



# YES! HOUSE

a project of Department of Public Transformation

Cultivating Creativity, Connection & Collaboration



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# *ACTIVITY* *CARDS ON THE TABLE*



*PICK ONE WORD AND DISCUSS  
ITS MEANING WITH THE PERSON  
NEXT TO YOU*



# HELLO!







## Agenda

- Welcome + Word Activity
- Department of Public Transformation Overview
- The YES! House Story
- Our Approach: How We Lead
- The YES! House Programming
- Group Discussion
- Q & A





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# *Organization Overview*



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## *Our Mission*

We are an artist-led nonprofit organization that works to develop creative strategies for increased community connection, civic engagement, and equitable participation in rural places.

## *Our Approach*

We believe in the power of rural creativity in activating solutions to address community challenges. We collaborate with artists, residents, and community champions on creative, people-centered projects, keeping our core values at the heart of all we do.





## *150 Year Vision*

Rural communities across the country acknowledge, support, and integrate art and artists as vital contributors to economic, community, civic, and social life.





## *Values*

### **Accessible Play**

We believe play is an essential tool to build connections, break down barriers, make room for vulnerability, and inspire creativity.

### **Deep Compassion**

We work from deep compassion for the people and places we work with. We meet people where they are, strive for critical self-awareness, and act as responsible stewards of the land and her stories.

### **Reciprocal Exchange**

We view our work as a reciprocal exchange and not an extraction or dissemination of knowledge, skills, or resources; we work with, not for; we work together.

### **Intentional Representation**

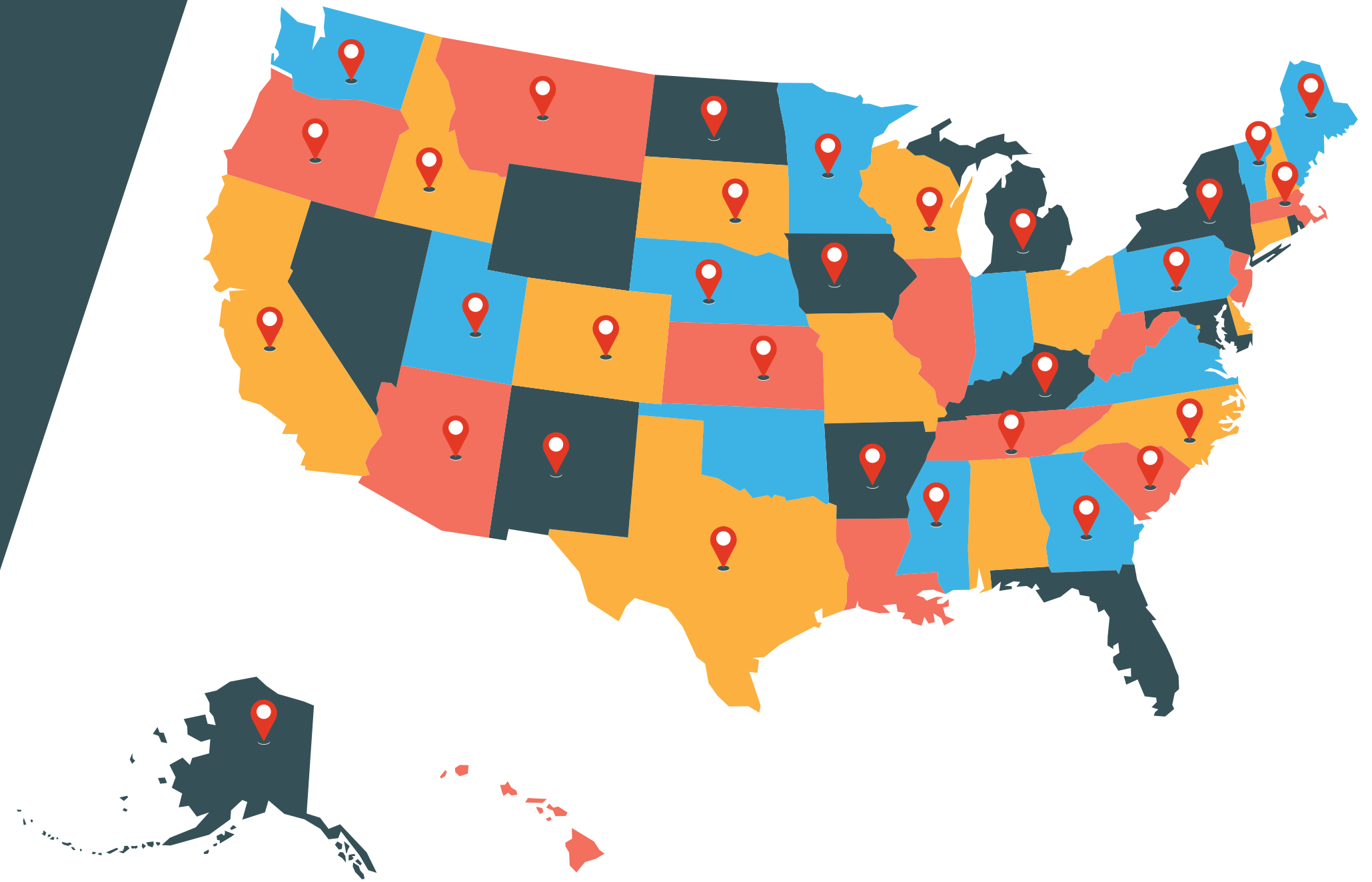
We strive to intentionally provide and promote intergenerational opportunities for women, non-binary people, people of color, LGBTQ2IA+, New American, and Indigenous community members to work towards equal representation in artistic and civic leadership.



