

Request for Proposals: 2019 Regional Prosperity Challenge Grants

Timeline

Request for proposals (RFP) release date	April 2, 2019
Question submission deadline	April 16, 2019
Grant application deadline	May 7, 2019
Expected decision date	June 7, 2019

Request for Proposals: Regional Prosperity Challenge Grants

Grant Application Deadline: May 7, 2019

The Greater Ann Arbor Region's (GAAR's) Prosperity Initiative invites proposals from organizations to support the implementation of its [Five-year Prosperity Strategy](#).

Established in 2014, the GAAR Prosperity Initiative is a collaboration of partners working to expand economic prosperity and improve the quality of life for residents in Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee, Livingston, Monroe, and Washtenaw Counties. This six-county region was recently awarded grant funds from the State of Michigan's 2019 Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI). The majority of these funds will be used to advance the area's strategic efforts through challenge grants.

CHALLENGE GRANT PRIORITY AREAS

The region is interested in applications that present innovative approaches and promise measurable progress toward the [Five-year Prosperity Strategy](#) released in March 2015.

The region has 11 goals across two major focus areas: growing and attracting talent to meet industry needs and advancing a high-quality, diverse regional transportation system.

The following are goals for growing and attracting talent to meet industry needs:

- All levels of education—including K–12, career and technical education (CTE), and college and adult education—use a common career pathway model to align and integrate their curricula and career-related experiences to enable all learners to efficiently achieve their educational and career goals.
- All stakeholders—including students, parents, teachers, counselors, service providers, and employers—are aware of and exposed to high-demand occupations. Additionally, job seekers are provided guidance in obtaining the foundational and technical skills and credentials needed to find gainful employment.
- Major industries in the region plan for and ensure smooth and effective transitions of management and leadership over time.
- Employers, educators, and economic developers deepen their relationships with one another and collaborate more in order to promote the region as a high-quality place to live and work.
- All vulnerable and/or underserved populations—including those who are low-income, low-skilled, long-term unemployed, older, physically or emotionally disabled, or veterans—are aware of and utilize available services, pursue training and education in high-demand occupations, and work with employers who provide necessary support and pay living wages.
- Adult education allows more learners to gain the crucial basic skills they need to succeed in postsecondary education and obtain good jobs, greatly increasing the likelihood of sustained employment and higher income.

The following are goals for advancing a high-quality and diverse regional transportation system:

- Adequate funding is available to ensure that the region offers a high-quality and diverse transportation system.
- The national and statewide corridors of highest significance in the region offer safe travel for all modes of transportation.
- The national and statewide corridors of highest significance in the region allow for reliable, efficient, and comfortable travel for personal and commercial travelers within and through the region.
- A highly accessible, excellent-quality network of nonautomobile options is available to transport people and goods within and through the region.
- Transportation and land-use planning will be collaborative and highly integrated within the region.

Each goal is accompanied by key objectives and priority strategies. The region seeks proposals, large and small, that advance those strategies. Projects may include:

- Deploying accessible career pathway tools, such as MI Bright Future, to integrate career planning with the existing educational development processes in K–12 schools
- Advancing collaboration among the six counties to increase learning opportunities for students interested in skilled-trade careers
- Addressing broadband access and adoption barriers in the region
- Advancing efforts to prepare communities for connected and automated vehicles, as outlined in the [Planning for Connected and Automated Vehicles report](#)

A key aspect of the RPI is its engagement of multiple sectors in problem solving, so preference will be given to projects that demonstrate collaboration in two or more of the following sectors:

- Adult education
- K–12 education
- Workforce development
- Economic development
- Transportation
- Higher education organizations

The region will also give preference to projects that directly involve the business community in their planning and implementation. (Examples of previously funded projects may be found in Appendix A.)

AVAILABLE FUNDING AND MATCH REQUIREMENTS

The total amount available for all challenge grants is \$90,000. Awards are expected to range from a minimum of \$1,000 to a maximum of \$30,000. **All applicants are required to provide a one-to-one match.** Matching funds may include non–State of Michigan public or private funds, funds that are not used as match for any other program, unrecovered indirect costs, cash, or in-kind contributions.

