

Annual Review

2021

SEND
Southeast Nebraska Development District



Global Perspectives. Regional Value. Local Impact.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As 2021 closes, I am filled with hope for the communities of southeast Nebraska. The past few years have been challenging; natural disasters, a global pandemic, and a distrust in our government that is testing the fabric of our nation. Yet, Nebraskans continue to display civility and a willingness to come together. From SENDD's standpoint, this sense of community is truly immeasurable, and I could not be more proud of our region and this organization.

This past year, we have taken on some very unique projects, moved to a permanent home, unveiled a new logo, partnered with new organizations, presented to national audiences, expanded our membership, and worked diligently to address ongoing concerns. Concerns such as quality housing, access to good jobs, crumbling historic downtowns, and finding a solution to affordable and reliable broadband - and our efforts are paying off.

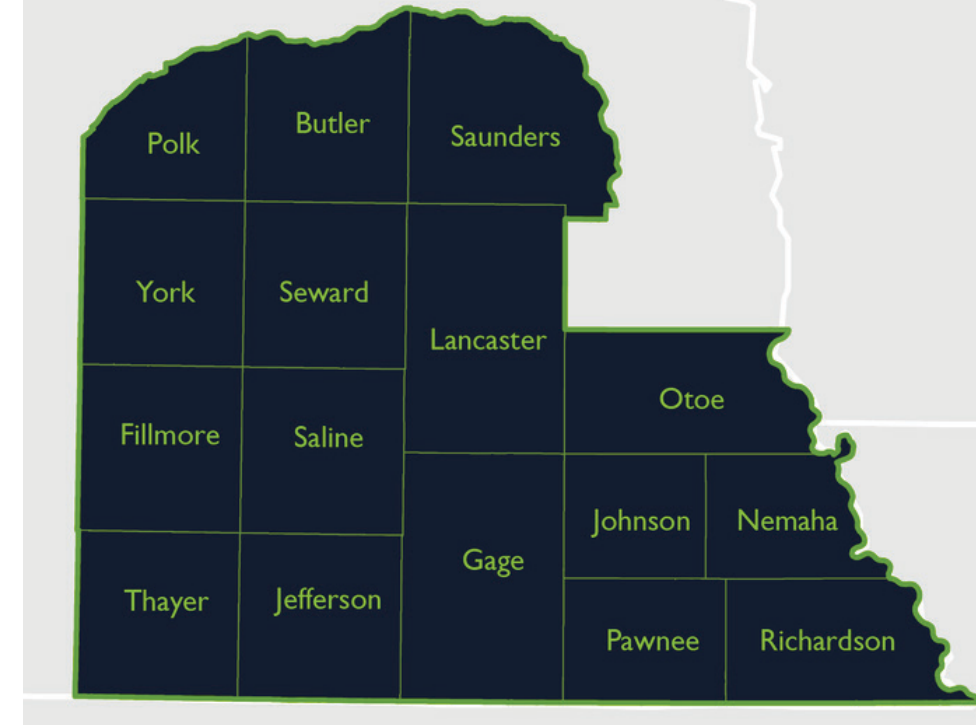
Over the last 16 months, SENDD was able to secure over \$15.8 million in state and federal grant funds that improve the lives of area residents. In partnership with our member communities, we renovated homes, assisted downtown businesses, helped create new jobs, improved streets and sidewalks, and added staff to focus solely on broadband. We also grew our loan programs by adding a \$1 million Economic Development Administration (EDA) Revolving Loan Fund.

We could certainly not do this without your support. As always, I want to extend an open invitation for all members to visit SENDD's offices when you are in Lincoln or Auburn. I encourage each of you to reach out to us through email or a phone call with your ideas, suggestions, and thoughts.

Tom Bliss

Executive Director

THE SENDD MEMBERSHIP REGION



16 COUNTIES, 1 NEW COUNTY MEMBER IN 2021

Butler



\$147,766 TOTAL COUNTY MEMBERSHIP & HOUSING DUES



52 CITIES, 3 NEW IN 2021

Beatrice, David City, Syracuse



72 VILLAGES, 5 NEW IN 2021

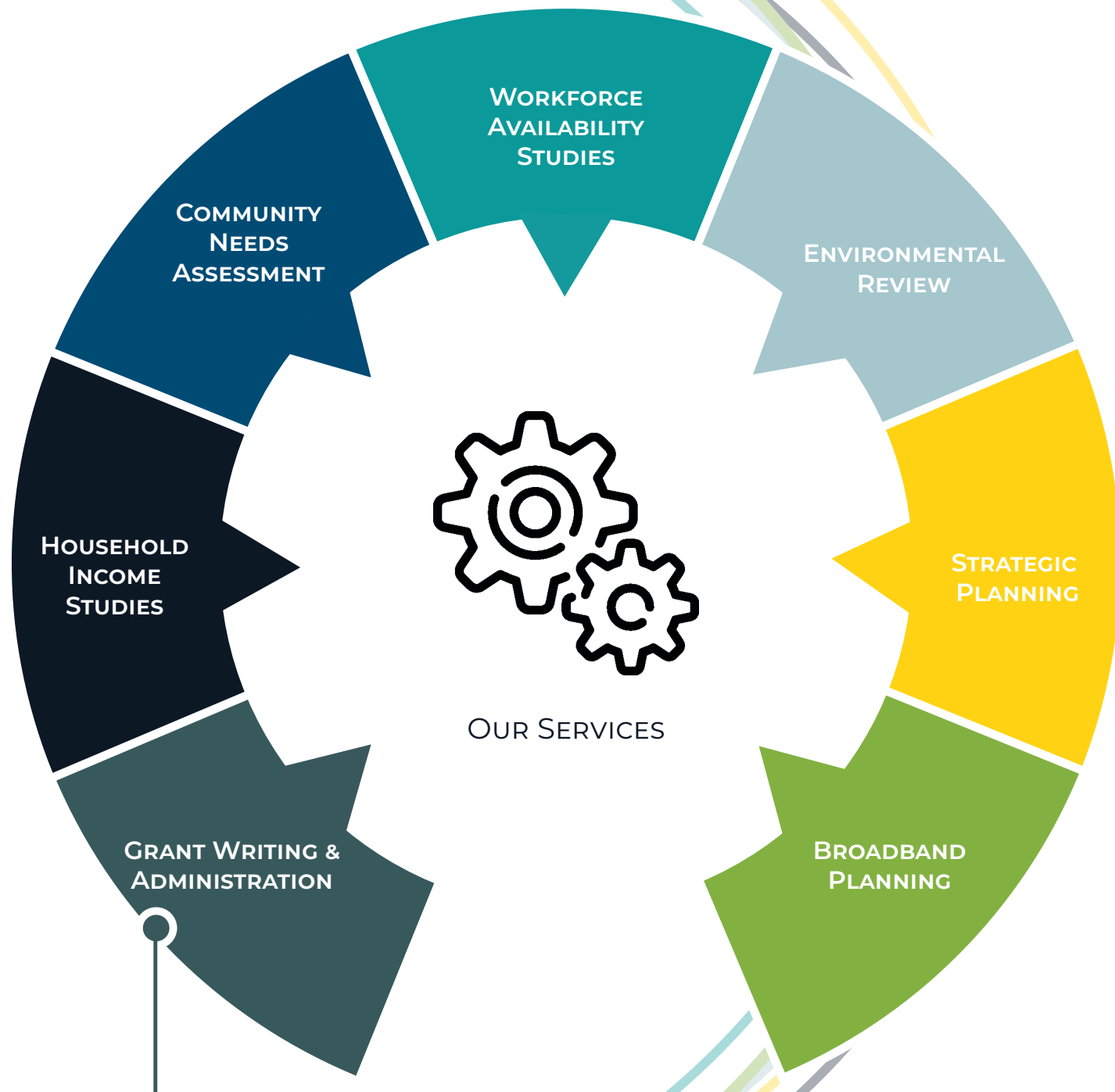
Bellwood, Cordova, LeShara, Sprague, Waverly



