AGENDA

City Council Work Session
Monday, November 9, 2026
Council Chambers
(following the Regular Meeting & EDA at 6 p.m.)

1. Community Partnership Annual Report from Greater Mankato Growth

2. Third Quarter Financial and Capital Improvement Project Report.

3. Adjournment

Greater Mankato Growth, Inc. (GMG)

City of Mankato
Council Work Session Presentation

November 9, 2026

City of Mankato & GMG Partnership Areas of Work

Visit Mankato

$613,000

Budgeted Visit Mankato 2026 Lodging Tax Funds

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE



$186,581

2026 Partnership Contribution

downtown PARTNERSHIP
Mankato - North Mankato

$25,000

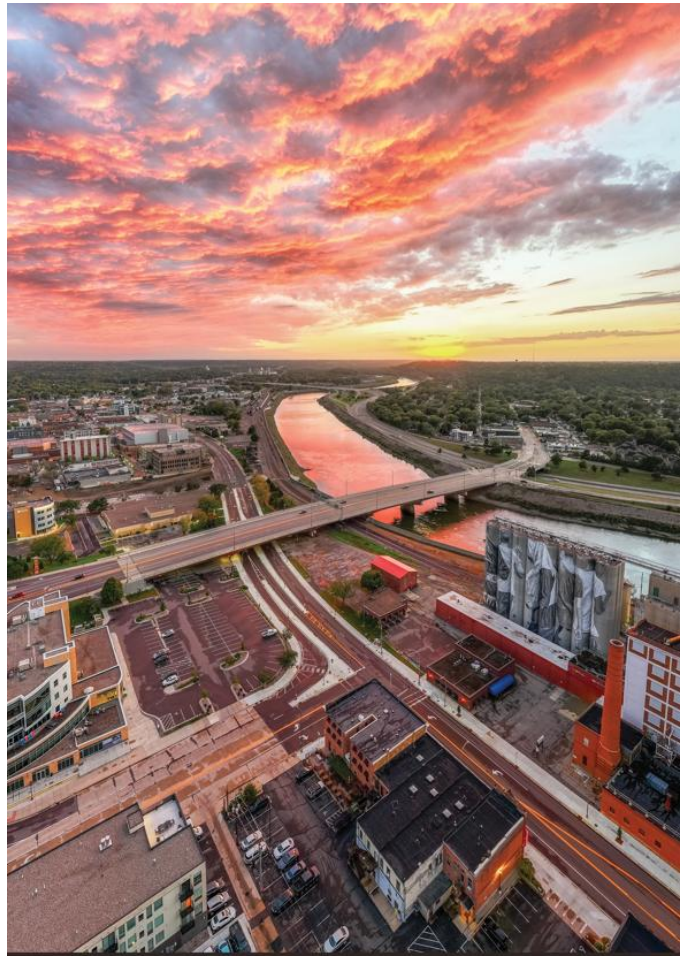
2026 Investment

GMG™

Tourism is a Significant Part of Our Economy

Why Tourism Matters

- Visitor spending supports local businesses, sustains jobs, and generates tax revenue that benefits our community.
- Tourism is also an investment in Mankato's future. Positive visitor experiences build awareness of our community as a place to live, work, attend college, start a family, and do business.



$68.8M
Estimated 2025 spending in Mankato by Visitors Traveling 50+ miles

2%
YOY Increase in Trips to Mankato from Jan. – Sept. 2026 by Visitors Traveling 50+ Miles

60.36%
Average Mankato Hotel Occupancy, Jan.– Sept. 2026

$266.4M
Estimated 2024 spending in Blue Earth County by Visitors Traveling 50+ Miles

2,237
2024 tourism-supported jobs in Blue Earth County

$25.3M
2024 state and local taxes generated in Blue Earth County

*Sources: Placer.AI; Explore MN/ Longwoods 2024 - Tourism Economics Study of the 2024 Minnesota Visitor Economy; CoStar/STR Dashboard

New 5-Year Plan Guides Tourism Investment

Visit Mankato Strategic Plan, 2026–2031

Introduced in 2026, the plan establishes a shared direction for growing Greater Mankato's visitor economy.

Vision: Greater Mankato thrives as the regional tourism destination of Southern Minnesota through robust experiences for all who visit.

Mission: Visit Mankato leads the growth of the tourism economy by attracting visitors and promoting Greater Mankato.





IMPERATIVES	OBJECTIVES	INITIATIVES
1 Develop a greater destination awareness of the Greater Mankato region	1. Increase in engaged web sessions as well as social media impressions and following 2. Increase in overnight stays as measured by Occupancy Rates and annual geolocation data	1. **Expand** marketing channels based on industry trends 2. **Identify** where and when there is capacity for more tourism to market and improve visitation year-round and region-wide 3. **Leverage** Greater Mankato's strength in outdoor recreation to increase leisure visitation 4. **Diversify** content for leisure travel through niche itinerary creation and storytelling
2 Strengthen and expand hospitality partnerships to advance tourism's economic impact in Greater Mankato	1. Attend at least 3 conferences annually and participate on 1 statewide board 2. Achieve a 4.3 out of 5 stakeholder satisfaction rating for "Overall, I recommend working with Visit Mankato" on the annual survey	1. **Develop** an onboarding and ongoing program to educate businesses and partners on Visit Mankato 2. **Provide** regular and consistent education, training, and resources to partners via sharing industry trends, webinars, newsletters, etc. 3. **Determine** a communication strategy to demonstrate the economic impact of tourism in Greater Mankato 4. **Facilitate** the cross-collaboration and cross-promotion of attractions, restaurants, and hotels 5. **Pursue** partnerships with other tourism organizations in the Southern Minnesota region to explore potential co-ops and travel packages 6. **Collaborate** with Transforming Tomorrow Together partners to align tourism with regional economic development goals
3 Amplify Mankato's reputation as a destination for meetings and conventions	1. Completion of meetings and events strategy with measurements in new events, repeat events, and marketing impacts 2. Demonstrated collaboration and alignment with event partners	1. **Identify** advertising opportunities to expand Mankato's presence in the meetings and conventions industry 2. **Strategize** and pursue attending travel trade shows; including developing a co-op with local stakeholders to attend more shows 3. **Identify** market expansions to target for meetings and conventions 4. **Assist** in improving connectivity, wayfinding, and activation of Mankato to meeting and convention planners and attendees 5. **Create** an onboarding program for new venues as well as an annual checklist to review with established venues to ensure awareness of Visit Mankato's role and how we can support them
4 Strengthen Mankato's position as a regional leader in sports tourism	1. Year over year increase in the economic impact of sports tournaments in Greater Mankato 2. Completion of a sports tourism strategy with measurements in new leads, bids submitted, and bids won	1. **Pursue** more advertising and promotion opportunities for sports tourism and event hosting 2. **Strengthen** relationships with rights holders and governing bodies 3. **Strategize** and attend relevant sports trade shows and sales events 4. **Partner** with venues and facilities to strengthen visibility and viability for larger sporting events 5. **Evaluate** regional and peer competitors to understand best practices and maintain a competitive edge
5 Build upon Visit Mankato's organizational excellence, capacity, and operations	1. Conduct 3 professional development sites visits to other DMOs by 2030 2. Achieve at least 20 hours of professional development and education per staff member annually	1. **Identify** and model best practices found in benchmarking or peer comparisons of other DMOs 2. **Conduct** a resource audit to determine needs and gaps 3. **Develop** data-driven strategies and decision-making processes 4. **Improve** alignment, expertise, and partnership with Board of Directors 5. **Define** Visit Mankato's role in the greater community as well as individual internal roles among staff

