



SOUTHWEST INITIATIVE FOUNDATION

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Data-driven work

Research shows there's a growing "opportunity gap" faced by American youth, where the division of economic classes is widening and children born into poor families are unable to access the opportunities they need to reach their full potential.

New Hampshire's Carsey School of Public Policy has been working with community foundations like us across the country to dive deep into our region's data. Their southwest Minnesota youth report is available on our website:

swifoundation.org



Confirmed in Compliance with
National Standards for U.S.
Community Foundations

An Equal Opportunity Provider and
Employer

Excellence. Accountability. Impact.™

One Connection. Unlimited Possibilities.

Grow Our Own

Supporting all southwest Minnesota kids
and the communities they call home

30 Years of Impact

Born from the farm crisis in 1986, Southwest Initiative Foundation was created to provide economic development, social support, vehicles for charitable giving and hope for a brighter future.

Looking ahead, we'll continue the work we do best—business finance, grantmaking, early childhood, community philanthropy—with a focus on helping our next generation have the opportunity to succeed right here in our region.

Did you know...

More than one in six southwest Minnesota kids lives in poverty.

- Not all of these kids—no matter how hard they try—will be able to reach their full potential.
- Kids from low-income families have less access to everything from quality early childhood education to Advanced Placement courses in high school to sport and enrichment activities that provide mentoring, teambuilding and other life-long skills they need to be good citizens and good employees.
- These kids are our future employees, entrepreneurs, community leaders, volunteers, homeowners and taxpayers. We believe that our region's economy depends on their success.

We need to break the cycle of poverty to help all our kids have the chance to succeed.

This work is economic development

Our regional employers are facing an incredible workforce shortage. We need more southwest Minnesotans to get into the workforce and successfully stay there.

Training workers starts long before walking through their company's door. Employers need a workforce who shows up on time, knows how to do their job and produces quality results. Not all of our young people are equipped to do this, and it starts at birth.

Starting from a position of strength

Despite challenges, research shows that our region is in a relative position of strength. Kids do better because of the resources we have here in southwest Minnesota, like:

- Quality education
- Safe neighborhoods
- Many two-parent households
- Strong support systems
- Access to enrichment activities
- Job opportunities
- And more!

Action now will preserve this advantage. We are taking a holistic approach to this work—from cradle to career—to help all our kids get the best start to life.

What can you do?

We're learning and we need you to help us and learn with us!

- Review the Carsey report and additional resources found on our website.
- Read *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis* by Robert D. Putnam.
- Watch a special broadcast by Pioneer Public Television from the Grow Our Own Summit, which officially launched our new focus. Find it at www.pioneer.org/growourown.html.
- Request a presentation in your community to dive deeper into Grow Our Own and regional data. Contact Nancy Kaping at nancyk@swifoundation.org or 800-594-9480.
- Get involved with local efforts in your community that support youth.

