



MID-MINNESOTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

COMMUNICATIONS HANDBOOK

2026 - 2028

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What is Mid-Minnesota Development Commission?

In the late 1960s the Minnesota state legislature recognized that challenges of growth and development transcend local government boundaries. They found that solutions to local problems could be realized by pooling resources through intergovernmental cooperation. To help local units of government work together, the Legislature enacted the Regional Development Act of 1969. As a result, Regional Development Commissions (RDCs) were formed . They now provide strong regional leadership. The Minnesota Legislature has updated the Act since that time including a major revision in 1997. There are currently nine active RDCs in Greater Minnesota. Each region is governed by a board of local elected officials as well as others who represent industries, populations, or other causes in the public interest.

MMDC Mission:

To administer state and federal programs, coordinate multi-jurisdictional activities, and to provide technical assistance to government, business, and local organizations in order to maintain or enhance the quality of life and support economic development

MMDC Value Statement:

Vision/Goals: While acknowledging and valuing the history of our Region, we will influence decisions that result in healthier, more resilient, more inclusive, and more prosperous communities while maintaining a future-focused perspective.

Accountability: We believe the MMDC should be held accountable to the residents of our Region, and to our funding partners, for the quality of our work, for the fiscally-responsible management of our budget, and for the continuous promotion of opportunity and development throughout our Region.

Professionalism: We will promote opportunities for MMDC staff and Commissioner development, encourage leadership at all levels, and expect professionalism to be demonstrated through our conduct and through our achievements.

Communication: We value timely, open, honest, and respectful communication as a pathway to improved MMDC effectiveness.

Adaptability: We welcome new ideas and challenges as opportunities for improvement and the advancement of the MMDC organization and Region.

Diversity: The MMDC aspires to lead as an organization where equality and inclusion is achievable for all, regardless of ethnicity, age, ability/disability, religion, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, or other difference. We believe that all deserve respect, dignity, and an opportunity to learn, grow, and achieve.

Teamwork: The MMDC supports teamwork throughout the organization and collaboration, both throughout our Region and beyond its borders. We will not hesitate to share our talents when partnering will lead to the achievement of greater outcomes for our communities.

Imperfection: We acknowledge our humanity. As humans, we will make mistakes. We will help each other learn from these mistakes and will strive for continuous improvement.

MMDC Communications Specialist:

All commissioners and staff play an outreach and communication role at MMDC. The communications specialist serves the communication needs of the organization. The communications specialist is responsible for communicating a vast amount of information to local stakeholders, partners, and the media. The communications specialist must also employ multiple techniques for listening, engaging and maintaining partnerships.

Functions of the Communications Specialist include:

Media Relations

- Message development
- Interview preparation and media coordination
- Educating local media on MMDC history, purpose, and goals
- Story tracking and analysis

Public Relations

- Message development for MMDC commissioners, staff, strategic partners, etc.
- Facilitating engagement opportunities for citizens, partners and stakeholders
- Message development and dissemination via social media channels
- Development and distribution of print publications (MMDC Annual Report, etc.)
- Web content development, design, and webpage management

Marketing

- Development, execution and analysis of strategic marketing plans and campaigns
- Graphic design and brand management
- Photography and videography services

Who Does MMDC Want To Reach?

- Residents of MMDC’s Region
- Elected Officials
- Local Government Entities
- Community Developers
- Economic Development Organizations/Professionals
- Transportation Organizations/Professionals
- Regional Partners (e.g. Foundations)
- Business Owners & Aspiring Entrepreneurs

MMDC's Communications Channels:

