

# Possible Innovation Funding recipients move on to next round

By [BRAINERD DISPATCH](#) on Jun 9, 2016 at 8:22 p.m.

STAPLES—The National Joint Powers Alliance on Wednesday announced projects up for the next phase in the Innovation Funding selection process.

This year, seven applicants presented their projects for consideration, NJPA said in a release. The 2016 Innovation Funding Review day provided an opportunity for applicants from city and county entities to present their projects, while member entities ranked and selected the ones with the most potential for regional impact and success.

The NJPA Board of Directors gives final approval of the funding at its June meeting.

2016 recommended projects included:

- Todd and Wadena County Corrections presented The Community Concern for Youth Program that is designed for early prevention, intervention and diversion of youth ages 10-17 (approximately), who are experiencing personal problems as well as problems with the law. The purpose of this program is to prevent youth from entering the court system, by working with the youth and their families to hold the youth accountable and provide opportunities for change. The Community Concern for Youth Program also provides education and assistance in helping youth resolve conflicts at home, school or in their personal lives. There is no other agency in the area that provides diversion services which keep youth from going to court and having a criminal record. On average, the Community Concern for Youth Program serves approximately 70 youth per year and requested funding for \$70,235.
- Cass County presented their project for region and city branding, termed Placebranding. The Cass County Economic Development Corporation would manage it. This would help the region highlight its assets, individual communities could maximize their impact, and build a culture of community collaboration. The overarching goals of the proposed project are to (1) attract potential workforce—primarily millennials; (2) attract businesses—either startups, or relocations; and (3) build a culture of collaboration among the municipalities of the region. The proposed project will result in a brand that will build a favorable internal and external image of the region and its small cities—one that builds social capital within the region, is owned by its communities, and which is attractive to those external to the region. The process of creating the regional brand will align individual entities around common themes and build a culture of collaboration. CCEDC is requesting \$100,000 in Innovation Funding for their Regional Marketing Plan.
- The Veteran Service Officers of the following counties; Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena counties, are requesting \$50,000. The request is to enhance veterans' projects and improve initiatives in our areas. Providing improved services, fiscal abilities, community

appearance and overall well-being of areas within our counties. Requesting \$5,000 for Veteran Grave upkeep and headstone repair located in Cass County. Crow Wing County is requesting \$15,000 towards paying for a replacement van for disabled veterans in the central Minnesota area. Requesting \$15,000 for the Wadena Veterans Park Committee to build a Veteran's Park. The committee is in the process of building a Veteran's Park for Wadena County and surrounding area veterans.

These awards are not intended to support single individuals, organizations, or communities, but are intended to support region-wide initiatives, consortiums and collaborations impacting many, and serving a greater public purpose. NJPA does not select projects, but hosts the program and comes alongside the chosen regional initiatives while financially supporting them to ensure successful regional impact. This annual funding opportunity is in its third year, with \$307,000 awarded in 2014, \$411,933 in 2015, and now another \$350,000 slated for the third round in 2016. The Innovation Review Day for education entities took place in May.