



BusinessFuture Brain Trust

*Local Business Innovation Teams
Request for Statement of Interest*

What is Econogy Talent Group?

Econogy Talent Group assembles, deploys and manages teams of young and unconventional innovators to create solutions to tough challenges facing businesses, organizations and communities.

ETG Team members come from diverse and multi-disciplinary backgrounds, and the ETG process enables them to use their **cutting-edge skills** and **innovation-ready perspective** to provide **professional advising and services**. ETG teams have successfully designed products, developed analytical tools, designed fundraising campaigns and more. To learn more about ETG, please visit Econogy.co.

After successfully testing the ETG approach in several lines of work, we are working with the Wise Economy Workshop to find **two to three economic development organizations that are interested in helping their local businesses and organizations achieve meaningful innovation** through a locally-based BusinessFuture Brain Trust Team

What Is A BusinessFuture Brain Trust?

A BusinessFuture Brain Trust is a standing team of up to five college/graduate students or recent graduates who help businesses and organizations improve their operations, develop innovative solutions, pivot, and make informed decisions to support strong growth and healthy operations.

Brain Trust participants are recruited from the local community's higher education institutions to the greatest extent possible, and supplemented by experienced Econogy subject matter experts and project managers. Brain Trust teams are designed to include diverse perspectives and areas of expertise, ranging from business and liberal arts to design and engineering, depending on the interests of the sponsor organization. Brain Trust members participate in a rigorous evaluation and training process before being admitted to the Team. Brain Trust members are paid for their work at a rate comparable to a high-level internship.

Depending on the preferences of the sponsor organization, Brain Trust teams can support multiple businesses or concentrate on one. They can focus on the sponsor organization's internal operations, or they can strengthen a specific vertical or cluster within the community.

Brain Trust team members are expected to provide a minimum of 10 hours' work per week over a minimum of 8 months, excluding major holidays.

What are the benefits to your organization and community?

BusinessFuture Brain Trust teams build on key learnings in innovation, experiential learning and talent recruitment. As research has indicated:

- **Diverse teams develop more innovative and higher-quality results.** This benefit is not available to many businesses and organizations, which puts them at risk of being disrupted by new technology or competition
- **People who are not experts are more likely to identify groundbreaking solutions that people who have worked in a field for a long time.** The tendency to rely on “experts” often means that businesses and organizations miss the opportunity to make life-changing innovations.
- **High-talent young people who work on real-world local projects while in university are more likely to stay in the community after graduation.** Students who have meaningful work experience in the community develop a stronger sense of the opportunities available, and they discover important entrepreneurial opportunities.

Brain Trusts are highly flexible and recruited based on identified needs, but Econogy Talent Group teams tend to be particularly useful for challenges such as:

- Strategy development
- Accounting and management systems
- Fundraising tactics and execution
- Go to Market planning
- Emerging market research
- Product development

HOW DO WE GET INVOLVED?

Econogy Talent Group is looking for two to three citywide or regional agencies that want to make a difference for both their businesses and their young people. Candidate agencies should have:

- Existing business or organization members, such as an economic development agency or chamber of commerce,
- Existing communication systems, such as a member newsletter or social media,
- A meeting or work space suitable for hosting team meetings and team/client meetings (up to approximately 10 people) that includes high speed internet service and projection equipment.

- The ability to fund a minimum \$30,000 project budget over the course of the year. Funding may come in full or in part from member businesses/organizations using the service. Funds are used to pay the team and training/management. A portion of the budget will be required as a retainer to fund start-up costs.

Minimal agency staff time will be required, but we do ask for a designated contact to receive routine reports and assist in connection to other agencies, if needed.

DEADLINE: Project proposals are due **September 30, 2018**. Submit your proposal online at [this link](#). Organizations will be notified if their project has been accepted by October 15, 2018

ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT:

Project proposals should be fully supported by the organization and/or its participants. Brain Trust Teams may not raise money to directly support their work, but they may be contracted to develop fundraising materials. It is the responsibility of the host organization or member to provide any other resources necessary for the completion of the project, such as printing or materials production.