Channel	Internal/ External	Frequency	Who Communicates	Performance Metrics
Facebook	External	Daily/Weekly	Communications Specialist	Followers, Likes, Comments
Website	External	Monthly	Communications Specialist	Website Analytics, Click Rate
Email	Both	Ongoing	All MMDC Staff	Responses, Follow Through
Phone	Both	Ongoing/As Needed	All MMDC Staff	Responses
Print Materials	Both	Ongoing/As Needed	All MMDC Staff	Number of Materials Distributed, Feedback & Responses
Digital Media: Press Releases, Notices	External	As Needed	Communications Specialist	Media Coverage, Responses
Radio	External	As Needed	Planning Staff Communications Specialist Executive Director	Coverage, Response, Feedback
Board, Commission & Committee Meetings	External	Monthly to Quarterly (Varies)	All MMDC Staff MMDC Commissioners	Attendance, Feedback Received
Team Meetings	Internal	Weekly	All MMDC Staff	Attendance, Participation
Events	External	As Needed	All MMDC Staff	Public Interest, Participation, Feedback

How Does MMDC Listen to Our Audiences?

MMDC has many outbound communication channels through which information reaches a wide audience. Equally important are inbound channels that allow MMDC to listen to and engage with this audience. While digital strategies are increasingly important, more traditional modes of communication and engagement still have enormous relevance and effectiveness. Following are the primary means by which outsiders can communicate with MMDC:

Boards, Committees, and Commission

MMDC staff and commissioners serve a variety of boards, committees, task forces, and Commissions throughout our region; and state. These positions provide Opportunities for listening and engagement. Commissioners and staff who serve in these roles provide recommendations that may lead to new initiatives and solutions.

Public Meetings

MMDC hosts public meetings, both for the organization, and for specific programs and projects. These meetings ensure transparency as needed for local government decision making. Citizens, partners and stakeholders are encouraged to seize these point-of-presence opportunities by providing feedback directly to our organization.

Special Events

MMDC hosts and/or participates in special events throughout the region. commissioners and staff can use these as opportunities to collect input from citizens, partners and stakeholders who may not otherwise know about our organization.

Online Presence

MMDC maintains several Online communications channels, including a website (MMDC.org) and Facebook (Facebook.com/ Mid-Minnesota Development Commission) page. These channels are not simply used to push out information. Rather, they are monitored for questions and comments that relate to our organization's services, programs and personnel. They are also used to promote our region and our regional partners' offerings. A great deal of engagement and customer service begins in these online spaces.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy provides a road map for regional economic development in the MMDC region. The U.S. EDA reviews and approves this plan, which undergoes a major update every five years. The CEDS is the mechanism through which MMDC receives Economic Development District designation.

Partner Collaboration

MMDC collaborates with a wide variety of partners to address common issues facing the MMDC Region and the state of Minnesota

MMDC Communications Goals:

Create & Improve Relationships With Local Media Outlets & Other Influential People:

- Seek opportunities to meet and develop relationships with media professionals across the four-county region. This will allow for better access to outlets when MMDC press releases are issued and other events take place in the interest of the public.
- Continually-strive to grow our relationships with influential people in our region (elected Officials, regional partners, business leaders, informal leaders, etc.)

Create Dynamic Content Across Multiple Communication Channels That Tell The Story of The MMDC and Our Region Itself:

- Develop a content-creation calendar to ensure timely posting across MMDC's communications channels. This includes the sharing of our regional partners content and other relevant information on MMDC platforms.

Explore New Ways to Reach Stakeholders By Using MMDC's Video Capabilities:

- Use internal video capabilities to promote MMDC's mission and services. Highlight major projects and initiatives throughout MMDC's region via high-quality, engaging video content. This includes MMDC's Ride Resources video series, MMDC Revolving Loan Fund success stories, and other video projects.

Continue to Publish ADA Accessible Materials:

- Strive to achieve clarity, readability, and usability among all MMDC publications and communications. Educate MMDC staff on ADA compliance when possible and applicable.

Continue to Grow & Enhance MMDC's Website to Ensure Accessibility & Relevance:

- Ensure our website has current MMDC content and informs on regional events and other news items.
- Develop a content check/update calendar for MMDC's website to ensure continued relevance.

