

1200 Fund Timeline, 1985–2025

Prepared for the Duluth 1200 Fund by
Tony Dierckins, Zenith City Press, September 2025

In the early 1980s, Duluth was hit with a devastating economic collapse. The city had long relied on large industrial employers like U.S. Steel, shipping, and paper mills, but when the Morgan Park steel mill shut down in 1981, thousands of jobs vanished almost overnight. This closure was the single most devastating economic event for Duluth at the time, triggering the broader job crisis. Across the region, about 12,000 positions were lost, leaving the community with record unemployment and little economic stability. The crisis became so severe that a billboard was famously placed along I-35 reading, *"Will the last one leaving Duluth please turn out the lights,"* a stark symbol of the despair many residents felt as families moved away in search of work.



CAPTION: Last One Leaving Duluth Billboard [Image courtesy of Perfect Duluth Day]

To combat this decline, city leaders and business partners came together to create the **Duluth 1200 Fund** in the mid-1980s. The goal was simple but ambitious: to generate 1,200 new jobs to help offset the losses. Seeded with federal Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) funds and local contributions, the 1200 Fund was structured as a nonprofit development finance organization. Its purpose was to diversify Duluth's economy and encourage private investment through business loans, loan guarantees, and other financing tools. Over the years, the 1200 Fund has supported major employers ultimately helping create almost 2,000 jobs, well beyond its original target, while serving as a cornerstone of Duluth's economic recovery and resilience.

1985

March 12, 1985

Duluth's City Council approves the 1200 Fund, designed to offer low-interest loans to small- and medium-sized service and manufacturing companies based on how many jobs the loan would help create. The program - designed to complement other loan programs and so-named for its goal to create 1,200 jobs - initially offers loans of \$10,000 for every job generated by expanding businesses, up to \$200,000 at interest rates below 5 percent. The project was created by Mayor John Fedo's Industrial Development Task Force under the direction of Vlasie Solon. Money for the program initially came from Minnesota Power's franchise fee, the federal Economic Development Administration, a Community Development block grant, the city's economic development fund, and private contributions. Loan repayments and interest would help finance the program. Its advisory board is made up of local business leaders, with Duluth entrepreneur Vlasie Solon serving as its first president.

December, 1985

C & G Associates Electronics Division, based in Minnetonka, Minnesota, received a \$175,000 loan intended to add ten jobs to the company's Duluth manufacturing plant at 525 Lake Avenue South. This is the first 1200 Fund loan.

1986

January, 1986

Louis Kemp Fisheries received a \$200,000 loan to open a fish processing plant at 3931 West First Street that would process Alaskan pollock (and later surimi) into artificial crab products. The business would initially employ up to 45 people and up to 180 after its first year. It was later purchased by the Tyson Seafood Group. The Duluth plant closed in 2001, costing 150 jobs.



CAPTION: Crab Delights, the Louis Kemp Seafood company's staple product. [Image courtesy Louis Kemp Seafood]

March, 1986

Arrowhead Concrete Works of 5572 Miller Trunk Highway received a \$100,000 loan for equipment, adding 32 jobs. The company still serves Duluth today.

November, 1986

Duluth entrepreneur Jeno Paulucci and the Fond du lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa together purchased C & G Associates and renamed it FDL Technologies. FDL Technologies received a \$175,000 loan for working capital. The company went bankrupt in 1991.

December, 1986

Superior Steel of 329 Lake Avenue South, which manufactured metal ducts, received a \$56,667 loan for equipment and working capital, creating two jobs. It was the first 1200 Fund loan to a new company. The company, now a steel distributor, since relocated to 1227 Port Terminal Road.

1987

No 1200 Fund loans issued in 1987.

1988**May 1988**

Duluth Engineering & Manufacturing (DEMCO) received a \$135,000 loan for equipment, creating 26 jobs. The company closed in July 2000.

May 1988

The Jamar Company, a construction and fabricating business, received a \$350,000 loan to help build a new plant at 4701 Mike Colalillo Drive in West Duluth's Oneota II Industrial Park, creating 217 jobs. The company still operates in Duluth today.



CAPTION: The Jamar Company's plant at 4701 Mike Colalillo Drive. [Image courtesy Google Maps]

July 1988

BendTech, provider of software and solutions for tube and pipe design and fabrication, received two loans — one for \$175,000 and another for \$400,000 — to construct two new buildings at 366 Garfield Avenue and create 92 jobs. The company still operates in Duluth today.

1989

April 1989

United Health Care received three loans (\$214,337, \$456,703, and \$500,000) to construct new facilities and create 659 jobs. One of the facilities was built at 4614 Mike Colalillo Drive in West Duluth's Oneota II Industrial Park. The company later moved to 4316 Rice Lake Road and continues to serve Duluth today.

June 1989

Arrowhead Medical Supply of 313 East Superior Street received a \$37,000 for working capital, creating eight jobs. The business closed prior to 2001.

