2024 Call for Co-Learning Plan Authors

Background

Since 2011, the MSU U.S. EDA University Center for Regional Economic Innovation (REI) has supported over 160 innovative economic development projects in Michigan, spurring high-growth entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic innovation. REI partners have achieved remarkable success; with over $68 million in public and private investments generated by 87 Student-Led, Faculty-Guided projects; over 60 Co-Learning Plans; and 15 Co-Implementation projects (Innovation Fellowships). Partners of REI leverage higher education, businesses, local governments, Economic Development Districts (EDDs), non-profits, economic developers, and others who create, identify, and develop new economic development strategies and practices, and perform technical assistance for communities in Michigan.

Call for Authors

In this next phase of the REI cycle, we are **"calling" for authors** and experts to research and develop Co-Learning Plans on economic development tools, models, policies, programs and practices based on several areas of interest identified by the REI Network. **These Co-Learning Plans should fall within one of four categorial areas, including: 1) resiliency planning, 2) financial resiliency, 3) 21st century communications, and 4) circular economies.**

The findings and recommendations in these Co-Learning Plans, funded through this request, will serve as a source for current and practical information for local and state economic development practitioners and policymakers as they consider important decisions that affect development efforts for Michigan communities and regions.

Topic

The REI University Center has identified the following topical areas for possible Co-Learning Plans of 2024. They include:

1. **Sustainable Infrastructure:** What are the important tasks communities need to undertake to transition to sustainable infrastructure / mobility systems. What would this look like? What local governance capabilities will be required to begin this process?

2. **Equitable Economic Development:** What models exist, or potential models, that can show positive outcomes for linking persons who are now being left out of the economy to jobs that may exist locally/regionally?

3. **Investing in Michigan Business**: Access to capital is critical to business growth. What investment models exist in the U.S. (or elsewhere) that could encourage large publicly managed investment funds like pensions, endowments, and others to be available investments in Michigan-based companies?

4. **Effective Referrals and Collaborations:** Identify highly effective regional referral models that are impactful and replicable in connecting local small businesses to needed resources enabling their growth.

5. **Circular Economies:** What are local governments defining as their community's circularity needs, such as recycling? How do communities overcome challenges when there are minimum financial resources to carry out circularity plans? What profitable models exist? If none, what steps to set up a market where factors are conducive to circularity might be possible?

6. **Other**

These topical areas within one of the above-mentioned foci were weighed by the REI Consultative Panel with consideration to these areas' likelihood to create or retain jobs and/or businesses in economically distressed regions of Michigan.

Application Instructions
Each proposal package must include:

Author(s)/Investigator(s) Information
Please provide a summary for each investigator or team of investigators emphasizing the capacities and prior experiences relevant to effective engagement with the primary intended audience of local and state economic developers (**one page**). *Experience in writing publishable quality papers and the ability to present these materials to a diverse audience* is also required.

Proposed Co-Learning Plan
Provide a detailed narrative, **not to exceed three pages**, that describes the proposed scope of work. The narrative should be double-spaced, have three-quarter-inch margins and 12-point font. You will also need to include **a 100-word abstract** at the beginning of the proposal.

It should have clearly identified sections, and include at least the following:

1. Description of population served or researched through the project idea (ALICE, Asset-Limited/Income Constrained Employed);
2. Identified Redevelopment Ready Communities and/or concentration of opportunity zone tracts;
3. Foci area of resiliency planning, financial resiliency, 21st century communications or circular economies;
4. Discussion of the significance and implications of the topical area for Michigan communities and regions, specifically those communities in the most distressed regions;

5. A detailed plan of work for conducting the analysis (e.g., scope, scale, and sequence of the proposed investigation, sources and methods of gathering information, analytic approaches and techniques to be employed, etc.); Identification of any special needs that must be accommodated for successful completion of proposed analysis (e.g., access to specific individuals or information), and discussion of proposed methods to accommodate such needs (if any);
6. Description and anticipated benefit of any intended deliverable outcomes of the project, beyond those required by this request (if any);
7. A dissemination plan, which describes how the project will be publicized and shared with the community, including Who/What/Where/How (social media, video, press release, presentation, etc.) and When (timeline with benchmarks);
8. Brief description and justification of requested budget;
9. Description of how you will work directly with the REI University Center team to revise the Co-Learning Plan until final Co-Learning Plan is agreed upon;
10. A predicted number and description of jobs that may be created or retained, if applicable;
11. A predicted number of businesses created or retained, if applicable;
12. Describe briefly how you plan to make your final report accessible.

Budget
The narrative proposal must include a brief summary of the budget. The budget should include personnel, travel, supplies, 'other' and a total; including costs associated with presentation at the 2024 annual Innovate Michigan! Summit. **Total costs should not exceed $8,000.**

Writing Samples
Two writing samples of 3-5 pages must be submitted in order to be considered. These can be hyperlinks to materials on a website or electronic versions. These should be sent to jondyjen@msu.edu.

