

May 13, 2016

Re: INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) is a collaboration within seven counties in southwest Michigan aimed at identifying opportunities that will catalyze prosperity. Representatives from sectors including economic development, higher education, workforce development, adult education, transportation and others have joined together as the Region 8 Prosperity Committee (Committee). The Committee's goal is to identify and pursue areas where the region is uniquely poised to flourish. The Committee has identified themes within which they would fund projects to facilitate this progress.

The purpose of Committee is to accomplish the goals defined in its *Prosperity Plan*. You are encouraged to consult page 21 of *Prosperity Plan Volume 1* (http://smpcregion3.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/rpi_plan_final.pdf) and pages 26-29 of *Prosperity Plan Volume 2*: (<http://smpcregion3.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/RPI-VOLUME-2-110315-FINAL.pdf>) for the themes, goals, and opportunities of the RPI.

Your organization was selected to receive this invitation to submit a proposal within the areas of emphasis identified by the Committee. Your expertise in the field suggests to us that you may have an interest in exploring solutions that match the focus of the Committee. We also encourage you to pass this RFP along to any organization that you think might also be an appropriate recipient.

The Committee is accepting proposals that aim to accomplish any, or a combination, of the following themes:

Connecting Education, Business, and Community Development to Enhance Talent

The region would, in many ways, increase the competitive value of area businesses through the retention and development of the local workforce while attracting talented workers from outside the region. Other regions in the state have developed coordinated efforts to align resources around talent in their region; most notably, leaders in the West Michigan Region created the Talent 2025 initiative. The Committee's aim is to combine RPI funding with local funding and expertise to create a unique effort designed to retain and develop the current and future workforce while attracting talent to the region. Furthermore, the project would help to convene partners from the many systems working to attract, develop, and retain students and workers in the region. If successful, this project will convene and leverage the outstanding existing resources and programs in the region to develop a strong singular talent-centered focus. The Committee is looking for proposals that are designed to more strongly connect and enhance the transitions between the talent pipeline and businesses in the region.

Tapping the Resources of Education to Solve Regional Challenges

The Committee is interested in identifying issues and applying regional university brain power to help collectively solve them. The Committee is looking to harness a portion of the immense student and professorial capacity of our education institutions and apply them to regional issues, like those identified in the *Prosperity Plan*. Through studios, labs, research practicum, and a wide variety of other means, our education partners could provide vital findings back to the Committee that could drive its future actions. Successful proposals will create a plan to engage as many of the local educational institutions as possible while identifying local needs.

Career Pathways

The seven-county area of Region 8 requires quality services to ensure its residents have the academic skills necessary to succeed at work, at home and in their communities. Connections and referrals between key agencies and services are vital to provide maximum support and assistance to every individual. Cross-agency partnerships will work to align systems (including adult literacy, English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, workforce development, community college, and others) and provide education and training options that focus on the skill demands of regional and local economies.

A broad supported theme of the Committee is the implementation of systems and programs that ultimately lead to an individual obtaining employment at a family sustaining wage. These strategies should build upon the existing continuum of services and initiatives and bring them together to increase efficiency and deliver more effective outcomes. This should result in more people being prepared for the workforce and being capable of pursuing careers that are in demand in the region.

The successful proposal(s) will identify the available assets in the region, gaps in current services, barriers to individuals accessing services, and how service providers can best work together to develop an efficient and effective regional system. Work completed through the selected proposal(s) in this theme should improve capacity throughout the region by:

1. Strengthening collaboration between businesses, local agencies, nonprofits, philanthropic organizations, and educational institutions.
2. Developing strategies for bridging gaps in program services.
3. Promoting a seamless progression from one educational ladder opportunity to another and across work-based training and education, so an individual's efforts result in progress and industry recognized certifications. This process would be a supported navigation system.
4. Creating regional collaborations among employers, educational institutions, nonprofits, and labor.
5. Expanding career pathways/career navigation systems to all areas of Region 8 by offering professional development.
6. Leveraging existing resources and collaboratively seeking new resources to support and sustain the career pathway system.

Project Selection

The Committee strongly encourages proposals that encompass multiple themes. Proposals with broad reach both geographically (within the seven counties of RPI Region 8) and across other goal themes within the *Prosperity Plan* are welcome. Proposals with the broadest geographic reach across the seven counties will receive higher scores. Proposals that span multiple themes will also receive higher scores. Other scoring criteria are likely to include: other sources of funding leveraged, encouragement of regional collaboration, long-term financial sustainability of the project (applicants should expect that RPI funding will be a one-time event), partners involved in the project, and organizational capacity. Strong proposals will aim to incorporate the work performed locally by various state mandated education groups:

- Talent District Career Council (TDCC)
 - www.michigan.gov/documents/wda/15-01_WDA_Talent_District_Career_Councils_479022_7.pdf
- Michigan Works Agencies
 - kinexus.org
 - michiganworkssouthwest.org
- Adult Learning Collaborative Board
 - www.michigan.gov/documents/mdcd/ttfreportFINAL_3_18_10_321374_7.pdf

The Committee anticipates issuing as many as two, but as few as one, award(s). The total funding available in this round of awards is \$100,000.