\$105,000 TOTAL COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP & HOUSING DUES

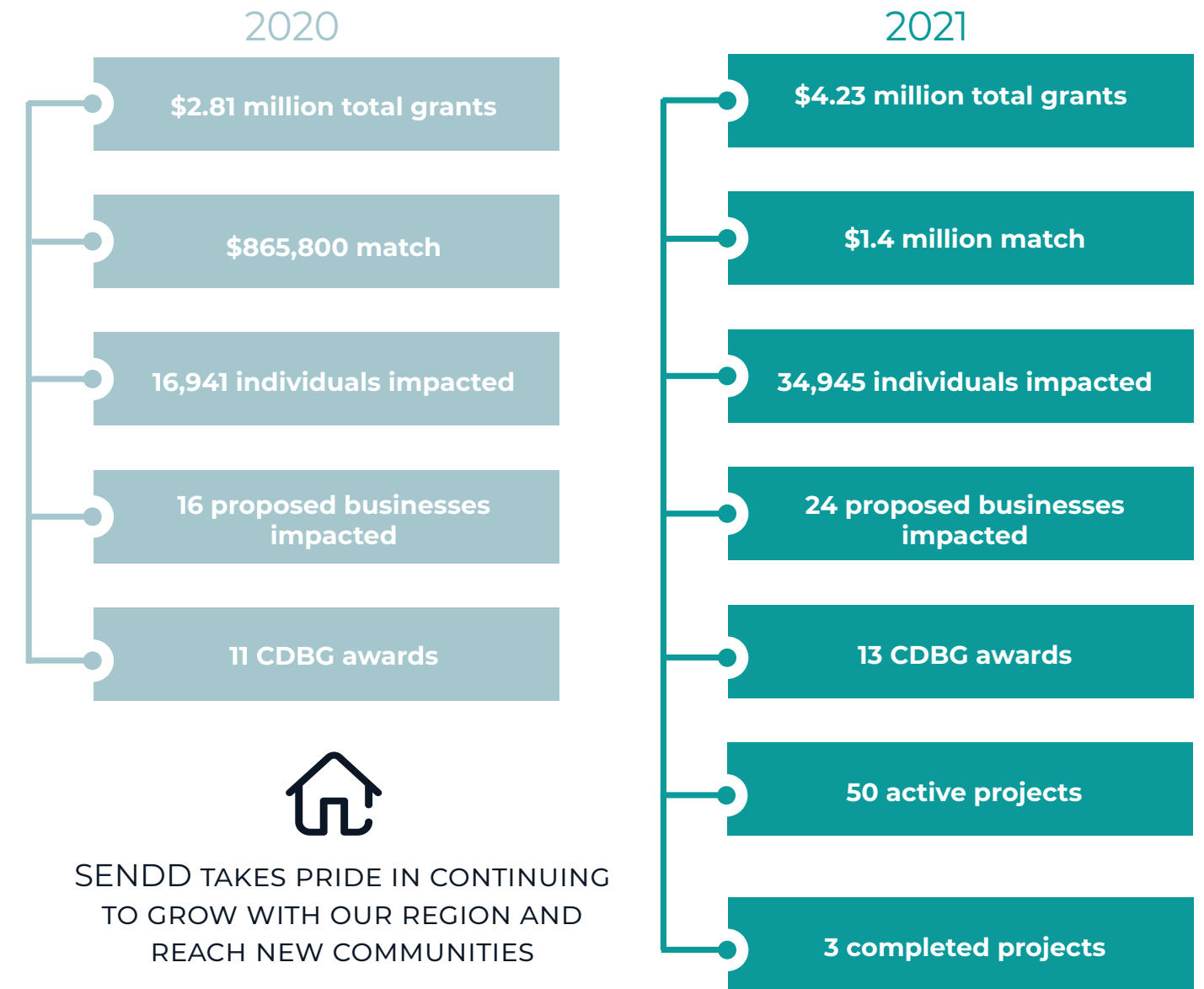


COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Downtown Revitalization, Economic Development, Planning, Public Works, Tourism, Youth Job Training
- Civic and Community Center Financing Fund
- Land and Water Conservation Fund

BY THE NUMBERS



(Above) Peru State College

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION: SEWARD



(Left) The former Woods Bros Realty building (644 Seward St.) has been converted to a new bakery, Liz's Sweet Stuff, and an art studio.



(Above right) The former Dollar General building (612 Seward St.) is now a business center/ coworking space called, "The Forge" that houses Aspyr Professional Group (accounting firm) and City Bank & Trust Co. mortgage loan office.



(Above) The IH Feary Building (132 S. 5th St.) suffered a substantial fire but has now been rebuilt into seven executive apartments and soon to be Jimmy John's restaurant.

