NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 37

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT





# CENTER FOR COMMUNITY AND VOL 37 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VOL 37 TABLE OF CONTENTS

Economic Autonomy: Supporting economic strength in our communities	2
Introducing the CCED's New Community Engagement Specialist: Dr. Kevin Brooks	5
CCED Lansing Update	6
Strategic Doing: Equitable Community Development in Flint	8
Spring Updates on the Fellowship for Tribal Economic Resiliency	10
Spring REI Update	11
Hello From our Humphrey Fellow: Alicia Arteaga	14
The CCED's Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA Team	15
Announcing the CCED's Circular Economy Newsletter	20
A Warm Welcome to New Student Researchers	21



#### ECONOMIC AUTONOMY: SUPPORTING ECONOMIC STRENGTH IN OUR COMMUNITIES

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

The Michigan State University (MSU) Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) adheres to the Community Development Societies (CDS) "Principles of Good Practice" [1] to guide our research and outreach activities. In advancing healthy, democratic and prosperous communities CDS advises community development professionals to support "economic autonomy" with communities.

Economic autonomy seeks to "strengthen local ownership and stewardship of community assets and wealth building opportunities."[2] CCED in partnership with university faculty, students and community partners has initiated and supported several innovative research and outreach projects that support community economic autonomy.

#### COMMUNITY INCOME AND EXPENDITURES MODEL

Developed and implemented by dedicated engaged scholars and community leaders the Community Income and Expenditures Model (CIEM) is a community economic development tool dedicated to arming communities with the information required to develop effective development strategies and policies. It is a tool to measure asset flows and economic leakage in communities.

CIEM was developed from the observation that low-income communities remain poor for reasons other than having a lack of accumulated wealth:

- The problem is not just that low-income communities have too little income, rather, the problem is that a substantial amount of money enters the neighborhoods then quickly leaves due to non-local purchases, non-local hiring, and non-local ownership of homes and businesses.
- The problem is intensified by the lack of commercial institutions (e.g., businesses, financial, etc.) that are located within poor communities and responsive to their needs. Dollars circulating outside of the community do not contribute to local economic wealth.

CIEM helps identify these missed opportunities for increasing local economic wealth. To do this, CIEM uses a community-based survey to gather information about the spending patterns of consumers, businesses, non-profit organizations, and government agencies within the community.

CIEM was developed from the observation that low-income communities remain poor for reasons other than having a lack of accumulated wealth:

- How much income is received by individuals and organizations within the community?
- How much of this income originates from within the community?
- How much money is spent within the community by individuals and organizations within the community?
- How much of this money is spent within the community and estimates how much money is spent outside the community or sent to institutions outside the community?

CIEM involves the community in an analysis of their own economy. The process provides education and opportunity to empower local residents and increase the linkages between people in the community. It is comprehensive and flexible, allowing for the examination of the economic behavior of a variety of economic entities, including the local household, business, non-profit, and government sectors in the local economy.

The goal of CIEM is to help economically distressed communities take more control over their lives and their economy in order to build upon their economic strengths and capacities. It hopes to accomplish this goal through three specific objectives:

- Learning: The project is designed to foster economic literacy so those community members are empowered to make economic decisions for their own well being.
- Community: The project seeks to build a sense of community by encouraging residents and community leaders from the business, non profit, and government sectors, to work together toward a common goal of community improvement.
- Diagnosis: CIEM is designed to identify opportunities for local economic growth by understanding leaks in the economy.

#### INVESTING IN MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES

Access to patient and affordable investment and loan financial resources are critical to supporting community economic development in distressed urban and rural communities. CCED has participated in several outreach and research projects that focused on this critical element of economic autonomy. Some of our more recent collaborative efforts have focused on the potential to leverage "institutional resources" like university endowments to help make capital available to distressed people and places.

In the Fall of 2021 with support of a grant from the MSU Office on Institutional Diversity and Inclusion, and guided by a group of dedicated faculty, students, and concerned partners, CCED undertook a fact-finding investigation to more fully understand the policies and practices that the MSU Board of Trustees employed to guide the University's investment portfolio. Valued at an estimated \$4.5 billion dollars, the management of this public endowment is the responsibility of the MSU Board of Trustees (BOT) and is critical to the fulfillment of MSU's mission. This investigation by the ad hoc group was motivated in part by a growing societal awareness of the importance of aligning institutional investment practices with an agreed-upon set of values and goals.

Over several months the Ad Hoc University Sustainable Investment Working Group reviewed policy documents, examined the practices of other higher-education institutions who had adopted value-guided investments, developed and administered a fact-finding survey that was completed by the MSU Board of Trustees' designated representative, and prepared a summary analysis offering recommendations on how MSU might align its investment portfolio with the values articulated in its recently adopted Strategic Plan with commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion.

The Working Group's analysis identified specific recommended actions that the MSU BOT could implement that would increase the transparency of their current investment practices, more clearly define MSU's "social conscience", diversify the representation of the advisers/consultants that provide expert advice to the BOT on investment opportunities, and clarify those parties' roles in the value-guided portfolio management process.

As a work "in progress" and as institutional investment practices evolve to our changing global economic realities, investing public resources like endowments that are guided by an institution's mission and values are a continuing opportunity to provide patient and affordable capital to distressed communities.

