

NEWSLETTER

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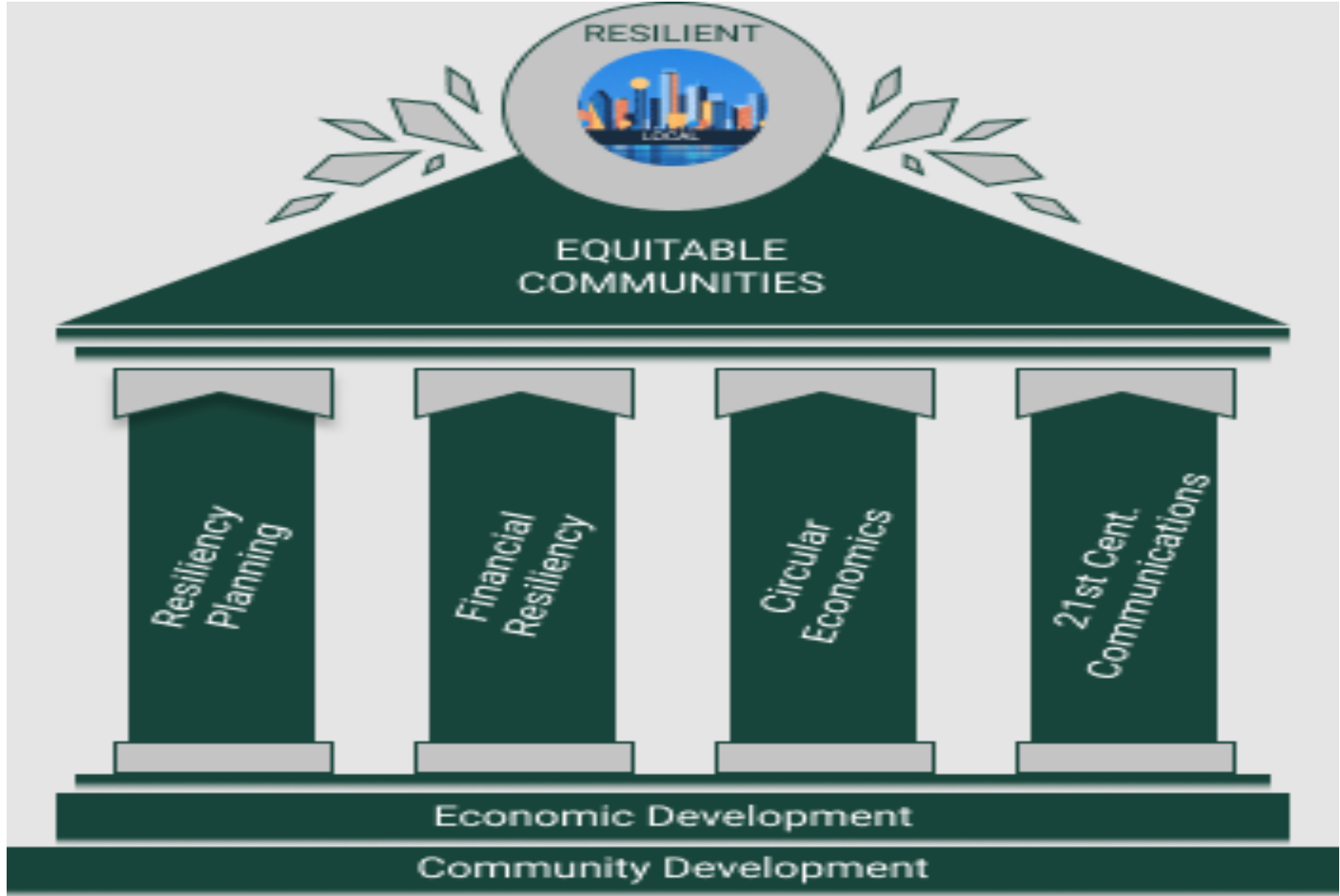


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A fond farewell to our colleague, Nat Hooper



Nathaniel Hooper, Project Coordinator of the Michigan Deconstruction Collaborative, said goodbye this October and is on to new adventures ahead! The staff at the Center all wish him the very best and look forward to staying in touch.



Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence Programs for Consideration

The growing prevalence and use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology in the production of community and economic development products calls upon us to provide reasonable guidance to our faculty, staff, students, partners, and colleagues on how that usage may be ethically employed. These guidelines are an initial set of recommendations recognizing that AI is a fast-evolving technology that may have value in

addressing capacity issues for communities in writing and data analysis.

We offer these guidelines as a beginning point in this rapidly changing field and as the practice of AI in community and economic development matures, welcome additional insights and suggestions on how we might best employ these tools *ethically* to advance the equitable use of AI in community.

The MSU CCED team recommends that community and economic development scholars and practitioners:

- Disclose the use of any AI tools in the introduction or methods section of a product to provide for transparency.
- Describe in detail at appropriate locations, such as footnotes or other citation methods, the

pieces of text and/or data that are affected.

- AI tools have inherent limitations and biases in their application to specific identity groups. If known, explain these limitations and biases in an appropriate footnote or appendix.
- AI tools may also pose ethical challenges in issues of data security and privacy. Explain how data security and privacy are not compromised in your use of AI.

Please note, no AI tool will be accepted as a credited author on a project. This is because any attribution of authorship carries with it accountability for the work. AI tools cannot take such responsibility.

###



Broadband Opportunities for Partnership

John Melcher, Associate Director and John Egelhaaf, Executive Director at Southwest Michigan Planning Commission

John Egelhaaf, Executive Director at the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission, asked John Melcher, Associate Director of the CCED, to join him on a discussion panel at the 2023 U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) University Center (UC) Showcase event for the Chicago region (held September 12-13th). Together with EDA program officers and other UC community engagement and development specialists, opportunities for regional planning organizations and university collaboration to improve broadband access were identified. Below, Egelhaaf and Melcher provide their thoughts on this panel conversation re. opportunities for communities to harness university research and community partnerships for more equitable access to connectivity.

Broadband planning and deployment have primarily been a function of the private sector with necessary tools and skills residing in a predominantly private ecosystem. Since the COVID pandemic, connectivity has shifted from a luxury and entertainment platform to a utility, or necessary resource. *Broadband* is the internet connection afforded by your internet service provider (ISP). This differs from wi-fi, for example, as it allows

access directly via LAN or an ethernet connection between one's modem and device. As this shift in reliance has occurred, so too has the thinking around planning and deployment to varying degrees of a public/private ecosystem with increasing roles for the public sector beyond merely funding.

The large amount of newly available federal funding has brought issues related to broadband deployment into sharper focus with near term goals (1-3 years) aimed at filling the gaps in the infrastructure and mid and longer-term goals being aimed at issues of access and equity, including adoption and affordability. As society transitions, Melcher and Egelhaaf ask:

- Who has responsibility helping ensure all may have equal access to broadband?
- Whose responsibility is it to find and fill the gaps in service?
- Who is going to find and assist people who need equipment or skills development or need financial assistance?
- Where does the responsibility for verification that the ISPs, who have received public money to fill the gaps, will do what they said they would do with the money?

