



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 is a regional community foundation and economic development organization working to build a thriving, inclusive, and resilient future for the region.

**SINCE 1986**



**\$63M+**

in loans distributed



**\$93M+**

in grants distributed



**9,300+**

jobs created or retained



**1,300+**

businesses impacted

For more than 40 years, West Central Initiative has partnered with the nine counties of west central Minnesota and White Earth Nation to strengthen communities and expand opportunity. We invest in local people and ideas to create lasting impact across the region.

Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals, we lead programs in economic development, rural democracy, environmental sustainability, and other key areas. Through grants, loans, and community funds, we support local organizations, businesses, and communities in reaching their full potential. Collaboration is central to our work, as we partner across public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

By taking a holistic, community-centered approach, we help shape a stronger, more resilient region—where communities are connected and equipped to meet today's challenges and tomorrow's opportunities.



**Learn More**

Discover how we're transforming our region—visit [wcif.org](http://wcif.org) to learn more about our programs and impact.

## A Glimpse at Our Work

**Children and Young People:** We partner with communities to strengthen the systems that support children and young people, connecting health, well-being, and learning.

**Climate & Energy:** Having developed the region's first Climate Action Plan, we support projects that build climate resilience and promote sustainable practices in our region.

**Community Funds:** Our Community Funds are tailored to specific causes, allowing donors to support targeted initiatives in their communities.

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

**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 with mentorship and financial support.

**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.

**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 cultivates belonging and strengthens connections in rural communities.

**Rural Democracy:** Our Rural Democracy initiative focuses on increasing civic participation, supporting leadership development, and ensuring rural voices are heard.

**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*



Andy and Nick Leonard run East Silent Lake Resort with their families, preserving its historic charm, while our loan program supported renovations that keep generations returning to connect and experience lake life.



United Chinese Americans, a Fargo-Moorhead Chinese heritage dance group, performs at Inclusive Moorhead's Welcoming Week celebration, sponsored by West Central Initiative.