

Economic Development Agencies and Programs

The following list of Economic Development agencies and programs is focused on agencies that serve the State of MN and the NE Arrowhead region. This list includes the resources available at the time of compilation with recognition that other resources may be available. At the bottom of the list, please also find links to County and local agencies and programs. Please feel free to contact Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) Regional Planning Division with questions about any of the following programs.

Phone: 218-722-5545 www.arrowheadplanning.org

Northland Connection <http://www.northlandconnection.com>

- Business Development Resources: Business toolkit with hundreds of resources (fill in the blanks): <http://www.northlandconnection.com/entrepreneurial.php>
- East Range Joint Powers Board Development Loan Program (Aurora, Hoyt Lakes, Town of White) <http://www.northlandconnection.com/businessresources.php?ID=144>
 - Loans made or provided by the ERJPB are intended to create and maintain permanent private sector jobs, expand the tax base, increase economic productivity and to create the inducement necessary to allow a project to proceed.
 - Loan Amounts: The loan maximum is \$25,000.
 - Eligible Applicants: Resorts/tourism projects which attract tourism expenditures from outside the region, energy related businesses which utilize indigenous fuels, technologically innovative industries, manufacturing/industrial operations, industrial service/supply, forestry/wood projects, industries based on utilization of the area's indigenous mineral resources; agriculture and other businesses to the extent they are in compliance with the goals of the program.
- Minnesota Employee Ownership Fund <http://www.northlandconnection.com/businessresources.php?ID=92>
 - Specializes in partnering with local banks and other financial institutions to provide gap financing for Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs)--offering loans up to \$1 million for qualified businesses.
 - The Fund also is committed to providing ESOP education and training programs to business owners, human resource executives, accountants, attorneys, bankers and financial advisors who are unfamiliar with the benefits of the ESOP model.
 - If you are a business owner beginning to consider retirement, an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) may be the perfect solution.
- Industry Clusters in NE Arrowhead Region identified for business recruitment. <http://www.northlandconnection.com/industry-sectors.php>
- Competitive advantages of the NE Arrowhead Region identified for business recruitment and strategic economic development. <http://www.northlandconnection.com/competitive-advantages.php>
- Education/Workforce/Leading Employers/Infrastructure listed for business recruitment. <http://www.northlandconnection.com/workforce.php>

Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) Business resources:

<http://mn.gov/irrrb/business>

- Commercial Redevelopment Program assists cities, townships and counties in demolishing dilapidated commercial or industrial buildings and cleaning up brownfields located within the IRRRB service area.
<http://mn.gov/irrrb/community/grant-programs/commercial-redevelopment.jsp>
- Community Development – Infrastructure funding. <http://mn.gov/irrrb/community/>
- Location Resources lists transportation hubs, utility information, and JOBZ Tax-Free Development Program (locations of available sites with infrastructure and possible tax incentives) <http://mn.gov/irrrb/business/location-resources/>
- Made on the Range: A website that the agency hosts to market and advertise local businesses and products, create awareness for shoppers within and outside the region, and stimulate the local economy. madeontherange.com
- Visit northeastern Minnesota: A webpage dedicated to advertising the northeast communities and amenities. http://mn.gov/irrrb/business/visit_northeastern_minnesota/

APEX <http://www.apexgetsbusiness.com/>

- New business start up
- Business expansion
- Business attraction – Organize economic development incentives

Arrowhead Regional Development Commission Revolving Loan Fund

<http://www.northlandconnection.com/businessresources.php?ID=135>

- Loans for (\$10,000-\$250,000): For-profit owner operated businesses engaged in manufacturing, value added products, tourism, the office sector and technological innovative industries.

Blandin Foundation <http://blandinfoundation.org/>

The Blandin Foundation's mission is to strengthen communities in rural Minnesota, especially the Grand Rapids area, with the vision of healthy rural communities grounded in strong economies where the burdens and benefits are widely shared. To do this, the Blandin Foundation engages in three types of work: grant-making, community leadership development and public policy programs.