MMDC Brand Identity:

Commission Name

The way in which MMDC is mentioned is critical, as our audience recognizes us, in part, through our agency branding. The Commission should always be referred to as “Mid-Minnesota Development Commission” or “MMDC”. When writing for public viewing, the first time the Commission is referenced, our entire commission name should be used, followed by (MMDC). “MMDC” then can be used throughout the rest of the document.

Logo

MMDC’s logo use and presentation plays a major role in the scheme of MMDC’s brand. The logo will be prominently displayed on all organizational information and promotional material, including all print and digital publications. No other logo should be used in place of our official organization logo.

Preferred Logo:



White Logo (shown here with black background):



Black Logo:

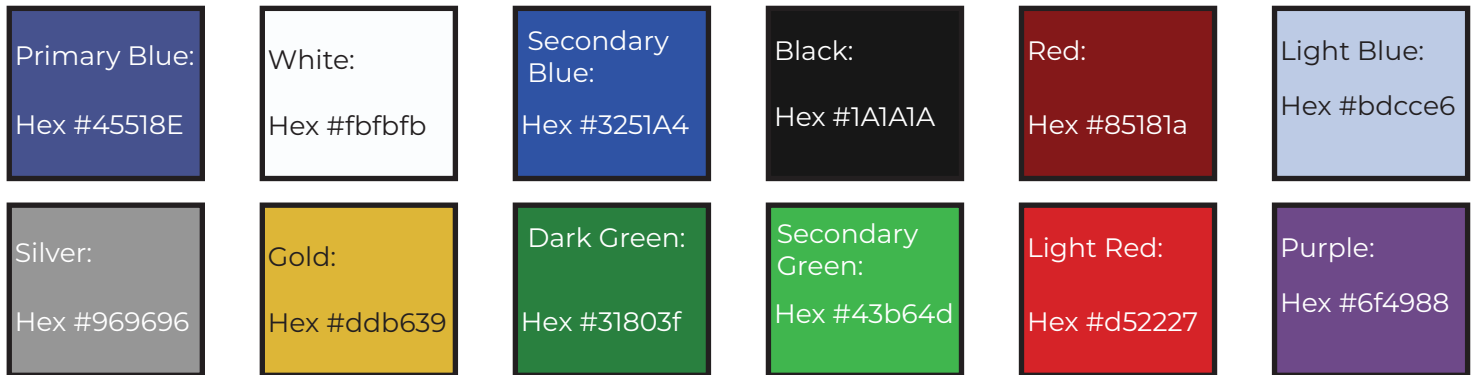


Logo Placement

Placement of the logo is based both on the need for prominence and how the piece will be designed, mailed, or presented. The logo is a brand and word-mark. While it is important, it is not necessary for it to be used as the central visual element of any publication.

The logo may be used in conjunction with photos or illustrations as a graphic element. When it is used in this capacity, a complete logo must be used on the same document following the standard guidelines.

Color Palette:



Tagline

Strengthening communities by improving quality of life & opportunity for prosperity for the residents of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties.

Co-Branding

It is often necessary for MMDC to share branding space with other partners (e.g., project collaborators, funders). When this is needed, logos should typically be placed as follows:

- If MMDC is the primary funding or resource contributor, then the MMDC logo should appear first, followed by other logos in succession of contribution level.
- If all organizations provide equal contribution to the effort, then all logos should appear in alphabetical order and be of similar size.
- If MMDC is a secondary partner, then MMDC logo should appear behind larger contributors.



MID-MINNESOTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

REVOLVING LOAN FUNDS

BUSINESS FINANCING OPTIONS AVAILABLE

MMDC can provide affordable financing to current and prospective entrepreneurs to support job creation through business establishment or expansion. This is an ideal opportunity for those who require gap financing due to limitations with traditional financing. MMDC will work with your private lender!



