

North  Central  
MASSACHUSETTS

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

North  Central  
MASSACHUSETTS

DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



North  Central  
MASSACHUSETTS

CHAMBER FOUNDATION

# NORTH CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & AFFILIATES

## STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW 2018-2021

Revised September 2018

## Board of Directors

Mr. Neil H. Abramson  
CFO  
ECi Stores

Mr. Will Aubuchon, IV  
President & CEO  
W.E. Aubuchon Company, Inc.

Mr. Wayne Canty  
President  
Heat Trace Products, LLC

Mr. David Duval  
President  
Protective Services, Inc.

Mr. Steven Duvarney  
Vice President  
Duvarney Jewelers

Mr. Mathew Fournier  
Owner  
Elite Construction & Design, Inc.

Mr. Mark W. Freeman (Immediate Past Chair)  
President  
Steel-Fab, Inc.

Mr. Kenneth W. Gurge, Esq.  
Attorney  
Law Office of Kenneth W. Gurge

Dr. Richard Lapidus  
President  
Fitchburg State University

Ms. Anne Leader  
President  
Vision Payroll Service

Ms. Rachel Lopez  
President  
Resource Management, Inc.

Mr. Christopher W. McCarthy  
President & COO  
Fidelity Bank

Mr. Anthony J. Mercadante  
CPA  
Mercadante & Mercadante, P.C.

Mr. Stephen J. Mullaney, P.E. (Chair)  
President  
S.J. Mullaney Engineering, Inc.

Mr. Roy Nascimento, CCE, IOM  
President & CEO  
North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Steven Rocheleau (Treasurer)  
President  
Rocheleau Tool & Die Co., Inc.

Mr. Henry Tessman  
General Manager  
Great Hill Lodge

Dr. James Vander Hooven  
President  
Mount Wachusett Community College

Ms. Deborah Weymouth (Vice Chair)  
CEO  
UMass Memorial HealthAlliance - Clinton Hospital, Inc.

## Professional Staff

Ms. Diane Burnette  
Visitor Center Manager

Ms. Sandie Cataldo  
Economic Development Manager

Ms. Kathleen Deal  
Events & Program Manager

Mr. David Ginisi  
Membership & Outreach Manager

Ms. Lauren Goulet  
Office Manager

Brendan Hannen  
Micro-loan Program Manager

Mr. Bruce Larsen  
Vice President of Lending

Mr. Christopher McDermott  
Public Affairs Manager

Mr. Matthew Myers, IOM  
Marketing & Communications Manager

Ms. Sabbra Reyes  
Visitor Center Assistant Manager

Ms. Teresa Roberts  
Director of Finance & Administration

Mr. Norman Vigeant  
Vice President of Lending

## PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

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Dear members, regional partners, and friends,

The North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce has recently received national recognition and earned accolades as one of the nation's leading regional organizations. The telltales of our growth and maturity as an organization are numerous and include:

- ▶ An **outstanding leadership team** that sets high expectations, embraces new ideas, balances the companion needs of vision and practicality, and enjoys excellent camaraderie despite its myriad perspectives;
- ▶ An **ambitious and talented professional staff** that is eminently capable of challenging conventional wisdom while remaining deeply respectful and energized by an understanding of the region's unique history;
- ▶ An enviable level of **financial stability** arising from solid membership recruitment and retention efforts, prudent economic development activities, and inventive tourism initiatives;
- ▶ A clear and indelible **connection to the community** in which the Chamber is widely understood to be a major catalyst for regional improvements as well as a fully invested partner in making North Central Massachusetts a better place;
- ▶ And a **commitment to robust, transparent planning** that actively assesses changing dynamics and strives to align resources with emerging needs.

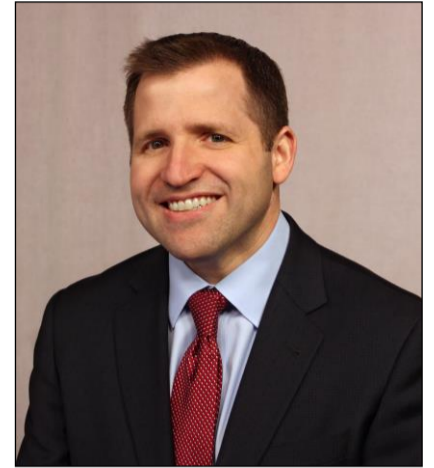
In the pages that follow, we are excited to share an overview of our new strategic plan. Building upon the tremendous momentum and successful completion of its predecessor - a first for our organization! - and coupled with the Chamber's action-oriented business plan, the new plan will guide us throughout our next phase of development and regional engagement.

