

THE NEW ECONOMY INITIATIVE FOR SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN (NEI)

Executive Director

Our vision: “Southeast Michigan will be a prosperous region with high per capita income and low unemployment, where all residents who are willing to learn and work will thrive in the new knowledge economy. A guiding principle of the initiative is to increase prosperity for all residents and communities in the region.”

The New Economy Initiative for Southeast Michigan (NEI) is designed to foster economic growth and speed the transition of Southeast Michigan to a new, knowledge-based economy. NEI will support efforts to generate, attract and retain skilled, educated workers who will start and staff the kind of innovative enterprises that are leading economic growth in the United States today.

NEI is an eight-year, \$100 million initiative funded by a collaborative of foundations, including the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan (CFSEM), The Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation, The Ford Foundation, the Hudson-Webber Foundation, The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, The McGregor Fund, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and The Skillman Foundation.

Southeast Michigan is in the midst of a difficult transition from the age of manufacturing to the age of information. Though Michigan and Detroit led the manufacturing era for the first 75 years of the 20th century, Southeast Michigan has been slower than some other regions to meet the challenges and seize the opportunities of the new, globally competitive, knowledge economy. Although the automobile industry will continue to be an important element of the economy, the region can no longer rely upon automobiles to drive economic growth.

In recent years, regions have thrived when they have been able to generate growth in the high-wage/high-education component of the service economy. In this knowledge economy, innovation and entrepreneurialism drive success, and a region’s growth is directly linked to its ability to generate, attract and retain skilled, highly educated workers. Additionally, the NEI recognizes that the development of a talented labor force is not confined to college graduates, but can be found and needs to be cultivated across the economic spectrum.

A group of Economic Advisers, composed of senior national economists and practitioners who specialize in regional economic growth, labor-force development, entrepreneurship and the demands of the global knowledge economy, will assist the initiative.



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NEI's four broad objectives are to:

- **Teach and Train** – Prepare a skilled labor force in southeast Michigan so all residents can lead and participate in the transition to the new knowledge-based economy;
- **Strengthen Networks** – Strengthen the systems and networks that support innovative enterprise launch and expansion;
- **Support Innovators** – Foster the emergence of a new generation of innovators and entrepreneurs who will serve as examples of success in the new economy;
- **Change the Culture** – Encourage and support a regional perspective that embraces positive change and a belief that the region's future can be enhanced by lifelong learning, innovation and entrepreneurialism.

A Governing Council for the initiative is composed of representatives of the project's leading funders and local civic leaders. This Governing Council will oversee the program's activities and policies, and recommend the initiative's grants and investments. The CFSEM board of trustees has final responsibility for the initiative. NEI is a project of CFSEM, and NEI staff members are employees of the Community Foundation.

FUNDING SCOPE

Working within and across Southeast Michigan's communities and initiatives, NEI will seek projects that will:

- Train promising young entrepreneurs;
- Train disadvantaged groups with competitive skills;
- Retrain laid-off workers (blue and white collar);
- Serve all of the region's diverse communities and people;
- Improve technology transfer from university and private labs;
- Coordinate and expand local capital networks;
- Establish business support centers in disadvantaged communities;
- Launch a promising nonprofit enterprise, such as a new university research center;
- Expand a high-tech enterprise in the inner city that will train residents with new high-tech skills;
- Provide start-up capital to a for-profit enterprise to launch a new high-tech product;
- Promote community engagement and education in an effort to change the culture of the region;
- Craft a public relations and media campaign focused on the transition to a new, knowledge-based economy.



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BASIC FUNCTION

The Executive Director shall lead NEI and shall have the responsibility for helping set the mission/vision, leading the Governing Council through continuous strategic thinking, managing implementation, projecting the distinct goals of the initiative and measuring outcomes. The Executive Director shall supervise other staff as may be needed to support NEI activities.

The Executive Director, a dynamic and innovative individual, will be experienced in entrepreneurial and creative environments. He or she should have some knowledge and/or comfort with economic development activities and will be expected to present and support programs that look beyond traditional economic and community development strategies. The Executive Director will serve as an external presence and spokesperson, representing NEI's mission and purpose, and raising the visibility of NEI as a central force for economic revitalization in Southeast Michigan.

The Governing Council will provide oversight and direction in relation to the substantive work of the initiative. The Executive Director, as an employee of CFSEM, reports to the President of CFSEM, who is also a member of the Governing Council. The Governing Council and the President of CFSEM will jointly conduct the ongoing review of the Executive Director's program activities and shall participate in performance reviews.

All functions of CFSEM including budgeting, finance, grants processing, human resources, communications, etc. are available to support and facilitate the implementation of NEI.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

The Executive Director's immediate priorities are to:

- Thoroughly understand NEI – its history, mission, governance structure, finances and funding, goals, and objectives;
- Secure the Governing Council's trust and confidence; build a system of decision making that sustains NEI and ensures its success and momentum; encourage and support Governing Council members' active involvement in NEI; develop a working relationship with Community Foundation staff;
- Master the history and culture of Southeast Michigan; get to know the key players in the corporate, government, academic, philanthropic and grassroots communities; become familiar with what is already underway in the economic revitalization of the region;



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- Review, assess and prepare to implement NEI's goals and objectives; work with the Governing Council to refine their thinking on grantmaking program areas and strategies by convening experts (practitioners, consultants and funders) to consider potential programmatic and funding initiatives; create necessary venues and vehicles to achieve NEI's goals;
- Develop grantmaking guidelines and initiate programs as needed;
- Determine staffing needs and assemble appropriate staff.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will be accountable for the following ongoing areas of responsibility:

LEADERSHIP/VISION

- Provide leadership to the Governing Council, Economic Advisors, staff, grantees and other NEI partners in carrying out its mission; pursue the objectives that have been established by the Governing Council and, over time, develop responses to opportunities and challenges that arise;
- Work comfortably with diverse philanthropic approaches, including strategic and proactive grantmaking, collaborative efforts, capacity-building, program-related investments and others; explore new intellectual frameworks and innovative ways of addressing issues, cutting across traditional boundaries of thought and action;
- Reach out to and engage all the diverse people and communities in the region;
- Provide public leadership on critical issues related to NEI's mission; represent NEI to its outside constituencies, interpreting the values and goals of the initiative;
- Cultivate, network and solicit engagement with the initiative from public and private resources.

