Staying ahead of the curve.

Hennepin County’s population is expected to grow by 22%, adding another 250,000 residents by 2040. Jobs are expected to grow by 28% over the same period. Strategic investments and partnerships that leverage our diverse resources, infrastructure and people help us plan for stable growth and continued prosperity for all who live, work, and do business here.

Learn more and apply
hennepin.us/economic-development
612-348-9260

Building our future here.
The success of our people is our bottom line.

We want all who live work and do business here to experience a way of life that matches the reputation we've earned. Our valued partnerships with the public and private sectors are key to the enduring success of the diverse people and enterprises who make Hennepin County home.

We look forward to working with you to build our future together.

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Here. To partner.

Businesses

Cities

Developers

Find your place here.

As the most populous county in Minnesota, Hennepin County is an epicenter of economic activity in the Upper Midwest.

You'll find every rhythm of life here, from big city buzz to rural expanse. Each of our 45 cities is rich in character, culture and amenities, and all are balanced with the beauty of Minnesota's natural lands and waters.

People of all backgrounds and businesses of all types find the ideal place to prosper here.
Vital economies begin with small businesses

Small businesses are responsible for creating two out of every three jobs in our economy. They reflect our growing diversity, as well. But, emerging entrepreneurs and small businesses can face some of the toughest obstacles to success, from developing necessary skills and industry know-how to accessing capital or securing loans. We help entrepreneurs navigate challenging headwinds through our backing of the Open to Business program.
Open to Business Program

To support entrepreneurs and small businesses in growing their enterprise, creating jobs, and contributing to the economic vitality of the region

Community impact

From 2012 to 2017, Open to Business provided meaningful technical support to 1900 business clients. The program also provided $7.8 million in direct or facilitated capital to small businesses, leveraging another $51 million in financing from other sources — resulting in the creation or retention of more than 932 jobs.

Diversity of participants accessing financing in 2017

- 43% Women entrepreneurs
- 51% Minority entrepreneurs
- 46% Low income entrepreneurs

“Hennepin County, through the Open to Business program, was our literal lifeline. We simply wouldn’t be here without them.”
– Tomme Beevas, Founder and Owner, Pimento Jamaican Kitchen (Pictured on front)

Who is eligible?

Entrepreneurs can access technical assistance free of charge through Open to Business.
Suburban cities can apply to Hennepin County to provide Open to Business programming to their community.

How does it work?

Hennepin County provides matching grants up to $12,500 to cities who contract directly with the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD) to provide business assistance.

Hands-on help for small businesses and entrepreneurs

Technical and financial assistance including business plan development, feasibility studies, marketing, loan request preparation, finance projections and much more

Learn more

hennepin.us/businessassistance
patricia.fitzgerald@hennepin.us
612-543-0864
Extraordinary construction costs can hinder business growth

Growing businesses can face extraordinary expenses when expanding, relocating or building new facilities. They often leverage their full borrowing power to finance capital investments for expansion. When other private and public funding sources aren’t enough, Hennepin County can help close the gap for projects that will create good paying jobs and strengthen our economic base.
The Economic Development Infrastructure Fund (EDIF)  

To support relocating or expanding businesses with a demonstrated financial gap in constructing or renovating facilities

Case study: Travail Kitchen and Amusements

Travail Kitchen’s $2.6 million business expansion project in Robbinsdale involved demolishing two dilapidated buildings and constructing a new two-story building to support five food-related businesses. The Economic Development Infrastructure Fund provided funding for extraordinary project costs, including new sanitary sewer lines and electric utility relocations serving multiple area businesses.

Project-based job growth

- 13 jobs created
- 47 jobs retained
- 28 existing jobs supported at other impacted businesses

“The Economic Development Infrastructure Fund bridged the gap in a major coordinated business expansion project that will help enhance the economic potential of downtown Robbinsdale for generations to come.”

–Marcia Glick, Robbinsdale City Manager

Who is eligible?

Cities and development authorities in Hennepin County

How does it work?

Proposals are accepted at any time. Funding is subject to availability and must be used within 18 months. Additional leveraged funds and jobs created or retained will be considered when evaluating proposals, along with job creation potential. Limited funds are available on an annual basis.

What can be funded?

Construction costs for real private or public property or infrastructure improvements, such as: site clearance, demolition, utilities and more.

What is required?

Project must show all other potential sources of private and public funding are insufficient. Eligible businesses must maintain current jobs and create at least 10 new permanent full-time jobs paying a minimum of $13.01 per hour. Project cost minimums may also apply.

Learn more and apply

hennepin.us/economic-development
elise.durbin@hennepin.us
612-348-4191
Driving investment around transit
Transit Oriented Development Program (TOD)

TOD shapes vital communities, economies

Transit can be a powerful economic driver. It connects people to jobs and opportunity, while helping businesses meet workforce demands. It also draws private investment and development, creating even more jobs and economic activity around our transit system.