New 5-Year Plan Guides Tourism Investment

2026 lodging tax investments advanced five connected strategic priorities.

01

Destination Awareness

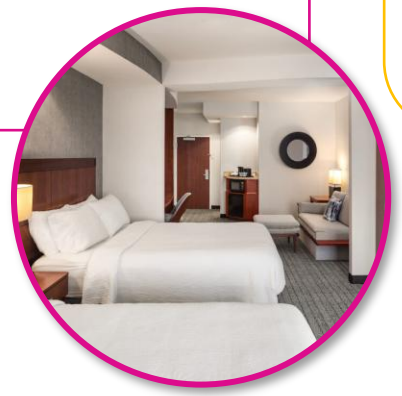
Develop a greater destination awareness of the Greater Mankato region.



02

Hospitality Partnerships

Strengthen and expand hospitality partnerships.



03

Meetings & Conventions

Amplify Mankato's reputation as a destination for meetings and conventions



04

Sports Tourism

Strengthen Mankato's position as a regional leader in sports tourism



05

Organizational Excellence

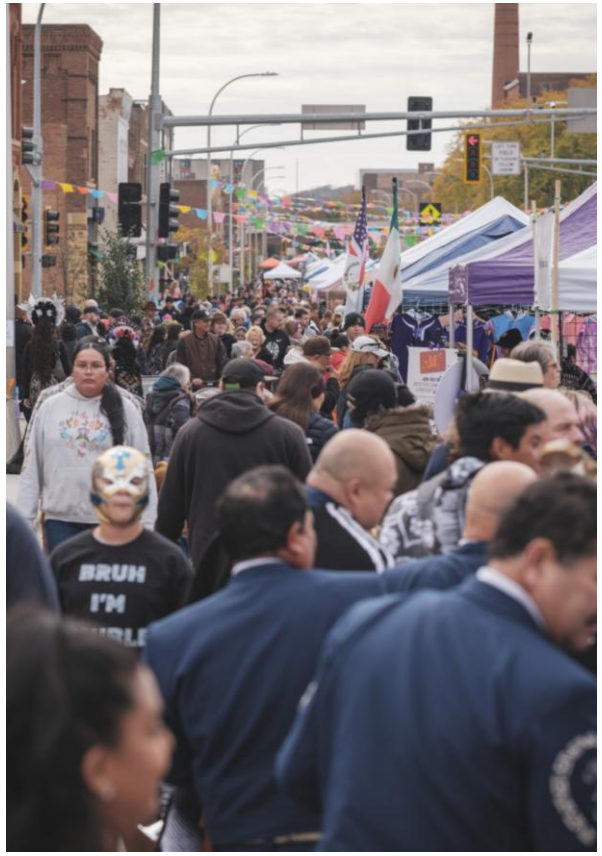
Build upon Visit Mankato's organizational excellence, capacity, and operations



Destination Awareness

2026 Highlights

- **Expanded destination marketing reach** through coordinated seasonal campaigns across print, paid social, native/display, public relations and other channels.
- **Elevated major community events** through targeted promotional campaigns, including bilingual advertising for Old Town's Day of the Dead celebration.
- **Created compelling reasons to visit** through themed campaigns and itineraries built around traveler interests, including outdoor adventure, dining, events and family-friendly experiences.



204,866
Web Sessions January 1–October 31

36,497
Sessions on Most Visited Page – Guide to Fall Events

$210,923
2026 Leisure Marketing & Promotions Budget

15K
Visitor Guide Distribution

50+
Miles Outside of Mankato for Marketing Audience

9.6%
Social Media Following Increase YTD

Hospitality Partnerships

2026 Highlights

- **Established new advisory committees,** inviting external stakeholders to help guide implementation of Visit Mankato's five-year strategic plan.
- **Strengthened collaboration with hospitality partners** through regular hotelier engagement, local committee participation, and direct relationships with local hotels, attractions, and venues.
- **Advanced regional tourism partnerships** through leadership involvement in statewide tourism organizations and collaborative destination initiatives.



13+
Community Events Supported

$8,500
In Community Event Grants and Dedicated Marketing Support

11
Participating Restaurants in 2026 Greater Mankato Restaurant Week

7
Local and Regional Committees/Boards Staff Serve on

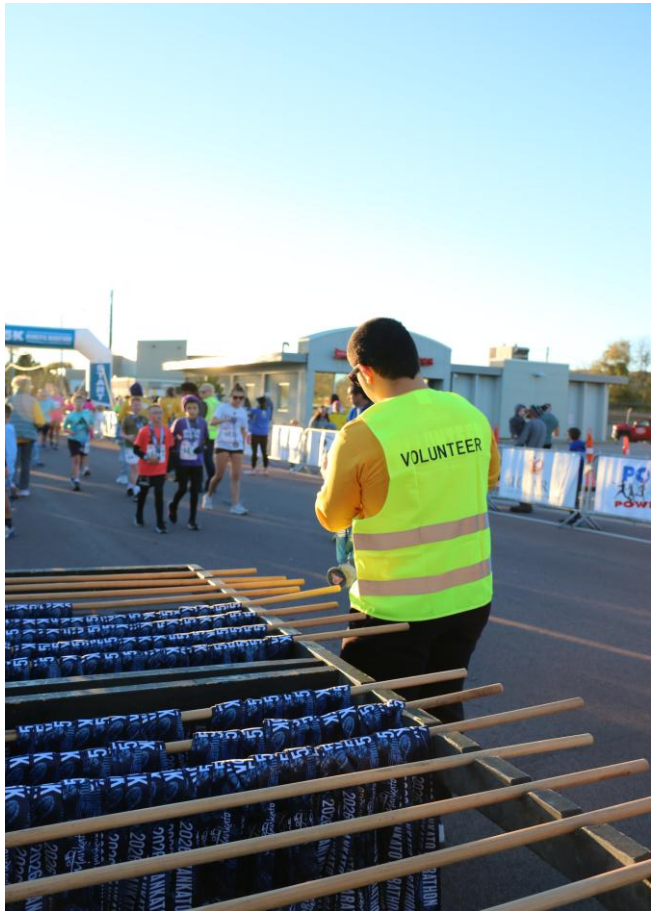
8+
New Stakeholder Voices Providing Strategic Plan Support