#### **COMMUNITY BENEFITS** AGREEMENTS

This past January as a part of CCED's Contemporary Issues Institutes, with the support of a broad-based university/community advisory committee, organized and hosted the state of Michigan's first ever gathering focused on community benefit planning. This statewide gathering was proceeded by the publication of a CCED "policy brief" that explored "the history and current application of community benefits. Community benefits are a tool for promoting more equitable development [3] practices by explicitly considering the needs of the community where a proposed development is to occur."

At the heart of the community benefit movement is the belief that "public and private sector investment in economic development should bring measurable, permanent improvements to the lives of affected residents, particularly low-income communities of color, through the creation of good jobs, affordable housing, and neighborhood services"[4]

The January 2025 Contemporary Issues Institute brought together over 100 participants in a one day event that examined current local government initiatives in support of community benefit planning and offered participants specific case studies of how this practice has been implemented in the U.S. CCED in collaboration with its advisory committee and other partners are currently exploring the feasibility of creating a "community benefit facilitators" training program to build community capacity to negotiate and monitor effective community benefit agreements

In closing, the summaries above are just a few examples of CCED's commitment to supporting scholarly research and engaged outreach to assist in creating economic autonomy within our local communities. It doesn't take a "rocket surgeon" to realize that part of the challenge of supporting authentic and sustainable community revitalization is for communities to have a financial infrastructure that "strengthens local ownership and stewardship of community assets and wealth building opportunities".

To learn more about these and other projects in visit ced.msu.edu.



Leaky Bucket

#### INTRODUCING DR. KEVIN BROOKS

Kevin Brooks, Ph.D., Community Engagement Specialist: CCED

MSU's Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) recently named Kevin L. Brooks, Ph.D. its new community engagement specialist. As a department within the Office of University Outreach and Engagement (UOE), CCED's mission centers on collaborative university-community partnerships that identify local concerns and develop innovative community and economic development strategies to address them.



In this role, Brooks will liaise between communities in the greater Lansing area—Ingham, Eaton, and Clinton counties—and MSU faculty, staff, and students to enable respectful, mutually beneficial research, projects, and initiatives that further community goals.

"It's a pleasure to welcome Dr. Brooks to this new role with CCED," said Kwesi Brookins, vice provost for UOE. "As a division of UOE, we engage with communities across our tri-county region to identify issues of concern and implement innovative community and economic strategies to address them. Dr. Brooks will develop and sustain relationships with regional organizations and communities, contributing to best practices for community-university partnerships."

Formerly, Brooks served as an academic specialist for diversity and civic engagement with MSU's Residential College in the Arts and Humanities from 2015 to 2022. In this role, he designed, led, and integrated civic and community engagement activities into classrooms by establishing new partnerships to assist K-12 students in Lansing, Detroit, and Flint. Brooks most recently served as the director for the Mary V. Jordan Multicultural Center at East Tennessee State University, providing support for programs that help underrepresented, first-generation, and low-income students succeed.

Dr. Rex LaMore, director of the CCED, said the Center is looking forward to drawing on Brooks' experience in community engagement. "With Dr. Brooks' help in strengthening relationships between university and the Lansing area community, we can further our mission to improve the quality of life for our community by working with both public and private organizations in mobilizing community and university resources to support the co-creation of innovative community and economic development strategies," he said.

Brooks earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's in physical education from Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University. He also holds a master's degree in health and kinesiology and a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from Purdue University.



#### **CCED LANSING UPDATE**

John Melcher, Associate Director: CCED

#### MICHIGAN TALENT PARTNERSHIP GRANT: LANSING'S REO TOWN

The State of Michigan budget for FY25 includes funding for the Michigan Talent Partnership Program which is designed to "support the development of talent-magnet neighborhoods in Michigan central cities".

The Talent Partnership Program goals are to 1) increase Michigan's population of young talent and 2) create local business opportunities for local residence. As stated in the legislative language, "The Michigan talent partnership program under this section must be used to implement transformational public space development projects in central cities neighborhoods or concentrated districts and leverage interdepartmental and cross-sector coordination through local talent plans that are designed to increase this state's population of young talent by creating high-density, walkable, vibrant street life neighborhoods or districts, and to create business ownership opportunities for local residents"

Of the \$25 million program budget, \$18 million will be used to fund one eligible project in each of four Michigan cities: Detroit, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor and Lansing. The remaining \$7 million will be used to fund other eligible initiatives under the Talent Partnership program throughout the state.

Lansing put together a team of people representing Lansing institutions and residents to develop a focus for the proposal. It was decided that the Talent Partnership proposal should be centered on REO Town, which is adjacent to Lansing's downtown. On March 12, 2025, the National Charrette Institute at Michigan State University conducted "City of Lansing REO Town Vision Community Workshop", a planning charrette to develop objectives for the Talent Partnership proposal. Building upon previous design work that had been done by the REO Town community (including REO Town Commercial Association, Studio Intrigue, and neighborhood groups), over 60 people participated in the workshop to develop a shared vision of REO Town and strengthen relationships among REO Town interest-holders, residents and partners.

