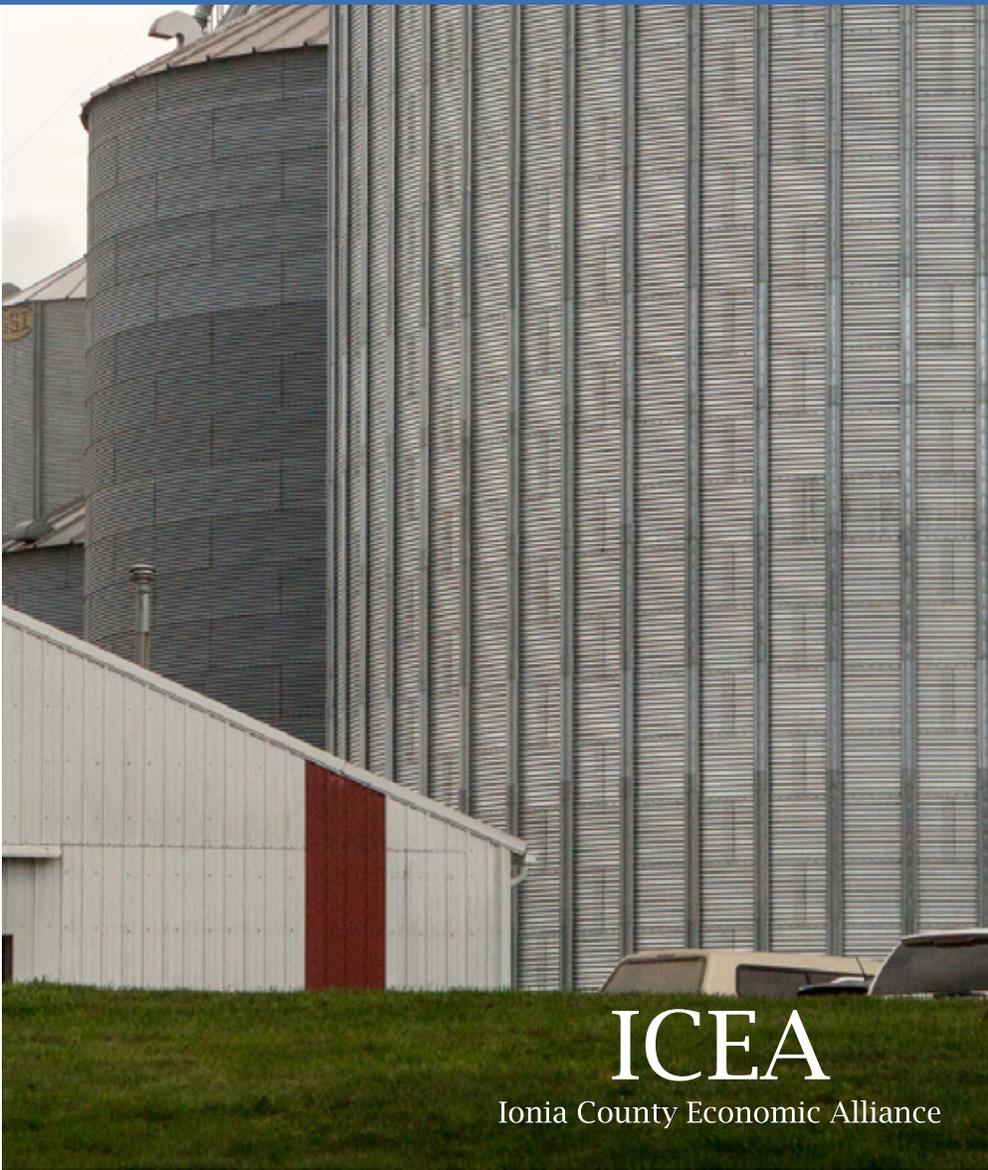




2020

Annual Report

**Ionia
County
Economic
Development**



ICEA

Ionia County Economic Alliance

To our investors and partners

To put it mildly, 2020 was a challenging year for us all. The Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic brought our economy to a screeching halt and turned even the most well-laid plans on their heads. When things began unfolding in March, the Ionia County Economic Alliance (ICEA) and The Right Place made it our priority to be a central, unwavering source of information and support for the Ionia County business community.

Together, we navigated this unprecedented disruption and mounting uncertainty the best way we knew how. We collected and disseminated timely, reliable information to Ionia County businesses and organizations on a regular basis. Whether it pertained to new safety measures or the availability of financial resources, we made it our mission to ensure our business and community leaders were informed and well equipped every step of the way.

