

# REGIONAL PROSPERITY INITIATIVE APPLICATION

Submission Deadline:  
**November 1, 2014**



The Regional Prosperity Initiative Application Form was developed to facilitate the application process for regional collaboration within designated regions throughout Michigan, as illustrated on the attached map.

The following checklist outlines the sequence of steps needed to complete an application:

- Study the Regional Prosperity Guidance and boilerplate to understand the requirements and purpose behind the new approach to regional collaboration and whether you are eligible to apply on behalf of your region.
- Note any additional requirements beyond the prerequisites of the grant application form (e.g., letters of support, application deadlines, etc.).
- Fill out the application form completely, using the format provided.
- If you are a NEW APPLICANT, enclose your organization's incorporating documents and pertinent memorandums of understanding
- If you are a NEW APPLICANT, enclose a list of current board members (include member affiliations and any other pertinent information).
- If you are a NEW APPLICANT, enclose the most recent audited financial statement (if available).
- Enclose your organization's current year operating budget.
- Enclose a list of key organizational staff, including titles and main functions.
- Applications must be accompanied by a cover letter (no more than one page) stating the region's request and proposed use of fund. This letter should be signed by the directors and board presidents of each of the required regional entities (i.e. economic development, workforce development, transportation, adult education and regional planning at a minimum.)
- The application for which you are seeking approval is a collaborative effort with other agencies; include letters of support from the collaborating agencies. (A resolution of support from the lead applicant and a letter of support from each co-applicant are due at the time of submission.).
- Complete the narrative section on p. 4. Limit your response to no more than four pages in total for that section (type no smaller than 12-point with one inch margins).
- If you are a NEW APPLICANT, complete p. 5 of the application. Limit your response to no more than four pages in total for that section (please use 12-point font and one inch margins).
- If you are a RETURNING APPLICANT (your organization received an RPI grant last year), you must complete p. 6 of the application. Limit your response to no more than four pages in total for that section (please use 12-point font and one inch margins).
- If you are a RETURNING APPLICANT, please enclose a copy of your completed regional prosperity plan, if applicable, a copy of the accompanying dashboard, and a record of the 2/3 or more vote of support on these items. If a completed plan is not yet prepared, please provide appropriate documentation illustrating compliance with the work product approved in the initial grant to date.
- Enclose a detailed budget and timeline of the project for which funds are being sought.
- Application is due to DTMB by Nov. 1, 2014. Submit by email: [harkinsc1@michigan.gov](mailto:harkinsc1@michigan.gov).

Additional questions may be directed to:

Sara Wycoff  
Strategic Advisor  
Executive Office of Governor Rick Snyder  
[wycoffs@michigan.gov](mailto:wycoffs@michigan.gov)

Chris Harkins  
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State Budget Office  
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APPLICATION MADE FOR: RPI Region #8 Southwest Michigan DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
(NAME of REGION)

NAME OF APPLICANT ORGANIZATION:

\_\_\_\_\_

YEAR INCORPORATED: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: (include street address if different)

Is the name above the same as  
it appears on the IRS Letter of  
Determination? Yes  No

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

If not, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S NAME & TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT'S NAME & TITLE (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Note: This will be the individual contacted regarding questions and/or updates about the application's status.*

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF FTE POSITIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

OPERATING BUDGET TOTAL FOR CURRENT FISCAL YEAR:

Fiscal Year: \_\_\_\_\_  
From To

SOURCES OF INCOME:

Government	Federal	_____ %	Fees/Earned Income	_____ %
	State	_____ %	Individual Contributions	_____ %
	County	_____ %	Corporate and/or Foundation Grants	_____ %
	City/Township/Village	_____ %	Special Events	_____ %
			Memberships	_____ %
			Other	_____ %

Are you applying for (check one of the following):

Regional Prosperity Collaborative  (TIER ONE)      Regional Prosperity Council  (TIER TWO)      Regional Prosperity Board  (TIER THREE)

Are you applying for funds to complete a feasibility study for the purpose of developing a strategy to move to a different tier (check one of the following):

YES

NO

**Guidance for Regional Funding Applications and Expectations:**

**Please limit the length of your answers to the following questions to no more than a total of four pages.**

1. What is the total amount of funding requested? Please provide an itemized list of what you intend to do with that funding. Include a timeline, information about any funds you will leverage in this effort and how you intend to measure success.