While each of these questions have yet to be answered, one thing that appears consistent is the answers are going to be in different places. To get started at the local level, consider these questions for regional

planning organizations as conversation starters in your community:

- Where is the existing infrastructure and who owns it? (This includes “last mile”, “middle mile” and “exchange points.”)
- Who are the existing internet service providers? What are they offering? Are there other ISPs willing to expand into the market?
- Who wants broadband in the region? Where do they live? What do they want specifically, and at what speed and cost?
- What connectivity maps are vital to this analysis? Who will build the maps? Who will collect the data and maintain the maps?
- What is the nature of the access problem? Availability? Quality (speed and reliability)? Skills, equipment, or cost?

The above questions dovetail into the broader topic of where and on whom the public side of broadband responsibilities reside. What tier of government - federal, state, or local levels - will be responsible for what activities? Federal programs are not alike, but some of the larger funding opportunities move dollars to state programs that are designed to fit the state and local contexts. In Michigan, the responsibility for finding “gap filling solutions” lies heavily with local government. Simultaneously, local governments are under severe financial and workforce resource constraints. Moreover, for many in local government, broadband is a new and profoundly complex ecosystem. There is an almost universal local need for subject matter expertise and problem-solving.

To address this, the Michigan Office for High-Speed Internet (MIHI) established in 2021, works hard to find a balance between responding to the local government voice and the need for concerted statewide action. They have created numerous opportunities for local government to engage in determining the design and function of Michigan's new broadband infrastructure. Though the state must necessarily build up to federal funding opportunities with state-level planning and local collaboration, the way that broadband service is experienced by individual households will remain a local government issue. To deal with this gap in expertise and resources, local governments may lean on their regional planning organizations for assistance. Such organizations each have their own unique understanding of the communities they

serve. They are engaged with leaders and citizens who represent a wide range of vital, interconnected resources. They are process and data driven and prioritize public engagement. Often, they function as an important bridge between state and local government.

Regional planning organizations are thus situated in an opportune place to recognize local broadband needs. That local knowledge can be leveraged with tremendous opportunity offered through universities. Generally, universities have areas of thematic focus, they have continuity over time within those focus areas, and they have state-of-the-art technical knowledge. They are talent rich with cutting edge problem solvers and the institutions themselves carry a civic responsibility. What are the opportunities here for partnership? Regional planning and development organizations and universities each have assets that can be applied to unique local government broadband challenges.

Broadband priorities today tend to be centered around two ideas that are simple to convey, but difficult to execute. First, gaps in broadband infrastructure must be identified and filled. Second, those who require access must also be identified and connected. The challenges embedded in these priorities raise questions that need answers and present opportunities for collaboration between universities and regional planning and development organizations.

Partnerships could assist to develop:

- Knowledge exchange systematically translating faculty knowledge and research into regional and local solutions
- A process model that makes broadband solutions understandable and systematic
- Basic scaffolding for a universal Geographic Information System (GIS) that would facilitate digital mapping, provide a framework for universal data layers, prioritize the maintenance of data, and be distributed to local governments and community groups
- Data collection and analysis systems for unique data sets that can be used to measure equity and access performance and verify compliance of publicly funded broadband deployment grants

- Policy solutions for local and state governments
- Skills training and technical support for public audiences (and elected officials) to enhance adoption and most importantly enhance cybersecurity and safety skills.

This is a partial list of opportunities that could be possible through partnerships between universities and regional planning organizations. The dream of universal broadband access requires high levels of cooperation, partnerships, and alignment of assets at all levels. Importantly though, when universal broadband connectivity and access is accomplished, opportunities for innovation in entrepreneurship, healthcare access, education, agriculture, and untold other areas will be worth the effort. Please contact John Melcher at melcher@msu.edu for more information.

###

Equity Toolkit

Bob Brown,
Associate Director

Wikipedia states that “oppression is malicious or unjust treatment of, or exercise of power over, a group of individuals, often in the form of governmental authority or cultural opprobrium (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oppression>).” They further explain that “oppression also refers to a more insidious type of manipulation and control,” sometimes involving the subjugation and marginalization of specific groups of people within a country or society, such as: girls and women, people of color, religious communities, citizens in poverty, LGBTQIA2S+ people, youth and children, and many more. Unfortunately, this can happen within and across communities anywhere and everywhere. Correlation is found between such subjugation and marginalization within poverty and inequality (of all forms). Such social justice and well-being crises convergence may fly under the radar, and often times goes unknown by parties revolving within the same ecosystems, but at different socioeconomic (SES) levels.

According to the 2017 American Psychological Association Task Force on Developing Guidelines for Psychological Practice with Low-Income and Economically Marginalized (LIEM) people:

Living under economic oppression affects almost all aspects of a person’s health and wellbeing. The ability to meet developmental milestones, risk of physical and mental health concerns, changes in identity development, self-efficacy concerning career aspirations and expectations from society are all impacted by our social class. Living in LIEM states is associated with substantially greater mortality and morbidity, with life expectancy differences of up to 14 years between those in the highest and lowest levels of income and resources. Individuals with low SES and/or experiencing homelessness often have difficulty getting and maintaining connection to both primary care and behavioral health care related to their financial statuses.

Further, individuals living in LIEM may suffer from increased mental health symptoms and mental health disorders; limited opportunity for engaging in healthy behaviors; and a decreased capacity to manage stressors both cognitively, mentally, and socially. Almost every aspect of our lives can be either directly or indirectly connected to our access to resources and can negatively impact our ability to make healthy decisions. Please see (<https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/indicator/2019/12/low-income-marginalization>)

In contrast, *equity* is an essential component in the establishment of a healthy, robust, dynamic, and inclusive community. It promotes the principles of fairness, justice, and social integration, while facilitating the assurance that each individual possesses the chance to realize their maximum potential. By prioritizing equity in both community and economic development, it is possible to construct a society characterized by greater equality and fairness for all members.

Why is equity important to community and economic development?

- **Promotes social inclusion:** Equity ensures that every individual in the community has access to the resources and opportunities necessary to fully participate in society, thus helping to build a more inclusive community in which everyone feels valued and supported.

- **Reduces disparities:** Equity helps to address the disparities and inequities that exist within communities. By promoting fairness and justice, equity can help reduce disparities in areas such as education, employment, health, and housing.
- **Improves community well-being:** Equity promotes community well-being by ensuring that everyone has access to the resources and services necessary for a healthy and fulfilling life including quality healthcare, education, and affordable housing.
- **Increases economic growth:** Equity can also contribute to economic growth by creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce, which can lead to increased innovation and productivity, ultimately yielding benefits for the entire community.
- **Build trust and social cohesion:** Equity can help to build trust and social cohesion within the community. Ensuring fairness and justice for all individuals fosters a sense of trust and inclusivity, ultimately encouraging a collective vision for the future.