July 1989

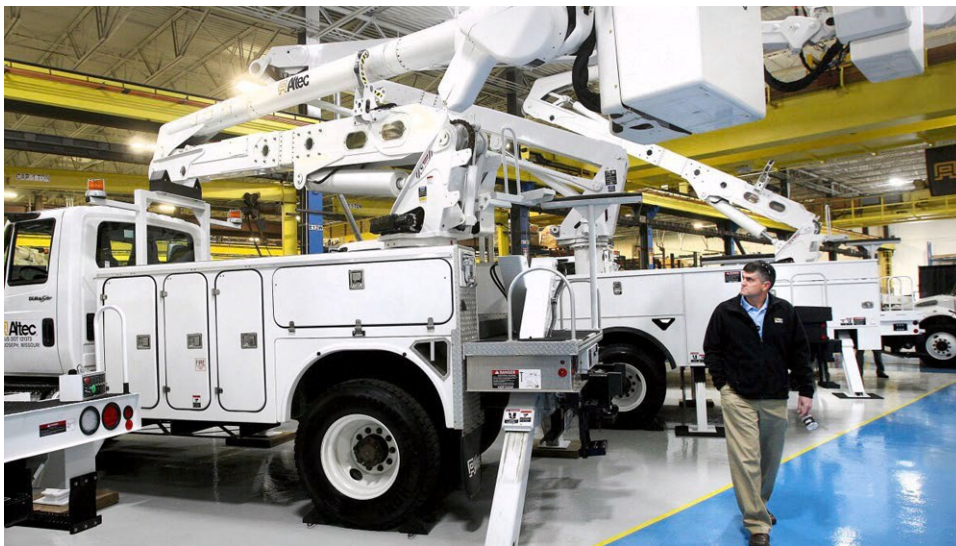
PDQ Engine & Machine – which remanufactured high-performance engines at 3001 West Superior Street – received a \$50,000 loan for working capital. The business closed in 2011.

September 1989

Forward Enterprises Inc., a stainless industrial piping products supplier to the paper and pulp industry based in Kaukauna, Wisconsin, received a \$60,000 loan for equipment and working capital for a new warehouse built at Airport Industrial Park. The business closed in 1997.

December 1989

Reach-All Manufacturing & Engineering of 1300 Port Terminal Road, manufacturers of truck-mounted hydraulic equipment owned by a subsidiary of Minnesota Power, received a \$231,000 loan for equipment. The business closed in 1995 but was purchased by NorStar Products International that same year and was purchased by Altech in 2002.



CAPTION: Altech, originally Reach-All and later NorStar Products, at 1300 Port Terminal Road. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

1990

May 1990

Archer Properties, 6367 Lavaque Road, received a loan of \$180,000 to construct a new facility. The company last made a recorded business transaction in 2015.

July 1990

Automatic Vendors of Superior, Wisconsin, received a \$250,000 to renovate the former Lighthouse for the Blind facility in Duluth at 2701 West Superior Street, expecting to create 41 jobs. The business later moved to 495 East First Street. The Duluth facility has since closed, but the business continues to operate in Superior.



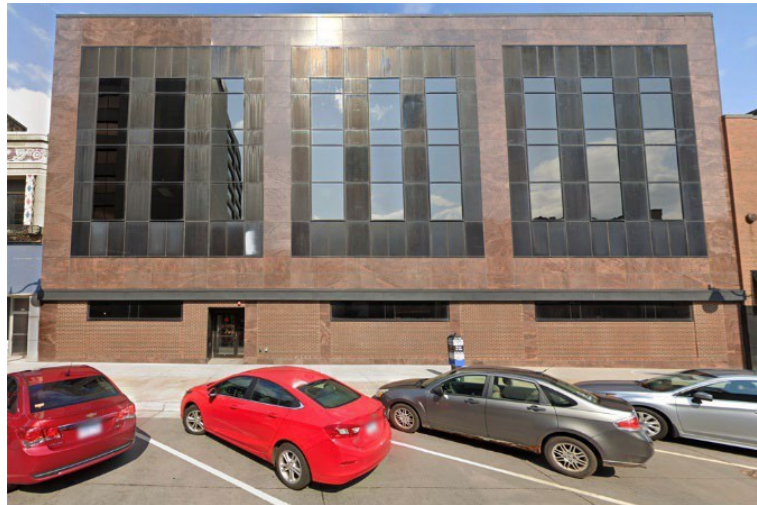
CAPTION: From Left: Gayla Rodenwald, Kathy Bennett, Linda Geving, and Barb Walcome package fresh-food products at the Duluth facility of Automatic Vendors in March, 1991. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

August 1990

Lighthouse for the Blind, then the state's largest employer and provider of rehabilitation services for the visually impaired, received two loans, \$125,000 and \$135,000, both for equipment. The money would be used to purchase a new toilet-paper tissue rewinding machine and to purchase and renovate the former Bombardier Building at 4505 West Superior Street. While it stopped rewinding toilet paper in 1999, the company still operates out of the same facility.

December 1990

Maurice's, a national chain of clothing retailers with headquarters in Duluth, received a \$500,000 loan for renovations to their building at 113-119 West Superior Street. Maurice's relocated to a new office building at 425 West Superior Street in 2016.

