

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



happy holidays



**CENTER FOR COMMUNITY AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

VOL 36

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COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION?

Rex L. LaMore, Ph.D., Director: CCED

The practice of publicly funding economic development has its roots in the early years of the republic. Some of the earliest projects emphasized the expansion of the nation's transportation infrastructure in the development of roads and canals. For example, the Erie Canal was funded primarily by the State of New York, completed in 1825 and provided for the transportation of goods between the Atlantic coast cities and the Midwest and the Great Lakes[1].

Over the past two centuries “economic development” has been the “common battle cry” of almost every elected local, state and federal official. It has been estimated that the federal government alone has approximately 130 economic development programs administered by over 20 federal agencies[2] ranging from road construction to tax policy, workforce training to direct subsidies of private businesses to adopt innovative technologies. State and local governments in competition for high paying jobs also contribute to this growth in publicly supported economic development programs.

While our communities have created and supported a vast number of publicly financed economic development programs the scale and scope of the nation's economy is principally driven by private sector businesses making private decisions about what is best for their private enterprises survival and growth. In 2023, the annualized GDP of the U.S. was estimated to be \$26.5 trillion. Eighty-eight percent of this (or \$23.5 trillion) comes from private industries and approximately \$3 trillion is government spending at the federal, state, and local levels[3].

Overwhelmingly, our economy is a private sector economy ruled by private sector entrepreneurial decisions. Given the overwhelming nature of our “private” economy it seems reasonable to ask then, what is the public's role in supporting economic development? In general, publicly funded economic development seeks to assist with private sector growth and development by providing among other supports, infrastructure investments, land acquisition, workforce development, tax abatements, and direct financial investment/incentives, with the frequently stated public purposes of attracting/creating/retaining businesses and jobs in a community. Economic development professionals have historically assisted developers and private businesses in securing these publicly funded economic development resources. This is the way economic development has generally been practiced in the U.S.

In recent years the effectiveness of traditional economic development practices has been challenged in creating equitable development outcomes for distressed communities and underserved/unemployed persons.

The basic policy question that is raised by some community development advocates is “given the investment of these public resources (either direct subsidies or indirect investments like infrastructure investments) what benefits are accrued to historically underserved people and places?” Additionally, are the jobs promised in development deals created and improving opportunities for those currently out of the workforce? Essentially, what is the measurable and enforceable public benefit that a community realizes from these economic development investments?

It is in this climate of questioning the public's identifiable benefits from large scale traditional economic development investment practices that the “Community Benefit Agreement” movement has arisen.

[1]<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-ushistory1ay/chapter/early-republic-economic-development/>

[2] <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46683>

[3]<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/visualizing-u-s-gdp-by-industry-in-2023/>

A Community Benefits Agreement (CBA) is “a private contract between a land use developer and a coalition of community-based organizations, regarding a proposed development project”[4] Negotiated community benefits have been initiated in a variety of different forms including, but not limited to, mutual benefits-sharing agreements, Impact and Benefit Agreements, community workforce agreements, project labor agreements, Native American tribal agreements, and good neighbor agreements [5].[6]

So, what does this emerging and expanding phenomenon mean for the practice of economic development and economic developers? *Business attraction and deal-making may no longer be sufficient skill sets for successful economic development professionals!* A 21st century publicly supported economic developer will be expected to be able to negotiate BOTH an economic development agreement with a private business AND support a community engagement process that helps the community they serve develop and negotiate an effective and enforceable community benefit agreement. Greater public accountability of the investment and increasingly limited public resources in support of private business development for some of the economic development community will be a welcome addition to their professional roles, for others this may be more difficult. *Evolution or revolution* - the profession is in transition and must continue to evolve if it is to survive and thrive in response to growing community expectations and demands in the 21st century.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW NATIVE AMERICAN INSTITUTE DIRECTOR

**Kevin Leonard, Ph.D., Director of the
Native American Institute**

Kevin Leonard, Ph.D., who has helped renew relationships with Michigan’s Tribal communities as interim director of MSU’s Native American Institute (NAI), has been named the Institute’s permanent director effective August 1, 2024. He was appointed interim director in October of 2022 by then MSU Provost Teresa Woodruff, who recognized his background, expertise, and forward-thinking commitment as integral to the success of NAI.

As interim director, Leonard led NAI’s transition from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources to the Office of University Outreach and Engagement, where he began conducting listening sessions with Michigan’s 12 federally recognized Tribes and partners across the state. As a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Leonard’s extensive knowledge has contributed to better understanding Native communities and what they want from NAI and MSU as a partner.



[4]United States Department of Energy. (2022, June 27). Community Benefits Agreements (CBA) 101. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Njg-YWjpnkE>
https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2023-07/Community_Benefits_Plan_Webinar.pdf

[5] Ibid

[6] For a more complete review of community benefits refer to the soon to be released “Community Benefit Planning and Agreements A Summary Overview” Fall 2024 at <https://ced.msu.edu/>

WELCOME TO THE NEW CCED FACULTY BOARD OF ADVISORS' MEMBER: DR. AHLQUIST

Daniel Ahlquist, Ph.D., Associate Professor

As a political ecologist, I am interested in people's political, economic, cultural, and material relationships to their environments, especially how power relations and social inequalities play out through unequal relationships to the environment. In my research and teaching, I focus on the interwoven social and environmental dimensions of conservation, agriculture, land use change, development, and climate change, with attention to the dynamics of settler colonialism, social inequality, and environmental justice.

Through my research, I have the privilege of learning from and building relationships with people and communities in Mainland Southeast Asia and the Northern Great Plains. I take an inductive approach to research, meaning that I immerse myself in the places and stories I'm studying with open eyes and ears and a lot of questions. Over the years, this approach has led me to experiences I never could have imagined beforehand, from fighting a forest fire with Highland farmers in Thailand to hanging out at a cowboy poetry gathering in Montana. It has given me the opportunity to observe different community and stakeholder groups as they mobilize to build the futures they want for their families, communities, and lands, from an Indigenous-led land rights movement in northern Thailand to pathbreaking collaborations between ranchers and conservationists working to protect rural livelihoods and grassland ecosystems on the Northern Great Plains.

When I first started teaching in MSU's James Madison College (JMC) in 2016, my students were often confused as to why in a college of public affairs, they were learning about human-environment relationships. They came to JMC to study things like social policy, political theory and international relations, after all. Not conservation, agriculture, and climate change. That has changed in recent years. Students these days are more attuned to the stakes and urgency of the environmental changes they are seeing in the world around them, and they are learning to see these so-called 'environmental problems' as social problems with causes and solutions firmly within the realm of public affairs.



