



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2026 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2026-381

Proposal Title: Building Resilient Communities: Data-Driven Insights for Local Action

Project Manager Information

Name: Monica Haynes

Organization: U of MN - Duluth

Office Telephone: (218) 726-7895

Email: mrhaynes@d.umn.edu

Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Supporting community resilience by helping communities in northeastern Minnesota address natural and socio-economic challenges through data-driven insights, stakeholder engagement, and the community capitals framework.

ENRTF Funds Requested: \$74,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2028

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (G)

Secondary Category: Resiliency (A)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Region(s): NE

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Region(s): NE

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

Communities are increasingly facing extreme weather events—storms, flooding, wildfires, and droughts—that strain infrastructure, social systems, and economies. Various funding sources, such as those from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, support resilience efforts, but many communities struggle to access these resources and engage effectively in regional adaptation.

Resilience extends beyond environmental challenges. Social and economic vulnerabilities—population decline, shifting demographics, employer closures, and loss of key community hubs—can be just as disruptive. These challenges weaken local economies, social networks, and overall community well-being.

The Community Capitals Framework (Emery & Flora, 2006) illustrates how natural, social, human, cultural, political, financial, and built capital shape resilience. Strengthening these capitals enhances a community's ability to adapt and recover from disruptions.

This project will first be implemented in northeastern Minnesota, a region facing a wide range of environmental and economic challenges. For example, rapidly warming winters threaten communities reliant on winter-based tourism, towns historically dependent on the mining industry wish to diversify their economies, and an aging population poses workforce concerns. Through applied research, stakeholder engagement, and planning workshops, we will equip communities with data-driven insights and practical strategies to prepare for and respond to these and other

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.

The goal of this application is to spark a region-wide conversation on community resilience, helping local leaders understand its multifaceted nature and its relevance to their communities. As extreme weather events and the resulting socio-economic challenges intensify, it's crucial for leaders to establish a clear framework for assessing resilience and pinpointing areas for improvement. This project will guide communities in building a shared understanding of resilience, incorporating social, economic, environmental, and financial factors, so they are better prepared for both natural and social disruptions.

Objectives include educating local leaders on the various aspects of resilience, using the Community Capitals Framework to assess their community's strengths and weaknesses, and equipping them with tools to prioritize resilience needs. The project will also assist leaders in identifying data sources and funding opportunities to support resilience-building efforts. Success will be measured by the leaders' ability to create actionable plans that leverage their community's strengths, address vulnerabilities, and promote a more resilient future through shared knowledge and resources.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

This project will help communities integrate resilience planning into local decision-making by providing data-driven tools and education. Outcomes include increased awareness of environmental and climate-related risks, improved capacity to assess vulnerabilities, and stronger connections between local leaders and available resources. Communities participating in planning workshops will identify specific resilience priorities and potential actions to address risks such as flooding, wildfires, and extreme weather. We will track outcomes through webinar and workshop participation rates, participant evaluations, and a six-month follow-up to assess actions taken. By supporting informed planning efforts, this project will contribute to the protection of natural resources and help

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Applied Research on Community Resilience Metrics

Activity Budget: \$16,000

Activity Description:

The first step in this project is to conduct a comprehensive literature review on community resilience, focusing on best practices and valuable data sources from past initiatives. Building on this foundation, we will collect county-level and sub-county data, drawing from resilience indices such as the CDC Social Vulnerability Index, FEMA Risk Index, and the University of Minnesota's Hazard Mitigation Plans, along with key demographic, economic, and social data. Using the Community Capitals Framework (Emery and Flora, 2006), we will categorize this data across seven capitals—human, natural, political, social, cultural, built, and financial—identifying resilience metrics specific to each capital. This approach will provide a clear understanding of community strengths and vulnerabilities, informing future resilience-building efforts.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Complete literature review on community resilience and data sources	September 30, 2026
Collect county-level and sub-county resilience data from relevant sources	September 30, 2026
Apply Community Capitals Framework to categorize resilience data	December 31, 2026

Activity 2: Advisory Group for Regional Alignment

Activity Budget: \$10,000

Activity Description:

To ensure community involvement and alignment with ongoing regional resilience efforts, we will establish an advisory group to provide guidance throughout the project. This group will include representatives from northeastern Minnesota, including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U of M Extension's Climate Adaptation Partnership, county governments, the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC), and organizations serving at-risk populations.

