

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

2021 Call for Innovation Fellows

Background

Since 2011, the MSU EDA University Center for Regional Economic Innovation (REI) has supported over 130 innovative economic development projects in Michigan, spurring high-growth entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic innovation. REI partners have achieved remarkable success; with over \$60 million in public and private investments generated by 72 Student-Led, Faculty-Guided projects; 54 Co-Learning Plans; and 9 Co-Implementation projects. Partners of REI leverage higher education, businesses, local governments, 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. REI is committed to a process of engagement to create the best and brightest community and economic developers in the world.

Call for Innovation Fellows

The REI Innovation Fellows program was established in 2016 to tackle the tough economic development issues that our distressed communities of Michigan face every day by supporting Innovation Fellows. Innovation Fellows provide on-the-ground support and coordination to turn concepts into actions, and implement new economic development tools, models, and policies. Innovation Fellows, recruited by REI, its partners, Economic Development Districts (EDDs), and past Co-Learning Plan authors, will identify recommendations in past Co-Learning Plans to serve as current and practical information for local and state economic development practitioners and policymakers as they consider important decisions for Michigan communities and regions.

Application Instructions

An Innovation Fellow should be embedded within the community or organization they seek to work with in order to achieve the project's goals. Innovation Fellows are expected to work with a community and/or an organization for their entire Fellowship, and are considered contractors, with financial support provided by REI. REI intends to fund two Innovation Fellows each year for a nine month period.

Proposed Innovation Project

Provide a detailed narrative, not to exceed five pages, that describes the proposed scope of work. It should be double-spaced, have three-quarter-inch margins and 12-point font. It should clearly identify sections containing the following:

1. Cover page, including your name, email address, phone number, and affiliation, and the project title.
2. A brief summary of the problem and how your proposed project will address the economic development challenge or opportunity, utilizing a past Co-Learning Plan or Student-Led, Faculty-Guided project.
3. The purpose in taking on this project, noting any special contributions it may make toward economic development efforts in Michigan. Is the project new to the community you wish to work with or to Michigan? How?
4. A list of who you plan to work with to implement this project. Have you already made contact with these individuals/organizations?
5. A basic timeline of your proposed project, including possible tasks for individuals or teams.
6. Resources (besides financial support), that REI could provide, that you might find useful for your project? Please be specific.
7. The skills, qualifications, and/or connections unique to you to guide this community or organization in this project.
8. A description of and how your project might generate living-wage jobs, public/private investments, or could be transformative in the community.
9. A **Dissemination Plan** listing Who/What/Where/How (social media, video, press release, presentation, etc.) and When (timeline with benchmarks).
10. A **letter of endorsement** from your organization or from the community you intend to work with.
11. One to three paragraphs describing how you fulfill the qualifications listed below.

Required Qualifications

- Strong knowledge base in the topic or area of interest and formal training in facilitating or leading successful projects.
- Creative problem solver.
- An opportunistic mindset.
- Energy and passion for the project.
- Proactive and prudent.
- A high level of social capital.
- A long-term vision for the project.

Funding

Up to \$10,000 for a 9 month period.

Deliverables

1. Four written updates, provided according to the schedule below. Each update must be 1-2 pages in length, and must indicate major steps taken to accomplish goals, barriers, and successes/outcomes.
2. A Final Report, 15-20 in length. It must describe the major steps taken, lessons learned, and any outcomes or successes achieved (including any measurable, such as jobs, investments, etc.).

Updates and deliverables should be sent according to the schedule below:

- **November 23, 2020** - Application/Proposals Due
- **Late December, 2020** - Notices of Award sent out by REI (**first payment**)
- **February 18, 2021** - First Update Due
- **April 22, 2021** - Second Update Due (**second payment**)
- **June 24, 2021** - Third Update Due
- **August 26, 2021** - Fourth Update Due (**third payment**)
- **September 16, 2021** - Final Report Due
- **TBD** - Present at Innovate Michigan! Summit (**final payment**)

Submission

Applications must be received by **5:00 pm EST on November 23, 2020**.

- *Online submissions* at reicenter.org (preferred method)
- *Email submissions* may be submitted as file attachments and sent to rei@msu.edu (you must enter your Innovation Fellow Project title, the date, and your last name in the subject as: "Innovation Project title, date, last name". Submissions will be acknowledged by an e-mail message to the lead author named on the application).

Questions

Please contact Ms. Mary ZumBrunnen at zumbrun1@msu.edu or 517-353-9555