

From Investment Practices to Grant Writing: My Journey at CCED



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I found MSU CCED through a sustainability fair advertised through CCED’s partner, the Office of Sustainability in April of 2022. I started working at the Center in the summer of 2022 with other students on a report about MSU's investment practices to help better position the University as a leader in sustainable endowment spending and transparency. Our team was called the University Sustainable Investment Working Group (USIWG). We presented this report to the board of trustees, Associated Students of Michigan State University, Student Sustainability Leadership Council, the Sunrise Movement, and the Council of Graduate Students. Following, the USIWG team hosted a forum convening additional stakeholders to share opinions and recommendations on sustainability and investments. Lastly, the working group developed a resolution presented to the University Council summarizing the report's goals recommended to the Board of Trustees as good practice for transparency and investing.

I also participated in a grant writing application process to increase awareness of community investing, economic development, and revitalization in distressed communities. This was awarded as a Creating Inclusive Excellence Grant (CIEG). The CCED CIEG working group then developed the [“Study to Determine the Feasibility of Michigan State University Investing in Community Development Financial Institutions \(CDFI\)”](#). Additionally, I participated in the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) II project where I conducted research on the feasibility of building a reuse material facility from deconstruction and the associated environmental, social, and economic impacts. Finally, I collaborated in writing a grant application narrative to provide Native American tribal communities with capacity building and leadership development awarded by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.



Furthermore, all of these experiences led me to choose to complete my internship requirement with CCED which is counting for credit within the *Madison Diversity Leadership Program* of James Madison College. This fellowship program is focused on inclusive leadership in the public and international affairs arena. Being familiar with the workplace and the team at CCED made it easy for me to decide to stay at the Center. The work I am conducting includes providing support for a pilot tribal fellowship through an 18-month planning process utilizing Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development funding for five participating tribes within Michigan. Also, I am assisting to build a *Circular Economy Institute* that includes potential event planning for a 2024 Summit, literature review, and small business curriculum development. My work at the Center will conclude with building a pre-plan and laying the groundwork, lastly, for three AmeriCorps*Volunteers in Service to America who will serve in Lansing beginning in mid-June of 2024.

I have learned many things at the Center that I want to take into my professional and personal life. Staff meetings every Tuesday, for example, began my Tuesdays with an icebreaker question that made the job feel less stressful and helped me hone facilitation skills as a rotating staff chair. Having open communication with my supervisors and building friendships with other research assistants also made this experience more fun.



I hope in the future to find a job that has similar qualities that make the work environment more welcoming. One of my favorite memories at CCED was working with the USIWG team and presenting to the board and other organizations on campus because I felt engaged in the process and every week we had something new to work on. The most useful skill I gained at CCED was confidence in the workplace in order to achieve my professional, academic, and personal goals. Lastly, I am looking forward to my last semester at MSU as well as CCED and I hope to contribute as much as I can to the work that needs to be done in circularity.

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