



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Fueling Our Future (FOF)?

A: Fueling our Future (FOF) is a long-term initiative, divided into four-year programs of work, led by regional business and community leaders, developed through a partnership between The Chamber and EDC. The initiative's focus is guided by three key pillars: People (workforce development), Place (community assets/quality of life) and Prosperity (economic development).

The intent of the initiative is to bring together multiple organizations to address large-scale solutions for the benefit of the entire region through projects that no one organization could accomplish on its own.

Q: How did Fueling Our Future start?

A: Approximately two years ago, The Chamber's board of directors began to look into an initiative like this. During the idea phase, an outside consulting firm that specializes in community development projects was brought in to conduct feasibility studies, compile local data and potential impact, gauge community need and feedback, and offer a framework. The Chamber approached the EDC as a partner because of their strength and the collaborative nature of this effort. Together, the collective resources and leadership assembled a governance board to lead the work going forward.

Q: Why are The Chamber and EDC the two organizations leading this initiative?

A: Because both organizations are closely tapped into the pulse of the business community, their collective members and partners believed that an effort like this was needed and would be supported. While the EDC and Chamber initiated the project and are assisting and coordinating work, the governance board will make program and funding decisions.

Q: Is there one primary goal?

A: The initiative's main goal is collaboration to support programs or solve challenges that could not be done without the collective group. FOF will focus on large-scale opportunities with regional benefits.

Q: What are the financial goals of Fueling Our Future?

A: The goal is to raise \$5 million total—with \$4 million in private funds and \$1 million in public funds—to be dispersed over the next four years.

Q: What is the makeup of the governance board?

A: To ensure its success, Fueling Our Future is led by a 15-member governance board, which is comprised of community leaders from private and public sectors who have invested significant resources in FOF. The president and chair from both The Chamber and the EDC organizations also sit on the board to maintain the vision behind FOF.

Q: What process will be used to choose the projects FOF will support?

A: The governance board will approve and review projects brought forward by the partners. In addition, an advisory council has been established to determine the appropriate process for bringing forward projects to the governance board and make recommendations of the issues affecting the community. All projects in consideration must align with the stated pillars by which FOF was created.

Q: What does the long-term plan for FOF look like?

A: To stay relevant and address timely needs in the community, every four years will be a period to reassess the goals, plans and funding behind FOF. The initiative is planned to become a key driver of growth in the region and remain in place long into the future.

Q: How does FOF differ from the Valley Prosperity Partnership (VPP)?

A: Both FOF and VPP are much-needed initiatives for the region. VPP is a regional initiative that includes businesses along the Red River Valley from Grand Forks to Wahpeton. The VPP is led by the Greater Fargo Moorhead EDC and the Greater Grand Forks EDC. The VPP has focused on specific initiatives like water security and higher education research. Much of the VPP's work has focused on state legislative decisions that support a healthy business environment. While the VPP spans a greater geographical area, Fueling Our Future focuses on the local metro cities. The VPP and FOF are complementary initiatives.

Q: Is there a successful model for an initiative such as this in other comparable cities?

A: Yes, the Forward Sioux Falls initiative is well established and has seen great success. Sioux Falls' initiative is similar to FOF in its goal to effectively position their region for economic success, making major strides in supporting workforce, entrepreneurship, public policy, air service and international trade.

Q: What types of projects or investments do you expect Fueling Our Future will fund?

A: FOF will fund large-scale projects that couldn't be tackled by one organization alone. Projects must align with the three pillars: people, place or prosperity. Some initial ideas include support of career academies, a certified shovel-ready site for the region, a business-focused task force to assist Hector International Airport and support of an established business accelerator.