly by working together across regions, sharing best practices and much more. This work of manufacturing ecosystem building is the work of a self-organized group of regions, the American Manufacturing Communities Collaborative, or AMCC.

An early predecessor of AMCC was called the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership (IMCP) program. IMCP aimed to arm American regions with the understanding of key activities and stakeholders in their respective manufacturing ecosystems. They were invited to 1) self-organize themselves in public private partnerships that were centered on regional manufacturing strengths, 2) convene and conduct assessments of local strengths called SWOT analyses, and then 3) put together a plan for progress based on the nature of those local strengths then work to execute them. Between 2014 and 2016, the federal government's multi-agency IMCP competition designated 24 regions to implement the foregoing approach.

The inspiring result of this work has led to most of those regional organizations staying together, sharing best practices every week, and forming themselves into a national organization called the American Manufacturing Communities Collaborative (AMCC). Because of the volunteerism by many people and partners, especially the kind support of its two co-founding partners, the Northeast-Midwest Institute (NEMWI) and The Century Foundation (TCF), AMCC was born. In addition to policy and organizational development expertise brought by both co-founding organizations, the NEMWI serves as AMCC's legal fiscal agent until a time when AMCC can incorporate as its own non-profit entity. AMCC is designed not only for these original communities but to help all American regions support and grow the manufacturing sector by using this bottom-up approach to sustainable development.

The leadership of these AMCC communities has led to several important achievements and creates new opportunities for American progress, including:

- After AMCC formed in 2018, many of its communities educated Congress on the importance of the IMCP model. Because the U.S. Department of Defense at the time was and still is very concerned about the [strength of the defense industrial supply chain](#), they authorized and appropriated new money to motivate defense manufacturing communities to self-organize and compete for a “manufacturing community” federal designation and millions of dollars. Now in its second year, the DMCSF is another example of how this bottom-up model can be applied in many contexts.
- The recent \$3 billion suite of programs from the U.S. Department of Commerce. Economic Development Administration (EDA) includes the \$1 billion Build Back Better Challenge aimed at incentivizing regions across the country to organize and compete for grants in support of 50 to 60 regions that propose to advance 3 to 8 mutually reinforcing projects in each region. EDA also has a competition aimed at stimulating the creation and growth of national networks like AMCC.
- The pending U.S. Innovation and Competition Act includes a billion dollar competition for up to ten designated regions to accelerate the application of key emerging technologies.
- As this momentum built, the new AMCC network began to focus on its organizational capacity to continue its work. Because AMCC has largely been a volunteer organization, the AMCC Advisory Board launched this Strategic Planning process early in 2021. Former U.S. Department of Commerce policy official Erin Sparks donated her time and talent to facilitate the process. The Advisory Board conducted scores of expert interviews with manufacturing associations, policy experts, and federal and regional leaders.

The Board developed four goals for the Strategic Plan:

Goal 1:

Grow the national community of manufacturing ecosystem partners with an intentional focus on enhancing competitiveness through innovation, equity, and environmental sustainability.

Goal 2:

Connect with and advocate for integrated national and state manufacturing policies with strong regional public and private partners.

Goal 3:

Develop a standard set of metrics across communities that can be rolled up to demonstrate impact.

Goal 4:

Build and significantly expand organizational sustainability.

The Board then hosted facilitated focus groups, composed of experts and AMCC community representatives, to identify strategies to achieve each goal. (Interview participants and focus group members are listed at the end of this strategic plan.) This Strategic Plan gives an overview of the most important actions identified for each goal and a snapshot of immediate next steps.

One of the goals, improved ecosystem metrics, is important to point out here in the introduction because it underscores an important ethos that permeates all of AMCC's work: that is, this network is dedicated to peer review evidence and science. America needs more confidence that the interventions we make in our complex society have the greatest likelihood of producing the outcomes we want. To increase that confidence we need to measure the interventions we make and improve them over time based on the evidence. Thus, metrics matter in both private organizations and in public governance.

This, and AMCC's other goals are the result of a great deal of leadership and volunteerism. The AMCC board benefited from the guidance and input of many stakeholders in producing this report. Just as the development of the Strategic Plan was a team effort, we expect the execution of activities will involve many stakeholders to be successful.

Ultimately, the vision of AMCC is to create and strengthen an alliance of communities with regional economic development initiatives underway dedicated to achieving sustainability through economic growth, improved environmental performance, and inclusive well-paid job creation supporting initiatives to create new opportunities and equity within a revitalized American manufacturing base. We invite you to join us in this important work. If you are reading this, please give us your feedback. Better yet, please let us know how you can join with us to advance the American project by strengthening its cornerstone, the American manufacturing ecosystem.