50% OF
PROJECT
COSTS WERE
PROVIDED
BY CDBG
FUNDS

PLANNING: SYRACUSE & DAVID CITY UNL PLANNING

As part of SENDD's efforts to empower local workforces and foster regional relationships, David City and Syracuse (new members) partnered with SENDD and the University of Nebraska - Lincoln (UNL) Community and Regional Planning (CRPL) program to create DTR plans that will serve as a guide for future investments and growth in downtown boundaries.



(Left) Jessica Meyer, City Administrator for Syracuse giving an introductory presentation at the first DTR community engagement session.

(Right) Syracuse Zoning Inspector, Bruce Neeman, giving a detailed description of buildings as students tour the downtown area. Pictured from left to right - Kelechi Chibuikem (SEND), Jacob Schalange (UNL), Bruce Neeman (Zoning Inspector) and Jessica Meyer (City Administrator)



(Left) Syracuse business owner sharing his experiences during a planning session

PUBLIC WORKS: WESTON

The Village of Weston recently completed municipal street improvements encompassing roughly 10 blocks of village streets located throughout the central business district.



(Left and above) Looking up Elm Street at the resurfaced road that serves the central business district including the popular Ponderosa Saloon.



82% OF PROJECT COST WAS PROVIDED BY CDBG FUNDS

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: HICKMAN



(Above) Reconstruction of the Nebraska Communities Playhouse, which helped remove architectural barriers and material that restricted the accessibility opportunities for persons with disabilities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: YORK COLD STORAGE

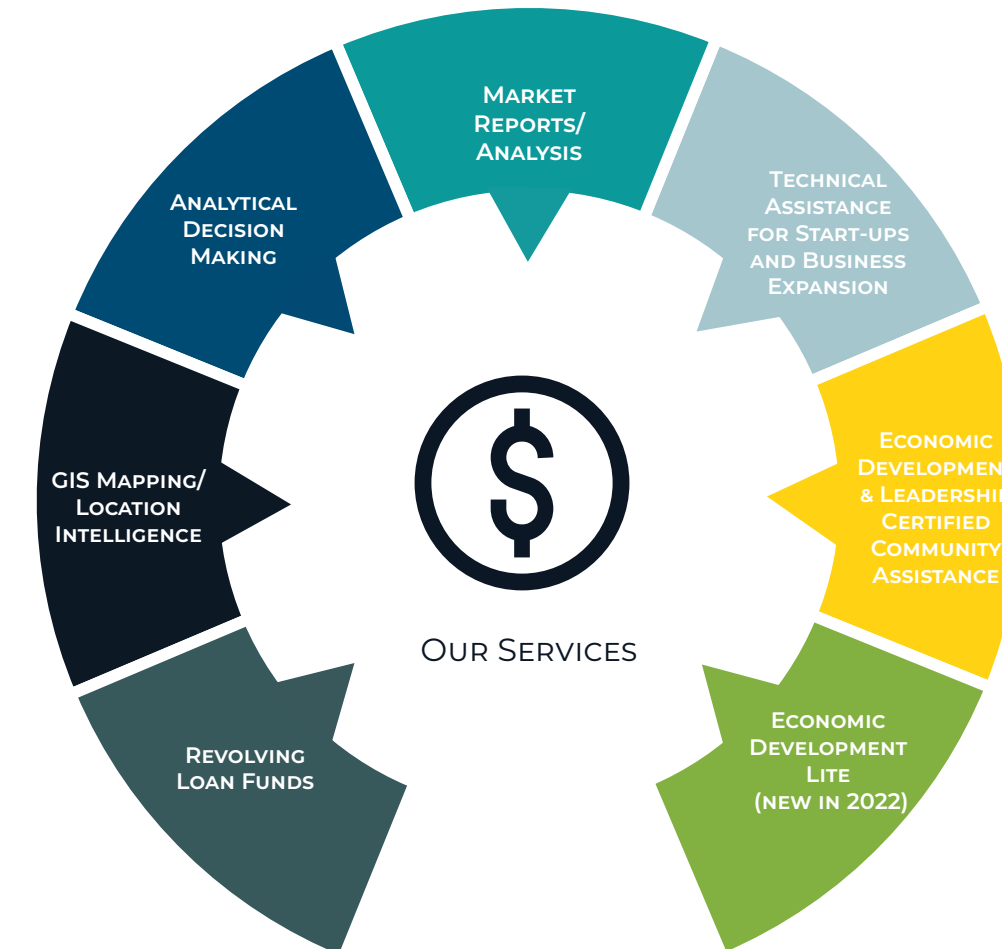
12 NEW JOBS AND \$4.35 MILLION IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT



(Right) The new plate freezer and ammonia compressors (Far right) in the cold storage facility



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



BY THE NUMBERS

5 BUSINESSES ASSISTED

40 TOTAL INQUIRIES

\$694,000 TOTAL AMOUNT LOANED

24 ACTIVE LOANS

\$7.525 million TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT

\$1.6 million LOAN FUNDS AVAILABLE

SPOTLIGHT: LISA HURLEY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, YORK COUNTY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (YCDC)



Lisa Hurley, Certified Economic Developer and Economic Developer Master Practitioner, joined YCDC in May 2013 as the Executive Director.

Lisa focuses her efforts on coordinating business (retention, expansion, recruitment, and development), marketing efforts, and overseeing other YCDC efforts including housing and workforce efforts. Lisa is the Vice

Chair of SENDD, Treasurer/Secretary of the National Rural Economic Development Association, and holds board seats on the following boards: York Chamber of Commerce, and York Rotary.

Under Lisa's leadership, what was an industry focused business development organization has expanded to working with collaborative partnerships adding talent, retail and housing initiatives, while being a business progressive organization. Due to her leadership in her industry, Lisa won the Nebraska Economic Developers Association 2021 Professional of the Year.



What drew you to your Economic Development role with York County Development Corporation?

I had been working at a regional level, and was ready to move to a local EDO. I was attracted to York County, as YCDC had a progressive reputation, and it was in the Lincoln region where we wanted to be.

If you had a magic wand that would give you one tool to support your community, what would it be?

This is difficult. I think it all comes down to collaboration and funding. Yes, that's two tools, and if I had to narrow it down, it would be collaboration. With a dedicated group of individuals who are willing to work through differences to come to a great solution, anything is possible!

How has Southeast Nebraska Development District been able to support YCDC in economic development/community development projects?

SENDD has helped us in too many ways to count. From housing to community projects, SENDD staff is always willing to talk through projects and figure out how to make projects work. For example, figuring out how to utilize the City of York's Economic Development Reuse Funds for COVID response was a tactic that took local, SENDD, and DED to ensure the project got approved, and then met all the regulations.