The Visioning exercise was conducted at tables of 8 to 10 people and designed to give each participant the opportunity to express their hopes and aspirations for the future of REO Town. Participants brainstormed five



**REO** Town Sign in Lansing Michigan

ideas that would create a vibrant REO Town, focusing on public spaces, then sharing them with the group and drawing them on a map. The ideas were then grouped together and prioritized by the table participants. The top three categories from each of the seven tables were reported out. All the ideas from this exercise were collected and organized into the following seven major categories: mixed use and infill development, support for businesses, housing options, historical character of community, parks and riverfront activation, connectivity and livability, and aesthetics and beautification. This output from the workshop will serve as content material for the development of the Talent Partnership Proposal.

A group of organizations have come together to form the Talent Partnership Grant Consortium and will be responsible for supporting the Lansing Economic Development Corporation as applicant for the Talent Partnership Grant. The Consortium members include Capital Area Transportation Authority, City of Lansing, Lansing Economic Development Corporation, Lansing Economic Area Partnership, MSU Center for Community and Economic Development, MSU Foundation, REO Town Commercial Association and Tri County Regional Planning Commission.

The proposal will be developed over the next several months. Three documents will need to be created. The first is an estimated total project budget for the district or neighborhood and is due in April. Second, a draft plan for the district or neighborhood is due in July. The third document will be a final project budget including the required matching funds and will be due in August.

#### MICHIGAN MITTEN FUNDING UPDATE

The Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) awarded \$10.6 million in grants to 13 organizations that will create regional hubs as a part of the Michigan Inclusive Training, Technology and Equity Network (MITTEN). The hubs will provide digital skills training, device distribution programs, online accessibility training, and access to affordable broadband services among other activities. The awards were made based on Michigan's Property Regions, with slight modifications. In mid-Michigan (Region 7) Ingham County was awarded \$857,909 to serve the tri county area including Clinton, Eaton and Ingham counties.

The selected organizations, listed by prosperity regions, are:		
• Region 1c: Eastern Upper Peninsula Intermediate School	• Region 7: Ingham County (\$857,909)	
District (\$857,909)	Region 8: Southwest Michigan Planning	
• Region 2: Grow Benzie (\$857,870)	Commission (\$857,909)	
• Region 3: Northeast Michigan Consortium (\$446,023)	• Region 9: Southeast Michigan Community	
• Region 4a: Mid Michigan Community Action Agency	Alliance (\$857,909)	
(\$857,909)	• Region 10: Tejara (\$820,080)	
• Region 4b: West Michigan Works! (\$857,908)	• Detroit: United Way of Southeastern	
• Region 5: Central Michigan University (\$854,304)	Michigan (\$857,909)	
• Region 6: Regents of the University of Michigan Flint	Grand Rapids: Hispanic Center of Western	
(\$746,405)	Michigan (\$857,909)	

#### **MICHIGAN BEAD PROGRAM UPDATE**

The Broadband Equity, Access and Development (BEAD) Program awarded Michigan \$1.559 billion to build broadband to unserved or underserved households. The window to receive applications for first round funding from internet service providers (ISPs) closed on April 9, 2025, with MIHI receiving 392 applications to provide service to 194,000 locations of the 248, 253 eligible locations. Over the next several months MIHI will read, score, and deconflict the applications. Grant agreements will be developed and negotiated with award announcements being made in the next several months.

#### STRATEGIC DOING: EQUITABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN FLINT

#### Bob Brown, Associate Director: CCED

CCED Flint uses the practice of Strategic Doing to cocreate with partners equitable community development efforts. What is Strategic Doing? According to the Strategic Doing Institute (SDI) it is a peer-reviewed, scientifically grounded practice that teaches the discipline of collaboration and strategy in open networks.



Collaboration is an essential aspect of building strong and thriving communities. From local neighborhoods to global networks, collaborations bring together individuals, organizations, and institutions to work towards common goals and address pressing social, economic, and environmental issues. SDI further indicates, "The key insight of Strategic Doing is that these collaborations emerge from conversations with a predictable structure. As participants learn how to design and guide these conversations, the performance, volume, and velocity of their collaborations grow".

Strategic doing uses four key questions to form the foundation of collaboration:

- 1. What Could We Do? What are the opportunities before us using only the assets we already have might generate solutions to the complex challenge we face?
- 2. What Should We Do? We can't do everything; which, out of all the opportunities, should we pursue, and what would success look like?
- 3. What Will We Do? Where will we start? What project should we launch? What commitments are we making to each other to begin that project?
- 4. What's Our 30/30? When will we get back together to share what we've done so that we can learn from our experience, adjust if we need to, and plot out our next set of commitments?

Strategic Doing was used by CCED Flint in the creation of Neighborhoods Without Borders and its Opening Doors initiative. Neighborhoods Without Borders, a networking grassroots community, comes together to significantly improve the overall quality of life in Flint neighborhoods by using an asset approach (people's gifts) to take direct action. Opening Doors is one of our Pathfinder Projects to break down the borders of fear and misunderstanding that separate us and divide our community. Strategic Doing is helping us transform Flint, Michigan into the epitome of equity.

For a more in depth look at Strategic Doing go to <u>https://strategicdoing.net/</u>. Bob Brown, CCED Associate Director, is a member of the Strategic Doing Institute core team.

