

MSU EDA University Center for Regional Economic Innovation (REI)
<http://www.reicenter.org/>

2020 Call for Co-Learning Plan Authors: Topics

The REI University Center has identified the following topics for possible co-learning plans in 2020. To submit an application or to learn more, please visit:

<http://www.reicenter.org/surveys/2020-call-for-authors/>

The deadline for all applications is Friday, December 6, 2019. Please direct questions to Ms. Jennifer Bruen at bruenjen@msu.edu or 517-353-9555

A. Ethics in Economic Development

It is a common practice within the economic development community for professionals to seek out and recruit business and industry from other communities/states. This practice often leads to overall job loss (companies downsize) increased public costs (both to the sending and receiving community) with limited long term economic gains for workers or communities. Economic development when conducted by publicly funded economic development professionals raises questions as to the ethical behavior of these professionals such as "how does this practice serve the long term public good" and "what overall benefits/costs result from economic development piracy and who pays and who gains"? This Co-Learning Plan would examine the ethical principles guiding publicly funded economic development professionals and identify the ethical dilemmas that economic development piracy raises in the profession and possible strategies and policies that the profession and communities/states might employ to minimize the negative impacts of economic development piracy.

B. Extended Producer Responsibility

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) can be described as a system of policies and practices that extend the responsibility of a "product" at the end of its post-consumer life to the original producer. Popularized in part by William McDonough & Michael Braungart in their 2002 book "Cradle to Cradle" extended producer policies and practices seek to maximize the sustainability of manufactured goods by reducing waste and increasing the recycling of valuable materials. Many modern companies have found this method of product design and production both profitable and environmentally beneficial. Many consumers prefer products that practice cradle to cradle material use and salvage. In Michigan the auto industry is a leader in this regard for example by re-utilizing salvaged steel. Our international neighbor, Canada, has adopted a number of provincial policies to expand extended producer responsibility to a variety of products. Little is known about Michigan's circular economy or the potential impact of extended producer responsible to create jobs and support new business development in the state. This Co-Learning Plan would examine and describe the economic, social and environmental impacts of adopting extended producer responsibilities to industries in Michigan and discuss the pros and cons of these policies and practices on sustainable and equitable economic development.

C. The Future of "Work"

The nature of work has drastically changed over the past 50 years. With the onset of automation, virtual reality and artificial intelligence soon, jobs will look vastly different than they did 10 years ago. This Co-Learning Plan will briefly describe the history of work and jobs in Michigan. This CLP will outline how community and economic developers might prepare for the decline in jobs and describe how the predicted transition will play out in Michigan communities. This CLP will describe how changes in the nature of work might impact rural, urban and suburban regions. It may also address the alternative measures of economic development rather than rely solely on the jobs created and retained etc..

D. Paying for Infrastructure

A critical part of public economic development is the investment in modern and cost effective utility infrastructure such as sewer, water and energy. What new models, policies and practices are there that can inform economic development professionals and state and local government officials on planning and financing the renovation or new construction of a sustainable modern utility infrastructure for communities?

E. Triple Bottom Line Manufacturing Authority

Some major corporations are beginning to find ways to operate more sustainably for people, planet and profit. Michigan's manufacturing sector is an enormous economic development driver in the state, however with automation and climate change it may be time for Michigan businesses to consider sourcing materials, producing products and handling waste. Companies that have a major manufacturing component may need encouraging to develop strategies to improve efficiency and environmentally finding outcomes that meet circular economy objectives. This Co-Learning Plan would identify companies that have successfully achieved sustainable practices that promote globally competitive manufacturing, and examines the feasibility of creating a new Manufacturing Authority where the guiding principles that promote and endorse a Triple Bottom Line (socially, environmentally and economically balanced) approach? This Co-Learning plan would identify if there are manufacturing authorities that have already incorporated sustainability into their mission. The CLP would outline steps that could be taken to initiate a TBLMA in Michigan.

F. Well-Being Index in Michigan

Community leaders are thinking about the well-being of their residents. Gallup and Mayo Clinic have developed well-being indexes and tools to measure the quality of life in different states and countries. Are there examples of well-being tools informing leaders and decision makers? Is there a Michigan well-being index being developed? If not, what it might measure? How might it function? If a well-being index were to be developed for Michigan how might Michigan business owners, employers, and community and economic developers use it? Could there be incentives for those raise their community's quality of life such as: could employers receive a tax credit for providing inexpensive onsite day care for children and elders, onsite preventive health care clinics, and teleworking spaces?

G. Other Idea Not Listed

We welcome innovative ideas under this category. What tools, models, policies or programs would support this idea? Consider your level of professional or academic experience in the topic area you are suggesting, as it pertains to economic development.