

PURPOSE – To help a community learn about existing strengths and weaknesses as seen through the eyes of the first-time visitor. Results of the First Impressions Program can form the basis for future development.

PROGRAM GOALS

SHORT TERM LEARNING

Community leaders will:

- Learn about their own community's assets and opportunities or view them in a new light.
- Develop a list of action items for community improvement.
- Learn about basic concepts in community place-making and development.

Local residents, elected officials, business owners, and economic development practitioners will:

- Strengthen an existing cohort of community leaders and residents by providing them with an opportunity to organize based on valuable feedback about their community from first-time visitors.
- Begin to take action on community improvements with financial assistance from funders.

MEDIUM TERM ACTION

Community leaders will:

- Identify priority action items.
- Make immediate improvements to the physical/built environment in areas such as signage, beautification, historic preservation, recreation, infrastructure, business recruitment, or lodging.
- Integrate action items into community plans.
- Create plans that integrate data from a variety of stakeholders including visitors and local residents.
- Establish a system for monitoring change based on priority actions.
- Obtain external funding to address priority issues.
- Cooperate or communicate with nearby communities on projects or programs.

LONG TERM CONDITIONS

Communities will:

- Implement appropriate long term plans based on priority issues and opportunities.
- Gain efficiencies through municipal sharing and cooperation.
- Improve community wellbeing and quality of life for residents.
- Improve the local economy.

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