A healthy, equitable community is one that offers complete social, physical and mental well-being at all stages of life and strives for justice and fairness in meeting the needs for all residents. The Center for Community and Economic Development at Michigan State University is dedicated to co-creating sustainable prosperity and equitable economies within communities. To that end, the Center has developed self-assessment or self-evaluation tools that help individuals know and rate their skill, organizational behaviors, and community practices, including equitable economic development. It includes:

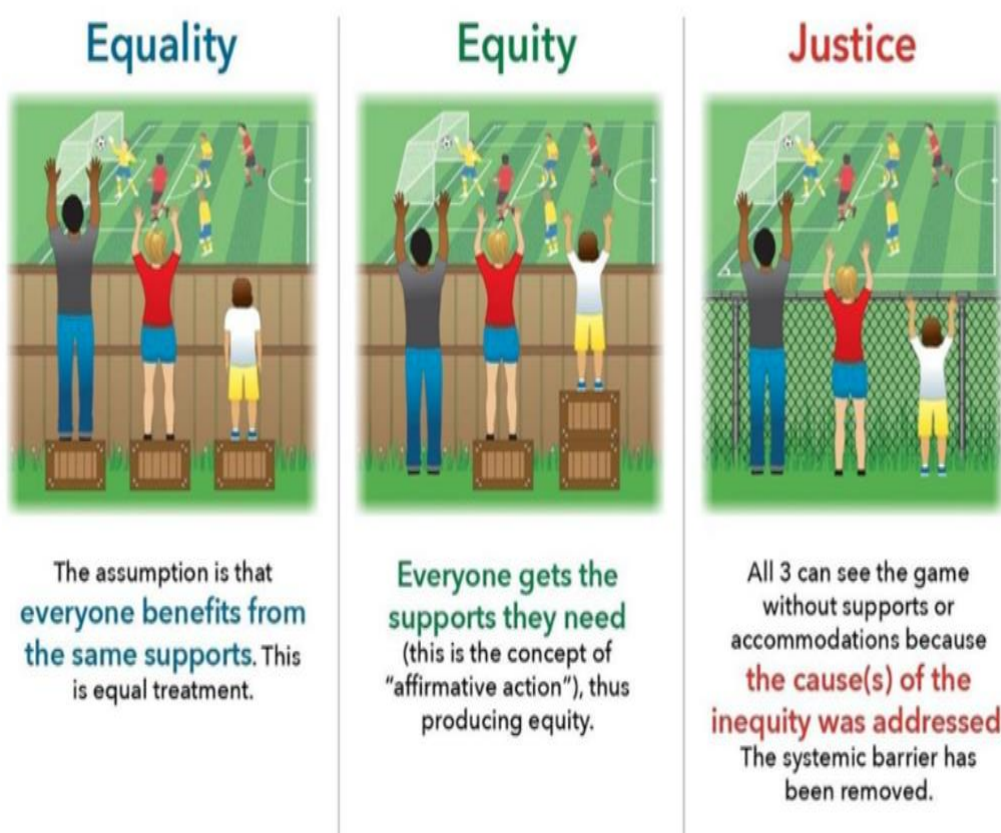
- Individual skills and competencies necessary to enact equitable community and economic development;
- Organizational norms/practices, culture, and structure that reinforce equitable community and economic development, and;
- Community practices that promote equity

Such self-evaluation tools help to identify the disparities and inequities that exist within our own practices, our organizations, and our communities while providing a framework for developing strategies to address them. These tools can be found at the *Equitable Community Economic Development Assessment Tools Manual* online.

The offered self-assessments are designed for utilization by professionals in the fields of economic and community development, also including health and human service professionals, community organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders assisting to collect data on key indicators of equity. The tools provide a systematic and structured technique for assessing equity and help detect patterns and trends that may not be readily visible. It helps to do the following, below.

- **Identify disparities and inequities in the community:** The tool can help to identify areas of the community where certain groups may be experiencing higher levels of disadvantage or marginalization.
- **Inform policy and program development:** The data collected through the tool can be used to inform the development of policies and programs that are intended to address the identified disparities and inequities.
- **Engage the community:** The tool can be used to engage community members in conversations regarding equity, and to involve them in the development and implementation of policies and programs that are designed to address equity issues.
- **Monitor progress:** The tool can be used to track progress over time, and to assess the effectiveness of policies and programs that have been executed to address equity issues.

As a visual aid, please see the picture noting the differences between equality, equity and justice below.



This community equity assessment tool serves as a significant instrument for communities that are committed to promoting equity and addressing disparities and inequities. By utilizing this tool, communities can develop more targeted and effective strategies for building a just and equitable society. For more information, please contact Bob Brown at brownr23@msu.edu.

###



The Center thanks former doctoral student, Sevgi Baykaldi, Ph.D., for her research on this project. Congratulations to her on completing her dissertation! To access the report, please visit the Center for Community & Economic Development [website](#). For more information on Flint CCED activities and publications, please see [projects](#).

Student View: How my job in research is preparing me for a career in public policy

Sean Farnum, Research Assistant

When I decided to work for Michigan State's Center for Community & Economic Development (CCED) in January, the trajectory of my life changed. In five short months, I have learned so much from the wonderful colleagues and mentors around me as we have worked towards improving the capacity of the university and affiliated organizations around Michigan to impact local communities.

The Center, run through the University's Office of Outreach and Engagement, is dedicated to building a more equitable and sustainable future for underserved communities while also being a base of academic learning for applying those needs to modern society. CCED tackles problems that pose unique challenges to distressed communities around Michigan.

Established in 1969, the center has spent over six decades conducting programs in partnership with public and private organizations to address local concerns, while also working with students, scholars, and communities to build a foundation for future projects.

Before joining CCED, I felt lost about the direction that I wanted to take with my career. Throughout college, I have always hopped from place to place, working for campaigns, legislative staffing, and fundraising, but I never felt like they were the fit I sought. I wanted to be at a place where I could help others and make changes while honing my skills in administration, finance, organization, research, and policy development.

When I was referred to the organization by Professor Louise Jezierski, I knew that CCED presented a critical opportunity for my future. Working at a center that combines collaborative learning, community engagement, building partnerships and professional development provided a way for me to explore my interests while working on substantial projects. I applied for the student research assistantship, which is geared for students interested in project

planning, research design and implementation, event organization, networking, and program evaluation.

Additionally, there are faculty-guided, student-led technical assistance projects that students can apply and gain funding for.

During my time at CCED, I have worked on a variety of projects in different programs that the office provides, like Regional Economic Innovation (REI), Domicology and other individual project-based programs. One of these projects has been to determine the feasibility of creating an investment fund for community development organizations such as community development financial institutions. I became the lead editor on a feasibility study to accompany this initiative, where I collaborated with other research assistants and a board of advisers over the course of the [project](#). More information on this work is also available in the "Key Pointers..." article on pg. 13.

###

Sean Farnum is a senior majoring in social relations and policy with minors in political economy and economics, graduating in December.



Thank you for your hard work to the Center's transitioning research assistants!



