

May 2014

**THE EQUITABLE INNOVATION ECONOMIES PILOT WORKING GROUP:
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

Summary

This RFEI seeks applications for the Equitable Innovation Economies (EIE) Pilot Working Group, the first phase of a multi-year initiative being launched by the Urban Manufacturing Alliance (UMA) to help cities create jobs and build a more equitable local economy by capitalizing on their creative assets. The initiative is being led by the Pratt Center for Community Development, which is part of the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. The RFEI is open to all UMA member cities¹ and responses must be submitted by June 13, 2014. Pratt Center will review all responses and select 3-4 cities to participate in this initiative.

Overview of the EIE Initiative

Cities across the United States are exploring ways to tap into their creative resources - from artists to universities to high-tech companies – to grow businesses and create jobs within their innovation economies as well as to stimulate broader economic growth. While these strategies can catalyze growth, without additional direction and support they will neither realize the full job creation potential of urban innovation economies, nor induce broad public benefits that empower people of color, immigrant communities and other populations facing barriers to employment. Inclusive growth requires a more deliberate, holistic approach integrating real estate, business, and workforce strategies, while strengthening the local production sector and building relationships between designers, engineers, entrepreneurs and local manufacturers.

Over the next 3 years, the UMA seeks to build an initiative that will enable member cities to collaboratively develop and implement programs that expand these innovation economy strategies to also advance more equitable economic development, particularly in their manufacturing sectors. In the first year, 3-4 UMA cities will be selected to participate in a pilot working group that will collaborate in a focused exercise to assess a segment of their innovation economy with an equity lens, and design strategies to increase access and economic opportunity within this ecosystem.

**EIE Pilot Working Group
*Overview and Structure***

To begin this initiative, the UMA and Pratt Center will lead a 12-month working group of 3-4 cities that will pilot this collaborative effort, laying the groundwork for a broader initiative. At the end of the 12 months, each participating city will have:

1. A vision statement outlining their goals and objectives for their equitable innovation economy;

¹ To join UMA, please visit: <http://urbanmfg.org/get-involved>. UMA membership is reserved for organizations directly engaged in the work of sustaining, growing, and promoting their City's urban manufacturing sector. There is no cost to join UMA.

2. An assessment of the baseline conditions in their city at the beginning of this initiative;
3. A set of policy and programmatic strategies to achieve a more equitable innovation economy. This will include a set of next steps toward implementation and identification of potential funding sources;
4. A methodology for evaluating their efforts.

Participants will work with Pratt to evaluate and design strategies that enable an identified creative or innovation resource (e.g. high-tech business incubator or design school) to provide greater access and economic opportunities to underserved populations, such as minority, immigrant, or low-income groups. This process will look at both increased access to these creative resources for underserved groups, as well as the potential of this resource to create good, quality production jobs and other economic benefits for these groups. For example, a city may choose to evaluate the potential for a design school to diversify its student body and build relationships with local manufacturers to prototype products, or how businesses in city-owned tech incubators might contract with local manufacturers for production and introduce them to new design or business skills.

Each participating city will work with Pratt Center and an expert consultant to define equity indicators to guide their evaluation process, such as job quality, demographics, and potential career pathways². As a group, participating cities will jointly identify and refine the strategies that will best leverage their innovation economies to increase access and achieve more equitable economic growth in their manufacturing sectors, using these indicators as a baseline for measurement of success. Strategies may include workforce development programming, industrial non-profit development, local procurement, new programs to provide support for M/WBEs, land use designations to support mixed industrial districts, and other economic development tools.

Pratt Center will facilitate the working group, providing project management, research and policy development, and logistical support, while drawing on UMA members and outside experts to provide support as needed. The participating cities will also collaborate with Pratt to identify and possibly apply for additional funding (which might be philanthropic, and local or national government) to underwrite implementation of their particular strategies as well as the group work. Outcomes and findings from the pilot group phase will be shared with the broader group of UMA cities and will inform UMA's policy objectives related to this initiative.