ISSUING OFFICE AND FUNDING SOURCE

This RFP is issued by the Region 2 Planning Commission. Public Sector Consultants (PSC) serves as the point of contact for this RFP.

SUBMISSION FORMAT

Grant applications are limited to ten pages—not including cover page and/or attachments. Applicants must present the following information outlined in the format below. All proposals must be submitted through the online portal at <http://greaterannarborregion.org/prosperity/grants/>.

PROBLEM APPROACH AND WORKPLAN

Applicants must provide a summary of the proposed project and scope of work in narrative form. In this section:

- Determine what goals, objectives, and strategies from the Five-year Prosperity Strategy apply to the project
- Briefly state how the project will advance these strategies
- Identify specific project deliverables, the regional impacts of these deliverables, and how success will be measured

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL SUMMARY

Applicants must be able to staff a project team that clearly possesses talent and experience in conducting the type of work proposed. In this section:

- Describe the applicant organization's proposed leadership, staffing, and experience
- Identify all potential key personnel involved—by name, title, and role or responsibility—and their qualifications
- Indicate and justify the estimated number of staff who will work on the project,
- Describe how funding will be managed to accomplish set goals

If other organizations will play a role in the proposed project:

- Provide sufficient background information to give the management team a reasonable understanding of their qualifications
- Include an organizational chart for the project

TIMELINE AND BUDGET

Applicants must provide a detailed timeline and budget for the proposed project. The timeline must include dates for completing specific project milestones. Total project time must not exceed one year from start to finish.

The proposed budget should include a corresponding budget narrative in accordance with the format and timeline for the proposed project as well as a budget explanation that provides sufficient details on match contributions. Required budget line items are listed below.

- **Personnel:** Include the name and salary for each staff position to be paid for by this grant; job title; anticipated number of hours to be worked; hourly rate; basic fringe benefits, if any; totals for each position; and a total for all personnel costs. For reimbursement, timesheets must be submitted, and the hours worked must be grant related.
- **Supplies, materials, and equipment:** If applicable, specify unit(s) and unit(s) costs.
- **Contractual services:** If applicable, specify these services and costs.
- **In-state travel:** If applicable, specify travel costs; out-of-state travel is prohibited.
- **Other expenditures:** If applicable, specify other item(s) with costs.
- **Indirect costs:** If applicable, specify any indirect costs.
- **Match:** Include specific match contributions by type, source, and total cost. Sources of funding may include non-State of Michigan public or private funds, funds that are not used as match for any other program, unrecovered indirect costs, cash, or in-kind contributions.
- **Total:** Specify project amounts for each item.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to receive a challenge grant, an applicant must be a Michigan-based nonprofit, public, or private organization. A public organization includes a governmental agency or a public educational institution. To be eligible for consideration, proposals must include all sections specified above and must stay within page-limit requirements.

Preference in awarding grants will be given to organizations that:

- Have direct experience in the proposed work
- Meet multiple Five-year Prosperity Strategy goals and/or example project areas
- Provide more than a one-to-one match
- Have an existing administrative structure to handle the proposed project(s)
- Provide evidence of collaborative leadership and participation that includes stakeholders from two or more RPI program sectors (as described below)
- Demonstrate impact in more than one county in the region
- Implement a high ratio of direct deliverables compared to administrative costs

REVIEW PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

GAAR's management team will review each proposal to determine the degree to which the proposed project fits with the grant objectives, whether it meets eligibility requirements, and the potential benefits if the project is funded. All proposals will receive an initial screening to ensure basic eligibility criteria are met—if the criteria are not met, the proposal will be rejected. Proposals meeting the eligibility requirements will be evaluated according to the selection criteria below.

PROBLEM APPROACH AND WORKPLAN

- Does the project directly address a strategy and goal from the Five-year Prosperity Strategy?
- Does the project impact more than one county in the region?
- Does the project involve two or more sectors (adult education, workforce development, economic development, transportation, and/or higher education)?
- Does the project engage the business community in planning and/or implementation?
- Does the proposal identify specific project deliverables and how success will be measured?
- Is the project feasible and likely to succeed?