My students today come in eager to learn about the challenges facing their communities and motivated to address them. It is a privilege to get to play a small part in their process of learning and discovery, and I've been amazed by how much I've learned from them, especially when it comes to issues affecting Michigan communities. One of the highlights of my career has been watching my students mobilize to take social and political action on issues that matter to them, from lobbying MSU's Board of Trustees to adopt a more sustainable investing framework to successfully lobbying the Michigan House of Representatives to allocate state funds to fighting food insecurity on college campuses. It is no surprise, then, to find three of my current and former JMC students doing excellent work with the CCED.

I'm delighted to be joining the CCED Faculty Advisory Board. I'm already learning so much about Lansing and other Michigan communities – not only about the challenges they face, but also about how they are building toward more equitable, sustainable, and resilient futures. I look forward to learning from and supporting the work of my CCED colleagues and the communities we serve.

21ST CENTURY COMMUNICATIONS: MICHIGAN BROADBAND UPDATES

John Melcher, Associate Director: CCED

Communities across Michigan and the United States are looking to partner with internet service providers (ISPs) to encourage the submission of proposals to the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. Of the \$42.45 billion available to expand high-speed internet access across the United States, Michigan was awarded \$1.5 billion (the fourth highest grant in the country) to connect 210,000 homes to high-speed broadband.



The Michigan High Speed Internet Office (MIHI) ([LEO - Michigan High-Speed Internet Office](#)) is responsible for developing and delivering the grant program for deployment of high-speed broadband across the state. MIHI has submitted a map of unserved and underserved locations which they have requested to be eligible for BEAD funding. An official map of eligible locations should be approved soon by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) who is responsible for administering the BEAD funding. The window of time for submitting proposals should be open soon, so stay alert for the announcement.

Another program administered by NTIA is the \$1.25 billion Digital Equity Competitive Grants Program aimed at supporting community efforts to address barriers to broadband adoption, including affordability, access to equipment and digital skills.

The State also received a \$20.5 million Digital Equity grant to implement the Michigan Digital Equity Plan ([LEO - Michigan Digital Inclusion Resources](#)) outlining a regional and community-based approach to close the digital divide in the form of a Digital Navigator Resource Network, which is formally known as Michigan's Inclusive Training, Technology, and Equity Network (MITTEN). MIHI has requested and received proposals for MITTEN funding which will establish regional resource hubs and host sites for Regional Digital Coordinators (RDC). Regional host sites will serve as the regional entities supporting the implementation of Michigan's Digital Equity Plan. The total amount of money available is \$13,726,540. The maximum amount per award is \$857,909 per region and the minimum amount is \$150,000. The announcement of these awards should be coming soon.

MIHI AND THE AMERICAN CONNECTION CORPS

MIHI is partnering with the American Connection Corps to increase the capacity of MITTEN. American Connection Corps (ACC) is an AmeriCorps program dedicated to connecting individuals, families and communities to high-speed internet. The ACC focuses on fields related to Economic Opportunity, Health, and Social Capital (<https://www.americanconnectioncorps.org/>). Each of these are closely related to the goals of MITTEN. ACC members will serve as the RDCs at the regional resource hubs and host sites. RDCs are expected to work closely with existing digital inclusion programs to identify local broadband needs and will support the establishment of resources appropriate for the region that align with the goals of the region and Michigan's Digital Equity Plan. RDCs will serve as a layer of support for Community Digital Navigators and as MIHI's direct connection to communities to advance progress in closing the digital divide.

MIHI RECEIVES PRAISE FOR THE MICHIGAN DIGITAL INCLUSION FUND

The National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) ([Home - National Digital Inclusion Alliance](#)) has praised MIHI for proposing an innovative strategy to use any money remaining from the BEAD deployment funds to establish a Michigan Digital Inclusion Fund. The fund is designed to complement and support the implementation of the state's Digital Equity Plan and sustain digital inclusion work throughout the state beyond the short-term federal investments.

The fund proposal has drawn praise from the NDIA who describes the program this way:

“The non deployment funds would help launch the fund, and the MIHI team would work to direct state and philanthropic dollars toward the fund to increase its impact. MIHI would run a competitive selection process (adhering to all the BEAD subgrantee regulations of course) to select a fund manager to administer the fund and issue grants to expand and sustain digital inclusion work across the state. The fund manager would work collaboratively with MIHI to carefully align all the Michigan Digital Inclusion Fund's grants and efforts with the [State Digital Equity Plan](#) and the MIHI office's digital inclusion initiatives. In particular, the fund would leverage the digital navigator network MIHI will establish with its State Digital Equity Capacity Grant, providing a feedback loop for the digital navigators and digital inclusion practitioners to continue identifying their community's needs. While innovative, leveraging federal funds to establish a state led endowment fund isn't unprecedented in Michigan. MIHI will model the endowment fund after similar successful initiatives within Michigan like the [Children's Trust Fund](#) (established in 1982).

NDIA applauds the MIHI office for so elegantly aligning and layering their BEAD and DEA funds, thoughtfully designing sustainability strategies to increase impact and effectiveness from the outset and prioritizing digital equity. We encourage all states, local governments, and the federal government to follow Michigan's lead and embed sustainability into your digital equity programs and plans.”

BROADBAND RESOURCES: NEW COMMUNITY NETWORK MAP SHOWS GROWTH OF COMMUNITY OWNED NETWORKS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance has released a new version of their Community Networks Map “showing where municipal networks operate across the United States and how they are acting to bring new service and competition to places around the country” ([New Resource: Our New Community Network Map Shows the Explosion of Publicly Owned Networks | Welcome to Community Networks](#)). The map which was first developed in 2011 identified 130 networks. The 2024 version identifies over 400 networks covering more than 700 communities, a third of which provide high speed internet to almost all addresses in those communities. The map is interactive, allowing users to filter by network business model and population size among other variables. It is of interest to note that nearly 200 communities are served by open access networks which increases competition between ISPs.

