

**Lanesboro EDA Board Meeting
Regular Meeting Agenda
Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.
Lanesboro Community Center Meeting Room and Zoom**

Zoom is provided as a way to offer more accessibility to council and committee meetings. However, due to potential technical issues, full functionality is not guaranteed

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89880004452?pwd=RmR1bTV0L0o1eURSTVUrb1hYOHdIZz09>

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Passcode: 550702

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1. **Call to Order/Roll Call: Introduction of new member, council member**
Members: ___ Tom Pursell ___ Linda Tacke ___ Joe Goetzke
 ___ Kathryn Wade ___ Michael Boho
Staff: ___ Cathy Enerson ___ Darla Taylor ___ Mitchell Walbridge
Guests:
2. **Approve the Agenda:**
Motion _____ Second _____
3. **Public Comments**
4. **Approval of the Consent Agenda:**
A. [Minutes from August 1, 2024](#)
B. [August EDA Financials](#)
Motion _____ Second _____
5. **Department Reports:**
A. Council Reps/City Administrator/Planning and Zoning Report:
B. Chamber - Report:
C. School Board - Report:
6. **Revolving Loan Fund**
A. New Applications - None
7. **Continued Business**
A. [2025 Budget Request and Grant Match Requests](#)
B. USDA Grant, Taylor Rural Improvements Grant, and REV Grant Status
C. 2024 Work Plan & Strategic Goals
D. Business Interruption Loan & Mini Grant Program
8. **New Business**
A. [Quarterly EDA Report](#) with Sept 12th, and 24th SMIF/REV event invite links
B. [Grant Opportunities for your spheres](#)
9. **Miscellaneous**

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 3, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.

Adjourn Regular Meeting

**Lanesboro Economic Development Authority
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 1, 2024 – 10:30 a.m.
City Council Chambers & Zoom**

Present Members: X Tom Pursell X Linda Tacke X Joe Goetzke
 Kathryn Wade X Michael Boho

Staff: X Cathy Enerson X Darla Taylor X Mitchell Walbridge

Guests: Bonita Underbakke, Michael Seiler, Kara Maloney

1. **Call to Order:** Member Goetzke called to order the Regular Meeting of the Lanesboro Economic Development Authority at 10:32 a.m.
2. **Agenda:** Member Pursell entered a motion to approve the agenda as presented; Member Tacke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
3. **Public Comments:** No comments were shared.
4. **Approval of the Consent Agenda:**
 - A. Minutes of the Regular EDA Meeting, June 6, 2024
 - B. Minutes of the Special EDA Meeting, June 6, 2024
 - C. July Financial ReportsMember Boho entered a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; Member Pursell seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
5. **Department Reports:**
 - A. City Council/City Administrator/Planning and Zoning Report: Member Goetzke informed the EDA members that the city council, city administrator, and city engineer met with the staff of both federal and state legislators to discuss potential funding assistance for the Highway 250 street/utility construction project that is scheduled for 2027. Administrator Walbridge shared that the city will continue working with the legislators and their staff members to pursue state bonding bill money in both 2025 and 2026 as well as congressional directed spending money at the federal level. Michael Seiler of the Planning and Zoning Commission also shared an update on the status of revisions to the city's land use and short-term lodging ordinances. Drafted ordinance language has been passed to the city council that is doing its review of the language before calling for a public hearing.
 - B. Chamber of Commerce: Member Goetzke shared the Chamber of Commerce report.
 - The Chamber of Commerce has been working on its rebranding project and developing a new city logo.
 - 2025 Visitor's Guide planning is underway.
6. **Revolving Loan Fund Update:** Director Cathy Enerson commented that most loan payments are current with one loan holder making payments and one is in collections.
7. **Continued Business**
 - A. 2024 Work Plan & Strategic Plan: A 1–3-year work plan is to be formulated in committee style. Member Boho and Member Goetzke will work with Director Enerson on the work plan to bring back to the EDA board for review.
 - B. Insights Data: Director Enerson continues to work on compiling the data and reports. Information will be presented at a future meeting.

