Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership

Principles of Operation

Introduction

The Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership is an economic development organization committed to the related goals of (1) attracting new business and (2) bringing high quality jobs to the northeast Indiana region. To accomplish these goals, the Partnership will work to bring together a broad array of public and private interests to promote the area as a single economic entity to collectively recognize the numerous benefits of continued growth and prosperity. The success of the Partnership will ultimately be measured by its ability to (1) generate higher wages, (2) increase assessed value, and (3) foster the general creation of wealth across the region as a whole. The following summary of principles represents the standards by which the Partnership will conduct its daily business.

Background

As business interests routinely transcend political boundaries, contemporary economic development is about regional competition on a global scale. By thinking and acting regionally, The RP will (1) eliminate duplication of effort, (2) achieve greater economies of scale, (3) leverage resources to a greater degree, and (4) create a more attractive environment for new business investment. The objective of the RP then is to encourage overall regional growth irrespective of where specific projects might ultimately be located. Toward this end, the RP's approach will be to serve the marketing needs of local economic development organizations (LEDOs) and to meet the needs of the prospective investors as the single, regional point-of-contact.

Principles

Confidentiality

The Partnership will honor and preserve confidentiality when requested by either members or prospects. Information shared with members in confidence shall remain in confidence.

Prospects from Outside Northeast Indiana

- The Partnership is committed to the promotion of the region as a highly desirable business location for new and expanding companies. When representing the Partnership and its members, RP staff will speak on behalf of the region collectively and emphasize specific assets when necessary.
- The RP understands and values the intrinsic competitive nature of economic development among member communities. The RP staff will promote the specific strengths and unique qualities of each member as well as the strengths of regional assets overall.
- Because the LEDOs are those responsible for managing and closing leads on a local level, the role of the Partnership is to cultivate productive leads into viable projects and facilitate direct relationships between prospects and member LEDOs as effectively as possible.
- The RP is committed to sharing as much information among members as is necessary or prudent on any project undertaken by the Partnership. The guiding principle is "more information is better than less information." Information on projects will be shared and updated in a timely fashion.

Prospects from Within Northeast Indiana

- Partners of the RP will not solicit new business from neighboring communities within the region.
- If contacted by a business from another community in the area, partners within the RP will:
  - Thank the company for their interest;
  - Determine if the company has contacted the responsible member community's LEDO;

  - Indicate that it is the policy and practice of LEDOs to not participate in intra-area bidding and to keep partner LEDOs and the RP staff informed when this occurs;
  - If not prevented by confidentiality requirements, notify regional IEDC office;
- If a business requests confidential treatment under these circumstances, the member will obtain written documentation to capture the circumstances (similar to attached).
- RP staff, if contacted by an area firm about internal relocation, will follow a similar process.

Interactions with Existing Businesses

When interacting with existing businesses in the region for purposes relating to business development, the RP staff will inform and/or involve the responsible LEDO if appropriate prior to the contact (or following), regarding the basis or nature of the interaction. This will ensure that the LEDOs may coordinate future communications with the business with the benefit of any information from the RP's relationship. To avoid confusion on the part of the company, the RP staff will ensure that the company understands that the LEDO is the primary point of contact for business retention and expansion activities.

Regional Counties

For the purposes of this document, the Regional Partnership is defined by counties who have chosen to pursue their common economic interests through a collaborative effort. Each county which has chosen to participate in the collaboration possesses a unique identity, workforce and economic assets important to defining the collective capabilities of the region. It is the mission of the Partnership to represent the skilled workforce, assets, infrastructure and quality of life attributes of the region as an attractive location to live and conduct business.

On occasion, other counties may seek participation in the Partnership. While it is the final decision of the board of directors to determine member counties, the LEDO Council will be consulted to assess the benefits and liabilities of the proposed addition. This consultation recognizes that each partner county has a vested interest in the long term success of the region and the overall ability of the Partnership to fulfill the mission.

Requests for Proposals

The RP will develop profile sheets to address common issues from a regional perspective. These profiles will be used to provide a more unified and consistent response alleviating individual counties' burdens to address this need locally.

Following distribution of an RFP, the RP will take the following steps:
1. Share follow-up questions with the client or site selector to reinforce the region's interest in the project. Additional information received will be shared with all responding LEDOs;
2. Summarize key regional points, unique to the specific proposal, to be included in the submission cover letter;
3. If possible, collect feedback from clients for lessons learned on both successful and unsuccessful projects and share this information with the LEDOs.