26
Locations and Kiosks in Mankato Where we Stock Visitor Information

Sports Tourism

2026 Highlights

- **Delivered another successful Mankato Marathon**, welcoming 3,445 registered participants and achieving the largest 5K in the event's history.
- **Expanded support for sporting events** through event grants, hotel room block coordination, equipment assistance, and direct event services.
- **Advanced sports tourism recruitment efforts** through 20 one-on-one meetings with sports rights holders at Sports ETA, positioning Mankato to attract future regional and national tournaments.



$17.6M+
Estimated Economic Impact of Sport Events VM Supported

33
Sporting Events Supported

$18,300
In 2026 Event Grants

3,445
Registrations for the Mankato Marathon

600+
2026 MN Senior Games Participants

$35,000
2027 Budgeted Event Funding

Meetings & Conventions

2026 Highlights

- **Supported major statewide and regional conferences**, including Ag Expo, MN Pork Congress, American Planning Association Minnesota Conference and Midwest Archaeological Conference.
- **Enhanced the attendee experience** through customized welcome services, local business promotions, visitor information, and connections to community attractions.
- **Strengthened Mankato's competitive position** through targeted conference recruitment and newly developed meetings and conventions bid incentives.



23
Total Meetings & Conventions Supported

130+
Hours of Assistance Including Registration, Name Badge Printing, etc.

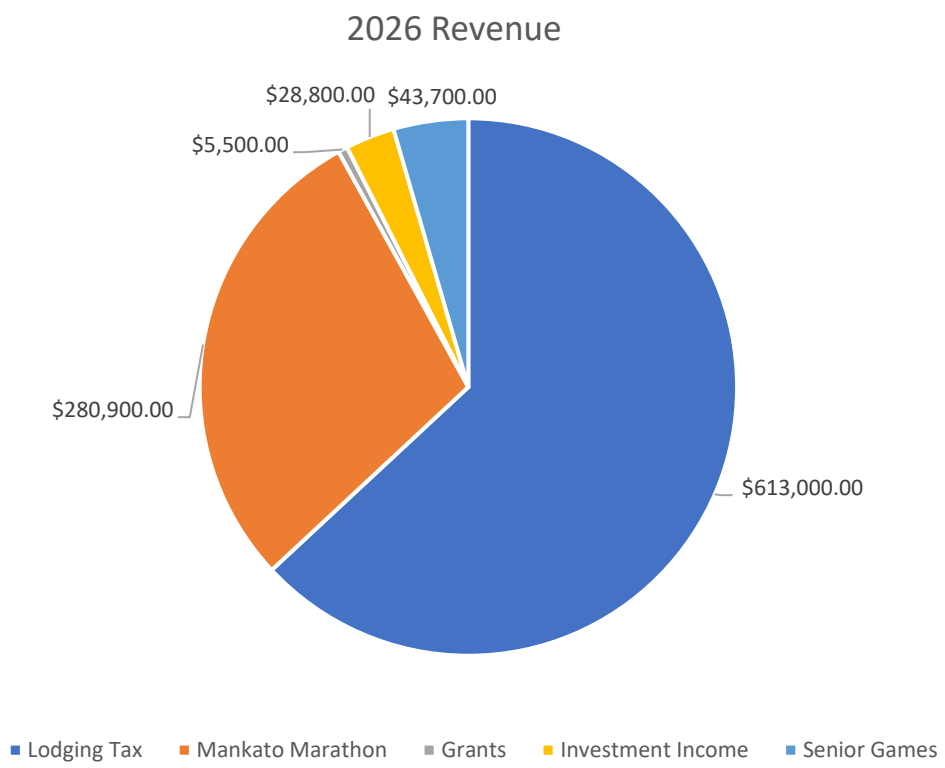
$6,750
In 2026 Conference Event Grants

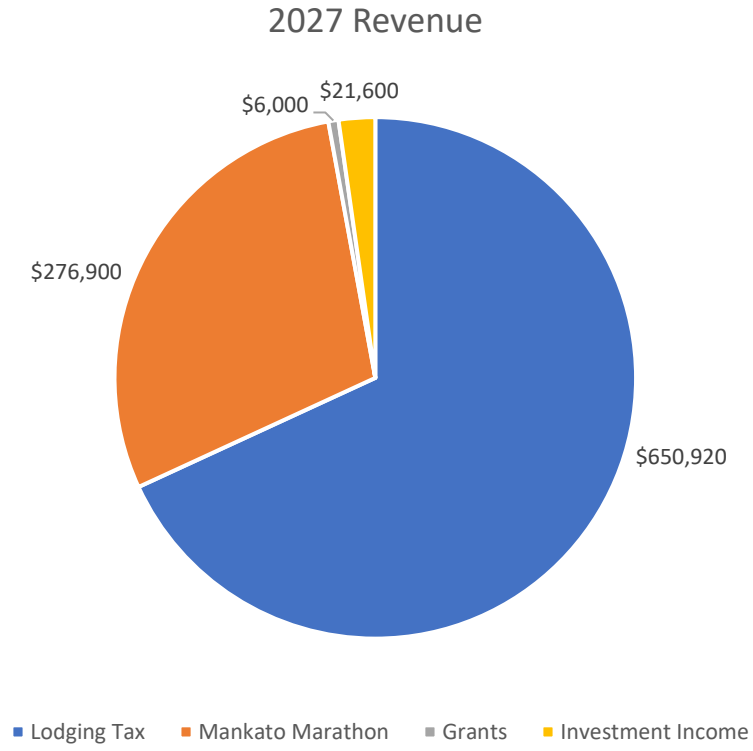
400
Pre-made Welcome Bags for Conference Attendees

