"Building Stronger, More Connected, and Investment-Ready Rural Communities Across Illinois"

STRONG COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE (SCI)

COMPEER FINANCIAL®

HOMETOWN CONSULTING
"A Community & Economic Development Consulting Group"

Compeer Financial in Partnership with Hometown Consulting

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Strong Communities Initiative (SCI)

The **Strong Communities Initiative (SCI)** is a diagnostic, capacity-building program designed to help small and mid-sized communities strengthen their internal systems, readiness, and leadership alignment. SCI focuses on five equally weighted pillars of municipal health and performance, providing communities with a clear roadmap for operational and economic success. Through this Compeer Financial-funded initiative, Hometown Consulting partners directly with selected Illinois communities to evaluate current conditions, benchmark performance, and identify actionable steps toward greater efficiency, resilience, and growth.

FIVE FOCUS AREAS

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Evaluates staffing capacity, clarity of responsibilities, internal coordination, and the procedures used to manage day-to-day municipal operations

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY

Assesses the community's capacity to attract, retain, and support business development and investment.

GRANT READINESS ANALYSIS

Reviews policies, processes, and recordkeeping to ensure communities are positioned to pursue and manage external funding effectively.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

Examines transparency, accessibility, and public trust through the review of websites, outreach practices, and media strategies.

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

Analyzes existing business ecosystems, outreach methods, and capacity for supporting local entrepreneurs and key employers.

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PROGRAMS PHASES

(16 - WEEK STRUCTURE)

PHASE I DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT - (WEEKS 1–6)

Document review, staff interviews, and data analysis across the five readiness categories to establish baseline conditions.

PHASE II READINESS ANALYSIS & REPORTING - (WEEKS 7–12)

Preparation of a customized Community Readiness Report and Strategic Roadmap outlining actionable recommendations.

PHASE III FINAL REPORT DELIVERED TO COUNCIL/BOARD - (WEEKS 13–16)

We will provide a final report for each community in Phase III, followed by an invite to our Hometown Consulting Annual Meeting event giving all SCI participants, HTC clients, Compeer Financial, and other partners to meet, network and share success stories.

DELIVERABLES & OUTCOMES

EACH PARTICIPATING COMMUNITY WILL RECEIVE A COMPREHENSIVE DELIVERABLE PACKAGE, INCLUDING:

- **A CUSTOMIZED COMMUNITY READINESS REPORT**
- **FIVE-CATEGORY CURRENT CONDITIONS REPORT**
- **STRATEGIC ACTION ROADMAP**
- **INCLUSION IN HTC ANNUAL MEETING**
- **SIX-MONTH & ONE-YEAR FOLLOW-UPS TO REVIEW PROGRESS**

PROGRAM VALUE

PARTICIPATION IN THIS INITIATIVE REPRESENTS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES TO:

VALUE OF $12,500, AWARDED TO 6 COMMUNITIES

Receive expert analysis, strategic planning, and actionable recommendations—fully subsidized through the generous support of Compeer Financial and Hometown Consulting, LLC.

Compeer Financial is investing in this initiative to award six Illinois communities, while **Hometown Consulting provides professional time and expertise** to help each community achieve measurable, on-the-ground improvements.

Selected communities are not asked to contribute any financial resources—only their commitment of time, engagement, and collaboration to ensure successful completion of the program and meaningful local outcomes.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Through SCI, participating municipalities will:

1. **BUILD ORGANIZATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP CAPACITY**
2. **STRENGTHEN GRANT READINESS AND STRATEGIC PLANNING**
3. **IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPARENCY WITH RESIDENTS**
4. **SUPPORT BUSINESS RETENTION AND GROWTH**
5. **COLLABORATE REGIONALLY FOR GREATER SHARED SUCCESS**

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