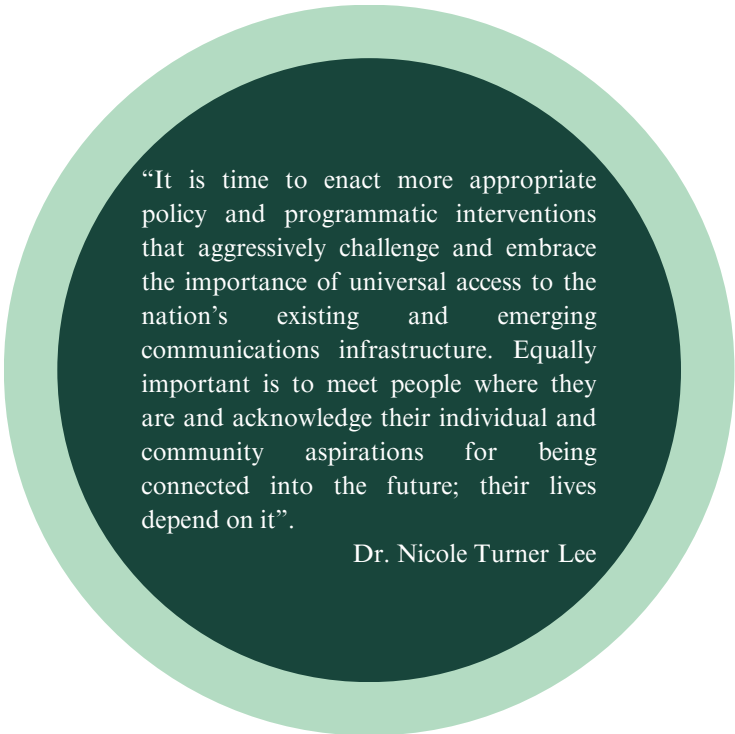
PENN STATE NATIONAL BROADBAND NAVIGATOR

Penn State Extension has just released the National Broadband Navigator ([Penn State National Broadband Navigator](#)) which is a “spatial analytics platform” containing demographic and broadband service availability data. This tool is designed to help empower communities with accurate data to better participate in the broadband developments in their communities. Data contained on the platform includes health care, workforce, business and education as well as current broadband availability data.

NEW BOOK: DIGITALLY INVISIBLE

Brookings Institution Press recently published a book by Dr. Nicol Turner-Lee titled *Digitally Invisible: How The Internet Is Creating the New Underclass*. Dr. Turner-Lee is a Senior Fellow in Governance Studies and the Director of the Center for Technology Innovation at the Brookings Institution ([Nicol Turner Lee | Brookings](#)). Dr. Turner-Lee spent three years talking with people and conducting field research in seven cities and small towns to “understand how people experienced the internet and the extent to which their access benefited them”. People shared how they navigate the internet in their daily lives and shared their future aspirations as they related to technology advancement. Unlike well connected individuals and communities, those with less access to broadband struggle to find jobs, access to quality health care and access to education and training opportunities. These are the people and communities Dr. Turner-Lee refers to as “digitally invisible”.

As the post-covid world emerged, the well-connected individuals and communities adapted and normalized the importance of internet access while the digitally invisible in urban and rural America “...are trapped by their own demography, geography, and circumstances”. The author highlights these individuals and communities “to bring attention to how disparate connectivity has become a social and economic determinant of one’s quality of life and well-being”. And with that attention it is emphasized that digital equity is crucial for America’s future and must be prioritized to offset the “unintended consequence of increasing digitization”.



“It is time to enact more appropriate policy and programmatic interventions that aggressively challenge and embrace the importance of universal access to the nation’s existing and emerging communications infrastructure. Equally important is to meet people where they are and acknowledge their individual and community aspirations for being connected into the future; their lives depend on it”.

Dr. Nicole Turner Lee

[The realities of being digitally invisible in the 21st century](#)

BROWN APPOINTED TO FLINT'S COMMUNITY ETHICS REVIEW BOARD

Bob Brown, Associate Director: CCED

Bob Brown, Associate Director, has been appointed to the Community Ethics Review Board (CERB) of the Flint Community-Based Organization Partners (CBOP). The purpose of CBOP is to provide a structure and forum through which Community-Based Organizations can exchange ideas, offer services, and develop programs in the interest of the African-American Community and the community-at-large.



CBOP works in cooperation and collaboration with, to support, develop, and sponsor community-based welfare projects and programs, that will serve the interest of the community. CBOP also advocates for and engages in activities of community-based participatory research, community health, social planning, social welfare, interest of individuals, health departments, higher education institutions, agencies, and other groups in or serving “The Community.”

CBOP is the “home” of the Community Ethics Review Board (CERB). The purpose of the CERB is to serve as a safety net to ensure that research conducted in the community is ethically safe, morally sound, and provides equal benefit to the community.

The CERB reviews research projects to make sure that:

- The community is engaged and informed,
- It will benefit from said research,
- Projects are sensitive to the community’s culture and needs,
- Needs and concerns about research are heard and addressed,
- A feedback loop is provided where research results will be disseminated to the community for its use and its benefit, and
- The community is educated about research.

For example, following are two submitted studies from Michigan State University that were recently approved by the CERB: 1) Food and Eating in Teens Study, and 2) Culturally Targeted Messaging and Parental Receptivity to HPV.

FOODS AND EATING IN TEENS STUDY

Nearly 1 in 4 children in Genesee County (23.7%) experienced food insecurity in 2022. Food insecurity is associated with elevated risk of adolescent obesity in the United States, and adolescent obesity is associated with numerous adverse physical and mental health consequences in adolescence and increased morbidity and premature mortality in adulthood. Evidence suggests that reducing food insecurity itself is likely necessary, but not sufficient, for preventing subsequent excess weight gain in adolescents affected by food insecurity. Therefore, understanding why food insecurity leads to excess risk for adolescent obesity is necessary to guide intervention development.

A potential mechanism to explain this excess risk is binge eating, a relatively common behavior in adolescents. Food insecurity has been established as a risk factor for binge eating and binge eating has been established as a risk factor for adolescent obesity in the general population, but binge eating has not yet been examined as a risk factor for obesity specifically in the context of food insecurity. Considering that periods of under-eating due to food scarcity in food-insecure households could potentially offset the contribution of binge eating to obesity risk, there is a need to clarify the role of binge eating in relation to food insecurity and adolescent weight. The overall objective in the proposed project is to guide the development of a community intervention in Flint to improve food security and promote healthy weight among adolescents at risk for food insecurity. To inform such an intervention, the PI will work with a youth advisory board to achieve the aims of the proposed project, which are to: (1) quantify the extent to which binge eating mediates the longitudinal association between food insecurity and weight gain during adolescence in 175 adolescents followed for an 18 month longitudinal study and (2) assess perceived acceptability of potential interventions in community settings to improve food security and prevent excess weight gain among adolescents at risk for food insecurity.

CULTURALLY TARGETED MESSAGING AND PARENTAL RECEPTIVITY TO THE HUMAN PAPILOMAVIRUS VACCINE

Cervical cancer is the fourth most common cancer among women worldwide. Cervical cancer disproportionately affects African American women, who have higher incidence and mortality rates than White women. Nearly all cervical cancer is caused by HPV, a viral infection that can be transmitted through sexual contact. HPV vaccination can provide long-lasting protection against HPV and, consequently, reduce risk for cervical cancer and other negative health outcomes associated with high-risk HPV. The 1 HPV vaccine is most effective when administered prior to becoming sexually active around 11- 12 years of age.