To guide strategic, collaborative conversations Strategic Doing uses 10 rules or skills:

#### **Before you begin:**

- 1. Create a safe space for deep, focused conversations.
- 2. Frame the conversation around an appreciative question.

#### What could we do?

- 3. Uncover hidden assets that people are willing to share.
- 4. Link & leverage your assets to create new opportunities.

#### What should we do?

- 5. Rank all your opportunities to find your "Big Easy".
- 6. Convert your Big Easy into an outcome with measurable characteristics.

#### What will we do?

7. Define a Pathfinder Project with guideposts.8. Create a short-term action plan with everyone taking a small step.

#### What's our 30/30?

9. Set a next meeting to review progress and make adjustments.10. Nudge, connect, and promote relentlessly to reinforce your new habits of collaboration.



#### SPRING UPDATES ON THE FELLOWSHIP FOR TRIBAL ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

#### Mary ZumBrunnen, Assistant Director: CCED

Over the week of April 14th, I had the pleasure of traveling to meet with three tribes in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. These included Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Bay Mills Indian Community and the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians. No "up north" trip during Michigan's early spring would be complete without perfectly sunny skies and an unpredicted severe storm winter white out! I was in luck....but alas, no Northern Lights viewing as such.



During our time, we discussed a series of the new federal administration's executive orders and their potential impacts on each sovereign tribal nation as well as surrounding local economies. Additionally, we also revisited the kick-off of the Tribal Economic Resiliency Fellowship (previously scheduled for June of this year) and related shifting tides. At the end of March, northern Michigan was hit with another severe weather event that left 60,000+ people without electricity and in many cases as such, also without heat, connectivity and supplies as they tried to dig out

Michiganders are tough, but we also rely on steady access to goods and services via local and multi-national supply chains as well as infrastructure and transportation. Across the Great Lakes region, the country and world, we as humans are systems-based and social creatures. Therefore, the ideas and strategies behind the development of the tribally-identified Economic Resiliency Fellowship work scopes are aimed at helping create buffers to shock such as severe weather events or COVID-19 pandemic.

I have been reminded time and time again, most recently with a colleague walking by in the hall last week to share an old report dated back more than 20 years titled, "Realizing Health in Community" by LeRoy Harvey, then an MSU-grad student and today the Environmental Programs Coordinator for Meridian Township. Within, he states, "...Even so, many doctors, politicians, businesses, teachers, parents, etc. are often lured by their constituents into prescribing the silver bullet, the quick fix, placebo, or grease that quiets the squeak, addressing the effect, rather than the deeper roots of the problem. It doesn't help that we tend to research these problems and sicknesses through our disciplinary blinders."

Holistic care includes, in part, both community and resiliency. Efforts to build and build, even decades of dedicated work, can be wiped out in one storm, one event or one executive action. Therefore, we are reminded and must continue to be, that resiliency should be built into all that we do, allowing room to flex and bend, bud and bloom, and transcend to transform systems. Systems are only as good as the humans that crafted them and the time/place context of their need. When one fails....all will find out quickly whether or not partnerships were built upon a three-legged stool. Therefore, community and stakeholder advisory support and capacity building is a must. Not to mention work-arounds...or "Plan B".



As American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 funding and other emergency funding is wound down, communities are now reeling from the lack of grant support in some cases to "right the ship" so-to-speak post COVID. As organizations with researchers working in communities across the world (and right here in our back yards) like the National Institute of Health and the National Science Foundation, for example, have been forced to terminate grants and conduct mass layoffs, what may seem a "drop in the bucket" to a larger bottom line, can derail one person's entire life, devast local economies and narrow our outlooks and world view. This also fans the flames of fear, distrust and openness to new information (that may be critical to moving forward). Now, more than ever, we must be mindful of this.

Moving forward, with any partnership, as well as any and all collaborative effort, let us genuinely be mindful of one another, meaning: connect together, let go of judgement as we do not stand in one another's shoes, and make an intentional and valid attempt to do so while offering grace. We cannot know what one another are going through, but we can rely on tried and true frameworks such as Asset-Based Doing and the Principles of Community Development.

For now, though in choppier waters, the Center for Community & Economic Development is working to find funding for the Tribal Fellows' stipends. Additionally, we have postponed the kick-off event to August but may be unable to begin recruitment based on American and nation-specific policies. However, we are determined to keep the ball rolling and are working closely with all partners to help pave the way smoothly for continued collaborative development. One thing is for sure, while we are tasked with making a clearer case for community within economics and development, dollars and cents can only tell the story so far. It is people that ultimately create and drive systems, govern them and live within them. The tale of our collective impact journey has reached a new chapter. We have turned a page, and what unfolds will be as we live it.



#### **SPRING REI UPDATE**

Jenan Jondy, Project Coordinator REI: CCED

Since 2011, the Michigan State University U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) University Center for Regional Economic Innovation (REI) has supported over 180 innovative economic development projects in Michigan, spurring high-growth entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic innovation. To date, <u>REI projects have had over \$68 million in</u> <u>economic impact</u> in distressed regions of Michigan with 97 Student-Led Faculty Guided technical assistance projects, 69 Co-Learning Plans, and 16 Innovation Fellows.