Currently, the UMA has seed funding to launch this pilot group, and is seeking additional funding to expand the initiative to a larger group of cities and support implementation of strategies. At this time, there is no direct funding for participation in the working group; however, there are a number of anticipated benefits, including:

- Technical assistance from Pratt Center and expert consultants (including a consultant specializing in equity issues) to:
 - Identify each city's creative resources and their economic development potential
 - Define a set of clear, equitable economic development goals
 - Complete an analysis of current needs, strengths and opportunities in identified sectors
 - Design actionable strategies and identify next steps and partnerships needed to achieve them
 - Develop a methodology and set of indicators to measure progress along equity goals
- Opportunity to learn from and contribute to an active, engaged dialogue and set of best practices amongst a diverse group of cities
- Participation in subsequent phases of the EIE initiative

² Pratt Center has had initial conversations with PolicyLink, the Center for Social Inclusion, and Nortech regarding their equity work and a potential expert consultant role for this initiative

In exchange, Pratt Center asks each participating city to provide in-kind staff support (approximately 20-30 hours/month), contribute to research and program development, and to work with Pratt to identify fundraising opportunities underwrite the overall initiative and its local implementation.

Activities and Deliverables

12-Month Project Timeline



I. Setting Goals for Equitable Economic Development (2 Months)

Participating cities will begin by articulating their specific equitable economic development goals in relation to one or more current or proposed policy initiatives in the innovation economy within their city. The selected initiatives should present opportunities to link the innovation economy to the city’s manufacturing and industrial sectors. Examples of opportunities participating cities may choose to focus on include: connecting designers with local manufacturers for production, researching the potential of a tech campus or incubator to connect to generate quality jobs, analyzing new uses for an existing industrial building, or launching a workforce development program focused on an emerging manufacturing sector. The cities’ chosen economic development goals will include specific equity objectives to increase access and create more diverse and equitable economic development opportunities for underserved businesses and residents.

II. Assessing Current Assets, Needs, and Opportunities (4 Months)

The EIE cities will use a common framework to assess current assets for – and challenges to – achieving their goals; they will collect the data and research needed to define the issues facing their city and identify a set of specific equity objectives. With Pratt’s support, each city will conduct its own analyses and share their “baseline” or current contexts as well as major opportunities with the working group.

III. Co-designing Strategies and Next Steps for Implementation (6 Months)

The pilot working group, facilitated by Pratt Center and supported by expert consultants, will collaborate to develop and prioritize potential strategies and equity objectives that can advance each city’s goals, and then identify next steps for implementation. The working group will openly share data, opportunities, and common challenges and draw on best practices from within the group as well as from other cities.

At the end of the engagement, the EIE cities will have identified viable strategies for advancing their goals, as well as a set of equity indicators to measure impact and guide implementation moving forward. Pratt Center will facilitate regular meetings and working sessions to lead participants through an analytical and program design process. Cities will be responsible for compiling data and information on their opportunities and challenges based on a common framework, and for sharing and discussing findings with other cities. Pratt Center or experts engaged by Pratt will help the cities to identify and adapt best practices and current research to contextualize and revise their strategies (and possibly help to implement in subsequent years if funding is available).

Funding

The UMA has seed funding for an initial launch of the pilot working group, but is seeking additional funding to provide assistance during the implementation phase of each city's plan, to expand the group to include a broader set of cities in subsequent years, and to disseminate the findings from this initiative.

Requirements for Participation

The pilot working group will be open to all UMA member cities through an RFEI and selection process guided by the Pratt Center and the UMA board. Each city may only submit one response. The 3-4 selected cities will demonstrate that they have made a policy determination to make their local economy more equitable and to strengthen their manufacturing sectors, have the support of their administration to participate in this working group, can contribute staff time as needed (approximately 20-30 hours/month on average), and are willing to participate in joint fundraising efforts.

RFEI Response Guidelines

To be considered for participation in the pilot working group, please provide a 3-page written response to the following:

1. Is your organization part of the city's administration? If not, please describe your organization and its mission, your relationship with the administration, and provide a letter of support from the administration for participation in this working group (1-2 paragraphs)
2. Why would you like to participate in this working group, and how would it advance your city's equitable economic development goals? If possible, please provide an example of a current opportunity to leverage the innovation economy to drive equitable economic growth in your city (1-2 pages)
3. Please describe the other local partners you might include in this working group (1-2 paragraphs)
4. Participating cities will need to contribute the necessary staff time and related costs to participate in this 12-month pilot, including completing research and data analysis, participating and presenting in regular meetings, and coordinating with stakeholders in their cities. What staff and other resources do you intend to dedicate to this project? (1 paragraph. Please feel free to attach staff bios.)
5. Please describe your ability to participate in joint fundraising efforts with the UMA and Pratt Center to support the pilot group and the overall initiative. Are there local foundations or resources that might be good candidates to support this work? (1 paragraph)

Please send responses and any questions to Tanu Kumar, tkumar@prattcenter.net. All submissions are due by **June 13, 2014**.