

STRONG FUND

Strengthening Regional Opportunities
for Next Generation Growth(STRONG)

www.strongsask.ca



Empowering Saskatchewan's Future

STRONG (Strengthening Regional Opportunities for Next Generation Growth) is a pioneering charitable investment fund designed to unlock economic prosperity and ensure sustainability of Saskatchewan's rural and under-resourced communities.

By supporting high-impact projects, STRONG bridges the gap between vision and execution—fueling growth where it's needed most.

THE NEED

Today's economic development ecosystem is complex and requires additional dedicated resources to address both economic and wellbeing drivers, ensuring generational prosperity for the province and its people – a strong economy that works for everyone.

An investment in building collaborative economies of scale is required to ensure the long-term resilience of rural infrastructure and industries, both critical to maintaining Saskatchewan's competitiveness. Without a renewed focus on rural economic development, communities risk isolation, lack of services, and inequitable growth that will instead gravitate toward the two main urban areas.

THE CHALLENGE

Saskatchewan's rural development ecosystem faces significant hurdles:

- **Insufficient Qualified Human Resources:** Many municipalities rely on overstretched administrators and volunteers, lacking the expertise and data needed for complex economic development. The talent pool for experienced economic development professionals remains limited with individual communities unable to meet market compensation rates.
- **Limited Collaboration:** Only 30% of communities actively collaborate on economic development, and regional competitive advantages are underutilized.
- **Infrastructure and Service Gaps:** Nearly half of communities lack adequate housing, water/sewer capacity, healthcare, and childcare facilities.
- **Short-Term Planning:** Strategic plans rarely extend beyond annual budgets, and private-sector investment in rural areas remains minimal.
- **Missed Economies of Scale:** The absence of regional economic development organizations has left communities without coordinated planning and support.

1. 2025 Capacity Assessment for Rural Economic Development Survey (SEDA)

Why Strong

By investing in STRONG, donors fuel measurable change, foster innovation, and build vibrant communities across the province.



01

Catalyzing Change

STRONG funds essential feasibility assessments, business case development and infrastructure for emerging sectors, especially in regions lacking sufficient economies of scale and public sector support. Strategic capacity building initiatives will also be considered for support.



02

Matching Investments

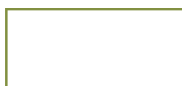
Donor contributions are matched to eligible projects and investment by municipal or sector organizations, multiplying your impact and reducing barriers to growth.



03

Building High Performing Regional Clusters

STRONG will prioritize joint initiatives being led by inter-municipal and/or municipal-First Nation partnerships.



04

Transparent and Accountable

STRONG donations are managed by the Saskatoon Community Foundation, with clear policies for reporting and disclosure.

Strategic Focus



STRONG prioritizes projects identified by local regions, including:

- Climate adaptation
- Food security
- Housing
- Innovation
- Economic infrastructure
- Regional Cooperation and Cooperation
- Economic Diversification
- Inclusion and Equity of Indigenous and Rural Economies
- Economic Capacity Building
- Growing the Next Generation of Leaders
- Devolution of Services
- Bridging the Urban-Rural Divide

Proposed projects will be adjudicated by a STRONG funds committee comprised of the SEDA CEO, two (2) representatives of the SEDA Board of Directors, and representatives from donors to the fund.

Metrics for success will be based on the socio-economic impact of each project. Results will be published annually.

Funding recipients must have charitable status.

90% of funds go directly to program deployment, with only 10% allocated to administration.

Potential STRONG Projects

By reducing development barriers in under-resourced areas of the province, the STRONG fund will enhance the capacity of Saskatchewan regions to capitalize on economic prosperity opportunities.

Innovation Pilot Projects in Emerging Sectors

- Funding to catalyze and accelerate opportunities in agriculture, food security, and housing.
 - **Impact:** Reduces barriers to new industry development and unlocks scalable opportunities for rural and under-resourced regions.
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Industry Expansion and Diversification

- Supporting organizations providing tangible socio-economic impacts to local residents and stakeholders. As an example, the Northwest Wild Rice Company is seeking investment to leverage financing and government funding to build a rice processing plant in northwest Saskatchewan. Further product diversification is also planned for this operation.
 - **Impact:** Generates jobs and reinvestment in its supply chain (growers) for greater self-sufficiency and improved quality of life for the peoples of the region.
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Community-Owned Renewable Energy Projects

- Strategic support for local renewable energy generation (solar, wind, biomass) owned and operated by the community or First Nation.
 - **Impact:** Drives energy independence, creates jobs, and supports climate goals.
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Disaster Recovery and Economic Resilience Initiatives

- Renewing local capacity for post-disaster economic recovery, such as emergency grants for impacted businesses.
 - **Impact:** Strengthens community resilience and ensures rapid recovery from the growing incidence of natural disasters.
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Community Business Succession

- Encouraging community-based solutions for rural business succession.
- **Impact:** Keeps wealth and employment local, ensures continuity of vital services, and builds community resilience.

