

# EASTERN PLAINS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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## *Upcoming Grant Opportunities*

### **Montana Community Foundation Community Investment Program**

The Community Investment Program (CIP) supports communities in Rosebud, Custer, and Fallon County. Montana Community Foundation by Grid United is dedicated to partnering with these communities with CIP funds that support innovative projects that enhance quality of life while strengthening communities.

The application is due Nov. 1, 2023

<https://mtcf.org/grants/apply-for-a-grant/community-investment-program>

### **MDU Resources Foundation**

MDU Resources Foundation will contribute to eligible 501(c)(3) in categories in Health and Human Services, Education, Civic and Community Activities, Culture and Arts, and Environment. Requests over \$1,000 can apply, however the foundation generally does not fund 100% of the project

Application Deadline is Oct. 1, 2023

<https://www.mdu.com/about-us/community/>

## **Executive Transition**

Eastern Plains Economic Development has entered a new phase. In June, Beth Epley left her role as Executive Director. Terra Burman leaves her role as Food, Ag, and Community Development Specialist and has been promoted to Executive Director. Beth was Executive Director for over 7 years and made a large impact on eastern Montana. Beth was a tremendous resource of institutional knowledge and overall Economic Development inspiration and will be missed. In addition to the Executive Director role shift, Lizzy Robertson has increased her hours to full time in Terry as EPEDC's Community Development Specialist. EPEDC's role in eastern Montana remains the same in helping cities, counties and businesses grow. Terra's direction for EPEDC is in line with what was established by Beth. The goals for the future include helping with infrastructure funding in all our cities and counties, helping small businesses grow through workshops and funding opportunities. EPEDC will continue to identify funding and financing options for infrastructure projects and sees this is an essential part in growing local economies. EPEDC will remain a resource for technical assistance, business plans, and grant writing. Another area of focus is growing awareness of EPEDC's revolving loan fund (RLF) to better serve entrepreneurs and diversify our local economy. Recently more of an effort has been made in working with the Montana Department of Commerce in business recruitment for the 5 county region. Terra and Lizzy look forward to building lasting relationships with our local cities, counties and businesses. We are excited for the future of eastern Montana and Eastern Plains Economic Development!

## Re-Imagining Rural: Local Problems, Local Solutions

Re-imagining Rural in-person gathering in Townsend on June 13 saw over 100 registrants. Communities from all over the state were represented, including Terry with Lizzy Robertson and Bailey Kortum (Prairie County Chamber of Commerce) attending.

The gathering was split into two sessions with roundtable discussions happening throughout. Sessions covered a variety of challenges and solutions for rural communities.

One of the first session speakers, Mary Rutherford of the Montana Community Foundation made the statement, "Rural Communities have the secret sauce. You (rural communities) are able to locally target challenges and then use local resources: overcome."

During the majority of the discussions, the "Power of the Narrative" was a main topic. Many of our small or rural communities are looking to change that negative talk and shift to a healthy community identity. This includes finding creative ways to express hometown pride and recognizing and celebrating local history.

Rural communities are special in the fact that we are small enough to be able to see what is holding us back or keeping us from our goals and create a local solution in addressing it.

Our communities all have common problems that could be addressed with a regional solution. It was reassuring to know

Our region's problems are not unique; many counties across the state are dealing with the same problems such as mental health, housing, lack of volunteers, and childcare challenges.

By thinking outside the box, our local problems can have local solutions.

### Next Board Meeting

Oct. 18  
Terry, Montana

## Childcare Challenges Connect

Childcare needs affect our small communities for several reasons. Supporting work families, school readiness, socialization, and economic impact are just to state a few. For the next year, Lizzy Robertson has committed to being a part of the Zero to Five Connect Mentor/Protege Pilot program. By working through a curriculum on the basis of creating or expanding current childcare facilities, our region will get a birds-eye view on how to help kick start and retain childcare in our communities. Montana Child Care Business connect is a state program that offers small business support for child care providers. They work with individuals to bolster their business by providing interactive workshops, individual consultation, community capacity building and more. Following the first 6 months of the program, the goal is to offer hands-on assistance to interested parties in our region to create businesses in the Childcare sector for the betterment of our communities.

## Regional Success Recap

We are excited to help provide technical assistance grant funds coming into our communities to help solve problems, create, and be proud of where they come from. EPEDC provided technical assistance for the Glendive Chamber of Commerce awarded \$3,000 from Midrivers for an OWL meeting camera to help provide technology needed for virtual meetings. In Prairie County, Evelyn Cameron Heritage, Inc was awarded the Montana Department of Commerce Destination Recovery Grant for a total of \$20,150 to offset their cost for their Cowgirl Heritage Days events coming this fall. Our Region has had a few training sessions in this last quarter as well. On April 29th, 6 people attended the C-PACE Local Government Training in Glendive. Montana State Extension Office Local Government Center offered a Local Government Board training on the evening of April 30th for over 45 people. In Partnership with FADC, we hosted a training of Agritourism in Circle on May 4th with 25 attendees. This fellowship event lasted 2 days and the group was able to visit the Mahlstead Ranch and Biasch's Dino Digs.

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Visit [epedc.com](http://epedc.com) for more information

The EPEDC serves the following counties and municipalities: Carter County, Dawson County, Fallon County, Prairie County and Wibaux County, as well as the Town of Ekalaka, the City of Baker, the City of Glendive, the Town of Plevna, the Town of Richey, the Town of Terry and the Town of Wibaux.