- C. Riverfront Property Development: Administrator Walbridge informed the EDA members that a commercial property appraisal estimate was quoted at \$3,500-\$4,000. The appraisal maybe completed in the future as part of a feasibility study of the sale of the public works facility and moving the facility to a new location in order allow for commercial development on Rochelle Avenue.
- D. Business Interruption Loan & Mini Grant Program: Director Enerson will continue to work on identifying potential funding sources for the business interruption grant program that the EDA would like to make available to business owners during the 2027 Highway 250 road project.
- E. USDA Grant Update: While the City of Lanesboro was awarded the USDA Rural Development Funds to recapitalize the revolving loan fund, the paperwork and contracts are being completed to initiate the new round of funding to be received. Director Enerson encouraged members to communicate with business owners who may need a low-interest business development loan so that they may take advantage of applying for the loan program. Member Tacke entered a motion recommending to the city council that the grant funds be accepted; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.

8. New Business

- A. Small Cities Block Grant: Director Enerson shared information from a meeting she had regarding the potential to obtain small cities block grant. Additional information, including a needs study, will need to be completed in the future if the block grant is pursued. Grant funds may be used for public facilities, housing, as well as potential assessment abatement for residential rental units which may aid during the Highway 250 road project. Member Goetzke entered a motion to table the small cities block grant; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- B. LEAN Meeting Update: Director Enerson shared updates from the June 26, 2024 LEAN meeting. LEAN members are preparing for a September 24 Cattle Town to Arts Campus presentation.
- C. Rural Entrepreneurial Ventures (REV) Activating Our Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Grant: Director Enerson and LEAN Chairperson Michael Seiler stated they would like to submit a Rural Entre application that will help them conduct interviews to determine the needs of business owners to mitigate business interruption during the Highway 250 road construction project in 2027. Seiler explained the time needed to complete the interviews should be compensated, so grant funds would allow someone to be hired to conduct interviews and complete the surveying. A 25% cash match is required for the grant. Member Pursell entered a motion to allocate \$4,250 from the EDA's Project Funds budget for the grant match and that \$750 be asked for from the city council so that the grant award could be maximized; Member Tacke seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor.
- D. Taylor Corporation and SMIF Grant: Members discussed potential projects for the Taylor Corporation Grant through SMIF. Members identified that grant funds could be used for the Lanesboro Legion Lights project and installation of new pickleball courts in Sylvan Park.
- E. 2025 EDA Budget Requests: Director Enerson presented budget requests for 2025 that included a 5% increase in the CEDA contract amount, \$750 for the Chamber Visitor's Guide contribution, \$5,000 in project funds, \$4,000 for a property appraisal for the public works street shop property, and \$10,000 to begin saving for the mini grants program for business interruption during the Highway 250 road construction project. Administrator Walbridge informed the board that he will present these requests during the city council's budget discussion on August 5.

9. Miscellaneous

- A. Director Enerson noted that there will be a workforce development meeting on Wednesday, August 14 at 9:00 a.m. at city hall. Members are invited to attend if they are interested.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 5, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.

Draft 08/02/2024

Member Pursell entered a motion to adjourn the meeting; Member Wade seconded the motion. Motion carried with all in favor. The meeting adjourned the meeting at 11:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mitchell Walbridge
City Administrator/Clerk