# *Geographic Scope*

DoPT works on projects and programs:

- in Southwest Minnesota;
- statewide across Minnesota;
- regionally in the Upper Midwest;
- and nationally across the United States.





# Current DoPT Staff



***Ash Hanson***

Creative Executive Director



***Holly Doll***

Ignite Rural Program Director



***Benjamin Domask-Ruh***

Activate Rural Program Coordinator



***Luwaina Al-Otaibi***

The YES! House Program Coordinator



***Elisa Franco***

Communications Coordinator



***Sarina Otaibi***

Activate Rural Program Director



***Hannah Holman***

Creative Operating Officer



***Shy Miguel***

The YES! House Program Assistant





## *Connect*

**Rural Municipalities & Artists** by amplifying the value of municipal + artist partnership and working with artists on civic initiatives

## *Activate*

**Rural Community Assets** with artist-led, people-centered engagements for imagine/design/build processes and creative community connections

## *Support*

**Rural Arts & Cultural Workers** through artist residencies, communities of practice, coaching, mentorship, and professional development

## *Nurture*

**Rural Arts & Culture Field** through networking, storytelling, and resource sharing, as well as advocating for geographic equity in philanthropy and organizing toward policy change



# *Support* Rural Artists



**IGNITE RURAL**  
ARTIST RESIDENCY



“Being part of Ignite Rural had a profound impact on my artistic practice and my personal perspective on how I create art. For one, I felt so heard and understood in relation to the complications that can be part of being a rural artist, it made me realize I’m far from alone. I was so inspired by being in space with other rural artists that it gave me a sense of possibility and play within my art.”

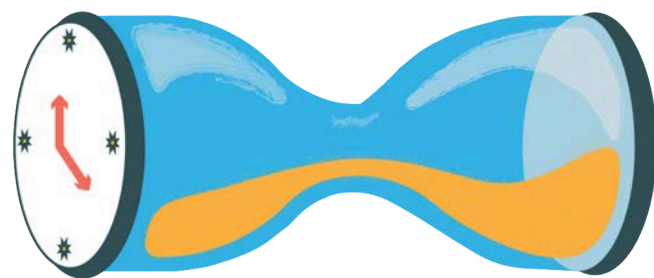
**Cecily Rose Engelhart, Ignite Rural Artist, Wagner, MN**



# *Nurture*

## Rural Arts & Culture Field

### BEYOND



### THE CLOCK



*Image by Nhatt Nichols; inspired by a conversation with Erika Nelson, Lucas, KS*  
“Riveting, Moving, Soulful, Connecting, Building Community one Beyond the Clock at the time. To meet one another in real time, whether that is in person or virtual, is always sacred time and a time to connect our stories towards building community and for the causes we care about.”