What advice do you have for communities interested in starting economic development?

Economic Development is a long-term game. You cannot expect huge results within the first year of starting up a program. Also, starting with the budget to allow your initial staff (hopefully trained or funding to train) to do their job is critical. Start with the strategic plan and then measure each year. As you work on this strategic plan, you have to have a product to market. If you do not have a building or land, then don't be marketing for new businesses. Either way, your existing businesses should be your priority! 80% of new jobs will come from local growth!

"If you can laugh together, you can work together." – Robert Orben

SPOTLIGHT: JIMMY JOHN'S - YORK



SEND, Inc., in partnership with the City of York, assisted Nixon Restaurant & Property, Inc. with an equipment and working capital loan. The project located at 3525 Lincoln Ave, York, opened its doors on January 5, 2021 with one of the largest grand openings in the history of Jimmy Johns.

"I am extremely grateful to have collaborated with SENDD in my projects. The officers have helped me accomplish a business success story. I truly believe that without the help of this organization I would still be staring up at my monster wall, always wondering what could have been. I am proud to say, I had my moment; I found my ladder to scale the wall, and my dream is right here, right now."

Sam Nixon, Jimmy John's (York)



SPOTLIGHT: WAVERLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER - WAVERLY

Waverly Child Development Center, currently located at 10920 N 144th St, Suite B in Waverly, NE, is a full-service childcare development facility that cares for children ages six weeks to 12 years. In 2021, SENDD assisted Waverly Child Development Center with a working capital and equipment loan for the proposed new facility located at 9611 Bailie Court in Waverly.

The project is proposed to be completed in Spring of 2022.

"While applying for financing through the SBA for our new childcare facility, we faced a challenge due to the increasing costs in materials, especially with our lumber package, which increased by nearly 300%. This was driving construction costs up, while property values stayed relatively the same, causing our appraisal for the new center to come back low. The appraisal coming in low, meant that we would have little to no room for financing the rest of the project without looking to a third party lender.

Through partnering with SENDD on our financial package, we were able to finance most of our equipment costs and working capital, which allowed us to work in everything we would need from our fire/access control system, to our appliances, to our furniture and school supplies. Kelly Gentrup with SENDD has been a pleasure to work with and we would highly recommend them to anyone seeking assistance in this space."

Cory Tinklin, Owner, Waverly Child Development Center



HOUSING & CONTRACTING

Owner Occupied Rehabilitation

Housing Quality Standards Inspections

Nuisance Abatement Programs

Down Payment Assistance Loans

Purchase, Rehab, Resale

New Construction Services

Housing Condition Studies

Lead-based Paint Inspections

General Contracting Services



OUR SERVICES



BY THE NUMBERS



11 CDBG PROJECTS FUNDED

\$4.458 million CDBG GRANT FUNDING

3 NAHTF PROJECTS FUNDED

NAHTF PROJECTS FUNDED



\$1.641 million NAHTF GRANT FUNDING



2 RWHF PROJECTS FUNDED

\$189,500 LOANS FUNDED

337 TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED

135 LEAD TESTS

4 NO. OF #504 LOANS PACKAGED



3 NO. OF REUSE PROJECTS



252 ASSISTED THROUGH LAP

\$1.64 million LANDLORD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

16 SENDD CONTRACTING PROJECTS

11 NO. PRR PROJECTS

72 INSPECTIONS

2 NO. OF #502 LOANS PACKAGED



\$40,000 TA GRANT FUNDING



(Above) Staff participated in a groundbreaking ceremony for a new housing development funded by the Disaster Recovery Housing program.



BEFORE



AFTER

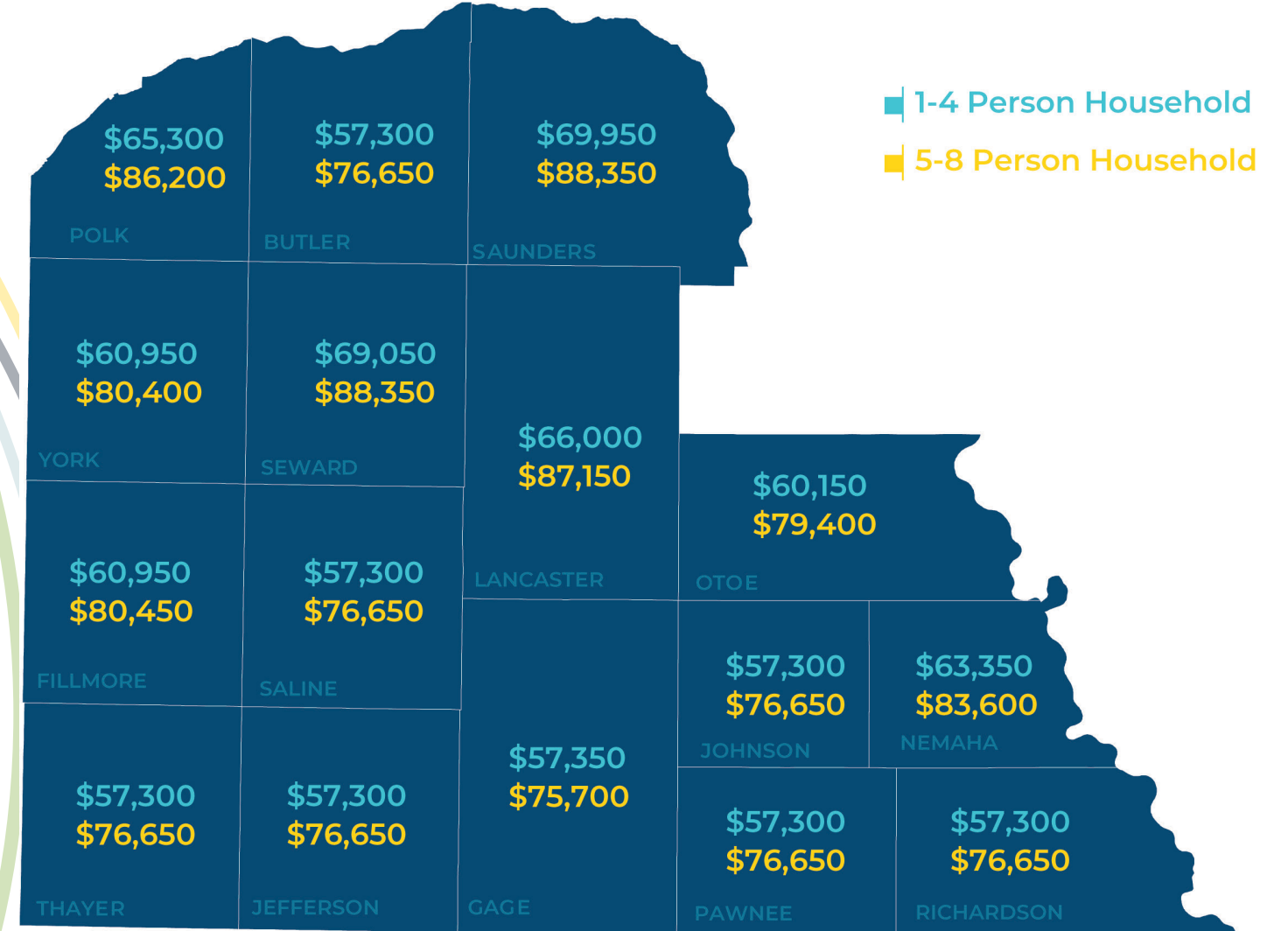
In 2021, SEND D Contracting continued to grow and expand the services offered throughout the region. Our efforts remained focused towards partnering with communities and regional organizations to revitalize dilapidated housing stock into safe, affordable, energy efficient, and low maintenance homes. While the region and the country are enduring extremely difficult times, we continue to evolve with the ever-changing market with creative and