When proposing buildings or sites in response to an RFP (client specifications):
1. LEDOs will prioritize buildings and sites in submission
2. RP will review LEDO submissions against client specifications.
3. RP will notify LEDOs of any buildings or sites that are not submitted to the client;

4. RP will keep records of any sites not submitted as possible alternatives for consideration during site visits or in the event that client specifications should change.

Site Visits

In the event of a site visit to one or more of the Northeast Indiana counties, the Partnership will communicate with the affected LEDO(s) to determine division of responsibilities, if applicable, using the Site/Community Visit Template attached as Exhibit A.

Training and Orientation

These principles have been drafted and adopted by consent and approval of the LEDO Council. The LEDO Council is responsible for periodic training of existing members and orientation of new members, in addition to periodic review of this policy for possible revision.
Members, staff, and consultants of the RP will acknowledge their understanding and agreement of this policy by signing the attached Affirmation of Confidentiality Policy.

Compliance

In the event that a concern develops that this policy has not been appropriately implemented, the following procedure will be used.

- In all cases, the first attempt at conflict resolution will be through direct dialogue between the responsible or affected LEDOs. Ideally, conflict resolution should be handled in a confidential, tactful and informal manner.
- If unable to resolve the concern, the chairman of the board will convene a meeting of an ad hoc committee with at least three members (Board Chair or other officer of the RP, non-LEDO director, LEDO director and others determined necessary).
- Parties of interest will be asked to document the concern in writing for review by the ad hoc committee.
- Upon review of the written concern and discussion with appropriate individuals, the committee will decide if a failure to comply with the policy has occurred and recommend appropriate corrective measures for board of director approval.
- Continued or repeated breach of this policy may lead to removal from participation on the council or board.
- Following determination of the ad hoc committee, the parties of interest may request a direct hearing by the full board of directors.
- The RP will maintain records of dispute resolutions.
- The LEDOs will review the effectiveness of these guidelines periodically and revise as necessary.

Roles and Responsibilities

RP Staff

- Develop and maintain a regional economic development strategy and marketing plan;
- Develop and maintain an operational website to include routine and timely updates, operational databases, sites and buildings, and appropriate links to member communities and stakeholders;
- Conduct targeted domestic and global marketing with consultants, brokers and business investors;
- Identify new business projects and provide prompt connection to LEDOs for local recruitment;
- Provide comprehensive research support and analysis to partner LEDOs;

- Formulate a regional brand and develop collateral marketing materials;
- Coordinate timely state and regional responses to all regional inquiries when appropriate;
- Convene forums to promote regional understanding, dialogue and collaboration;
- Coordinate and conduct multi-county prospect visits in the region;
- Provide routine reports on the status of business prospects
- Provide support for projects generated by individual counties keeping in mind those projects are the sole property of the initiating county and are not to be shared with other counties until consent has been given by the initiating county.

Local Economic Development Organizations

- Provide prompt updates to the RP staff to ensure that county data and sites and building databases are current and accurate;
- Produce local marketing materials;
- Prepare prompt response to identified leads;
- Lead local ED strategy and planning efforts to ensure that appropriate community leaders and officials are engaged and own countywide ED plans;
- Coordinate with the RP and lead local site and building prospect visits within the county.
- Interface with regional brokers and developers; See attached “Interface Principles” for guidelines on interactions and “Non-Disclosure Agreement” for a template document
- Provide timely company updates to CRI for tracking within the business dynamics database

LEDO Council

- Provide operational guidance to the RP and staff members through LEDO forums, committees and task teams;

IEDC

- Provide overall coordination between the state and regional economic development efforts.
- Provide detailed support and integration of state incentives.
- Provide assistance with Skills Enhancement Fund Training grants and access to other state assistance programs (International Trade, Venture Capital, 21st Century Fund, etc).

RWB

- Provide business consulting services;
- Provide training for dislocated, incumbent and emerging workforce;
- Provide training for youth, both in school and out of school;
- Provide job profiling, assessment, and education to develop a more skilled workforce;
- Provide testing, recruitment, and employment services for businesses.

