

EMERGING LEADERS Spring Training

May 7, 2026 - Lansing, MI



MEDAWeb.org/emergingleadersspring

Agenda

- 8:00 a.m. Registration**
- 8:30 a.m. Influencing Without Authority, and Other Lessons from Two Decades in the Field**
Jordan Twardy, Economic Development Director, City of Dearborn
- 9:15 a.m. Networking Break**
- 9:30 a.m. Community and Stakeholder Engagement for Data Center Development**
Moderator: Tyler Rossmassler, EDFP, Executive Director, Flint and Genesee Economic Alliance
Panelists: Brad Comment, Senior Vice President, Strategic Initiatives, The Right Place, Inc.
Kris Klein, EDFP, President and CEO, Lansing Economic Development Corporation
Sean Strube, Vice President of Economic Development, Monroe County Business Alliance
- 10:15 a.m. Networking Break**
- 10:30 a.m. Building a Workforce That Works: Childcare as Critical Economic Infrastructure**
Joan Blough, Vice President of Innovation and Evaluation, Early Childhood Investment Corporation
Lisa Brewer Walraven, Director, Child Development and Care, Office of Early Childhood Education, Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential
Tekeyah Gaines, Sr. Program Manager, Detroit Means Business, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation
- 11:15 a.m. Lunch and Networking Break and Overview of Top Economic Development Credentials**
- **11:15 a.m. Lunch and Networking**
 - **11:45 a.m. Overview of Top Economic Development Credentials**
Jill Bland, CEcD, Executive Vice President, Southwest Michigan First
Samantha Mariuz, MPA, EDFP, Economic Development Manager, Fleis & VandenBrink
- 12:15 p.m. From Reputation to Opportunity: Building Your Personal Brand and Network that Works for You**
Amiee Evans, Director of Economic Development, Lansing Economic Development Corporation
Lindsay Kirchinger, EDFP, Senior Vice President of Growth and Marketing Operations, Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- 1:00 p.m. Networking Break**
- 1:15 p.m. Economic Development in Uncertain Times**
Moderator: Lashawna Manigault, Director of Small Business Attraction and Retention, Detroit Economic Growth Corporation
Panelists: Jill Bland, CEcD, Executive Vice President, Southwest Michigan First
Dan Casey, CEO, Economic Development Alliance of St. Clair County
Birgit Klohs, Co-Founder and Executive Chair, New Community Transformation Fund
- 2:00 p.m. Adjourn**



Scan here for the attendee roster, speaker roster, and session handouts.

www.medaweb.org/26emergingleadershandouts/

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Webinar: Federal Incentives That Move the Needle: Strategies to Strengthen Feasibility & Unlock Project Financing

May 14, 2026 - Zoom - registration open

Take a deep dive into how federal strategy can reshape project financing and be leveraged to close feasibility gaps.

Webinar: Brownfield Redevelopment in Michigan: Strategy, Structure, and Successful Implementation - Part 2

May 21, 2026 - Zoom - registration open

Part II moves from strategy to implementation. This session walks through the core components of a Brownfield Plan, what differentiates a Plan from a Work Plan, and how to prepare for state-level review.

Annual Golf Outing

June 2, 2026 - Hawk Hollow Championship Golf Course - registration open

Economic development champions and friends from across the state are invited to participate in this fun day and fundraiser.

New Member Webinar

June 25, 2026 - Zoom - registration coming soon

Whether you're a new member or have been around a while and looking to maximize your benefits, this webinar will give you tips, walk you through the website, let you meet fellow members, and ask any questions of staff and Membership Committee.

Not a member? Learn how you can get attendance discounts by joining at www.medaweb.org/join-meda

FELLOWSHIP - STILL TIME TO APPLY

Birgit M. Klohs Fellowship Applications Due May 15, 2026

The Birgit M. Klohs Fellowship aims to expand opportunities for women and minorities in economic development by providing access to the education and training needed to strengthen their skills and abilities. In doing so, it supports MEDA's overall mission to drive positive economic growth in Michigan, while empowering the next generation of economic development leaders.

Visit www.medaweb.org/fellowship to apply.