At the end of September 2024, REI made the call on authors and experts to contribute to the next annual cycle of its work to develop new Co-Learning Plans. These Co-Learning Plans serve as essential resources for local and state economic development practitioners and policymakers, providing guidance as they make decisions that affect Michigan's distressed communities and regions. Through an annual process of outreach, REI and partners identified seven topics for possible Co-Learning Plans in 2025: Workforce Transition and Economic Adaptation; Fair Share Affordable Housing Linked to State Supported Economic Development; Encouraging Large Companies and Public Institutions to Procure from Local Businesses; Addressing Agricultural Workforce and Infrastructure Shortages through Innovation Centers; Community Economic Impacts and Feasibility of Developing Renewable Energy Sources; Assessing the Capacity of Economic Development Professionals for Community Benefit Plans and Agreements; Assessing Businesses Concerns in Adopting Community Benefit Plans and Agreements; and Other.

After receiving many qualified applications, REI, through the counsel and advice of the Consultative Panel, announced the 2025 project awards.

#### **2025 PROJECT AWARDS**

This year, REI will support five innovative CLP projects, each addressing critical challenges and opportunities in Michigan's economic and community development landscape. These projects demonstrate a commitment to advancing equitable, sustainable, and regionally impactful solutions.

Partnerships for Infrastructure Expansion & Economic Development: Analysis of Michigan Act 425 Agreements, will evaluate the effectiveness of Michigan's Act 425 agreements as tools for addressing housing and infrastructure needs in rural areas. Another CLP, Buy Flint Initiative: Connecting Local Businesses to Corporate Procurement Opportunities, focuses on revitalizing Flint's local economy by connecting small businesses and microenterprises with procurement opportunities. This initiative focuses on identifying and supporting local businesses through capacity building programs, resource alignment, and a new BuyFlint directory. In Detroit's Zone 8, Future-Proofing Detroit: Bringing AI Upskilling to the Neighborhoods will equip residents with AI literacy and skills to enhance job prospects and economic stability. Practical, neighborhood-based training on AI tools will be offered in collaboration with local partners. The initiative also includes plans for an "AI Upskilling Toolkit" to ensure scalability and knowledge sharing with other communities. Addressing Agricultural Workforce and Infrastructure challenges in Michigan by proposing the development of agricultural innovation centers. These centers would coordinate existing resources, such as private sector expertise, university research, and career and technical education, to provide training and support for a well-prepared domestic workforce.



**CLP Awardee: Laura Sigmon** 



**CLP Awardee: Rob Carson** 



CLP Awardee: Zach Vega

The last CLP award, *Changing the Paradigm: Mobilizing Community Investment Funds*, funded an innovative event on March 7, 2025, in East Lansing, Michigan. With over 180 attendees, the event took a deep dive into the critical and evolving role of community investment funds, offering attendees the chance to learn from leaders at the forefront of the community capital movement. Participants engaged in expert-led, interactive discussions, and invaluable networking opportunities designed to equip attendees with the necessary resources and connections to support their own community's investment fund. This in-person convening brought together community builders, entrepreneurs, developers, and investors, facilitating connections that advance the community capital movement.

Through additional support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the 2025 projects will also include Student-Led, Faculty-Guided (SLFG) projects. These technical assistance projects provide assistance to Michigan communities in completing local and regional economic development initiatives. Work is completed by students at colleges and universities throughout the state, under the supervision of experienced faculty.

Through these projects, students gain firsthand and practical experience in the application of previously studied theory, and economic development professionals receive technical assistance that might not otherwise be available.

The 2025 projects will include the *Downtown Beaverton Land Use and Parking Optimization Study*, which aims to balance parking needs with sustainable design; the *Lansing Riverfront Revitalization* project, enhancing public spaces and identifying private development opportunities; and the *Van Dyke Corridor Implementation Plan* in South Warren, targeting key economic opportunities and community improvements. Further, the *Delhi and Watertown Townships Sign Ordinance Update* will ensure compliance with Court decisions regarding the regulation of signs based on content; the *City of Sterling Heights Corridor Study* will provide planners with data and recommendations to attract development and support local stakeholders, and the *Watertown Township Sign Ordinance update* will make recommendations for modern sign regulations, including digital signage. Additional technical assistance support is also being provided to the 2025 Michigan Inventors Coalition (MIC) Expo.

#### MICHIGAN INVENTORS COALITION EXPO

MIC is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping start-up inventors bring their ideas to life and guiding them through the innovation process. MIC seeks to provide inventors and entrepreneurs with the tools, connections, and knowledge they need to succeed. The Expo, now in its 14th year, is scheduled for August 14, 2025 – the same day and time of the Innovate Michigan! Summit. The Expo will bring together inventors, startups, small businesses, patent attorneys, economic development professionals, and more. Attendees will gain access to expert panels and speakers: Top-ranked speakers share insights and guidance on critical topics for inventors and entrepreneurs; networking opportunities: Attendees connect with like-minded individuals, potential collaborators, and industry professionals who can help take their ideas to the next level; exhibitor space: Inventors showcase their products, ideas, or businesses while meeting individuals and organizations who can provide support; spin pitch & sell competition: A friendly competition where inventors hone their pitch skills, gain exposure, and compete for prizes. Additional SLFG projects will be funded throughout the summer.