~Neely Bardwell~



~Andrew Bracken~



A Snapshot of Native American Tribal Economic Resiliency in Michigan

**MARY ZUMBRUNNEN,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

The idea of resiliency is often characterized as the ability and speed of a system to recover. Economic resiliency and development can be methods and/or measurements utilized to help a community withstand, or more quickly recover, from man-made or natural disruptions. This is particularly important for historically marginalized populations, such as tribal nations, who may be excluded from participating in decision-making, and who encounter obstacles to embracing their lived experiences as a part of the development process.

Therefore, with support from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA), the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan approached the Native American Institute (NAI) at Michigan State University (MSU) with request to assess the economic resilience and development of tribes in Michigan at the end of winter 2023. By spring, NAI partners including MSU Extension and the Center for Community & Economic Development (CCED) were conducting an environmental scan, focus groups and hybrid workshops focused on these topics. Simultaneously, Extension Educators offered the tribal leadership programming, *Building Strong Sovereign Nations*, to meet the needs of tribal governments through the end of June. A research analysis of economic resiliency across all 12 Tribal Nations located within the state of Michigan was developed based on these activities. The full program, economic development strategies assessed,

including, but not limited to, comprehensive economic development strategies (CEDs), as well as land use management, business, investment, gaming, and more by tribe were detailed. Additionally, a map of the tribal reservations including trusts has been overlaid with Michigan's EDA regions. This is followed by a summary table of tribal CEDs and other economic development activity – some included within Michigan Association of Regions' CEDs documentation. A focus group summarization, findings and recommendations wrapped the project up in July. Ultimately, the MSU partnership developed recommendations broken down into short, medium, and long-term goal areas for further discussion.

Additionally, EDA's Michigan representative, Michigan Association of Regions' partners and planners were contacted and joint strategic plans, economic development strategies, working group collaborations and more were analyzed as well as partnership with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

Though many tribes do not have formal CEDs documents, it was found that they may collaborate on EDA regional plans through workforce development, planning, tourism, development and so forth. Examples of this include the complexities, for example, of a tribe hosting the largest workforce in a county or region, or operating the largest educational institution, and those entities being part of a broader and diverse attraction strategy within a regional council of MI governments.

In late June, two events were hosted entitled: 1) "Economic Resiliency in Indian Country" at the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College, and 2) "Business and Economic Development

Gathering" at the Soaring Eagle Casino and Resort.

Prior to these events, prep meetings were hosted between the University, speakers and panelists. Throughout these conversations, more information and recommendations came to light. During the live events, additional commentary, dialogue and brainstorming were recorded. As a culmination at the Economic Development Gathering, a focus group was held with tribal membership following a business and economic development panel luncheon composed of tribal leaders, federal, state, and local change-makers taking questions from the audience – online and virtually.

The focus group (facilitated both in-person and online) asked participants to describe their vision and hopes for tribal economies. Paraphrased as the "WOW", this guided exercise helped attendees think through their ideal future for equitable development and resiliency. Next, it was followed by conducting the same type of exercise to discuss where attendees feel tribal nations and Michigan currently are in relation to resiliency and economies, entitled the "NOW". Lastly, a bridging technique was used to work through the "HOW" of helping the NOW bloom into the WOW.

Over the course of this project, it was found that the tribes of Bay Mills Chippewa Indian Community and the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians were part of the Eastern Upper Peninsula CEDs while Hannahville Potawatomi Indian Community is a part of the Central Upper Peninsula CEDs documents. As another example, the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe is a part of the East Michigan Council of Governments' CEDs.

Three tribes also did not have public strategy documents, including Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and Little River Band of Ottawa Indians. It is unknown if Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians have a CEDS, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians or Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians. Ultimately, it is also unknown if Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians have CEDS.

Seven tribes reported having incorporated economic development arms including Grand Traverse Economic Development, Waseyabek Development Co., LVD Tribal Economic Development, Odawa Economic Development, Inc., Mno-Bmadsen, Migizi Economic Development Co., and Sault Tribe, Inc.

Additional types of development are on-going (including business and entrepreneurship as well as nonprofit development), action plans, commercial development, strategic plans, membership with other associations, land use planning, investments and more. It was found that

all tribes have gaming and non-gaming assets and tribes continue to expand into non-reservation land development.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is also meeting at least once annually, if not many more times, with each tribe on their reservation in proactive efforts to share resources and fill funding gaps while building partnership.

Lastly, from the focus group discussions, it was clear that some tribes desire more feasibility and implementation funding support as well as capacity building. There is a desire for additional entrepreneurial innovation, as well as food systems design and coordination for self-sufficiency.

Another clear finding of this research was the large variations across tribal development. To address these, providing functionality and support for more equitable economic development for resiliency in Indian Country will require greater collaboration across all levels of government – as well as community – including academic institutions with tribal leadership.

To help support this and with consideration for next steps, a series of recommendations divided into short, medium and long-term goals were generated and it was acknowledged that each should be grounded in community, and as able, market-driven.

To address these findings and offer a more inclusive, sustainable and unique approach to growing resiliency based on tribally-identified needs, MSU has proposed an Economic Resiliency Tribal Fellowship program.

In early November of 2023, an initial application to the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development’s “Rural Readiness Round Two Funding Opportunity” was submitted. Should this be awarded, an 18-month planning period will inform next steps to build out a pilot fellowship program, centered on resiliency, and utilized to plan, recruit and begin training for tribal members who plan to stay in their communities for the long-term.

For more information about the economic analysis and tribal fellowship pilot program, please contact Mary ZumBrunnen, at zumbrun1@msu.edu.

###

“Fix the Zoning!”

Rob Carson, AICP
2023 Regional Economic Innovation Fellow

"Fix the zoning!" is a common refrain among planners and social media experts alike when it comes to addressing development hurdles. However, after nearly two decades of experience in local government planning ranging from development process management, code writing, plan writing and implementation (all of which has necessitated significant communication, community engagement efforts and consensus building); I have found that the real issues often go beyond mere policy and regulation. This is especially true in semi-urban and rural communities, where problems may lie in intergovernmental coordination and the availability of professional services – not just in zoning laws or other regulatory measures.

In my planning work, I've often found that transparency about navigating development processes in rural communities leads to dialogues that helped build trust and allowed for clear identification of issues at hand.

In my development work, it's also become clear many roots of challenge involve a lack of coordination and collaboration among different levels of government. A logical initial step to improving this is by attempting to increase participation levels between local units of government and the county by building a collaborative process that addresses development permitting and process guidance.

Establishing collaborative processes proved successful and led to a growing support service structure between the county and the local units of government contained within. Over time, three distinct models for such collaboration emerged from Northwest Michigan. These collaboration models have been studied extensively. Most recently, as through a Michigan State University EDA University Center Regional Economic Innovation Fellowship, I facilitated a study titled, *Collaborative Partnership Models: A Case for Increased Capacity & Efficiency*.

This research, involving input from local elected officials, professional staff, and the development community, further underlined the efficacy of a collaborative approach. The report with findings will be available soon at <https://reicenter.org/projects/completed-projects/creativity-and-invention/2023-collaborative-partnership-models-a-case-for-increased-capacity-and-efficiency>

While zoning and regulatory reform have their place in streamlining economic development, communities may find that fostering intergovernmental coordination and collaborative efforts can be just as impactful, if not more so. For those looking to improve the efficiency of economic development in their communities, evidence suggests that a collaborative approach may be the missing piece of the puzzle.