I would like to thank the many volunteer leaders and professional staff of the Chamber and its vibrant affiliates for the spirited contributions they have made to this plan. Equally important, our forward trajectory has been shaped by the steady stream of suggestions and feedback we receive from both our members at large and the citizens of North Central Massachusetts. Together, we are making our region the best in the state to live, work, raise a family, or build a business!

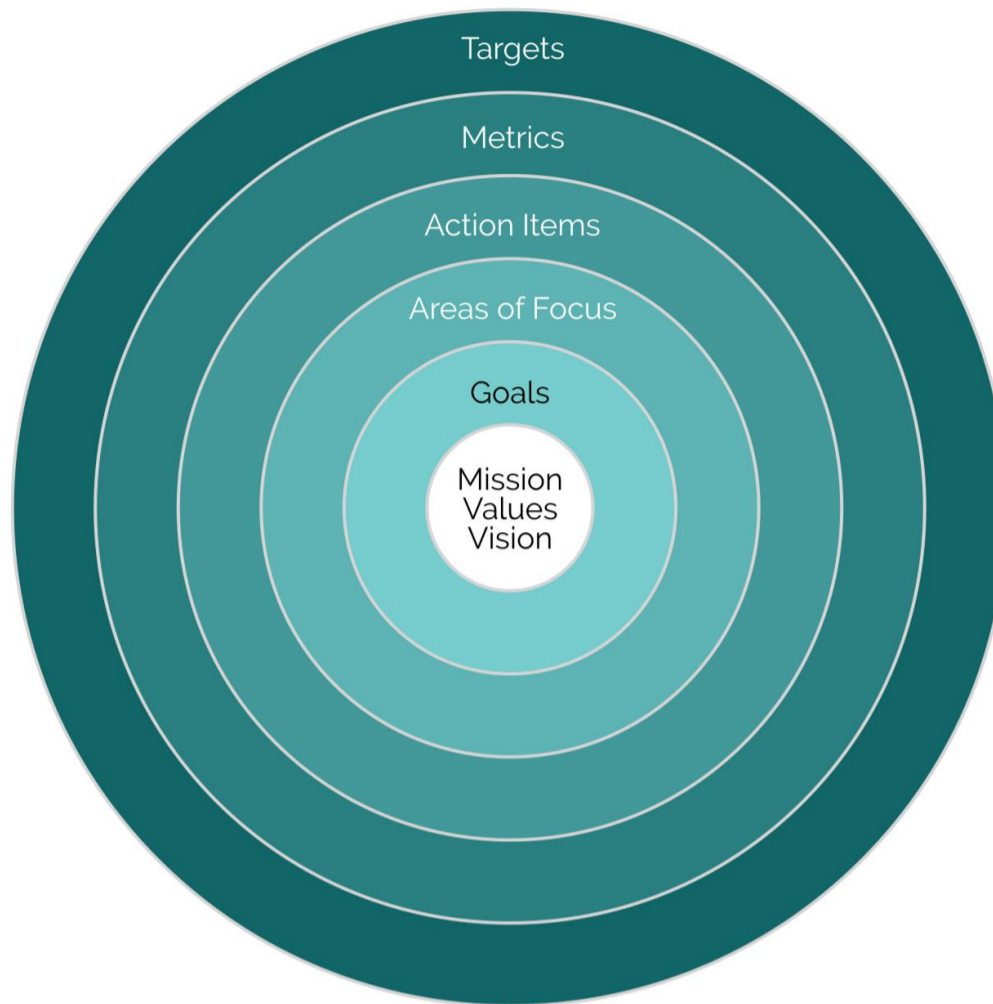
Sincerely,



Roy Nascimento  
President & CEO



Roy Nascimento, CCE, IOM  
President & CEO



<b>Mission</b>	What is the Chamber's enduring sense of purpose?
<b>Values</b>	To which standards does the Chamber hold itself?
<b>Vision</b>	What is the desired, long-term impact of the Chamber's work?
<b>Goals</b>	How is the Chamber advancing its mission and reaching for its vision while reflecting its values?
<b>Areas of Focus</b>	What is the Chamber doing to better align itself with the evolving needs of its members and the region?
<b>Action Items*</b>	What discrete and achievable steps is the Chamber taking to to pursue its goals?
<b>Metrics</b>	What measures does the Chamber use to gauge its progress in advancing goals?
<b>Targets</b>	How far does the Chamber intend to advance a particular metric?

