

Rebuilding Regional Planning Systems

Northeast Minnesota's community and economic development organizations don't always work together as well as they could.

THE CHALLENGE

- Many regional institutions are decades old and have grown or evolved without much thought to how they all fit together.
- Efforts can lose momentum or grow redundant, without clarity on what should be delineated, merged, reoriented, or stopped.
- This moment is an opportunity for organizations to think about how they collaborate, and how an ideal system might look instead of sustaining things for their own sake.
- The [Aspen Institute's Rural Development Hub](#) model offers one path to a long-term, inclusive, action-oriented regional system.

OUR ROLE

The Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) has shared its intent to lead in this space. ARDC intends to operationalize its Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) work with regional commitment to specific identified tasks and community-based conversations that explore cross-jurisdictional opportunities. Northspan and Northland Foundation support that effort and will share resources and thinking on how the Rural Development Hub model could work here.

TAKE ACTION

REGIONAL

- Advocate for tax policy that better meets needs of area communities
- Flag regional groups that seem to be stuck rather than making progress
- Assess your group against Rural Development Hub criteria (p. 9-11 of the [full report](#))
- Contact ARDC Executive Director Betsy Olivanti, bolivanti@ardc.org

LOCAL

- Explore collaboration, mergers, and more defined roles with local groups who share goals
- Educate officials and residents about tax policy implications
- Coordinate with neighbors on shared services or research
- Consider whether your group's approach is redundant with others, or a model for them

See the full report and project updates at <https://www.northspan.org/thriving-rural-communities/>