For further information on collaborative models for planning, please contact Rob Carson, AICP and Regional Director of Community Development at Networks Northwest at rob.carson@networksnorthwest.org.

MSU Foundation Selected by U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) for a “Tech Hubs Strategy” Development Award ~ [original article here](#) ~

Materials Advancement and Research Solutions (MARS) program MSU Research Foundation

2023 – The Michigan State University Research Foundation, Michigan State University, and a consortium of their research partners (including supporting collaborator, CCED) have been selected for a Tech Hubs Strategy Development Award from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA).

The EDA Tech Hubs Program is an investment in the future of the United States, created as part of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022. The program aims to transform select regions into globally competitive innovation centers that strengthen U.S. competitiveness.

“We’re excited to have this Strategy Development Award. It gives us an opportunity to showcase the depth of our technical capacity and the strength of the economic development engine we’ve put into place over the last 10 years,” said **David Washburn, Executive Director of the MSU Research Foundation.**

The MSU Research Foundation’s proposal titled [Materials Advancement and Research Solutions \(MARS\) Strategy Development Consortium](#) focuses on transforming the region’s economy based on expertise and competitive advantages in advanced materials science, specifically the manufacturing of specialized synthetic diamonds and rare isotopes.

These synergistic advanced materials are driving groundbreaking improvements in semiconductor chips, defense and space electronics, advanced manufacturing, medical imaging, sensing, quantum computing, and other applications essential to U.S. national and economic security. Michigan State University has deep expertise in this domain.

“The MARS proposal builds on two key areas of strength at Michigan State and will serve as platforms for significant commercial and economic development outcomes,” said **MSU Interim President Teresa K. Woodruff.** “These areas of strength have overlaps and synergies, both technical and in the industries they will enable. This is great news for Michigan State, the MSU Research Foundation, and our local community!”

The EDA Tech Hubs Program has two phases: **Phase 1:** EDA has designated 31 Tech Hubs and awarded approximately \$15 million in Strategy Development Grants to accelerate the development of future Tech Hubs. **Phase 2:** Tech Hubs Designees are eligible to apply for an

implementation award in the range of \$50-\$75 million.

The Strategy Development Grants are planning awards that amount to approximately \$500,000 in funding, allowing the consortium to develop its Phase 2 application should the EDA receive its fully authorized budget from Congress.

The Tech Hubs Programs is designed to drive effective commercialization partnerships by strengthening a region’s capacity to scale manufacturing while creating good jobs for American workers. Success requires a strong ability to bring together public, private, and academic partners into an effective consortium focused on creating opportunity for all.

“The MSU Research Foundation has assembled a great consortium of partners,” said **Jeff Smith, Director of Research Parks at the MSU Research Foundation** who led the proposal. “In a way this opportunity solidifies what we already know and rallies consortium members around our shared initiatives.”

[Click here to read the rest of the article.](#)

The CCED participated in the development of this strategy proposal with particular focus on community benefits (CB) planning. CB focuses on incorporating residents’ needs and desires within the planning process as well as addressing how citizens will benefit post-development.

###



Inspiring MSU Museum- goers to Consider a Circular Vision of the Built Environment

JAYLA SIMON, RESEARCH ASSISTANT

At the end of the 2023 Spring Semester, CCED staff and partners from the MSU Surplus Store & Recycling Center, School of Planning, Design and Construction at MSU, and the state of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy came together in collaboration with the MSU Museum to develop an exhibit that highlights central concepts of Domicology as a field of study and its potential for societal cultivation that arises from its lens. The exhibition will open this winter and is entitled, *Domicology - Creating a Sustainable Built Environment*.

A quick recap for those who may not be familiar: *Domicology* examines the economic, social, and environmental factors regarding all structures that exist, have existed, and will exist in the built environment. Domicology also seeks to innovate effective processes that manage and develop a more sustainable built environment. Most importantly, all Domicological concepts and ideas are derived from the vital recognition that structures have a life cycle.

This recognition serves as the “start” of our exhibition and its conceptual foundation. The exhibit establishes that most residential structures’ current life cycles are short, linear, and finite. In many cases, they end in vacancy, abandonment, and eventually demolition. As viewers walk through the exhibit the feeling is anything but uplifting. Depictions and examples of blighted communities push one to grasp the uncomfortable truth about the modern impacts of current use, structural abandonment, and demolition.

However, “Designing for Deconstruction” has led to major advancements in the construction field, and material salvage markets have inspired transformations of blighted communities. Such innovation speaks to the power of circular vision and demonstrates why educational efforts like this museum exhibit are essential in progressing the influence of Domicology. Perhaps the best way to encourage widespread practice of deconstruction is by laying its conceptual groundwork for collaborative ingenuity.

The MSU Museum is the perfect hub to indulge in your interests or curiosities about Domicology. As the state’s first Smithsonian Affiliate, the MSU Museum is innovative in striving to encourage exploration and experimentation with ideas across disciplines and interests. To be a part of this experience, just walk through the doors of the MSU Museum and go east of the Welcome Desk to the “Ground Floor Gallery” where CCED’s exhibit, *Domicology - Creating a Sustainable Built Environment*, will be open this December.

The Museum is located at 409 West Circle Drive next to Beaumont Tower on the MSU campus. Visitor parking is available at metered spaces on the Grand River Ramp, one block away at the corner of Grand River Avenue and Charles Street.

Just before guests become entirely discouraged, the next portion of the exhibit presents a possibility of reimagining the current life cycle of most structures by implementing a circular vision of their end-of-life stages. To salvage and re-use structural materials (rather than landfilling them) reduces contribution to environmental degradation from additional waste and the rapid production of materials needed to build new structures. This part of the exhibit captures the benefits, practices, and nuances of deconstruction, material salvage reuse possibilities and the resale markets created from them. It also presents “Designing for Deconstruction” as a method of constructing future structures with a plan for their end-of-life, thus optimizing potential salvage.

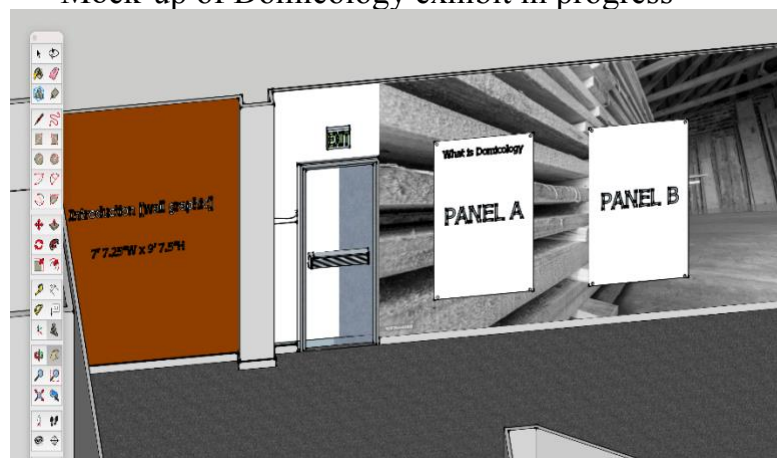
This display is provided in a vibrant learning environment including interactive demonstrations, compelling images, and expert descriptions. In the museum, attendees will learn that deconstruction not only proposes a remedy for the environmental, economic, and health implications of demolition, but creates fertile grounds for countless development opportunities - whether it be in dismantling a residential structure or repurposing and selling material salvage.

