

Thank You to Our Transitioning Student Researchers



Isaac Herter

During my time at CCED, I had the privilege of working as a Regional Economic Innovation Research Assistant for almost a year and a half. I was involved in planning the Michigan Inventors Coalition Inventors Expo along with the *Innovate Michigan!* Summit, learning the ins and outs of event management and production. Along with that, I conducted research on a variety of topics, planned CCED's social media and outreach—including an issue of this newsletter—and assisted in designing presentations and social media materials. By working across these areas, I developed a much deeper understanding of marketing, social media strategy, and engagement.

CCED gave me the opportunity to develop these skills while also allowing me to gain a deeper understanding of community and economic development in Michigan. Moving forward, I'll be working as a Spartan Engagement Ambassador under the Office of Community & Student Relations and MSU Government Relations, where I'll continue building upon the knowledge I've gained at CCED. In addition, I plan on graduating with my bachelor's degree in Urban and Regional Planning and pursuing a master's degree in the same field. I'm excited to begin my career as an urban planner, with the aim of working in Chicago, or even somewhere abroad in the future. I hope to apply the skills I've developed at CCED as well as from my studies to help foster togetherness, drive positive change, and build economic and environmental resiliency in the communities I serve.

I am extremely grateful for all the opportunities I've had at CCED, and I'm excited to further expand upon the skills and connections I've gained here. I'd like to thank my supervisor, Jenan Jondy, my coworker, Jenna Salhab, and everyone else that made working here so wonderful and meaningful.



Jo Troxell

My name is Jo Troxell, and I am a senior at MSU majoring in the Arts and Humanities with a concentration in community engagement and dual minoring in American Indian and Indigenous Studies and Writing. Originally from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, I am also an enrolled member of the Hannahville Potawatomi Indian Community located in Wilson, MI. This past summer I had the amazing opportunity to work at the Center for Community and Economic Development as a research assistant for the grant funded MSU Rural Readiness Tribal Pilot Fellowship.

In this role, I contributed to the early planning stages of the fellowship, which intends to be a competitive program that will partner individuals with Tribal nations in Michigan to work on economic resiliency efforts. My responsibilities included tasks like communication and collaboration with the planning team and tribal partners, drafting work plans, creating calendar outlines with event and agenda items, designing a logo and promotional materials, and conducting various research on relevant topics for organization and content.

The fellowship will be moving into its final planning stages over the next year, and meanwhile, I will be completing and enjoying my last year at MSU while applying and going through the process of applying to graduate school. As I am primarily interested in Indigenous knowledge systems and representation in community engagement and leadership efforts, I hope to enter a career in higher education to make university spaces safer and more accessible for Indigenous, first-generation, and underserved students. Additionally, I will be starting my second year as an intern for MSU's Center for Poetry and continuing my involvement with the Native community on MSU's campus and with the North American Indigenous Student Organization (NAISO) executive and powwow planning board. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work at the center, and I enjoyed my time working here.