EDA 2024

Fund	Abbrev	Fund	Dept	Account Descr	Current Period	August 2024 Amt	YTD Amt	YTD Budget	%YTD Act
Expenditure									
EDAOPER	250	46500	E	250-46500-100	Wages and Salaries	August 2024	\$0.00	\$900.00	0.00% Active
EDAOPER	250	46500	E	250-46500-122	FICA	August 2024	\$0.00	\$90.00	0.00% Active
EDAOPER	250	46500	E	250-46500-210	Operating Supplies	August 2024	\$8.73	\$12,500.00	113.44% Active
EDAOPER	250	46500	E	250-46500-300	Professional Svcs	August 2024	\$0.00	\$15,203.00	75.00% Active
EDAOPER	250	46500	E	250-46500-445	EDA Project	August 2024	\$0.00	\$5,000.00	15.00% Active
Revenue									
EDAOPER	250	46500	R	250-46500-36200	Miscellaneous	August 2024	\$0.00	\$2,000.00	22.92% Active
EDAOPER	250	46500	R	250-46500-36210	Interest Earnings	August 2024	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00% Active
EDAOPER	250	46500	R	250-46500-39203	Transfer from Other	August 2024	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00% Active
EDAOPER	250	46600	R	250-46600-31000	General Property	August 2024	\$0.00	\$33,693.00	55.76% Active
Fund	2024 Begin Balance		Receipts	Disbursements	Transfers	Journal Entries	Payroll JEs	Balance	
10104 - F&M Bank EDA									
250 - EDA OPERATING				\$0.00	\$6.06	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6.06
620 - EDA Loan Funds Flexible				\$13,444.78	\$14,051.27	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,676.07
625 - EDA USDA Loan Funds				\$866.69	\$12,713.76	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$13,580.45
				\$14,311.47	\$26,771.09	0	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$32,262.58

Loan Client Status as of 8/28/24:

CLIENT	STATUS	BALANCE
Skelly	On-Time	\$ 27,692.68
Lind	On-Time	\$ 12,482.24
Pfeffer	On-Time	\$ 64,230.08
Harvey	On-Time	\$ 31,912.76
Claras	On-Time	\$ 17,634.14
Palmer	On-Time	\$ 27,017.23
Shipton	On-Time	\$ 33,538.57
Madland	Past Due 8/1/24	\$ 439.48
Erwin	In Collections	\$ 1786.40

August 1, 2024

3 EDA Items for Council Consideration

#1 - Taylor/SMIF Grant only for CEDA Communities

Pilot Program

\$25,000

25% grant match

Grant Funds to be used for the Pickleball court restoration, and the new winter festival of lights

\$20,000 toward pickleball courts - Materials and labor

\$5,000 toward Legion Winter Lighting and activities within Sylvan Park - equipment purchases, lights, fire pits, signs, ect...

\$5,000 would be the city Match for \$20,000 in grant funds

\$1250.00 would be the required Local Committee Match for \$5,000 in grant funds

Requires 2 letters of support

One from the city park and rec, one from the Legion Light fest committee

The EDA is requesting a city match of \$5,000 to obtain the \$20,000 grant for pickleball rehab, as well as a letter of support from Park and Rec to support and collaborate on both the pickleball rehab and Legion Winter Lights Projects

Full Guidelines:

**Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
Taylor Rural Improvements Grant
Guidelines and Procedures**

Effective August 2024

Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation (SMIF) works collaboratively to help create vibrant communities, innovative and successful economies and engaged and valued citizens. A key component to creating a vibrant region is to ensure all its communities are strong and successful.

The Taylor Rural Improvements Grant seeks to support capital projects that can make a big impact in the vibrancy of small towns. SMIF offers up to \$25,000 for projects in communities located in our 20-county region with populations under 10,000. Projects must be completed by December 31, 2025.

Examples of projects include, but are not limited to: public playground equipment, park shelters, ADA compliance ramps, seating, or similar in community spaces, refrigerator/freezer or loading dock for food shelf, or new computers for a public library.

Eligible organizations are units/agencies of government, IRS-designated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations (current status, not pending), and public institutions (public schools, public higher education, etc). Organizations which do not comply with the above status may seek a fiscal agent who holds one of the above legal statuses.

The Taylor Rural Improvements Grant is supported by a generous donation from Glen A. Taylor through the Taylor Family Farms Foundation. Taylor has a long history of funding philanthropic initiatives related to rural community revitalization. The gift will create a financial framework to support these and other causes for future generations in the area Glen Taylor still calls home.