CRI

- Maintain an up-to-date the business dynamics database on companies within northeast Indiana
- Work with LEDOs to obtain updates on companies within northeast Indiana

- Make information readily available to all local and regional economic and workforce development organizations
- Support for economic news monitoring, collection and placement on Partnership website
- Providing and updating demographic and related data for inclusion on Partnership website
- Provide ongoing general research support to Northeast Indiana Foundation and Partnership

Interface Principles

1) The Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership is committed to attracting new business and bringing high quality jobs to the region. To accomplish these goals, the Partnership will work to bring together a broad array of public and private interests to promote the area as a single economic entity.

2) Local economic development organizations (LEDOs) are responsible for managing and closing deals for economic development projects on a local level. The role of the Partnership is to cultivate productive leads into viable projects and facilitate direct relationships between prospects and member LEDOs as effectively as possible.

3) The Partnership is not a broker and will not represent itself as a broker. As a normal part of attraction work for regional economic development purposes, the Partnership will respond to inquiries from clients and prospective employers. Such inquiries may include requests for information and access to available sites and buildings.

4) For prospects without a formal buyer's representative relationship with a broker, the Partnership will suggest establishing a relationship with a broker from the region.

5) The Partnership will make every effort to work with local economic development organizations (LEDOs) and brokers to confirm current listing agreements for sites and buildings. This will include looking for evidence of a broker's sign, information on LoopNet (or other electronic database), direct contact with brokers, etc. This requires that brokers keep LEDOs informed of changes in listed properties (new listings, sales, change in representation, etc.). If a listing change occurs it is up to the broker(s) involved to inform the affected county LEDO of the change.

6) The Partnership will report to LEDOs monthly on its activity with clients and prospects. The Partnership will endeavor to make the reports as complete as possible in areas such as prospect feedback, project status, etc.

7) As a matter of routine, the Partnership will work directly with the LEDO to coordinate site and property tours and access. If there is occasion for the Partnership to have direct contact with an owner of a listed property, the Partnership will copy the LEDO and listing broker on any direct communication with the owner.

8) When a broker identifies a prospective employer, the Partnership will communicate with the prospective employer through the broker unless and until a change in the relationship is agreed to by all involved.

9) When the Partnership identifies a prospective employer, brokers will communicate with the prospective employer through the LEDO and the Partnership unless and until a change in the relationship is agreed to by all involved.

10) When a LEDO shares a project lead with a broker, subject to a nondisclosure agreement, brokers agree to not make direct contact with the prospect company or site consultant without explicit permission from the responsible LEDO. Upon breach of the agreement, interaction with the offending broker will be addressed within LEDO Council to determine appropriate resolution. If necessary, refer to the Compliance section on page 3 of the Principles of Operation.

Real Estate Broker Nondisclosure Agreement

The undersigned, real estate broker (broker) doing business in northeast Indiana and working with the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership (NEIRP) and partner local economic development organizations (LEDOs), is being furnished with confidential information, as hereinafter defined, for the purpose of participating in discussions with regard to the recruitment of certain businesses to northeast Indiana. Typically, the information shared is with respect to searches for existing buildings and development sites to respond to enquiries regarding the availability of development locations within a county of northeast Indiana.

The undersigned agrees as follows:

1. *Disclosure of Confidential Information*. During discussions with the LEDOs and/or the NEIRP, the broker shall be furnished with certain proprietary confidential information, orally and in writing, with regard to request for proposals, which information is not readily available to the general public, including but not limited to client search specifications, development plans, operating information, information about other prospective tenants, processes and general land use requirements ("confidential information").

2. *Non-Use*. The broker will make use of the confidential information only for the purpose of locating suitable buildings and/or sites and general considerations of recruitment of the business and prospect client to _________ County. The undersigned broker will not make any other use of the confidential information, and shall not permit or facilitate use of the confidential information by any other person or entity.

3. *Non-Disclosure.* The broker shall hold the confidential information in the strictest confidence and shall not disclose such confidential information to any other person or entities, either orally or in writing, including other LEDOs, unless it shall have obtained the prior written consent of the originating LEDO or NEIRP representative.

4. *Materials.* All materials furnished to broker embodying confidential information shall remain the property of the LEDO or NEIRP. Upon demand, the broker shall return or destroy all such materials.

5. *Term.* This Agreement shall exist in perpetuity unless terminated in writing by either party. All duties and obligations imposed upon the LEDO and Broker shall survive such termination.

