

Request for Proposals for a draft curriculum to prepare community leaders to guide and support a comprehensive approach to local economic recovery after major economic disturbances

In support of the Midwest Innovation Initiative

June 10, 2010

The Institute for Work and the Economy is requesting proposals from qualified persons for a draft curriculum to prepare community leaders to guide and support a comprehensive approach to local economy recovery after major economic disturbances. Proposals are due by e-mail to Peter A. Creticos by 5 p.m. CDT on Thursday, June 17, 2010.

Background

The Midwest Innovation Initiative (MI2) is a project organized by the Great Lakes Employment and Training Association, an association of local workforce development executives, and the state workforce development administrators from the Midwestern states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio and Wisconsin. It is working in collaboration with the Midwestern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments, an association of state legislators from the Midwestern states plus North Dakota and South Dakota. It is funded by a grant from the Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor to the State of Minnesota in behalf of the region. The Institute for Work and the Economy provides project management.

The mission of MI2 is to:

- Identify and address the barriers preventing Midwestern states and communities from making full use of the competitive advantages of the region functioning as a single, integrated economy
- Take stock of:
 - The talent and skills of Midwesterners
 - The institutions and systems that foster the development of talent
 - The investments that we are making in our human resources
- Look forward to the region's collective future workforce needs and less on today's demand
- Assist in the development and implementation of talent-based models that foster invention, innovation, entrepreneurship and business growth in industries in which the Midwest can obtain a competitive advantage
- Support the development of agile education and job training structures
- Support efforts to integrate investments across the region to reach the critical mass needed for a virtuous cycle of self-sustaining growth
- Join with other regional initiatives to integrate workforce development with economic development efforts

The goals and objectives of the initiative are:

- Develop a research framework that deepens our understanding of:
 - The economic connections that bind together Midwest communities and states
 - The talent base of the region and the institutions and systems that support its development
 - The interplay of the state and local workforce systems with large-scale initiatives and trends in the region and global changes
 - Talent-based models that lead as well as support innovation, invention, entrepreneurship and business development
- Support the integration of workforce development and economic development in furtherance of Midwest growth by:
 - Forging and strengthening social networks connecting the region's WIRED and RIG projects
 - Furthering the development of state and local workforce leadership to help them understand and respond to shifting global, national and regional economic changes
 - Co-hosting gatherings of policy makers and opinion leaders with other Midwestern groups
 - Leveraging other resources in furtherance of this Initiative
- Identify and, where necessary, develop and publish possible policies and programs that are consistent with the goal of greater collaboration and coordination. The Initiative will not lobby for any specific policy or program.

The Initiative will produce several products and services. Over the course of the project, the Institute for Work and the Economy will commission several policy and program development-related research papers and reports on regional economic issues, the transition from automobile manufacturing to other manufacturing products and services, on talent driven development, and on regional workforce challenges, opportunities and solutions. It has and will continue to convene a series of working sessions focused on the development of new tools that will aid local and state workforce agencies in their work to grow local, state and regional economies. Finally, it will support the exchange of ideas and solutions amongst practitioners and policy makers in the region through conferences, workshops and through the initiative's website: midwestinnovate.org.

Project for which proposals are requested

Background:

Business closures and downsizing often pose the same challenges to communities as a natural disaster, yet without the outward visible signs of devastation that often lead to the a focused and coordinated response. In reality, economic and natural disasters require a cadre of on-the-ground coordinators whose responsibilities are to:

- Create seamless worker transition supports that assist jobless workers and their families deal with the financial and psychological effects of

- unemployment, conduct successful job searches, and acquire the skills needed to pursue new work opportunities
- Stabilize at-risk businesses so as to avert further job losses and assist them in developing and adopting strategies that will enable them to grow and employ more workers
 - Strengthen the ability of government, private and non-profit institutions to support community members, stimulate economic growth and increase the capacity of local businesses to expand their workforce.

Significant work has been done already in all phases of a local economic response, including:

- Research on successful turnaround strategies
- Methodologies leading to greater collective action
- Effective uses of federal, state, local and philanthropic resources in achieving local economic turnaround
- Effective public-private partnerships
- Technical assistance to small and medium size businesses, especially in manufacturing
- Analytics of local economic and labor market conditions and opportunities
- Training for various groupings of local and state leadership on how to respond to local economic challenges.

Thus far, these and other resources are aggregated in various baskets from which local and state leadership are left on their own to pull together into a coherent package while sorting out a comprehensive community strategy. A typical response is to hire a consultant who must take time to become acquainted with the specific circumstances, culture and players in the effected community. This approach can be costly, be poorly fitted to the needs of the community, and time consuming as the consultant gets ramped up. The Institute for Work and the Economy believes that local recovery can be strengthened and speeded significantly if groups of local specialists are trained in both the research and practice of economic emergency response, including the more targeted use of consultants and federal, state, and local services.