2024 Michigan Inventor's Coalition Expo



2024 Michigan Inventor's Coalition Expo



2024 MIC Summit: Breakout Sessions

#### **INNOVATION FELLOWSHIP**

REI also continues to support Innovation Fellows in distressed Michigan communities. Established in 2016, the Innovation Fellows Program seeks to incorporate the tools, models, and policies identified in Co-Learning Projects into practice. Innovation Fellows provide on-the-ground support and coordination to move concepts to actions, implementing new economic development tools, models, policies, and practices.

This year's Innovation Fellow, Jon Willow, will focus on leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance coalitionbuilding within Michigan's MITTEN regions, addressing administrative inefficiencies, resource limitations, and organizational burnout to advance digital equity. Jon's expertise in digital equity is rooted in her extensive work with Michigan-based organizations.

Congratulations to the 2025 Co-Learning Plan, Innovation Fellow, and Student Led Faculty Guided awardees! We are excited to support these projects and look forward to their contributions to Michigan's economic and community development goals. To learn more about these and other projects, visit: <u>https://reicenter.org/projects/</u> <u>current-projects</u>



## **Hello from our Humphrey Fellow!**



#### MEET ALICIA ARTEAGA: HUMPHREY FELLOW

Alicia Arteaga is a Humphrey Fellow and a Community Benefit Research Assistant at Michigan State University's Center for Community and Economic Development. With advanced degrees in Law and Globalization and over a decade of experience in civil society, she is a passionate advocate for humanitarian, social, and economic development as the cornerstone for thriving communities. Her areas of expertise include entrepreneurship, higher education, governance, and women's leadership. For the past seven years, Alicia has been a dedicated volunteer with World Vision Nicaragua, serving on its Advisory Council's Audit and Risk Committee and later on its Governance Committee. She has been appointed to serve as the next president of the Advisory Council upon her return.

Alicia's multidisciplinary background lays the foundation for a holistic vision in every initiative she undertakes. She is deeply committed to fostering critical thinking, global citizenship, and sustainable development. Ultimately, she aspires to reduce migration and strengthen local communities in Nicaragua by supporting the creation of formal businesses and cultivating a culture of entrepreneurship. In her free time, she enjoys reading, cooking, traveling, and watching films from around the world—an experience that nurtures her appreciation for diverse cultures and perspectives.

#### SPRING 2025

VOLUME 37

### THE CCED'S CAMPUS COMPACT AMERICORPS VISTA TEAM

AmeriCorps



#### COURTNEY LUONG: HEALTH ZONES VISTA AT CCED

At the beginning of this project, the goal was to partner with "Blue Zones", a journalistic approach to focusing on the health and well-being of centenarians across the world. Following multiple interactions with local organizations and representatives of Blue Zones, the team decided to use the inspiration of "Blue Zones" but partner with local stakeholders doing similar work to aid the social well-being and quality of life of vulnerable, low-income senior populations. This project is now called "Health Zones", and focuses on Ingham County – home of Michigan State University. Currently, the project has dialed in on nine areas within Ingham County called opportunity zones. Though more traditionally used for tax incentive purposes, these zones helped identify low income areas where residents live, work and play.



In this project, we are not focused on tax incentives but instead rather on the poverty rate and ALICE threshold or Asset-limited, Income-constrainted statistics. Within these zones, we were able to analyze the resources and services available in these areas and pinpoint community centers, food distribution sites, health centers, and much more on an ecosystem map. This map was created through the use of Google Maps and public data from the local community partners. Looking at this map, we are able to observe several gaps and barriers.

The gaps and barriers that we are looking at are similar to the Blue Zones' Power 9. The Power 9 are variables the Blue Zone project has identified as impactful to improving the overall well-being of an individual. However, the Power 9 appears to work only in certain living conditions and environmental terrain. Therefore, using the Power 9 as inspiration, our community advisors have narrowed it down to seven variables more appropriate for Ingham County. These seven variables are mental health, access to transportation, balanced diet, connectivity, access to parks and recreation, accessible housing, and affordable healthcare.





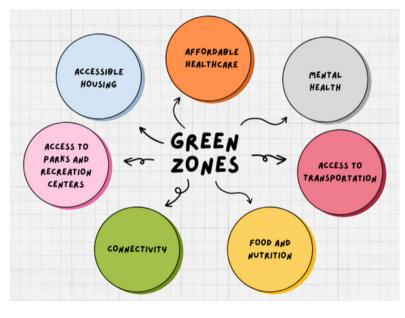
Nine Ingham County Opportunity Zones

**Ecosystem Mapping** 

The aim of this project is to focus on these seven variables within the opportunity zones to improve the social wellbeing and quality of life of vulnerable, low-income seniors through measurements of "age in place" and "longevity".

The Health Zones team is lucky to receive additional support from Michigan State University students and local stakeholders to reach their goal. Partnering with a MSU data science capstone team has allowed the Zones team to further their research utilizing data analytics. The MSU Capstone team has started to map out what is occurring in these areas using the seven variables given. Through their research, we will be able to observe trends, gaps and barriers that are negatively impacting the senior population living in these areas. Not only does Health Zones have support from the MSU Capstone team, but we also partnered with Ingham County Health Department, East Lansing Prime Time, Tri-County of Aging, and many more. These supportive partnerships will help move the project forward into Yr 2.