Facilitator; Author/Scribe; Room Rental; Asset Inventory for Region 8 (assets assigned to geography); Refine Choices for data to monitor link to dashboard; Mileage Reimbursement for members of the Collaborative; Printing expenses for Updated Five Year Prosperity Plan; Planning projects to support the work of the Collaborative

From January to the end of September, we have nine months. With the Five Year Prosperity Plan as our guide, we will be driven forward by the four goal sets we developed for the Plan. The first eight months will be divided into two-month segments. For each segment, two meetings will be dedicated to drilling down for the greatest possible detail on each goal set. We will invite our regional thought leaders whose work falls naturally into the goal set in focus. Our invitation list will also specifically include representation from those who have an interest in the work within the focus goal set. At the first of the two meetings, the goal set will be introduced to the group. The SWMPC and SMPC will have prepared a regional asset inventory that relates directly to the goal set. The asset inventory will be presented as one of the initial components of the meeting. A discussion will then be facilitated that flows from the goals identified in the Prosperity Plan and will attempt to link the goals identified with the assets inventoried. From the dialogue, input will be solicited that can then fuel the greatest possible detail for objectives and action strategies. Also from the dialogue, possible missing pieces of the asset inventory can be identified.

The second of the two meetings on the focus goal set will involve primarily the members of the Prosperity Committee. The Committee will revisit the findings from the first meeting and do the work necessary to translate that information into the specific objectives and actionable strategies to refine the Prosperity Plan. The Committee will identify the assets most central to the execution of the individual goals, objectives, and action strategies. Finally, the Committee will identify the data most relevant to measure their progress relative to their refined goals, objectives, and action strategies.

In addition to the Asset Inventory material produced for each goal set, a second report with a particular emphasis within goal sets will also be produced. For the education goal set ("Promote talent development and retention") we will produce a Talent Asset Map as a resource to drive the discussion regarding the development of talent in southwest Michigan. For the infrastructure goal set ("Encourage expansion and improvement of regional infrastructure") we will produce a study on our broadband internet infrastructure and a second on the regional passenger rail infrastructure. For the RPI Strategies goal set ("Advance regional communication and collaboration") we will produce a report of bylaw best practices.

Itemized List of What We Intend to Do with the Funding

1. Four meetings broadly attended.
  - Each meeting focusing on one of the four goal sets from the Prosperity Plan.
2. Five meetings of the Prosperity Committee.
  - Each meeting will generate detailed objectives and actionable strategies to refine a separate goal set from the Prosperity Plan.
3. An Asset Inventory initially constructed around each of the four goal sets from the Prosperity Plan then combined into a single Regional Asset Map for RPI Region 8.

4. A Talent Asset Map to provide detailed information regarding the existing workforce talent profile, the linkage between employers and job seekers, skills training capacity, and a profile of the region's unemployed/underemployed.
5. A study of the region's broadband internet coverage that identifies providers, needs, coverage, gaps, and explores the preferred method of closing gaps.
6. A study of the region's passenger rail infrastructure that links with the efforts being conducted by RPI Regions 4 and 2 and explores the opportunities presented by expansion of rail service to improve the region's multi-modal movement of people.
7. A portfolio of data that will constitute the measure for progress for RPI Region 8.
8. Produce volume II of the Southwest Michigan Prosperity Region Five Year Prosperity Plan.