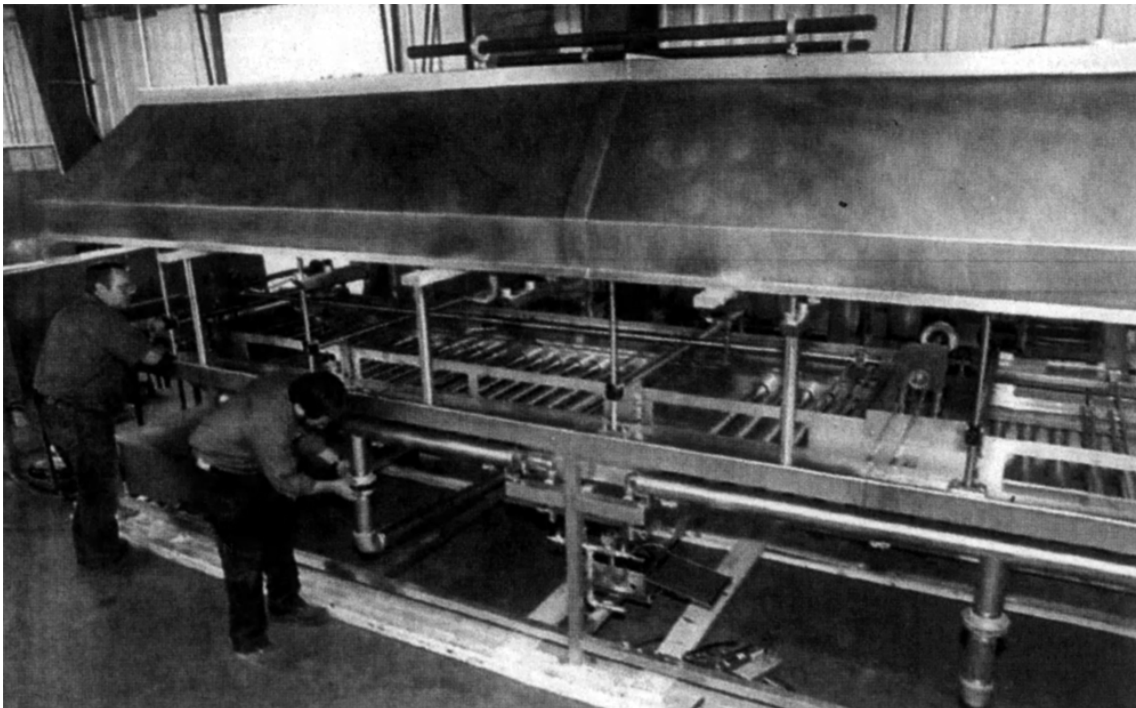


CAPTION: Maurice's former corporate headquarters at 113-119 West Superior Street. [Image courtesy Google Maps]

1991

July 1991

Moline Machinery, manufacturer of bakery equipment at 114 South Central Avenue received three loans (two for \$200,000 and another for \$55,321) to create new facilities, adding 26 jobs. The business continues to thrive in the same location.



CAPTION: Moline Machinery's Dennis Leland (left) and Chris Matheson assemble a new doughnut fryer capable of making 1,900 dozen doughnuts an hour, ca. 1991. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

August 1991

Louigino's of 3700 Oneota Street – organized in 1990 by Jeno Paulucci to make frozen Italian dinners – received three \$250,000 loans for working capital, creating 250 jobs. Paulucci renamed the company Michelina's in 2005 and again to Bellisio Foods in 2006 and sold the company that same year. The business relocated in Lakeville, Minnesota, in 2007.



CAPTION: Jeno Paulucci (foreground) shows of his new pasta-making facility in West Duluth to mayor John Fedo (in dark helmet). [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

December 1991

West End Iron & Metal at 220 South 39th Avenue *West*, received a \$32,000 loan for equipment, creating one job. The company changed its name to Bayside Recycling in 1994 and continues to operate in Duluth today.

1992

No 1200 Fund loans issued in 1992.

1993

November 1993

Electrical supply company Viking Electric, in partnership with A&L Development, received a \$170,000 loan for a new facility at 4529 West First Street, creating 11 jobs. The company has since relocated to 15 South 38th Avenue West.



CAPTION: Viking Electric's original Duluth location at 4529 West First Street. [Image courtesy Viking Electric]

December 1993

Schott Power Systems of Wayzata, Minnesota – which manufactured and tested high-power switching power supply systems – received a \$250,000 loan for equipment to outfit its new 10,000 square foot facility in Duluth's Airpark industrial park, creating 38 jobs. In 2002 Schott Corp. spun off its Power Systems division into a separate company called Schott High Reliability, soon renamed HiRel Systems. The business continues to operate in Duluth as Vishay HiRel Systems.

1994

July 1994

Fladmark Publishing – a new company formed by Orlando "Lars" Fladmark that published trade magazines – received a \$50,000 loan for working capital to publish an international directory for hearing professionals, creating two jobs. The company closed in 2009 after selling off its last remaining publication, *Cabin Life*.

1995**May 1995**

PEMCO received two loans, one for \$500,000 and another for \$50,000, for equipment.

October 1995

After purchasing Reach All, NorStar Products International received a \$250,000 loan for equipment and working capital, returning 53 jobs to Duluth. Altech acquired the assets of Duluth's NorStar Products International in 2002 and continues to operate in Duluth today.