Proposals shall include all of the following:

1. Summary
 - a. Brief summary of the project (*limited to two paragraphs*)
2. Project Description
 - a. Describe the project, the need(s) it intends to alleviate and the communities and/or populations it will serve or positively impact
 - b. Describe how the project will accomplish one (or more) of the aforementioned themes
 - c. List the counties in which the project will take place. If the project does not include all seven counties in the region, describe how the project may be scaled up to include all counties within the region (if applicable)
 - d. *Limited to three pages*
3. Organizational Description
 - a. Briefly describe the organization(s) that will complete the work outlined in the proposal
 - i. Outline relevant experience, organizational structure, team who will work on the project, and other information you may deem appropriate
 - ii. Describe the ability and capacity of the organization(s) to complete the project
 - b. *Limited to two pages* – may attach project team member biographies, resumes/CVs, or other relevant personnel information in an appendix
4. Partners
 - a. List all partners who will have an active role in the project and describe their role in the proposed project

- i. The partners may be those with whom you will collaborate for data, information, contacts, or other aspects of the project
 - ii. Including partners in your proposal will help clarify the breadth of involvement your proposal
 - b. *Limited to one page*
5. Project Timeline
- a. Provide a timeline for each activity enumerated in the Project Description
6. Budget
- a. Create a table with categories of expenditures that will be funded by the requested funding, how much funding will be required for each category, and how much of that funding will come from the RPI funding request
 - b. See example below:

Expenditure Category	RPI Request	Funds from other sources	Total
Wage/Salaries	\$8,000	\$16,000	\$24,000
Fringe	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$6,000
Indirect	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$3,000
Equipment	0	0	0
Travel	\$750	\$1,500	\$2,250
Materials	\$250	\$500	\$750
Totals	\$12,000	\$24,000	\$36,000

7. Project Breakdown
- a. Create a table that divides the proposal into its various components and their corresponding costs.
 - b. Where possible, prioritize each component (on a 1 to 5 scale - 1=low; 5=high) and its associated cost. See example below:

Project Component	Component Cost	Component Priority
Phase 1:Inventory	\$4,000	2
Phase 2:Assessment	\$2,750	3
Phase 3:Acquisition	\$9,500	5
Phase 4: Installation	\$4,000	5

Proposal Format:

Please submit proposals in a commonly used 11 point font (Arial, Calibri, Times New Roman, etc). Please also use 1" margins.

Proposal Submission:

Submit an electronic version of the proposal to John Egelhaaf at egelhaafj@swmpc.org before 3:00 pm, June 24, 2016. Staff and the review subcommittee will field questions and comments regarding the RFP prior to 5:00 pm, June 3, 2016; direct all questions to John Egelhaaf (269-925-1137 x1512 or via email).

Staff will post changes to the projection selection process or timeline on the RPI webpage, smpcregion3.org/regionalprosperity.

Project Selection Criteria:

Project will be scored and selected based on the following criteria and weighting:

<i>Points</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
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- | | |
|----|--|
| 25 | Geographic Scope (Partial County=0 points, 1 County=3, 2=6, 3=10, 4=15, 6=20, 7=25) |
| 20 | How well does the project accomplish the area(s) of focus selected by the Committee? |
| 15 | Potential for early success to build momentum. Does the project link to a larger effort? |
| 10 | Supports Regional Collaboration (the number and geography of the project partners) |
| 10 | How significant is the potential impact of the project (ROI)? |
| 10 | Does the project represent innovation in scope or efficiency? |
| 5 | Access to funding. Are enough funding sources available to complete the project? |
| 5 | Organizational Capacity |

Key Dates:

The overall proposal timeline will follow the following schedule:

May 13	Request for Proposal Distributed
June 3	Deadline for Questions and Comments Regarding the RFP
June 24	Proposals Due
Weeks of June 27, July 4 & July 11	Proposal Selection Subcommittee Reviews Projects
July 15	RPI Proposal Selection Process Completed
August 4	Region 8 Prosperity Committee Review & Award

Proposals are due by the close of business on June 24th. Please email your replies to egelhaafj@swmpc.org. If you need additional information, contact can be made at the same email address or at (269) 925-1137 x1512.

Sincerely,



K. John Egelhaaf, AICP
Executive Director
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission