

Meeting Notes

Agenda

- 1) EDA Latest
- 2) WMSRDC Update
- 3) EDA Investment Priorities
- 4) Roundtable

Attendance:

Greg Poches, FACH
Jodi Gruner, MDARD
Darryl Todd, MEDC
Sue DeVries, MEDC
Phil Morse, Village of Shelby
Ryan Coffey-Hoag, MSU Extension

Current EDA Grants in the Region

- 1) City of Hart: Wastewater Upgrades
- 2) Lake County Economic Diversification

Submitted Applications

- 1) Whitehall Infrastructure
- 2) WMSRDC 3-yr Planning Grant

Potential Projects

- 1) Mason County
- 2) Muskegon County
- 3) Newaygo County

Stephen Carlson, WMSRDC

Joel Fitzpatrick, WMSRDC

Brian Mulnix, WMSRDC

1) EDA Latest

- “The best way to show value is to be valuable” -Susan Brehm, Regional Director, Chicago Regional Office
- EDA has some funding carried over from 2025, therefore there is expected to be more to go around than usual this year
 - Open application cycle
 - Contact WMSRDC to discuss potential EDA fit for a project
 - Upgrades to workforce training facilities and Assistance to Coal Communities were two priorities specifically mentioned in a recent quarterly call with EDA economic development districts.

2) WMSRDC Update

- WM Agriculture Coalition Update
 - Increase collective capacity for demonstrating support for funding applications, ability to share resources and capacities, and coordinate applications within the region (minimize conflicts/increase funding chances).
 - Each Coalition meeting has featured very productive and engaging discussions, and has reinforced the need for it to provide support to the agriculture and food processing sectors.
 - The coalition has drafted an MOU to demonstrate support for regional cooperation/coordination around agriculture and food processing in West Michigan.
 - WMSRDC planning to host a landing page for the Coalition on its website beginning this summer.
 - Next Coalition meeting to be held in June.
 - To participate or stay informed, message Annika, agacnik@economicrecoverycorps.org
- RICH Hubs
 - WMSRDC has a grant to level-up and coordinate regional GIS capabilities throughout the region.
- Project development
 - WMSRDC is always eager and willing to discuss potential projects for EDA assistance.
 - EDA grants start at 60% federal/40% local match. Grant rate can be more favorable for an applicant depending on factors such as economic distress (local unemployment and/or per capita income, compared to national levels)

- Contact WMSRDC early in the project development phase to increase chances of a successful application!

3) EDA Investment Priorities

- **Critical Infrastructure::** Economic development planning or implementation projects that support development of **public facilities**, including basic public infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, or telecommunications infrastructure.
 - WMSRDC transportation staff discussed aspects of federal and state transportation funding, as well as ties to economic development.
 - Ms. Gruner (MDARD) noted that Rural Development Fund funding is (or will be) shifted over to the Michigan LEO, Office of Rural Prosperity. MDARD may have some funding to leverage for EDA or other federal grants.
- **Economic Recovery Resilience:** Economic development planning or implementation projects that enhance the ability of an area to withstand and recover from adverse short-term or long-term changes in economic conditions, including effects from industry contractions or economic impacts from natural disasters.
 - EDA Disaster Supplemental...aims to support communities recovering from major disasters and set them on a path to exceed pre-disaster conditions and transform their local economies.
 - <https://www.eda.gov/strategic-initiatives/disaster-recovery/supplemental/2025>

4) Roundtable Notes

- MDARD
 - Facing potential budget cuts (tbd through state budget process).
 - There is a focus on regenerative agriculture, supporting small growers and “last mile” infrastructure through Farm to Family program.
 - Wastewater Infrastructure Fund grants set to sunset.
- Fremont Area Community Foundation
 - Newaygo County Community Response Fund assisting in communities affected by recent flooding.
 - Thanks to initial success, the Newaygo County Housing Initiative has increased funding capacity for public and private housing initiatives.
- MEDC
 - Facing potential budget cuts (tbd through state budget process).
 - Looking for potential projects to have waiting in pipeline.

Upcoming 2026 Meeting Schedule:

July 31 - EDA Investment Priorities: **Workforce & Manufacturing**

October 30 - EDA Investment Priorities: **Innovation & Entrepreneurship**