

**WISCONSIN**

OFFICE OF RURAL PROSPERITY



# Our Mission

The Office of Rural Prosperity seeks to foster vibrant, prosperous and resilient rural communities across Wisconsin. The Office provides a one-stop shop to help rural stakeholders navigate programs and resources serving rural communities and businesses.

The Office of Rural Prosperity is housed within the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.

# How we accomplish our work

- **Rural Thought Leader-** Assisting WEDC in building rural pipelines to programs, creating awareness of barriers rural and tribal communities face in accessing state and federal resources, and sharing rural perspectives in program design conversations.
- **Projects-** Identifying replicable and scalable projects that address a systemic change within Wisconsin. Serve as convener and in some cases a funder.
- **Convening** – Fostering collaborative partnerships to develop outreach processes and participating in collaborative federal applications that solve for a specific issue or gap.
- **Resource Sharing-** Developing toolkits, promoting grant resources and creating frameworks that advance rural prosperity.

# Observations

- Small business is big business in rural communities. In particular, business that supports outdoor recreation, tourism and placemaking
- Rural communities need more innovative and collaborative approaches to address capacity challenges
- Climate migration will impact rural communities disproportionately

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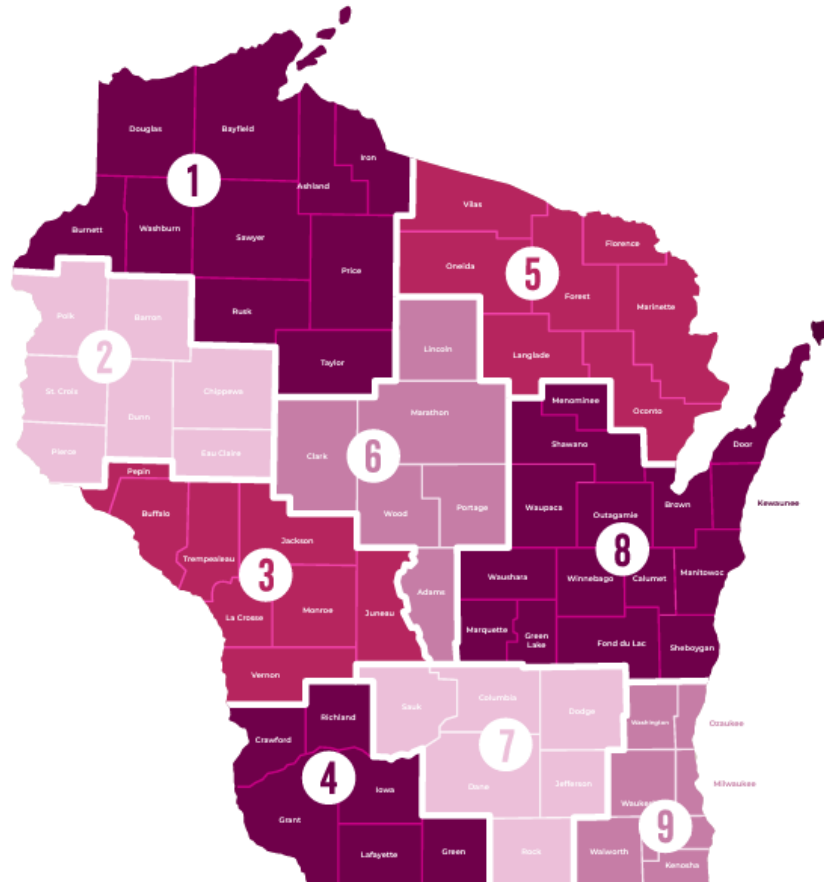
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**COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT  
AND ATTRACTION**

**INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS  
DEVELOPMENT**



# Community Development

With the goal of improving quality of life across Wisconsin, the following programs support minority business growth, downtown development projects and community revitalization efforts.

- Brownfields Site Assessment & Grant Programs
- Capacity Building Grants
- Fabrication Laboratories Grants
- Idle Sites Redevelopment
- Main Streets & Connect Communities
- Diverse Business Development
- Historic Preservation Tax Credits



# Community Development Investment Grants

The CDI Grant Program will support urban, small city, and rural community (re)development efforts by providing financial incentives for catalytic shovel-ready projects with emphasis on, but not limited to, community-driven commercial corridor efforts. The maximum grant amount is generally \$250,000.

Grant recipients must provide a minimum 3:1 matching investment in project costs; projects located in a designated economically distressed community, a Development Opportunity Zone, or a rural community must provide a minimum 1:1 matching investment. Additionally, a project where a key component is to provide childcare services or expand housing availability may also be approved by WEDC to provide 1:1 matching funds.



# Business Development & Attraction

WEDC and its partners work to connect business and community leaders with the programs that meet their specific needs. Small business is big business in rural communities.