The exhibit’s finale leaves one feeling uplifted through real-life deconstruction examples both on MSU’s Campus and in other places in the world. It notes that substantial value is gained from salvaging materials, otherwise to be demolished, and from construction projects utilizing reused materials to make entire structures. In some cases, new structures are even already designed for future deconstruction utilizing the old!

Ultimately, the goal of this exhibit is to inspire viewers to leave with new perspectives on the built environment that surrounds them. Thinking with a circular vision has inspired such innovation and creation. For more information contact simonjay@msu.edu.

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Mock-up of Domicology exhibit in progress



MSU Museum entrance



Making Deconstruction Economies Work

By Nathaniel Hooper, Project Coordinator

The Domicology team has long postulated that our relationship with the built environment constitutes one of the most pressing challenges (and abundant opportunities) for introducing circular economy practices in the region. With 30% to 40% of all Michigan solid waste being made up of C&D (Construction & Demolition) debris, widespread blight and abandonment still saddles municipalities with undue burdens. New construction activities are also projected to eclipse any earlier periods of development globally. Simultaneously, an increasing awareness and investment in sustainability and carbon stewardship initiatives is rising across the country. Municipalities, environmental groups, state agencies, and industry partners are increasingly interested in exploring questions of deconstruction and material reuse.

Advances in building materials science and technologies (such as Mass Timber@MSU) are demonstrating the utility of material salvage and reuse as viable strategies for carbon sequestration and greater circularity in buildings. However, identifying and overcoming numerous technical challenges to reuse that continue to loom large are substantial conceptual barriers to ‘closing the loop’ on material inputs/outputs in the construction industry.

The tax-deductible donation incentive is a primary driver currently for market-driven regional deconstruction economies in the nation. Under this incentive, owners of structures pay the additional cost for deconstruction up-front, and then work with deconstruction and building material reuse-focused 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations to manage the end-of-life considerations for materials salvaged during the process. Structure owners donate the materials salvaged, and in return receive a tax-deductible donation receipt in the sum of the total appraised amount of the donated materials – often in the five-figure range, but sometimes rising into six figures depending on the quantity and quality of materials donated.

The donor is then free to claim the donation value as a tax deduction via the itemized deduction process (with a five-year carryforward), resulting in reduced tax burden for the homeowner/donor. While in many ways this incentive represents an innovative way to create real value for consumers of deconstruction services in the short-term, it also decouples that value from the costly and time-consuming processes of marketing and retailing the reclaimed building materials. However, there is one serious flaw in this approach.

Because of the IRS’s stipulation that in-kind tax-deductible donations are capped at 30% of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) annually, the ultimate value of the tax-deductible donation receipt in terms of its ability to generate tax savings to offset the additional cost and de-industrialization, relies on these incentives alone in most communities. It is simply not enough to cover the costs of deconstruction as it is pinned to the annual income of the homeowner/donor. This means that though higher quality/quantity donations do net larger donation receipts; the actual value (in terms of the amount of money saved by the donor) in this process

is largely determined not by the magnitude of donation, but by the income of the person donating the materials.

While substantial progress is being made on multiple fronts, a key question remains: how do we transition these activities into the market? In fact, are new market conditions going to be necessary and can they be controlled?

In response to this question, the MSU Domicology team (with support from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy) embarked in Summer 2021 on its most ambitious community-engaged scholarship project to date; a multi-sector market development project - affectionately referred to as ‘EGLE II’ - that endeavored to lay the groundwork for a sustainable and enduring deconstruction and material reuse economic sector in our state. With this project wrapping up its final phases, the team reflects on two years spent working in the field with a sense of heightened clarity on (and admittedly, frustration regarding) the status of deconstruction market conditions in the state of Michigan.

The fundamental market challenge in deconstruction is deceptively simple. The processes of deconstruction are more complex and expensive than that of demolition, and they invariably generate additional costs (mostly through additional labor) resulting in deconstruction costing twice as much as demolition. To offset these additional costs, deconstruction economies in the United States can best be understood as proceeding down two non-mutually exclusive paths. Both of which have precedent nationwide, and their respective strengths and downfalls.

The first path is the path of public sector partnership and grant funding. This path usually entails the involvement of state agency funding and municipal buy-in, using funds to offset the additional costs of deconstruction. While this pathway provides substantial benefit towards the upstart of deconstruction enterprises and generates deconstruction projects more expediently than market-driven upstarts alone; the reliance on grant funding to ‘generate’ a market for deconstruction services creates a situation in which deconstruction enterprises are reliant on external funding streams liable to change, disappear, or otherwise become unavailable in the future. This makes planning for growth and sustainability extremely difficult.

The second path is that of market driven approaches where deconstruction enterprises develop value propositions that allow for consumers of deconstruction services (those looking to remodel or remove all-together structures) to recuperate the additional cost. The method most widely observed in US-based deconstruction enterprises used to generate this value proposition is the tax-deductible donation incentive and was the focus of the aforementioned ‘EGLE II’ multi-partner project. In the eyes of the Domicology team, this constitutes a serious equity issue – as the ultimate gatekeeping factor for participation in the deconstruction sector (as a consumer of services) becomes annual income (specifically, AGI).

The forthcoming report titled [‘Making Deconstruction Economies Work in Michigan: A praxis-based framework for Deconstruction feasibility assessment in Michigan’](#) includes extensive overview of this challenge.

It also shares an array of replicable frameworks intended to help Michigan communities understand, define, and assess the potential for deconstruction economies in their region. Provided within are also a host of potential policy recommendations meant to nurture regional economies, enhance their feasibility and provide accessibility.



Thank you for all your hard work, Nat!

A Warm Welcome to our Humphrey Fellow



From being a vulnerable orphan to becoming an agent of change, Jimmy Ndiokubwayo is a 2023-2024 Humphrey Fellow from Burundi working with MSU faculty mentor, Mary ZumBrunnen, Assistant Director at the Center for Community and Economic Development. Jimmy's journey is one of resilience, determination, and a dream. Born in the Republic of Burundi during civil war, he spent his childhood far from his family due to insecurity in his native province of Bujumbura. With malformed hands he faced rejection and exclusion. Circumstances were aggravated by the passing of his father in 2010 and family poverty. Ultimately, Jimmy was catalyzed to become an active and committed change-maker.

