

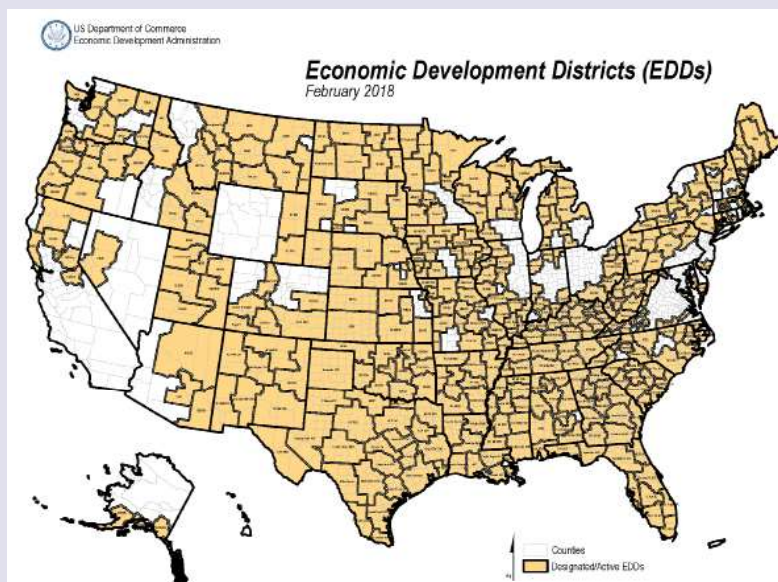
“For Such a Time as This” Pray. Fast. Act.

INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

The United States has a long history of investing in public works and infrastructure, which has left a legacy and foundation that is still largely in use today. Many of the great projects stemming from the [New Deal initiatives in the 1940s are now appreciated as everyday parts of American life](#): bridges, tunnels, dams, schools, hospitals and the energy grid, to name a few. Laying our physical formations energized the economy and created thousands of jobs along the way. Fortifying U.S. infrastructure also creates long-term efficiency, encourages greater private investment in communities, and can produce meaningful changes for families facing poverty.

Amid Great Depression and New Deal politics, many Lutheran churches increasingly [discussed the role of public contributions to social welfare](#), particularly marginalized seniors, low-income families and investments that strengthened employment. Raising concern for neighbor and living out the “Social Gospel” became a growing element of church thought.

While stimulus efforts have had great effects on the economy, gains are not always felt universally across all incomes and geographical regions. Rural and tribal areas, for instance, often see too little private investment without additional incentive although these areas are increasingly facing dilapidated facilities and homes. As critical stakeholders and drivers of local vitality, places of worship and faith activists can play a critical role in informing effective investments that reach communities in the greatest need.



DID YOU KNOW?

Economic Development Districts (EDDs) are local entities which help coordinate and implement regional economic development planning. EDD's play a major role in organizing public and private investments and help connect local stakeholders in conversations in on economic priorities.

Find out more about your regional EDD and how to connect with them at www.eda.gov/edd/.

SOURCE: U.S. Economic Development Administration, Economic Development Districts (EDDs), February 2018.

Today, leaders across the political spectrum share the concern that many of our historic investments are deteriorating, bringing discussions of a new infrastructure stimulus back into national conversation. Years of underspending, coupled with the consequences of the Great Recession and a rapidly changing global economy, have left many areas across the country in urgent need of a boost. As lawmakers discuss a new 21st-century infrastructure plan, it is important for concerned people of faith to call for an equitable strategy with an inclusive vision that addresses needs in rural and tribal areas where investment will have fundamental impact.



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INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

It is critical to share support for the annually renewed programs that maintain the safety and endurance of U.S. infrastructure along the way, such as:

HIGHWAY AND TRANSIT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Federal Highway Administration is a federal-state partnership program that helps repair roads, bridges and other routes in need of repair. The Highway Trust Fund (HTF) similarly supports roadways, though funded almost entirely from fuel taxes. Due to massive demand and backlog, both programs are in critical need of additional funding. The HTF, which has been infused with extra federal support since the 2008 recession, is due to run out of funds after 2020. Ensuring safe bridges and roadways is important for the development and maintenance of communities across the U.S.

TRANSPORTATION ACCESS AND SAFETY

TIGER Grants: The TIGER grant program provides funding for states and local governments to make transportation investments that improve safety, increase efficiency and expand economic opportunities. Investments in transit help reduce commutes, expand access to hospitals and schools, and [produce nearly \\$3.60 in additional local and private investment](#) for every dollar spent.

DRINKING AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

Stories of [water crises like that in Flint, Mich.](#), may make national headlines, but in many cities and counties across the nation, drinking water and wastewater systems are rapidly deteriorating. Urgent support for [state-level Environmental Protection Agency water infrastructure](#) efforts and [rural U.S. Department of Agriculture water programs](#) are critical for community safety and health.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

Infrastructure is more than just pipes and bridges. It includes many other elements, from hospitals, to schools, and even our housing stock. It includes the buildings and roadways that are necessary for the operation of society. Churches can get involved by directing projects to where the needs are greatest and considering direct investment in community infrastructure by building affordable housing, investing in faith-based hospitals, supporting local schools and other means.