However, and despite widespread availability, only 59% of children are fully vaccinated for HPV. Health promotion strategies aimed at increasing HPV vaccine uptake are therefore urgently needed. Underlying cervical cancer disparities, African American girls are less likely to have completed the HPV vaccination series than Whites. Although structural and sociodemographic factors contribute to disparities in vaccine uptake, an additional yet underappreciated psychosocial barrier for African American parents of HPV vaccine-eligible children are racism-related cognitions and emotions.

Developing culturally effective health communication strategies to mitigate adverse impacts of racism-related cognition and increase parental receptivity to the HPV vaccine is therefore vital to reducing cervical cancer disparities among African Americans. The proposed research will develop and initially evaluate culturally targeted messaging to better promote receptivity to the HPV vaccine among African American parents. Parents of White and African American female children will be recruited from Flint, Michigan, to participate in an online educational module about cervical cancer risks and HPV vaccination. Half of African American participants will also receive culturally targeted messaging about the HPV vaccine and cervical cancer, and we will evaluate the impact of educational materials and targeted messaging on HPV vaccination receptivity. The long-term goal is to address racial disparities in cervical cancer by increasing HPV vaccine rates among African Americans. The immediate objective is to promote equity in parental receptivity to the HPV vaccine through the use of culturally targeted health messaging. The central hypothesis is that African American parents will have greater receptivity to the HPV vaccine after receiving a culturally targeted message, relative to an education-only condition.

Brown is currently serving a two-year term on the CERB.



TRIBAL FELLOWSHIP PLANNING FOR ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

Mary ZumBrunnen, Assistant Director: CCED

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.





REI SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS COLLABORATIVE ECONOMIC INNOVATIONS FOR MICHIGAN'S COMMUNITIES

Jenan Jondy, Project Coordinator REI: CCED

Since its establishment in 2011 by Michigan State University's Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED), the Regional Economic Innovation (REI) initiative has built a collaborative approach to advancing economic progress across Michigan.

Supported by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA), REI's mission focuses on fostering collaboration between experts, policymakers, and communities to co-create strategies, tools, models, and policies that promote economic resilience and sustainability in the state's most economically challenged regions. This unique approach has seen REI engage with key issues, including resilience planning, financial sustainability, 21st-century communication infrastructure, and the advancement of circular economies.

As part of its ongoing commitment to innovation, REI has cultivated partnerships with EDA Economic Development Districts, as well as public and private organizations, to serve both rural and urban areas of Michigan. These collaborations have resulted in over 180 impactful projects that focus on creating or retaining jobs and businesses, particularly in economically distressed areas of the state.



2024 REI Summit Keynote Panel

For over a decade REI has supported three project types: Co-Learning Plans, Innovation Fellowships (also known as Co-Implementation Plans), and Student-Led/Faculty-Guided technical assistance projects. These projects bring together multiple stakeholders, including university students, to develop new strategies for more equitable community and economic development.

This year, 17 projects were co-created with the community and 11 of these projects were presented at the annual *Innovate Michigan!* Summit. The Summit, which took place on August 15th at the Kellogg Conference Center in Lansing, also included the Michigan Inventors Coalition (MIC) Expo. MIC provides targeted technical support to early-stage startup inventors and entrepreneurs in Michigan communities, empowering them to introduce innovative products rapidly and confidently to the market.



2024 Michigan Inventors Coalition Expo

The events attracted hundreds of attendees, including inventors and stakeholders, who participated in sessions and voted for their favorite inventions. The Summit also featured a keynote address from State Senator Mallory McMorrow, who discussed critical topics such as affordable housing, sustainability, and the Strategic Outreach and Attraction Reserve (SOAR) Fund.



Phyllis Sykes, Nic Custer, and Adil Mohammed



Summit Registration Table




Summit Breakout Sessions



SPOTLIGHT ON CO-LEARNING PLANS AND INNOVATION FELLOWSHIPS

During the Summit innovative projects were presented showcasing the breadth of REI's impact across Michigan's communities, including:

- The International Center of Greater Flint and the Global Flint Initiative Co Learning Plan: The Global Flint Initiative is a grassroots effort to attract international talent and promote Flint as a Welcoming Community. By conducting extensive outreach with immigrant and native populations, this project aimed to create a cohesive strategy for revitalizing Flint's economy through the retention of international talent.
 - Diversified Community Investment Fund Co Learning Plan: This project sought to reverse the decline of locally owned businesses in Michigan's Upper Peninsula by introducing a community investment fund. The fund would enable local residents to crowd capitalize on small businesses, bringing economic vitality back to the region.
 - A Regional Model for Small Business Prosperity Co Learning Plan: This is a case study of four Michigan Works! program services in Northwest Lower Michigan. This study provided a comprehensive review of the program's small business development services and their impact in statistically underserved communities. Research into the programs would help to identify strengths and weaknesses and could help other regional entities such as chambers of commerce, county governments, and industry leaders to potentially replicate the programs' referral methods. These best practices would be influential in helping distressed local communities build their economic bases.
 - The Align Center for Workforce Development (ACWD Innovation Fellowship): Focused on addressing workforce training gaps, the ACWD project proposed a unified resource hub for financial empowerment and job training. The project aims to create living wage jobs and attract both public and private investment to City of Adrian and Lenawee County by fostering employer specific skill development.
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STUDENT-LED INITIATIVES

REI's commitment to fostering student-led projects was evident in the innovative initiatives presented at the Summit. For example, MSU's Urban and Regional Planning Program partnered with Detroit organizations to assess housing conditions in the city's Morningside neighborhood. The project, which involved surveying vacant and occupied homes, will inform future efforts to secure funding for neighborhood revitalization.

Other student-led projects included sustainability initiatives such as the investigation into consumer plastic behaviors in Marquette, Michigan. This research, conducted in collaboration with Recycle906, aimed to develop recommendations for reducing plastic consumption and improving recycling practices in the community.

CIRCULAR ECONOMY OPPORTUNITIES

One of REI's key focus areas is the support of circular economics, which emphasizes the sustainable use of resources. A standout project in this realm is the Co-Constructing Circular Economic Opportunities through University Waste to Organics Diversion initiative, which addresses the issue of food waste at Northern Michigan University. By diverting food waste from landfills and transforming it into organic material for agriculture, the project shares the potential of circular economic models to drive environmental and economic benefits.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2025: THE CALL FOR CO-LEARNING PLANS

As REI continues to support innovative community and economic development projects, it will soon issue its annual call for Co-Learning Plan proposals towards the end of October. These plans will serve as a crucial source of information for local and state economic development practitioners, helping them make informed decisions that affect Michigan's communities.

