

## TRIBAL FELLOWSHIP PLANNING FOR ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

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The MSU Rural Readiness Tribal Fellowship Planning Project is about halfway through its initial 18-month planning grant (01/24-06/25) period this fall. With funding from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development “Rural Readiness Round 2” program, the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development, Native American Institute and MSU Extension have completed six initial “deep dive” economic resiliency visioning events to help identify tribal priority foci areas.

Working with the Bay Mills Indian Community, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe and others, March through December of this year, four tribal fellowship workplans have been crafted.



Moving from the Summer of 2023 Economic Resiliency Tribal Summit focus group data, the MSU team followed up with tribes throughout 2024 to build out detailed goals, objectives and activities utilizing a fellowship workplan model to hit the ground running in Summer of 2025. Beginning with individual interpretations of “economic” and “resiliency” tribal leadership, stakeholders spent several hours then visioning with MSU partners to go from the “Now” (current state) to the “Wow” (preferred state) through a facilitated bridging activity. Participants were led through discussions focused on economic development and resiliency projects as they currently are and what they would like to see as outcomes or “hopes” and “dreams” of the future. Next, activities necessary to get there were brainstormed and responses recorded to capture what was then distilled into workplan components.



Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, Black Elk Building

From these events broad goal areas such as: increased adaptability, quality of life, planning, financial literacy, housing for all, consistent government structures and more emerged. At the high level, reflecting much of the '23 Summit reporting, economic resiliency goals were created and prioritized such as: people (social/human capital needs), sustainability/resiliency planning, infrastructure and diversification. As a group, participants then collaborated utilizing “SMARTIE” (strategic – measurable – ambitious – realistic – time-bound – inclusive and equitable) compartmentalization strategies to develop draft workplans. From there, the team worked together to plan out specific objectives that encompass “who, does what, to what extent, for whom, by when” outlining each tribe’s associated activities and performance periods.

On October 18th, the first tribal fellowship leadership working group kicked-off via Zoom. Recruitment, work stipends, funding and workplan goal refinement were discussed. As the holiday season gears up, fellow recruitment flyers will be disseminated. In particular, outreach and connection is developing further between tribal colleges, including Bay Mills Community College, Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College and Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College.

Moving into 2025, marketing and informational sessions will be offered online and in person. Interviews and candidate selection are anticipated to take place between March through May of next year. A June kick-off and orientation will commence this service learning opportunity. Additionally, throughout the duration of their fellowship, these competitively selected participants will receive extensive leadership and professional development training as well as networking opportunity, workforce innovation exposure and host-site perks – such as community gardening, cultural instruction and language immersion. The CCED, NAI and Extension are looking forward to a great cadre and vibrant partnership that is anticipated to stay within their tribal communities and that will continue to lead capacity building and resiliency efforts into the future.



MSU Tribal Extension Coordinator, Emily Proctor, and MSU Extension Educator for Government and Community Vitality, Harmony Fierke-Gmazel, join Mary ZumBrunnen in facilitation exercises.

