



# Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, Inc.

26 West Main Street, PO Box 69, Mohawk, NY 13407-0069  
Phone: 315.866.4671, Fax: 315.866.9862, Web: [mvedd.org](http://mvedd.org), Email: [info@mvedd.org](mailto:info@mvedd.org)  
*Serving Counties of: Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Oneida, Otsego, Schoharie*

**11/18/2022**

**PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Dr. Mari Kate Mycek, MVEDD RPIC Project Director**

[mmycek@mvedd.org](mailto:mmycek@mvedd.org)

**(315) 866-4671**

## **Creative Resiliency in the Mohawk Valley**

The Mohawk Valley Economic Development District, Inc. (MVEDD) has been awarded a grant in the amount of \$173,033 from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC) for the project titled "Creative Resiliency in the Mohawk Valley." MVEDD serves the Mohawk Valley Region in New York State and will be working directly with four target communities on this initiative: Town of Minden, Village of Fort Plain, Village of Palatine Bridge, and Village of Nelliston.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development under Secretary Xochitl Torres Small announced that USDA is awarding [\\$4 million in cooperative agreements to 17 organizations under](#) the Rural Placemaking Innovation Challenge (RPIC). The assistance will help the organizations support people who have been unserved or underserved and live in socially vulnerable communities, Tribal communities, and rural areas.

Placemaking is a collaborative planning and technical assistance process that helps leaders from rural communities create quality places where people will want to live, work, visit, and learn.

Creating effective and attractive community spaces truly takes a village. Eddie Watt, Village of Nelliston Clerk-Treasurer, who was instrumental in gaining local support for the project, stated, "I'm excited and grateful for this opportunity from the USDA to bring our community together. It's worth noting that this wouldn't have been possible without all of our partners from business and government to education and cultural organizations. Nothing happens in a vacuum and I believe RPIC will give us the chance to plan for community growth that benefits everyone. I look forward to showing the community what we can accomplish together."

Through MVEDD's community engagement, strong partnerships, and implementation assistance, we will collaborate with these towns and villages to help solve problems, create effective new projects and strategic plans, and build more creative and equitable places to live, work, and play. MVEDD's innovative and adaptive approaches to economic and community development will allow us to provide, alongside USDA Rural Development, technical assistance unprecedented in the rural communities we serve.

Dr. Mari Kate Mycek, the project director for the program, remarked, "I am grateful for all the dedicated partners who have supported this project. I grew up in Montgomery County and know firsthand what a beautiful place it is to live, and how much potential there is. We have an incredible team of people invested in helping these communities shine, and it's a joy to see so many creative approaches and ideas."

MVEDD, alongside its partners, will work with community leaders to create placemaking plans, hold community workshops, identify implementation projects, and submit applications for grant funding. There is no universal formula to create a sense of place and opportunity in a community. Each location this taskforce works with will be unique. However, all projects will require our partners to create both a connection to that space, in a collaborative way.

Celebrating and honoring this region's history will be central to the placemaking plans. Highlighting a region's history can help foster a sense of pride and connection to our communities - and history is something the Mohawk Valley is rich in. James Post, Village of Palatine Bridge Mayor stated, "The Village of Palatine Bridge has a variety of places located on the historic registry and is located along the Mohawk River which provides a serene and beautiful landscape for our residents. We look forward to engaging with MVEDD and USDA-RD to better understand ways in which we can further enhance our community."

These projects are meant to increase the draw to this entire region, and it will take a spirit of cooperation in which everyone has a voice. Cheryl Reese, Town of Minden Mayor, commented, "We believe through our efforts to collaborate with MVEDD and the many committed partners supporting this project, we can help continue to be an agent for positive change in our region."

Placemaking can also be a springboard toward the future. Patrick Hanifin, Village of Fort Plain Mayor said, "We have a vibrant community with passionate residents and an up-and-coming downtown area that is ripe with possibility. We are excited and eager to help identify community assets and projects that will help our community become a better place to live, work, and play for all."

To create lasting change, this project will need Mohawk Valley youth to get involved and put down their roots. Dr. Nick Fitzgerald, Superintendent of Canajoharie Central Schools said, "MVEDD's approach to placemaking activities will make our communities stronger, which benefits the many students and staff who live and work in these communities. In order to help keep the next generation in our communities, we need to have youth actively involved in decisions regarding placemaking programs and future projects. This is an excellent opportunity for students to learn about community engagement, public policy, and network."

Project events and updates will be published on the project website hosted by [Mohawk Valley Today](#). Mohawk Valley Today's goal is to highlight all the wonderful things about the Mohawk Valley to the public, both for residents and those who might want to call the Mohawk Valley home. Ginny Rogers, the creator of Mohawk Valley Today commented, "The work that will be completed through this project deserves to be shared widely, and Mohawk Valley Today is committed to helping facilitate this." Matthew Ossenfort, Montgomery County Executive said, "The County is committed to placemaking projects for continuing revitalization momentum in this region, and we see this initiative as a complement to our community development goals for creating flourishing towns by investing in small businesses and neighborhoods."

MVEDD's mission is to promote economic growth and community resiliency within the Mohawk Valley. MVEDD's vision for the Mohawk Valley is to create a thriving region through inclusive economic development practices that provides lasting solutions for our communities. Through collaborative partnerships, innovative programs, and community engagement, MVEDD works to foster economic well-being for the communities they serve. This project was developed as part of MVEDD's [Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Mohawk Valley Region](#).

#####

Photos: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Q4uvYul04w49-67Zc5lLotniHEy9DyK1?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Q4uvYul04w49-67Zc5lLotniHEy9DyK1?usp=share_link)

**Media contact:**

**Dr. Mari Kate Mycek, MVEDD RPIC Project Director**

[mmycek@mvedd.org](mailto:mmycek@mvedd.org)

**(315) 866-4671**