The findings and recommendations derived from Co-Learning Plans have the potential to inform policymakers about the strategies most likely to create or retain jobs and businesses in economically distressed regions. By fostering collaboration between stakeholders, REI continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of Michigan's economy.

REI's commitment to collaboration, innovation, and sustainable development has had over \$68 million in economic impact on Michigan's communities. By engaging with a wide range of partners and focusing on areas such as resilience planning, workforce development, and circular economies, REI has become a driving force for economic and social progress.

To learn more about REI's initiatives or to submit a proposal for a Co-Learning Plan, visit <https://reicenter.org/projects/24-25-project-overviews> or contact Jenan Jondy at jondyjen@msu.edu. REI looks forward to continuing its work with communities across the state to drive innovation and create lasting economic opportunities.



Summit Breakout Sessions, Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center

INTRODUCING THE CCED'S NEW CAMPUS COMPACT AMERICORPS VISTA TEAM



AmeriCorps



MEET COURTNEY LUONG: GREEN ZONES VISTA AT CCED

Courtney Luong was born and raised in Woodhaven, Michigan. Currently, she is finishing her undergraduate degree at Michigan State University majoring in International Relations with minors in Global Health & Epidemiology, and Philosophy & Law. Serving at the Center for Community & Economic Development, Courtney is serving through Campus Compact as an AmeriCorps*Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) supporting co-creation of "Green Zone" development within Ingham County.



GREEN ZONES COORDINATION

Over the course of the last 20 years, “Blue Zones” have been areas that traditionally reflect the lifestyle habits of “natural movement, purpose, ‘less-stress’, appropriate proportions, inclusion of antioxidants, sense of community, care-giver support, and socialization as supported by ‘healthy behaviors’ leading to average life span increases of 10-12 years”. Inspired by the Blue Zone Netflix documentary and quality of life as it relates to aging-in-place, Courtney’s VISTA position will focus on analyzing health-related factors that affect low-income populations within the Capital Region. Ultimately, Blue Zone Designation, potentially the second for Michigan (the first being Activate Barry County) may be pursued. However, in this exploratory phase, the CCED affectionately refers to this project as “Green Zone” development

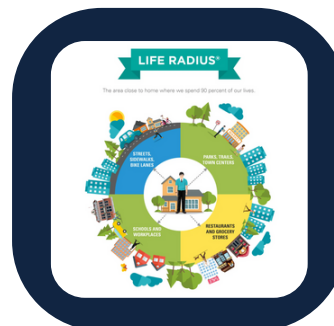
First coined by Dan Buettner, a National Geographic explorer, fellow and journalist in 2004, hundreds of cities and organizations across the US have begun to work towards Blue Zone co-creation. This includes the development and implementation of evidence-informed well-being transformation programs to create sustainable, system-level solutions that improve population health and economic vitality.

In partnership with public and private sector leaders, Courtney will help facilitate initial “Blue Zone” steps ultimately intended to support greater stability, reduced healthcare costs and disparities, and increased resilience.

Blue Zones Map of the World

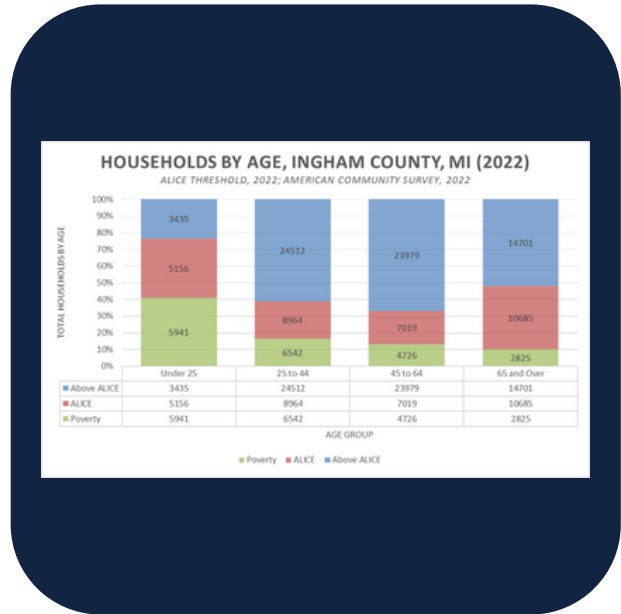


Life Radius Map

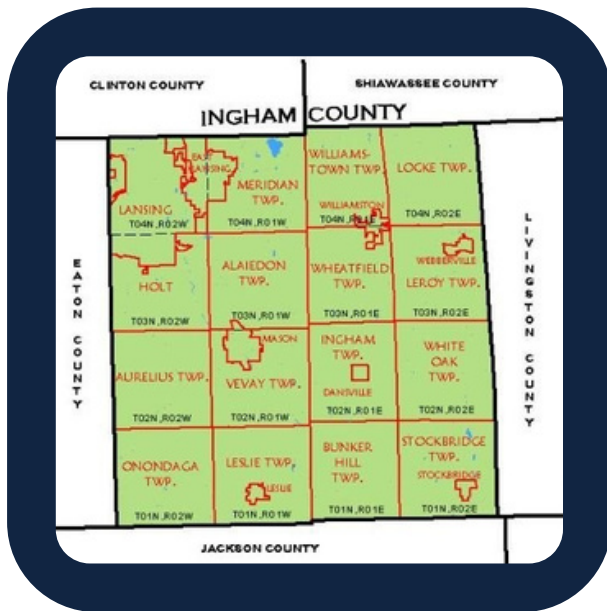


As a new area of concentration, this position will kick-off with learning more about traditional Blue Zones, building a community advisory board and conducting resource and data assessments benefiting low-income senior populations across Ingham. Broadly, these also include social determinants of health (non-medical conditions) within Ingham County such as those spaces in which we are born, grow, work, live and age. The Green Zone*VISTA will also serve alongside two additional Center VISTAs focused on circular economics and community benefits.

During her 12 months of service, Courtney aims to achieve personal goals and skills that will also benefit her future. She wishes to strengthen her networking and communication abilities in a professional setting with representatives of diverse organizations and build a more professional local network. Other skills Courtney wishes to activate include the ability to facilitate diverse teams with confidence. Courtney values this hands-on experience and looks forward to making an impact on public health within the built and natural environments particularly for vulnerable seniors. Please see the Fall 2024 “Thinker + Doers” event flyer following this article.