Please send feedback or questions about this strategic plan to matt.bogoshian@amccmail.org

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AMCC Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Grow the national community of manufacturing ecosystem partners with an intentional focus on enhancing competitiveness through innovation, equity, and environmental sustainability.

Strategies:

- Identify paths to become an AMCC member community and to become an AMCC partner.
 - Build stronger relationships with a broad network of partners that can provide expertise on specific topics to communities and manufacturers.
 - Connect communities and companies to a manufacturing network, community-facing resources, and a shared knowledge base.
-

Goal 2: Connect with and advocate for integrated national and state manufacturing policies with strong regional public and private partners.

Strategies:

- Capture and package AMCC front-line expertise at state and regional level into policy recommendations.
 - Do more to help communities access federal funding to help manufacturers.
 - Advocate for a more comprehensive and better integrated state and federal manufacturing policy/strategy.
-

Goal 3: Develop a standard set of metrics across communities that can be rolled up to demonstrate impact.

Strategies:

- Hold an AMCC Metrics "Congress" to identify what metrics members are already using, develop consensus definitions for commonly used metrics, and build consensus on metrics aggregation.
 - Provide AMCC communities with tailored metrics support—tools, expertise, confidence.
 - Promote adoption of a small set of ecosystem metrics as a starting point for communities to use.
 - Influence the federal measurement process—develop suggested ecosystem metrics that the federal government starts tracking.
-

Goal 4: Build and significantly expand organizational sustainability.

Strategies:

- Identify and pursue a small set of collective initiatives that align with AMCC's strategic goals.
- Increase the visibility of AMCC, its collective value, and the opportunity to leverage and scale investments (to funders and investors).
- Develop a long-term funding, capacity building, and partnership approach.



GOAL ONE

Grow the national community of manufacturing ecosystem partners with an intentional focus on enhancing competitiveness through innovation, equity, and environmental sustainability.

The Situation

The global economy demands a broader range of capabilities and supports for manufacturers, necessitating the need for new partnerships that heretofore were not generally considered by industry, community, and economic development stakeholders. The COVID 19 Pandemic elevated the importance of manufacturing's role in providing products that are critical to health, safety, and national security. Global supply chains experienced shocks and disruptions often catalyzing innovation. Manufacturing sector employees were deemed essential and critical to our country's well-being. This has renewed interest in reshoring and has highlighted the talent needs of the sector and the continued need for increased productivity and growth.

As a result of the challenges illuminated by COVID, the climate change, and ongoing concerns about the defense industry supply chain's ability to meet our national security needs, a crosscutting approach that incorporates an equity lens, talent solutions, innovation, production technology and sustainability to advance the competitiveness of US manufacturing has become even more important. Within this context, AMCC serves as an impactful voice to advocate for federal policies to support a sector-based and regional approach, highlighting the need for multi-jurisdictional partnerships, centered on connecting stakeholders, utilizing knowledge and peer-to-peer learning exchanges that inform practices, while representing ongoing programs and best practices from around the United States.

Central to AMCC's approach is that the policies and practices that it learns about and shares with regional manufacturing communities are informed by direct engagement with industry.

The Opportunity

AMCC provides value by supporting US manufacturing competitiveness through advocacy, education, and market driven initiatives that are holistic in approach including developing a diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce, enabling innovation, fostering competitive supply chains, and encouraging sustainability.

Strategies

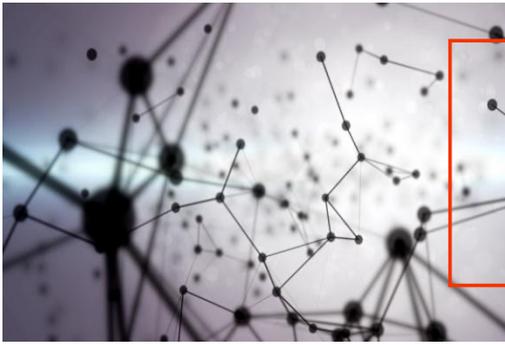
- Build stronger relationships with a broad network of partners that can provide expertise on specific topics to communities and manufacturers.
- Connect communities and companies to a manufacturing network, community-facing resources, and a shared knowledge base.
- Identify paths to become an AMCC member community and to become an AMCC partner.