**Kiran Singh Sirah, International Storytelling Center**



# *Connect*

## Rural Municipalities & Artists



**RURAL CIVIC ARTS  
PARTNERSHIP**

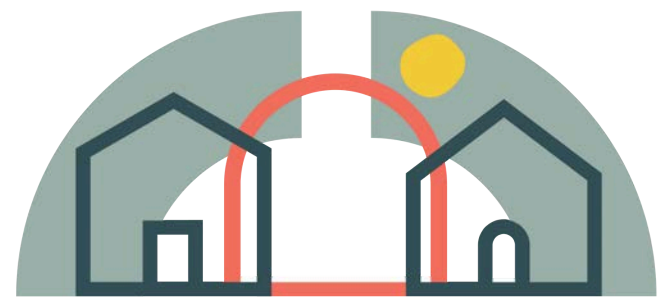


“Participating in the Southwest Minnesota Civic Arts Cohort introduced me to the concept of Civic Arts, and opened my eyes to the powerful role that art can have in healing and growing my community. [...] I look forward to using the knowledge I gained to positively impact my community for many years to come.”

**Valerie Quist, Library Director, City of Tracy, MN**



# *Activate* Rural Community Assets



**ACTIVATE RURAL**



“Our participation in the Activate Rural Cohort has ignited a collaborative design experience between business people, students, and community members. We are thinking about spaces, events, and time in creative ways that are bringing us all together to increase belonging for all ages. Thank you for the inspiration and for acting as both a partner in accountability and support!”

**Activate Rural Cohort Member, Spring Grove, MN**



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HOUSE

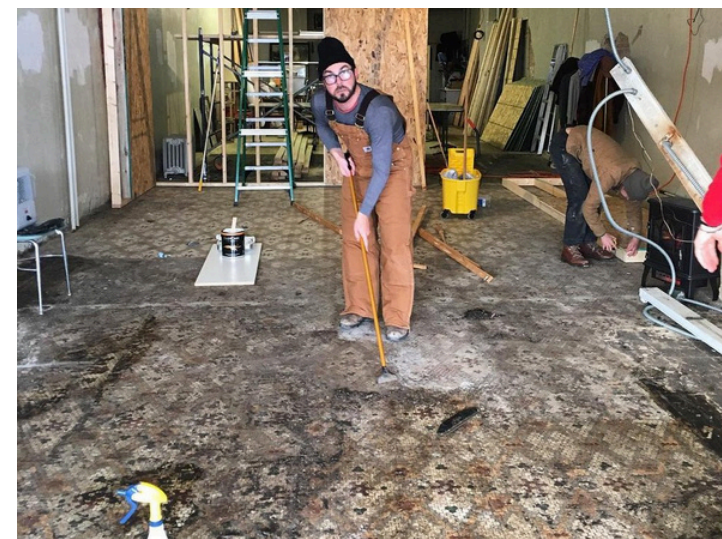
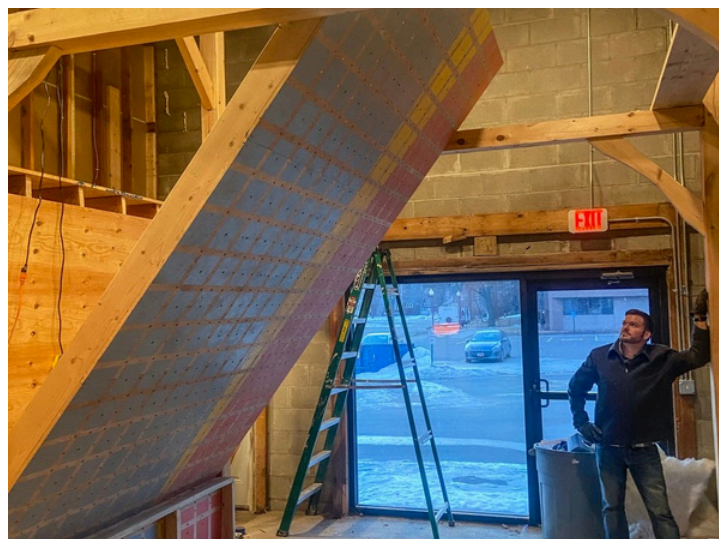


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# What is The YES! House?