Households By Age, Ingham County



Map of Ingham County



Social Isolation Indicators



MSU Center for Community and Economic Development Presents:

Fall 2024 “Thinkers and Doers” Health and Wellbeing Among Vulnerable Senior Populations ~An Introduction to “Green Zones”~

When: Thursday, December 5th, 2024 at 4:00pm – 5:30pm

Where: MSU CCED Office, Located at 1615 E Michigan Ave, Lansing, MI 48912

Online Attendees, please use this link: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/98268565438>

Meeting ID: 982 6856 5438 | Passcode: 433037

Registration Code:



The bi-annual “Thinkers and Doers” event brings together key stakeholders and community members from the MSU and Eastside Lansing communities. The event is free for attendees. Light refreshments will be provided.

Join us to discuss and explore "Green Zones" - or opportunities within Ingham County to support vulnerable senior populations as inspired by the Netflix documentary Live to 100: Secrets of the Blue Zones and what can be done on Lansing’s Eastside to support people in living extraordinarily long and vibrant lives. Kicking off this event, an overview of area low-income census tracts, neighborhood anchor points (such as resources within walking distance), climate and health-related factors as they impact vulnerable senior populations for longevity will be shared. Next, a panel discussion of current well-being indicators and activities will be facilitated with live Q&A to follow. Please RSVP of your attendance or regrets at https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6zGafPSMHS1x81g.

Panelists



Erica Phillipich
Community Relations Administrator
College of Human Medicine
Michigan State University

In her work at the University, Ms. Phillipich works closely with local hospitals and organizations to identify research opportunities for the college’s faculty members and students to participate and engage with the East Lansing and Lansing communities. Erica is passionate in strengthening and growing engagement across the Greater Lansing region.



Kara Trimbach
Health Analyst
Ingham County Health Department

At the Health Department, Ms. Trimbach works to increase community involvement and engagement, build coalitions, develop funding support. In her role, she also chairs the Regional Housing Partnership, and the community health assessment and community health improvement plan (CHA/CHIP) workgroups. She is motivated by improving the health of the community and creating change.



Mike Tobin
Vice President, Population Health & Post-Acute Care
Univ. of Michigan Health-Sparrow

Working for UM Health-Sparrow for over 21 years, in his current role Mr. Tobin provides oversight for UM Health-Sparrow’s Population Health Service Organization. As Vice President, he also oversees the Sparrow Care Network, Population Health and the UM Health-Sparrow Community Care including Medical Supply, Home Care, Hospice, and Palliative Care. The Care Network is a 550+ Physician-led Clinical Integrated Organization.

MEET REAGAN WINNIE: CIRCULAR ECONOMICS VISTA AT CCED

Reagan is a senior at Michigan State University majoring in International Relations and Economics at James Madison College. She loves merging her academic interests with a commitment to community development through her AmeriCorps* Volunteers in Service to America position at the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development focused on circularity. She is eager to engage in community-based economic development, where she can make a significant positive impact. Reagan aims to develop professionally through her work and gain valuable skills and knowledge that she will carry on throughout her life and future career. Her primary goal is to deepen her understanding of economic development and to contribute meaningfully to the community and the fight against poverty while promoting circular and sustainable business practices.

In her position as the Circular Economics VISTA, Reagan will tackle the task of researching the transitions of small business supply chain models from a linear economic model to circular ones. The current linear model follows a "take, make, waste" paradigm that is highly unsustainable in the long run. By supporting a circular economic transition, Reagan will focus on three key goals identified by international leader in circular economies, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation: eliminating waste and pollution, recirculating products and materials, and regenerating nature. Reagan will employ an asset-based approach to community and equitable economic development to achieve these objectives, centering her efforts on justice and inclusivity. Her project is among the first in the country to focus on circularity at a local level for low-income business owners making it a pioneering initiative.

Reagan is particularly excited about the potential to use her skills to support circular economic initiatives and provide support to low-income entrepreneurs, helping them establish and grow their businesses in a regenerative and sustainable way. At the CCED, Reagan's responsibilities will include identifying low-income business owners and assisting in developing strategies that support their businesses within their communities' unique contexts and value chains.



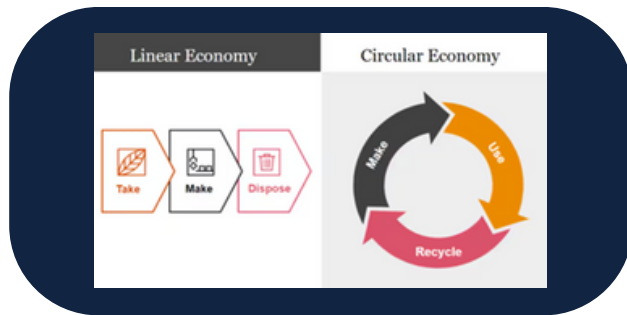
Her work will aim to build economic resiliency through a holistic approach and integrating data collection and assessment to help find ways to help low-income business owners adopt sustainable and circular practices. Another important aspect of Reagan's role will be asset mapping, which involves aligning ecosystems and conducting research to lower procurement barriers to local sourcing. She will also support partner recruitment and meetings, build a contact database, and conduct extensive outreach efforts. These activities are designed to create a strong network of support for the local businesses and communities served.

Thus far, Reagan has been involved in multiple impactful projects. The first major project she contributed to was researching and writing part of a white paper on the circular economy, "[A 2024 Snapshot of Circular Economics](#)". Her research focused on exploring Michigan programs, policies, and grants relevant to circular economy, specifically for small and medium-sized businesses. The Snapshot provided an overview of the circular economy on multiple levels, including international, national, state, and community.

Additionally, Reagan has worked on various other projects with the circular economy team. One notable project was a statewide survey on recycling initiatives, distributed to leaders of material management facilities across Michigan.

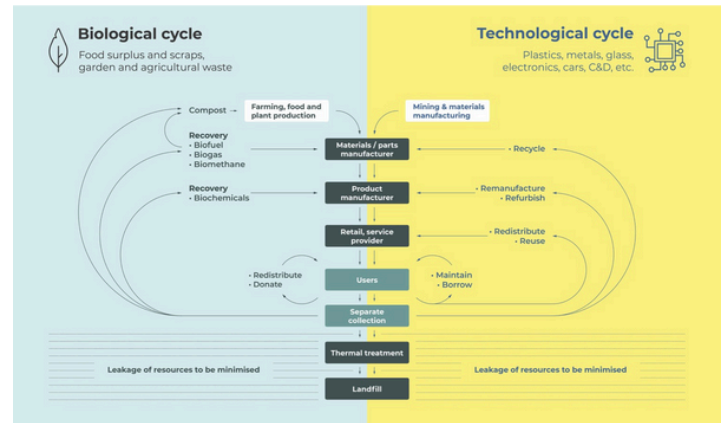
The results gathered from this survey help us to identify key challenges and effective strategies to increase recycling rates statewide. Another project involved conducting interviews with industry partners on their circular economy practices. The interviews aimed to gain a deeper understanding of how large companies are transitioning to circular practices, and the role that higher education can play in guiding and informing these efforts.