Exclusions:

- Individuals, businesses, or other for-profit organizations
- Equipment for emergency services will not be covered by this grant. The Taylor Family Farms Foundation has a separate grant that supports emergency services.
- Individuals, businesses, or other for-profit organizations
- General operating expenses and expenses not directly related to the project
- Programs or services mandated by law
- Routine maintenance
- Campaigns or endowments

Application requirements:

- Only CEDA communities are eligible for this pilot program
- Completed application (online)
- 25% cash or in-kind match (For example, if applicant is seeking \$25,000, they must have \$6250 cash in-hand or in-kind before SMIF will release any awarded grant funds.)
- Grant dollars must be spent by September 30, 2025
- A final report is due within 30 days of final grant dollars expended

2024 Taylor Rural Improvements Grant Timeline:

August 1, 2024- Announcement

August 29, 2024- Applications Due

September 30, 2024- Award Date

October 31, 2025- Final Report Due

For questions contact:

Sarah Scheffert, Community Vitality Specialist

507.214.7015

sarahs@smifoundation.org

#-2 Grant Match Request

LEAN, a Subcommittee of the EDA is your local volunteer community member driven boots on the ground committee.

There is an opportunity for LEAN to apply for and implement a SMIF REV communities \$20,000 grant to build capacity

Request to use the remaining 2024 budget line item 250-46500-445, \$4250 in the EDA Project fund, along with a request of \$750 from the city as a total of \$5,000 to be used for a grant match to request \$20,000 from SMIF.

Funds would be used to:

- Interview 25 plus business in order to determine their current needs for economic tools using the REV interview model
- Compile and store the collected data and any future data collected during business interviews
- Thru the use of the data Implement outside professionals and engage economic tools to meet the entrepreneur requested needs in order for their specific business to thrive within the city of Lanesboro
- Data will be collected to gage the success of adding capacity/staffing, engaging outside professions, and utilizing the \$99,900 USDA grant funds.

REV Community Goals must be met within 16 months

USDA spend down must take place withing 12 months or unused funds are clawed back.

In addition the EDA will need letters of support from the LEAN Chair, CVB Director, and the City Administrator on behalf of the council to engage staff in the REV activities, provide support via the \$5,000 grant match, and report via the EDA as prescribed in the grant guidelines.

Full Grant Guidelines for REV Communities can be found [HERE](#)

#3 - 2025 EDA Budget Requests

CEDA Contract Increase of 5%

EDA Project Fund increase from \$5,000 to \$20,000

Expected uses in 2025 include:

- \$700 for the CVB guide
- \$4,000 for an appraisal to determine the value of the public works site if it were to be sold
- \$5,000 grant match for potential Taylor Grant or Small Towns Grant
- \$10,000 saved each year over the next three year to create a \$30,000 mini grant fund for businesses during the Hwy 250 project (MNDOT funds for business promotions and adjustments may replenish the 3- year savings, and the amount saved could them be clawed back to the city general fund)

9-1-2024

EDA Report and Grant outline to share with your spheres.

- **USDA - Grant award of \$100K** - the EDA and City Admin are working with the USDA to sign applicable docs and secure the funding. Awaiting grant contract.
- **Revolving Loans-** Eenson was contacted by 3 people, 2 to purchase buildings to open businesses, 1 to build, who she reached out to, and 1 to remodel. The first step is the potential client creates a business plan with cash flow statement to ensure repayment. Some inquires will and some will not take the next step and plan, and then fill out the loan application. Each client is sent a link to free business planning services, which includes a local coach from the SBDC, and the RLF guidelines and application. Eenson will contact Arts Space to see if the organization is interested in participating in a build in Lanesboro.
 - All but a past loan client from pre-CEDA contract are current, past clients pre-CEDA: one is making payments and one is in collections. The EDA has injected over \$200K into the Lanesboro economy in the past several years using CEDA contract staffing. City Admin works diligently to collect any past due loans and the format for collections is making a difference.

Loan Client Payment Status as of 7/24/24

CLIENT	STATUS	BALANCE
Skelly	On-Time	\$ 27,692.68
Lind	On-Time	\$ 12,649.49
Pfeffer	On-Time	\$ 64796.43
Harvey	On-Time	\$ 32,370.25
Claras	On-Time	\$ 17,923.86
Palmer	On-Time	\$ 27,544.97
Shipton	On-Time	\$ 34,118.98
Madland	Making Payments	\$ 439.48
Erwin	In Collections	\$ 1786.40

- EDA has a business interruption loan fund of \$5K and would like to build a Hwy 250 mini grant fund: **Eenson will continue to work on identifying potential funding sources for the business interruption grant program** that the EDA would like to make available to business owners during the 2027 Highway 250 road project.
- **2025 EDA Budget Requests:** Eenson presented budget requests for 2025 that included a 5% increase in the CEDA contract amount, \$750 for the Chamber Visitor’s Guide contribution, \$5,000 in project funds, \$4,000 for a property appraisal for the public works

street shop property, and \$10,000 to begin saving for the mini grants program for business interruption during the Highway 250 road construction project.

- **Work force Development Meet up** - The new director, reached out to meet with Enerson. Enersons are the invite with others, both Johnathan and Joe from the Chamber attended the **meeting. Workforce Development** will actively participate in training programs, has a job board, and can meet individually with business owners. Joe plans to broadly share the services with Chamber Members. Cathy will match up entrepreneurs based on survey needs with those interested or in need of assistance

To build workforce there is the Adaptability grant, as well as Workforce Development who will remove barriers, such as the need for special uniforms, transportation, training, and more to build workforce within individual businesses **Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund** <<https://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business-eraf/>> will reimburse small/medium sized business owners for costs related to making modifications to their business for applicants or employees that have disabilities. In our case the new Chamber Director needed office equipment that fit his height.

This is a reimbursement for eligible employers, which can include nonprofits as well as for-profit businesses, and is easy to apply for. To be eligible, businesses must be domiciled in Minnesota, have fewer than 500 employees and have gross annual revenues of less than \$5 million.

“With this program, there’s not a lot of red tape and hoops to jump through,” he said. “We want this process to be accessible. We can usually approve them in 30 days and they can get the money promptly.”

Expenses for workplace accommodations that ensure equal employment opportunities include:

- Assistive Technology: Specialized software or hardware for computer accessibility
 - Workplace Modifications: Adjustable desks, wheelchair ramps, and adapted workstations
 - Communication Tools: Real-time captioning services, sign language interpreters, or text-to-speech software
 - Job Application Assistance: Support for disabled applicants during the hiring process, such as offering application materials in alternative formats like braille.
- “Employers are using this assistance in ways you wouldn’t think of, like ergonomic chairs or workstations or, in a new building, making sure the bathrooms are ADA compliant. We’ve had employers get reimbursement for something as simple as changing their lighting for people who have sensitivities to bright lights,” McCoy explained. To be eligible, employers must be domiciled in Minnesota, have fewer than 500 employees and have gross annual revenues of less than \$5 million. For more information on ERAF, go to www.mn.gov/deed/eraf <<http://www.mn.gov/deed/eraf>>. Businesses and nonprofits that believe

they meet the eligibility criteria can contact the ERAF team at eraf.deed@state.mn.us<mailto:eraf.deed@state.mn.us> or 651-539-2390 to start the application process.

- **Data Insights for the city of Lanesboro - Link pending to 2024 Report which will be presented to the EDA Sept 5th**
- **EDA Work Plan** - the Strategic Plan is complete, see results at this link, the Director has two volunteers willing to work on the work plan, planning is on hold until the budget is set (Do hours and budget stay the same), the results of a \$25 capacity building grant are known (Are there funds to increase staffing to interview at least 25 local entrepreneurs), and the data planning tool is shared.
- **Enerson on August 21st was one of a two panel members from MN to present to GRO Oregon, a rural entrepreneur project similar to REV.**
- **IN August Enerson submitted the Taylor / SMIF grant** - a request for \$25K to build capacity and bring in education to businesses based on indicial survey results, the goal is to interview a minimum of 25 entrepreneurs. The EDA matched the request using \$5,000 from its development fund. Award results are pending
- **Sept 12th -REV training for the LEAN members that can attend, mileage is paid, Enerson will attend**, the goal is to learn new skills when meeting a new or existing business owner to determine their needs for continued prosperity. “What are your needs” Interviews will be used to bring in training and experts to the local business community
- **Sept 24th - EDA’s LEAN to attend and present Lanesboro’s Ag + Arts Town at the Annual Entrepreneur Bridge Event held in SE MN. To attend go to:**

[Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation \(SMIF\)](#)

is proud to once again be hosting one of our region's largest gatherings of rural innovators and entrepreneurs. SMIF's tenth annual Entrepreneurial Bridge event is an integral part of building a vibrant ecosystem for our region's entrepreneurs.

Join us to connect with fellow entrepreneurs and to celebrate diverse voices of innovation from across southern Minnesota!

Event Details

September 24, 2024

8:30 AM - 3:15 PM

Reception:

3:15 PM - 5:30 PM

**Wedgewood Cove Golf
Club**

**2200 W 9th St,
Albert Lea, MN 56007**

Cost: \$25

**LI NK - Get
Your
Tickets**

Featuring Innovative Speakers

**Transforming the Economy of a Small Town by
Understanding the Heart of the Community,
Leaders of Lanesboro**

Over the last 10 years, Lanesboro has catalyzed new growth opportunities by investing, visioning and creating intentional economic change. Seven individuals will describe how they are sowing seeds for the future in this bluff country community at the heart of the Root River.

- Up coming GRANTS to share with your spheres/boards

SMIF Small Towns Grant - \$10K deadline passed

SMIF REV Grant for LEAN - Capacity building, **Applied for \$25K**

From CEDA Grant Department

Taylor Family Farms Foundation Grants

The current grant round is **opening Sept. 1, grants are due Oct. 1** and notifications on or before Nov 1. I'm not finding information on award totals they will consider, but they are focusing on southern MN and NW Iowa. Areas of interest for grants include health and human services, youth and education and community engagement.

The area of focus for this granting period is **projects/needs in Health and Human Services with an emphasis on emergency services.**

Laura Jane Musser Fund has two grants opening in September:

- Rural Initiative Grant is **opening Sept 3, and due Oct 3**. The grant aims to “to encourage collaborative and participatory efforts among citizens in rural communities that will help to strengthen their towns and regions in a number of civic areas including, but not limited to, economic development, business preservation, arts and humanities, public space improvements, and education.” Funds are available for **Planning (up to \$5,000) or Implementation (up to \$25,000)**.
- Intercultural Harmony Initiative Grant is **opening Sept 16, and due Oct 16**. This grant aims to “to promote mutual understanding and cooperation between groups and citizens of different cultural backgrounds within defined geographical areas through collaborative, cross-cultural exchange projects. Projects must be intercultural and demonstrate intercultural exchange, rather than focused on just one culture.” Funds are available for **Planning (up to \$5,000) or Implementation (up to \$25,000)**.

SMIF Early Care and Education Grants

Opening Sept. 4, applications due Oct. 24

This program will help fund early care and education services for children birth to age five in SMIF's 20-county region. Grant funds could be used to support social, emotional, physical and mental health, training and development to operate and address the needs of young children, or other activities necessary to maintain the services in early care and education.

Medica Foundation [Rural Health Grant](#)

Due September 6

Aims to fund nonprofit, community-led solutions that address health needs and social determinants of health in rural communities. Individual grants awards of **up to \$10,000**.

