



SUPPORTING REGIONAL
GROWTH

Economic Development District

Leveraging public and private resources to support communities and our shared region with planning services, loans, grants, and programs.



Your Regional Development Organization for West Central Minnesota

West Central Initiative is proud to serve as the region's trusted partner in planning, economic development, and long-term resilience—for today and for generations to come.

SINCE 1996



\$2.7M+

in revolving federal loan funds.



\$8M+

in federal grant dollars awarded to local communities.



\$1.5M+

in federal planning grants received and matched by West Central Initiative.

More than 40 years ago, community leaders established the Region IV Economic Development District to ensure west central Minnesota has a strong, coordinated voice in shaping its future. As the federally designated Economic Development District through the U.S. Economic Development Administration, West Central Initiative connects the region to federal resources and keeps decision-making grounded in local priorities.

In this role, we also encourage communities to look beyond their borders and plan for shared regional success. We work alongside communities, counties, and partners across nine counties and White Earth Nation to turn local ideas into action, recognizing that the region's communities are interconnected and stronger together. Whether supporting small business growth, advancing infrastructure projects, or strengthening long-term resilience, our role is to bring together the tools, funding, and partnerships that move the region forward.



Learn More

Scan to learn more about how we support communities across west central Minnesota.

Through our Economic Development District designation, we deliver four core services that support regional growth and resilience.

1. Investing in Local Businesses Through Lending

Strong communities are built on strong local businesses. Our lending program provides flexible financing that helps entrepreneurs start, grow, and sustain their operations—especially when traditional financing options may not meet their needs.

Through our federally supported Revolving Loan Fund, we provide gap financing to businesses in manufacturing, service, and other key sectors—helping move projects forward when traditional funding falls short. As loans are repaid, those dollars are reinvested back into the region, creating a continuous cycle of support for new and growing businesses. Beyond financing, we partner with business owners to understand their goals and connect them with additional resources that support long-term success.

2. Connecting Communities to State & Federal Funding

Navigating state and federal funding can be complex, but it's often essential to making big projects possible. We help communities identify opportunities, align priorities with funding requirements, and prepare competitive applications.

From infrastructure improvements to community development initiatives, our team works behind the scenes to bring outside investment into the region—helping local governments and organizations secure the resources they need to move projects forward.

3. Partnering on Regional & Community Planning

Every community has its own goals, challenges, and vision for the future. We partner with local leaders to turn those ideas into clear, actionable plans.

Using data, community input, and practical strategies, we support projects ranging from housing and workforce development to infrastructure and climate resilience. Our approach is collaborative and locally driven—ensuring plans reflect the unique identity of each community while preparing for long-term success.

4. Shaping the Region's Future Through a Coordinated Strategy

We lead the development of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Updated every five years, the CEDS serves as a roadmap for regional priorities and a gateway to federal investment. It brings together input from across the region to focus on key issues, such as workforce, housing, infrastructure, and economic growth.

Our current plan continues to guide this work, and the next five-year strategy is already in development. Together, they help ensure our region stays aligned, resilient, and ready for what's ahead.

A Foundation for Regional Development

In 1972, the State of Minnesota established the West Central Regional Development Commission, which dissolved in 1982. After nearly a decade without a regional entity, local governments sought a way to access critical federal funding and turned to West Central Initiative. In 1995, West Central Initiative became the federally designated Economic Development District for Region IV through the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Today, we continue to serve as the region's planning and economic development partner, grounded in local priorities and supported by state and federal partnerships.

Local Support Makes This Work Possible

When communities support West Central Initiative, they extend their impact beyond their own borders—strengthening the entire region. Annual contributions from counties and cities fuel the planning, coordination, and expertise that no single community can provide alone. These local dollars also unlock additional state and federal funding, bringing more resources into our communities and expanding what's possible for the region as a whole.

This is regionalism in action: communities working together, thinking beyond boundaries, and building a stronger, more resilient future—together.

► Connect with Us



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