innovative solutions. We are currently undertaking our biggest project to date located in Stromsburg and are thrilled with the progress we have made. SEND D Contracting will carry this momentum into 2022 with several exciting new projects and opportunities already in the pipeline!



BEFORE

AFTER



The USDA Section 502 Direct home Loan Program assists low-income Nebraska residents in obtaining safe and sanitary housing in eligible rural areas. Additionally, funds can be used to build, repair, renovate, or relocate a home. SEND D currently has four staff members qualified to assist those interested with the application.

Eligible applicants can typically expect low interest rates (2.5%), no down payment, and a 33-year loan term.

In early 2021, SENDD was approached by Harlan Ptomey, Superintendent of Cedar Bluffs Public Schools, to discuss options for grant programs to reinvest in Cedar Bluffs' older homes, a locally identified housing priority. Ptomey introduced SENDD to the Cedar Bluffs Education Foundation (CBEF), a 501 (c)3 non-profit founded in 2012 to not only help grow the school by providing scholarships and financial aid to students, but also to help Cedar Bluffs thrive by spearheading various community improvement initiatives. These discussions resulted in a collaboration between CBEF and SENDD, with the former applying to the 2021 Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF) for an Owner-Occupied Rehab (OOR) Program to serve at least 18 Cedar Bluffs homeowners. Utilizing SENDD's grant writing services, the CBEF put together a very competitive and strong application.

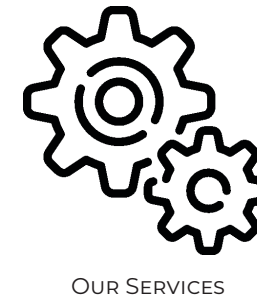


This success can be attributed to the outstanding local marketing efforts conducted by the CBEF Board of Directors and employees of Cedar Bluffs Public Schools. Their combined efforts resulted in a tremendous turnout of potential applicants, which far exceeded the targeted goal of at least 18 potential beneficiaries. A Cedar Bluffs High School student even volunteered to create informational program posters and brochures in his digital art class, which were sent home with each student and distributed around the community through the CBEF's door-to-door marketing campaign.

SENDD would like to acknowledge the dedicated initiative and leadership displayed by the CBEF during this year's NAHTF grant cycle. With the Cedar Bluffs OOR Program scheduled to begin in early 2022, the CBEF will oversee yet another successful project, adding to their already impressive resume of community enhancements.

"It was such a pleasure working with Southeast Nebraska Development District to develop our grant that will be a monumental benefit for our community. We can't thank the organization for all their support and look forward to the positive impact this program makes on our community."

Harlan Ptomey, Cedar Bluffs Superintendent



SENDD continues to make disaster-related information easily accessible to the public through our newsletter, website, and social media pages.

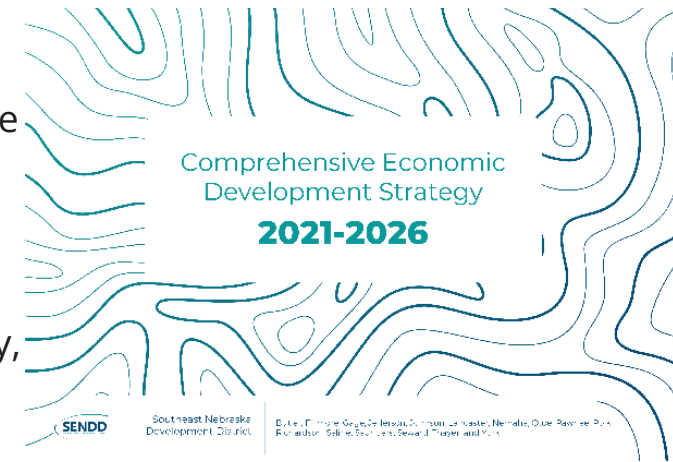


(Left) Staff presented at the 2021 Nebraska Planning & Zoning Association Conference on hazard mitigation and economic implications for the region. (Above) Attendees at the NPZA Conference.

ONGOING SENDD PROJECTS

COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SUMMARY

After a furious 2020, the time came for SENDD and stakeholders (community members and appointed strategy committee members) to update the 2018-2023 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for southeast Nebraska. It is an accepted best practice to revisit economic strategies routinely. Consequently, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) requires all development districts within the United States to revise their CEDS every five years and update them annually. The 2021 CEDS serves as an update of SENDD's previous CEDS.



Early in the CEDS planning process, SENDD staff met with appointed strategy committee members to map out a five-year vision for southeast Nebraska. A survey questionnaire was also issued earlier to reveal the economic needs of residents in the area. Following the identification of stakeholders' goals, vision, and priorities, SENDD staff was tasked with developing an Action Plan that aligns with the overall economic vision of the SENDD area, which is:

"Increase regional growth and resilience that enhances our natural, built and community systems throughout the southeast Nebraska region."