The next step for this project is to work closely with vulnerable senior citizens to receive feedback regarding the resources and services they are aware of through a series of focus group. Stay tuned! Lastly, I want to thank you for a great year of National Service and this impactful volunteerism opportunity through Campus Compact.



Green Zones



Reagan is in her final semester as a senior at Michigan State University, majoring in International Relations at James Madison College, with a dual major in Economics and a minor in Political Economy.

#### REAGAN WINNIE: CIRCULAR ECONOMICS VISTA AT CCED

She is passionate about the intersection of economic development and environmental sustainability and actively contributes to the circular economy initiatives at the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED). Over the past few months, in her role as an AmeriCorps\* Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA), Reagan has worked on various projects to enhance capacity for circular economy initiatives within Michigan's communities.

Circular economy seeks to redefine traditional economic models by minimizing waste, reusing resources, and establishing sustainable and regenerative systems. Reagan's involvement on this topic has encompassed research, outreach, coalition building, and educational efforts to raise awareness and foster the adoption of these innovative practices. She has collaborated with community leaders, local businesses, and various stakeholders to create educational opportunities that enhance understanding and promote the adoption of sustainable practices. Reagan has made progress in shaping a more sustainable future for Michigan's communities through her research and outreach efforts.

One of Reagan's notable early accomplishments was organizing a forum dedicated to the circular economy, called the Conversations of Circular Economy Fall Forum. This event successfully brought together stakeholders from various sectors, including business, government, and academia, to explore the role of the circular economy in shaping Michigan's future. Reagan played a pivotal role in both the organization of the event and in contributing to discussions on how to integrate circular economy practices into local development strategies. The forum yielded valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities the state faces as it progresses toward a more sustainable future

Additionally, Reagan has undertaken a significant project focused on conducting interviews and surveys regarding the barriers and successes in recycling management throughout Michigan. Through these efforts, she has collected crucial input from waste management leaders, which will help inform policy decisions and support the establishment of education hubs to increase recycling rates. Her work in this area has been vital in laying a stronger foundation for circular economy initiatives at both the state and local levels.

Reagan's commitment to education and outreach is demonstrated through her podcast series Transforming Tomorrow Together. This podcast highlights various projects from MSU CCED teams and is an accessible platform for the public to learn about our initiatives. It has become a valuable resource for anyone interested in circular economy practices, domicology, community benefits work, green zones, and more. In addition, Reagan has also been involved in producing a webinar focused on EGLE programs, which will be released soon. This webinar will serve as an educational tool for the community. It will feature key leaders from EGLE, who will offer insights on how organizations and individuals can promote sustainable practices. Reagan aims to further the conversation around the circular economy through these resources and ensure that communities have the knowledge and tools they need to thrive.

As Reagan's term with AmeriCorps VISTA comes to a close, she is eager to continue her efforts in advancing circular economy initiatives. A primary objective of the circular economy team is to reintroduce a circular economy bill. This bill aims to secure 10% of the Solid Waste Fund to establish a circular economy institute at Michigan State University. Reagan and the circular economy team have been engaged in discussions with key stakeholders, including the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, and various state representatives, to garner support for this bill.



The Circularity team meets with MSU President Kevin Guskiewicz



Reagan Winnie presents on the Circular Economy Institute

Additionally, Reagan is excited to announce the launch of a monthly Circular Economy Newsletter. This newsletter will offer updates on legislative developments, educational opportunities, and success stories related to the circular economy. It will be an important tool to keep MSU Faculty informed and engaged as Michigan builds momentum toward a more sustainable future.

Throughout her time as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED), Reagan has gained invaluable experience in research, community engagement, event planning, coalition building, and policy support. She has made a lasting impact on Michigan's efforts to adopt circular economy principles. As she prepares to graduate and take the next step in her career, Reagan's dedication to creating a more sustainable future will continue to guide her work and inspire those around her.



THEO VAN HOF: COMMUNITY BENEFITS VISTA AT CCED

The CCED and our community benefits team has been hard at work on increasing our understanding of community benefits and how they can best be applied in our communities. Community benefits represent an important tool for communities as they look to foster environments of equitable economic development. The Center worked with our advisory committee to create, plan, and host an event in January 2025 surrounding community benefits. The event, *Conversations on Community Benefits and Equitable Development*, was formatted around three main sessions and a lunch keynote with time allotted for audience Q&A after each session.

The first session, Community Benefits: What Are They, gave attendees an understanding of what community benefits are and ensured that people were operating with the same definitions as we went into the rest of the event.

We were joined by Dr. Sarah Reckhow from the MSU Political Science Department and John Goldstein, a longstanding community benefits advocate who has been involved in this work for decades. The panelists, along with our moderator Sam Butler from Doing Development Differently Detroit, discussed the origins of the community benefits movement, the way it developed, and ultimately, where we are now. They gave a brief overview of the three main forms of community benefits: plans, agreements, and ordinances. The session wrapped up with a conversation about the Detroit Community Benefits Ordinance (CBO) and how that is structured and how it results in a Community Benefits Agreement (CBA).

