



Western Alliance for Economic Development
Strategic Workshop Session
Wednesday March 11, 2026
2-4pm
Greenleaf City Hall
20523 Whittier Dr.
Greenleaf, Idaho 83626

Present: Lee Belt
Jules Belyea*
Kate Dahl
Debbie Davis
Jenny Hemly*
Jerry Miller*
David Moore
David Lincoln
David Porterfield

* via videoconference

Call to order – Kate Dahl, Chair

Kate Dahl called the meeting to order at approximately 2:06 p.m.

Opening remarks & meeting purpose – Debbie Davis

- Purpose of meeting: To determine the future direction, legal structure, branding and service model of WAED in order to effectively support rural economic development in Southwest Idaho
- Current structure of WAED:
 - Who do we currently serve and what is realistic going forward
 - What services do we provide
 - Metrics



Debbie Davis led workshop discussion. For detail, please see handouts “Rural Economic Partners of Southwest Idaho – Proposed Per-Capita Funding Model for Small Cities” and “Idaho Rural Economic Development Professional (ED Pro) Grant – 2026” and Kate Dahl’s notes (attached).

- Future direction & legal structure:
 - Option A: WAED remains a stand-alone legal entity
 - Option B: WAED becomes a department or program under Region 3
 - Consideration Factors:
 - Competing for economic development dollars
 - Service area & other local economic development associations

Debbie Davis led workshop discussion. It was noted that Frontiers (aka RIVDA) has concluded that an ED Pro group does not work under the umbrella of a EDA Regional Agency. Lee Belt moved to move forward with Option A. David Moore seconded. The motion was approved by voice vote.

- Rebranding Initiative: Proposed transition from Western Alliance for Economic Development to Rural Economic Partners of Southwest Idaho.
 - Provides clear brand identity regardless of legal structure
 - Social media outreach combined with website usage to further our reach and engage rural communities and businesses

Debbie Davis led workshop discussion. David Moore moved to initiate the rebranding initiative. Lee Belt seconded. The motion was approved by voice vote.

- Closing remarks.

The Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee C. Belt
WAED Secretary
Greenleaf City Clerk



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AGENDA

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- Future direction & legal structure:
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- Rebranding Initiative: Proposed transition from Western Alliance for Economic Development to Rural Economic Partners of Southwest Idaho.
 - Provides clear brand identity regardless of legal structure
 - Social media outreach combined with website usage to further our reach and engage rural communities and businesses
- Closing remarks.
- Next WAED monthly meeting: March 26, 2026

20523 Whittier Drive, Greenleaf, ID 83626
www.WesternAllianceed.org

Rural Economic Partners of Southwest Idaho Proposed Per-Capita Funding Model for Small Cities

Purpose

This proposal outlines a fair and sustainable funding model to support regional economic development services for **rural cities in Canyon and Owyhee Counties with populations under 5,000**. A per-capita membership structure ensures that each participating city contributes proportionally based on population while allowing the region to build a stable operating budget.

Why Regional Economic Development?

Small rural communities often benefit from working together to:

- Attract and support new businesses
- Assist existing businesses with expansion or workforce needs
- Coordinate infrastructure resources and state programs
- Market the region collectively
- Advocate for rural economic priorities
- Connect communities with state and federal economic development resources

A shared funding model allows rural communities to access professional economic development services that may otherwise be difficult to sustain individually.

Proposed Membership Structure

Cities participate through a **per-capita membership contribution** based on population.

City	Population	\$1 Per Capita	\$1.50 Per Capita	\$2 Per Capita
Parma	2,096	\$2,096	\$3,144	\$4,192
Wilder	1,656	\$1,656	\$2,484	\$3,312
Greenleaf	814	\$814	\$1,221	\$1,628
Notus	610	\$610	\$915	\$1,220
Melba	581	\$581	\$872	\$1,162
Homedale	2,996	\$2,996	\$4,494	\$5,992
Marsing	1,263	\$1,263	\$1,895	\$2,526
Grand View	458	\$458	\$687	\$916

Total Regional Funding Potential

Rate	Total Annual Revenue
\$1 per capita	\$10,474
\$1.50 per capita	\$15,711
\$2 per capita	\$20,948

Recommended Implementation Approach

To make participation easier for cities, a phased approach is recommended:

- **Year 1:** \$1 per capita
- **Year 2:** \$1.50 per capita
- **Year 3:** \$2 per capita

This allows communities to see the value of regional collaboration while gradually increasing investment.

