



# Northeast Michigan

Regional Prosperity Initiative

PO Box 457  
Gaylord, MI 49734  
989-705-3730

## MICHIGAN REGIONAL PROSPERITY INITIATIVE:

### Region 3: Community & Economic Development Mini-Grant Program

The MI Regional Prosperity Initiative's goal is to encourage local private, public and non-profit partners to create vibrant regional economies. Since the inception of Region 3 – Northeast MI's Regional Prosperity Initiative efforts have been based on supporting strategies to enhance Talent – Business - Community in Northeast MI.

A component of the 5-Year Region 3: Regional Prosperity Plan focused on strengthening capacity throughout the 11 counties in the region for Economic and Community Development services.

The following recommendations were developed after having conversations with various reps from twenty-two communities throughout the eleven-county CDC region. They are designed to leverage limited resources, help local communities improve service/delivery at the local level and provide a game plan for those communities wishing to increase their effectiveness.

- 1. Training for Volunteer Economic Development Organization/Team:** To build knowledge and capacity, a specific training program would be offered to all members of your local economic development team. Topics would range from business retention and attraction to assisting local entrepreneurs develop and grow.
- 2. Retention Visit Coordination:** Staff assistance to schedule regular “pro-active” retention visits to those companies in your community that create base-jobs.
- 3. Business Attraction and Available Sites Inventory/Promotion:** Assist your community team to be prepared to promote sites available as well as respond to info and meeting requests with potential companies and developers.
- 4. Business Counseling & Support Resources for Entrepreneurs:** Assistance in developing basic tools for small business (pre-start up to existing) including self-help resources, web-based tools, classes and business counseling.
- 5. Business Connect Websites (NE Region and State-wide):** Provide opportunities for your local companies to have an active presence (at no charge) to the two web-based tools in place to encourage doing business locally.
- 6. Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Assistance:** Provide “back office” assistance to your local RLF. This would include up-dating loan application forms, vetting applications prior to local board review/approval, keeping track of loans/programs in progress and identifying funds to add to your RLF.

7. **Flex Service for technical expertise:** Provide “on-demand” services to those communities without staff expertise, but in need of assistance on a project by project basis.

The above recommendations highlight key needs in the region. Application for the mini-grants may address other needs/projects not listed above, as long as the application successfully demonstrates how community and/or economic development will be enhanced.

Mini Grants of up to **\$5,000** (provided as cash) will be made available on a competitive basis to economic development organizations, local governments, and nonprofit organizations that enhance community and economic development in Prosperity Region # 3.

## **Purpose**

The Regional Prosperity Initiative Economic and Community Development Mini Grants Program is intended to strengthen regional capacity for economic and community development services throughout the 11-county region. Applications may address the recommendations as listed above or may involve a specific project need to enhance local economic or community development services.

## **Project Application and Selection**

### *Eligible Applicants*

All economic development organizations, local governments, and non-profit organizations that provide economic and/or community development assistance in the 11-county Region 3 are eligible to apply.

### *Application*

NEMCOG is accepting applications in the form of clear and concise proposals of no more than 4 pages. Proposals must contain all of the following:

- **Purpose Statement.** Summarize the purpose of the project.
- **Background and Need.** What has led you to apply for this grant? What is the need for this activity?
- **Project Goals and Activities.** In a brief statement, please identify the project goals. What do you hope to achieve? What activities will be completed to meet the community’s needs? Who will complete the work?
- **Participant Information.** Describe your organizational structure, including staff capacity and leadership. Who are the partners and how will they participate in the project?
- **Project Area.** Please provide a brief description and/or map.
- **Project Commitment.** The proposal must include a commitment to provide a 25% cash match within one month of project start-up.
- **Project Timeline:** Please provide a timeline for your project.
- **Innovation.** Does your program/project incorporate a new approach, technique or methodology?
- **Community impact.** What will be different in the community if your project is successful? How will the outcomes of the project have a long-term community benefit?

- **Performance Measures and Accountability.** How are the impacts of this activity measurable? What is the plan to show accountability in reaching the defined project goals?
- **Project Budget.** Provide the total grant request. Specify the local match of 25% (where is it coming from). Is it committed? If not, by what date will it be received?

*Selection*

An application review committee of the MEDC's Northeast MI Collaborative Development Council (CDC) will evaluate all applications received. The success of an application will be determined by its completeness and clarity of purpose, the likelihood of project success, and the level of commitment offered by participants.

Successful Applicants will be notified by **June 24, 2016.**

**To Apply:**

Grant applications must be received no later than **4 p.m. on May 27, 2016.** Please submit applications as Adobe Acrobat .pdf documents (preferred method), to [drekowski@nemcog.org](mailto:drekowski@nemcog.org) or mail to:

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PO Box 457  
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