**\$300,000 available
to Duluth businesses
for job creation**

Apply by Dec. 1, 1995

New or existing Duluth employers who provide additional manufacturing, service or wholesaling jobs are encouraged to apply for up to \$2,500 per new job in state income tax credits. the Duluth 1200 Fund will evaluate applications, which must be received at City Hall by December 1, 1995.

To see if your small or large business qualifies, or to have an application form mailed to you, please call the City of Duluth Business Development Office at 723-3556.



D·U·L·U·T·H

CAPTION: This advertisement for the 1200 Fund ran in the Duluth News Tribune in October, 1995. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

1996

January 1996

Duluth Camera Exchange, which operated from several locations, received a \$150,000 loan for equipment. The business continues to operate from its 321 West Superior Street storefront.

February 1996

Construction contractors A.W. Kuettel & Sons of 310 Canal Park Drive — a Duluth institution since 1895 — received a \$70,000 loan for equipment. That year the company moved its facilities to the Clure Public Marine Terminal on Rice's Point and today operates out of 3930 Airpark Boulevard.



CAPTION: Inside the A. W. Kuettel & Sons facility at the Clure Public Marine Terminal. [Image courtesy A. W. Kuettel & Sons]

June 1996

Quality Finer Foods — established in 1995 by Louis Kemp to pack and sell wild rice products made by Louigino's, Inc. — received a \$75,000 loan for equipment and working capital. The business closed after losing a trademark infringement lawsuit brought by the Tyson Seafood Group.

1997

No 1200 Fund loans issued in 1997.

1998

October 1998

Cirrus Design Corporation, makers of small airplanes outfitted with parachutes capable of landing a disabled plane safely, received two loans—\$500,00 for a new building and \$500,000 for working capital—as part of a \$1.9 million DEDA-Cirrus expansion, creating 269 jobs. The Cirrus Aircraft Innovation Center continues to operate at 4515 Taylor Circle, Hermantown, adjacent to the Duluth International Airport.



CAPTION: Inside the Cirrus Design airplane factory adjacent to the Duluth International Airport, date unknown.
[Image courtesy Cirrus Design]

1999

No 1200 Fund loans issued in 1999.

2000

January 2000

Alakef Coffee Roasters received a \$70,000 loan to renovate an existing building at 1330 East Superior Street. The company continues to operate from that facility today.



CAPTION: Alakef Coffee Roasters at 1330 East Superior Street. [Image courtesy Google Maps]

June 2000

Westburne Supply, which sold a wide variety of plumbing, heating, and industrial pipe products, received a \$100,000 loan to help build a new facility in the Duluth Airpark at 4209 Airpark Boulevard. The company was later purchased by Ferguson Enterprises, which still operates out of the same facility.

November 2000

ScanHealth, founded in 1997 to develop software to help health providers file reports and track performance, received a \$150,000 loan for working capital, hoping to add up to 15 jobs. In 2007 the company changed its name to Sansio and continues to operate from 11 East Superior Street.

2001

May 2001

Internet service company CP Internet, founded in 1994, received a \$70,000 loan for working capital. In 2003 the company, which operated at 209 West First Street, changed its name to CP Telecom. The company was purchased by HickoryTech Corp. in 2009. HickoryTech later became Enventis, and was subsequently purchased by Consolidated Communications, which continues to operate in Duluth at 4330 West First Street.

2002

October 2002

Northstar Aerospace, which manufactured seat assemblies for Cirrus Design and precision-machined parts for the aerospace industry, received a \$150,000 loan used to help construct a new facility at the Duluth Airpark. The business continues to operate from 4212 Enterprise Circle today.



CAPTION: Machinists at Northstar Aerospace work with computer-assisted machines to create parts for small aircraft. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