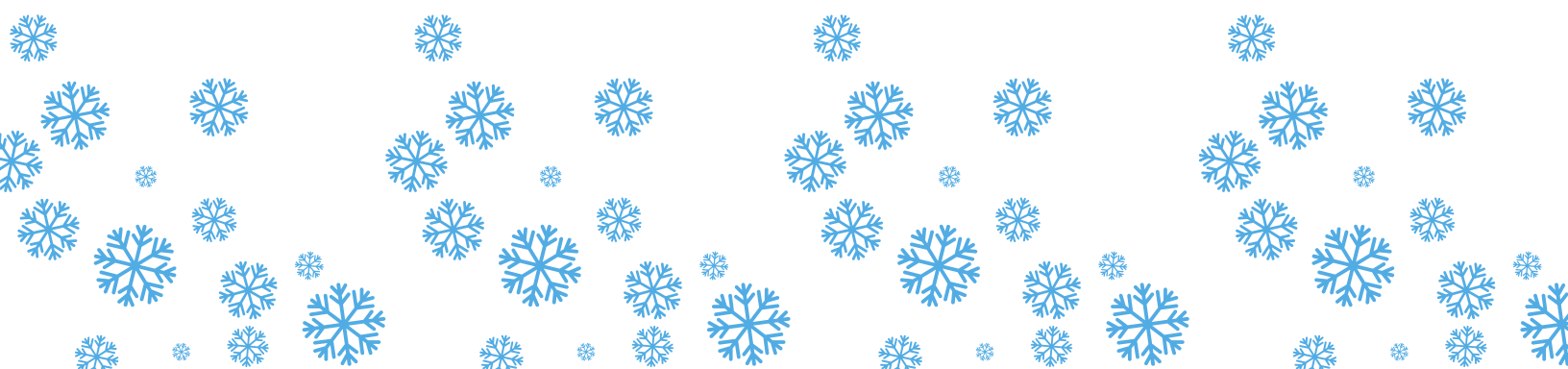


As I transition from my role at the CCED office, I am excited to announce I will continue my journey with the National Charrette Institute (NCI). In this position as a graduate student assistant at NCI, I have been actively engaged in facilitating community engagement events, including recent work with the Mass Timber Collaborative. This project has focused on organizing and connecting stakeholders involved in the production and use of mass timber for construction, helping to strengthen collaboration and innovation in sustainable building practices.

Charlotte Peterson

In addition to my role with NCI, I serve as an Urban Community Engaged Fellow through Michigan State University's Office of Outreach and Engagement. Through this fellowship, I've collaborated with an interdisciplinary group of graduate students to strategize and implement community-driven projects in southwest Lansing, strengthening my skills in urban planning and community engagement. Lastly, I'm also working diligently toward the completion of my Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning, with plans to graduate in Spring 2025. Recently, I attended the 2024 Michigan Association of Planning Conference in Grand Rapids, where I received an award for excellence for my undergraduate practicum project, a Neighborhood Revitalization Plan for the Morningside neighborhood in Detroit. This recognition affirmed my dedication to community-focused urban revitalization. Looking ahead, I am eager to continue building on the skills and experiences I have gained through my work at the CCED and beyond as I move closer to achieving my long-term career goals in urban and regional planning.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone at the Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) office for creating such a positive and enjoyable work environment. During my time at CCED, I gained invaluable experience in team building and learned the importance of effectively engaging with community leaders. I also deepened my understanding of community benefits agreements and contributed to domiciology research, all of which have enriched my professional growth.





Abigail Bies

As I prepare to step into the next chapter of my professional journey, I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude for the experiences I had at the Center. The time I've spent has been incredibly meaningful, filled with countless memories and learning opportunities.

I've been fortunate to work alongside the other members of the Community Benefits team, who are such talented and dedicated individuals. I truly appreciate the support, guidance, and friendship they've extended to me during my time at the CCED. To everyone at the Center: the passion and commitment each of you brings to your work have shaped me into the professional I am today. I have so much gratitude for my time with each of you.

Though I'm excited about transitioning to working on K-12 education policy research, my research on equitable development here at the Center has been invaluable to building a comprehensive education in policy. Please know that I will carry forward all the lessons and experiences we've shared together. This isn't goodbye, but rather a "see you later." I look forward to staying in touch and following all the great things CCED will continue to accomplish both in community benefits and elsewhere.

A Warm Welcome to New Student Researchers



Sonya Koenig

Sonya Koenig is a Junior at Michigan State University studying Social Relations and Policy and Environmental and Sustainability Studies. Growing up in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Sonya witnessed the disparities between urban and suburban access to sustainable and healthy environments. This background sparked her passion for advocating for environmentally just futures in underserved areas. She is particularly interested in reimagining local development and planning strategies to foster sustainability and advance circular economic models. As a member of the Circular Economy and Community Benefits teams, Sonya is actively working on a series of initiatives to advance sustainability and foster equity in local communities and the state.



Mikayla Thompson

Mikayla Thompson is a new research assistant on the Tribal Fellowship Project at MSU's Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED)! Mikayla is a reconnecting descendant of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma on her mother's side, and a descendant of Norwegian immigrants on her father's side. Her maternal family has roots in the Appalachian Mountains, along the Little Tennessee River. After the forced removal known as the Trail of Tears, her family settled in Southwestern Michigan. Her paternal great-grandfather emigrated from the Surnadal region of Central Norway and built a homestead in Benzie County, Michigan.