12
Welcome tables with visitor information

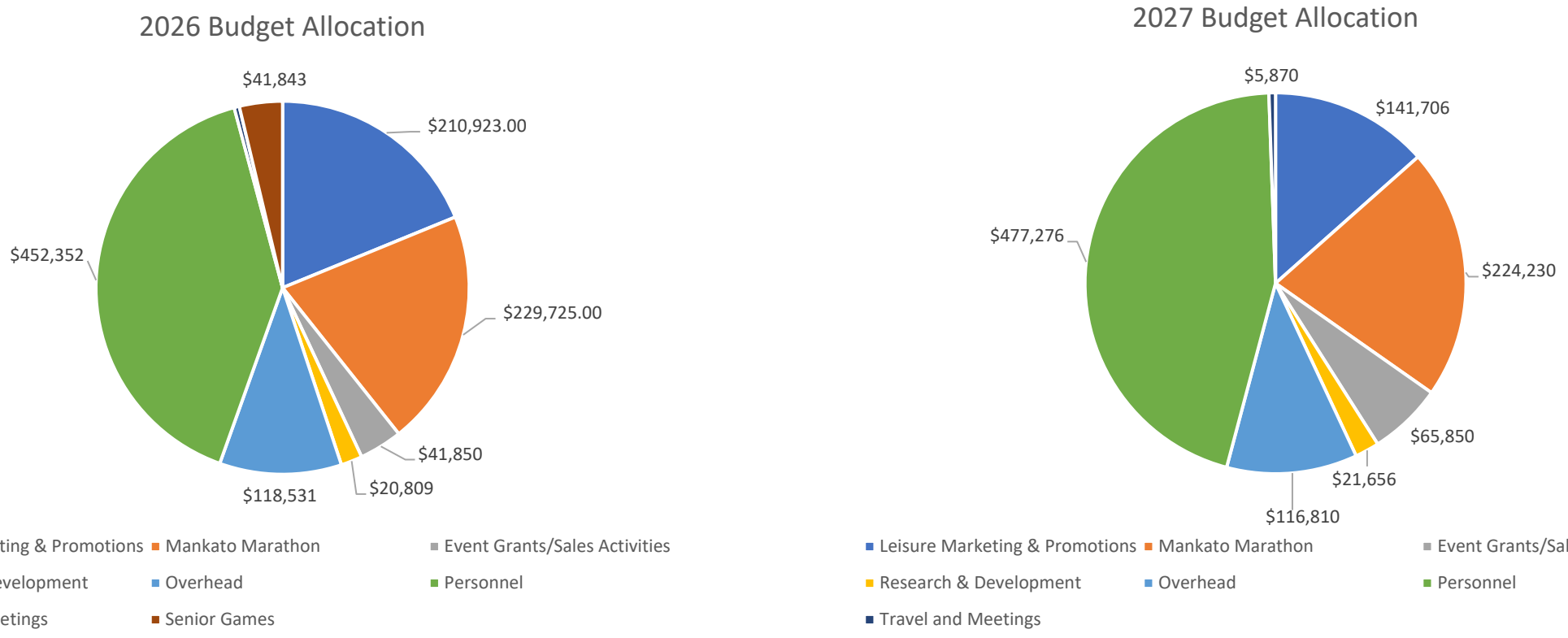
$20K
2027 Budgeted Event Funding

Revenue Breakdown





Budget Allocation



Downtown Partnership Mission & Vision

downtown PARTNERSHIP
Mankato - North Mankato

Our **Mission** is to promote collaboration and foster investment in the downtown of Mankato and North Mankato to attract and support the growth of a diverse array of businesses, customers, visitors and residents to the region.

Our **Vision** is a vibrant downtown that anchors and exemplifies the creativity, diversity, and vitality of the region.

Mainstreet Four Point Approach



Impact at a Glance

downtown PARTNERSHIP
Mankato - North Mankato



10

Signature Retail Promotions & Events

Sustained year-round foot traffic and active commercial district promotion through regular program delivery.



50+

Unique Downtown Businesses Engaged

Fostered key partnerships and strengthened the local downtown business community.



9+

New Activation Concepts Launched

Introduced fresh initiatives for customer discovery and explored sustainable fundraising models for organizational growth.

Programming

downtown PARTNERSHIP
Mankato - North Mankato

JANUARY

BONUS Gift Card PROGRAM

MARCH

NEW

THE GREAT Bouquet BUILD

JUNE

NEW

HARD HATS on Belgrade

JULY

NEW

SUMMER Crazy Days

AUGUST

NEW

Downtown BURGER Battle

AUGUST

NEW

CASH BINGO @ Hickory Street RibFest

SEPTEMBER

NEW

FALL Haul

OCTOBER

NEW

Downtown Spellbound

NOVEMBER

Shop Downtown

DECEMBER

NEW

UGLY SWEATER STROLL

A full calendar of events was launched to drive repeat visits, featuring 7 new promotional events, 2 returning favorites, and 1 new fundraising event.

Program Impact

downtown PARTNERSHIP
Mankato - North Mankato

Early Engagement Builds Strong Momentum

Event participation, digital reach, and business response point to growing awareness and demand.



SOLD OUT

The Great Bouquet Build

18 Participating Businesses
150 Ticketed Participants
2,700 Flowers Distributed

- 26,232 Organic Social Views
- 48,920 Event Ad Impressions
- 350+ Facebook Event Responses
- 513 Paid Landing Page Views ($0.39 CPC)



WINNER

Downtown Burger Battle

13 Participating Restaurants
750+ Votes Cast
2,000+ Featured Burgers Sold

- 147,000+ Organic Social Views
- 35,290 Paid Meta Impressions
- 16,738 Paid Meta Reach
- 1,676 Paid Landing Page Views ($0.12 CPC)

Impact at a Glance

downtown PARTNERSHIP
Mankato - North Mankato

> Thank you for an amazing day and introduction to many new businesses!!!
> — Downtown Shop Hop Participant, March 2026

> Had a great time on a beautiful warm spring day and found fantastic new businesses along the way! Thank you!
> — Downtown Shop Hop Participant, March 2026

Business Support

downtown PARTNERSHIP
Mankato - North Mankato



Wayfinding

Finalized district banner designs, brought the updated downtown map near completion, and reviewed 2015 wayfinding plans to guide future navigation improvements across the area.



Communication

Expanded stakeholder outreach by sending monthly newsletters to business and property owners, while updating website event pages and increasing social media activity to engage the broader community.