In 2020, The Right Place facilitated 513 business assists in Ionia County throughout the year. Each assist represents an interaction creating tangible, actionable value for businesses and organizations receiving support. This is more than a 235% increase from 2019, emphasizing the need for economic development resources, especially in times of difficulty.

513

Business Assists

(Compared to 153 in 2019)

\$404,245

**Grant Dollars
Awarded**

300+

**Webinar
Attendees**

In April, and again in August, ICEA worked in partnership with The Right Place to distribute critical grant and loan dollars from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC). The funds from the Small Business Relief and Small Business Restart programs were vital to our local businesses. We formed a committee to review applications from businesses throughout our community. In total, we distributed more than \$400,000 to 46 small businesses in Ionia County, and two businesses were approved for \$50,000 loans each.

It is times like these that truly shed light on the benefits of cultivating a sense of collaboration and support within our business communities. In the face of hardship, West Michigan has pulled to together like never before to weather this storm as a unified region.

The need for community support

The Right Place partners with ICEA to provide professional economic development services to Ionia County. It is this partnership that has allowed us to pivot and better support our business community's needs during the hardships of the last year. To keep this partnership active and maintain the availability of economic development resources in our county, ICEA needs your support. We ask that you join our efforts to sustain this regional partnership and work alongside us to creating lasting economic prosperity and a clear path to economic recovery for our community.



Susan Hatto, Chair

Ionia County Economic Alliance
Board of Directors



Travis Alden

Business Development Director
The Right Place, Inc.



Just Like Home Adult Center, Ionia

“This grant enabled us the ability to purchase the necessary PPE without concern that we wouldn’t be able to pay our rent because of it. It allowed us to bring back our employees when we opened up full time and with our full client load and have the ability to pay them.”

**Danielle Camp
Just Like Home Adult Center**

Small Business Relief and Restart Grants

ICEA, in partnership with The Right Place, worked tirelessly to distribute Small Business Relief and Small Business Restart Grant dollars from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to West Michigan businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. ICEA reviewed all applications from community and was able to distribute \$404,245 to 46 small businesses in Ionia County. In addition, two Ionia County businesses were approved to receive \$50,000 each as part of the Small Business Relief loan program.

Assisting Businesses Through COVID-19

As the world grappled with the significant and widespread impact of COVID-19, ICEA worked diligently to support the Ionia County business community through the uncertainty that unfolded. ICEA immediately prioritized regular, proactive communication to keep businesses apprised of relevant and timely information. As a central point of contact for business leaders, ICEA assisted local businesses a total of 513 times in 2020, exceeding its annual goal by nearly 250%.

Re-Engaging the Rural Economy

Via its strategic partnership with The Right Place, ICEA convened a series of collaborative virtual roundtable webinar sessions, first in May, and another in November. Re-Engaging the Rural Economy focused on bringing the rural business community together to share best practices for resiliency and prosperity in the midst of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Topics included ‘Innovations in Talent Retention & Attraction,’ ‘Manufacturing Operations,’ and ‘Activating Rural Entrepreneurship,’ along with webinar sessions specifically for independent retailers, dining establishments, and rural tourism. The series, which included 10 sessions in total, attracted over 300 unique attendees from across West Michigan.

2020 Annual Results

5

New and Retained Jobs

\$255,000

New and Retained Payroll

\$950,000

Capital Investment

1

Total Project

513

Business Assists

46

Companies Served

47 for a total of \$444,960

Indirect Monetized Assists

Board of Directors

Susan Hatto, Chair
Montcalm Community College

Ryan Wilson, Vice Chair
Michigan One Community
Credit Union

Sandy Wolniakowski, Secretary
Village of Pewamo

Sue Dahms, Treasurer
Union Bank

Ethan Ebenstein
Ionia County Intermediate
School District

Tutt Gorman
City of Portland

David Hodges
Ionia County Commission

John Niemela
City of Belding

Jessica Tramontana
Consumers Energy

Jason Eppler
City of Ionia

Investors

- Belding Area Schools
- Boston Township
- Cargill Kitchen Solutions
- City of Belding
- City of Ionia
- CL Trucking
- Coldwell Banker – Frewen Realty
- Coldwell Banker – Weir Manuel Hoppough
- Consumers Energy
- Easton Township
- Herbruck’s Poultry Ranch
- Ionia County
- Ionia County Intermediate School District
- ITC Holdings
- Keene Township
- Lakewood Public Schools
- Lyons Township
- Mercantile Bank
- Michigan One Community Credit Union
- Montcalm Community College
- Odessa Township
- Portland Public Schools
- Saranac Community Schools
- Union Bank
- Village of Clarksville
- Village of Lake Odessa
- Village of Lyons
- Village of Muir
- Village of Pewamo

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ICEA
Ionia County Economic Alliance