6. *Direct Contact.* When a LEDO shares a project lead with a broker, subject to this nondisclosure agreement, brokers agree to not make direct contact with the prospect company or site consultant without written permission from the responsible LEDO.

7. *Choice of Law and Forum.* This Agreement shall be governed, construed and enforced in accordance with the laws of the State of Indiana.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the LEDO and Real Estate broker have executed this Agreement on the date shown.

________________________________	______________________________
LEDO	Principal Broker

Date: __________________________

Affirmation of Confidentiality Policy

Partners, staff, and consultants to the RP will annually acknowledge and affirm their understanding of the following confidentiality policy. A "Partner" is defined as someone who routinely collaborates with the Regional Partnership on projects and/or programs (i.e. a member of LEDO Council, LEDO Forum, board members, investors, etc.).

The Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership (RP) brings together numerous interests to focus on regional economic development. Both the RP staff and participating LEDO's throughout the region meet routinely to communicate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest. This policy applies to RP staff, partners and others who may become involved with confidential matters through conduct of regional economic development matters, either directly or indirectly.

The RP regularly works with information that should be discussed with other parties on a limited basis because of the potential to adversely affect a prospective project. Two types of information are particularly sensitive:

- The names of prospective companies interested in a Northeast Indiana location and details about possible expansions or relocations, and
- The acquisition of land or buildings in Northeast Indiana for economic development purposes.

This information is considered sensitive because companies may not be ready to reveal their interest in a Northeast Indiana location to customers, suppliers, or employees; and because it may alert other communities that could then contact the prospect. Revealing information about possible real estate transactions too early may generate speculative activity, thereby driving up the prices.

Disclosure of company identity to others, including the general public, is, in some cases, required by law. In other cases, RP staff and partners may be responsible to the organizations they represent, that may conflict with maintaining confidentiality of company identity. However, as much as possible, representatives of the RP should describe companies in more generic fashion, such as the plastics manufacturer, or metal fabrication company. Representatives and partners of the RP should discuss specific company names with other members of their respective bodies only when an individual or organization needs such detail in order to evaluate the investment of significant time or resources, and is unable to make such a decision without knowing the company's identity. When doing so, RP members should be clear with other governing board members about the confidential nature of the project.

Creation of clear policy guidelines regarding land transactions and incentives can facilitate productive discussions with companies prior to the time when they request official action by a governing body. The name of a specific company will need to be revealed when the company requests official approval of a project by a community or its EDA; the company will be made aware that official action will require such disclosure.

As a member of or partner with the RP, I affirm that I understand this policy and agree that the approval of a prospective company should be secured prior to publicly revealing its identity whenever possible. I also understand that my agreement to this document represents the agreement of all staff members within my organization.

Signed: ____________________________________ **Date:** _____________________

Representing: _____________________________________

Request for Confidential Treatment

Background

The RP routinely works with information that should be discussed with other parties only on a limited basis due to the potential for adverse impact on a prospective project. Two types of information are particularly sensitive:

- The names of prospective companies interested in a Northeast Indiana location and details about possible expansions or relocations, and
- The acquisition of land or buildings in Northeast Indiana for economic development purposes.

Policy

As a priority, the Partnership will honor and preserve confidentiality when requested by either members or prospects. Information shared with members in confidence shall remain in confidence.

If a business requests confidential treatment, the partner will obtain written documentation to capture the circumstances and timing of the request.

Documentation

The undersigned hereby agree(s) this ________ day of _____________, 20___:

1. To hold all financial and/or company information concerning the following project in strict confidence.

Project description:____

2. That any damages caused to ______________________ as a result of divulging said information to any other person or entity is the responsibility of the undersigned.

Requesting confidential treatment: _________________________ of _________________________.

Responsible to protect in confidence: ______________________ of __________________________.

Exhibit A

Site/Community Visit Template

Project Name: ______________________________
Company/Consultant: ______________________________
Date(s) of Visit: ______________________________

	Date/Time	Responsible Person/Entity
Accommodations		
Hotel		
Special requests		
Welcome Gifts		
Other:		

Transportation		
Airport Pick-Up		
Meetings/site visit		
Other:		

Meetings		
Meetings		
Presentations		
Information Packets		
Incentives		
Other:		

Meals		
Breakfast		
Lunch		
Dinner		