*\*Note: Action items are described in the Chamber's Business Plan*

<b>Mission</b>	<i>What is the Chamber's enduring sense of purpose?</i>	<b>We advance the economy of North Central Massachusetts and strengthen its quality of place by connecting businesses, people, and ideas.</b>
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<b>Values</b>	<i>To which standards does the Chamber hold itself?</i>	<p><b>Integrity</b> We are open, candid, and fair; honor our commitments; and adhere to high ethical standards.</p> <p><b>Excellence</b> We consistently deliver programs, services, and products of the highest quality that meet the expectations of our members and other regional stakeholders.</p> <p><b>Focus</b> We stay on task and achieve the goals we set, but also recognize the need to readily assess outcomes and realign efforts based upon the evolving needs of our members and the region.</p> <p><b>Visionary Leadership</b> We are expansive and future-oriented in our thinking, decision making, and programming, just as we remain proud and energized by our unique history.</p> <p><b>Inclusion</b> We value, respect, and involve the region's rich diversity of people, businesses, organizations, and perspectives as we advance our mission.</p> <p><b>Innovation</b> We marshal our creative and inventive energies to respond to challenges, develop solutions, and embrace change as opportunity.</p>
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<b>Vision</b>	<i>What is the desired, long-term impact of the Chamber's work?</i>	<b>Inspired business leadership, robust economic development, and collaborative community partnerships make North Central Massachusetts the best region in the state to live, work, raise a family, or build a business.</b>
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<b>Goals</b>	<i>How is the Chamber advancing its mission and reaching for its vision while reflecting its values?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. STRENGTHEN</b> the regional economy and <b>IMPROVE</b> the overall business climate.</li> <li><b>2. PROMOTE</b> the region as an ideal place to live, work, visit, and invest.</li> <li><b>3. CONVENE</b> the community to deepen understanding of complex issues, identify collaborative solutions, and improve the region's ability to respond to change.</li> <li><b>4. ADVOCATE</b> regional interests to key decision makers and stakeholders.</li> <li><b>5. POSITION</b> the Chamber for long-term sustainability and success.</li> </ol>
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Goal 1 **STRENGTHEN** the regional economy and **IMPROVE** the overall business climate.