2003

September 2003

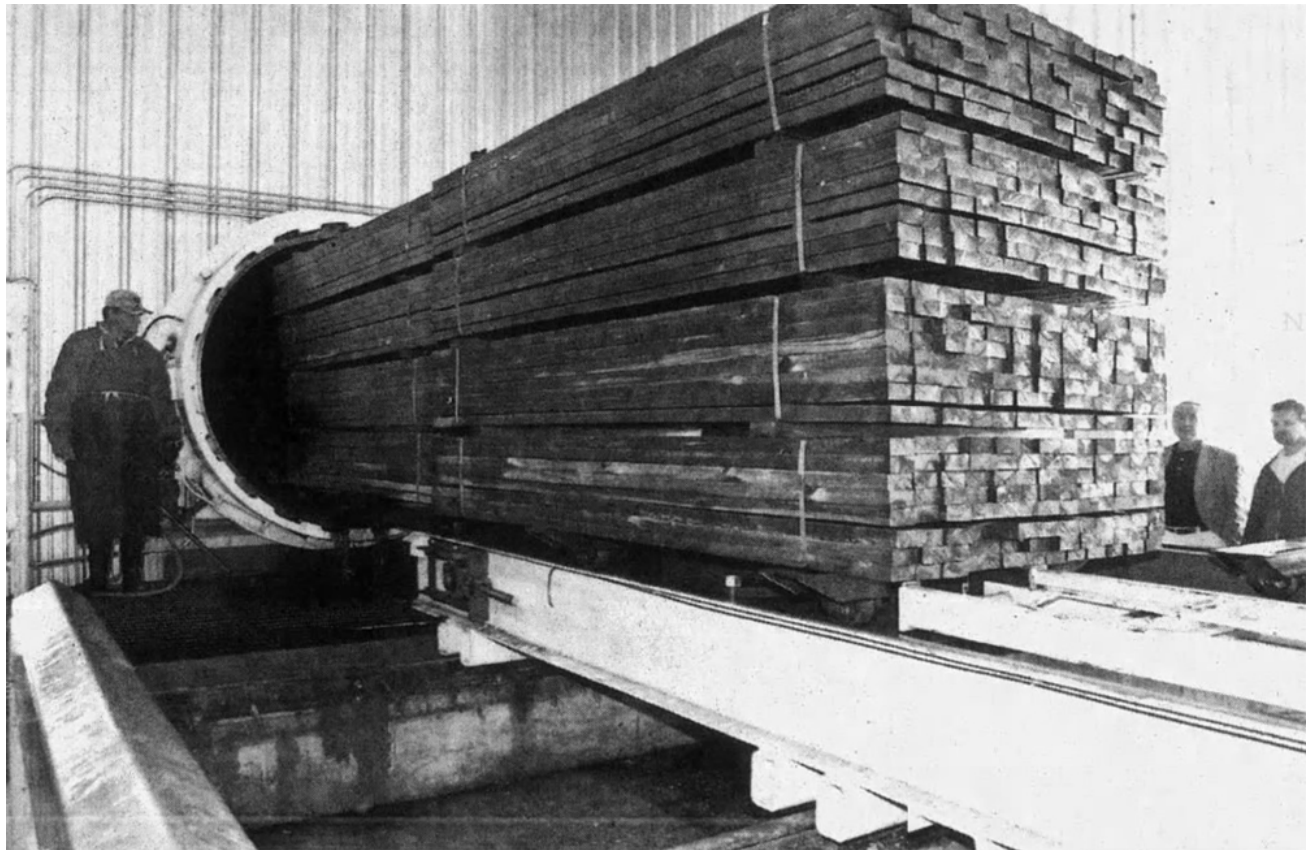
General Pattern of Blaine, Minnesota — producers of precise models used in the automobile industry — received a \$500,000 loan for equipment to help establish four business incubators in the Duluth Airpark at 4441 Venture Avenue that would each employ between five and ten people. One project, which involved the University of Minnesota Duluth and the Natural Resources Research Institute, led to the development of Northern Lights Rapid Prototyping & Design Center at the NRRI.



CAPTION: Steve Kossett, supervisor at of Northern Lights Rapid Prototyping & Design Center operates a prototyping machine. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

September 2003

Innovative Pine Technologies received a \$250,000 loan to help construct a \$3 million wood-treatment plant at 1102 Port Terminal Road on Rice's Point, expecting to employ up to 25 people. The business continues to operate from the same location today.



CAPTION: Roy Johnson at the controls of an autoclave at Innovative Pine Technologies new \$3 million facility on Rice's Point, 2003. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

2004

April 2004

Hydro Solutions, established in 2003 at 4845 Lackland Street, received a \$60,000 loan for equipment. The company then specialized in custom-cutting materials using high-speed water jets, and by 2009 it was manufacturing and selling an industrial pipe-cleaning machine. Today it specializes in waterjet cutting, metal forming, CNC machining, and assembling products for the aerospace, medical, and architectural industries out of its facility at 444 Haines Road.

September 2004

True Ride, which specialized in custom-made ramps for skateboard parks, received a \$140,000 loan to construct a facility at 5781 Bergquist Road. The company was sold to California's Spohn Ranch in 2007. In 2003 its founders had established Epicurean using the same paper-composite material they had employed in their skate ramps to make commercial cutting boards and utensils. In 2015 Epicurean moved its operations to Superior, Wisconsin.



CAPTION: An example of the style of skateboard parks made by True Ride. [Image courtesy Epicurean]

2005–2008

No 1200 Fund loans issued from 2005 to 2008.