The indulgence of SENDD staff in the later planning stages ensured the development of a well-informed and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely) Action plan. The staff also guaranteed that the Action Plan aligned with the six priorities (Local Business, Infrastructure Development, Housing Affordability, Regional Engagement, Quality of Life, and Disaster Planning) identified by stakeholders. Six priorities, each with underlying strategies, performance measures, and partnerships, served as the bedrock of the Action Plan. The regional survey, SWOT analysis, stakeholder input, and recent statewide initiatives such as the Nebraska blueprint also informed the plan.

The CEDS, approved and submitted in December 2021, employs the two fundamental pillars of Equitable Growth and Connectivity/Resilience (as agreed upon by stakeholders) to strengthen regional growth and economic resilience throughout southeast Nebraska.

22 Visit www.sendd.org/ceds to view the final CEDs document.

SENDD'S NEW LOCATION

In partnership with Southeast Nebraska Affordable Housing Council (SENAHC), SENDD purchased and remodeled a new office located at 7407 O St in Lincoln, NE.

- A refurbished lobby with conference tables to accommodate up to 25 people ideal for full board meetings
- A built out copier room
- 3 newly constructed offices
- Updated restrooms & kitchen
- New office furniture
- New audio/visual system
- New signage
- New paint, carpet, & tiles



23

BROADBAND

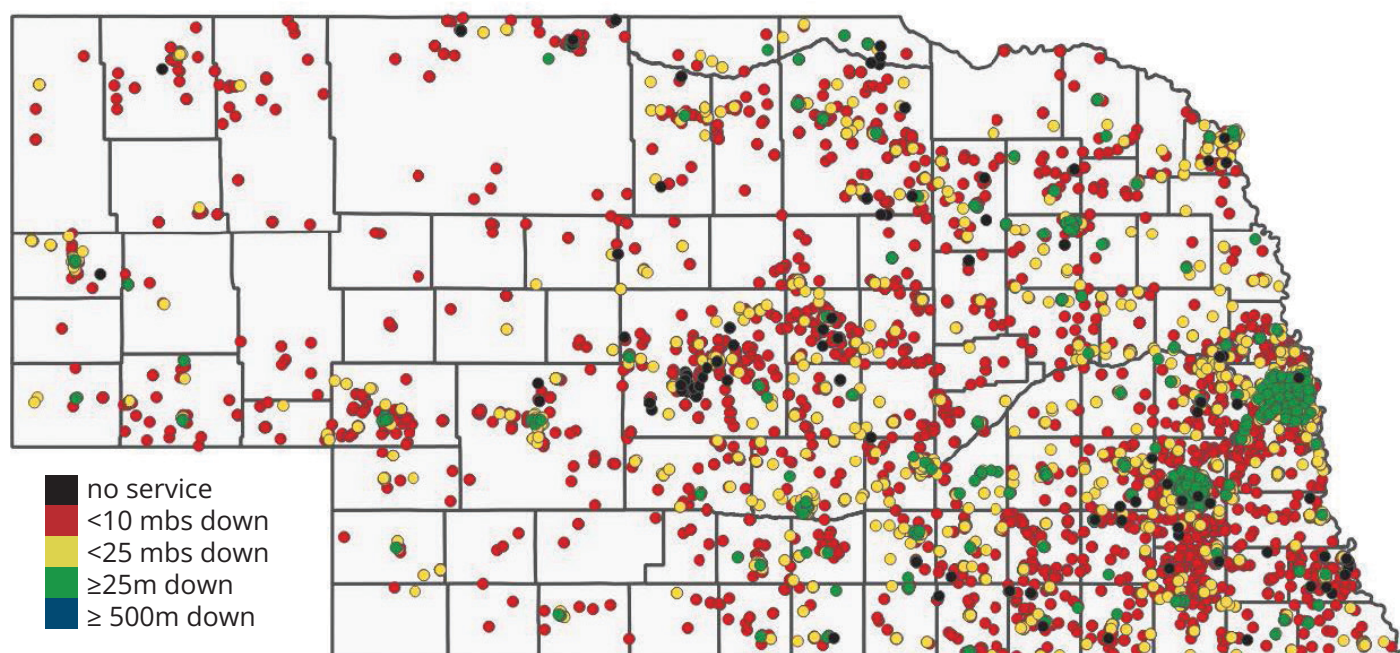
Broadband availability is trending upward across SENDD's 16-member counties: 32% of the region has access to wireline broadband of at least 100 Mbps download, 20 Mbps upload, an increase of 17% from the previous year (2020). Despite recent progress, rural broadband access remains a major priority to foster economic development and place-making in the southeast Nebraska region.

In the spring of 2021, SENDD created a four part video series called Broadband 101 (www.sendd.org/broadband) to help educate the public about broadband expansion. SENDD also continues to operate and expand the scope of the Nebraska Broadband Speed Test (www.nebraskaspeedtest.org) to help provide decision makers with an accurate picture of connectivity in the region. SENDD has positioned itself as a regional leader in efforts to close the digital divide.

In the fall of 2021, SENDD with Lead for Nebraska, a fellowship program focused on building capacity in rural communities. This collaborative effort is the first of its kind and it establishes SENDD as the leading driver of broadband expansion in the state. Two Broadband Fellows are assisting in the coordination and implementation of broadband expansion efforts throughout the region, empowering local stakeholders to connect their communities to reliable broadband networks.

New state and federal funding sources present an opportunity to connect

NEBRASKA SPEED TEST (1 DOT = 1 TEST)