Entrepreneur Fund <http://www.entrepreneurfund.org/>

- Loans for business equipment, inventory, working capital. Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, Cook, Crow Wing, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine or St. Louis counties in Minnesota or Douglas County, Wisconsin. Assists people considering starting or expanding a small business with planning including developing the idea, targeting markets, determining financial feasibility, and setting personal and business goals.
- Grow your business with the Greenstone Group. Because growth is the only way forward. Entrepreneurs seeking long-term growth receive a variety of services and become part of a regional entrepreneur network to spur entrepreneurial success in the region.

Granite Equity Partners <http://www.graniteequity.com/>

Granite Equity Partners, a Minnesota-based private investment firm, invests in established companies. We specialize in financing buyouts, recapitalizations, and growth company transactions which include the sale or purchase of a business, generational transfers, or business expansions. (Contacted 11/6/2014 – They serve arrowhead region, Interested in \$10-50 Million companies)

Great River Energy <http://www.greatriverenergy.com/index.html>

Great River Energy and our member cooperatives take pride in serving the region with competitively priced, reliable energy. We also are committed to helping customers start and grow their businesses by helping them plan and manage their energy needs. We work closely with local and state organizations to assist businesses planning to locate or expand in our service area.

- E3 (Energy Efficient Equipment) Commercial Loan Program
- LEED Certification Commercial Loan Program

Iron Range Economic Alliance <http://www.ireamn.org/>

A member organization of professionals representing organizations, communities, associations and entities which are committed to fostering economic development within the Arrowhead Region of Northeast Minnesota.

- Promote networking opportunities for communities and other entities
- Address regional economic development issues and opportunities with a futuristic outlook and focus
- Serve as a voice for economic development at all levels and as a source of local contacts
- Provide educational tools and resources that provide opportunities to generate and share ideas and information
- Advocate public policy development affecting rural economic development
- Market the region collaboratively as a quality place to develop a business, live and work
- Play a lead role in business retention and expansion

Lake Country Power

<http://www.lakecountrypower.coop/viewpage.php?pagename=energyefficiencyloans>

Economic Development and Energy Efficiency Loans. (Districts 4 and 6 encompass the 169 Iron Range Communities) Planning a "Green" Building? State and federal financial incentives are also available if you plan to "go green" by building with energy efficiency in mind. You'll find more loan information on the Good to Be Green site: <http://g2bgreen.com/>

Lake Superior Angel Network (LSAN)

<http://www.wisconsinangelnetwork.com/resources/index.aspx?id=58>

Lake Superior Angel Network (LSAN) is an angel group focusing on entrepreneurs in three states, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan. The LSAN facilitates the introduction of entrepreneurs to potential angel investors interested in privately-held companies or ventures typically in an early stage of development.

Minnesota Business Finance Corporation (MBFC) <http://www.mbfc.org/>

Certified Development Company (CDC) Small business funding. Get an advance look at your potential SBA 504 business loan, access forms to get started or access additional small business expertise in Minnesota and across the nation by visiting partners and vendors of MBFC. Focused on high technology, new proprietary technology, or a new proprietary product, process or service in specified fields. The maximum credit is \$125,000 per person, per year (\$250,000 if filing jointly). The credit is refundable. Residents of other states and foreign countries are eligible.

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (MnDEED)

<http://mn.gov/deed/business/>

- Starting a business
- Managing a business
 - Management Guidance for employers considering a layoff
 - Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership (MJSP) program we work strategically with businesses and educational institutions to train or retrain workers, expand work opportunities, and keep high-quality jobs in the state. Our training grants are used to offset training-related expenses incurred by business, industry and educational institutions necessary to meet current and future workforce needs.
- Financing a business – General guidance and:
 - Minnesota Investment Fund
 - Job Creation Fund
 - State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI)
 - Flood Recovery Financing
 - Small Business Development Loan Program
 - Urban Initiative Loan
 - Reservist and Veteran Loan Program
 - Tourism Business Septic Tank Replacement
 - Minerals 21st Century Fund
- Tax Credits
 - Minnesota Angel Tax Credit provides a 25-percent credit to investors or investment funds that put money into startup companies.
 - Greater MN Job Expansion Program - Purchases and use of tangible personal property and taxable services made by a qualified business are eligible for a sales tax refund.
 - Minnesota Job Opportunity Business Zones (JOBZ) initiative provides local and state tax exemptions to qualified companies that start up or expand in targeted areas of Greater Minnesota. (Expires 2015 – new Job Creation Fund noted above)
 - Research and Development Tax Credit - Companies that engage in certain research and development (R&D) activities in Minnesota may qualify for the Credit for Increasing Research Activities.
- Finding workers
- Exporting and trade
- Business Guidebooks
- Locating in Minnesota

Minnesota Pathways Program

<http://www.mncareerpathways.org/pathways/index.html>

Job readiness and placement assistance. Step One: Prepare, Step Two: Explore, Step Three: Act.