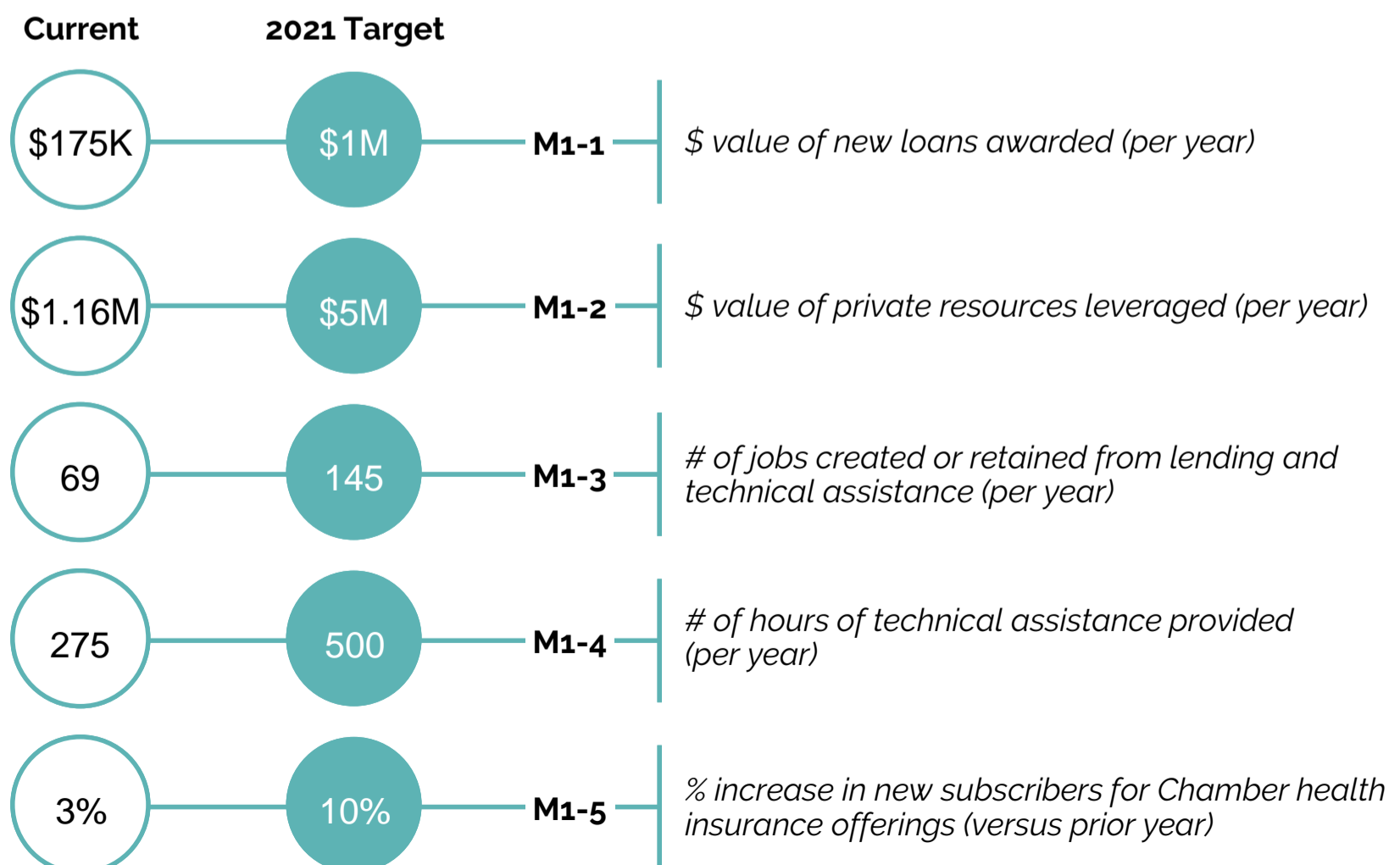
**Areas of Focus**

*What is the Chamber doing to better align itself with the evolving needs of its members and the region?*

- ▶ **Providing** services and benefits that offer Chamber members the opportunity to save money, save time, or provide support for the challenges they face in their businesses
- ▶ **Providing** programs that offer Chamber members the opportunity to network with their peers or to meet new customers and/or promote their businesses
- ▶ **Expanding** opportunities for direct B2B connections that effectively link local buyers and sellers with targeted partners (e.g. buyer introductions)
- ▶ **Partnering** with local institutions to improve the effectiveness of job-training programs and other educational offerings focused on building critical skill sets in great demand by area businesses
- ▶ **Expanding** industry- or skill-specific Chamber programming and events
- ▶ **Adding** professional capacity to the North Central Massachusetts Development Corporation (NCMDC)
- ▶ **Expanding** NCMDC's small business lending and technical assistance services to support entrepreneurship and small business growth in North Central Massachusetts
- ▶ **Building** and **supporting** shared information platforms that assist small and micro businesses (e.g. databases of available positions, internships, events, etc.)
- ▶ **Facilitating** the development of a cooperative buying program that helps small and mid- size businesses