A creative community gathering space located at 726 Prentice Street in Granite Falls



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EMPLOYMENT AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## ARTIST-LED DESIGN BUILD & CREATIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*Homeboat*

# Yes! House Research Report

December 2018







# YES! HOUSE

a project of Department of Public Transformation



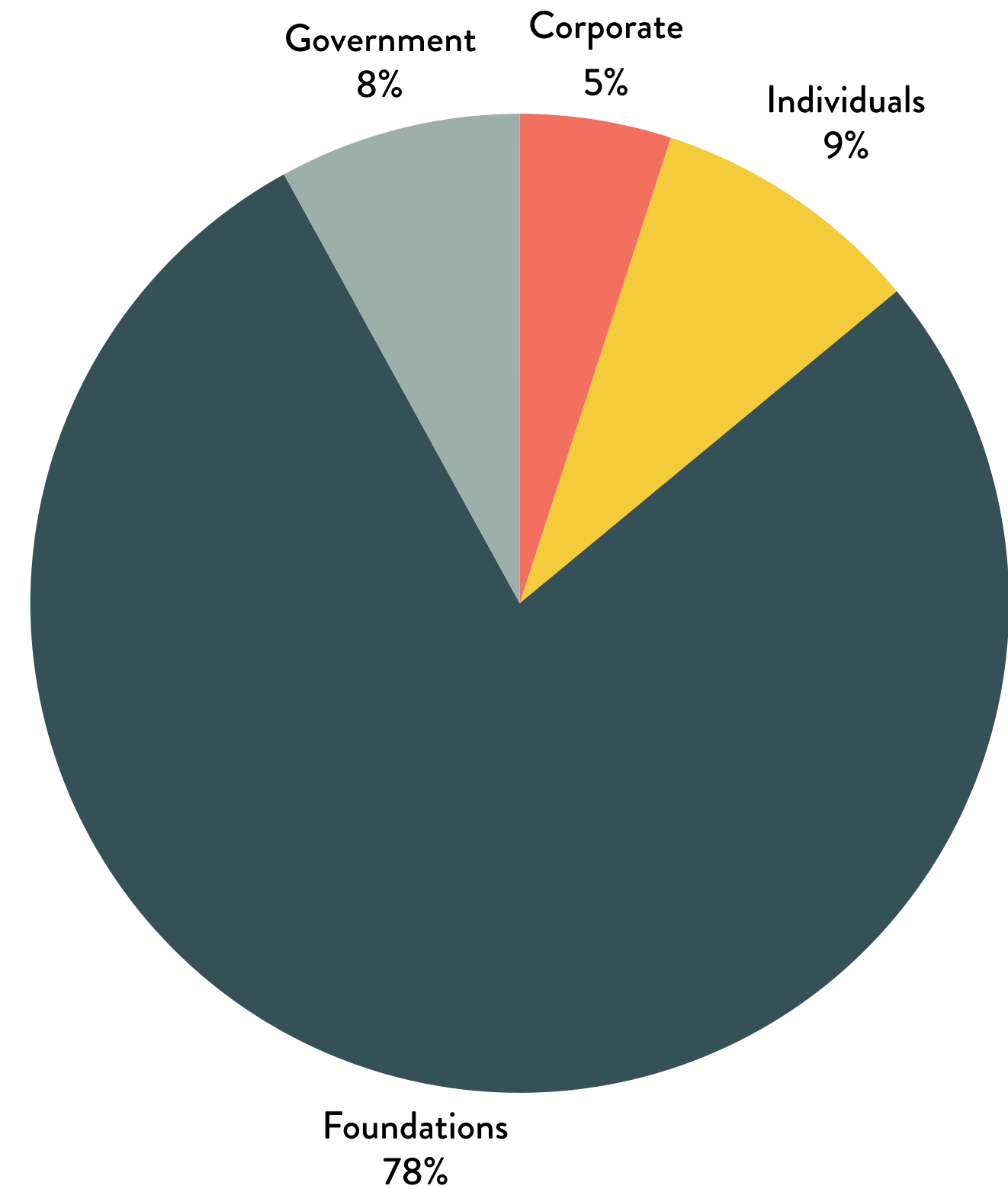
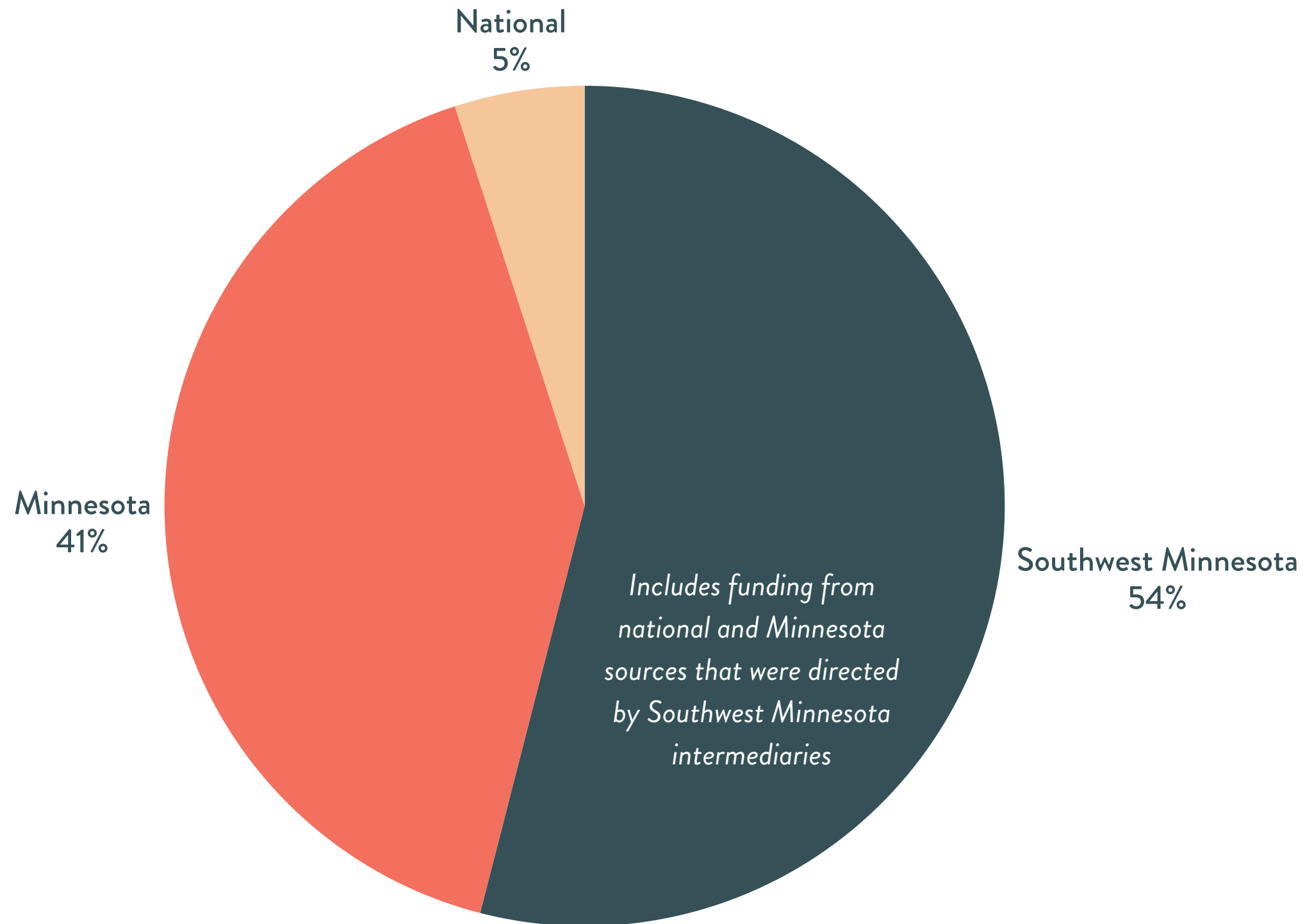
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# Capital Campaign: Where funds came from...