Today, Ndiokubwayo is the founder and executive director of Tabitha Community in Action, a local NGO that carries out relief activities for vulnerable populations and focuses on community development in Burundi, East Africa. In this role, Jimmy oversees the administration, programs, and strategic plans of the organization. He is a young social entrepreneur who is passionate about humanitarian activities and is actively involved in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals within his country. Economist by profession, he participates in the construction of a just, free, united, and prosperous society where social inclusion and human values dominate.



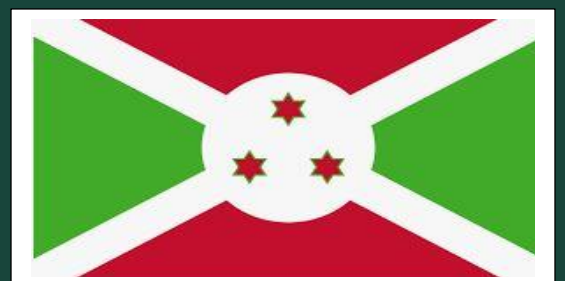
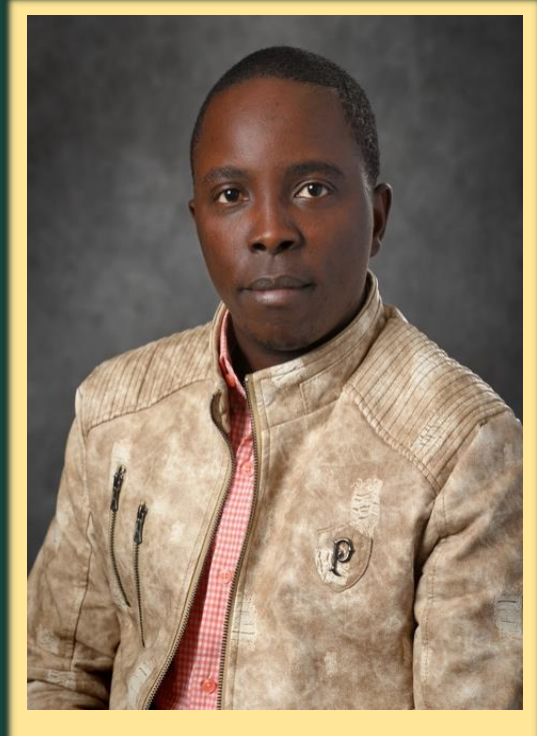
Currently, Jimmy Ndiokubwayo is one of 12 Humphrey Fellows at Michigan State University. He is enrolled in a *Leadership for Community Sustainability* class and is also a part-time visitor at the MSU CCED learning about community and economic development.

The Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship program enhances leadership among international professionals who collaborate to address local and global challenges and foster change for collective good. This fellowship is a part of the larger Fulbright Foreign Student Program developed to help connect U.S. and foreign leaders advancing solutions to our most pressing challenges.

Alongside his commitment to drive social change in Burundi, Jimmy has been a part of and served leadership roles in different initiatives and organizations such as Global Shapers Community Bujumbura Hub (former curator), Burundi Redeemed Gospel Church (general secretary) and the Young African Leaders Initiative (chairperson of the YALI alumni chapter of Burundi), NOW Generation Network of Mo Ibrahim Foundation and Youth Lab-Great Lakes Region Africa (Burundi young innovators for peace.)

Despite challenges faced, Ndiokubwayo continues to work toward his dream of improving lives within communities and is always eager to uplift others. He is a living story of resilience and transformation.

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For more information about Jimmy's nonprofit, **Tabitha Community in Action**, please visit their website at www.tca-help.org.

Connect on social media through Facebook and YouTube at:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TabithaTV1>

YouTube: www.youtube.com/tabithatv1



To contact Jimmy directly, please email ndihokub@msu.edu. To learn more about the Humphrey Fellowship opportunities, please see the [Fullbright Exchange Program](#).

Key Pointers on Determining the Feasibility of MSU Investing in Community Development Financial Institutions

Gabrielle Teachey, Research Assistant

For years, many Michigan families have struggled to send their children to college, and as 2020 approached, the COVID-19 pandemic intensified problems such as racism, social injustice, and the inequities of affording higher education. Many of these communities and families are still struggling to economically rebound from such financial stressors. In addition, access to capital is a major impediment to new businesses forming and community revitalization in many distressed urban and rural communities in Michigan. Providing capital support through responsible investing of MSU's Endowment and that of the MSU Foundation can be an important part of supporting community investing in affordable housing, entrepreneurial development, income growth and job creation in targeted Michigan Communities.

Addressing this, a working group at the CCED conducted ["A Study to Determine the Feasibility of Michigan State University Investing in Community Development Financial Institutions"](#) over winter '23 exploring the opportunity for MSU to help pioneer higher education endowment investment practices through community development financial institutions (CDFIs). Please see the infographic below at the end of this article. CDFIs are lender institutions required to meet specific criterion certified by what's known as the federal CDFI Fund. The CDFI Fund helps generate economic growth and opportunity in some of the nation's most distressed communities by offering tailored resources and innovative programs that invest federal dollars alongside private sector capital.

Specifically, the team sought to determine the feasibility of MSU strategically investing its financial resources in the creation of a Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF) within its investment portfolio. As a growing number of universities and institutions look to invest in underserved communities through CDFIs, it is important for MSU

to take a national leadership role in the coming years within this area. The CDFI Fund is aligned with this by serving mission-driven financial institutions that take a market-based approach to supporting economically disadvantaged communities.

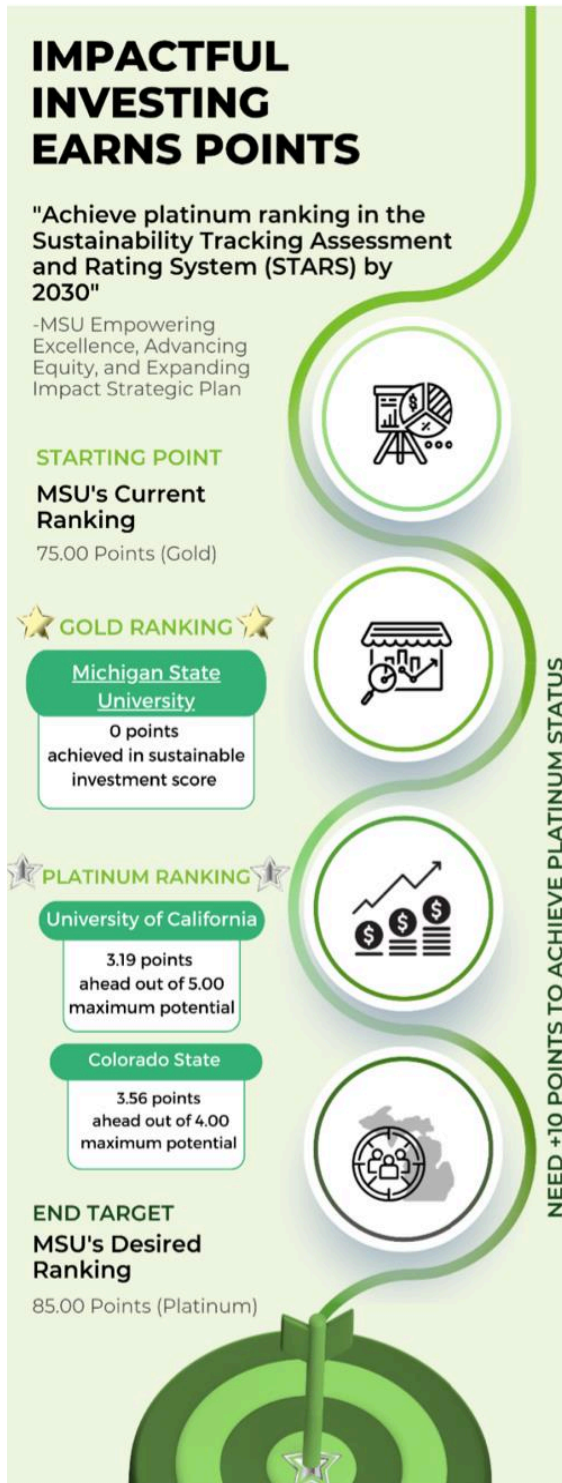
Therefore, CDFIs' goals include assisting underserved populations along with socially and economically distressed investment areas accelerating community development through capital flow by offering responsible and affordable loans. These Institutions can also promote financial literacy through financial counseling, homeownership education, and support of small businesses. Ways in which CDFIs aid economically distressed areas also include creating jobs through community development investments, having affordable and accessible loans, and engaging community. Following, several examples are provided of CDFIs positively impacting minorities, low-income communities, and small and women-owned businesses within the state of Michigan. Report examples follow.