KEY DATES:

Project Proposal Submission Deadline	September 30, 2018
Notification of Project Selection	October 15, 2018
Team recruitment and evaluation begins (approximate)	November 15, 2018
Team begins (approximate)*	January 1, 2018
Team concludes (approximate)*	August 15, 2019

*Teams and projects are designed to meet the objectives of the agency. Teams may work longer or shorter than 8 months, with appropriate adjustment to the budget. Start/end dates may be adjusted to reflect local universities' calendars.

For more information or to discuss a potential proposal, please contact Della Rucker AICP CEcD, at 513.288.6613 or della@econogy.co.

Frequently Asked Questions:

This sounds like an internship or a co op.

Yes and no. Econogy is based on the realization that young people can do much more meaningful work than they usually get to do in conventional internships -- and that when they can do that, everyone benefits. We employ diverse teams, rather than individual interns, and we place the management structure around them that they need to meet your objectives and your time frame. Most organizations don't have the internal capacity to manage a team of interns to do mission-critical work, so we do that management for you. That management allows you to get the benefits of a truly innovation-equipped team - for a lot more impact than one lone intern!

This sounds like a class project.

Working with a class doing a project can be fun, but students and professors are often more interested in meeting academic standards than in giving you, the client, something that you can actually use. Econogy's model puts the client's needs first, like a conventional consulting arrangement. You get the new ideas that you might get from a class project, but with professional interactions that value your time and actually result in something that you can use.

Why does this cost money? The class project was free...

We pay all of our team members. For some, working with us replaces the kind of job where they would not be building important skills. For others, it's a supplement that they do mostly for the experience. But they take the work seriously, and we think it's crucial to honor that. And they work hard.

Most team members work part-time, and their pay scale reflects what they would make in a high-quality internship, given each person's field of study and experience level. Our fees also reflect our costs for recruiting, training and managing teams -- responsibilities that we take very seriously.

What can the Brain Trust teams do?

You can design the scope of work to provide professional support for any legal business or group of businesses you like -- or for your own organization. Since we will recruit the team to support what you need, we can be very flexible. But here's a few examples:

- Help a business take a prototype products to market
- Help five small businesses clean up their bookkeeping
- Help 10 small businesses develop marketing plans
- Help an organization develop a new fundraising strategy
- Conduct research and surveying on what business members need your organization to do to help them

- Identify five emerging market opportunities for local business sectors that are at risk of becoming obsolete, and develop strategies for transitioning them to new models.
- Design and implement a membership campaign targeting young professionals

Can I charge the businesses that use the Brain Trust?

Yes. You can offset the fee for the team by passing all or part of the cost on to any businesses or organizations that the team is going to help. That's your choice.

How exactly does this work?

Glad you asked. Here's the details of the process:

1. Econogy leadership works with you to develop a scope, a budget, and a time line that meets your needs.
2. You sign off on it and pay the retainer, which allows us to start recruiting.
3. We identify the skills and skill levels needed, and assign the Project Manager from our national team of experienced and trained managers. For complex or technical projects, we may also assign a Project Lead from our network (otherwise, the Project Lead is usually the most senior or most experienced person on the team).
4. We conduct a recruiting campaign targeting your local universities and colleges and alumni. We use a combination of events, network relationships and targeted social media.
5. We conduct a detailed screening of potential team members for a variety of factors, including collaboration skills, communication, technical expertise, personal resilience and grit, and others. We assemble teams to reflect the diversity of the area as closely as possible. When needed, we may supplement the team with a remote member.
6. We conduct a mandatory training, typically two days in length, in which we teach them the project management process, practice key client relationship skills, and plan for the execution of the scope of work.
7. The team reviews its work with the Project Manager once per week, and the Project Manager makes sure that the team is meeting the full terms of the scope of work and staying on track.
8. The Project Manager provides Quality Control on all deliverables, and the Project Lead provides Quality Assurance.
9. When projects are completed, we will provide you and the clients with public relations materials, if desired.

Other questions? Email them to della@econogy.co.