To realize the full potential of our transit investments, we support businesses, housing and commercial development, and infrastructure near existing and planned transit lines through the Transit Oriented Development program.
Transit Oriented Development Program (TOD)

To support development projects that create a mix of uses and amenities to encourage transit ridership, and enhance the walkability and vibrancy of communities

Community impact
To date, $39 million invested in 136 projects, contributing to:

- More than $1 billion in leveraged funding
- 10,000 new or retained housing units
- 2,800 new or retained jobs
- More than 2.1 million square feet of new or retained commercial and office space

“Hennepin County’s TOD program is helping transform what once were primarily industrial transportation corridors into welcoming, vibrant places where people want to live, work, and play. Our two most recent projects - both along the Green Line - were only made possible because we were able to use the TOD program to fill our financing gaps and bring the projects to reality. The TOD program is a necessary and efficient tool that will continue to allow us to provide safe, thoughtfully-designed housing options near transit.”

–Ryan Sailer, vice president of development, Timberland Partners

Who is eligible?
Businesses, developers, nonprofits, government entities or other development authorities

How does it work?
About $2.2 million awarded per year
Request for proposals is posted in January, applications are due in February, awards are made in May. Funds must be used within 18 months. Additional leveraged funds are not required but are considered during proposal evaluation.

What can be funded?
- Development oriented to transit stops or stations
- Public realm/infrastructure improvements that support walking, biking, and transit
- Property acquisition to preserve land for future TOD uses
All eligible projects must have a demonstrated financial gap.

Learn more and apply
hennepin.us/tod
elise.durbin@hennepin.us
612-348-4191
Thriving business districts drive local economies and shape livable communities

Lively commercial hubs and bustling main streets are at the heart of livable communities of all sizes. They create jobs, generate tax revenue, supply goods and services, and help make places people want to live and visit.

Suburban cities across the county rely on their unique business districts, but can face challenges unlocking their full potential. Through the Business District Initiative, we offer suburban cities resources to help turn their valued activity centers into vibrant destinations.
Business District Initiative (BDI)

To invigorate business districts and main streets in suburban Hennepin County

Community impact
Research shows that places with high densities of local businesses have higher incomes, less poverty and greater talent and employee retention.

We’ve funded six projects in five cities, totaling $241,000 and benefiting 291 businesses.

Walkable business districts with independent local businesses return more than 1.5 times more of their revenue to the local economy, and create 2.5 times more jobs.

Who is eligible?
Suburban cities and development authorities

How does it work?
Total available funding: $200,000 per funding cycle
Max individual award: $50,000
Funds must be used within 12-24 months. Additional leveraged funds are not required but are considered during proposal evaluation.

What can be funded?
Business recruitment, district-wide marketing, wayfinding, technical assistance, financial or legal services, streetscape and façade improvements, business incubators, and more

Learn more and apply
hennepin.us/economic-development
nathaniel.hood@hennepin.us
612-596-9876
Sound planning is the foundation of prosperity

Our quality of life is shaped in part by the places we live, work and play, and how we move between them. As our population and economy continue to grow, smart urban planning is fundamental to the future success of our communities.

Hennepin County’s Corridor Planning program provides cities and other agencies with resources for plans, studies or preliminary designs focused on public improvements or redevelopment around transportation corridors.
Corridor Planning Program

To support planning activities along county transportation corridors

Community impact
Since 2006, we’ve invested $1 million in 42 projects to support land use planning and redevelopment efforts throughout Hennepin County.

Types of projects funded
- Corridor plans and area studies (38%)
- Redevelopment and market studies (35%)
- Trails, traffic, and parking studies (18%)
- Public space and engagement (9%)

The city of Wayzata used a Corridor Planning matching grant to create a plan that identified community values and priorities to inform a 10-year framework and downtown implementation plan.

Who is eligible?
Cities, park and watershed districts, or other local agencies and authorities

How does it work?
Total available funding: $250,000 every two years
Max individual award: Up to $50,000
Proposals accepted starting January 1, then reviewed on rolling basis until funds are fully committed. Project timelines will vary according to scope of work. Match varies from 0 to 50 percent depending on local population size.

What can be funded?
Studies, plans or preliminary designs for land use, market feasibility, public realm improvements, bicycle and pedestrian connections, storm water management, sustainability improvements and more

Learn more and apply
hennepin.us/economic-development
nathaniel.hood@hennepin.us
612-596-9876
Economic growth depends on the continued success of local businesses

Once past the startup phase, transitioning a small business into a sustainable growth enterprise can be challenging. Whether confronting a growth plateau or deciding where to go next, risk and uncertainty are major variables CEOs of second-stage companies have to calculate.

