



Strategic Plan 2025–2026

Mission

To drive business success, connect leaders, cultivate partnerships, and shape community solutions to build a thriving future for Great Falls.

Vision

The Great Falls Area Chamber is recognized as the trusted voice of local business, driving disciplined strategy, forging strong partnerships, enhancing stakeholder connections, and leading integrated advocacy. These efforts deliver growth, strengthen business success, and continue to make Great Falls a place where businesses and people thrive.

Mission Pillars

Drive Business Success

- Member value, growth, and a competitive climate.

Connect Leaders

- Build stronger networks across business, education, military, and civic partners.

Shape the Future

- Deliver visible results through disciplined strategy and advocacy.

Focus Area 1

Organizational Development & Excellence

Goal: Build a high-performing, financially sustainable Chamber that models excellence in governance, operations, and staff/board leadership.

Why this matters now: As the Chamber has shifted to a working board, credibility will depend on disciplined governance, transparent operations, and professional development. Strong internal systems free the Chamber to focus outward; on members, advocacy, and economic vitality.

Strategies & Actions:

- **Policies & Procedures:** Finalize and adopt board and committee policies, bylaws updates, and onboarding materials to reflect the new working board model.
- **Staff & Board Development:** Deliver annual training for staff and board on governance, advocacy, and leadership. Provide onboarding refreshers for existing board members.
- **Data & Systems:** Fully implement MC Trade dashboard for transparent tracking of membership, engagement, and ROI; integrate data into reports.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Diversify non-dues revenue streams (workshops, sponsorships, leadership pipeline) while maintaining alignment with mission pillars.
- **Representation & Integration:** Proactively recruit board and committee leaders from underrepresented sectors.
- **Reputation & Recognition:** Position the Chamber as the trusted voice of the business community.

Success Metrics:

- 100% of committees are operating under updated policies and procedures, onboarding guides, and succession plans.
- MC Trade Dashboard launched within 6 months; data reviewed by board and shared publicly.
- ≥90% of board members complete onboarding/training refresh annually.

- 15% of annual revenue generated from non-dues sources by 2026.
- New board members recruited from underrepresented sectors by 2026.

Focus Area 2

Member Value & Business Growth (Drive Business Success)

Goal: Become the go-to resource for business success and support. Provide demonstrated value to membership through training, networking, and mentorship.

Why this matters now: Our 568-member base is strong but under-engaged. Members want outcomes they can see and measure: new hires, increased sales, expanded networks, and solutions to workforce gaps.

Strategies & Actions:

- **Impact Dashboard:** Launch Chamber Impact Dashboard in MC Trade to track retention, event/program engagement and referrals.
- **Outcome-Based Programming:** Reframe events around business outcomes (workforce pipelines, business support, industry roundtables).
- **Membership Packages:** Evaluate à la carte benefits and sponsorships. Ensure these are tied to measurable value (training seats, data briefings, marketing reach).
- **Business Lab Pilot:** Support early-stage entrepreneurs with peer cohorts, expert Q&A, mentorship and networking connections.
- **Ambassadors & Connectors:** Train Ambassadors and Networking Groups to serve as structured connectors-to-outcomes, not just social greeters.

Success Metrics:

- +10% net membership growth; +20% net growth in member engagement.
- Track first-time and returning participation at events. Evaluate metrics for event success, not just event satisfaction.

- ≥15% of total revenue from non-dues sources by 2026.
- Member Value Briefs distributed with at least 3 Chamber-attributed wins recommended biannually.

Focus Area 3

Leadership Pipeline & Cross-Sector Partnerships (Connect Leaders)

Goal: Build a visible, broad leadership pipeline that connects business, education, military, and civic leaders to establish community solutions.

Why this matters now: Great Falls' competitive advantage is relationships. By channeling that into leadership and collaborative projects, the Chamber strengthens both its influence and the community's resilience.

Strategies & Actions:

- **Leadership Pathway:** A defined pipeline from:
 - member
 - committee
 - committee chair
 - board member
 - executive board

Documented succession policies will preserve leadership continuity.

