

# JUSTICE SYSTEM CONSORTIUM



## WHERE

Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, & Wadena counties

## WHY

In our regional efforts to understand WHERE barriers to Equitable Economic Ecosystems occur (negatively impacting people's ability to prosper and have a sense of belonging), we wondered about our rural criminal justice system. We know that when discrimination, inequities and polarization are at play, financial stability becomes more complex and difficult, and at times impossible, for those who are forced to prioritize survival.

## WHO

Region Five Development Commission (R5DC), Sourcewell, Initiative Foundation, the diverse community at-large and the law enforcement community.

## WHEN

Discussions began after the civil unrest of 2020. The Justice System Consortium (JSC) started with separate visits occurring with law enforcement members only and community members only. Both groups came together for the first time in January 2021 with monthly meetings and community projects now taking place.

## HOW

- Build trusted relationships with people willing to have deep difficult conversations
- Understand the current story about rural law enforcement and community relations
- Gather more feedback from a broader range of people
- Host "Affinity Group Chats"
- Utilize story harvesters and share audio stories to learn more about each other's cultures
- Access funding for community-led projects, designed to create opportunities for authentic connections.

## NEXT STEPS

Serving as the backbone organization of the JSC, R5DC fully appreciates our limited experiences when working in the space of law enforcement/community relations. Thus, to better serve the region, R5DC has brought on a JEDI (justice, equity, diversity and inclusion) Fellow who is working beside R5DC staff in ways that leverage our credibility and builds capacity to collectively tackle this regional issue from authentic lived experiences.

Visit [regionfive.org/jsc](https://regionfive.org/jsc), to learn more.