Three case study highlights:

- Chi Ishobak, a nonprofit Native American CDFI, assists tribal citizens to build financial stability while promoting and protecting their tribal culture, dignity, education, health, welfare, and self-sufficiency. In 2022, Chi Ishobak distributed \$3,983,204.71 to tribal entrepreneurs through their commercial program. Their consumer program distributed \$9,449,865.34.
- Invest Detroit (ID) is a nonprofit lender and venture capital firm that supports economic growth and inclusive development throughout the Detroit area primarily through housing and neighborhood development. To date ID has dispersed \$491,093,703 with 812 projects and 5,234 housing units constructed. Many of the businesses that have been assisted are owned by women of color and immigrants.
- Northern Initiatives (NI) is a CDFI whose goal is to build a stronger local economy, enhance job growth, and support economic mobility. NI provided \$91 million in small business loans, creating, and retaining 6,961 jobs in MI in 2021. Of their recipients, 66% were startup businesses. Additionally, 100% of loan customers received extra business guidance and support. Many customers are women, minority, and veteran-owned businesses.

Inequities in accessing higher education by race/ethnicity and income have existed for decades. Students of color and low-income students remain two demographics with the lowest college-education rates, many times for financial reasons. However, in its "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Report and Plan" (2021), which was produced through a collaborative engagement effort with members across the university's community, MSU states a goal of improving the diversity of its student body through recruitment and retention. Through strategic community investing, MSU should re-affirm its land-grant leadership as a premiere public research institution and global trailblazer of engagement by harnessing the power of Michigan CDFIs to effectuate revitalization, recruitment and retention. The case studies and literature explored throughout the study support the notion that MSU has the power to create a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable campus by supporting community revitalization efforts through investing in CDFIs. Supporting equitable and sustainable community investing strategies promoting economic resilience in underserved communities helps provide world-class education to historically disadvantaged students and addresses long-term structural inequities underpinning uneven access to higher education. For more information, email Gabrielle Teachey at teacheyg@msu.edu.

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MSU EDA University Center: Recap and Future Outlook

Jenan Jondy, Project Coordinator

What's New

Adding to this year's excitement, the MSU EDA University Center for Regional Economic Innovation (REI) has received its third-year EDA investment award. This award marks a significant step for REI in its mission to transform economically distressed communities into hubs of entrepreneurial activity and innovation. This award, along with the many public and private partners, has provided support for the continuation of strategic partnerships and collaborative learning to develop and share the most

innovative economic development tools, models, policies, and practices.

This year, REI and its partners produced two Innovation Fellowships, three Co-Learning Plans, and seven Student-Led Faculty Guided Projects – and a NEW website! Learn more about REI and this year's projects, [here](#). To further disseminate what has been learned, projects may now also be found electronically on Humanities Commons and Google Scholar.

The U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration highlighted REI in its monthly newsletter as a success story entitled, "EDA University Center at Michigan State Bridges Gap Between Academia and Economic Development Practitioners." This article was published to the EDA's social platforms: [EDA Newsletter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and reshared by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

The REI team is happy to share that this University Center's collaborative work also contributed to MSU's *Innovation and Economic Prosperity* (IEP) designation by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities demonstrating, "substantive, sustainable, and institution-wide commitment to strategy for regional economic engagement, growth, and economic opportunity." This designation process enables educational institutions to assess and articulate their impact on state economic well-being. This process also serves to refine and spotlight their local and state-level economic development initiatives.

Bridging Digital Gaps, Advancing Sustainability and Fostering Innovation

On August 17th, the *Innovate Michigan!* Summit and Michigan Inventors Coalition Expo attracted over 200 attendees which set the stage for discussions, collaborations, and a celebration of innovation. From sustainability to digital equity, the summit drew attention to the most pressing issues facing vulnerable communities in Michigan and the broader Midwest region today.

High-profile Keynotes

The Summit was honored to host distinguished speakers and presentations around this year's projects. Dr. Nabil Nasr, CEO of the ReMade Institute, talked about the importance of circular economies in fostering sustainable

development. The REMADE Institute is a 171-member, public-private partnership funded in part by the U.S. Department of Energy with an initial investment of \$140 million. It then reinvests in research, development and deployment projects to accelerate the nation's transition to a more circular economy. The Institute works in partnership with industry, academia, trade associations, and national labs focused on addressing knowledge gaps that eliminate and/or mitigate technical and economic barriers preventing greater material reuse, remanufacturing, recovery, and recycling.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jon Gant, Director of the Office of Minority Broadband Initiatives at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), brought the crucial subject of digital equity to the forefront. Dr. Gant, a thought leader on models for university-led partnerships to bridge the digital divide and advance equity for economic growth, workforce development, and innovation, shared his experiences working on digital inclusion at North Carolina Central University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Located within the Department of Commerce, the NTIA is the Executive Branch agency that is principally responsible by law for advising the President on telecommunications and information policy issues. NTIA's programs and policymaking focus largely on expanding broadband Internet access and adoption in America, expanding the use of spectrum by all users, and ensuring that the Internet remains an engine for continued innovation and economic growth.

Wide-Ranging Discussions

Lastly, from the impact of Electric Vehicles (EVs) on vulnerable communities to the power of worker-owned cooperative businesses, the Summit offered a wide array of thought-provoking presentations and conversations. Attendees had multiple networking opportunities throughout the Summit (and after), including via the Whova app, to learn about each other's communities, partnerships, and work. Innovative ideas, challenges and successes were also shared by attendees on the Center's first graffiti wall! For more information about REI, please contact jondyjen@msu.edu.

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