Construction Support

Created dedicated consumer navigation maps for the Veterans Memorial Bridge and Belgrade Avenue projects to support local business access during ongoing construction.

These initiatives worked together to keep downtown visible, accessible, and easy to visit and support local businesses.

Marketing Results

downtown PARTNERSHIP
Mankato - North Mankato

Downtown Kato Facebook
2026 Year-to-Date

4,316 followers
(**+20.8%** YTD)

117,000+ viewers

3,900+ event responses

Downtown Kato Instagram
2026 Year-to-Date

291 followers
(**+55.6%** YTD)

896 content interactions
(**+188%** YTD)

8,100+ viewers

Downtown Kato TikTok
Created September 2026

11,000+ views

185 followers

780 total unique viewers in the first month

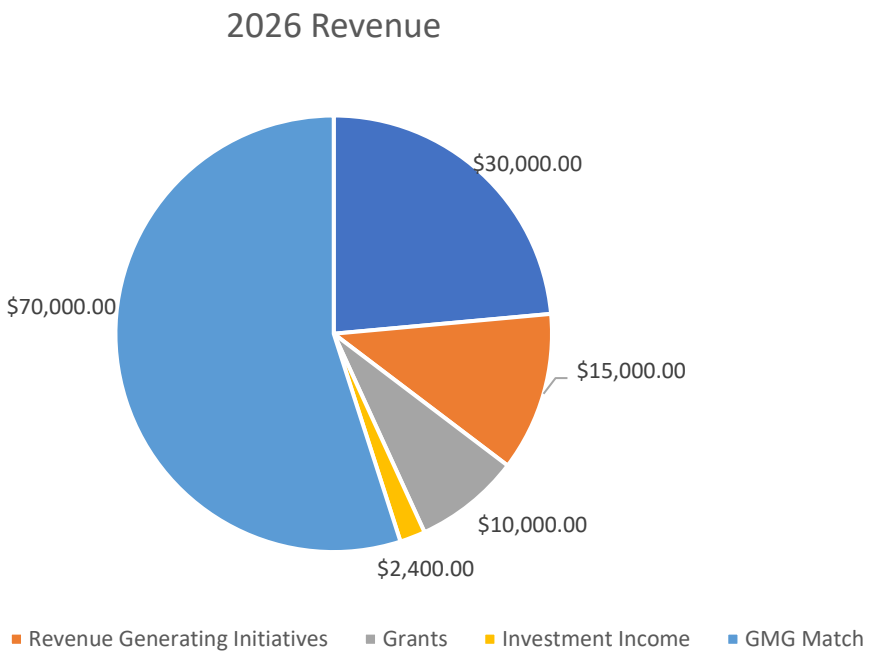
Downtown Partnership
Business E-Newsletter

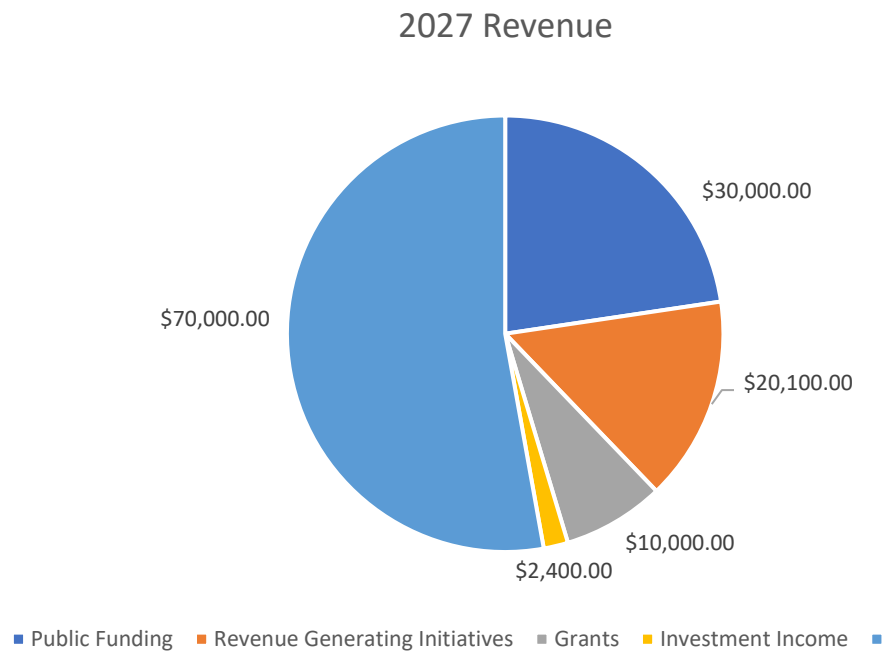
55% average newsletter open rate

144 business contacts

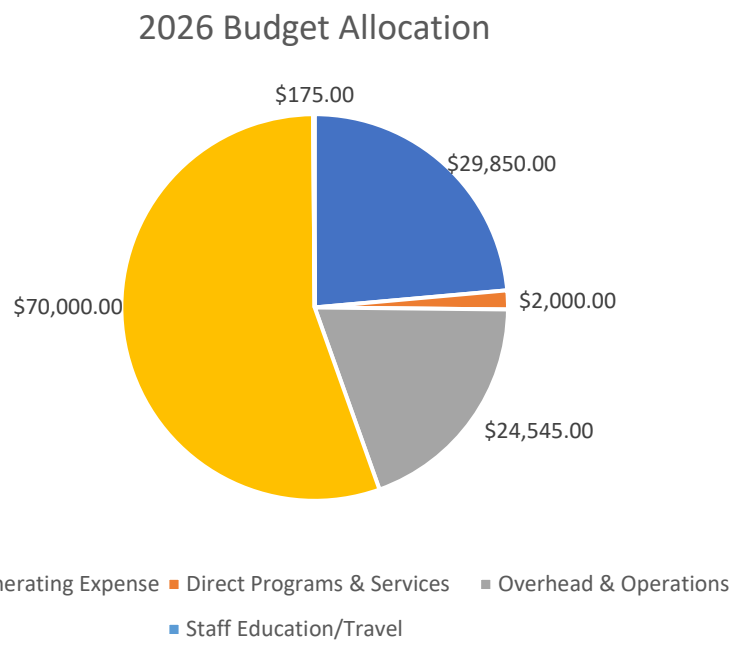
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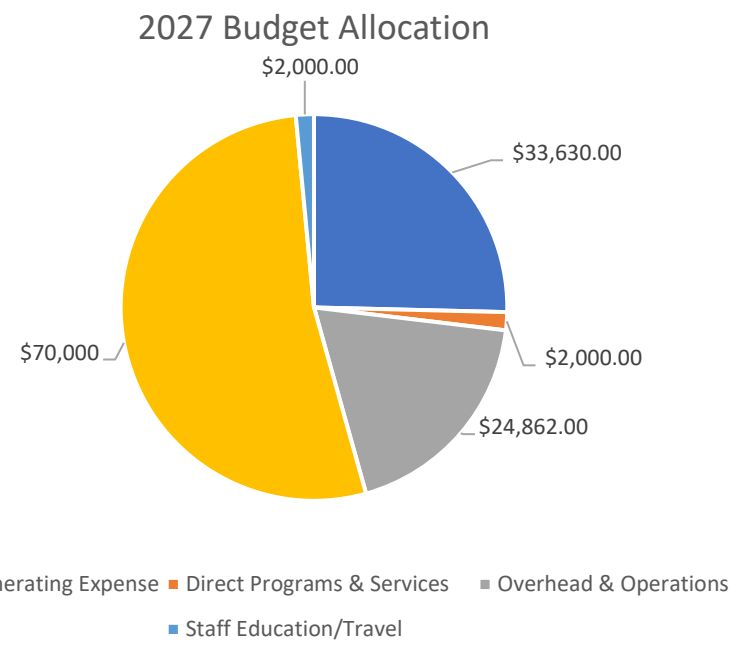
Revenue Breakdown