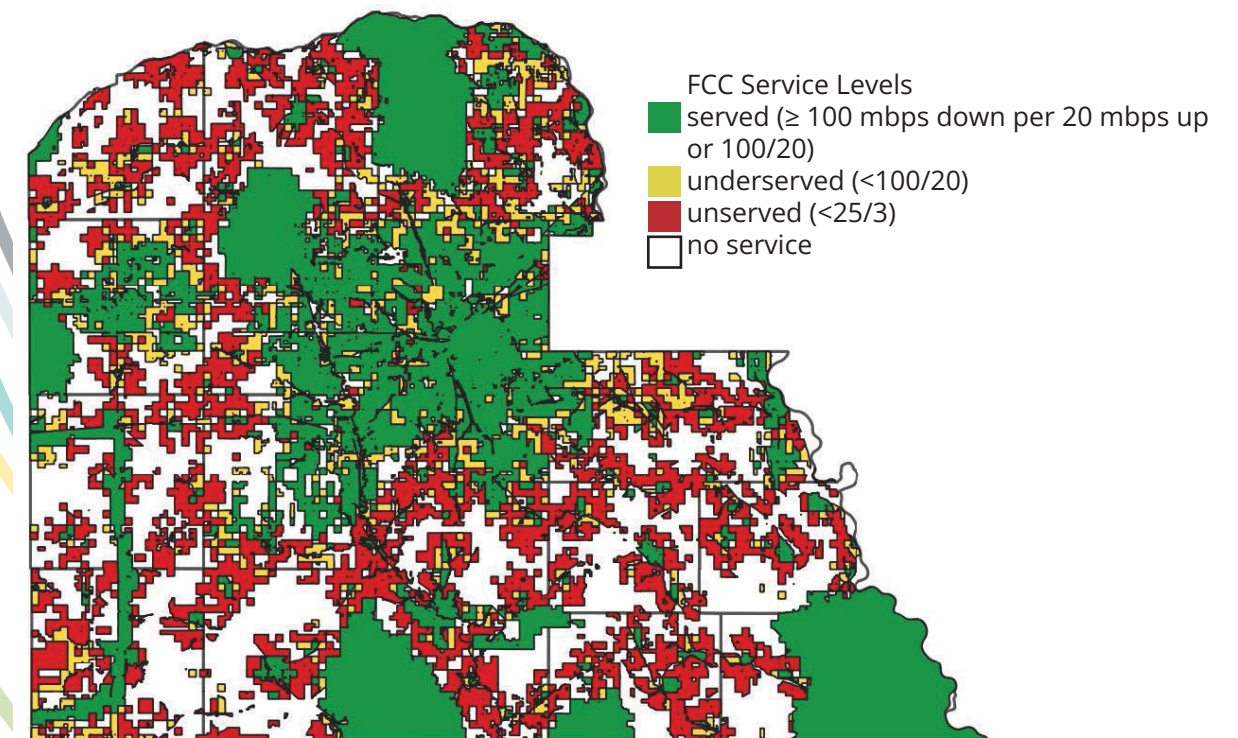


Nebraskans to high-speed broadband. Round one of the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program promises to connect hundreds of households in the region. SENDD is working with member counties to leverage American Rescue Plan Act funds to further connect rural communities and residents. Additionally, the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act includes \$65 billion in funding for broadband and digital inclusion that will be available in 2022. SENDD has made it a priority to inform communities about these funding opportunities and to equip stakeholders with the necessary tools and information to negotiate partnerships and secure funding.

To keep the momentum for broadband expansion going, SENDD continues its previous efforts while also pursuing new ones. SENDD further recommends that the speed test be taken by at least 10% of the population in every county.

The Broadband Fellows continue to meet with county commissioners and stakeholders to emphasize the importance and value of broadband access. SENDD is also actively facilitating the formation of local Broadband Action Teams (BATs), a model for community involvement in broadband expansion planning and digital inclusion programs, that has proven effective in other states across the country.

WIRELINE BROADBAND AVAILABILITY IN SENDD REGION



CITY OF LINCOLN SMALL BUSINESS STABILIZATION PROGRAM

The City of Lincoln received \$46 million dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act and allocated those dollars by creating the \$7 million dollar Small Business Stabilization Grant program that assists small businesses with rental/lease assistance. The program launched October 18 and within the first 5 days, over 369 applications were submitted for a total of \$9.3 million. The City partnered with SENDD to administer the program. SENDD is grateful for the partnership with the City of Lincoln and the ability to assist businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION REVOLVING LOAN FUND



COVID-19 continues to have a significant impact on small businesses throughout the region creating a financial burden leaving businesses in tough economic times.



The Economic Development Administration awarded SENDD a \$832,000 Revolving Loan Fund grant matched with \$270,000 from SENDD for a total of over a \$1 million loan pool to assist eligible businesses impacted by COVID-19. This RLF program was funded in part by the CARES Act.

CHILDCARE

SENDD is partnering with First Five Nebraska and Nebraska Children and Families Foundation to create a childcare centered business plan model. This model provides a market snapshot and evaluates the business models and profitability for new and expanding owners. Its purpose will be to provide a structured model to reference when considering market entry, profitability, and benchmarking analysis. Childcare, especially in our rural communities, is a huge need. This project will address the need for childcare in the region by providing a resource for those entrepreneurs who are developing a business plan, securing financing, or discussing options with investors to expand childcare facilities within their designated markets.

PURCHASE, REHAB, RESALE

SENDD and SENAHC partnered to create a unique alternative option for housing by providing safe, decent, and affordable housing for homeowners within the region. This program is designed to revolve funds for a continual flow of projects throughout both organizations' district. The goal of this program is to utilize existing housing stock to create long term viable homeownership opportunities for local homeowners while eliminating dilapidated and nuisance properties. The process includes:

- Identify potential buyers and properties for the program
- Conduct initial inspection and evaluate property for feasibility
- Create a scope of work
- Provide recommendations to the review committee
- Purchase property and complete the scope of work
- Sell the property to a pre-qualified buyer

FOOD SECURITY FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFA) is a national association dedicated to the advancement of development finance concerns and interests. CDFA is collaborating with SENDD to produce a strategic financing plan for the local food system. The plan will focus on the use of traditional development finance tools -- like bonds, tax credits, and revolving loan funds -- to meet regional infrastructure and small business needs for food and agriculture-related development. Regional stakeholders and members of the regional advisory committee will have the opportunity to shape the future of our local food system and create new opportunities for small businesses and food organizations. This work will complement the ongoing efforts of SENDD communities to strengthen regional food security.



WEALTHWORKS

SENDD is initiating WealthWorks training for area chambers, developers, business owners, stakeholders, and elected officials. WealthWorks aims to advance a region's overall prosperity and self-reliance, strengthen existing and emerging sectors, and increase employment and income opportunities by building on regional assets. WealthWorks simplifies things by organizing local features into eight discrete capitals: individual, social, intellectual, cultural, financial, built, political, and natural. Our goal is to strengthen the quality of life for all people across the region, by promoting shared values of health, respect, equality, and inclusiveness.