PROGRAM

- Develop a thorough command of NEI's program and grantmaking strategies, thereby enabling an ongoing leadership role in program direction and implementation; establish and maintain relationships with individuals and organizations that will provide a conduit of knowledge and information to enhance NEI's effectiveness;
- Assume responsibility for ongoing evaluation of program quality and effectiveness;



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- Take advantage of opportunities to leverage the core \$100 million to raise additional resources for NEI;
- Monitor key trends and issues, particularly those impacting the program interests of NEI; communicate implications to the Governing Council and staff, together with recommended action;
- Work collaboratively with other institutions relevant to NEI's purposes.

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

- Assure sound management of NEI operations, working closely with appropriate Community Foundation staff to ensure successful implementation;
- Hire and supervise appropriate staff;
- Continually assess the effectiveness of programmatic activities; maximize use of Governing Council and staff time together.

GOVERNANCE AND GOVERNING COUNCIL RELATIONS

- Take a leadership role in the implementation of Governing Council philosophy and policies; develop, review and monitor standards of performance of NEI's work; implement benchmarks for assessing effectiveness of all NEI activities;
- Make recommendations to the Governing Council regarding the direction of NEI's programs, operating policies and grants; keep the Governing Council advised of the activities and financial position of NEI; provide the Governing Council sufficient and high-quality information for making sound policy decisions;
- Organize regular meetings with the Governing Council and the Economic Advisers, supporting an open and participatory process, and encouraging the active involvement and leadership of Governing Council and Advisers.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Serve as NEI's representative and advocate to the broad-based Detroit community, including the media, businesses, educational institutions, labor unions, grassroots and community-based organizations and professional associations; convene and organize meetings as appropriate;



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- Manage NEI's external communications efforts in collaboration with NEI funders and the Community Foundation, assuring an appropriate level of public visibility for program aims by effective speaking and writing using both traditional media and new technologies.

IDEAL EXPERIENCE

The Executive Director will be a creative and entrepreneurial leader with some knowledge and/or experience in the economic development field. Additionally, this person will have the following experience and qualifications:

- Extensive senior-level experience in leading a participatory, complex organization or program that brings together top leaders in a collaborative partnership to affect change; proven senior-level managerial, strategic planning, problem solving, financial and board experience;
- A significant understanding of public policy, developments and challenges to the urban/metropolitan sector, coupled with a practical, community-based orientation;
- Demonstrated commitment to public and community service along with an understanding and enthusiasm for NEI's mission and funding activities; strong commitment to the communities and constituencies that NEI encompasses, and to improving conditions in urban communities and in creating opportunities for their residents;
- A capacity for public leadership and a demonstrated ability to work effectively with and influence a broad range of people, including foundation leaders, bankers, policy makers, the media, community development leaders, politicians, business leaders, government officials, academicians and others; understanding of the political dynamics of the community and governmental entities in the Detroit metropolitan area would be a plus;
- Familiarity with key and emerging challenges/opportunities in the redesigning of urban environments;
- A high comfort level with developing collaborations and partnerships and cultivating alliances;
- Demonstrated experience as a thoughtful risk-taker with a record of converting vision into working programs;
- Outstanding oral and written communications skills, including the means to address issues in nonpartisan and non-polarizing ways; an understanding of and level of comfort with the media;



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- An understanding of the strategies and mechanics of grantmaking.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate should be:

- Committed to the mission and values of NEI; open-minded, with the flexibility necessary to provide direction in a new complex initiative;
- Decisive and resourceful, with the organizational wisdom to gain and effectively use the support of the Governing Council, community leaders, funders and staff at all levels; a self-confident management style necessary to work with and manage strong, competent people; interpersonal skills that embody collaboration and a team-oriented approach; able to balance diverse agendas and points of view, while maintaining on all fronts a sense of common purpose; an ability to subordinate ego, without impacting or impinging on the ability to take concerted and definitive action;
- An individual who is straightforward, shares information easily, listens to as well as gives advice, and is comfortable receiving input from many sources, and who respects the opinions and abilities of others; someone who imparts trust, integrity and enthusiasm and motivates others in a similar vein while maintaining balance and perspective;
- An entrepreneurial leader who is adept at analyzing and formulating disparate information into sound, well-organized plans, and at prioritizing, organizing and following through; a “doer” with a willingness to work hands-on in developing and executing various activities ranging from the internal day-to-day operations to the highly creative and visible; a person comfortable with ambiguity;
- An outcome-focused, results-driven person who is able to capture and share those outcomes and results;
- A catalyst who can anticipate and act on events which may create beneficial opportunities for NEI;
- Emotionally mature with a sense of humor; intellectually curious, with a sense of adventure.

Please send nominations or applications, including all contact information to:

Leslie Maddin/Mark Tarnacki

Phillips Oppenheim – 521 Fifth Avenue, 29th Floor, New York, NY 10175

Fax: 212/953-1775 – E-Mail: NEI@PhillipsOppenheim.com

NEI
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