Budget Allocation





REDA Partnership

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

"It is broadly accepted, embraced and understood that economic prosperity and activities do not stop at jurisdictional boundaries. Rather our economic and community prosperity lies in the success of our collective marketplace."

- Business Retention & Expansion
- New Enterprise and Emerging Business Development
- New Business Development
- Marketplace Enhancements

Alliance Partners

- Eagle Lake
- Lake Crystal
- Madison Lake
- Mankato
- North Mankato
- St. Peter
- Blue Earth County
- Nicollet County

Business Attraction – Verdánt Organics

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE



- REDA recruitment process working as designed
- 75 Jobs - $13.6 Million Investment
- Supports three Transforming Tomorrow Together Regional goals
- Supports City of Mankato Climate Action Plan
- 90% reduction of water usage

Business Attraction – Verdánt Organics

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

GMG Activities

- Made initial outreach & pitched Greater Mankato
- Conducted RFP for site search
- Created investor connections
- Hosted & coordinated site visit
- Introduced to partner organizations
- Shared grant opportunities and wrote letters of support

City of Mankato Activities

- Pitched City of Mankato
- Managed Zoning & Permitting
- Held ongoing meetings with Verdánt
- Established New Tax Abatement Policy
- Provided Tax Abatement
- Provided Revolving Loan Fund

"Greater Mankato Growth and the City of Mankato have welcomed us every step of the way." – Mike Borman, President & CEO

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Business Attraction – Verdánt Organics

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Individual Strengths, Collective Success

11:45-1:00

Resource Meeting: Utilities & Talent & Workforce Resources

Lunch Served at 12:00

Attendees

- Ben Jacobsen, Sales Consultant, CenterPoint Energy (Natural Gas)
- Jake Andre, Corporate Economic Development Manager, Xcel Energy (Power for Mankato Sites)
- Tim Braulick, Engineering & Operations Manager, BENCO Electric Cooperative (Power for N Mankato Site)
- Jon Wheelock, Energy Services Manager, BENCO Electric Cooperative
- Travis Thul, Vice President for Student Success & Engagement, Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Aaron Budge, Interim Executive Director for the School of Applied Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources
- Kelcey Woods-Nord, Vice President of Strategic Partnerships, South Central College
- Caleb Watson, Career Pathway Coordinator, Mankato Area Public Schools
- Heather Gleason, Executive Director, South Central WorkForce Council
- Jessica Miller, Director of Workforce Strategy, Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development

"When we came down here, we weren't even seriously thinking about Mankato… Greater Mankato Growth was [at the Community Venture Network event]"

"I couldn't believe how many people we met from the community [during the initial site visit] and the message was, we want to partner with you to figure out how to make Mankato your home."
– Mike Borman, KEYC In the Spotlight Interview

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Main Street Economic Revitalization Program

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

CITY PROJECTS FUNDED

33 of 54

17 in Round 2 • 16 in Round 3

STATE GRANTS AWARDED

$1.93M of $2.65M

$1.85M distributed to date

REPORTED MATCHING INVESTMENT

$32.7M

23 projects reporting expenditures
$39 million anticipated

WHAT THE PROJECTS SUPPORT

- **98 new apartments**
  Axis Lofts and The Silos
- **New business attraction**
  Crumbl, Power Athletics
- **Expanded local services**
  North Counseling, Menari Body Works, Picklebarn
- **Nonprofit support**
  Carnegie Art Center, Grace Lutheran Church

LARGEST CONFIRMED MATCHES

Axis Lofts	**$14.94M**
The Silos	**$5.96M**
Elevate 22	**$3.93M**
Arch & Cable Hotel	**$2.35M**

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MSERP Full Project List

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Round 2

- Menari Body Works (Cherry Street)
- The Silos
- Volk Investments Company
- Elevate 22
- Landmark Apartments Demolition (Hotel Mankato)
- MAH BKS, LLC
- The Post at 401 (Titan MKT)
- LocAle Brewing Company
- Arch and Cable Hotel
- Axis Lofts
- Carnegie Art Center
- 709 S Broad (CLM Partners)
- Desai Hospitality (Coratel Inn & Suites)
- Dairy Queen West
- LocAle Phase 3
- Happy People, LLC (Crumbl)
- Vision Studios, LLC

Round 3

- Barkhadle Store
- Ember Wellness Studio
- Mankato School of Massage
- Urban Escape Salon & Spa
- Mankato Area Arts Council (Carnegie Art Center)
- Coins and Antiques (Save Mor Jewelry)
- Grace Lutheran Church
- Kato Moving & Storage
- North Counseling
- Ophthalmology Associates of Mankato
- Picklebarn
- Spotlight Mankato 4 (Mithun Enterprises)
- Vietnamese Café
- Volk (True Value Distribution Center)
- Finn Co LLC
- Power Athletics

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Impacts on Mankato Residents