Industry Clusters and Economic Corridors

- Supporting development of industry clusters in sectors such as energy, agriculture and manufacturing will enable regional specialization and advantage. As SEDA has illustrated in development of four rural clusters (2023-2025), industry and the regional ecosystem are interdependent.
 - **Impact:** Increased regional competitiveness, industry expansion and attraction. Economic and trade corridor development. Stronger and more resilient regional ecosystems.
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Workforce Development

- Saskatchewan's future depends on its ability to cultivate a skilled workforce across all sectors, especially in rural areas where workforce shortages are acute. Focused efforts to leverage regional colleges and establish active workforce pipelines between regional industry and middle/secondary education institutions are required.
 - Establishing an Economic Development Professional Internship Program will amplify career development and sustainable support for communities.
 - **Impact:** Industry retention and expansion, resident retention.
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Capacity Building

- Facilitating the ground up development of regional trading areas with provision of evidence-based research, action planning and implementation support.
 - Initiatives to enhance productivity and equip young people with leadership skills.
 - **Impact:** Sustainable human resource and infrastructure capacity, enhanced regional competitiveness and productivity.
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Infrastructure Upgrades in Rural Communities

- Projects such as feasibility analysis and engineering studies required for upgrading water and sewer capacity to facilitate industrial and residential development.
 - **Impact:** Supports industry expansion and attraction, and population growth.
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New Models of Service Delivery

- Building economic resilience through application of entrepreneurial approaches to provision of community services.
- **Impact:** Long term viability of communities by meeting future needs of residents and businesses..

Giving Levels and Recognition

Born of necessity, STRONG is the first of its kind in Saskatchewan and, to the best of our knowledge, the first in Canada. All donations are eligible for charitable tax credits.

Sustainer \$100,000+

- Ongoing recognition as a strategic partner of SEDA to include an integrated package of online and special event recognition/participation elements
- First-tier recognition on www.strongsask.ca, including a 30-second video and banner ad
- Media event to announce the donation
- Seat on grant adjudication committee

Resilience \$50,000–100,000

- Ongoing recognition as a strategic partner of SEDA via its corporate website
- Second-tier recognition on www.strongsask.ca, including banner ad
- Media event to announce the donation
- Seat on grant adjudication committee

Builder \$10,000–50,000

- Recognition as a SEDA strategic partner via its corporate website
- Third-tier recognition on www.strongsask.ca
- Seat on grant adjudication committee

Booster \$1000–10,000

- Fourth-tier recognition on www.strongsask.ca

Donor Impact

Your investment directly supports:

- Business retention and diversification
- Sustainable businesses in rural and remote areas
- Leveraged local and stakeholder investment
- Increased rural and Indigenous participation in the economy
- Population stability and skilled workforce pipelines close to rural industry
- Enhanced infrastructure in rural and remote areas
- Strategic alliances, regional collaboration and vibrant communities
- Social enterprise development
- Rural and urban innovation



The Saskatchewan Economic Development Alliance (SEDA) has been a champion of sustainable communities since 1984. As a not-for-profit organization, we have a longstanding culture of self-reliance. We are independent, not publicly funded. We work closely with partners in the public, non-profit, and private sectors as required to fulfill our mandate and link and leverage the various service providers across communities and the economic development continuum. We know how to understand and prioritize economic development. Our applied knowledge is used to identify barriers and gaps, raise important issues, inform better choices, and move communities toward action.

The Saskatoon Community Foundation was created in 1970 by seven community-minded citizens. The Saskatoon Community Foundation now manages assets of over \$55 million. The Foundation works to enhance the quality of life in Saskatchewan communities by managing endowments as well as independent charitable funds.

To enhance the competitiveness of our communities and fill a long-term gap in public sector support, SEDA and the Saskatoon Community Foundation have partnered to create an innovative grant program for under-resourced areas in the province.

**Help us give life and lift to successful
economic development projects.**

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