



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.

Mikayla is a recent graduate of Michigan State University, where she studied Linguistics and minored in Indigenous Studies. Her primary focus is Indigenous language revitalization and endangered language documentation. She hopes to attend graduate school in the coming years to continue her studies in the field so that she may work with minoritized languages worldwide, all while learning more about the concept of global Indigeneity.



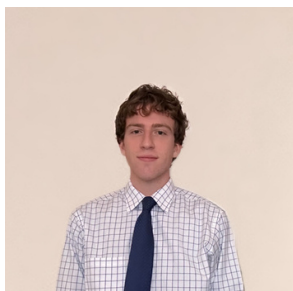
Emma Eurich

Emma Eurich is a freshman at Michigan State University studying Journalism with a concentration in Environment, Science, and Health Reporting. Having started her position as a Research Assistant in October of 2024, she is interested in writing about workforce innovation and public health based communication. Emma is passionate about using journalism to reshape current power structures in the United States that will foster sustainable community and economic growth. She is driven by her desire to make an impact through her writing and community- focused initiatives. As for future endeavors, she hopes to use the skills she gains at the CCED to enhance community outreach and spread awareness about various public health-related issues. Emma is also a member of Michigan State University's Academic Scholars Program, tackling honors experiences and activities right alongside her studies. Outside of academic activities, she enjoys writing creatively, discovering new music, and spending time with family and friends.



Chloe Halverson

Chloe Halverson is a Regional and Economic Innovation (REI) Research Assistant for MSU's Center for Community and Economic Development. She is currently a senior at Michigan State University where she studies Urban and Regional Planning. Chloe is a passionate and eager student, particularly interested in planning law & policy, placemaking, and economic development; she is also highly active in student organizations, as a member of the Urban and Regional Planning Student's Association (URPSA) and Real Estate Investment Club. Additionally, Chloe has a strong background in writing, with experience as a Copyeditor at The State News. In her professional pursuits, Chloe aims to apply her academic background, skills, and experiences in fostering vibrant, sustainable, and equitable communities. In her free time, Chloe enjoys getting outside to hike or spend time at the lake, especially in Michigan's beautiful Upper Peninsula.



Henry Jerred

Henry Jerred is an undergraduate in his third year at Michigan State University. He studies Social Relations and Policy at James Madison College and is pursuing minors in Environmental and Sustainability Studies and Anthropology. Driven by his passion for environmental justice, Henry is interested in understanding the relationships between people and their environment and how they manifest themselves on the landscape. Henry began his position as a research assistant at CCED in October of 2024. Currently, he is working on the domicology team where he hopes to spread awareness about the life cycle of the built environment and collaborate with communities to create more sustainable material flows. In the future, Henry aims to utilize the experience and knowledge gained at the CCED to combat climate change and environmental injustice worldwide. In his free time, he enjoys reading, biking, learning about history, and spending time in nature.