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Childcare

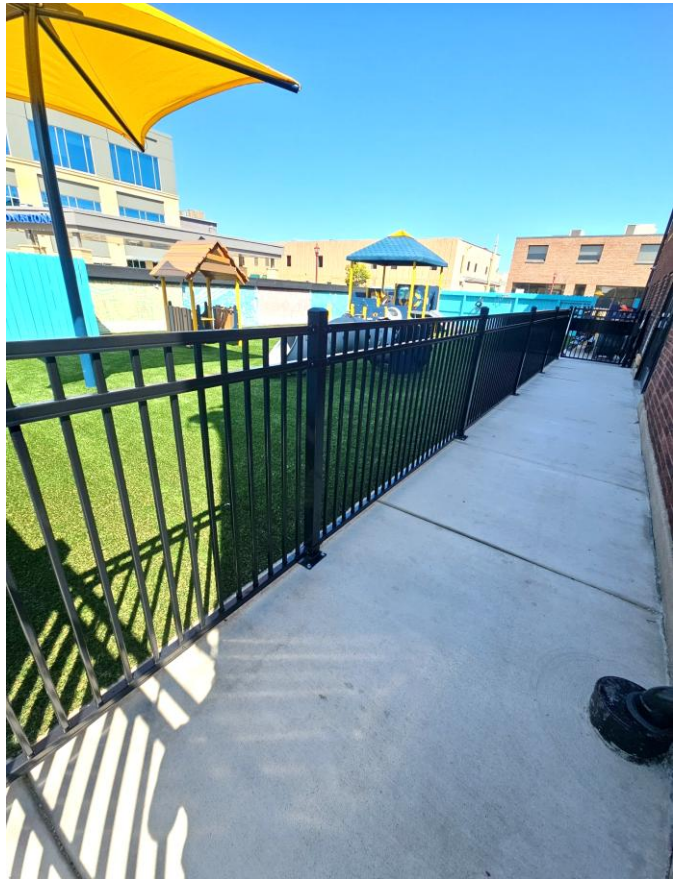
- Recruitment of New Horizon Academy finalized
- 100 children currently under care, 20 staff members
- Acquisition of Cultivate supported by Mankato EDA

Housing

- Support Region Nine Development Commission in planning strategy for Housing Forum Conducted with MN Housing
- Provided Letters of Support for City of Mankato's application for Minnesota Housing Finance Agency Funding

Workforce

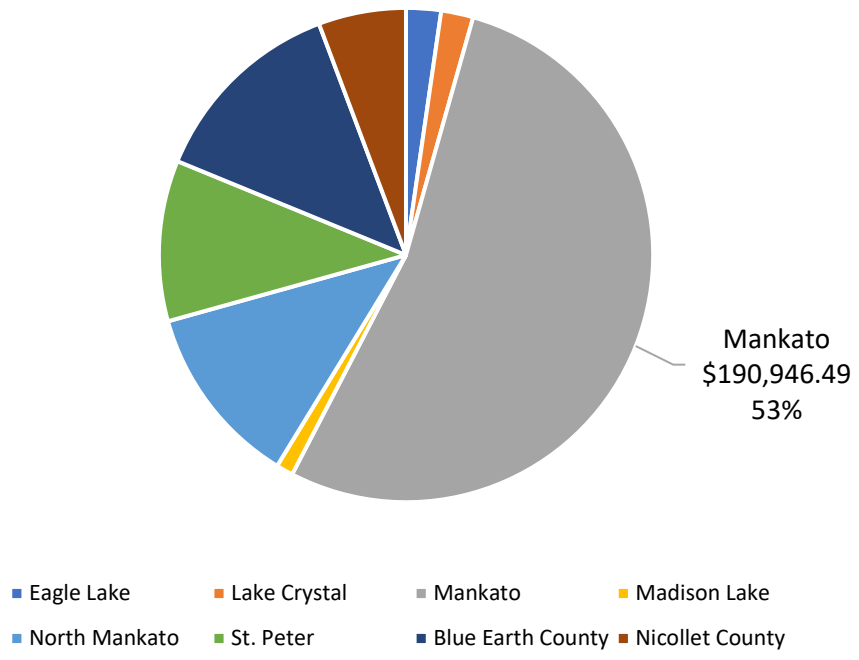
- Initiated CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) program engaging local high school students
- Connected laid off KRI workers with DEED & Workforce Council



