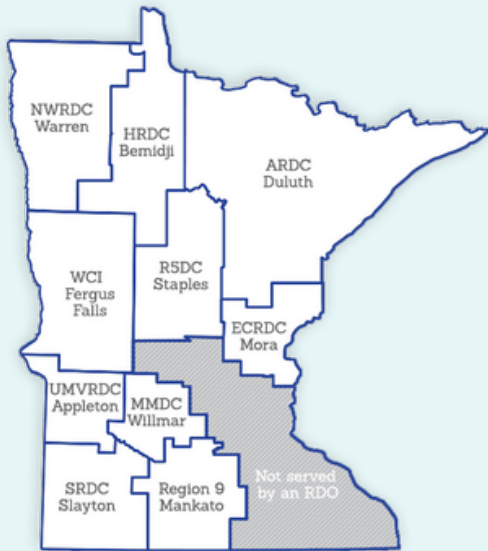




WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA'S

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION



Minnesota Association of Development Organizations



Minnesota Initiative Foundations

HISTORY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA

In 1972, the State of Minnesota created the West Central Regional Development Commission (WCRDC) to serve west central Minnesota. The commission faced fierce anti-regionalism and widespread misinformation, which eventually led to its dissolution in 1982.

By 1991, after almost ten years without a Regional Development Commission (RDC), local units of government throughout the region came to the painful realization that access to federal funds for significant infrastructure projects hinged on an RDC's recommendation. Having abolished their own RDC, they approached West Central Initiative (WCI) about assuming the federal designation, reasoning that economic development and planning were a close match with the mission of the organization. WCI accepted and established a board to direct Economic Development District activities. WCI became the designated Economic Development District for Region Four in 1995.

“West Central Initiative has successfully served the region as its Regional Development Organization for more than 30 years, and it’s well-positioned to serve the region for decades to come.”

- Gordon Hydukovich, Former WCRDC Staff Member



ADVANTAGES OF HAVING A REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

A Regional Development Organization (RDO) provides a group of professionals and planners as resources, attracts state and federal support for projects, creates greater local government involvement, and provides special services to communities.

The regional approach is an alternative to state or federal regulation of regional decisions. Through RDOs, local communities are able to keep the integrity of their own boundaries and collaborate with other communities on work that benefits the region as a whole.

As a RDO, WCI is included in the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations (MADO), which is comprised of ten Minnesota RDOs that collectively promote and create economic prosperity in Greater Minnesota.

MORE THAN 30 YEARS SERVING THE REGION

At WCI, we leverage public and private resources to assist communities with planning services, lending, grants, and programming.

We have a formal relationship with elected officials through the Economic Development District Board that serves as an advisory committee to our Board of Directors.

Our planning staff work with datasets and analyze trends in population, housing, employment, education, healthcare, and other subject areas that contribute to the region's quality of life.

We work with citizens to improve and connect our communities with resources that attract the funding needed to take on big projects, such as road construction, bridges, water treatment plants, and main street revitalizations.



PLANS, PARTNERSHIPS, AND TOOLS

Creating the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

WCI is the federally designated planning organization for the region through the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). As part of our contract with the EDA, every five years we create a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for the Region Four Economic Development District of Minnesota. The CEDS outlines the needs, goals, strategies, and implementation process for the region's economic development work. The document is a blueprint for regional alignment. As a federally designated planning organization, we are supported by the EDA's Chicago Regional Office.

Addressing Challenges and Opportunities in Greater Minnesota

DevelopMN is a resource created by MADO to establish strategies to address challenges and opportunities in Greater Minnesota. DevelopMN has identified Four Cornerstones of Community Development: Human Capital, Economic Competitiveness, Community Resources, and Foundational Assets. These four pillars are the framework of our region's CEDS.

Measuring Our Progress

WCI, along with our MADO partners, created a dashboard that features the Four Cornerstones of Community Development and other measurements important to the long-term vitality of Greater Minnesota. The dashboard provides the ability to compare measures across geographies. Learn more at wcif.org.

2022 PLANNING WORK

Facilitated community conversations to further work on local and regional plans, including:

- The Region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.
- 1 Watershed 1 Plan.
- West Central Minnesota's Climate Action Plan.

Served as strategic advisors and collaborators to make plans and projects a reality, including assisting:

- Clean Energy Resource Teams.
- West Central Minnesota Small Business Development Center.
- Becker County Child Care Collaboration.
- MinneAg Coalition.
- Positive Community Norms Coalition.
- Future Well-Being in MN Think Tank.
- University of Minnesota Morris Community Engagement Office.
- University of Minnesota Extension Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships.
- Building Economic Resilience through Clean Energy and Equity in Minnesota.
- Pelican Rapids Local Foods Advisory Committee.
- Great Plains Institute.
- Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society.
- Welcoming Week Celebrations.
- Growing Grant County.

Administered the region's transportation plan through state and local partnerships, including:

- Minnesota Department of Transportation.
- Safe Routes to School Plans for the communities of Hancock and Underwood.
- Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plans for the Otter Trail Scenic Byway (in Otter Tail County) and the Glacial Ridge Trail Scenic Byway (in Douglas and Pope Counties).

OUR IMPACT AS A REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION SINCE 1995



\$8.23 MILLION FEDERAL GRANT DOLLARS AWARDED TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES



\$1.86 MILLION FEDERAL PLANNING GRANT DOLLARS RECEIVED AND MATCHED BY WCI



\$1.12 MILLION DOLLARS DISTRIBUTED THROUGH THE LEGACY REVOLVING LOAN FUND



\$1.34 MILLION DOLLARS DISTRIBUTED FROM CARES ACT REVOLVING LOAN FUND