Eligible borrowers include new or existing businesses operating in Region 6E (Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties)

"This is a good program for projects like ours and it was instrumental to achieve our goals for a repair shop well needed."
- Chuck Steffi, StepSaver Inc.

The GAP financing loan from MMDC was instrumental in helping us grow from a small at-home business into a full-scale wholesale food manufacturing operation something that would not have been possible without their financial support.
- Mari Wildt Smokey Dukes Pretzels

Business owners from all walks of life are encouraged to apply.

LOANS MAY RANGE FROM \$7,000 TO \$150,000

Strengthening communities by improving quality of life & opportunity for prosperity for the residents of Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties.

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
1700 Technology Drive NE, Suite 300, Willmar, MN 56201

Uber is Here in Kandiyohi County!

Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) is working to make rideshare service (e.g. Uber) available to Kandiyohi County residents! With generous funding from the Willmar Area Community Foundation, we're working with two Uber Drivers to increase transportation service throughout the county, especially during late afternoon, evening, and weekend hours!

You Can Use Uber For:

- Rides to Work
- Appointments & Errands
- Grocery Runs
- Social Outings & Community Events
- Safe Rides Home
- And More!

Whether it's your everyday commute or a last-minute need, rideshare services help fill the gaps in rural transportation.



To Use Uber, Follow These Steps:

1. **Download the Uber App to Your Smartphone**
Just search for "Uber" in the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play (Android) or simply scan the QR code to the right.
2. **Set Up Your Account**
Just follow the prompts to create a free account. You'll need a phone number and payment method (credit/debit card, PayPal account info, or Uber gift card).
3. **Enter Your Destination**
Simply input where you want to go and confirm your pickup location.
4. **Choose a Ride Option**
Select the type of ride you'd like (UberX is the most common)
5. **Request Your Ride**
When you confirm your trip you'll be notified that a driver is on their way to pick you up. **Be ready for their arrival!**



Not sure how to get started or need some help downloading the app? Contact MMDC Mobility Manager Terry Smith at (320) 235-8504 and he'll be happy to help you out!



MID-MINNESOTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION



WILLMAR AREA
Community
Foundation

MMDC Social Media Guidelines:

Purpose: With the ever changing landscape of online and digital marketing & communications, the MMDC acknowledges that a strong online presence has become key to our story. It is therefore of the utmost importance for MMDC to be aware of and support the goals and voice of the MMDC, not only in person but also via their own online presence.

Goal: The goal of this section is to address potential inconsistencies across the MMDC's communications channels and better unify the public image of the MMDC online.

Responsibilities: It is important that the voice of the MMDC be consistent across MMDC's organization's online communication channels. Therefore all online communications from the MMDC shall be publicized by the Communications Specialist or, in their absence, the executive director, unless otherwise specified.

The Communications Specialist will be responsible for monitoring each MMDC communications accounts

MMDC social media accounts will be public business profiles allowing all citizens the ability to see and follow all information.

Accounts: The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC) maintains an active and professional presence on select social media platforms to engage the public, share information, and promote our programs and initiatives. These platforms serve as tools to increase transparency, community awareness, and participation in MMDC's work. as of November 2025.

- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/MidMinnesotaDevelopmentCommission>
 - Purpose: MMDC's primary social media platform for public engagement and outreach
 - Uses: Citizen engagement, event promotion, project updates, press releases, job openings, partner highlights, and emergency or crisis communication.
 - Audience: General public, local officials, community partners, and media outlets.

- **LinkedIn:** <https://www.linkedin.com/company/mid-minnesota-development-commission>
 - Purpose: A professional platform focused on workforce, economic, and organizational development.
 - Uses: Sharing job opportunities, staff announcements, regional economic news, and professional achievements.
 - Future Opportunities: Expansion to include thought leadership content, community and economic development discussions, and partner collaboration networks.

