



ASSOCIATION  
OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

Dawn Mandt, Chairwoman  
Brent Ekstrom, Vice Chairman  
Sandy Shively, Secretary/Treasurer

**Testimony of Dawn Mandt in support of HB 1018 – with an amendment**

To Senate Appropriations Committee

March 2, 2023

Chairman Bekkedahl and members of the Committee:

I am Dawn Mandt, Executive Director of the Red River Regional Council and Chairwoman of the ND Association of Regional Councils. I have been a rural development practitioner in North Dakota for the past 30 years.

On behalf of the ND Association of Regional Councils, **I'm seeking your consideration of an amendment to support \$8 million (\$1 million per biennia per region) funding for the eight regional councils which serve communities, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and more statewide.**

Created by NDCC 54-40.1 in 1973, the regional councils were to serve the purpose of establishing statewide policy for planning, economic development programs, operation, coordination and related cooperative activities of state/local governments to resolve issues and problems transcending individual jurisdictions.

Yet, these organizations have not had a consistent long-term funding mechanism to meet this purpose.

The organizations have subsisted with county contributions, contracts for services (development, grant writing, grant management, small business counseling), loan program revenues, and other special purpose initiatives. The regional councils have an average of only three staff serving multi-county regions of up to

During COVID, each of the Regional Councils was provided supplemental funding through the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) to increase capacity to address economic resiliency and develop resiliency strategic plans. Additionally, each Regional Council was awarded loan programs to support business resiliency across the state.

**With temporarily enhanced capacity in staffing, we made collective strides forward and witnessed the higher impact we could have collectively to meet the founding purpose of the regional councils.**

**In 2021 and 2022, the regional councils secured more than \$52 million to invest in communities, business, and development projects statewide.**

516 Cooper Avenue, Suite 101  
Grafton, ND 58237  
701-352-3550



**With specialized expertise in project and funding development from private, and public (local, regional, state, and federal resources), we can provide the needed expertise to further develop the state.**

Over the past decade, 70% of the population growth in North Dakota was concentrated in three counties – Cass, Burleigh, and Williams. In rural counties, we have witnessed the continuation of long-term population loss.

North Dakota has been ranked last in the country for rural development counties.

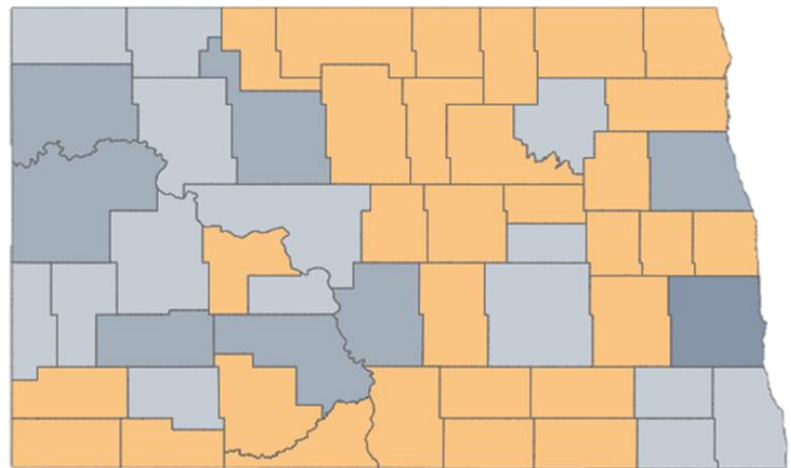


Figure 1: The 30 orange shaded counties lost population between 2010 and 2020

Rural areas are at a deficit for capacity, resources, and investment comparatively to larger communities that have the population density and tax revenues to support larger and stronger economic development organizations, convention and visitors' bureaus, housing authorities active in the development, community development staff, and more. At the same time, building regional collaborations and initiatives in rural areas span many miles over many communities with dispersed populations making the work complex and difficult on shoestring budgets.

Therefore, rural areas have struggled with decades of disinvestment.

**With increased funding, each of the regional councils across North Dakota has plans to expand professional capacity to create systemic and regional support to address complex regional issues around workforce, childcare, community infrastructure, housing, tourism, philanthropy, and more. It would be our collective goal to strengthen the rural development ecosystem statewide.**

Please find attached a matrix with a vision for the future roles of each of the eight regional councils that would be executed with this additional state investment in people power and planning.