**Metrics & Targets**

*What measures does the Chamber use to gauge its progress in advancing goals?*





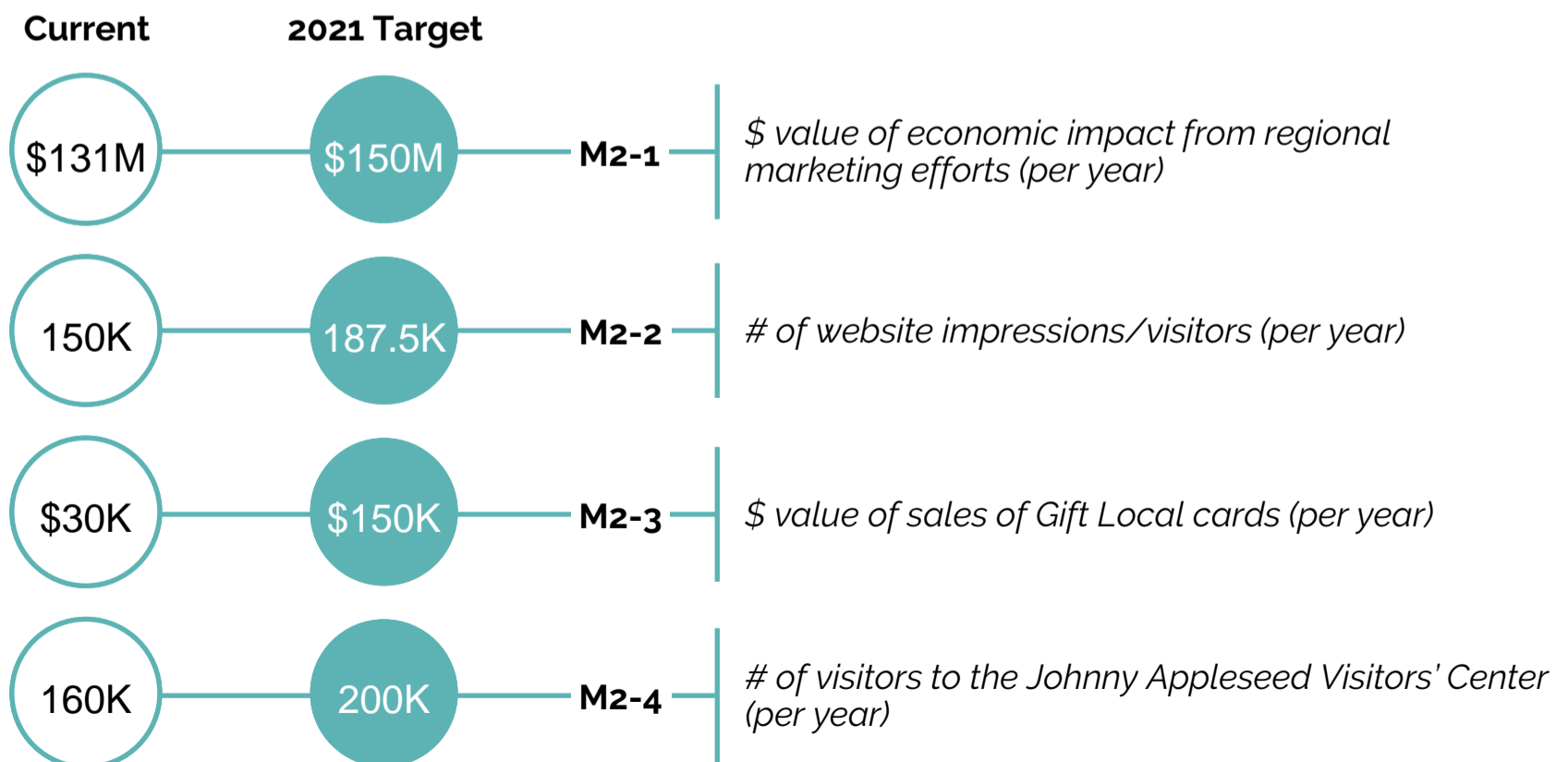
**Areas of Focus**

*What is the Chamber doing to better align itself with the evolving needs of its members and the region?*

- ▶ **Promoting** the resources, positive activities, and accomplishments of North Central Massachusetts; and encouraging citizens to take pride in their community by developing greater community awareness, identity, and image
- ▶ **Assessing** and then **transforming** the existing Appleseed Country brand to better align with the broader promotion of North Central Massachusetts, a unique and vibrant region comprised of cities and towns that are rich in history, culture, and entrepreneurial drive and that offer authentic New England experiences and events
- ▶ **Providing** visitors to the Johnny Appleseed Visitors' Center with a positive experience
- ▶ **Championing** regionalism to enhance the business environment and boost economic development through the coordination and leveraging of resources
- ▶ **Formalizing** affiliate relationships with smaller chambers in the region (e.g. Gardner, Nashoba, North Quabbin)
- ▶ **Marketing** North Central Massachusetts as the preferred visitor, group-tour, and small-meeting destination in Massachusetts and New England
- ▶ **Securing** new resources to sustain and expand regional tourism marketing efforts, including advocating for a dedicated portion of meal and room taxes and for the development of Tourism Marketing Districts.
- ▶ **Finding** solutions to make it easier for small businesses to take advantage of the Gift Local program

