



Early Warning Network

Retain, redesign, and rebuild the manufacturing sector.

Developed for the Community Wealth Building Early Warning Systems Building project, a pilot for Manufacturing Succession Solutions

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Acknowledgements

The first Early Warning manual (which serves as the primary resource for this training) was published in 1996 and authored by Greg LeRoy, MR's Research Director, with the assistance of Dan Swinney (MR's founder) and Elaine Charpentier. This Early Warning training and the revised Early Warning manual were made possible in part by the [Chicago Community Wealth Building Initiative](#) in which MR is a Phase I grantee. The following individuals currently serve as Advisory Committee members and are helping us revise our Early Warning manual and providing valuable input as we create this training curriculum:

- Ken Gaebler, Former CEO, Walker Sands
- Sequane Lawrence, Executive Director, The Revolution Institute
- Lucy Minturn, Founder + CEO, FosterWorks
- Jim Piper, President, Kelair Products (formerly Matot, Inc.)
- Steve Simmons, Director of Business and Economic Development, North Branch Works
- Dr. Matt Wilson, Associate Director for Economic and Workforce Development, Great Cities Institute, University of Illinois Chicago

Overview

This syllabus outlines a training curriculum as the first step towards the establishment of an Early Warning Network that will create a democratized infrastructure for proactively identifying, engaging, and providing technical assistance for legacy manufacturing companies willing to explore worker ownership as a succession strategy. Up to 24 individuals, prioritizing those who work with organizations that serve Chicago's South and West sides, will be trained and invited to a network as manufacturing business development specialists. Participants will engage in **up to 24 hours of training**. The 24 hours will consist of at least five synchronous meetings (some face-to-face and some virtual via Zoom) and assignments to be completed asynchronously within an online learning platform.

Expectations

All participants must meet the minimum expectations outlined below.

- Actively participate in the training sessions, including punctual attendance and engaging with the instructors and other participants.
- Complete the assigned coursework in a timely manner
- Interact and engage with the online modules ensuring at least 90% completion
- Contribute to the development of the Early Warning Network and actively participate in strategic planning activities
- Commit to periodic check-ins with MR in the six months following the training



Early Warning Training Curriculum

Organizations with *at least one* individual who meets or exceeds the expectations will be eligible to receive a stipend payable to the organization and a certificate of completion.

Objectives

After completing the Early Warning Network training, including reviewing case studies and visiting local manufacturers, participants will be able to:

1. Discuss their observations and insights (online and face-to-face) about the manufacturing landscape, including summarizing and articulating the major factors leading to deindustrialization and the current state of manufacturing in Chicago.
2. Explain the various resources and technical assistance services provided by Manufacturing Renaissance, the Early Warning Network, and Manufacturing Succession Solutions, as well as how they support industrial retention.
3. Identify key components and stakeholders of the current manufacturing ecosystem and explain how these stakeholders collaborate in an Early Warning Network, including their roles, responsibilities, and technical assistance services offered.
4. Articulate economic democracy and other ownership strategies such as worker cooperatives, Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs), and acquisitions.
5. Understand the basic business structure and operating principles of a typical manufacturing company, including financials, sourcing, staffing and workforce, marketing, production, and sales.
6. Effectively collaborate with a network of stakeholders in the manufacturing ecosystem, demonstrating successful teamwork and communication skills in discussions (online and face-to-face) and through a collaborative group project.
7. Recognize key indicators, best practices, and actions steps towards industrial retention.
8. Understand the protocols and requirements for gathering and using early warning information and how to identify and engage viable companies.
9. Define and apply the high road approach which companies, communities, government, and labor can implement, including its principles, strategies, and benefits, demonstrating comprehension through a detailed case study analysis.
10. Understand the role of race in the manufacturing ecosystem and the steps we are taking to diversify the sector and to promote inclusion in all aspects of the sector.

Assessments

Formative: elevator pitch, discussions, and interactive quizzes

Summative: group project



Early Warning Training Curriculum

Training Sessions

- Sept 18-24th Executives only
- Oct 14-Nov 16th Staff Members (week of 10/08 is pre-work)

Day 1: Saturday, Sep 21 (4 Hours) *Executives Only* **Location:** Kelair Products

Session	Session Title	Activity	Objective(s)
1 (90 mins)	Introduction to Early Warning & The History and Current State of Chicagoland Manufacturing	Presentation and Discussion	1, 2, 3, 9, 10
2 (90 mins)	Manufacturing Business 101	Guest Speaker Presentation and Tour	4, 5

Day 2: Tuesday, Sept 24 (2 Hours) *Executives Only* **Location:** online

Session	Session Title	Activity	Objective(s)
3 (75 mins)	Building the network	Presentation, Discussion, and Brainstorming	3, 6