Thank you for your consideration.

# 8 Regional Councils supporting ND communities

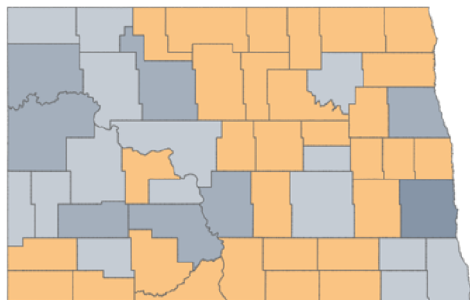
## Invest in rural North Dakota

**Support HB 1018:**  
Commerce Dept. Appropriations Bill Amendment

# NDCC 54-40.1

Created by the state in 1973 to establish consistent statewide policy for planning, economic development program, operations, coordination and related cooperative activities of state/local governments to resolve issues and problems transcending individual jurisdictions - **but did not include a funding mechanism.**

The State's economic prosperity is focused where there has been population growth.



**30 counties** (in orange) have continued an 80-year trend of population loss between 2010 and 2020. The loss trend has begun to stabilize.

These counties have **50% of the state's land mass.**

**70%** of rural residents live in small towns of **less than 1,000 people.**

**70%** of the state's population growth in the past decade was concentrated in three counties:

- Cass (Fargo)
- Burleigh (Bismarck)
- Williams (Williston)

## Seeking the state's investment in rural development capacity

### CURRENT SYSTEMS DO NOT SUPPORT SOLVING COMPLEX RURAL ISSUES

Small towns require ongoing technical support to develop and implement development strategies, plans and projects related to **community infrastructure, entrepreneurship, housing, childcare, workforce development/attraction, housing, tourism, philanthropy, and more.**

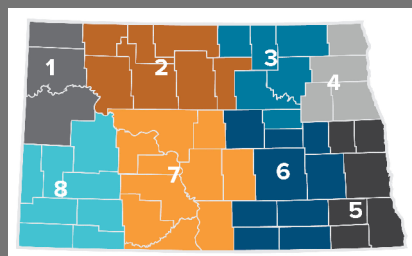
### What would the funding do?

- Implement existing and recent comprehensive economic development strategies developed every five years by regional leaders - by increasing staff capacity to an estimated 4+ new staff and/or contracted capacity per region.
- Create regional partnerships to address shared issues
- Provide technical assistance to develop plans, projects, secure funding, and implement
- Seek professional development to enhance skills and capacity to create innovative solutions.
- Create rural/urban alliances.
- Maximize the state's prosperous times to rise all areas of the state.

Often rural strategies stretch multiple counties, many miles, and with limited budgets. The local governments are already heavily invested in local development - investing both time and resources. Seeking the state to partner in the creation of rural development hubs as part of the rural ecosystem.

## \$8M in people power

### EIGHT REGIONAL COUNCILS POSITIONED TO ASSIST



Regional Councils are led by professional staff, mayors, county commissioners, Job Service, hub city representatives, and more.

There is an existing network of long-term, trusted relationships with local and regional leadership to be leveraged for statewide growth.

Invest in proven, long-standing organizations led by local leaders to support community growth statewide

**\$52M**

Funds secured for communities, businesses and development in 2021 & 2022 alone.

**32 Staff**

Staff levels vary from 1.8 to 7 people (most have 3) per region. Regions range in size from 3 to 12 counties.

**\$148M in Loan Programs**

Regional Councils have established loan programs to support business growth.

January 18, 2023

# ND Association of Regional Councils

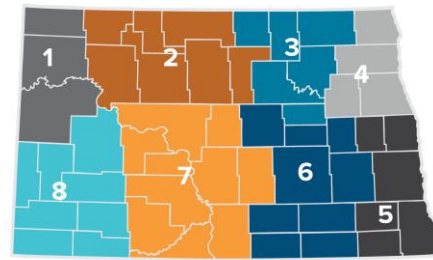
2023

Current officers:

Dawn Mandt, Chairwoman

Brent Ekstrom, Vice Chairman

Sandy Shively, Sec/Treasurer



## Region 1 - Tri-County Regional Development Council

<b>Contact Name:</b>	Everette Enno
<b>Physical Address:</b>	113 4th Street East Williston, ND 58801
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	PO Box 697 Williston, ND 58802-0697
<b>Phone:</b>	(701) 577-1358
<b>Fax:</b>	(701) 577-1363
<b>Website:</b>	www.tricountyrdc.com
<b>Email:</b>	everettee@ci.williston.nd.us