**Metrics & Targets**

*What measures does the Chamber use to gauge its progress in advancing goals?*



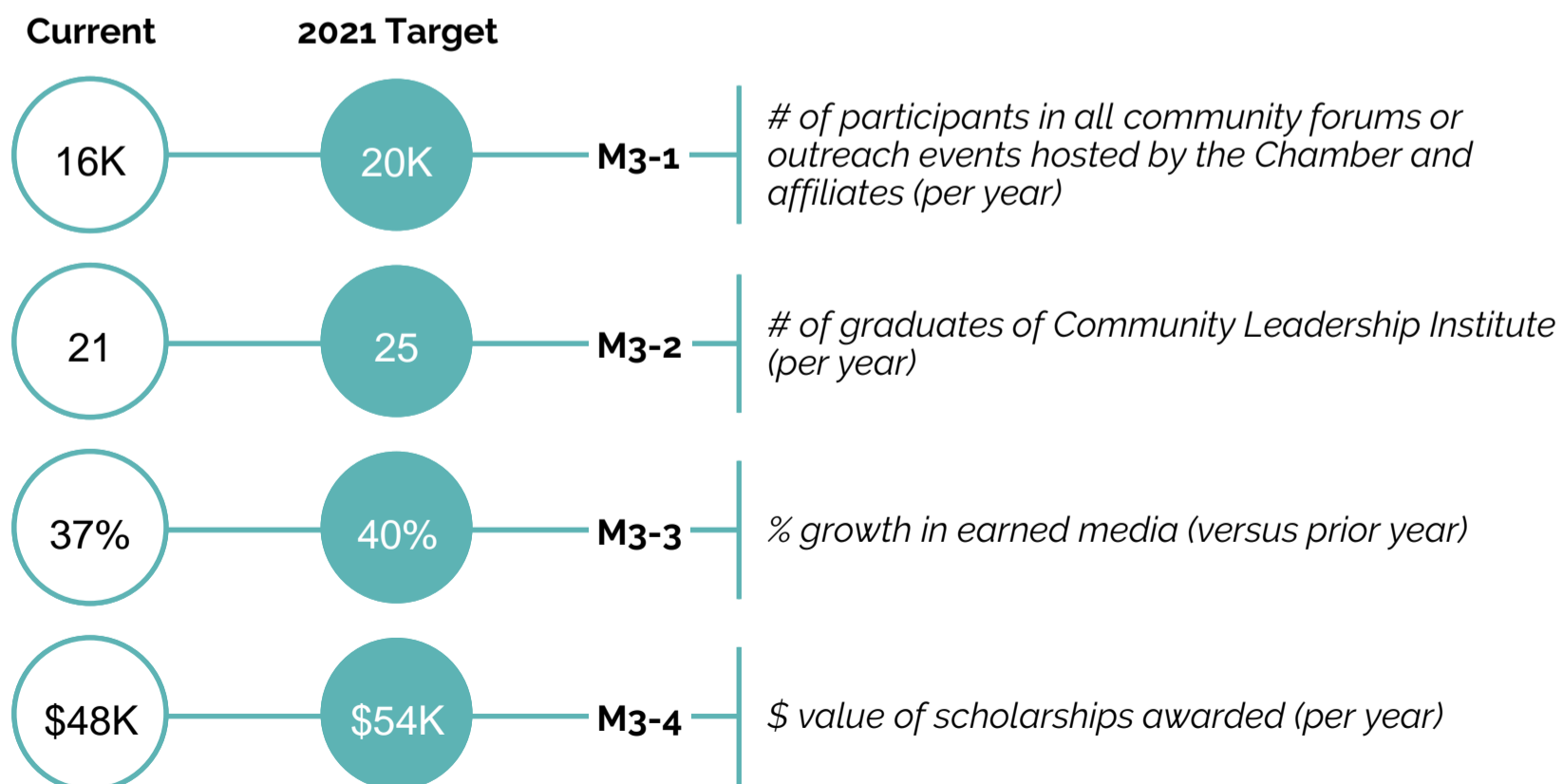
**Areas of Focus**

*What is the Chamber doing to better align itself with the evolving needs of its members and the region?*

- ▶ **Developing** and **retaining** an ongoing source of diverse leaders, who are prepared and committed to serve as catalysts and sustainers of positive change for the betterment of North Central Massachusetts
- ▶ **Enhancing** existing programming to give participants more of an opportunity to have meaningful, shared experiences in some of the region's more interesting, exciting, and unique venues
- ▶ **Adding** focus to the work of the Community Leadership Institute by having participants collaborate on a shared project of high community value
- ▶ **Hosting** themed or location-specific events to break down cultural barriers and build appreciation for the region's growing diversity
- ▶ **Emphasizing** the need for direct outreach to new immigrant communities
- ▶ Further **tailoring** Chamber programming to meet the different needs of young professionals (e.g. mentoring, structured networking, etc.)
- ▶ **Leveraging** the full power of the Chamber's recent investments in technology platforms to refine messaging and better engage the community;
- ▶ **Piloting** the use of industry- or skill-specific newsletters or other communications vehicles to catalyze engagement among target populations