Existing Activities

- AMCC weekly meetings provide a strong platform for Goal 1 implementation and represent a foundational AMCC activity.
- EDA ARPA Funding will serve as a resource and funding opportunity to implement the goal.

Immediate Next Steps

- The AMCC Board will partner with a think tank to develop a shared definition of a manufacturing ecosystem, including regional definition, policy model, and values such as inclusion, efficiency, and innovation.
- The AMCC Board will identify manufacturing consortia in each state that AMCC can approach for peer exchanges.
- The AMCC Board will invite communities that are interested in this approach (DMC, MEP, Manufacturing USA, other manufacturing consortia) to join the AMCC communications network, Monday calls, and possibly an annual AMCC meeting.



GOAL TWO

Connect with and advocate for integrated national and state manufacturing policies with strong regional public and private partners.

The Situation

Sustainable development in America depends upon a thriving manufacturing sector and a robust manufacturing ecosystem of support. We know this because of the unique multiplier effect manufacturing has in the economy, including its ability to deliver living wage jobs to workers of diverse backgrounds. Although the number of “manufacturing” jobs is smaller as a percentage of total employment than in past generations, this new more advanced manufacturing sector is and will continue to be critical to creating the positive ripple effect it generates throughout the rest of the American economy.

Policy makers from all parties have begun to recognize this reality, putting money toward advancing bottom-up economic development interventions for manufacturing and regional manufacturing ecosystems of support. For a decade, manufacturing communities have been working to bring systems science to bear to help manufacturers and their communities thrive. For example, the IMCP initiative helped to pilot this approach; a federal program helping communities build diverse regional public/private partnerships that gather and analyze regional strengths and opportunities so all levels of government, for-profit and nonprofit partners can carry out coordinated activities that the best evidence shows will be most likely to help manufacturing thrive.

The nation needs more investment in this bottom-up approach of helping regions deal with complex challenges, investments in better systems for collaboration amongst private and public players at every level. The evidence shows that for lasting progress it is critical to have and heed the experienced voices of regional leaders who are sensitive to the needs of small and medium sized manufacturers in all communities, especially those in distressed communities, urban and rural, throughout the country.

Too often federal manufacturing investments have primarily focused on technology development without prioritizing job creation, diversity, equity and inclusion. Too often these investments have primarily focused on company needs without prioritizing help for and leveraging with the manufacturing ecosystem of support that a strong manufacturing sector needs. And too often these investments have insufficiently focused on key supply chains and industries critical to American prosperity, i.e. industries that respond to key needs in national defense, climate response, and pandemic response.

The Opportunity

As a national entity composed of regional members and national partners, AMCC sees a rare, once-in-a-generation opportunity to draw together manufacturing ecosystem players to shape and secure new investments now and over the next five years. AMCC has already punched well above its weight as a new organization. Not only has the bottom-up model it promotes continued with the IMCP initiative stakeholders, but its influence has helped to create the federally funded Defense Manufacturing Community Support Program (DMCSP) effort now in its second year and the multibillion-dollar investment in the pending USICA Tech Hub program. Ultimately, the nation needs a national manufacturing plan that can be coordinated with standardized state and regional manufacturing plans so we leverage resources at all levels to produce mutually desirable outcomes. AMCC aims to take advantage of this generational federal investment opportunity by developing the capacity, partners and systems necessary to scale this ecosystem approach; helping every region across America build and/or gain access to the best interventions most likely to produce priority outcomes.

Strategies

- Capture and package AMCC front-line expertise at state and regional level into policy recommendations.
- Do more to help communities access federal funding to help manufacturers.
- Advocate for a more comprehensive and better integrated state and federal manufacturing policy/strategy.

Existing Activities

- Securing federal support for AMCC to maximize the equity, climate and jobs impact of generational investments in manufacturing by applying to the State Planning Research and Networks RFP by September 30th, 2021
- Outlining and presenting AMCC priorities to the Administration as it executes new manufacturing funding, by scheduling a meeting with Administration appointees by December 31st, 2021
- Providing models, metrics and planning strategies that ensure that new federal investments produce results that make a lasting impact and set the stage for ongoing federal support for regional industrial policies by producing a short white paper by December 31st

Immediate Next Steps

- The AMCC Board will gather better data about what communities are doing to inform advocacy (for example, conducting a national survey).
- The AMCC Board will advocate for the establishment of new manufacturing community designation programs.
- The AMCC Board will use the developing metrics and dashboards to create an understandable and accessible vision for strategic local/state/federal integrated investments/interventions that produce better outcomes.
- The AMCC Board will add federal funding opportunities as a regular section of AMCC's weekly Update.