## Region 2 - Souris Basin Planning Council

<b>Contact Name:</b>	Briselda Hernandez
<b>Physical Address:</b>	18 2 <sup>nd</sup> St NE, Suite 2 Minot, ND 587013
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	PO Box 2024 Minot, ND 58702-2024
<b>Phone:</b>	(701) 255-1982
<b>Fax:</b>	N/A
<b>Website:</b>	http://www.sourisbasin.org
<b>Email:</b>	briselda@sourisbasin.org

## Region 3 - North Central Planning Council

<b>Contact Name:</b>	Sandra Shively
<b>Physical Address:</b>	417 5th St NE Devils Lake, ND 58301-2539
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	PO Box 651 Devils Lake, ND 58301-0651
<b>Phone:</b>	(701) 662-8131
<b>Fax:</b>	(701) 662-8132
<b>Website:</b>	http://www.northcentralplanningcouncil.com/
<b>Email:</b>	sandyncpc@gondtc.com

## Region 4 - Red River Regional Council

<b>Contact Name:</b>	Dawn Mandt
<b>Physical Address:</b>	516 Cooper Ave Ste 101 Grafton, ND 58237-1533
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	516 Cooper Ave Ste 101 Grafton, ND 58237-1533
<b>Phone:</b>	(701) 352-3550
<b>Fax:</b>	n/a
<b>Website:</b>	http://redriverrc.com/
<b>Email:</b>	dawn@redriverrc.com


## Region 5 - Lake Agassiz Regional Council

<b>Contact Name:</b>	Amber Metz
<b>Physical Address:</b>	417 Main Ave Fargo, ND 58103
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	417 Main Ave Fargo, ND 58103-1956
<b>Phone:</b>	(701) 235-1197
<b>Fax:</b>	(701) 235-6706
<b>Website:</b>	http://www.lakeagassiz.com
<b>Email:</b>	amber@lakeagassiz.com

## Region 6 - South Central Dakota Regional Council

<b>Contact Name:</b>	Traci Redlin
<b>Physical Address:</b>	429 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street SW Jamestown, ND 58402
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	PO Box 903 Jamestown, ND 58402-0903
<b>Phone:</b>	(701) 952-8050
<b>Fax:</b>	(701) 952-4930
<b>Website:</b>	http://www.scdrc.org
<b>Email:</b>	tredlin@scdrc.org

## Region 7 - Lewis & Clark Development Group

<b>Contact Name:</b>	Brent Ekstrom
<b>Physical Address:</b>	200 1st Ave NW Mandan, ND 58554-3162
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	200 1st Ave NW Mandan, ND 58554-3162
<b>Phone:</b>	(701) 667-7600
<b>Fax:</b>	(701) 255-7228
<b>Website:</b>	http://lcdgroup.org
<b>Email:</b>	brent@lcdgroup.org

## Region 8 - Roosevelt Custer Regional Council for Dev.

<b>Contact Name:</b>	Trisha Kelly
<b>Physical Address:</b>	40 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue West, Suite 301 Dickinson, ND 58601
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	40 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue West, Suite 301 Dickinson, ND 58601
<b>Phone:</b>	(701) 483-1241
<b>Fax:</b>	n/a
<b>Website:</b>	www.roosevelt-custer.org
<b>Email:</b>	rcrc@ndsupernet.com




# ND Region 1 Tri-County Regional Development Council

Serving a collective of 54,491 people  
Providing technical and administrative assistance in economic development, community and leadership development, workforce development, strategic planning, public infrastructure and housing, and financial development and packaging



## REGIONAL COUNCIL

LEGAL STRUCTURE

501(c)(4)

FOCUS

Technical and administrative assistance, leadership development, workforce development, strategic planning, public infrastructure and housing, financial development, and entrepreneurship, **expand lending capacity and infrastructure development**

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS COMPOSITION

Elected officials, government, business, industry, higher education, Tribal government, community organizations

FUNDING

EDA, Counties, State, revolving loan fund, grant and project administration and service fees, other