This semester, Reagan also contributed to organizing the Conversations on Circularity Forum, an event that brought together MSU faculty, legislative representatives, student organization leaders, and professionals in material management and sustainability. The forum fostered dialogue on circular economy practices and facilitated networking. It featured two key panels: one focused on material management and the other on Michigan public policy.



Linear Economy & Circular Economy

Reagan has also been involved in MSU’s first honors seminar on the Circular Economy at MSU as a team assistant. Building on her experience in circular economy, academia, and community engagement, Reagan’s latest project focuses on supporting entrepreneurs in Ingham County. Partnering with the Lansing Economic Area Partnership small business entrepreneur cohorts, she helped format a survey to assess their circular economic practices. From this, she aims to provide recommendations to help businesses adopt circular methods that reduce costs and increase marketability. This project will be Reagan’s primary focus moving forward.



Circular Economy Model



MEET THEO VAN HOF: COMMUNITY BENEFITS VISTA AT CCED

In April of this year, Theo graduated with a degree in Political Theory & Constitutional Democracy from James Madison College at Michigan State University with a minor in creative writing. Theo is also originally from East Lansing, Michigan, but lived in Lincoln, Nebraska for five years and then moved with his family back to Okemos, Michigan, where he finished high school, college, and currently lives.



Conversations on Circularity

Join us at our Fall Forum, where Michigan’s recycling and legislative leaders will discuss the state’s latest progress and initiatives in Circular Economy. This event is designed to foster collaboration, strengthen coalitions, and grow valuable connections within our community.

Join Us!
**November
14, 2024**
4 PM - 5:30 PM



PANEL DISCUSSIONS:

Panel One:

Leaders in Material Recycling and Waste Reduction in Michigan

Panel Two:

Michigan’s Public Policy Update- What Might the Future Hold?

MSU Union, Lake Huron Room, Third floor
 49 Abbot Rd, East Lansing

SCAN THE QR CODE TO REGISTER FOR THE EVENT AND VISIT OUR WEBSITE



Contact tierne29@msu.edu with any questions

Theo is excited to be volunteering at the CCED in effort to combat poverty in Michigan. He believes that providing communities with the resources they need to succeed is critical and that “people helping people” will always be the most effective way to make lasting and sustainable positive change. Helping people is what drives Theo and he hopes to gain a broader skillset around community organizing and service work.

As a VISTA member, Theo will spend his year focusing on Community Benefits. Community Benefits are legal agreements that bring local stakeholders, such as labor organizations, racial justice groups, and environmental entities together to ensure that public funds help provide public benefit. As a new business breaks ground or a developer signs a contract, for example, a municipality may co-create a Community Benefit agreement with citizen stakeholders to ensure the community itself benefits from the new development.

Examples of this could be a commitment to hire local workers, contributions to economic trust funds, or offering workforce training. There is great opportunity for customization and tailoring of these agreements to the specific needs of a community.

Further, Theo will aid in researching, drafting templates, compiling data, and ultimately providing evaluative feedback on Community Benefit plans and agreements for distressed communities and marginalized populations across Michigan. He will also support and facilitate a community advisory board of local stakeholders to determine how Community Benefit plans and agreements may best take root. These meetings are an important part of community participatory development and co-creation of community-driven solutions.

In addition to building a statewide network of community advisory board representatives, Theo will help to generate a toolkit for community development professionals and volunteers of information supporting effective implementation based on case studies of Community Benefit plans and agreements.

Theo will also assist communities in broadening their understanding and application of Community Benefit agreements, as well as creating and providing workshops, webinars, and other media on Community Benefit plans and agreements for educational outreach and engagement statewide.

In his free time, Theo enjoys walking and finding a nice spot to read. He loves watching movies and TV shows. Theo is also a big sports fan, his favorite teams are Michigan State, the Detroit Lions, and Arsenal FC. Finally, Theo loves to write and often will be deep in some poetic thought, but is more than ready to get hands on experience in making our communities better. Theo is very excited about this opportunity and is excited to be working with the Center for Community and Economic Development as we all think about a positive future Michigan. *Go Green!*

Community Benefits
Ensuring equitable and community-based economic development

Why are community benefits important?
Considering community needs creates more equitable economic development by explicitly considering the needs of the community through negotiations between communities and developers.

What are benefits?
Benefits are measurable and specific actions or services provided by a developer for the good of the community being developed. Benefits are tailored to the individual needs of each community.

Common benefits:
Environmental Benefits
Job Training
Priority Hiring
Quality of Life Considerations
Right-to-Organize Commitments
Scholarships





CONVERSATIONS ON COMMUNITY BENEFITS

Join Community Leaders to discuss Community Benefits and how they can be applied in communities to foster equitable-community-based economic development.



15th January, 2025
09:00 am – 02:00 pm



**HANNAH COMMUNITY
CENTER, EAST LANSING, MI**



**SCAN THE QR CODE
FOR EVENT
REGISTRATION AND
INFORMATION**

events.engage.msu.edu/cbaevent

SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

Session 1

What are Community Benefits?

Session 2

Why do Community Benefits Matter?

Lunch Keynote

Terrell Knight - Cleveland Community Benefits Ordinance Overview

Session 3

Community Benefits and the Way Forward

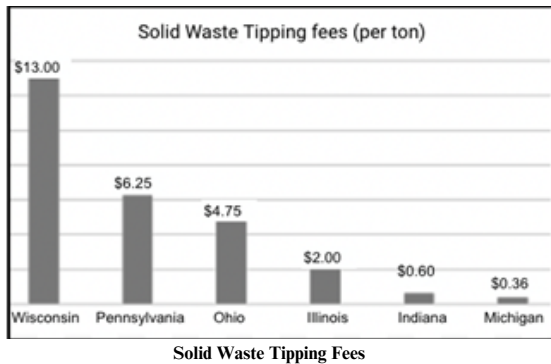
Contact vanhofth@msu.edu with questions



TIPPING THE SCALE ON RECYCLING IN MICHIGAN: A STATE OF THE STATE SURVEY POLICY BRIEF

Jayla C. Simon, Senior Research Assistant: CCED

In the fall of 2023 with the leadership support of the Circular Economy Institute Network partners, including CCED Director Dr. Rex LaMore, Research Assistant Jayla Simon, Ecological Economist at the White House Office of Management and Budget, Dr. Robert Richardson, and Amcor Endowed Chair in Packaging Sustainability, Dr. Rafael Auras, jointly applied for the Michigan Applied Public Policy Research Grant to research Michigan’s recycling rates and policy issues, such as waste importation, household recycling behaviors, and the interplaying impact of statewide disposal surcharges and recycling infrastructure.