Deadlines and Delivery
Applications must be received by **5:00 pm EST Friday December 08, 2023.**
1. *Online submissions at reicenter.org* (preferred method)
2. *Email submissions* may be submitted as file attachments and sent to jondyjen@msu.edu (you must enter your Co-Learning Plan title, the date, and your last name in the subject as: "Co-Learning Plan title, date, author's last name." Submissions will be acknowledged by an e-mail message to the lead author named on the application).

Selection Criteria
Selection of proposals will be based on how well the proposed work plan meets the following criteria and whether or not the author(s) is qualified.

1. A clear focus and understanding of the topic, experience, and knowledge in the topic.

2. Demonstrated capability to meet the standards of due diligence in conducting the scope of work.
3. Demonstrated capacity to communicate effectively to economic development practitioners, policymakers and others.
4. Work Plan is a new idea or strategy for local and state economic development solutions in Michigan.
5. Work Plan emphasizes actionable knowledge on the practical implications of empirical research into the economic development topic(s).
6. A Dissemination Plan that demonstrates capacity to effectively share information.
7. Author(s) has the capacity to meet project deadlines.
8. Project budget is appropriate for the scope of work proposed and competitive with other applications received.

Preference will be given to initiatives and projects that include commitments for cost-sharing of funding (e.g., cash, credit, financing commitment); leveraging of in-kind assets, especially from for-profit business enterprises; building on and or extending related government or non-profit initiatives; engaging EDA stakeholders and partners; and benefiting distressed economies.

Final selection of Co-Learning Plan author(s) is reserved to REI in accordance with the overall project objectives.

Eligibility
Economic development practitioners, entrepreneurs, community leaders, educators, policymakers, university faculty, staff and students affiliated with any postsecondary education institution in Michigan are invited to submit proposals under this request.

Funding
This is a competitive process. Up to four Co-Learning Plans are expected to be funded. Plans selected for funding will receive financial support not exceeding $8,000 for the scope of work. If your application is selected, REI will contact you to finalize the scope of work and financial arrangement. **Be prepared to keep and submit all** receipts of costs associated with the creation of your Co-Learning Plan in case of an audit.

Use of AI:
The growing prevalence and use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in the production of community and economic development products calls upon us to provide reasonable guidance to our partners and colleagues on how that usage may be ethically employed. These guidelines are an initial set of recommendations that recognize that AI is a

fast-evolving technology that may have value in addressing capacity issues for communities in writing and data analysis.

We offer these guidelines as a beginning point in this evolving field and as the practice of AI in community and economic development matures welcome additional insights and suggestions on how we might best employ these tools ethically to advance the equitable use of AI to assist our communities.

We recommend that community and economic development scholars and practitioners:

- Disclose the use of any AI tools in the introduction or methods section of a product to provide for transparency.
- Describe in detail in the appropriate locations through footnotes or other appropriate citation methods which parts of the text/data are affected.
- AI tools may have inherent limitations and biases in their application to specific identity groups. If known, explain these limitations and biases in an appropriate footnote or appendix.
- AI tools may also pose ethical challenges in issues of data security and privacy. Explain how data security and privacy are not compromised in your use of AI.
- No AI tool will be accepted as a credited author on a project. That is because any attribution of authorship carries with it accountability for the work, and AI tools cannot take such responsibility.

Deliverables
The lead Co-Learning Plan author is expected to facilitate the following activities and produce the below deliverables:

1. Submit a **15-page Co-Learning Plan** of publishable quality.
2. Submit up to a **two-page Executive Summary.**
3. Deliver a **webinar or video** on findings and recommendations, if requested.
4. If any work is done on the project after the completion of the Co-Learning Plan, an **Addendum** (maximum 5 pages) should be prepared documenting additional work or changes to the project that occurred before the annual REI event.
5. Present the Co-Learning Plan at the **2024 annual REI Summit**.
6. Participate in a **post-project survey** evaluating the outcomes of your project.

Key Dates
- **December 08, 2023**: Deadline for Submitting Applications
- **January, 2024:** Notice of Awards
- **March 29, 2024**: Deadline for First Draft of Co-Learning Plan

- **May 3, 2024**: Deadline for Second Draft of Co-Learning Plan
- **June 7, 2024**: Deadline for Third Draft of Co-Learning Plan
- **July 9, 2024:** Deadline for Fourth Draft of Co-Learning Plan
- **August 5, 2024:** Slide Deck for Innovate Michigan! Summit Due
- **August 26, 2024:** Final Report Due
- **August 26, 2024:** Addendum due
- **TBD**: Annual REI Summit

Questions
Please contact Jenan Jondy at jondyjen@msu.edu or 517-353-9555

Application

Title of proposed Co-Learning Plan:

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Author's Name: _____

Organization: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Other Authors, Experts, or Partners (please include contact information):

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Qualifications (Describe your knowledge and work experience relevant to the topic. What makes you an expert or the best author for this topic?):

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Other Notes:

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In submitting the proposal, I agree to meet the timeline and deliverables specified in this Call for Co-Learning Plan Authors

I would be interested in being considered to serve as an Innovation Fellow on this topic, as well. I know of a specific community that I would like to work with as an Innovation Fellow.

Community: _____