Services Provided to Member Cities

Participating communities would receive support including:

- Business recruitment and retention assistance
 - Economic development project coordination
 - **Monthly check-ins with each member city** to discuss needs, opportunities, and local priorities
 - **Direct follow-up with any businesses requesting assistance** within the community
 - Connections to Idaho Department of Commerce programs and incentives
 - Infrastructure funding guidance for rural communities
 - Workforce development connections and employer support
 - Regional marketing and partnership development
 - Support for restoring and strengthening the **Region 3 Economic Development District**
-

Regional Collaboration Strengthens Rural Communities

By working together, Southwest Idaho communities can increase their ability to compete for investment, attract businesses, and ensure long-term economic vitality across the region.

The **Idaho Department of Commerce Rural Economic Development Professional (ED Pro) Grant Program** is the main funding source used across Idaho to support regional economic development staff. Here is the **current structure used for the 2025–2026 program cycle**, which is expected to remain similar for 2026.

Idaho Rural Economic Development Professional (ED Pro) Grant – 2026

Grant Amount (Full-Time Position)

- Up to **\$35,000 per year** for a **full-time economic development professional**.
- Funds can be used for **salary and benefits only**.

Definition of Full-Time

- **Minimum 32 hours per week dedicated to economic development activities.**
-

Required Local Match

The program requires **local funding to match the state investment**.

- **60% cash match required** from local partners.

65%

Example Budget (Typical)

Funding Source	Amount
Idaho Commerce ED Pro Grant	\$35,000
Local Match (minimum)	~\$22,750
Total Program Budget	~\$57,750

The **match must be cash**, not in-kind contributions.

What Local Match Typically Pays For

The local contribution usually covers:

- Remaining salary
- Benefits
- Office expenses
- Travel
- Marketing
- Operational costs

The state grant **cannot pay for office overhead or administrative costs.**

Eligible Applicants

Applications must be submitted by:

- **A county, or**
- **A joint powers agreement between cities and counties,**
- **With an economic development organization managing the program.**

Most programs operate through a **regional nonprofit or EDO board.**

Important Program Expectations

Programs funded through ED Pro must:

- **Maintain a local economic development board**
 - **Meet at least 6 times per year**
 - **Submit regular progress reports to Idaho Commerce**
 - **Focus on activities such as:**
 - business retention and expansion
 - business recruitment
 - startup support
 - community economic development
-

What This Means for Your Region (Example)

If **Rural Economic Partners of Southwest Idaho** wanted to support a **full-time ED Pro**, a realistic budget might look like this:

Source	Example Amount
Idaho Commerce Grant	\$35,000
City Contributions	\$10,000
County Contribution	\$15,000
Private Sector / Utilities	\$10,000
Total Program Budget	\$70,000

That level usually supports a **competitive rural salary plus operations**.

Good news for your current model:

Your **\$1–\$2 per capita city model (~\$10K–\$21K)** would **almost perfectly cover the local match requirement** for the ED Pro grant.

WAEO STRATEGIC PLAN

3/11/26

CURRENT STRUCTURE

WAEO

SERVES COMMUNITIES 5000 OR LESS

PARMA
INWOOD ✓
GREENLEAF ✓
NOTUS NO
MELBA

WINE
TRAIL
SUPPORT

10,000 OR LESS
NO LONGER RURAL

HOMERIDGE
MANSING
GRANDVIEW

CHAMBER/ECON
GEM

WOULD ADD
MIDDLETOWN
EMMET

9700 EMMETT - HAVEN'T PAID
WAITING FOR REGION 3

SERVICES - BUSINESS RECRUITMENT RETENTION

EC DEVE PROJECT DEV

PROPOSED MONTHLY CHECK-INS

FOLLOW-UP W/ BUSINESSES

CONNECTION TO SERVICES
WORKFORCE

BUSINESS RELOCATION

REGION 4 SAID RURAL DOESN'T
WORK UNDER REGION FELON

FEE STRUCTURE BASED ON \$/PERSON
LAST CENSUS

BASED ON UNDER \$5000K POP
14-17 GRANTS

\$35K ED PRO 65% \$10K RURAL

NEED \$22K OF MATCH \$50K

\$15K Right Now URBAN

\$10 or less

TRIBES FOLLOW-UP

TARGETS
SCRIPTING

LEE MOTION TO KEEP WAEN APPROVED
DAVID APPROVED SEPERATE
APPROVED

ORON CLEAR DEFINITION OF
SERVICES OF

MEET W/ CANYON COUNTY

AMANDA SOCIAL MEDIA

RURAL

1. NEW ERA
2. UNDERSTAND NAME

DAVID MAKE A MOTION TO INTAKE
NEW BRANDING

MOTION PASSES

KATE - EOD PRO REP

DAVID MOTION