

ARKANSAS
INC

ARKANSAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Business & Community Development Division

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Addressing the Need to be Competitive

In an effort to help communities become more attractive to jobs and investment, the AEDC and utility partners have developed the Competitive Communities Initiative.

The goal of the initiative is to ensure that all communities in the state are fully prepared to successfully compete for jobs and investment.



- **Initiative Overview**
- **How the Evaluation Works**
- **The Four Pillars**
- **Stakeholders & Resources**
- **Benefits**

Four key community development pillars are essential for competing and winning:

- **Economic Development Organization**
- **Economic Development Funding**
- **Workforce Narrative**
- **Product Readiness**

The AEDC and utility partners have developed an evaluation tool that assesses strengths and weaknesses and encourages communities to take the next steps in ensuring their economic success.



The initiative will help **communities** to

- Better understand their strengths and weaknesses through 3rd party evaluation
- Learn from best practices and receive guidance from seasoned economic development professionals
- Educate community leaders on their competitive standing and readiness
- Utilize the outcomes of the evaluation in improving their success in attracting investments and jobs

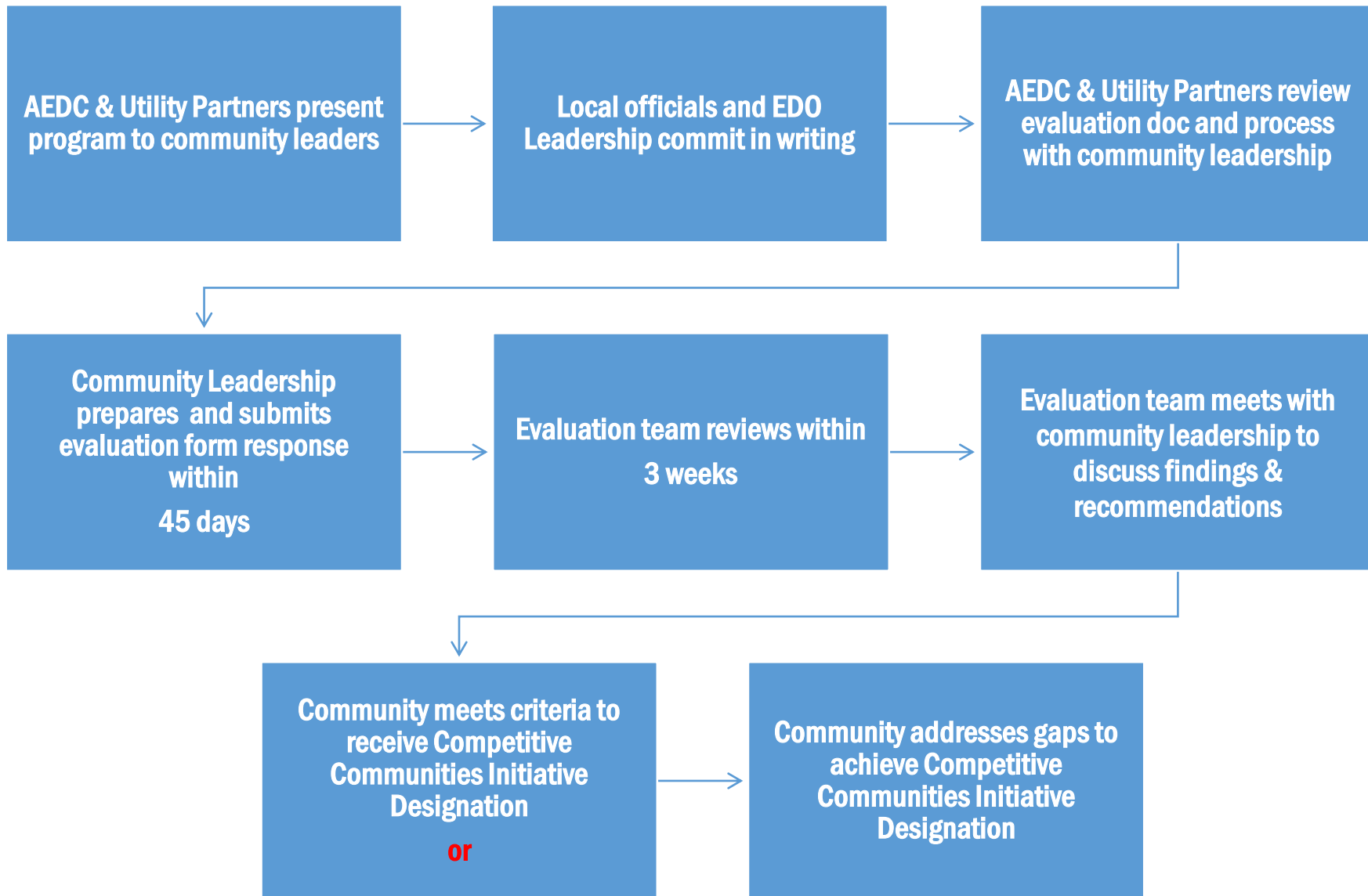


The initiative will help the **state & utilities** to

- Provide focused review and constructive feedback
- Increase the competitive viability of sites and buildings
- Better articulate Arkansas' workforce as "product"
- Better focus state and utility resources in the communities
- Attract more jobs and investments

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How the Evaluation Works



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The aim of this pillar is to provide evaluation questions and criteria for determining the strengths, weaknesses, and overall competitiveness of the structure of the local economic development organization.





Economic Development Funding

The aim of this pillar is to provide evaluation questions and criteria for determining the strengths, weaknesses, and overall competitiveness of the funding for the local economic development organization.



The aim of this pillar is to create a narrative by providing answers to evaluation questions and criteria that will describe the strengths, weaknesses, and overall competitiveness of your community's workforce.

The aim of this pillar is to evaluate the competitiveness of available buildings and shovel-ready sites, which are either certified or qualify for certification.

What is a Successful Evaluation?

The evaluation team reviews the completed document and information to reach consensus based on the following:

- Fit-for-purpose according the size and amenities of the community
- Demonstrated preparation and commitment by leadership
- Assets, resources, and product readiness
- Quality and thoroughness of information

Evaluation form should be updated, submitted, and reviewed every two years to maintain designation.

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Community (5-6)

- Economic Development Director, staff, board chair
- Chamber of Commerce Director, staff, board chair
- Mayor and County Judge
- Utility partners: electric, gas, water, wastewater, telecom, rail
- K-12 & Secondary Education and workforce partners

Evaluation team (4-5)

- **Electric utility provider**
- **The AEDC Community Developer**
- **An AEDC Business Development Project Manager**
- **The AEDC Building and Sites Coordinator**
- **Planning & Development District representative**

The evaluation team will provide assistance and guidance needed to complete the evaluation and address gaps.

- **The AEDC Community Developer and PDD (on-going assistance, best practices)**
- **The AEDC Research Team (mapping, workforce data)**
- **Electric utility service provider (site certification, mapping, financial assistance)**



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- **Benefits**

Communities and EDOs that successfully achieve the Competitive Communities Initiative designation will benefit from the following:

- **Valuable engagement with key community & business development partners**
- **Community recognition by the Governor**
- **Recognition by AEDC via website, social media and the AEDC newsletter**
- **Recognition by Utility Partner(s)**
- **Included in more RFI submissions**
- **Opportunity for more investments, jobs, and economic growth**

The End Game



“Our goal is not just to compete. Our goal is to win.”

Governor Asa Hutchinson



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