Capital Catalyst

Entrepreneurship Partnership Grants (EPG)

SizeUp WI

Main Street Bounceback Technical Assistance





# Cooperative Development Grants

Grants to support the development of new and existing cooperatives in Wisconsin, with a goal of fostering the success of current and future cooperatives by supporting planning and exploratory research in advance of making a large investment.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

- An existing cooperative operating in Wisconsin
- Businesses looking to convert to the cooperative business model
- Any group of individuals actively working towards legal cooperative status in Wisconsin

## WHAT CAN GRANT FUNDS COVER?

- Applicants may use the funds to cover consulting fees for business planning, feasibility studies, legal services, and accounting services to help new or existing cooperatives become established or further develop.
- Only projects related to development are eligible. Salaries and supplies are NOT eligible costs.

## WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- A minimum 20% cash match of the grant amount is required.
- Each application must include an active quote from the consultant (or attorney or accountant) with whom you will work.





# Cooperative Technical Assistance



**UW Center for Cooperatives**

Fostering critical thinking and understanding about cooperatives.

- About UWCC ▾
- Co-op Basics ▾
- Start a Co-op
- Resources
- Research
- Events ▾
- Students



Supporting cooperatives through research, education, and outreach.

# ORP's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Webpage

- Direct links to Wisconsin state agencies' BIL webpages
- A downloadable spreadsheet of grant opportunities, updated on a monthly basis and organized by topic, including open/close dates, contacts, and links to more information.
- A downloadable spreadsheet of Wisconsin consultants with expertise in grant writing
- Informational videos on how to apply for and manage federal grants

*Broadband & Internet, Economic Development, Transportation*

## BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW (BIL)

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is a \$550 billion dollar package with funds available through fiscal year 2024. BIL is a once in a lifetime funding opportunity that supports general infrastructure (e.g. bridges, roads, and railroads) and workforce development. The law also contributes dollars to other important aspects of life such as expanding access to broadband, removal of lead pipes, public safety, clean energy, and a healthy environment.

The BIL includes special provision for rural communities, and many programs have portions of grant funding reserved for rural communities. Ensuring rural Wisconsin has access to BIL funding is a high priority of WEDC and the Office of Rural Prosperity (ORP).

ORP convenes an interagency task force to identify opportunities and pilot initiatives that build capacity for rural communities to access BIL funding. The task force has created a grant writing pilot in partnership with NWRPC and UW-Steven's Point to hire graduate students to provide grant writing assistance. The task force has also created a directory of professional consultants who can assist with grant writing and infrastructure projects and a spreadsheet that tracks open BIL funding opportunities. Both can be found under Resources.

<https://ruralwi.com/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/>

# Inflation Reduction Act

For fiscal year 2024, which began Oct. 1, 2023, the Inflation Reduction Act provides:

- \$1.65 billion for the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program](#)
- \$754 million for the [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#)
- \$472 million for the [Conservation Stewardship Program](#)
- \$189 million for the [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#)

These additional funds will help farmers and ranchers implement expanded conservation practices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase storage of carbon in their soil and trees. The conservation funding is in addition to otherwise available program funds, and participation is voluntary, incentive-based and targeted to support climate-smart mitigation activities and other conservation activities that facilitate them.

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

CONSERVATION BASICS      GETTING ASSISTANCE      PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES

**Inflation Reduction Act**

# Inflation Reduction Act: Renewable Energy

## Direct Pay: Tax Credit Monetization

Here's how Inflation Reduction Act's new **direct pay** and **transfer** options allow more organizations to utilize clean energy tax credits for equipment placed in service on or after January 1, 2023 and through December 31, 2032:

- The **direct pay option** allows certain non-taxable entities to directly monetize certain tax credits for entities such as state, local, and tribal governments, rural electric cooperatives, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and others to [directly monetize specific tax credits](#) including many renewable energy credits such as the ITC ) and the PTC. Applicable entities may elect to treat these tax credits as refundable payments of tax. Such entities are eligible to receive a direct payment from the IRS for any amount paid in excess of their tax liability for credits.
- The Inflation Reduction Act also allows eligible taxpayers that are not tax-exempt entities to **transfer** all or a portion of certain tax credits, including the ITC and PTC, to an unrelated party.



# Rural Entrepreneurship Development

## Inaugural Wisconsin CEC Conference

Come to Platteville this spring and explore how local entrepreneurship drives the Driftless Region's development. Network with fellow community champions from around the state. And gain new technical skills for promoting entrepreneurship in your own small town.

Save the  
Date

Platteville, WI

May 30-31, 2024



**EXTENSION**



**Business and Cooperative  
Programs**

## Law & Entrepreneurship Clinic

### About the Clinic

The Law & Entrepreneurship (L&E) Clinic (Room 4314) provides free legal services to nascent entrepreneurs and early stage companies through the work of law students supervised by faculty and private sector attorneys.