- **Leadership Programs:** Integrate Leadership Great Falls (LGF) and Leadership High School (LHS) with board mentorship, micro-projects, and nonprofit placements.
- **Partnership Map:** Publish a “Who to Call” map of local/regional partners (GFDA, schools, healthcare, Malmstrom, government) to accelerate collaboration.
- **Bridge Forums:** Host forums to connect leaders across sectors for important community projects. Include stakeholders from GFDA, Tourism, Education, Military, City/County Leaders, Tribal Leaders, etc.

Success Metrics:

- 100% of committees have succession plans by 2026.
- 30% of LGF participants advanced or placed in community boards.
- One cross-sector project launched annually through Bridge Forums.
- Annual Partnership Map updated and distributed to members

Focus Area 4

Advocacy, Workforce & Community Vitality (Shape the Future)

Goal: Deliver a sharp, nonpartisan advocacy agenda focused on Chamber priorities, turning policy into progress.

Why this matters now: Workforce shortages and business climate barriers remain top challenges cited by members. Clear priorities, visible wins, and practical workforce solutions will define the Chamber's credibility as the trusted voice of business.

Strategies & Actions:

- **Advocacy Platform:** Adopt and publish a biennial nonpartisan advocacy agenda aligned with Chamber priorities.
- **Policy Tracking:** Develop a real-time bill/policy tracker and weekly update during legislative sessions to keep members informed.
- **Workforce Solutions:** Partner on soft-skill credentials, internships, and open-door employer days with schools and workforce partners.
- **Civic Engagement and Community Pride:** Board members will share personal testimonials about why they serve the Chamber and value Great Falls. These stories will showcase authentic leadership, inspire civic pride, and build a unifying narrative that attracts new members, investors, and partners committed to shaping Great Falls' future.

- **Public Briefings:** Create an annual report to share the state of business in Great Falls.

Success Metrics:

- Chamber representative attendance at >80% city/county commission meetings.
- Legislative Tracker created and implemented prior to the beginning of the next MT legislative session (Jan 2027).
- ≥100 learners complete soft-skill or work-based experiences by the end of 2026.
- ≥75% of board members with Chamber testimonials by the end of 2026.
- Annual Report

Implementation & Accountability

How We Deliver:

- **Committee Reporting:** Each committee submits progress updates on goals, metrics, and next actions.
- **Executive & Finance/Audit Oversight:** Ensure committee policies and procedures, budget alignment, and risk management are consistently applied.
- **Impact Dashboard:** Real-time tracking of membership census data, engagement, events, and ROI available to board and staff.
- **Public Impact Brief:** Biannual member-facing update that summarizes data and stories of Chamber impact to highlight the value of membership.
- **Annual Report:** Combines financials, dashboard metrics, and success stories to demonstrate transparency and community impact.
- **Board and Staff Development:** Annual retreat, training refreshers, and onboarding for all board members.

Timeline

Immediate (0–3 months)

- Publish a one-page “Who We Are” document for members and partners.
- Finalize policies and procedures for all committees and onboarding.
- Establish baseline census data (membership, retention, event ROI, referrals).
- Develop plan for Chamber representative attendance at city/county meetings.

Short-Term (3–6 months)

- MC Trade Impact Dashboard live and accessible to all board members.
- Launch personal-invitation membership program (board/committee outreach).
- Development of soft-skill or work-based experiences.
- Create evaluation metrics for events and programs.
- One board/staff training and/or development session completed.

Mid-Term (6–12 months)

- 50% of Chamber Board member testimonials have been created, filmed and are being circulated on media platforms.
- Implementation of soft-skill or work-based experiences.
- Conduct biannual member surveys with $\geq 30\%$ response rate. Collect info about the needs of the business community, not just membership satisfaction. What do members desire?
- Publish first biannual Member Value Brief and Partnership Map.
- Succession plans in place for Committees.
- Hold a Bridge Forum.

Long-Term (12-36 months)

- ≥15% of total revenue from non-dues sources.
- New board members recruited from underrepresented sectors.
- Board Members have completed Onboarding and Training.
- A collaborative project launched through Bridge Forums.
- Membership has grown by targeted amounts.
- Create legislative tracking tool.
- Annual report released publicly with financials, dashboard data, and member stories.