METHODOLOGY

The team conducted a review of literature and baseline data to develop a conceptual framework for analyzing a specific meaningful policy issue. Key findings included that Michigan recycles only 18% of its waste, well below the national average, while importing over 22% of its trash due to low disposal fees, and may overtime face landfill capacity issues with a tipping fee significantly lower than the regional average.

Subsequently, the team established and proposed various research questions aiming to understand Michigan households’ recycling behaviors, barriers to recycling, support for importing solid waste, and willingness to support higher disposal surcharges, as well as relevant implications on public policy.



Landfill Dumping

After receiving the grant, the team conducted additional research, which suggested that to improve recycling rates, policies informed by citizen needs and prioritizing more comprehensive outreach are essential. In support of additional research, the team conducted secondary surveys and interviews with landfill operators and waste management industry experts, as well as reviewed past State of the State surveys to identify gaps and patterns in research.

Informed by such research and analysis of past data, reports, and publications on recycling behaviors and barriers in Michigan, the team was able to develop six questions, purchased through grant funding, for the State importing solid waste, and support for increasing the statewide disposal surcharge for varying reasons.

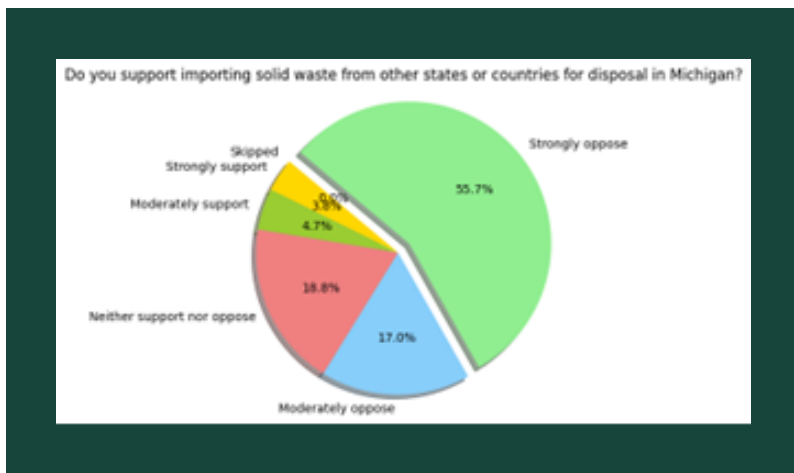
These questions were included in the 2024 SOSS. The survey was distributed via email to respondents who were asked to participate by clicking a link and answering the questions to the best of their ability. Following the distribution of survey questions, the team analyzed the raw data to conclude the following findings. The team identified key variables used to indicate response themes as well as conduct various cross tabulations regarding demographic characteristics. These included: ‘attitude about recycling,’ ‘knowledge about recycling,’ ‘always recycle,’ ‘should recycle more,’ and ‘number of barriers.’ The data analysis also used the responses to categorize popular infrastructural changes to encourage recycling by categorizing responses into three groups: Individual, Corporate, and Public Infrastructure. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Software, the team consolidated the options of the question asking about methods to encourage recycling based on research and past survey data. Key findings from the top seven chosen options categorized accordingly included the need for better community support, more information from manufacturers, and increased public education.

FINDINGS

Most interestingly, the survey revealed significant opposition to waste importation and mixed opinions on increasing disposal surcharges to fund recycling programs. For example, respondents indicated that a discrepancy exists between the support for raising fees to reduce waste importation and the support for increasing recycling programs.

The analysis of such complexities has highlighted the importance of Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs and the need for public education on the benefits of policy changes to enhance recycling rates and sustainable waste management practices.

That being said, sustainability and circularity influence every aspect of an individual’s life and the urgent need to change how the game is being played is evident in empirical evidence and the theme seen throughout the data collected from the MAPPR survey taken by various Michigan residents. There are revolutionary ways to modify Michigan’s current progression. Some suggestions that would revive recycling within communities are:



Percent of People Supporting the Importing of Solid Waste to Michigan

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Implementing policies for businesses to design products with easier recycling options;
- Increasing public education to communities about recycling systems that enhance understanding and support for sustainability initiatives, and;
- Encouraging accountability in the public and private sectors.



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.

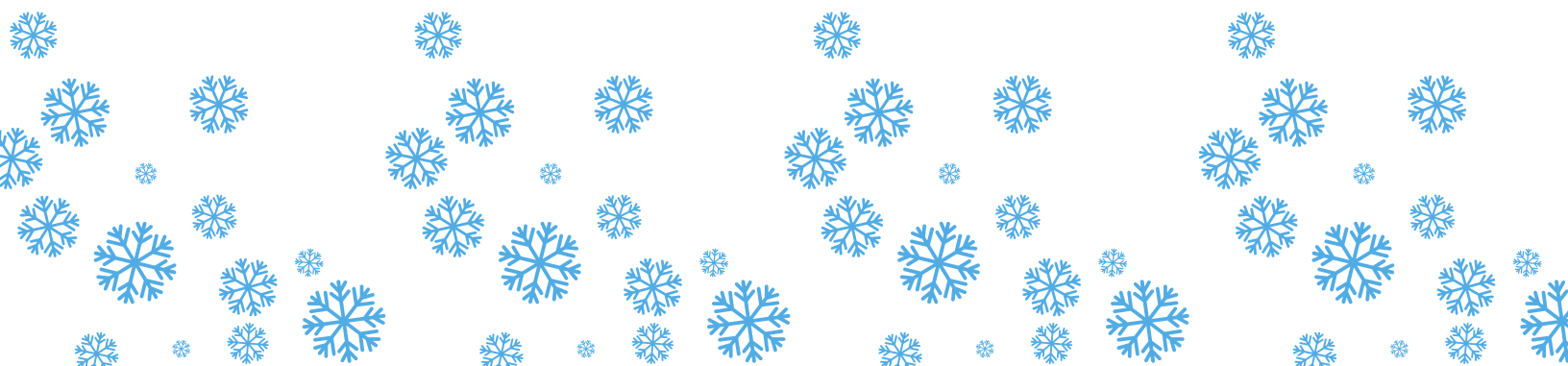


As I transition from my role at the CCED office, I am excited to announce I will continue my journey with the National Charrette Institute (NCI). In this position as a graduate student assistant at NCI, I have been actively engaged in facilitating community engagement events, including recent work with 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.

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.



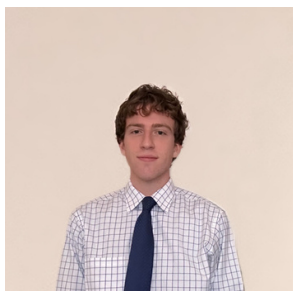
Emma Eurich

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.

