

SDA Receives \$100,000 'Impact Grant' from Nicor Illinois Community Investment (NICI)

UNIVERSITY PARK, IL, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Southland Development Authority \(SDA\)](#) has received a \$100,000 grant from NICI. The 'Impact Grant' announcement was made with a check signing ceremony on Tuesday, July 29, in University Park.



**Southland
Development Authority**
Driving Growth in Greater Chicago

The funding is part of NICI's Impact Grants program, an invitation-only initiative that provides large-scale support to nonprofits. The ultimate goal is long-term, meaningful change for organizations that, much like the SDA, work in economic mobility, small business development, and infrastructure.

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“We are immensely grateful to NICI for their generous support,” said SDA CEO [Bo Kemp](#). “This grant will significantly advance our mission to provide financial resources to the businesses that drive our community forward.”

“At NICI, we believe in investing in organizations that are

driving real, measurable impact. We are proud to support the Southland Development Authority with this grant as they continue their important work in strengthening communities, growing businesses, and creating pathways to economic opportunity across the Southland,” said Tovah McCord, NICI Executive Director.

This grant will play a critical role in bolstering the SDA's emerging 'Monarch Fund'. Developed by the SDA, the Monarch Fund is a new financing vehicle designed to power business growth across the Southland and prepare large-scale, development-ready land. With 260 acres currently under contract, the fund aims to replicate the success of projects such as the CNI Pullman redevelopment on the South Side, but it is tailored specifically for the Southland's assets and communities.

While NICI provided the funding, its parent company, Nicor Gas, was also represented at the

event. The SDA is actively working with Nicor on one of the fund's core strategies: powering land for development to accelerate business and infrastructure growth in the region.

Speakers at the event included State Representative Will Davis, Cook County Commissioner Donna Miller, and University Park Mayor Joseph E. Roudez III. Their presence was a testament to the unified state, county, and local support for the SDA's vision of the Southland. SDA Chair Nathaniel K. Sutton also addressed the crowd, accompanied by fellow board members David Agosto, Frank Clark, and Vernard Alsberry.

Additionally, Will Davis, the Vice President of External Affairs at Governors State University, spoke about the university's plans for expanded student housing, as well as campus growth. He made clear that the SDA's work in University Park fits into that same vision of building a stronger and more livable community for students and residents.

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About the Southland Development Authority

The Southland Development Authority, a not-for-profit economic development organization, is committed to driving equitable and sustainable economic growth in the south suburbs of Chicago. Through innovative programs, strategic partnerships, and impactful direct investments, the SDA is building a vibrant, inclusive economy that drives wealth growth for individuals, businesses and municipalities. Combined with the benefits of the South Suburban Land Bank and the Monarch Fund, the SDA serves as a model for regional development.

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