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WHIN's Regional Cultivation Fund

Program Summary

The Wabash Heartland Innovation Network (WHIN) was established in September 2017 by a generous contribution from Lilly Endowment Inc. with the intent to advance the economic and community prosperity of 10 north-central Indiana counties (Benton, Carroll, Cass, Clinton, Fountain, Montgomery, Pulaski, Tippecanoe, Warren and White) in the watershed of the Wabash River, known as the Wabash Heartland Region.

WHIN is supported by three initiatives: digital agriculture, next-generation manufacturing and the Regional Cultivation Fund.

The purpose of the Regional Cultivation Fund (RCF) is to invest in innovative projects and programs that increase education, vitality and connectivity across the entire region.

RCF Vision

RCF grants are dedicated to advancing the region's quality-of-place and must focus on at least one of the following areas:

- **Education:** Increase job readiness, training and educational alignment that prepare students as well as adults for the workforce of tomorrow.
- **Vitality:** Increase the attractiveness of physical spaces and the health of residents for community benefit and implement measures to improve economic prosperity and sustainability.
- **Connectivity:** Enhance the engagement and connection of residents in the Wabash Heartland via waterways, broadband, and/or transportation.



Project Priorities

Consistent with WHIN's mission, preference will be given to projects that:

- Are multi-entity and multi-county initiatives
- Promote long-term, sustainable efforts that strengthen the whole region
- Incorporate Internet of Thing (IoT) technology and education

Planning or Impact Grant Guidelines

Funding: Funding is available until the Lilly Endowment, Inc. allotment is exhausted. All grant funds must be expended and grant-funded work completed within 12 months for planning grants or 24 months for impact grants (after the agreement is signed).

- Planning grants: up to \$100,000 per award
- Impact grants: greater than \$100,000 per award and up to \$1 million per award

Impact grant match requirement: Each applicant will be required to provide a match of at least 30% of WHIN award amount (20% may be in-kind and 10% must be in cash). Among the project/program partners, a lead applicant (or fiscal agent) who possesses the 501(c)(3) status must be identified, but the match may be provided by any of the grant partners specified in the Letter of Intent (LOI).

Impact grant audit requirement: Organizations applying for an impact grant must provide a copy of a recent audit by a public accounting firm.

Scope of work:

- **Planning:** Grants may be awarded in a variety of forms, such as (but not limited to): Multi-county strategic plans, feasibility studies (examples include: broadband infrastructure, transportation logistics, willingness-to-pay surveys), engineering schematics, build-out cost estimates, focus groups/qualitative inquiry, etc.
- **Impact:** Grants can be awarded in a variety of forms but ultimately must produce a tangible result or outcome (e.g. a physical structure, a deployed app, and educational program with enrolled students, etc.). WHIN encourages applicants to review the resources tab of WHIN.org to explore data and gain ideas for potential projects.

Eligible expenses:

- **Planning:** Grants may be awarded in a variety of forms, such as (but not limited to): Multi-county strategic plans, feasibility studies (examples include: broadband infrastructure, transportation logistics, willingness-to-pay surveys), engineering schematics, build-out cost estimates, focus groups/qualitative inquiry, etc.
- **Impact:** Personnel, supplies, travel, training and capital expenses are all eligible.

Eligible Applicants

Generally speaking, the following organizations will be considered eligible to apply:

- Incorporated cities and towns
- County Commissions and Councils
- Nonprofits including foundations, agencies and hospitals
- Public Educational Institutions including pre-K, K-12 and post-secondary
- Main Street organizations
- Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development organizations with 501(c)(3) status

Evaluation Criteria

Applicants should identify how project impact will be measured, what indicators will be utilized to determine project success and how the project outcomes will benefit the community and/or the Wabash Heartland region. Multi-county planning with broad stakeholder convening and organization participation is expected and encouraged. WHIN will provide technical assistance as requested.