2. Please describe why the region is eligible for the funding tier to which you are applying.

Continuation of progress made in year one; Develop new membership; cultivate 3-5 projects; refine our goal set (education particularly); develop bylaws to provide better structure and function for the collaborative

**Our Unique Role:** In its first year the collaborative worked through many predictable, early-stage issues. Members had serious concerns about the possibility that the work was redundant relative to other important efforts in the region. Over time the partners worked hard to find the unique role that the collaborative could fill. To some extent we are still refining that understanding but are in a much better place at the end of year one. Further time in tier one will allow the collaborative to better see our work in the context of other regional collaboration that is happening. With that understanding we can function without the concern that our work is overlapping with the efforts of others in the region.

**Building Trust:** We had to learn to trust our fellow collaborators. There is far more trust now that we have reached the end of year one. That trust will need to continue to be built. The trust is built both between the individuals around the table and between the organizations they represent. There is not an easy way to familiarize each participant organization with their fellow organizations around the table. That familiarity comes with time and effort. Similarly, individuals require time to learn how to work well together. We have seen that familiarity and comfort built as our work has progressed through year one.

**Broader Collective Knowledge:** There is a similar need to look outside the immediate inner-circle represented within the Collaborative. We need to engage in an intentional effort to increase our understanding of other organizations within the five sectors but outside the collaborative. By building our collective understanding we can then engage in an effort toward better aligning our shared assets.

**Building for Long-Term Success:** We had to push through the strong desire to get to the action strategies as quickly as possible prior to building the foundations on which those actions would be based. An understanding was gradually built that the collaborative was preparing itself for a longer-term working relationship. Near-term success on the project level would not necessarily equate to successful long-term collaboration. A second year at the tier one level will provide the group with the best possible foundation from which they can build their long-term working relationship.

3. Please identify all partners participating in this application and specifically denote those that are required partners as identified in the boilerplate language. Please outline any additional prospective partners you contacted to participate in this effort, but that have not yet submitted a formal letter of support. For returning applicants, please also denote changes to your participant list from the prior year.

We need to get formal consent from the partners from year one.

We propose to add the following: K-12 Education; Law Enforcement and Emergency Response; Health Care; Local Government; Private Sector (particularly Logistics & Rail); State Agencies/Departments

4. Are the proposed counties to be served in accordance with the regional prosperity map? If not, why not?  
How do you intend to begin to work in the region outlined in the aforementioned map going forward?

Yes all seven counties will be included in the work of the RPI.

**This Page for NEW APPLICANTS ONLY:**

**Please limit the length of your answers to the following questions to no more than a total of four pages.**

1. **LEAD APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND:** Include organizational mission statement and purpose, organizational qualifications, history of accomplishments, governance, area and population served, and role of volunteers. (As this is collaboration, describe the lead agency and its relation to others involved.)
  
2. **IDENTIFICATION OF REGIONAL ASSETS:** Identify the defining assets of your region (geography, economy, education, talent, transportation, etc.) and explain why your organization, with your co-applicants, is uniquely qualified to bring all of the appropriate partners together to leverage the region's assets to create, strengthen and support regional economic prosperity.
  
3. **NEEDS STATEMENT:** Explain the need for a collaborative economic strategy in your region. Identify the needs you will address. Acknowledge similar existing projects or agencies, if any, and explain how your proposal differs, and what effort will be made to work cooperatively.
  
4. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Please address anything else about your organization or project you think is relevant to the proposal.

**This Page for RETURNING APPLICANTS ONLY:**

**Please limit the length of your answers to the following questions to no more than a total of four pages.**

1. **DEMONSTRATION OF SUCCESS:** Please describe your progress toward the deliverables outlined in your application from the last grant cycle. Your response must include evidence of engagement by all required partners, adherence to your budget, proposed timeline, open meetings act, development of your dashboard, prosperity plan and other proposed deliverables.

Include attendance from year one, meeting minutes. Produce budget and expense data. Generate work timeline. Specific URL references to dashboard and website. Attach prosperity plan.

2. **NEEDS STATEMENT:** Explain the need for a continued collaborative economic strategy in your region. Identify the needs a second grant would fulfill. Acknowledge similar existing projects or agencies, if any, and explain how your proposal differs, and what effort will be made to work cooperatively.