SEMAC has two LOIs due Oct 1:

- **[Legacy grants](#)** through the Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund support activities in three key areas as established in the Minnesota Constitution: Arts and Arts Access, Arts Education, and Arts and Cultural Heritage. Award totals are dependent on category, and are **either up to \$5,000 or up to \$10,000**. This grant is offered twice per year.
- **[Small Towns/Rural Areas](#)** grants aim to support and encourage the creation and development of art and arts organizations in communities with populations under 7,500. Grants of **\$5,000** in three categories are available: Local Production Projects, Administrative Support, or Equipment Purchase. This grant is offered twice per year.

Note: the LOI due Oct 1 is considered part 1 of the application, with part 2 required to be submitted within 10 days. More information can be found under the [General Application Instructions](#) page.

MN Historical Society [Legacy Grants](#)

The small grant application (**\$10,000 or less**) deadline is **October 11**. This is a quarterly grant.

American Academy of Dermatology Association [Shade Structure Grant](#)

Opening Oct 1, applications due Dec 23

This program is for grants of **up to \$8,000** for the installation of permanent shade structures to schools, daycares, parks, pools, and other non-profit organizations where children learn and play.

Note: A "sun-safety/skin cancer awareness program" must be in place for at least one year prior to the application. If this application is something that you or someone in your community may be interested in, implementing a program now will make you eligible for next year's application round.

MORE For planning the CEDA [2024 Grant Calendar](#).

9-1-2024

Up coming grants to share with the board and their sphere of Influence

SMIF Small Towns Grant - \$10K deadline passed

SMIF REV Grant for LEAN - Capacity building, **Applied for \$25K**

Taylor Family Farms Foundation Grants

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- **Small Towns/Rural Areas** grants aim to support and encourage the creation and development of art and arts organizations in communities with populations under 7,500. Grants of **\$5,000** in three categories are available: Local Production Projects, Administrative Support, or Equipment Purchase. This grant is offered twice per year.

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- I have a community that has used: **Employer Reasonable Accommodation Fund**[<https://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/eraf/>](https://mn.gov/deed/business/financing-business/eraf/) will reimburse small/medium sized business owners for costs related to making modifications to their business for applicants or employees that have disabilities. In our case the new Chamber Director needed office equipment that fit his height.

This is a reimbursement for eligible employers, which can include nonprofits as well as of-profit businesses, and is easy to apply for. To be eligible, businesses must be domiciled in Minnesota, have fewer than 500 employees and have gross annual revenues of less than \$5 million.

“With this program, there’s not a lot of red tape and hoops to jump through,” he said. “We want this process to be accessible. We can usually approve them in 30 days and they can get the money promptly.”

Expenses for workplace accommodations that ensure equal employment opportunities include:

- Assistive Technology: Specialized software or hardware for computer accessibility
- Workplace Modifications: Adjustable desks, wheelchair ramps, and adapted workstations

- Communication Tools: Real-time captioning services, sign language interpreters, or text-to-speech software

- Job Application Assistance: Support for disabled applicants during the hiring process, such as offering application materials in alternative formats like braille.

“Employers are using this assistance in ways you wouldn’t think of, like ergonomic chairs or workstations or, in a new building, making sure the bathrooms are ADA compliant. We’ve had employers get reimbursement for something as simple as changing their lighting for people who have sensitivities to bright lights,” McCoy explained. To be eligible, employers must be domiciled in Minnesota, have fewer than 500 employees and have gross annual revenues of less than \$5 million. For more information on ERAF, go to www.mn.gov/deed/eraf<<http://www.mn.gov/deed/eraf>>. Businesses and nonprofits that believe they meet the eligibility criteria can contact the ERAF team at eraf.deed@state.mn.us<<mailto:eraf.deed@state.mn.us>> or 651-539-2390 to start the application process.

MORE

[2024 Grant Calendar](#).