STAFF

Executive Director  
Office/Finance Manager  
Economic Recovery Coordinator  
Consultant

Certified Planner  
Loan Officer (2)



# ND Region 2 Souris Basin Planning Council

Serving a collective of 99,279 people  
Supporting communities, leaders, and entrepreneurs to advance economic progress



## REGIONAL COUNCIL

Political subdivision and designated economic development district 501(c)4

Business lending, entrepreneurship, economic development, AmeriCorps, capacity building, funding development, strategic planning, **workforce development, community development, expand lending capacity**

Elected officials, Job Service, Minot Air Force Base, EDCs, JDA's, MSU, Three Affiliated Tribes, Advisory Committees

EDA, Counties, State, JDAs, AmeriCorps, project administration, other

Executive Director  
Shared Program & Finance Manager  
Program Coordinator  
Communications & Project Specialist  
Administrative Assistant  
**Regional Workforce Coordinator**  
**Project Development Manager**  
**Lending Coordinator**

## Foundation

501(c)(3)

Community and economic support initiatives in Northwest ND; the Foundation works side-by-side with the regional council

3-member Board of Directors made up of community members

Grant funding

Shared Program & Finance Manager

**Executive Director**

LEGAL STRUCTURE

FOCUS

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS COMPOSITION

FUNDING

STAFF



# ND Region 3 North Central Planning Council

Serving a rural collective of 37,800 people  
Providing expertise and leadership to facilitate economic and community development



## REGIONAL COUNCIL

## Foundation



LEGAL STRUCTURE

Political subdivision and designated economic development district 501(c)(4)

501(c)(3)



FOCUS

Community and economic development, planning, business lending, grant writing, small business development

Capacity building, innovative ideas for regional development, regional marketing, tourism attraction, housing development, workforce development, entrepreneur development



BOARDS OF DIRECTORS COMPOSITION

Elected officials, financial sector, workforce, Tribal representatives, economic development

JDAs, stakeholders, RC board member(s)



FUNDING

EDA, Counties, project administration, service fees, local, other

EDA, USDA RD, Counties grants, development groups, local



STAFF

Executive Director  
SBDC Advisor  
Grant Administrator  
Financial Officer

Executive Director

Loan Officer  
Special Projects Developer

Marketing Manager  
Housing Developer/Manager



# ND Region 4 RED RIVER DEVELOPMENT GROUP



Serving a rural collective of 35,000 people

Providing expertise, leadership, technical assistance, resources, funding development, and grant writing to address community and regional issues/opportunities



	REGIONAL COUNCIL	DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION	DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT
LEGAL STRUCTURE	Political subdivision and designated economic development district	501(c)(3)	501(c)(6)
FOCUS	Community infrastructure, entrepreneurship, workforce, economic development, business lending, JDAs, strategic planning, grant writing/funding development	Housing and real estate development; philanthropy	Visitor attraction, marketing, product development, <b>implementation of Destination Red River Action Plan</b>
BOARDS OF DIRECTORS COMPOSITION	NDCC - elected officials, Job Service, EDCs, private sector, UND, Advisory Committee(s)	Lenders, NDHFA, developers, lumber stores, Grand Forks Housing Authority	State Parks, hospitality businesses, Chambers, GFCVB, ND Tourism
FUNDING	EDA, Counties, State, JDAs, project administration, USDA RD, Bush Foundation, other	\$200,000 seed funding secured, project development fees, HUD, USDA RD, Bremer	Memberships, state funding for pilot project, JDAs, long term funding strategy to be developed
STAFF	Shared CEO Shared Director of Operations Director of Nelson County Director of Pembina County <b>Director of Workforce</b> <b>Director of Community Services</b>	Shared CEO Shared Director of Operations  <b>Director of Development</b>	Shared CEO Shared Director of Operations  <b>Director of Marketing</b> <b>Director of Product Development</b>





# ND Region 5 Lake Agassiz Development Group

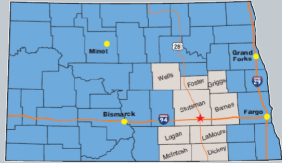
Coordinating and facilitating the provision of economic and social opportunities to residents in North Dakota