The advisory group will help integrate regional expertise, ensuring the project complements existing resilience initiatives. Members will provide feedback on research findings, assist with outreach and engagement strategies, and help identify additional resources and funding opportunities. Regular meetings will facilitate collaboration and ensure that project activities remain relevant to community needs.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Establish advisory group and confirm member participation	September 30, 2026
Hold initial meeting to align project goals with regional efforts	October 31, 2026
Conduct regular advisory meetings for ongoing guidance	June 30, 2028

Activity 3: Educational Outreach on Resilience Planning

Activity Budget: \$23,000

Activity Description:

To build awareness and capacity for resilience planning, we will develop and implement an educational outreach

program that includes a webinar series and 3-4 in-person presentations designed for local civic leaders and community members. The webinars will introduce key resilience concepts, share best practices, present the Community Capitals Framework, and offer data resources. Participants will also learn how to request customized planning workshops to further their understanding and application of these tools. To ensure broad participation, we will prioritize outreach to historically marginalized and at-risk communities. By collaborating with local organizations and leaders, we will recruit participants from these communities, focusing on those most affected by economic, environmental, and social challenges. This inclusive approach will ensure that resilience strategies reflect the specific needs and lived experiences of vulnerable populations, fostering a more equitable approach to community resilience planning.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Launch webinar series on resilience concepts and best practices	February 28, 2027
Engage historically marginalized communities in the outreach process	February 28, 2027
Conduct 3-4 in-person presentations tailored to local leaders and community members	June 30, 2027

Activity 4: Tailored Community Resilience Workshops

Activity Budget: \$25,000

Activity Description:

Following the webinars and in-person presentations, community leaders will be invited to apply for customized resilience planning workshops. These sessions will bring together local leaders, residents, and stakeholders to review data, assess strengths and weaknesses across the seven capitals of the Community Capitals Framework, and identify key resilience gaps. We will select 2-4 communities based on their ability to convene a committed group and their readiness to act on recommendations. Selection criteria will include leadership engagement, organizational capacity, and demonstrated interest in resilience planning.

Before the workshop, each selected community will participate in a pre-meeting with the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) and Extension research team to clarify goals, logistics, and participant recruitment.

Workshops will include guided discussions on vulnerabilities, a SWOT analysis, and potential project ideas. After each session, we will provide a summary report outlining key data insights, takeaways, and actionable recommendations to guide future resilience planning and funding efforts.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Open application process for community planning workshops	July 31, 2027
Select 2-4 communities based on readiness and capacity	September 30, 2027
Conduct planning workshops with selected communities	March 31, 2028
Deliver summary reports with actionable recommendations	June 30, 2028

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
John Bennett	U of M Extension Center for Community Development	Extension Educator, Community Economics	Yes
Craig Campbell	U of M Extension Center for Community Development	Extension Educator, Leadership and Civic Engagement	Yes

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?

The project's findings and resources will be shared through publicly available reports, webinars, and community planning workshops. Workshop participants will receive tailored recommendations to guide future resilience planning. We will collaborate with regional partners, such as Arrowhead Regional Development Corporation, the Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership, the Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation, and the Minnesota Association of County Economic Developers, to integrate results into ongoing initiatives. If additional work is needed, we will seek funding from local, state, and federal sources, including grants focused on climate adaptation and community resilience. Long-term, we aim to build capacity within communities so they can

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Monica Haynes

Job Title: Director, Bureau of Business and Economic Research

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

Monica Haynes, M.S., has served as the Director of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) at the University of Minnesota Duluth since 2014. She has extensive experience managing research projects from inception to completion, overseeing budgeting, timeline coordination, stakeholder engagement, and staff supervision. Under her leadership, the BBER has successfully completed over 80 funded research projects, collaborating with government agencies, businesses, and community organizations.

Haynes will serve as the Project Manager for this initiative, responsible for overseeing project management, coordinating the advisory group, and leading the applied research component. Additionally, she will co-lead the webinars and workshops to ensure that key insights are delivered effectively to participants. With a strong background in socioeconomic analysis, economic impact studies, and data-driven decision-making, Haynes is committed to delivering practical insights that promote community resilience and sustainable economic development.

In addition to BBER staff, the project team includes staff from the University of Minnesota Extension's Department of Community Development. The mission of Community Development is to engage Minnesotans in order to strengthen the social, civic, economic, and technological capacity of their communities. The department's staff helps create vibrant communities and enhances skills and knowledge in economics, leadership and civic engagement, and tourism.