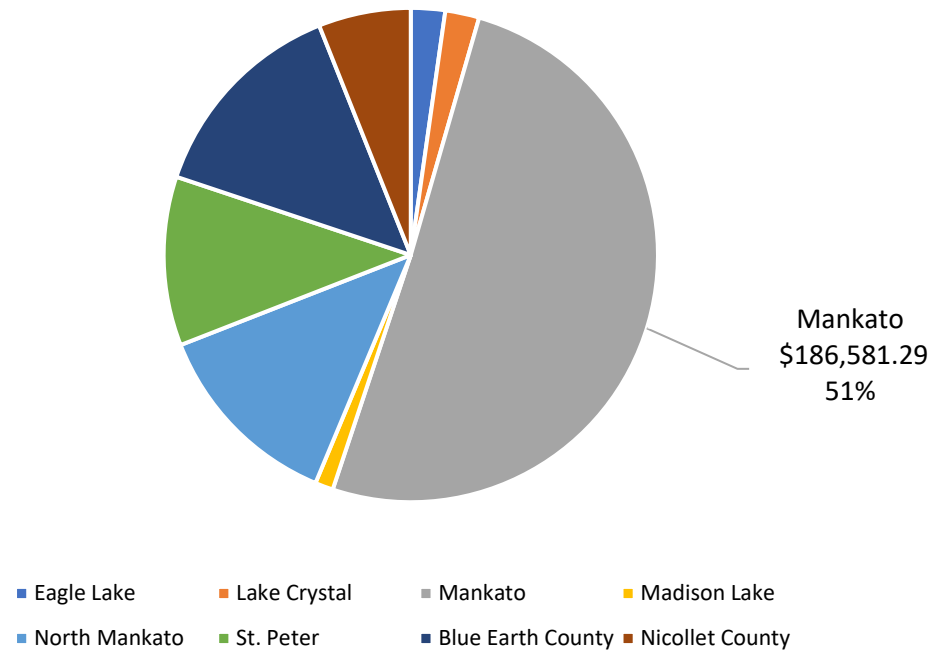
City of Mankato Contribution

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

2026 REDA Contribution $343,947.42

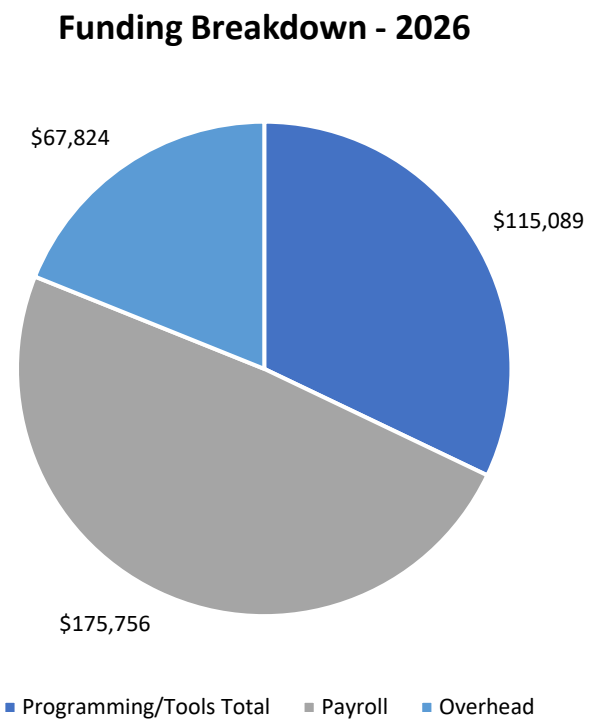


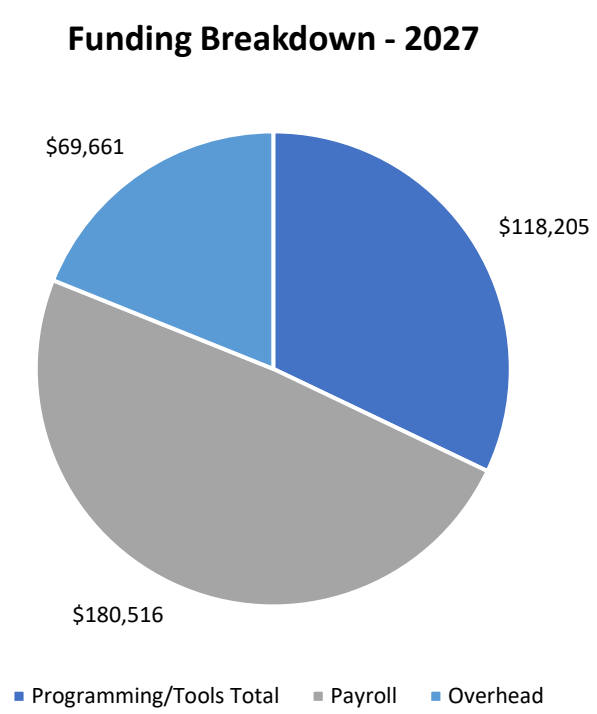
2027 REDA Contribution $368,382.55



Funding Breakdown

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

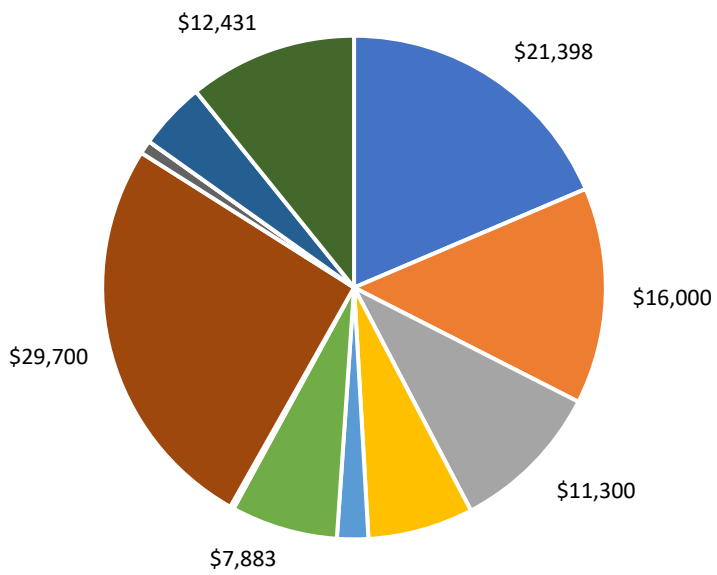




Programming & Tools

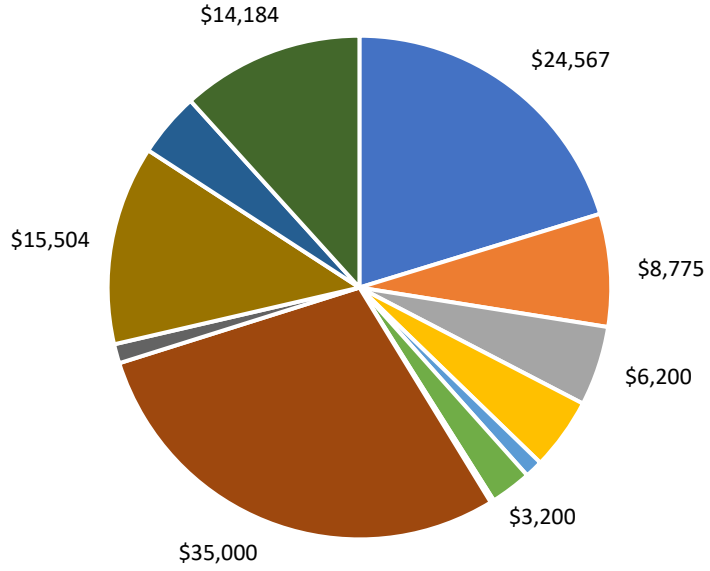
REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

Programming & Tools - 2026



- Software Subscriptions
- New Business Development
- BRE & Talent Development
- Memberships
- Trainings
- Events & Travel
- Meals & Entertainment
- Marketing
- REDA Annual Meeting, events, other
- SBDC Contribution
- Guided REDA Spend

Programming & Tools – 2027 (Preliminary)



- Software Subscriptions
- New Business Development
- BRE & Talent Development
- Memberships
- Trainings
- Events & Travel
- Meals & Entertainment
- Marketing
- REDA Annual Meeting, events, other
- Contract Data Support
- SBDC Contribution
- Guided REDA Spend

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Funding Well Spent

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

$1 → $370

Every $1 committed to REDA by public partners in 2025 supported $370 of **private capital investment** in the region.

Questions?

Visit Mankato

downtown PARTNERSHIP
Mankato - North Mankato

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE

GAG™

THANK YOU

GMG™

GREATER MANKATO GROWTH

Visit Mankato

downtown PARTNERSHIP Mankato - North Mankato

GREENSEAM®

GMG™