

News Release

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Initiative Foundation Seeks Four Communities for Citizen Leadership Program

The Initiative Foundation is seeking four central Minnesota communities that want to rally citizens around planning for a more prosperous future.

Leaders are invited to apply for selection to the foundation's Healthy Communities Partnership (HCP) program, which trains volunteer teams in leadership skills, planning and organizing efforts.

Selected communities will receive up to \$50,000 over five years to identify, plan and complete projects identified in town hall-style meetings.

Since 1998, more than 80 communities have participated in HCP. Projects have included economic development, comprehensive planning, downtown revitalization, youth and family activities, conservation efforts, parks and trails.

"Our goal is to ask people to dream about their community's future and then give them an opportunity to make it happen," Dan Frank, Initiative Foundation program manager for community development. "We want to deepen the pool of engaged volunteers and build on each community's strengths."

According to Frank, the four communities will be chosen based on economic need, citizen involvement, and participation of city government.

The HCP program is funded in part by a \$150,000 grant from the St. Paul-based Bush Foundation. Minnesota Public Radio news is also participating in the program by reporting on and telling the stories of one or more selected communities as residents get engaged in the planning process.

Communities that wish to apply for HCP must attend a pre-application meeting in November. Full applications will be due on December 15, with selections announced in early January. For more information, contact Dan Frank at (877) 632-9255 or dfrank@ifound.org.

Based in Little Falls and serving central Minnesota's 14 counties, the Initiative Foundation offers loans to businesses, grants to nonprofits, and a variety of leadership programs that enable citizens to build stronger communities.

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