2009

April 2009

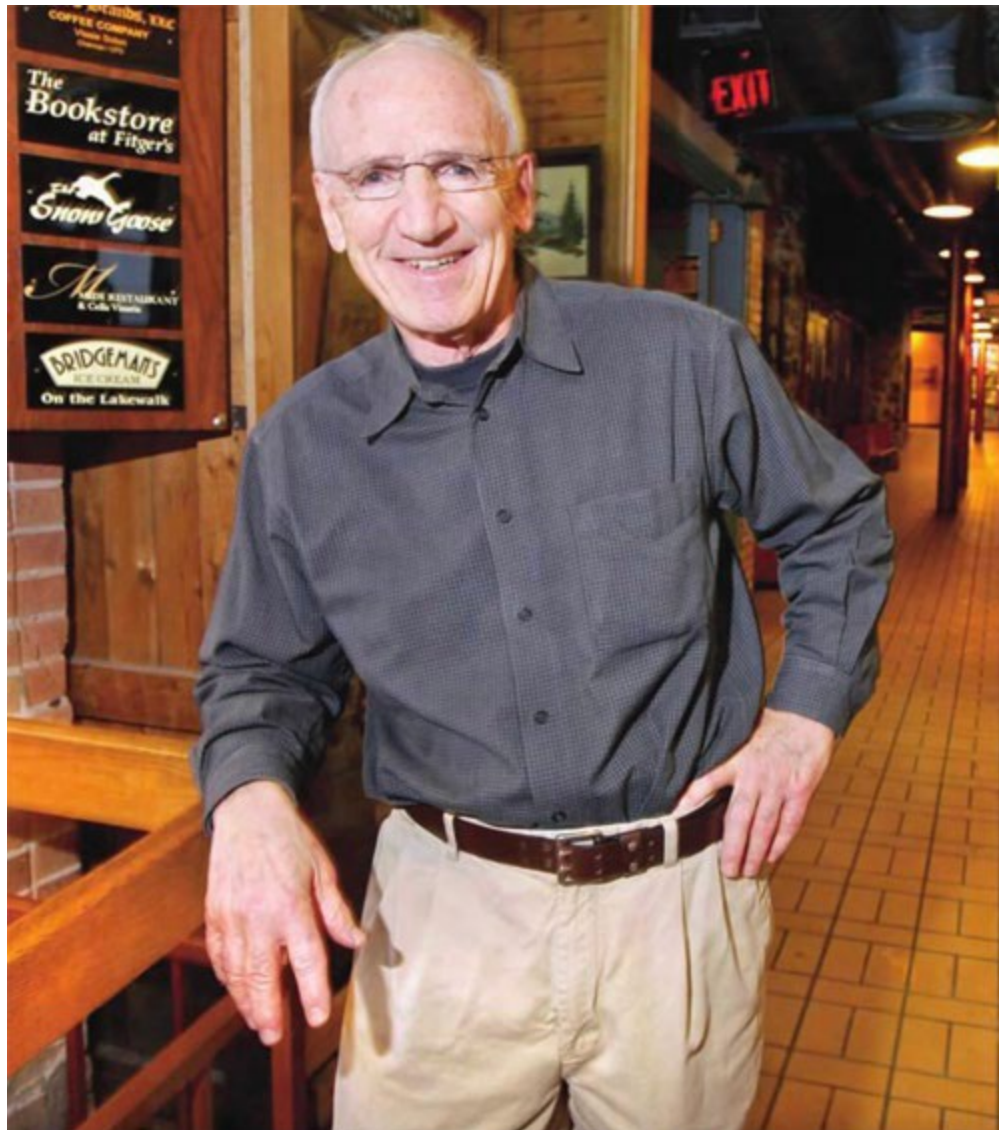
Hydro-Klean, an industrial cleaning company based in Des Moines, Iowa, received a \$250,000 loan for equipment to operate a Duluth branch of the business from 367 Garfield Avenue and hire nine employees. The Duluth branch closed ca. 2014.

2010–2011

No 1200 Fund loans issued in 2010 and 2011.

2010

No 1200 Fund advisory board president Vlasie Solon retires after 25 years. Solon, a co-owner of the Fitger's on the Lake Complex, retired from his position as vice president of RBC Wealth Management at the same time. He then started Fitger's Coffee with his son Jerry. Betty George Sola takes over as 1200 Fund president.



CAPTION: Vlasie Solon shortly after his retirement from the 1200 Fund in 2010. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

2012

April 2012

Walsh Building Products, manufacturers of windows and doors at 6430 Grand Avenue, received a \$50,000 loan for building improvements. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

2013**March 2013**

Vikre Distillery, a craft distiller of gin, vodka, aquavit, and whiskey located at 525 Lake Avenue South, received a \$60,000 start-up loan. The business continues to make and serve fine spirits in Duluth today.



CAPTION: The entrance to Vikre Distillery at 525 Lake Avenue South. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

2014–2016

No 1200 Fund loans issued from 2014 to 2016.

August 2016

Mayor Emily Larson announces the creation of the Advance West Loan Program, using 1200 Fund resources to make business loans specifically for West Duluth and Lincoln Park. The loans are offered to small business employing less than 50 people. The loan recipient would receive between \$10,00 and \$20,000 for each full-time job created. The maximum amount available to each business is \$50,000. The program forgives \$7,500 of the debt for each full-time position created that lasts over two years.

2017

February 2017

Duluth Pottery received a \$50,000 loan for construction costs to relocate from Superior, Wisconsin, to 1924 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, creating four jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.



CAPTION: Karin Kraemer of Duluth Pottery oversee the renovation of a former plumbing supply store in Lincoln Park in 2017. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

April 2017

OMC Smokehouse, a restaurant at 1909 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, received a \$50,000 loan for construction costs, creating two jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

August 2017

The Hotel Pikku, a boutique hotel at 1923 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, received a \$40,000 loan for construction costs. The business closed in 2022.