Natural Resources Research Institute Wood Materials & Manufacturing Program

<http://www.nrri.umn.edu/cartd/forestp/lean.htm>

The Natural Resources Research Institute works closely with small and medium-sized natural resource based companies to conduct training and implementation of lean manufacturing.

Northland Foundation <http://www.northlandfdn.org/>

Created in 1986 by The McKnight Foundation, the Northland Foundation serves communities in Northeastern Minnesota. Unlike the typical concept of a "foundation" which is a charitable organization that makes grants to programs from their endowment the Northland Foundation is unique. We assist our region through:

- Grant-making program that provides resources to nonprofit organizations in the region
- Operating program, KIDS PLUS, that is dedicated to improving the well-being of children and youth
- Business finance program that provides flexible lending to help small and medium-size businesses to grow and create family-sustaining jobs
- Assisted living venture that provides high-quality, affordable living options to enable older adults to age-in-place in underserved rural communities
- The Northland Institute is a subsidiary nonprofit formed in 1996 by the Northland Foundation which formerly managed the Minnesota Community Capital Fund, the Twin Cities Community Capital Fund, and the Minnesota Employee Ownership Fund. The Northland Institute discontinued management of these entities as of July 1, 2014. It remains a subsidiary nonprofit of the Northland Foundation.

NorthRidge Community Credit Union <http://www.nrccu.org/ASP/home.asp>

NorthRidge Community Credit Union provides commercial lending for equipment loans, secured revolving lines of credit, commercial real estate and commercial construction loans.

Northspan Group <http://www.northspan.org/>

Northspan is a private nonprofit economic development firm offering a full array of professional business and community development services:

- organizational development
- strategic planning facilitation
- funding development with grant and loan application packaging
- market research and project feasibility assessments
- project proposal development
- business financing assistance
- regional and local revolving loan fund administration
- technical loan reviews
- community development project financing
- downtown and community revitalization assistance
- housing financial packaging
- technology systems development
- business incubator and technology center development

**University of Minnesota Duluth Center for Economic Development
Small Business Development Center**

<http://www.umdced.com>

- Consulting Services
- Workshops & Events
- Resources including: Resource Library, Newsletter Archive, and Start Up assistance

USDA Business & Community Development

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=rural-development>

Nearly 60 million Americans live in rural areas. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, through its Rural Development mission area, provides financial resources and support for rural communities, residents and businesses.

- Economic Development and Business Support
- Infrastructure Investment
- Rural Development Initiatives
 - American Indian & Alaska Native Programs
 - Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships
 - Substantially Underserved Trust Area
- Financing - Loans and Grants
 - Community Facilities Financing
 - Multi-Family Housing Financing
 - Rural Energy Financing
 - Single Family Housing Financing

U.S. Economic Development Administration

<http://www.eda.gov/>

- Communities interested in US EDA funding should contact Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (EDA) Regional Planning Division

Definition: Economic Development creates the conditions for economic growth and improved quality of life by expanding the capacity of individuals, firms, and communities to maximize the use of their talents and skills to support innovation, lower transaction costs, and responsibly produce and trade valuable goods and services. Economic Development requires effective, collaborative institutions focused on advancing mutual gain for the public and the private sector. Economic Development is essential to ensuring our economic future.

County and Local Agencies and Programs

Aitkin County Economic Development Department

<http://www.co.aitkin.mn.us/Departments/Economic-Dev/EconomicDevelopment.html>

The Aitkin County Economic Development Department's goal is to address economic/industrial development of businesses within Aitkin County.