**Our Context:** The scale of multi-sectorial representation at which the RPI functions is not otherwise addressed in southwest Michigan. We came to that understanding by first working hard to acknowledge the other good work that is currently happening in southwest Michigan. Southwest Michigan First's Transformation Agenda and the two Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs) generated within the region are primary examples. In addition, there is other sub-regional work that either was recently completed or is currently in process. We have to create a context in which that work can be understood and complemented by the our RPI. That is important to our members.

**Building Collaborative Structure:** The Five-Year Prosperity Plan is one of the central components to help the region move toward collective action. We recognize that as we progress, we should expect to engage in group decision-making on specific issues and projects. The Plan provides the "why" for collaborative action. Moreover though, collaborative decision making will require more structure beyond the Plan to answer the "how." The partners recognize this. We are prepared to build bylaws and other tools that help support our group action. Future projects will need to be evaluated against criteria that identify actions that have broad, regional impact. The assets of the Collaborative will then be applied to those regionally impactful projects to insure their success. The assets of the Collaborative may ultimately include financial but we see our assets as far more inclusive than just funding that might be allocated to deserving, regionally impactful work.

**Our Role as Convener:** While our RPI work has progressed, outside of our five-sector process we have observed the reordering of other sectors into the same RPI Region 8 geography. We believe that as other sectors fall into this geographic order, it represents an opportunity for us to be a convener when our work might be mutually complementary. Again, the Prosperity Plan can provide a way to dictate when it makes sense for us to orchestrate the alignment of other sectors for common goals.

**Exploring Additional Representation:** There has been interest in our work from other sectors that were not active in the year one work. That interest has come from local government, health care, and K-12 education. These sectors were not part of the core "prosperity committee" in the first year. Part of the early work of the collaborative this year will be to determine what that additional representation looks like.

**Responsiveness to Emerging Opportunities:** The proposed missile defense project at Fort Custer (Battle Creek) spoke to the need and opportunity represented the RPI in southwest Michigan. The project helped to crystallize the recognition that a broad collaborative could create significant momentum very quickly for a regionally impactful project. We will remain alert to other emerging needs and opportunities to which the Collaborative can apply itself.

3. **LESSONS LEARNED:** What lessons will you take from last year's grant process that you will apply this year? How can these lessons inform your strategy for the upcoming year and increase opportunities for success?

**Representation and Attendance:** Attendance levels were maintained throughout the year. Meetings were held every three weeks. The solid attendance was a testament to the importance of the process to the participants. We did observe spotty attendance from some sectors specifically. We will work to better engage those sectors. We are also dedicated to involving sectors that were not formally represented. Those sectors include public sector representatives like the Department of Natural Resources and local government, public transit, and Amtrak. The private sector was also underrepresented; specifically we believe that freight logistics could bring a lot of value to our work.

**Broader Input:** Beyond the exploration of broader attendance within the prosperity committee, we would like to do a better job of mining the collective input of a larger cross section of regional stakeholders. To that end we propose to hold at least two meetings where a broad attendance is solicited. We expect to make the most of these meetings by using electronic polling to gauge input on the Prosperity Plan and other issues being discussed by the Prosperity Committee.

4. **TRANSPARENCY REQUIREMENT:** Please indicate the appropriate website at which the required transparency documents for the 2014 Fiscal Year grant can be found.

5. **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Please address anything else about your organization or project you think is relevant to the proposal.

The Collaborative would like to take advantage of the opportunity to conduct planning projects that can propel its work forward. We anticipate combining unexpended funds from our 2014 RPI work as well as 2015 funding to proceed with research that will support the actions of the Collaborative. Four examples of projects that represent nearly universal value for the Collaborative include: Regional Asset Mapping; Regional Broadband Study; Regional Passenger Rail Study; and Regional Talent Asset Mapping. Each of these studies will yield short and long-term actionable results for the Collaborative.