



Immersive Student Entrepreneurship Grant Applications Details

Background

The Northeast Michigan Regional Prosperity Collaborative, a private, public and non-profit partnership formed to develop and promote a shared vision for economic prosperity in the area, completed a 10-year talent plan for the region approximately two years ago. The plan, which takes a comprehensive approach to addressing talent shortages in the region as well as a job market that is softer than surrounding areas, identified many strategies for area leaders. One such key strategy is the need to further develop, encourage and promote an entrepreneurial culture in the region.

Much like the rest of Michigan, the Northeast Region has a labor market history of relying on traditional blue-collared jobs. Previously, these jobs delivered good wages and a great deal of security, though global and national economic trends have changed this. Whether through automation, outsourcing or other labor market changes, these types of jobs are now less secure and often pay less, in relative terms. For these reasons, among many others, area leaders have recognized the importance of supporting existing entrepreneurs in the area as well as investing in the future of entrepreneurship in Northeast Michigan.

The area's Collaborative Development Council (CDC) and its partners recognize that we must begin by working with youth, which is why the group has reserved funding for a school-based youth entrepreneurship effort. The CDC through the Immersive Student Entrepreneurship Grant will be awarding \$15,000 of seed funding for participating schools as well as working with successful local entrepreneurs to provide further support and assistance.

Goals of the Grant Program

The CDC is seeking education and training partners who are interested in helping to provide middle and/or high school students with an experiential learning opportunity that would begin this fall. A successful program will allow them to participate in the development and operation of a business while learning other foundational skills. Ideally, such programming would include the development of a business plan, development of a product/service, marketing or advertising, actual creation or execution of the product/service, management of the business finances, division of labor, etc. Through this effort, this grant program aims to achieve the following:

- **Demystify entrepreneurship** by showing youth that entrepreneurship is accessible to everyone. Too often, there is a false sense that entrepreneurship requires you to be a technological whiz or relocate to Silicon Valley, which simply isn't true.
- **Promote calculated risk-taking** for students. It seems increasingly that we send a message to youth that all risk-taking is bad, which certainly does not promote the idea of becoming an entrepreneur. By providing the seed funding and allowing youth to pursue a business idea in a team/class environment, we hope to lessen the fear of risk and instead help students learn to take strategic, calculated risks.

- **Leverage existing resources** by partnering with schools or other institutional partners that may have existing programs and/or underutilized assets. We think this is leading by example as we try to teach students to look for their existing, strategic advantage in business, whether that be location, previously untapped assets or other skill sets unique to Northeast Michigan.
- **Connect schools and students with existing area entrepreneurs** by using a network of entrepreneurs from within the region to act as technical support for the students' businesses. This will help our schools and students have better local business contacts, learn from successful local businesses and, perhaps, go on to build lasting personal and professional relationships.
- **Celebrate the unique aspects of participating schools** by avoiding a one-sized fit all design. We recognize that each school has different classes, teachers, assets and needs. This grant program has been intentionally designed to celebrate the unique assets throughout the region and allow for maximum flexibility and innovation.
- **Result in the development of a sustainable source of revenue** for schools so that the region can build upon this success for many years to come and many years of students can benefit from this funding.

Eligibility and Rules

Eligibility for this grant program is straightforward. Eligible applicants include any Intermediate or K-12 school district, must serve students in the Northeast Michigan region, and must intend to operate the program in question for, at least, the 2018-19 school year. Each of these criteria is further described below.

- **Eligible applicants** are defined as K-12 School districts (including Intermediate districts), post-secondary education institutions (including 4-year colleges, community colleges and credentialed training providers), private sector businesses and non-profit institutions with a demonstrated commitment to youth development within the region (such as Future Farmers for America, First Robotics, Junior Achievement, etc.). All entities wishing to apply for this funding must demonstrate collaboration with a local school(s) in their application.
- **Eligible programs** must operate within the Northeast Michigan Prosperity Collaborative's region of service (Cheboygan, Presque Isle, Otsego, Montmorency, Alpena, Crawford, Oscoda, Alcona, Roscommon, Ogemaw, Iosco). At least 51% of the youth served by the program must reside in the region as well.
- **Programs must operate for at least one school year** in order to be eligible for funding. This is important to ensuring that the programs funded are truly immersive and give students an opportunity to practice entrepreneurial skills.

It should also be noted that successful applicants will be expected to report on the status and result of their grant funded program through the program year and advise the CDC on the benefit, need for and feasibility of expanding similar programming.

Funding Availability

Through this grant, area schools will be awarded \$15,000 in seed funding for immersive entrepreneurial programming. Each eligible applicant may apply for up to \$5,000 of funding.

Key Dates and Timelines

Applications for grant funding are available at:

<http://www.discovernortheastmichigan.org/studentbusiness.asp>

Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis until the funds are expended..

Applicant Scoring

Applicants will be reviewed and scored by Northeast Michigan Council of Governments (NEMCOG) staff based on the scoring rubric provided below. Scores and applications in their entirety will then be shared with the CDC membership, who will have the final say on financial awards.

| Criteria | Score | Notes |
|---|------------|-------|
| Program is truly immersive (1), involving students in development (3), execution (3) and management of business (3) | /10 | |
| Geographic disbursement of funds. (Our intent is that funds are distributed throughout the region, rather than consolidated in one area or district.) | /6 | |
| Proposal is compelling and includes a clear timeline | /5 | |
| Budget request demonstrates need and potential impact of grant funding | /5 | |
| Leverages Existing School/Community Assets | /5 | |
| Connects or demonstrates willingness to connect students with area entrepreneurs | /5 | |
| Plans to reinvest any earned revenue into future immersive entrepreneurial education programs | /5 | |
| Identifies evaluation strategy and demonstrates willingness to advise CDC on need for/feasibility of continuing grant program | /5 | |
| Number (%) of Students Served from Region 3 | /2 | |
| Demonstrates non-traditional partnerships (such as those with business, non-profits, colleges, etc.) | /2 | |
| Total Points Awarded/Possible | /50 | |