



EMPOWERING SMALL MINNESOTA COMMUNITIES



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Agenda

Welcome & Introductions

Opportunity overview: Historically significant funding available to small communities.

Program overview: What is Empowering Small MN Communities?

Process, Criteria & Eligibility

Next Steps

Q&A

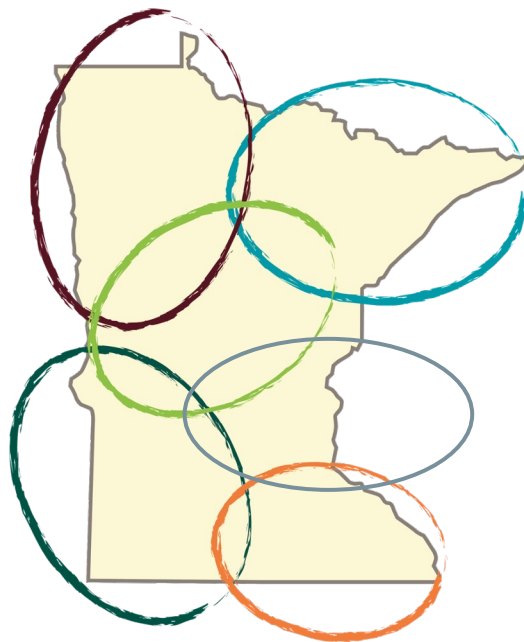
Introductions

Presenters

Kyle Shelton
Andi Sutton

Empowering Small MN Communities Contacts (by region)

Southeast: Andi Sutton
Southwest: Anne Dybsetter
Central: Molly Zins
Northwest: Shannon Stassen
Northeast: David Abazs
Metro/Multi-region: Mike Greco



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Historically Significant Opportunity for Small Communities

Unprecedented funding for infrastructure is available to communities across Minnesota.

- **Transportation**
- **Water**
- **Parks, trails, & tourism**
- **Buildings**
- **Emergency & weather readiness**
- **Energy efficiency**
- **Economic & cultural vitality**
- **Housing**

**And so
much more**



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Historically Significant Opportunity for Small Communities cont'd

Available public and private funding could be transformative for Minnesota's small communities.

- **Federal Infrastructure Investment and Job Act** (IIJA)
- **Inflation Reduction Act** (IRA)
- **Additional state programs** (LCCMR, MDA, MNDoT, DEED, etc.)
- **Foundations** (regional, statewide, and local)

Challenges for Small Communities

But access to federal and state grants can present challenges to small communities.

- Time
- Capacity
- Specialized expertise
- Technical requirements for grants
- Navigating complex funding programs
- *And many others...*

UMN Partnerships Supporting Pathways to Success

Empowering Small Minnesota Communities (ESMC) is a community-centered collaboration with UMN partners.

Why? To strengthen small communities through the development of resilient infrastructure.

Partnerships to...

- Develop or strengthen projects & plans to pursue long-term goals.
- Lay groundwork for competitive proposals eligible for a wide a range of funding opportunities.
- Be well positioned to benefit from local and state investments.



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UMN Partnerships Supporting Pathways for Collaboration

Empowering Small Minnesota Communities

has **three** pathways for collaboration, all FREE of charge:

Rapid Response

Tactical Actions

Community Futures



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UMN Partnerships Supporting Pathways to Success

Rapid Response

Short projects with a quick turnaround providing technical assistance to produce specific small-scale products requested by communities.

- Committed UMN researcher provides 10-20 hours to develop products under the leadership of the community partner.
- *Examples:* GIS maps, survey writing, data analysis, and more.



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UMN Partnerships Supporting Pathways to Success

Tactical Actions

Longer-term projects where community partners work with UMN research teams to develop project ideas into clear, concrete outcomes.

- UMN research teams collaborate with community partners medium-term **(2-9 months)**; work plan co-developed across UMN team and community partners; results in specific pre-identified project outcomes.
- *Examples:* Energy-efficient building designs; water management plans that create tourism assets; new processes for public input into city initiatives, **and much, much more.**



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UMN Partnerships Supporting Pathways to Success

Community Futures

Longer-term collaboration with UMN team from the MN Design Center

- UMN teams collaborate with communities longer term **(6-12 months)** through facilitated community dialogues and design-thinking; starts with open-ended questions and can lead to various possible outcomes
- Develop visions and ideas into an integrated, place-based strategy, reinforcing the unique strengths of each community.
- Build the capacity of the community to continue the work going forward.
- *Example:* Using transportation infrastructure to design and connect community assets

Process for Idea Submission to ESMC

If interested in submitting an idea

1. **Learn more at our website - z.umn.edu/ESMC-home**
2. **Talk with your region's Operations Team member - z.umn.edu/ESMC-contact**
3. **Submit your idea online - z.umn.edu/ESMC-how-to**

If selected as a finalist

4. **Meet with UMN team to discuss University contributions and approach.**
5. **UMN co-develops work proposal; you review, discuss, request revisions, and approve.**
6. **Submit final proposal as a Community/University team.**

If selected as a ESMC-supported project

7. **Begin work!**



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ESMC Eligibility Requirements

- Priority will be given to communities of 5,000 or fewer. Communities with populations of 15,000 or fewer are eligible to apply.
- Multiple communities can collaborate on a single proposal, all of which must have populations of 15,000 or fewer.
- Tribal nations, local government entities, non-profits, and community groups can apply.



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ESMC Selection Criteria

- Advances resilience and sustainability.
- Demonstrates innovation, impact, and/or a transformational vision.
- Serves a need, narrows a resource gap, or presents a timely opportunity.
- Proposed work is realistic and actionable.
- Advances equity and/or involves meaningful participation of historically underrepresented communities.
- Community driven: showcases community leadership, commitment, & capacity.
- Prioritizes authentic engagement by those impacted.

Community Support and Outcomes

- **Communities will be supported throughout their participation.**

Operations team members as and process navigators.

UMN partners and UMN ESMC core team members leveraging resources, research, contacts, and strategies.

Funds and other supports for community member participation (community lead, focus groups, cultural liaisons, interpretation, etc.).

- **Many possible products and outcomes supported by this University partnership.**

Project Ideation

Many possibilities...

when in doubt, submit!



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More information

Primary University Partners

- Center for Transportation Studies
- Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs
- Minnesota Design Center, UMN College of Design
- Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, UMN Extension
- Resilient Communities Project, UMN Center for Urban & Regional Affairs (CURA)

Other University of Minnesota departments and programs available to support projects.



For More Information

- **Log on to the ESMC Website:**
z.umn.edu/ESMC-home
- **Reach out to your region's ESMC Team member**
Northwest: Shannon Stassen
Northeast: David Abazs
Central: Molly Zins
Southwest: Anne Dybsetter
Southeast: Andi Sutton
Metro/Multi-region: Mike Greco
- **How to apply & application form:**
z.umn.edu/ESMC-how-to



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Thank you!

Q&A

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