

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

2021 Call for Co-Learning Plan Authors

"Build Local Supply Chain"

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. In the summer of 2020 the REI Network (over 2,000 Michigan economic development practitioners, business leaders and scholars) submitted innovative economic development ideas/topics of interest. To accomplish the goal of REI we are seeking Co-Learning Plans¹ that are effective and innovative in bringing new knowledge to bear on the challenges we face in economic development.

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.

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 will affect economic development efforts for Michigan communities and regions.

¹ Collaborative learning, or co-learning, is the process of co-creation, co-application and dissemination of valued knowledge. In co-learning, the aggregate knowledge, expertise, and experience of practitioners, decision-makers, community leaders, entrepreneurs, scholars, and stakeholders is compiled and presented in a readable/usable context. A key objective of co-learning is to create actionable knowledge and to design and implement innovative economic development strategies to accelerate competitive success in the global economy. In other words, you learn, they learn, we learn and then we do!

Topic

The REI University Center has identified the below topic for a possible Co-Learning Plan in 2021.

A. Build Local Supply Chain

The COVID pandemic has shown us some of the weaknesses of community economies that rely heavily on external/global networks to provide needed goods and services, Communities need to strengthen their capacity to provide locally/ regionally products and services which help create sustainable, self-sufficient local businesses and jobs.

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. Definition of the topic and the specific questions to be addressed by the analysis;
2. Discussion of the significance and implications of the topic for Michigan communities and regions, specifically those communities in the most distressed regions;
3. 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);
4. Description and anticipated benefit of any intended deliverable outcomes of the project, beyond those required by this request (if any);
5. 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);
6. Brief description and justification of requested budget;
7. 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;
8. A predicted number and description of jobs that may be created, if applicable;
9. Describe briefly how you plan to make your final report accessible²

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 2021 annual Innovate Michigan Summit. **Total cost should not exceed \$8,000.**

² Web accessibility means that people with disabilities can read, navigate, and contribute on the web; see <http://webaccess.msu.edu/> for more information

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 zumbrun1@msu.edu.

Deadlines and Delivery

Applications must be received by **5:00 pm EST Friday, November 20, 2020**.

1. *Online submissions* at reicenter.org (preferred method)
2. *Email submissions* may be submitted as file attachments and sent to rei@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. Demonstrated capability to meet the standards of due diligence in conducting the scope of work.
2. Demonstrated capacity to communicate effectively to economic development practitioners, policymakers and others.
3. Work Plan is a new idea or strategy for local and state economic development solutions in Michigan.
4. Work Plan emphasizes actionable knowledge on the practical implications of empirical research into the economic development topic(s).
5. A Dissemination Plan that demonstrates capacity to effectively share information.
6. Author(s) has the capacity to meet project deadlines.
7. 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 4 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.

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 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 2021 **annual REI event**.
6. Participate in a **post-project survey** evaluating the outcomes of your project.

Key Dates

- November 20, 2020: Deadline for Submitting Applications
- Late December, 2020: Notice of Awards
- April 16, 2021: Deadline for First Draft of Co-Learning Plan
- June 25, 2021: Deadline for Second Draft of Co-Learning Plan
- July 23, 2021: Deadline for Executive Summary
- August 20, 2021: Deadline for Final Draft of Co-Learning Plan
- August 28, 2021: Deadline for Presentation Materials
- TBD: Annual REI Event

Questions

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

Application

Title of Proposed Co-Learning Plan:

Author's Name: _____

Organization: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

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

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

Other Notes:

- 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 Fellow³ on this topic.
- I know of a specific community that I would like to work with as an Innovation Fellow.
- Community: _____

³ An *Innovation Fellow* provides on-the-ground support and coordination to move projects from concepts to actions. Innovation Fellows are recruited by REI, its partners, EDDs, and past co-learning plan authors. Innovation Fellows receive one year of support to move a previously completed co-learning plan to implementation through a process of leading, organizing and supporting a community or region in taking the next steps to implementing an innovative strategy, policy, tool or practice.