- **YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@mid-minnesotadevelopmentco7318>
 - Purpose: A visual storytelling and educational platform used to share video content highlighting MMDC’s programs, regional initiatives, and community partners.
 - Uses: Video campaigns (such as RLF Spotlights and Emergency Management features), project updates, event recaps, and other multimedia outreach.
 - Audience: Community members, partner organizations, local governments, and media outlets seeking informative and accessible video content.
 - Future Opportunities: Expansion to include topic-specific video series, interviews, and educational content supporting MMDC’s mission and services.

- **Twitter (X):** <https://twitter.com/MidMNRDC>
 - Status: Currently inactive; maintained to preserve MMDC’s name and brand identity for potential future use.
 - Potential Use: Real-time updates, quick announcements, and engagement during events or emergencies if reactivated.

Additional Platforms: Any official MMDC participation in new social media channels (e.g., Instagram, Threads, Blue Sky) must be reviewed and approved by the Executive Director or their designee prior to creation or posting.

Any official MMDC participation in additional social media channels must first be approved by MMDC’s executive director.

To the extent possible, account names will be given the name of “Mid-Minnesota Development Commission”. This to maintain clear identification of the Commission. “MMDC” can be used as a replacement if character count is limiting.

Profile pictures for all MMDC accounts will always include the MMDC logo to ensure brand awareness. Profile and cover photos (such as those found on Facebook or LinkedIn) will be updated regularly to reflect changing seasons, regional assets, etc.

Social Media Page Promotion:

MMDC staff should follow the MMDC. Staff should also encourage MMDC partners, stakeholders, regional entities, and citizens to follow social media pages whenever possible, and to share any news relevant to our region or their community. Staff may create professional profiles associated with their MMDC email accounts, if desired, to help separate personal from professional lives

Posting Content:

MMDC's online communications platforms will be monitored at least daily and updated as frequently as information allows. MMDC staff who wish to have content posted via MMDC's online communications channels (Facebook, LinkedIn, website) should submit that content to the communications specialist for review, revision, and posting. When submitting any sort of media (Photo, Video, Audio) MMDC staff should ensure that permission has been secured when needed. Any long form online campaigns should be discussed and mapped out with the communications specialist in advance of targeted launch date.

While it can be an effective strategy and should, which should be incorporated when appropriate and as budgets allow, paid "boosting" should be incorporated without the knowledge and permission of the executive director.

Guidelines:

The following guidelines apply to all employees when using official MMDC online communications platforms:

- All MMDC-related communication through social media outlets must remain professional and be conducted in accordance with the MMDC personnel policies, practices, and expectations.
- It is prohibited to post anything that is dishonest or misleading on one of the MMDC's social media outlets.
- MMDC should respect all people regardless of race, creed, age, religion, color, marital status, physical or mental disability, national origin, sexual orientation, political affiliation, etc.
- Plagiarism is illegal. Proper respect to laws concerning copyright shall be followed. Excerpts of another's work must be attributed to the original writer.
- The use of profane language and obscene or offensive content is prohibited.
- Posts must respect MMDC's partners, loan recipients, etc. Discussing general details about a project is allowed; however, permission must be given when identifying specific details.
- MMDC reserves the right to remove any post deemed inappropriate, untrue, or disrespectful. If a post is in violation of any guidelines listed above, the post will be removed. Prompt action should be taken when submissions are believed to violate the above guidelines.

Crisis Statements:

In the event an emergency or crisis (e.g. tornado, flood, evacuation) occurs in our four-county region, MMDC's Facebook page will become MMDC's primary information sharing channel. MMDC will share relevant information from local officials in a timely manner.

Any weather or health related MMDC office closings will be posted on MMDC's Facebook page.

