



2025 Southwest Initiative Foundation Strategic Plan

Leading with Purpose

We are proud to be rooted in Southwest Minnesota, the place we love and call home. Since our founding in 1986, we've been a regional leader in building local economies and advocating for and responding to community needs. We have distributed nearly \$130 million through our grantmaking and business finance loan programs, and we're a trusted partner in investing in and strengthening Southwest Minnesota.

We are proud of what we have been able to accomplish over the last 40 years and are excited for what the next 40 years will bring. Today, we look to the future with a bold and unwavering vision: A Southwest Minnesota where all people thrive. Our strategic priorities will guide us in elevating our work and reaffirming our partnerships, building stronger and more resilient communities, and leveraging funding and assets to be a responsive and reliable philanthropic partner.

We will lead with purpose.

Our Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission: Connecting people, investing in ideas, and building communities

Vision: A Southwest Minnesota where all people thrive



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FOUNDATION

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CFNS

ACCREDITED
FOUNDATION

Confirmed in Compliance with National
Standards for U.S. Community Foundations
An Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer

These five values guide our work, our decision-making, and culture.

Optimism

- We believe the future of Southwest Minnesota is bright!
- We aspire to achieve great things in our region.
- We are uniquely positioned to take a strategic and long-term view.
- We start with what works and build on the assets in our organization and communities.

Belonging

- We believe that dignity and belonging are core human values and that all people deserve the opportunity to reach their full potential.
- We are a human-centered organization and acknowledge that people have different needs and aspirations.
- We commit to removing barriers that prevent full participation in Southwest Minnesota's abundant opportunities.
- We use our resources to create opportunities for all people to thrive in the communities they call home.

Integrity

- We value honesty and high ethical standards.
- We are accountable for our words and actions.
- We are trustworthy, fair, and respectful.
- We embrace courageous leadership required to live out our mission.

Innovation

- We value learning and curiosity.
- We continuously seek to expand both personal and organizational knowledge, and we are willing to take healthy risks in pursuit of big ideas.
- We are open and responsive to immediate opportunities and challenges.
- We approach problem solving through a deliberate process that relies on experience and experimentation.

Collaboration

- We believe better results come from working together.
- We treat our colleagues, partners, and communities with empathy and respect.
- We approach our role in collaborative processes with humility, hospitality, and heart.
- We openly share what we learn.

Strategic Priorities

Boosting Economic Mobility

When wealth stays in our region, the result is economic mobility for all. Our region's economy is the backbone to building vibrant and resilient communities.

Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)

In 2024, we created a subsidiary of Southwest Initiative Foundation called Southwest Minnesota Community Capital (SMCC), our emerging CDFI. Attaining CDFI certification will help us make mission-driven investments and loans that provide opportunities to historically underserved populations, which will in turn promote business growth and stability in our region.

Loan Programs

We offer Business Finance Loans and Microenterprise Loans for entrepreneurs and business owners. In partnership with banks and credit unions, economic development organizations, nonprofit lenders, and private investors, we create and retain quality jobs, foster entrepreneurship, and help our communities – large and small – compete in a global marketplace.

Business Support

We're not just a lender. We're a partner. Our team leverages resources and connections to help businesses grow and improve. Our Microenterprise Loan Program includes technical assistance such as training in accounting, business operations, and marketing.

Child Care

A strong regional economy depends on access to quality, affordable child care. We will collaborate with communities on solutions, help plan and finance local projects, and invest in professional development opportunities for our early care and education professionals.

Workforce Development

The long-term vitality of Southwest Minnesota depends on ensuring that community members can access economically stable employment and fulfilling careers. By partnering with regional workforce development and career pathways experts, we will help expand opportunities for middle and high school students to explore industries, professions, and future possibilities available right here in our region.

Building Resilient Communities

Economic development and community development go hand in hand. Communities flourish when neighbors feel like valued members of the place they call “home,” can dream big, and accomplish goals for themselves and their families.

Leadership

The people who live and work in our region are our communities’ greatest assets. We will offer convenings and programs to help advance leadership initiatives for community members who are ready to step up and take on a leadership mindset to help their communities thrive.

Nonprofit Support

Nonprofit organizations, big and small, are addressing critical needs in Southwest Minnesota. We will engage with these partners by offering educational training and resources to bolster their work.

Belonging

We believe our communities are strongest when all people can fully participate in our region’s opportunities. We will bring people together with innovative approaches to build vibrant and welcoming communities and engage in community-led belonging initiatives.

Retaining Wealth

We exist to strengthen Southwest Minnesota through charitable giving. Generous support from the people, businesses, and organizations that care about Southwest Minnesota make it a region of opportunity.

Community Foundations and Fund Partners

We partner with more than 120 community foundations and other designated funds across the region to keep wealth in communities. We will grow and strengthen these partnerships by working closely with local advisory boards to provide technical and professional support, helping them fundraise, and market their important work.

Grantmaking

Grantmaking is at the heart of our role as a community foundation. We will support projects and ideas that help build resilient communities, through our own designated funding, our community foundation affiliates, and as an intermediary partner, attracting resources from outside our region.

Donor Relations and Programs

Our menu of giving options allows flexible and creative ways to give back in support of our mission, a community foundation affiliate, or another local fund that benefits our neighbors across Southwest Minnesota.

Catalyzing Capital and Connections for a Stronger Southwest Minnesota

We aspire to be the leading philanthropic partner in Southwest Minnesota and to provide exceptional customer service to our donors and partners.

We aspire to continue to grow our resources so that we can help our communities reach their greatest potential by responding to immediate needs and opportunities.

We aspire to be a changemaker and connector, partnering with leaders and nonprofits in our region to help create communities where everyone belongs and can flourish.

We are excited about the future of Southwest Minnesota! And, we need your help.

A few ways you can get involved are:

- Make a gift to support our work, an affiliate community foundation, or another local fund. There are many ways to make a gift. Contact our Philanthropy Team at donate@swifoundation.org or (320) 587-4848.
- Watch our events calendar for an upcoming event or training opportunity.
- Join our e-newsletter list so that you don't miss relevant news and updates.
- Spread the word. Share this strategic plan with a neighbor, friend, or colleague who could be a future partner or friend of the foundation.

It takes all of us. Join us in building an even stronger, more vibrant Southwest Minnesota. Lead with us.