MANAGEMENT AND PERSONNEL SUMMARY

- Does project leadership have the experience and skills to lead and complete the proposed work?
- Does the applicant clearly identify a process for collaboration?

TIMELINE AND BUDGET

- Is the proposed timeline reasonable for the work to be completed?
- Are the budget line items reasonable and detailed?
- Are administrative and overhead costs minimized?

Applicants may be required to present their proposal to the region's management team. The presentation will provide an opportunity for the applicant to clarify their proposed project to ensure thorough and mutual understanding.

The management team will forward recommended awards for approval by the Region 2 Planning Commission. The same applicant may be recommended for more than one award. (Please note that a proposal recommendation does not guarantee funding.)

APPLICANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Selected applicant(s) will assume responsibility for all services offered in their proposal, whether or not they possess them within their organization. Furthermore, the region will consider the selected applicant(s) as the sole point of contact regarding grant matters, including payment of any and all charges resulting from the grant and grant reporting.

DISCLOSURE OF PROPOSAL CONTENTS

The information in all proposals and any grant resulting from the RFP are subject to disclosure under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act, 1976 PA 442, as amended, MCL 15.231, et seq.

INCURRING COSTS

Neither the GAAR Prosperity Initiative nor the Region 2 Planning Commission is liable for any cost incurred by an applicant prior to issuance of a grant agreement.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS

The selected applicant(s) shall agree to grant to the State a nonexclusive, irrevocable license to reproduce, translate, publish, use, and dispose of all copyrightable material developed as a result of the project.

GRANT AWARD AND PAYMENT

Grant award negotiations will be undertaken with the applicant(s) who exhibit the qualifications to, establish responsibility for, and demonstrate capability of performing the project within the proposed timeline. Payment for any grant entered as a result of this RFP will be made according to the following criteria:

- Grantees will submit a written report that details progress relative to the proposed scope of work during the preceding quarter and an invoice that details incurred expenses consistent with the approved project budget. The report and invoice shall be submitted in accordance with a schedule included in the grant agreement.
- At the close of the grant period, grantees will submit a final report and invoice.
- During the grant period and/or at its conclusion, grantees may be asked to present to the management team to communicate status and findings.
- The Region 2 Planning Commission will take all steps necessary to ensure that payment is mailed within 45 days after receipt of the invoice.

QUESTIONS

Questions concerning this RFP may be emailed to James Durian, Public Sector Consultants, at jdurian@publicsectorconsultants.com, no later than April 16, 2019. Answers will be posted at <http://greaterannarborregion.org/prosperity/grants/>.

In the interest of transparency and fairness to all applicants, only written questions will be accepted.

APPENDIX A. SAMPLE OF PAST CHALLENGE GRANT PROPOSALS

Year	Grantee Name	Project Description	Amount Awarded
2015	Jackson College	Research on best practices for advanced manufacturing credentialing	\$5,000
2015	Ann Arbor SPARK—Region 9 Economic Development Partners	GAAR familiarization tour	\$7,500
2015	Workforce Intelligence Network	Leveraging LinkedIn Recruiter for labor market data	\$4,500
2016	Jonesville Community Schools	Student success program	\$13,003
2016	Livingston Career and College Access Network	MI Bright Future Livingston County expansion	\$27,800
2016	Lenawee Now	Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant preparation and analysis	\$28,000
2017	Michigan Broadband Cooperative	Regional broadband access framework	\$15,000
2017	Monroe County Intermediate School District	Efforts to grow and attract talent to meet industry needs	\$6,736
2017	Jonesville and Hillsdale Community Schools	Career preparation program—increasing local talent opportunities	\$23,067
2018	Save Our Youth/Help Them Prosper	Pilot program to provide soft-skills training for non-violent first-time youth offenders	\$15,000
2018	Hillsdale County 2-B District Court	Program to provide job opportunities for 30 individuals on probation by offering aptitude testing, soft-skills training, and supportive services	\$14,000