	REGIONAL COUNCIL	DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION	CERTIFIED DEVELOPMENT COMPANY
LEGAL STRUCTURE	501(c)(4)	501(c)(3)	501(c)(4)
FOCUS	Community infrastructure, business lending, JDAs, strategic planning, grant writing, <b>workforce, tourism, destination development, housing development</b>	Business lending, Senior Housing, shared service office space, entrepreneurship	SBA 504 Lending
BOARDS OF DIRECTORS COMPOSITION	Elected officials, Job Service, private sector	Private sector including lender, business owner, and developer	Lenders, business owners, attorney
FUNDING	EDA, Counties, JDAs, project administration	SBA, USDA, Otto Bremer Foundation, Bush Foundation, fees	SBA Program and servicing fees
STAFF	Shared Executive Director Planner Additional staff provided by RDC <b>Regional Workforce Coordinator</b> <b>Project Development Director</b> <b>Engagement and Communications Director</b>	Shared Executive Director CFO Administrative Assistant Commercial Lenders (3) Loan Servicing	Staff provided by RDC

# ND Region 6

## South Central Dakota Regional Council



Serving a rural collective of 55,850 people

Providing planning and development services, technical assistance, information coordination, grant writing, and program administration to facilitate the needs of local units of government in the areas of community development, economic development and public infrastructure



### REGIONAL COUNCIL

Political subdivision and designated economic development district, 501(c)(3)

Capacity building, regional marketing and development, workforce development, **housing development, tourism**

Elective officials, EDC and private sector

EDA, USDA, Counties, Grants, project administration, planning administration

Executive Director  
Planner  
Administrative Staff

**Grant Writer**  
**Loan Specialist**  
**Project Specialist**

 LEGAL STRUCTURE

 FOCUS

 BOARDS OF DIRECTORS COMPOSITION

 FUNDING

 STAFF



# ND Region 7 Lewis & Clark Development Group

A collaboration of three separate non profit organizations, joined to provide programs and loans to support businesses, local governments, and individuals in expanding affordable housing opportunities and advancing economic and community development across North Dakota



	REGIONAL COUNCIL	CommunityWorks North Dakota	Lewis & Clark CDC
LEGAL STRUCTURE	Political subdivision and designated economic development district 501(c)(4)	501(c)(3)	501(c)(3)
FOCUS	Economic and community development, business lending, community infrastructure	Affordable housing and development opportunities; part of the national NeighborWorks America Network	Administer and facilitate SBA 504 program for small business lending
BOARDS OF DIRECTORS COMPOSITION	Elected officials, EDCs, RECs, private sector, Tribal representatives, UTTC	Lenders, Local and State Housing Agency Representatives, Service Agency Representatives, Realtors, and business owners	Financial institutions, Community Development Organizations, business owners, government officials
FUNDING	EDA, Counties, and USDA RD	NeighborWorks America, NDHFA, Wells Fargo Foundation, Dacotah Bank, USDA RD, Rural Development Finance Corporation	Small Business Administration
STAFF	Senior Commercial Lending Director Commercial Lending Director Lender (2) Commercial Closing Officer Commercial Loan Processor Shared Director of Operations Shared CEO <b>Compliance Officer (2)</b> <b>Loan Servicing Officer</b>	Housing Director Multifamily Housing Director Multifamily Development Director Compliance Director Compliance Processor Property Managers (2) Site Managers (2) Maintenance Managers (3) Shared Director of Operations Shared CEO	Staff provided by RDC



# ND Region 8 Roosevelt Custer Regional Council

Roosevelt Custer  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

Serving a rural collective of 46,000 people  
Providing technical assistance, leadership, business funding and resources, and more  
traditional regional council services in southwest North Dakota



## REGIONAL COUNCIL

LEGAL STRUCTURE

Political subdivision and designated  
economic development district 501(c)(3)

FOCUS

Community infrastructure, entrepreneurship, economic development, business  
lending, JDAs, strategic planning,  
technical assistance, grant writing, funding development, workforce  
development, destination development, visitor attraction

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS  
COMPOSITION

Elected officials, Job Service, EDCs,  
private sector, higher education, Advisory Committees,  
ND Tourism Advisory

FUNDING

EDA, Counties, project administration, USDA RD,  
Cities, membership, State, other

STAFF

Executive Director  
Council Administrator  
Shared Finance & Operations Coordinator  
Shared Marketing & Communications Coordinator  
Grant Writer  
Tourism Director  
Workforce Director  
Program Specialist