

September 7, 2017

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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 *Five-Year Prosperity Plan* developed by the Committee defines its goals for its work in the region. You are encouraged to consult page 21 of *Prosperity Plan Volume 1* ([http://smpcregion3.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/rpi\\_plan\\_final.pdf](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. Specifically, in 2017, the Committee seeks to focus its resources on the accomplishment of the following education goals: "Encourage infrastructure development and interconnectivity to better support education, training, and employment." And "(S)upport work of existing organizations in the following areas: adult education, credential acquisition, career exploration, functional literacy, skilled trades, employers."

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

### **1. Connecting Education, Business, and Community Development to Enhance Talent**

The Committee recognizes that the region can increase the competitive value of area businesses through the retention and development of the local workforce while attracting talented workers from outside the region. To that end, the Committee funded a project that is examining the labor market in the region, Talent Match. The Talent Match project is focused on inefficiencies found in the labor force, and appropriately matching the needs of business with the skills of the residents of Southwest Michigan. The latest presentation of the Talent Match work to-date is found here: <http://smpcregion3.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/6-1-17-RPI-Meeting-TM-Presentation.pdf>. The Committee is looking build upon Talent Match by seeking proposals that are designed to more strongly connect and enhance the transitions between the talent pipeline and businesses in the region. The Committee's aim is to catalyze a unique effort designed to retain and develop the current and future workforce while attracting talent to the region. Furthermore, the effort would help to convene partners from the many existing efforts that work 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.

### **2. Tapping the Resources of Education to Solve Regional Challenges**

The Committee is interested in identifying challenges and applying regional university brain power to help collectively resolve them. The Committee is looking to harness a portion of the immense student and professorial capacity of our higher 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 uniquely tuned to higher education, our regional higher education partners could provide vital, innovative solutions back to the Committee for implementation. Successful proposals will create a plan to engage as many of the local higher education institutions as possible to resolve regional needs.

### **3. 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 the most effective possible outcomes. This should result in more people being prepared for the workforce and being capable of pursuing careers that match their interests and 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 innovative ways for 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 and leveraging existing program services.
3. Promoting a seamless progression from one educational laddering opportunity to another and across work-based training and education, so an individual's efforts result in progress and industry recognized certifications. The resulting process would be a system for navigation mutually supported by industry and the providers of training and education alike.
4. Creating regional collaborations among employers, educational institutions, nonprofits, and labor.
5. Expanding career pathways/career navigation systems to all geographic areas of Southwest Michigan.
6. Leveraging existing resources and collaboratively seeking new resources to enrich and sustain the career pathway system.

## Project Selection

The Committee strongly encourages proposals that respond to the three themes detailed above in an innovative manner. Proposals with broad reach geographically (within the seven counties of southwest Michigan) are welcome. Proposals that span multiple themes or utilize an innovative approach 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), diverse partners involved in the project, and organizational capacity.

The total funding available in this round of awards is approximately \$110,000.

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. Reference best or new practices from which your project may have been derived (if applicable).
  - e. *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:

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>RPI Request</b>	<b>Funds from other sources</b>	<b>Total</b>
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
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$24,000</b>	<b>\$36,000</b>

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:

<b>Project Component</b>	<b>Component Cost</b>	<b>Component Priority</b>
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](mailto:egelhaafj@swmpc.org) before 3:00 pm, September 29, 2017. Staff and the review subcommittee will field questions and comments regarding the RFP prior to 5:00 pm, September 19; 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](http://smpcregion3.org/regionalprosperity).

**Project Selection Criteria:**

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

<i>Points</i>	<i>Criteria</i>
20	Geographic Scope (1 County=2, 2=4, 3=6, 4=10, 6=15, 7=20)
20	How well does the project accomplish the area(s) of focus selected by the Committee?
15	Does the project represent innovation in scope or efficiency?
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)?
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:

September 7	Request for Proposal Distributed
September 19	Deadline for questions and comments regarding the RFP
<b>September 29</b>	<b>Proposals Due</b>
Early October	Proposal Selection Subcommittee reviews projects
November 2	Region 8 Prosperity Committee awards funding
December 7	Contract(s) Executed

Proposals are due by the close of business on **September 29**. Please email your replies to [egelhaafj@swmpc.org](mailto: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