



Program Update – 2024

- Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA), a nonprofit economic development organization based in Chatfield, Minnesota, was appropriated \$627,000 during the 2023 legislative session to support 18 non-metro, rural cities under 3,000 in population with essential economic development initiatives.
- The Rural Capacity Program (RCP) runs through June 30, 2025.
- State funding provided each participating city with up to 150 hours of technical assistance and \$15,000 in project funding – totaling \$270,000 for community projects.
- Cities applied for assistance in key areas such as childcare, downtown revitalization, business retention & expansion (BR&E), and revolving loan fund development. Communities were selected based on need.
- The RCP has been an overwhelming success, providing vital economic and community development support to some of the state's smallest communities – including one with a population of just 101.
- Of the \$270,000 allocated for community programming, 12 communities have already received funding and launched active projects.
- CEDA's RCP Team has successfully leveraged an additional \$47,100 in outside funding to further enhance community programs. With additional funding sources being identified, this number will continue to grow.
- To date, Team Members have engaged with 79+ businesses, gathering valuable feedback to inform local economic development strategies.
- Multiple community-wide surveys have been completed, helping guide project focus areas.
- Listening sessions, open houses, and other community engagement events have been held to gather public input and build support for local initiatives.
- Educational materials have been developed on topics relevant to rural communities, including business support, grant opportunities, and economic development best practices.
- Current projects underway include USDA and DEED grant applications, as well as work on DNR grants, business surveys, development of business education programs, childcare support initiatives, structured BR&E programs, feasibility studies and more.

The Senators and Representatives of Minnesota deserve commendation for their dedication to supporting rural communities through its special appropriation to Community and Economic Development Associate's, Rural Capacity Program. This forward-thinking investment exemplifies the state's commitment to fostering growth and sustainability in rural Minnesota. By channeling these funds into 18 small communities, the State of Minnesota has empowered local leaders to work with dedicated economic development staff with CEDA to develop, enhance, and promote economic development tools tailored to their unique needs. This initiative not only strengthens the economic fabric of these areas but also ensures a brighter, more prosperous future for residents. Such initiatives set a benchmark for proactive governance and community-focused development.

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Round 1 Cities

Cities all over Minnesota, from “Up North” all the way to the Minnesota/Iowa border have benefited from the first round of the Rural Capacity Program. CEDA is pleased to be providing economic development tools, resources and technical assistance hours to the following communities:

Baudette, Buhl, Clarkfield, Cottonwood, Danvers, DeGraff, Elmore, Grand Meadow, Kiester, Mahanomen, Newfolden, New Richland, New York Mills, Orr, Parkers Prairie, Rushmore, Vergas and Warroad