**Luwaina  
Al-Otaibi**

The YES! House Program Coordinator  
Department of Public Transformation (DoPT)  
based in Granite Falls, MN (pop. 2,685).

# My Story

- Started working at The YES! House in 2022
- My personal “why” to doing this type of community work







## The Creative Collaboration Team

The Creative Collaboration Team (CCT) is a group of volunteers from the Granite Falls area that work together with The YES! House staff to help promote, plan, & host programming.



- Meets once a month
- Hosts CCT Saturday hangouts 4 times per year
- Co hosts events with staff
- Assists in event promotion
- Collaborates together in planning details of events
- Receives a small stipend for their time



## The YES! House Advisory Council

**Local leadership to advise on operations of space, focusing on transparency, accountability and community connection**



- Meets quarterly
- Discusses issues, interests and needs of the local community and surrounding region
- Evaluates potential revenue and rental opportunities as needed
- Brainstorms how to communicate to/with the public
- Supports volunteer activities
- Engages their networks to build and maintain relationships & collaborations with businesses, organizations and individuals
- Receives small stipend for their time



## The YES! House Programming

- Open Mic Nights
- Learn From Your Neighbor Events
- Campfire Chronicles
- Artist Talks & Conversations
- Classes & Workshops
- Community created Haunted House
- Theater performances
- Musical performances
- Much much more!





## Visiting Artists & The Exchange



- Visiting Artist residencies
- Host visiting artists- both rural & urban.
- Artists stay for multiple days
- Artist may visit multiple times
- Local community interactive component
- Bringing in Artists from diverse cultures and backgrounds



# River Valley Ripple Artist Residency Program



**RIVER VALLEY RIPPLE**  
ARTIST RESIDENCY

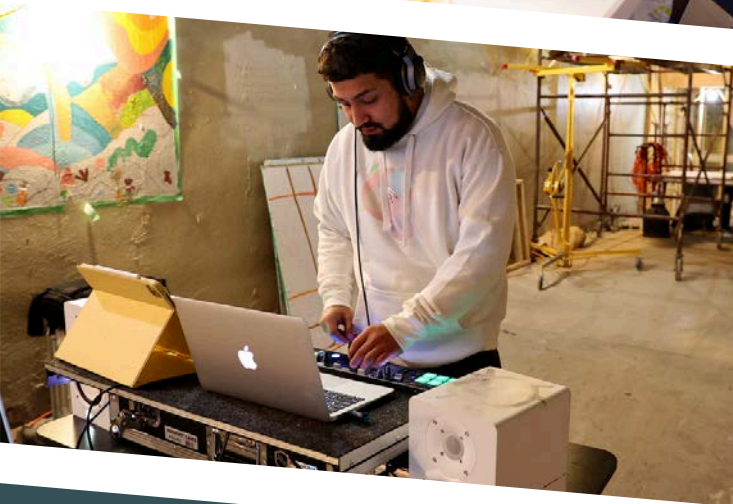


## Community Collaborative Events



- Senior Tech Ed Program
- Winter Solstice
- Holiday Kick Off
- Crazy Days
- Meander Opening Night
- SquidFest
- Culinary Experience





*FROM “YOU” to “WE”!*







*Sharing is caring!*

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT  
SPECTRUM ACTIVITY**

**LET'S REVISIT THE SPECTRUM!**





*Questions?*



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**The YES! House Website:**

**[www.theyeshouse.org](http://www.theyeshouse.org)**

**Contact:**

**Luwaina Al-Otaibi**

**The YES! House Program**

**Coordinator**

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**320-204-5578**



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