Day 3: Monday, Oct 14 (2 Hours) **Location:** online

Session	Session Title	Activity	Objective(s)
4 (90 mins)	(re)introductions & Why Early Warning: Case Study of a Company	Breakout Discussion	1, 2, 3, 5, 9, 10

Day 4: Saturday, Oct 19 (4 Hours) **Location:** UCI GCI

Session	Session Title	Activity	Objective(s)
5 (90 mins)	Monitoring Business Health and Recognizing the Signs - Recognizing Viable Companies	Guest Speaker Stations (resources & services)	7, 8
6 (90 mins)	Taking Action Pt 1: Approach & Relationship Building	Conversation Role Play Elevator Pitch	6, 8, 9

Day 5: Tuesday, Oct 22 (4 Hours) **Location:** UCI GCI

Session	Session Title	Activity	Objective(s)
7 (75 mins)	Best Practices	Panel	1, 2, 7, 8
8 (90 mins)	Taking Action Pt 2: Financials, Ownership, & Workforce		3, 4, 7, 10

Optional online session will be offered on Thursday, Nov 7

Training Completion Ceremony, November 12th 5-7pm (tentative) Location: in-person Group Presentations
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Assignments

#	Description	Due By
1	Pre-work: Discussion post – Introduce yourself on the online discussion board and interact with at least two other participants <i>Minimum time: 0.5 hours</i>	Sept 20th
2	Pre-work: Reading – Read the Early Warning Manual and note any questions that you have. <i>Minimum time: 2 hours</i>	Sept 21st
3	(re) Watch the Stewart Warner Video and discuss with other participants in our online course. <i>Minimum time: 1 hour</i>	Sept 24th
4	Identify staff member(s) to attend the remaining training sessions. <i>Minimum time: 0.5 hours</i>	Oct 8th
5	(Staff only) Discussion post – Introduce yourself on the online discussion board and interact with at least two other participants <i>Minimum time: 0.5 hours</i>	Oct 11th
6	(Staff only) Reading – Read the Early Warning Manual and note any questions that arise. <i>Minimum time: 2 hours</i>	Oct 14th
7	Develop and prepare to share a 60 second elevator pitch that you can use to tell someone about the Early Warning Network. <i>Minimum time: 0.5 hours</i>	Oct 19th
8	Discussion on communicating with Early Warning Network stakeholders about the various resources and services available. <i>Minimum time: 0.5 hours</i>	Oct 22nd
9	Discussion post – Share an individual project check-in and engage by posting at least 2 replies to others. <i>Minimum time: 0.5 hours</i>	Nov 8th
10	Group Project <i>Minimum time: 3 hours</i>	Week of Nov 11th



Resources

- [Early Warning Training Thinkific Course](#)
- Manufacturing Renaissance's Early Warning Manual
- [Manufacturing Renaissance's website](#)
- [Chicago Community Wealth Building Ecosystem website](#)
- [Steel Valley Authority](#)
- [Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center \(IMEC\)](#)
- [Technology & Manufacturing Association](#)
- [Local Industrial Retention Initiative \(LIRI\) Agencies](#)

The Instructors



Dan Swinney is Founder and Director of Strategic Initiatives at MR. Dan founded MR in 1982 to address the closure of manufacturing plants in the Chicago area, focusing initially on industrial retention efforts. He led campaigns with local unions, community organizations, and the City of Chicago to save industrial jobs and co-founded the Labor Research Review, a prominent labor movement journal. Serving as MR's Executive Director until 2020, Dan now acts as a senior advisor and is recognized nationally for his expertise in advanced manufacturing. Prior to MR, he worked as a machinist, organized Steelworker Local 8787, and was an activist during and after his college years, including organizing against the Vietnam War. Dan holds a B.A. in history from the University of Wisconsin. He enjoys hiking, horseback riding, dressage, travel, and politics.

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David Robinson is the Director of External Affairs at MR. Robinson began his career as an award-winning reporter for the Detroit News and later held editorial roles at United Press International and Black Press Review. In the 1980s, he joined the Harold Washington administration in Chicago, developing programs for municipal recycling and solid waste management. With over 30 years in public affairs, Robinson has held senior government roles and managed various campaigns. Since 2016, he has advocated for public education and community wealth building linked to modern manufacturing. Robinson studied journalism and history at Morehouse College and holds certifications in conflict resolution and executive leadership. He enjoys film, music, golf, martial arts, and a variety of vintage collectibles.

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Pauline Lake is the Research and Instructional Design Project Coordinator/Operations Manager at MR. After attending high school on Chicago's South side, Pauline earned her Bachelor's in computer science and educational studies and a Master's in public policy with a concentration in education policy from Trinity College in Hartford, CT. Pauline also holds a Certificate in Project Management from the College of St. Scholastica. With over a decade of educational research and teaching experience, she has helped develop two national high school Advanced Placement Computer Science (CS) curricula, expanding access to CS education. Her interests include comedy, music, sports, and solving puzzles.

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