**Metrics & Targets**

*What measures does the Chamber use to gauge its progress in advancing goals?*





### Areas of Focus

*What is the Chamber doing to better align itself with the evolving needs of its members and the region?*

- ▶ Proactively **advocating** on local, state, and federal government affairs issues that will have a direct impact on the business community or impact the economic advancement of North Central Massachusetts
- ▶ **Expanding** the Chamber's information network to keep better track of legislative and regulatory developments across the region
- ▶ **Establishing** more focused relationships with Congressional leaders and national organizations such as the US Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers to collaborate on global issues of increasing local concern (e.g. tariffs and other barriers to free trade)
- ▶ Proactively **harnessing** the shared reach and horsepower of the Chamber's Leadership Council to deepen the organization's connectivity with key decision makers on timely regional issues
- ▶ **Involving** the membership in grass-roots lobbying
- ▶ **Continuing** to be a leader on transportation initiatives by setting private sector objectives for area rail, air, and highway transportation development and working with local, regional, state, and federal government and planning agencies towards their implementation
- ▶ **Continuing** to be a leader on energy initiatives by advocating for measures and initiatives that support and encourage a reliable and more affordable energy supply that keeps pace with the region's growing population and economy, while protecting our environment

**Metrics & Targets**

*What measures does the Chamber use to gauge its progress in advancing goals?*

**Current Year Accomplishments**

- Supported approval of new public and private development projects such as the new Game On Fitchburg sports complex and City Hall redevelopment, bringing additional tax revenue and investment into the region
- Advocated for infrastructure and economic development investments from the state that emphasize regional equity in other parts of the state outside of Greater Boston
- Reduction of Fitchburg commercial tax rate
- Maintenance of Leominster single tax rate
- Common sense energy policies (natural gas/renewables)
- Adoption of formal positions on 2018 ballot initiatives
- Collaborative work with Keolis to improve commuter rail

**M4**

**Public Policy Agenda Through 2021**

**Economic Competitiveness**

- Regional equity
- Public infrastructure
- Broadband and high-speed Internet
- Property tax rates
- Investments in public promotion of tourism
- Regulatory reform and streamlined permitting

**Small Business**

- Sensible minimum wage
- Unemployment insurance taxes
- Micro-lending and technical assistance investments
- Health insurance & health care costs
- Energy costs

**Manufacturing**

- Removing the stigma associated with manufacturing
- Removal of the inventory tax
- International trade and tariffs

**Education**

- Support of high quality education
- Aligning K-12 curriculum with workforce development

**Transportation**

- Widening of Route 2
- Increased transportation options for employees
- Roadway improvements
- Airport improvements