# *AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES*



## Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program

- DATCP will be awarding approximately \$27 million in grants through USDA
- Grant programs available (applicants may only apply for one):
  - Equipment-Only Grants between \$10,000 and \$99,999
  - Infrastructure Grants between \$100,000 and \$3 million
- Includes construction projects
- Middle-of-the-supply-chain activities are eligible (i.e., aggregation, processing, distribution)
- Excludes meat, poultry, and wild-caught seafood
- For more information: [RFSI.WI.GOV](https://RFSI.WI.GOV)

# Agritourism Resources



- Diversifies farm revenue
- Connects farmers directly to consumers
- Creates local entertainment and event venues
- Provides lodging opportunities
- Celebrates rural culture and places

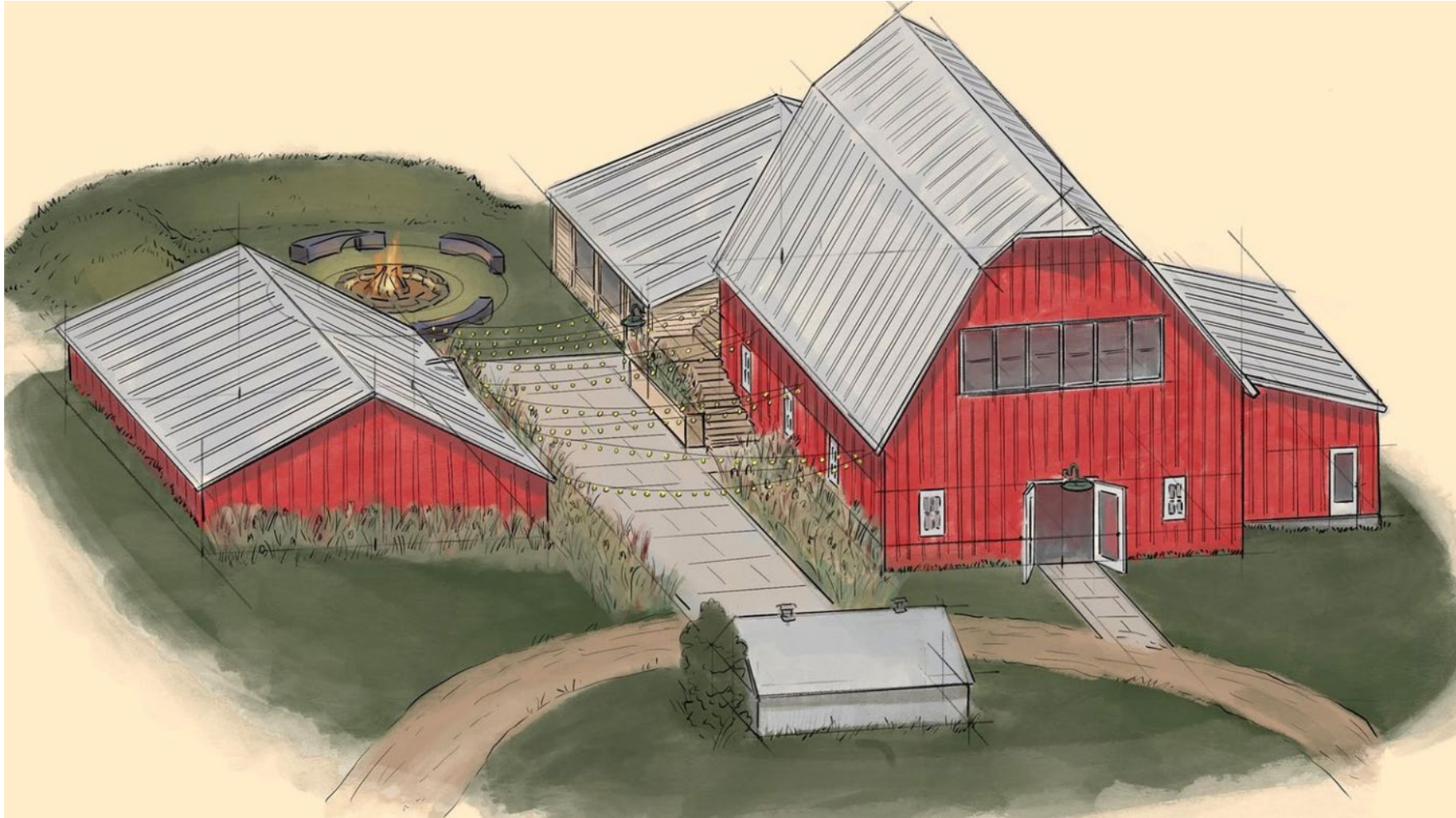
## About AFSIC

The **Alternative Farming Systems Information Center** (AFSIC) provides research-based resources for nontraditional food-production and crop-management practices to support the USDA's mission of promoting a sustainable future and agricultural economic viability for farmers worldwide.





# Red Clover Ranch, Soldiers Grove Wisconsin





# Rural Placemaking Toolkit:

USDA Rural Development and the University of Kentucky

Highlights placemaking activities, projects, and success stories from across rural America.



Initiating Place: Creative Community Conversations



Community and Cultural Assessments



Public Spaces & Gathering Places



Cross-Sector Partnerships



# Wormfarm Institute, Reedsburg Wisconsin

## Creative Placemaking

*Wormfarm variation*

Creative Placemaking is an active process that illuminates existing assets and re-enchants the familiar, amplifying what is while building fertile soil for what might be.

With an arts emphasis, diverse partners engage in serious yet playful rediscovery of a place rich with history, idiosyncrasy, and possibility - a place too important to leave alone.



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