



# *Innovate Michigan!* Summit 2025

## Recap: Innovation & Collaboration

The annual *Innovate Michigan!* Summit and Michigan Inventors Coalition (MIC) Expo took place on Thursday, August 14th, at the Kellogg Conference Center in Lansing. Nearly 300 people attended both events, creating space for collaboration, networking, and the exchange of new ideas.

This year's agenda featured a wide variety of sessions, beginning with opening remarks from Dr. Rex LaMore, Director of MSU's Center for Community and Economic Development, and Dr. Doug Gage, MSU Vice President of Research and Innovation. A highlight of the morning included a keynote fireside chat with Dr. Sarah Gretter, Director of the Apple Developer Academy and launch lead of MSU's Apple Manufacturing Academy, who spotlighted upcoming Apple Manufacturing sessions. Throughout the day, participants engaged in eight sessions - including two sessions eligible for AICP Certification Maintenance credits. Topics included the use of AI to strengthen coalitions and bring upskilling opportunities to Detroit neighborhoods, efforts to connect Flint's small businesses to corporate procurement through the

"BuyFlint Initiative," and strategies for addressing agricultural workforce and infrastructure shortages through innovation centers. Sessions also examined the role of community investment funds, innovative approaches to infrastructure expansion (shared water and sewer infrastructure) in Northwest Michigan, and the importance of partnerships and resilience as shared by REI Innovation Fellows. The day closed with a student-led presentation on the strategic investment planning project along Warren's Van Dyke Corridor. Attendees also celebrated the MIC Pitch Contest during the evening reception. A key feature of the Summit was the Ideas to Innovation rating, where attendees



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helped identify the most promising strategies to create or retain jobs in Michigan's economically distressed communities. These ratings will be reviewed by REI's Consultative Panel of experts and will help inform the 2026 call for proposals—pending funding availability. The call remains uncertain, as the EDA University Center program remains under review by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce.

The day concluded with the REI & MIC Reception, where attendees celebrated innovation and connection while learning the results of the MIC Pitch Contest. To learn more about this year's REI projects: <https://reicenter.org/projects/current-projects>

