



COLLECTIVE STRENGTH,
SHARED SUCCESS

West Central Initiative

*Our Vision: A vibrant,
inclusive, and
sustainable world starts
here in west central
Minnesota.*



Empowering Communities, Driving Growth, Fostering Sustainability

West Central Initiative a regional development organization and community foundation dedicated to building a thriving, inclusive, and resilient future for the region.

SINCE 1986



\$59M+

in loans distributed



\$84M+

in grants distributed



9,100+

jobs created or retained



1,280+

businesses impacted

Since our founding in 1986, West Central Initiative has been dedicated to serving the nine counties of west central Minnesota and White Earth Nation. Our focus has been on driving economic growth and community development throughout the region. We harness local resources and collaborate with partners to create a more thriving, inclusive, and sustainable future for everyone who calls this area home.

With the Sustainable Development Goals as our guide, we run a variety of programs aimed at addressing key areas such as economic development, rural democracy, and environmental sustainability. Through our grants, loans, community funds, and more, we empower local organizations, businesses, and communities to reach their full potential. We believe in the power of collaboration and generosity, working closely with public, private, and nonprofit sectors to tackle regional challenges and create lasting positive change.

Our commitment goes beyond financial support—we're passionate about promoting equity and inclusivity across the region. We strive to ensure that underrepresented and marginalized communities have the resources and opportunities they need to succeed. By prioritizing holistic, community-centered approaches, we're proud to play a crucial role in shaping the future of our region.



Learn More

Discover how we're transforming west central Minnesota—visit our website to learn more about West Central Initiative's impact and programs.

A Glimpse at Our Work

Climate Resilience: Having developed the region's first Climate Action Plan, we support projects that build climate resilience and promote sustainable practices in west central Minnesota.

Community Funds: Our Community Funds are tailored to specific causes, allowing donors to support targeted initiatives within west central Minnesota.

Convening: Through events such as 17 Rooms, Climate Catalysts, and Community Conversations, we convene diverse stakeholders to address regional challenges through collaboration and innovation.

Donor Advised Funds: Our Donor Advised Funds allow donors to support causes they care about while receiving tax benefits and making a lasting impact.

Early Childhood Initiative: Our Early Childhood Initiative helps to ensure access to quality early education and care for all children in the region.

Granting: We provide grants to support projects that drive economic development, environmental sustainability, and community well-being in our region.

Initiators Fellowship: The Initiators Fellowship supports emerging social entrepreneurs in rural Minnesota through mentorship and financial assistance.

Lending: Our gap financing options help bridge funding gaps for businesses that may struggle to secure all of the traditional financing needed to launch or expand.

Live Wide Open: Our Live Wide Open campaign is on a mission to inspire a sense of belonging among all people in west central Minnesota through showcasing the fascinating and diverse people across our region.

Local Foods & Sustainable Agriculture: We support local food systems and sustainable agriculture practices that benefit the environment and economy.

Maps & Measures: Through measurement tools such as our Sustainable Development Goals Dashboard, we track and measure regional progress toward sustainability.

Planned Giving: Our planned giving services enable donors to leave a legacy by including charitable gifts in their estate plans, ensuring long-term regional and community impact.

Regional/Community Planning: We create the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to guide sustainable growth and resilience in our communities.

Rural Belonging: Our Rural Belonging initiative strengthens community connections and promotes inclusion in rural areas.

Rural Democracy: Our Rural Democracy initiative promotes civic engagement and ensures that rural voices are heard and represented.

Transportation Planning: We work to improve transportation infrastructure for safe, efficient, and accessible systems that enhance regional growth.



"The quest for effective leadership is arguably one of the greatest challenges confronting rural communities. West Central Initiative understands these dynamics and looks to help residents meet this leadership demand."

—Kurt Mortenson

Otter Tail County Commissioner, Underwood



Kicking off their journey, the first Run4Rural cohort unites to celebrate community and rural pride.



Sara Boyum helped revitalize Battle Lake's downtown, including opening Neverbetter Market and Wellness with the help of West Central Initiative's loan program.



Naima's Farm hosts a vibrant Welcoming Week celebration, sponsored by West Central Initiative, bringing community together to embrace diversity and unity.