Following the first session, the second session focused on why community benefits matter. We were joined by two Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) members who were involved in the CBA negotiation process for the City of Detroit. One, Deirdre Jackson, represented the community side and the other, Richard Hosey, represented the developers' side. In addition, we had Denise Brooks-Williams from Henry Ford Health and Leah Gordon standing in as our union representative from the Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters and Millwrights. The panelists and our moderator, Arlynn Dailey from the MSU College of Human Medicine, talked about the benefits that community benefits and specifically CBAs can have for both communities and developers. They spoke about how CBAs center and place the community at the heart of the development process and ensure that community voices are heard. We also heard about how the CBA process helps developers connect with the community they are building in and give them a better understanding of the community's needs and the community a better understanding of the developer's capacity to provide benefits.



State Representative Tonya Myers-Phillips talks about Community Benefits



Attendees listen to panelists at the CCED's *Conversations on Community Benefits* event

At lunch we heard from our keynote speaker, Terrell Knight from the Community Benefits office in Cleveland. He spoke about the CBO that the City of Cleveland passed in the summer of 2023, its structure and where it stands today. The CBO is triggered, and a Standard CBA is required when there is more than \$250,000 of city assistance to the development project. If the total cost exceeds \$20 million then the developer must enter into an Expanded CBA where additional benefits are negotiated and provided. As of January 2025, 19 CBAs have been signed in Cleveland with four of those being Expanded CBAs. Terrell spoke about some of the benefits that have been agreed to in Cleveland including expanded apprenticeship and paid internship opportunities, workforce development, and community infrastructure improvements. Additionally, Terrell was joined by Aaron Goodman from the City of Detroit Planning and Development Department to put the two cities in conversation with one another. They discussed some of the similarities and differences between the two city's CBOs and some best practices moving forward.

After lunch, we launched straight into our final panel of the day, *The Way Forward*. We heard from Michigan State Representative, Tonya Myers-Phillips about her advocacy on community benefits, as well as hearing from Alan Walts from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Sean Egan from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). Alan spoke about the importance of community benefits in promoting environmental justice, especially in historically underinvested communities. Meanwhile, Sean gave us insight into the future of community benefits with regard to the state's attitude. The sentiment around community benefits is overwhelmingly positive and the session gave a brief look into where community benefits can go from here.



Attendees listen to panelists during the session: Why are Community Benefits important?

### MSU CENTER FOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



# **Circular Economy Newsletter** Hello Broader Circular Economy Network

The MSU Center for Community and Economic Development and the MSU Faculty Circular Economy Core Team are continuing their efforts to strengthen MSU's teaching, research, and outreach in support of a circular economy.

We're excited to share recent updates that highlight the momentum across our network and hope they inspire continued collaboration and innovation. This May edition serves as both an update and a reminder of our shared commitment to advancing a more sustainable future—and our appreciation for your dedication as valued partners in this mission. Let's keep building together!

We encourage you all to continue your critical role in the advancement of the circular economy, as we strive for a closed loop future. If there is anyone else you know that is committed to our mission, please pass on their contact to our CCED team and, as always, feel free to reach out with any inquiries, suggestions, or introductions you find worthwhile amidst our ongoing efforts. Check out the Circular Economy Newsletter <u>HERE</u>!

## A Warm Welcome to New Student Researchers



Nicolas Ceme-Prefontaine

Nicolas Ceme-Prefontaine is a Regional and Economic Innovation (REI) Research Assistant at Michigan State University's Center for Community and Economic Development. As a senior majoring in Urban and Regional Planning at MSU, he is deeply committed to community and economic development, with a strong focus on equitable and sustainable planning. Highly engaged in both the MSU and East Lansing communities, Nicolas serves as Vice Chair of the East Lansing University Student Commission (USC) and is a member of the College of Social Science Dean's Advisory Board. His expertise spans data analysis, GIS, and 3D modeling software, including SketchUp and Twinmotion, which he utilizes to develop innovative planning solutions. Driven by a passion for fostering inclusive and resilient communities, Nicolas aspires to apply his academic background, technical skills, and leadership experience to shape equitable urban environments. In his free time, he enjoys working out, practicing yoga, and staying actively involved in community initiatives.



Joseph Novy

Joseph Novy is a Regional and Economic Innovation (REI) Research Assistant at Michigan State University's Center for Community and Economic Development. He is a senior majoring in Games and Interactive Media Design with a minor in Graphic Design from Michigan State University. In his role, Joseph focuses on videography, capturing key events and producing high-quality video content that highlights innovative economic and community development efforts. His creative and collaborative approach to storytelling helps bring attention to initiatives that drive regional growth. Previously, Joseph completed a marketing internship at XELA Robotics in Tokyo, where he worked on digital media campaigns to promote advanced robotic sensing technology. This experience strengthened his skills in visual communication, content creation, and international collaboration. Passionate about the intersection of design, media, and economic innovation, Joseph aims to leverage his skills as a videographer and graphic designer to support impactful initiatives. In his free time, he enjoys watching Michigan State sports and staying engaged with the university community.