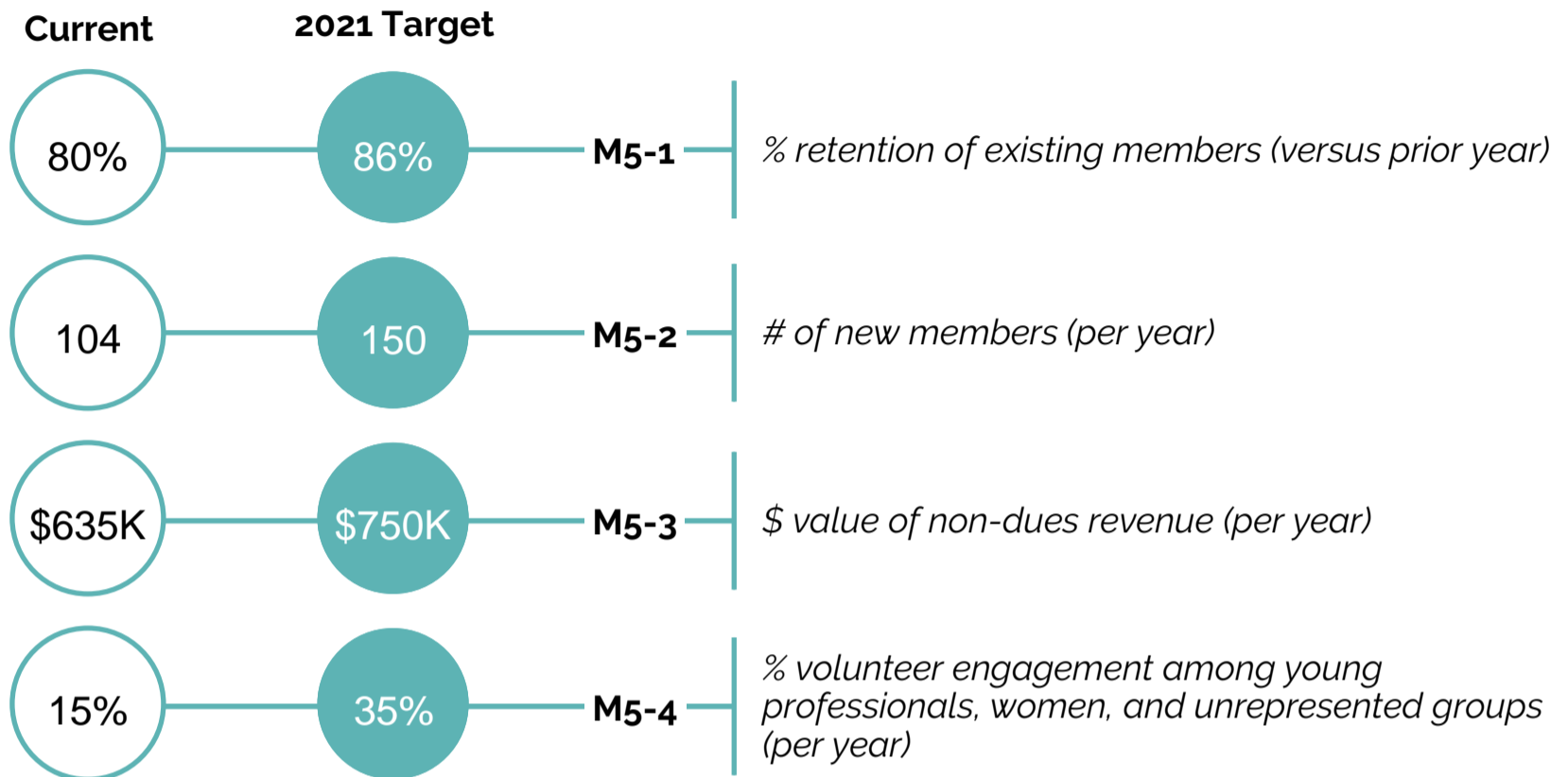
### Areas of Focus

*What is the Chamber doing to better align itself with the evolving needs of its members and the region?*

- ▶ **Collaborating** with the leaders of current member organizations to promote the benefits and services of the Chamber among their employees
- ▶ **Increasing** market penetration in the region and **improving** member retention
- ▶ **Examining** current and future revenue sources in order to plan for the future
- ▶ **Increasing** non-dues revenue sources to strengthen the financial position of the Chamber and its affiliates
- ▶ **Expanding** efforts to market the benefits of the Chamber to young professionals in the hopes of building a new generation of aspiring leaders who will serve the community and be increasingly engaged with the Chamber
- ▶ **Leveraging** the full power of the Chamber's ongoing scholarship program as a recruitment tool and opportunity to engage young professionals
- ▶ **Designing** additional specialized programs to build affinity for the Chamber with students currently attending the region's numerous universities, colleges, community colleges, and vocational schools (e.g. job shadowing, informal engagements with CEOs, business tours, etc.)
- ▶ **Infusing** the Chamber's broader thinking with the perspectives of young professionals by adding representation on key decision-making bodies
- ▶ **Diversifying** the Board to make it more reflective of the region's diversity (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age, industrial mix, etc.)
- ▶ **Expanding** the Chamber's cultural competencies to widen its appeal to immigrant communities (e.g. producing a basic suite of multilingual publications, partnering with translators, etc.)
- ▶ **Diversifying** the staff through attrition and incorporating multilingual capacity and cross-cultural perspectives
- ▶ **Improving** communications to better tell the Chamber's story and strengthen the value proposition for membership
- ▶ **Strengthening** the single-point-of-contact functionality inherent to the Chamber's social media channels as a method of improving customer service and response times
- ▶ **Promoting** an organizational culture that nurtures staff development, teamwork, and continuous improvement

**Metrics & Targets**

*What measures does the Chamber use to gauge its progress in advancing goals?*



# North Central MASSACHUSETTS

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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