2018

February 2018

Frost River Trading/Superior Tech. Group, makers of waxed canvas luggage at West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, received a \$50,000 loan for working capital, creating six jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

July 2018

Toppers Pizza at 1231 East Ninth Street in Chester Park received a \$50,000 loan for building renovation and equipment. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

2019

February 2019

Flora North, a florist located at 5831 Grand Avenue, received a \$50,000 loan for construction costs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

June 2019

Caddy Shack, a bar and indoor golf facility at 2023 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, received a \$50,000 loan for construction costs, creating eight jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

November 2019

Zia Properties received a \$50,000 loan for building renovation and equipment to establish the Duluth Tap Exchange, a self-serve tap room at 1905 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District.

2020

2020

Betty George Sola steps down as the 1200 Fund's president. She is replaced by Deb Otto, then president of Bremer Bank, who served until 2023.

January 2020

East-West Property Management of 1720 West Superior Street received \$50,000 for construction costs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

January 2020

Boreal House, a neighborhood bar at 330 North 57th Avenue West, received a \$50,000 loan for construction costs, creating six jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.



CAPTION: The Boreal House at 330 North 57th Avenue West, 2020. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

April 2020

The 1200 Fund announces its new 2020 Fast Grants Program, using \$1.2 million to offer grants to small businesses in an attempt to retain 1,200 jobs during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Qualifying small businesses would receive \$10,000 while business who have previously received 1200 Fund loans would be eligible for up to \$20,000. The program issued \$1,280,000 in grants.

July 2020

Mesabi Preschool Academy at 26 East Superior Street, received \$50,000 for working capital, creating 10 jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

August 2020

Hope for Kids, a child-care center located within the Hope United Methodist Church at 301 West Saint Marie Street, received a \$100,000 loan for equipment and working capital, creating eight jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

2021

February 2021

Ursa Minor Brewing, a craft brewery established in 2018 at 2415 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, received a \$50,000 loan for building renovations. The business continues to operate at the same location today.



CAPTION: Ursa Minor's Ben Hugus, Mark Hugus, and Andrew Scrignoli inside their Lincoln Park brewery. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

March 2021

Heaven On Earth Wellness Spa at 307 East Central Entrance received a \$50,000 loan for building acquisition and remodeling. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

March 2021

Lester River Brewing Company received a \$50,000 loan for building renovations to the property at 5324 East Superior Street, which since opened as the Lake Superior Brewery and continues to operate at the same location.

April 2021

Hostel du Nord, a boutique hotel, received a \$50,000 loan for renovations to its building at 217 West First Street. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

December 2022

Hucklebeary, a gift shop located at 218 East Superior Street, received a \$50,000 loan for building renovations and working capital. It continues to operate at the same location today.

May 2022

The Round Up Bar & Grill at 415 East Fourth Street received a \$50,000 loan for building acquisition and renovation. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

August 2022

New Hope Child Care at 1028 East Eighth Street, received a \$25,000 loan for working capital, creating 23 child-care slots. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

2023

January 2023:

The West Theater, built in 1937 at 317 North Central Avenue in West Duluth and closed as a theater in 1977, received two loans—one for \$150,000 and another for \$50,000—for equipment and building renovations. The business continues to operate at the same location today.



CAPTION: Workers renovating the 1937 West Theater at 317 North Central Avenue. [Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]

February 2023

Red Willow—which offered home décor, furniture, gifts, and home design services—received a \$50,000 loan to purchase a building at 1923 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, creating eight jobs. The company has since relocated to Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

March 2023

Cheesecake & Co., a cheesecake and smoothie food truck business that served cheesecake in jars, received a \$27,000 loan for a food truck and equipment.

April 2023

Bailey Builds, owned by wood mosaic artists Duluth artists Anna and Nathanael Bailey, received a \$50,000 loan for the renovation of a building at 601 North 56th Avenue West, creating 11 jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.



CAPTION: Anna Bailey of Bailey Builds hard at work on her craft. [Image courtesy Bailey Builds]

June 2023

Oasis del Norte, a taqueria at 2401 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, received a \$50,000 loan for building renovations and equipment, creating 11 jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

The Duluth 1200 Fund's **Mentorship Loan Program** launched in June, providing small loans paired with required business mentorship to help startups and entrepreneurs build credit, cover early costs, and strengthen their chances of success. With its blend of financing and hands-on guidance, it quickly became one of the Fund's most popular programs to date.

November 2023

Bali Asian Cuisine, a restaurant at 1931 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, received a \$15,000 loan for building start up costs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

December 2023

e-Bike Duluth, which sells and services ebikes at 4707 E Superior Street, received a \$15,000 loan for business expansion. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

December 2023

Wired Whiskers, a cat-friendly coffee shop at 1823 East Superior Street, received a \$50,000 loan for building renovation and working capital, creating eight jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

2024**January 2024**

Imperium Dance Company at 2826 Piedmont Avenue, received a \$15,000 loan for start-up costs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

January 2024

Wise Roots Wellbeing, which offers online wellness coaching, qigong training, and intimacy and sex coaching, received a \$6,300 loan for equipment. The business still operates out of Duluth today.