Introducing the right high-impact information into those equations can help companies find the optimal strategic growth solution. By connecting executives of established businesses with individualized research teams and confidential peer learning opportunities, Economic Gardening helps growing businesses become long-term market movers.
Community impact
Since 2012, Economic Gardening has worked with nearly 100 businesses, creating or retaining more than 2,000 jobs in Hennepin County.

Case study: HED Cycling
A pioneer of solid disc bicycle wheels, Hed Cycling designs and manufactures high-end cycling equipment. Owner and co-founder Anne Hed had grew the company to 45 employees, generating more than $8 million in annual revenue. But, prior to entering the Economic Gardening program, Hed Cycling had hit a growth plateau.

Working with a personal research team through the Economic Gardening program, Hed refined her business model and marketing strategy and launched into a new growth phase.

“The research we got through Economic Gardening was invaluable. By learning more about our competitors, we were able to focus on what set us apart and what our most profitable services were. We refined our business model and are experiencing renewed growth and sustainable success.”
–Andrew Schmidt, Co-founder and CEO, Amek Home Remodeling (Pictured on front)

Who is eligible?
Private businesses in Hennepin County with 10-99 employees, $1 million to $50 million in annual revenue, and clear potential for continued growth

How does it work?
Hennepin County and our partners provide scholarships to fully cover the cost of participation in the Economic Gardening Program. Hennepin County leads coordination, along with Ramsey and Scott counties, of a regional Economic Gardening network.

Learn more and apply
hennepin.us/businessassistance
elise.durbin@hennepin.us
612-348-4191
Environmental cleanup costs can be a barrier to development

Contaminated lands present risks to the health of our residents, communities and environment. The cost of cleaning up contaminated sites can be prohibitive for developers and businesses looking to invest in our communities, create jobs and grow our economic base.

Providing funding to assess and clean up contaminated lands benefits businesses and communities by spurring economic growth, revitalizing neighborhoods and leveraging private and public investment to protect and preserve our environment.
Environmental Response Fund (ERF)

To help reuse contaminated sites where the added cost of environmental cleanup is a barrier to improvements or redevelopment

Case study: Surly Brewing Co.

Surly Brewing Co. pioneered the booming independent craft beer industry in the Twin Cities. By 2014, Surly needed a new site where they could expand production and create a destination brewery with a beer hall, restaurant, event center and beer garden.

They selected a large vacant industrial site on the border of Minneapolis and St. Paul, near light rail and the University of Minnesota. Funding from Hennepin County’s Environmental Response Fund, along with other county, state, and federal contributions, made it possible to remediate the site’s significant contamination.

Today, Surly’s 50,000 square-foot facility is a national beer destination and valuable community asset.

To date, Hennepin County has awarded 370 ERF grants totaling more than $51 million, leveraging $1.7 billion in private development investments.

Who is eligible?

Municipalities, economic development agencies, housing and redevelopment authorities, government entities, non-profit organizations, and private for-profit companies

What can be funded?

Environmental consulting, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) review fees, laboratory, assessment, cleanup plan development, asbestos and lead paint assessment and abatement, some demolition

How does it work?

Max individual award: No minimum or maximum

Awarded grants have ranged from $5,000 to more than $800,000.

There are two funding cycles per year with applications due May 1 and November 1.

Matching funds are not required.

Learn more and apply

hennepin.us/ERF
mary.finch@hennepin.us
612-596-1595
Businesses produce waste that hurts the bottom line and the environment

The commercial sector generates more than half of the total waste in Hennepin County, and nearly two-thirds of it is recyclable. A strong recycling program protects our natural resources, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, demonstrates a commitment to sustainability and the community, and can boost bottom lines.

Hennepin County offers grants, signage, technical assistance and research assistance to help businesses and organizations start or improve recycling programs, reduce waste and donate usable goods.
Business Recycling Grants
To help private businesses reduce waste and increase recycling rates

Case study: Oracle’s organics recycling
takes waste reduction to new heights

Oracle & International Centre reduced their trash by 10 tons per month after adding organics recycling at their downtown Minneapolis office building with funding from Hennepin County’s Business Recycling program. Tenants are enthusiastic about being able to compost and continue to find new ways to reduce waste and save money.

Hennepin County awarded $490,175 in business recycling grants to 71 organizations in 2017. On average, businesses receiving recycling grants increase their waste diversion by 54%.

Who is eligible?
For-profit businesses, multifamily housing complexes, nonprofits and other organizations

What can be funded?
Recycling containers, signage, programming and other recycling and waste-reduction projects

How does it work?
Grant funding and support to help businesses and organizations improve recycling rates, reduce waste and donate usable goods

Grant levels range from $2,500 for recycling containers to $50,000 for large or innovative projects or programs.

For competitive large grants, a 25% match is required. No match is required for smaller grants.

Learn more and apply
hennepin.us/businessrecycling
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612-543-1316