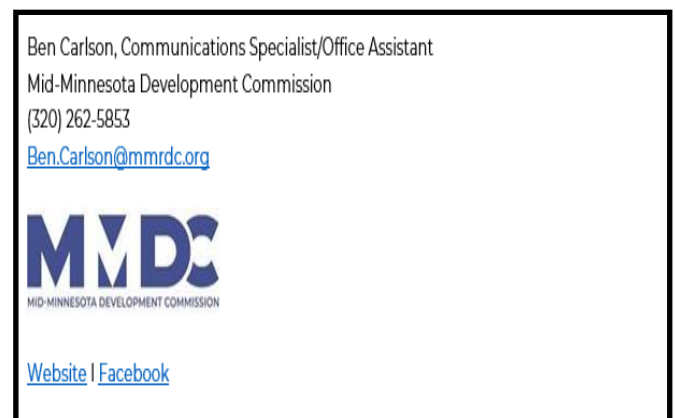
In the event an MMDC borrower faces negative publicity for any problem or issue, the following statement should be used by MMDC staff to local media or other inquires until told otherwise. *"MMDC is aware of a situation with one of our borrowers and we are looking into the matter. Please understand that our lender relationship requires confidentiality and so, at this time, we cannot say more. We will be happy to get back to you if there is more information that we can share with the public. Thank you for making sure we are aware of the issue."*

In the event of a more general MMDC issue, the following statement should be used by MMDC staff to local media or other inquires until told otherwise. *"Thank you for your question. MMDC is aware of the situation. While I cannot speak to this concern right now, please understand that we are looking into the matter and that we'll be happy to get back to you as soon as more is known and a more public statement can be made."*

MMDC Email Signatures:

A consistent MMDC email signature should be adopted by all MMDC staff. This signature should be uniform across MMDC and use the preferred MMDC font of Montserrat Regular in size 10.

Any additional information needed on a staff-by-staff basis, such as other affiliations, certifications, etc. should be added before the website and social media links.



Out-of-Office Email Replies:

Out-of-Office email replies should be in place during any planned extended absence (more than one business day away from one's email account). This reply should provide an alternate MMDC contact for those in immediate need of assistance.

Zoom Meeting Background and Zoom/Teams Profile Pictures:

An MMDC Zoom background (i.e., a background image that prominently displays MMDC branding) should be adopted by all MMDC staff when possible. Recommended background files can be found in the MMDC shared drive, within the "Computer Backgrounds" file, located within the "Communications" file. MMDC's communications specialist will assist any staff who would like to add MMDC branding to a specific image for this purpose (e.g., a favorite photo depicting the MMDC region).

Similarly, staff should incorporate Zoom and Teams profile pictures that feature MMDC branding. By doing so, MMDC's logo will be displayed whenever staff have their cameras disabled. This will help to ensure MMDC's presence is more quickly and easily noticed by participants at any online meeting or webinar.

Media Appearances:

MMDC staff are encouraged to incorporate media outreach to promote economic development, planning, and other projects. However, Any media appearances (radio programs, newspaper interviews/articles, blogs/vlogs) should be approved in advance by the executive director whenever reasonably-possible.

Communication With High-Level State or Federal Elected or Appointed Officials & Their Staff:

- Any communication with high-level state or federal elected officials (e.g., governor's office, state legislative office, U.S. congressional office) should be shared with the executive director as soon as reasonably possible. Copy executive director in any email communication to these parties
- Copy The executive director should be copied in any MMDC-related email communication to these parties.
- Staff should refer to Executive Director when subject matter is beyond their expertise and/or outside of the scope of their position.

Spell Check, Grammar Check, and Other Tools:

Staff should use spelling and grammar checks in all document writing. It is also recommended that staff incorporate other tools, such as editing services provided by artificial intelligence and "read aloud" features provided through MMDC's purchased software package, with the understanding that each staff is responsible for the final product.

Staff should also strive to ensure all public-facing documents are in plain language, requiring a reading proficiency level of grade eight or less. and strive for a grade eight or lower reading level.

MMDC Commissioner Communication:

The executive director should be made aware of or included in any communication with MMDC Commissioners unless this communication is related to the expression of concern over executive director behavior, competence, capacity, or other deficiency in leadership or supervision.