April 2024

Studio Café, a coffee shop currently located at 102 West Superior Street in downtown Duluth, received a \$50,000 loan for construction costs for their building owned at w 1st St, in need of improvements. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

May 2024

Ritual Salad, a restaurant at 4501 East Superior Street in Lakeside, received a \$15,000 loan for equipment. The business continues to operate at the same location today.



CAPTION: Ritual Salad at 4501 East Superior Street in Lakeside. [Image courtesy Ritual Salad]

May 2024

Four Directions Sacred Healing & Massage, located at 1118 East Superior Street, received a \$15,000 loan for inventory and equipment. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

May 2024

Thriving Solar LLC, which services solar panels, received a \$5,000 loan for equipment. The business continues to operate in Duluth today.

May 2024

Zenith Base Camp, a hostel at 2631 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, received a \$75,000 loan for construction. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

August 2024

Halcyon House, a wellness center and tea house at 11 East Michigan Street, received a \$15,000 loan for inventory and equipment. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

September 2024

Northland Special Events/Josephine Bridal, offering wedding planning and management services at 315 West Superior Street, received a \$50,000 loan for building renovations, creating 8 jobs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

November 2024

Northern Waters Float Center, offering floatation therapy at 5019 Ramsey Street in West Duluth, received two loans, one for \$50,000 for a building and equipment and the other for \$15,000, for website and branding costs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

November 2024

Star Power Electric, an electrical contractor at 4530 Oakley Street, received a \$15,000 loan for equipment. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

2025**January 2025**

Sleepy Sparrow LLC received a \$15,000 mentorship loan from the Duluth 1200 Fund to help with inventory and electrical upgrades at its new Lincoln Park Craft District location. The business blends a gift shop with massage therapy, with a focus on inclusivity.

March 2025

Balanced Paws Veterinary Rehabilitation and Acupuncture at 2704 West Michigan Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District received a \$15,000 loan for equipment. and tenant improvements. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

April 2025

Koti, LLC received a \$15,000 loan for construction costs for their building at 2027 West Superior Street in the Lincoln Park Craft District, which they plan to lease to small to medium-sized retail businesses such as boutiques, coffee shops, or specialty stores.

May 2025

Essentia Health received a \$100,000 Childcare Collaboration Grant to assist with costs associated with establishing a new childcare center called Brae View, to be located on East Fifth Street between North Fourth and Fifth Avenues East. It is expected to create 25 jobs.

The city of Duluth creates the \$1.4 million Historic Fund, an additional offering to the 1200 Fund's loan programs. The new fund calls for the city to issue \$400,000 in low-interest, partially forgivable loans to historic building owners for property work in 2025.

June 2025

Duluth Coffee Company at 105 East Superior Street received a \$100,000 loan for renovation costs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

In January 2025, the Duluth 1200 Fund authorized a one-time grant dispersal of \$200,000 to support child care businesses within Duluth. Over \$150,000 of this funding was awarded to 21 child care facilities, helping create 70 new child care slots in the city.

July 2025

Eagle's Nest Spa at 1114 East Ninth Street received a \$50,000 loan for renovation and construction costs. The business continues to operate at the same location today.

Sweet Bee's Sunrise Eats, a breakfast-focused food truck, received a \$15,000 loan for equipment and a food truck.

August 2025

Dickinson Clothing Company LLC dba Barbo's Columbia Clothing at 303 West Superior Street received a \$15,000 loan for working capital and display needs. Owned by brothers Jeffrey and Kyle Dickinson, the business was purchased from the previous owner upon retirement and continues to provide men's formal wear with updated offerings in the same downtown Duluth location.

September 2025

Ebbs & Flows LLC at 217 North 59th Avenue West received a \$15,000 loan for building improvements. The recently purchased Spirit Valley location will be developed into a collaborative community space, with a focus on supporting women-run businesses and tenants that align with values of community, collective growth, and empowerment.

Hi Bald LLC dba Juice Pharm at 208 East 1st Street received a \$15,000 loan for inventory, employee wages, and start-up costs. Owned and operated by long-term employees Alexandra Killian and Katie Johnson, the business offers plant-based, gluten-free meals, acai bowls, vegan smoothies, and cold-pressed juices, with options for in-store purchases, delivery, and catering in partnership with other local businesses.

Since its creation in 1985 through October 2025, the 1200 Fund issued 105 loans to 93 different companies totaling **\$12,168,507** and creating an estimated **1,977 jobs**. Of the loan recipients, **78 companies - or 83.8 percent** - continue to operate in Duluth.

The current board is made up of President Laura Mullen, Vice President Emily Vikre, Fred Lewis, Jebbeh Edmunds, Tara Swenson, Simone Giacomelli, Amber Brostrom, Tiersa Wodash, and Michael Scharenbroich.

In addition, Steve Overom has proudly served as legal counsel for the Duluth 1200 Fund board since its inception, providing invaluable guidance on governance, contracts, and compliance for 40 years. His dedication and expertise have been instrumental in supporting the Fund's mission, and his contributions are deeply appreciated for the lasting impact they have had on Duluth's economic development.



CAPTION: Current 1200 Fund president Laura "Fryberger" Mullen, co-founder of Duluth's Bent Paddle Brewing.
[Image courtesy Duluth News Tribune]