C2ER | THE COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH

2026 Applied Economic and Workforce Development Research Awards

The C2ER + LMI Institute awards programs recognize the contribution of creative research activities that benefit local, regional, or state community, economic, and workforce development initiatives.

Eligibility:

Award nominations are open to all C2ER + LMI Institute members. The nominated organization must have a coordinating or leading role within the nominated project. All projects must be ongoing or started within the **last two years** (January 2024).

Award Categories:

Business Development: Projects and initiatives that have helped to create or grow businesses, leading to economic and workforce development.

Data Analytics: Projects that have collected, analyzed, or visualized data in a way that has been beneficial for communities or organizations.

Impact & Sustainability: Projects that have had a demonstrably positive impact in their community, and that will have lasting benefits.

Access to Opportunity: Projects that have promoted diversity, equity, and inclusion in their communities or organizations.

Collaboration: Projects that have brought together different groups or organizations to achieve a common goal.

Policy Analysis: Projects or policy analysis supporting federal, state, or local initiatives.

Award Review Criteria	Selection Process
Judges will review nominations for the following: • Contribution to applied community, economic or workforce development research • Innovative and collaborative approach or implementation • Project using researchers with larger implementation team • Response to a demonstrated need • Economic or other additional value gained from project implementation • Product/process quality • Replicability for other C2ER and LMI Institute members	Representatives from C2ER membership will review nominations. The panel may select up to one winner in each category and an overall award for a particularly innovative project. Any representatives that identified to have a conflict of interest with a nomination will be removed from reviewing projects submitted under the same category. **Note:** C2ER reserves the right to the following if determined: • Assign a nomination to a different category than originally nominated. • Not select a winner in all categories.

Award Application Process + Presentation:

Applicants must submit a summary describing the project's goals, objectives, and innovation via nomination form by **Friday, March 27, 2026**. Alternative formats (e.g. videos, websites, and interactive dashboards) are encouraged. C2ER will present the awards at the Awards Lunch during the 66th C2ER + LMI Institute Annual Conference held June 17 – 19 in Memphis, Tennessee. ***The awardee must be registered and present at the conference.***

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2026 LMI Institute Awards

The LMI Institute awards program recognizes state LMI research activities that serve as examples to other state offices.

Eligibility:

State LMI shops are eligible to receive the award. Eligible projects are those in which the nominated state research office plays a coordinating role or in which research activities play an integral role in the project or activity. All projects must be ongoing or started within the **last two years** (January 2024).

Project Categories:

Best State LMI Product or Collaboration for **Regional Resilience**

Best State LMI Product or Collaboration **Supporting Workforce System or Jobseekers**

Best State LMI Focus on **Access to Opportunity**

Award Review Criteria	Selection Process
Judges will review nominations for the following: • Contribution to workforce labor market information research • Innovative approach or implementation • Unique approach to using researchers as part a larger program implementation team • Response to customer or community needs • Economic or other benefits that have resulted from implementing the project • Quality of product or process • Replicability for other LMI Institute members	Representatives from the LMI Institute membership will review nominations. The panel may select up to one winner in each category and an overall award for a particularly innovative project. Any representatives that identified to have a conflict of interest with a nomination will be removed from reviewing projects submitted under the same category. **Note:** The LMI Institute reserves the right to the following if determined: • Assign a nomination to a different category than originally nominated. • Not select a winner in all categories.

Award Application Process + Presentation:

Applicants must submit a summary describing the project's goals, objectives, and innovation via nomination form by **Friday, March 27, 2026**. Alternative formats (e.g. videos, websites, and interactive dashboards) are encouraged. The LMI Institute will present the awards at the Awards Lunch during the 66th C2ER + LMI Institute Annual Conference held June 17 – 19 in Memphis, Tennessee. ***The awardee must be registered and present at the conference.***