BOARD MEMBERS

Executive Board Members

Erich Tiemann - Chair	Gage Co.
Lisa Hurley - Vice Chair	York County Development Corporation
Dan Mauk - Treasurer	Nebraska City Area Development Corporation
Dave Bruning - Secretary	Thayer Co.
Gale Poehlman	Jefferson Co.
Walker Zulkowski	NPAIT/PMA Financial Network

Governmental Representatives

Ralph Graham	Fillmore Co.
Jared Somson	Fillmore Co. (alt)
Jim Erickson	Johnson Co.
Rick Vest	Lancaster Co.
Mike Hall	Nemaha Co.
Jim Thurman	Otoe County
Lavon Heidemann	Pawnee Co.
Ron Seitz	Pawnee Co.
Ron Boruch	Polk Co.
Rick Karas	Richardson Co.
Russ Karpisek	Saline Co.
Frank Albrecht	Saunders Co.
Ken Schmieding	Seward Co.
Darrell Zabrocki	Seward Co. (alt)
Kurt Bulgrin	York Co.

Private Sector Representatives

Rod Reisen	13 Bank
Bob Berggren	Rose Colored Glass
Brook Aken	Omaha Public Power District
Jerry Divis	Home Real Estate

Stakeholder Organization Representatives

Marguerite Himmelberg	Southeast Community College
Rebecca Jewell	Peru State College

At-Large Representatives

Rex Nelson	UNL Extension
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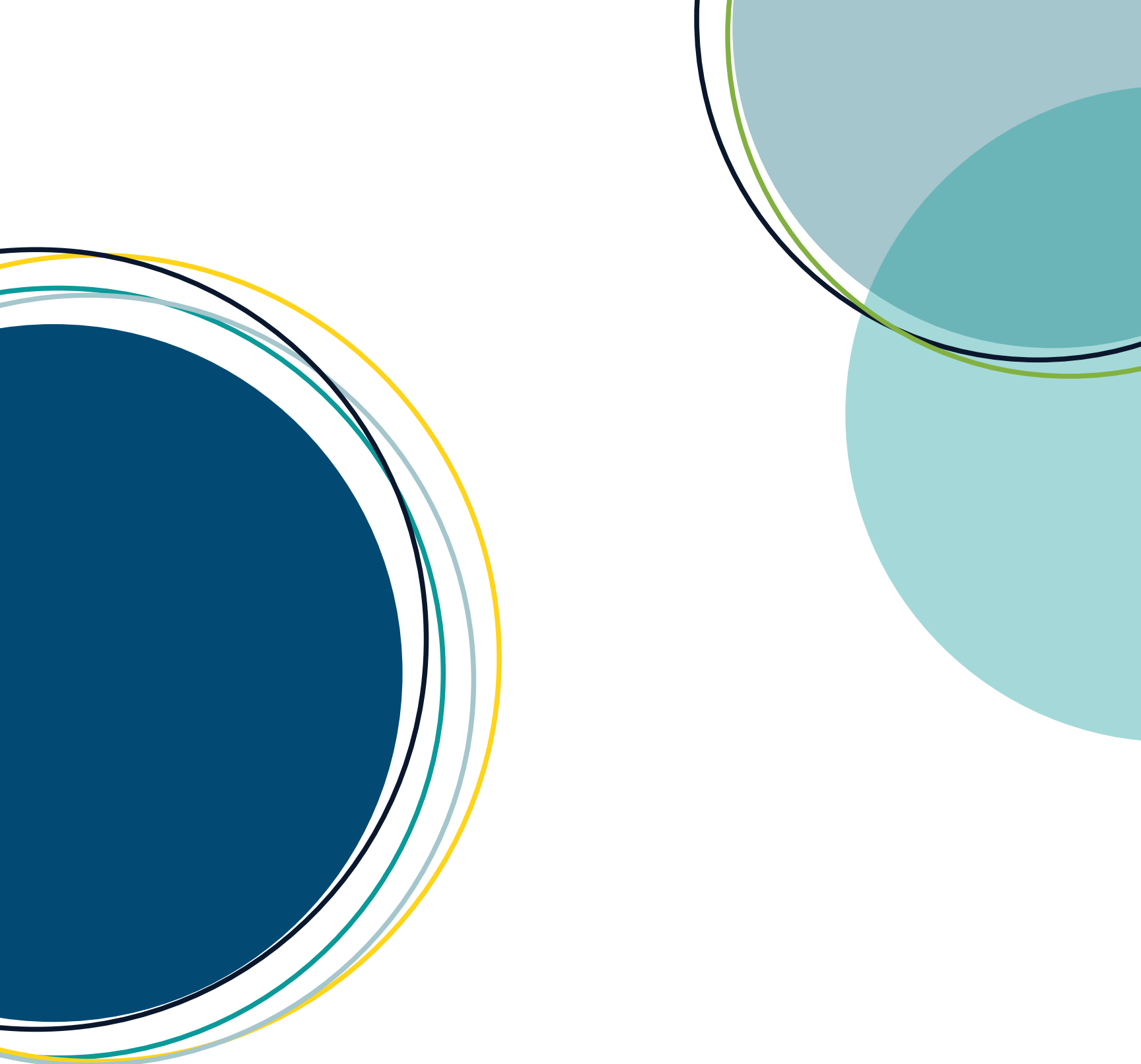
DEADLINES & RESOURCES

ANTICIPATED DEADLINES:

Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund
CDBG Economic Development: Open Cycle, July
CDBG Emergent Threat: Open Cycle, July
CDBG Tourism Development: Open Cycle, July
CDBG Public Works: August
CDBG Planning: September
CDBG Downtown Revitalization: September
CDBG Owner Occupied Rehabilitation: September
Land & Water Conservation Fund: September

OTHER REGIONAL RESOURCES:

Ashland Area Economic Development Council (AAEDC)
Black Hills Energy (BHE)
Blue Valley Community Action Partnership (BVCA)
Center for Rural Affairs (CFRA)
National Association of Development Organizations (NADO)
Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF)
Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC)
Nebraska Community Foundation (NCF)
Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED)
Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT)
Nebraska Economic Developers Association (NEDA)
Nebraska Emergency Management Agency (NEMA)
Nebraska Enterprise Fund (NEF)
Nebraska Housing Developers Association (NHDA)
Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)
Nebraska Planning and Zoning Association (NPZA)
Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD)
Nebraska Regional Development Commission (NRDC)
Omaha Public Power District (OPPD)
Partners for Progress/Stronger Economies Together (P4P/SET)
Perennial Public Power District (PPPD)
Small Business Administration (SBA)
Southeast Community College (SCC)
Southeast Nebraska Affordable Housing Council (SENAHC)
Southeast Nebraska Community Action (SENCA)
Southeast Nebraska Development, Inc. (SEND, Inc.)
Thayer County Economic Development Alliance (TCEDA)
United States Department of Agriculture
United States Economic Development Administration (EDA)



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