Request for proposals

The MI2 project is requesting proposals for the creation of a draft curriculum for a 5-day training program to prepare community leaders to guide and support a comprehensive approach to local economic recovery.

The training should combine didactic instruction and scenario-based learning exercises that provide community leaders with the knowledge and tools to:

- Understand the underlying causes of the economic dislocation affecting manufacturing-dependent communities (Note: given the significant role of manufacturing in the Midwest, our initial focus is on communities engaged in the production and delivery of tangible goods. We believe that future

iterations should also address the challenges faced by communities engaged in the production and delivery of services.)

- Promote awareness and partnerships among diverse community stakeholders
- Identify relevant promising practices that may enable individual workers, businesses and community institutions deal with both the immediate symptoms as well as root causes of the economic dislocation affecting the community
- Pursue an adaptive and inductive approach to planning and implementing change projects.

Budget. The budget for this project is \$26,000 to prepare the proposed draft curriculum. In addition, the Institute is reserving additional funds to cover printing costs as needed. Pursuant to the terms of the grant funding the Midwest Innovation Initiative, indirect expenses are not allowed. All travel, meeting and other expenses are subject to the governing laws, rules and regulations of the United States and the State of Minnesota (the grant fiscal agent).

Timeframe. The draft curriculum in electronic portable document format (PDF) form is due to the Institute for Work and the Economy by no later than 5 p.m. CDT on July 15, 2010.

Desired Skills. Respondents to this proposal:

- Must have suitable experience in the design and implementation of executive, professional and leadership level training in workforce development and economic development
- Must have suitable experience in facilitating cooperation between labor and management towards the development and implementation of workplace change initiatives, including work redesign efforts aimed at averting plant closures
- Must have suitable experience in facilitation cooperation among diverse groups of stakeholders
- Must have the staff and resources capacity to pilot and implement the curriculum when provided with suitable funding for implementation
- Must have previously aggregated significant elements of the resulting draft curriculum. This award contemplates that the successful respondent will focus primarily on the development and implementation of instructional methodologies, the logic and presentation of the curriculum, and will use associated resources drawn from the extensive body of work within the public domain and from affordable private sources
- Must have a strong track record for on-time, on-budget performance and high customer satisfaction
- Must have a working knowledge of workforce development or economic development systems.

Questions. Questions concerning this request for proposal should be directed to:

Peter A. Creticos, Ph.D., President
Institute for Work and the Economy
70 E. Lake Street, Suite 1700
Chicago, IL 60601
creticos [at] workandeconomy.org
312-332-8508

Response content. Responses to this proposal shall include the following elements:

1. Conceptualization of the project and a strategy for addressing each of the six sets of issues described above
2. Timetable and project plan, including milestones
3. Description of existing intellectual property rights
4. Qualifications and C.V. of core members of the respondent team
5. Acknowledgement that the respondent has reviewed and is prepared to accept the standard contract for services posted on the website for the Institute for Work and the Economy.

Term of the project. All work must be completed on or before 5 p.m. CDT, July 15, 2010.

Response Delivery. All responses must be in writing in Adobe Portable Document Format (pdf) and delivered by e-mail to:

Peter A. Creticos at [creticos \[at\] workandeconomy.org](mailto:creticos@workandeconomy.org), with a copy to:
[pacreticos \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:pacreticos@gmail.com) for back-up.

All proposals must be received by not later than 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time, Thursday, June 17, 2010. The burden for determining timely receipt is upon the responder. All proposals received by the due date and time will be evaluated. Late responses will be considered only if 1) no other response that is received on time is determined to fulfill the requirements of this project within the time period and budget specified by this request, and 2) no combination of respondents filing on time can fulfill the requirements of this project within the time period and budget specified by this request.

Response Evaluation. Responses will be evaluated on “best value”: the qualifications of the members of the team, the plan and timetable for accomplishing the tasks outlined in this request, and costs considerations (the budget as outlined is the “not to exceed” amount; a proposal may be for a lesser amount). No foreign outsourcing is permitted on this project.

Decision. The Institute for Work and the Economy expects to make an award to a single winning respondent, however, it reserves the option to request two or more respondents to re-submit a joint proposal when the Institute determines that such a joint proposal takes advantage of complimentary strengths in each of the proposals

and provides the highest likelihood of success. A final decision will be made within one week of the deadline for receiving proposals.

Conflicts of Interest. Responder must provide a list of all entities with which it has relationships that create, or appear to create, a conflict of interest with the work that is contemplated in this request for proposal. The list should indicate the name of the entity, the relationship and a discussion of the conflict or appearance of a conflict.

Disposition of Responses. All materials submitted in response to this Request will become public record after the evaluation process is complete.

Contractual Requirements. A copy of the standard contract for services is available on the website of the Institute for Work and the Economy (www.workandeconomy.org).