GOAL THREE

Develop a standard set of metrics across communities that can be rolled up to demonstrate impact.

The Situation

Key to progress on effectuating AMCC's mission and a thriving manufacturing ecosystem is benchmarking key progress indicators and building a community of practice that will bring the best evidence to inform integrated decision making to advance American manufacturing competitiveness and sustainable development. AMCC therefore aims to co-create a robust community of practice that develops and implements a useful beginning set of manufacturing ecosystem indicators that can be improved over time.

To understand this goal, two categories of “metrics” are important to distinguish. The first set of metrics that funders often focus on are called “programmatic metrics”. Programmatic metrics, like those required from many governmental or philanthropic grant programs, often focus on producing “outputs” of activities that are relatively easy to measure to ensure accountability for the money spent. Some output activities produced by these grants are clearly “caused” by the granting of money to an organization. Examples of outputs where causation is measurable, clear, and credible include the quantification of the number of meetings convened, stakeholders engaged, trainings produced, etc.

To be sure, it has been and remains important to have increasingly accurate programmatic metrics, but at the same time, to inform the best policy making, we need reliable improving longitudinal ecosystem metrics that drive multiple stakeholders to produce improved societal outcomes.

The metrics we are discussing here in Goal 3 are not these kind of programmatic “output” metrics. Instead, Goal 3 is about creating manufacturing ecosystem metrics that measure “outcomes” that are often a primary focus of policy makers.

An example of an outcome metric can be the creation of a job. Most policy analysts view job creation and the multiple benefits a job produces for the individual, the community, and the economy as a very desirable “outcome” and yet the interventions that produce that job outcome are not always easy to identify and measure. As such, too little attention gets paid to producing better ecosystem metrics measuring the “correlations” between interventions and these kinds of important, albeit harder to prove, outcomes.

As with other fields of science, we expect that wide use of ecosystem metrics measuring interventions aimed at producing specific outcomes will reveal from the evidence gathered which interventions are most likely to produce desirable outcomes. By accelerating this work, we hope that one day we can say with high confidence that particular interventions are not only “correlated” with producing a particular outcome but are in fact “causing” them.

The good news is that we are not starting from scratch. Many types of ecosystem metrics exist and need to be analyzed, augmented with others, potentially integrated, improved and used by practitioners to produce a useful feedback loop for continuous ecosystem metrics improvement.

It is especially important that ecosystem metrics evolve to have longitudinal data consistency so practitioners and policy makers can see trends over time and adjust accordingly. Whatever ecosystem metrics emerge, to be most useful, they must be consistently gathered and shared for analysis and reform.

The Opportunity

Create national manufacturing ecosystem metrics that make it easier for every American manufacturing community and region to prioritize evidence-based interventions most likely to produce outcomes that their community decides matters most.

Strategies

- Produce a white paper of existing manufacturing ecosystem progress indicators/metrics.
- Co-create a national meeting of stakeholders who will collaborate to improve progress indicators that advance this manufacturing ecosystem goal. The convening will identify what ecosystem metrics communities are already using, develop consensus definitions for commonly used ecosystem metrics, and build consensus on ecosystem metrics aggregation.
- Provide manufacturing communities with tailored ecosystem metrics support - tools, expertise, and confidence.
- Promote adoption of a small set of ecosystem metrics as a starting point for communities to use.
- Provide manufacturing communities with guidance on understanding and adopting manufacturing ecosystem metrics.
- Influence the federal measurement process by advocating for ecosystem metrics that the federal government starts to prioritize and track.

Existing Activities

- Present work with CREC under a new EDA grant to build a framework for measuring economic development drawing from EDA CEDS and state economic development and other plans.
- Preliminary discussions with national stakeholders to include those at the Federal Reserve Bank and NIST who may collaborate to improve progress indicators to advance this manufacturing ecosystem goal.
- Informal discussions with manufacturing communities as to how they measure outputs and outcomes of their interventions.

Immediate Next Steps

- The AMCC Board will begin formal meetings with AMCC communities and stakeholders on existing ecosystem metrics currently used (e.g., communities, manufacturing institutes, Brookings Institution, ITIF, CREC, federal agencies).
- The AMCC Board will establish a working group consisting of key manufacturing ecosystem stakeholders to set the groundwork for the white paper, national conference, and identification of a small set of ecosystem metrics that manufacturing communities can use right away.
- The AMCC Board will secure funding for the aforementioned strategies:
 - D Apply now for EDA ARPA networking grant
 - D Consider applying for an EDA ARPA research grant
 - D Consider applying for NIST Measurement Science and Engineering (MSE) Research Grant
 - D Seek foundation support, e.g. the Kauffman Foundation.



