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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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R5DC and Sourcewell Partner for Welcoming Communities Initiative

STAPLES, MN – Regional partners Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) and Sourcewell are teaming up to expand the Welcoming Communities program to their shared five-county region in Central MN. This program is focused on workforce attraction and expanding cultural agility for individuals, organizations, and communities. Initially supported by The Blandin Foundation and Northwest Area Foundation, the program has received support from Sourcewell for continued growth.

Under the newly executed agreement, R5DC will deliver Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) assessments to fifteen entities which may include public (municipalities and school) boards, nonprofits, philanthropic, or private-sector organizations. The IDI Assessments assist our understanding of and ability to experience cultural difference, and how to set and achieve goals that further develop individual and group skills that impact community service. It's a self-reflective tool that allows individuals and groups an opportunity to be intentional about welcoming people.

R5DC will additionally pilot implementation with one community through a citizen-led community project that exemplifies goals that bridge cultures. This citizen-led Welcoming Community Advocacy Group will be made up of students, educators, residents, business owners, elected officials, nonprofit and community foundation leaders who have taken the IDI assessment.

There is a financial and social cost benefit to communities who are welcoming to residents. Rural communities who are welcoming to ALL people -- despite their age, gender, disabilities, race, religion, national origin, or family status -- will be the communities who win the race for talent. A belonging environment through welcoming communities adds value to resident quality of life and attracts the qualified workforce that is in high demand. The workforce attraction magnetizes new businesses and increases entrepreneurial activity that creates and retains people and jobs.

The Welcoming Communities program aligns well with Sourcewell's commitment of partnering with education, government, and nonprofits to boost student and community success. It is with gratitude that R5DC makes this announcement, allowing the expansion and scope of this initiative to reach a wider audience and with greater regional impacts.

"Sourcewell fully embraces the importance of relationships right here at home," said Sourcewell Manager of City and County Solutions Anna Gruber. "We are proud to support this important work in our region and excited to see the results of this initial pilot program. Ultimately, we believe it will lead to widespread community success for everyone throughout Region 5."

Communities interested in learning more about participating as a pilot for this program, please contact Dawn Espe at despe@regionfive.org or 218-894-3233.

About Region Five Development Commission

Enhancing the vitality and quality of life in Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena counties is the mission of Region Five Development Commission. Resiliency, inclusion and collaboration are guiding concepts in achieving mutually shared goals that continue to evolve with local municipalities, state, federal agencies, philanthropic, non-profit and social advocacy agencies. Visit www.regionfive.org to learn more.

About Sourcewell

Sourcewell (formerly National Joint Powers Alliance) is a self-supporting government organization, partnering with education, government, and nonprofits to boost student and community success. Created in 1978 as one of Minnesota's nine service cooperatives, we offer training and shared services to our central-Minnesota members. Throughout North America, we offer a cooperative purchasing program with over 300 awarded vendors on contract. Sourcewell is driven by service and the ability to strategically reinvest in member communities.

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