Primary objectives include:

- Inform businesses of Aitkin County business assistance programs, including Tax Abatement, Minnesota Community Capital Fund and JOBZ;
- Provide a single-point source of contact to connect business owners with financing information and technical assistance programs available;
- Market Aitkin County's Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified Forest Products.

Carlton County Economic Development Authority

<http://www.carltoncountyeda.com/>

The Carlton County Economic Development Authority (EDA) objectives are to:

- Develop, encourage, promote and protect the business interests of the Carlton County area
- Encourage the development of the county's employment base
- Provide centralized services for the Local Development Corporations (LDC's) and Developers

Cook County / Grand Marais Economic Development Authority

<http://www.prosperitynorth.com/about/>

A community agency responsible for promoting economic growth, developing the Cedar Grove Business Park and overseeing housing programs. The mission of the Cook County/Grand Marais EDA is to diversify the economy and create year-round, livable wage employment for Cook County through the preservation and expansion of existing businesses and development of new business that is environmentally responsible, respects multiple use and enhances the unique attractiveness of our area.

Greenway Area Business Association (GABA)

Collaborative promotion of the Greenway Area. GABA represents Greenway's seven towns, eight townships and about 8,200 people. <http://www.gabamn.com/economic-development.html>

Itasca Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) <http://www.itascadv.org/>

- New Business Start Up
- Existing Business Expansion
- Business Attracting
- Site Selection

Koochiching Economic Development Authority (KEDA)

<http://www.businessupnorth.com/>

The Koochiching Economic Development Authority (KEDA) is the development agency for Koochiching County in Minnesota's great North Country. Economic development is about jobs and the KEDA was created to be the point-of-contact to assist and simplify the process of locating a business in Koochiching County or expanding an existing business. The KEDA can assist with site selection and development, finance and incentive options working with other economic development agencies, as well as act as a liaison between the various local units of government to handle all of the details of development.

Lake County, MN

<http://www.co.lake.mn.us/>

Lake County is located in the Arrowhead Region of Northeastern Minnesota, covering 2062 square miles with a population of 10,866 people. Within our boundaries are 4 state parks, a Nation Forest and the BWCAW. All offer superior hiking, camping, fishing and winter recreational opportunities. Snowmobiling, hiking, cross-country skiing and ATV trails are readily accessible throughout the county. Bordering our county is the largest freshwater lake in the world, Lake Superior. With its rugged beauty and pristine shoreline, it offers many recreational opportunities as well as historical shipwrecks, two operating lighthouses and two public marinas.

St. Louis County Economic Development

<http://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/LANDPROPERTY/EconomicDevelopment.aspx>

St. Louis County, as a regional leader, has vested interest in a strong tax base and the economic well being of its citizens. The county works in cooperation with communities and regional partners to strengthen the local economy and promote long-term economic vitality.

St. Louis County supports a variety of activities which strengthens the regions infrastructure and contributes to economic growth. The Planning and Community Development Department serves as contact for economic development initiatives seeking county assistance.

Community Specific

Beaver Bay & Silver Bay Economic Development Authority Storefront Loan Program
Bois Forte Development Corporation Small Business Development Program
Carlton County Economic Development Authority
Carlton County Revolving Loan Fund
Cook County Development Loan Program
Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
Eveleth Economic Development Authority
Eveleth Economic Development Authority Community Development Revolving Loan Program
Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority
Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority Commercial Building Improvement Loan Program
Grand Rapids Economic Development Authority Downtown Redevelopment Loan Fund
Hibbing Economic Development Authority Revolving Loan Fund
Itasca Economic Development Corporation
Koochco, Inc. Loan Program
Koochiching Economic Development Authority
Lake Superior Angel Network
Minnesota Chippewa Tribe Finance
Northwest Wisconsin Manufacturing Outreach Center
Northwest Wisconsin Regional Economic Development Fund
Northwest Wisconsin Rural Economic Development Fund Revolving Loan Fund
Silver Bay Economic Development Authority
Silver Bay Economic Development Authority Revolving Loan Program
St. Louis County Planning & Development
Superior Business Improvement District
Trade Assistance for Manufacturing Firms
Two Harbors Development Commission Financing Program

Virginia - Eveleth Economic Development Authority
Wisconsin Angel Network
Wisconsin Business Development Corporation
Wisconsin Rural Enterprise Fund