John Bennett, a Community Economics educator with more than 20 years of experience in economic development and resilience planning, and Craig Campbell, a Leadership and Civic Engagement educator with expertise in environmental education and public engagement strategies, are both part of the Extension Community Development team. They will

assist in designing and implementing the webinars and workshops for this project.

Together, this team brings a strong combination of research expertise, community engagement skills, and practical experience in guiding local leaders through resilience planning and economic development efforts.

Organization: U of MN - Duluth

Organization Description:

The Bureau of Business and Economic Research (BBER) at the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), part of the Labovitz School of Business and Economics (LSBE), has over 60 years of experience conducting applied economic research. BBER provides economic impact analysis, feasibility studies, demographic analyses, and other services to support decision-making for businesses, policymakers, and communities across northeastern Minnesota.

The BBER's mission is to provide high-quality, unbiased research that promotes economic growth and wellbeing in northeast Minnesota by leveraging the skills and knowledge of LSBE's community of learners and educators.

The University of Minnesota Extension's Community Development team works to engage Minnesotans in strengthening the social, civic, economic, and technological capacity of their communities. Through workshops, leadership training, and economic development research, Extension helps local leaders build resilience and navigate change.

Recognizing their shared commitment, BBER and Extension Community Development have established a formal partnership to address community and economic development needs in northeastern Minnesota. By combining BBER's expertise in applied economic research with Extension's strengths in community engagement and leadership training, this partnership delivers data-driven insights and practical solutions for communities to adapt and thrive.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
Monica Haynes		Haynes will serve as the project PI and will be responsible for project management, coordinating the advisory group, and leading the applied research component. Additionally, she will co-lead the webinars and workshops.			27%	0.2		\$29,043
John Bennett		Bennett, Extension Educator, will be responsible for designing and implementing the webinars and coaching sessions, focusing on economic development, resilience planning, and local policy analysis.			27%	0.16		\$19,701
Craig Campbell		Campbell, leadership and civic engagement educator, will assist in designing and implementing the webinars and coaching sessions, providing expertise in environmental education, community facilitation, and public engagement strategies.			27%	0.12		\$12,423
Gina Gensing		Gensing will assist in the writing and preparation of all public-facing project materials, including slide decks, handouts, and summary reports.			24%	0.02		\$2,303
Undergraduate Research Assistant		UGRAs will assist with the data collection and analysis, literature review and background research, support related to community outreach activities, and report writing assistance.			0%	0.22		\$7,118
							Sub Total	\$70,588
Contracts and Services								
							Sub Total	-
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
	Tools and Supplies	Postage, printing, and materials for presentations and workshops	Postage for mailings, printing of posters and other training materials, and general supplies for in-person presentations and workshops					\$1,257

							Sub Total	\$1,257
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Estimating 3 trips in year one and 6 trips in year two, with 2-3 team members per trip. Fleet vehicle rental and mileage per trip = \$100; Per diem expenses = \$100 per trip (3 people @ \$35 per person); Lodging is unlikely but may be necessary depending on the distance and timing of meetings.	Travel, per diem meals, and lodging to attend in-person resilience presentations, community coaching sessions.					\$2,155
							Sub Total	\$2,155
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$74,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
In-Kind	UMN unrecovered indirect costs are calculated at the UMN federally negotiated rate for research of 37% modified total direct costs	Indirect costs are those costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be readily identified with a specific sponsored program or institutional activity. Examples include utilities, building maintenance, clerical salaries, and general supplies. (https://research.umn.edu/units/oca/fa-costs/direct-indirect-costs)	Secured	\$27,380
			Non State Sub Total	\$27,380
			Funds Total	\$27,380

Total Project Cost: \$101,380

This amount accurately reflects total project cost?

Yes

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [c6eb2c87-879.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

One page handout describing our project, approach, team, and the community capitals framework...

Supplemental Attachments

Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other

Title	File
UMD Authorization Letter	3e6d25e2-738.pdf
Letter of Support for Building Resilient Communities proposal	76afe090-498.pdf

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?

Yes, I understand the UMN Policy on travel applies.

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?

No

Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?

No

Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this proposal:

John Bennett, UMN Extension; Craig Campbell, UMN Extension

Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements

N/A