GOAL FOUR

Build and significantly expand organizational sustainability

The Situation

From the beginning, the IMCP network — and now the AMCC — has been run by volunteers. In fact, AMCC's Executive Director Matt Bogoshian and Fiduciary Michael Goff at the Northeast-Midwest Institute have contributed countless hours of pro bono work.¹ This ongoing work for AMCC needs to be funded for the organization to be sustainable long-term.

AMCC has already developed two promising income-generating models— membership/donations and as sub-awardees to other organizations' grants. The first model has its limits, since several members — especially the smaller organizations— cannot afford to contribute. Another approach involves partnering with other organizations on grants. For example, Utah included AMCC as a sub-awardee for a Defense Manufacturing Support Program grant, and CREC included AMCC as a sub-awardee or contractor as part of its EDA grant award. Most promising is for AMCC to lead collective initiatives with members and partners with funding for these initiatives that support AMCC as an organization.

The Opportunity

Based on the experience, partnerships, and value already added as described above, it is clear there is strong potential for AMCC to generate sustaining income. Now is the time for AMCC to develop an in-depth understanding of the funding landscape and which funders' priorities are the best matches for its needs. This step will enable AMCC to develop a prioritized, focused funding strategy that will include tailored messages and proposals for specific funders and programs. A major opportunity for AMCC is to identify collective initiatives that engage members and partners, as well as funders.

AMCC aims to be strategic about building value that existing and prospective members, partners, and stakeholders are willing to support financial

Strategies

- Identify and pursue a small set of collective initiatives that align with AMCC's strategic goals.
- Increase the visibility of AMCC, its collective value, and the opportunity to leverage and scale investments (to funders and investors).
- Develop a long-term funding, capacity building, and partnership approach.

¹ The Northeast-Midwest Institute (NEMWI) serves as AMCC's legal fiscal agent until a time when AMCC can incorporate as its own non-profit entity.

Existing Activities

- The AMCC board with this strategic plan has identified initial priorities for collective initiatives.
- AMCC has been included in selected manufacturing community proposals including a Defense Manufacturing Community Support Program grant, in which AMCC is providing expertise and counsel, and in an EDA grant to the Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness, in which AMCC is providing policy education via webinars as well as expertise and content for the CREC policy academy.
- Maintaining and upgrading the AMCC website.
- Maintaining and upgrading the Constant Contact database for communications.
- Hosting regular AMCC webinars.
- Maintaining and circulating the AMCC membership information.
- Enlisting manufacturing communities to make voluntary donations to AMCC.
- Delivering on program obligations on DMCSF and EDA grants.
- Asking the Kauffman Foundation to fund AMCC.

Immediate Next Steps

- The AMCC Board will compile and prioritize a list of internal initiatives and operational funding needs with input from the entire AMCC community that is internal to AMCC as a collective and to AMCC members.
- The AMCC Board will explore collective projects with a group of MEP Centers -- with one Center as the prime -- and with AMCC as a major partner.
- The AMCC Board will plan for a national conference; invite funders to present and participate hosted by an AMCC Steering Committee, with assistance from AMCC member and stakeholder volunteers.
- The AMCC Board will increase visibility with targeted regions by various means to include communicating network benefits, hosting calls and convenings, increasing access to web tools, and publishing a research paper on manufacturing policy to get visibility for manufacturing and the role of regions.
- The AMCC Board will lead a series of briefings/introductory sessions for AMCC with selected foundations and other funders to introduce the strategic plan and to explore interest in one or more of the possible collective initiatives and to learn what kind of prospectuses and other materials they look for from potential grantees. This should integrate with newsletter articles for wider reach.
- The AMCC Board will develop a funding landscape study that identifies private funders (philanthropic, corporate and others) whose priorities potentially match AMCC funding priorities. This exercise will also help identify what kind of approach and prospectuses these funders expect.
- The AMCC Board will develop 1-2 funding proposals each year with the help of a potential funder and/or investment advisor, or philanthropic entity hosted by an AMCC Steering Committee/member volunteer task force.

Acknowledgements

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Matt Bogoshian, AMCC Executive Director

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Andrew Stettner, The Century Foundation

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