

NEWSLETTER

Michigan State University

Center for Community & Economic Development

SPRING 2024 ~ Volume 35



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From Theory to Practice: Guiding Community Development Principles



By **Rex L. LaMore, PhD.**
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As part of Michigan State University (MSU), the premier land-grant institution, the Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) was established in downtown Lansing, Michigan in 1970. In keeping with the land-grant tradition of creating and applying knowledge to address the needs of society, CCED is committed to:

“...creating, applying, and disseminating valued knowledge through responsive engagement, strategic partnerships, and collaborative learning. We are dedicated to co-creating sustainable prosperity and equitable economies with communities.”

Since its establishment, the CCED has expanded through strategic partnerships its scholarly outreach to communities throughout Michigan and has a statewide capacity to initiate and support innovative problem-solving strategies intended to improve the quality of life in Michigan's communities.

A society's ability to successfully address the problems that confront distressed communities largely depends on their intellectual capacity to understand the causes of these problems and to conceive of and effectively implement strategies that eliminate or minimize the sources of distress. Few institutions in modern society have both the capacity and the responsibility to generate and apply new ideas to address what are called in planning practice “*wicked problems*,” i.e., those problems in which there is a lack of consensus as to their causes and which lack obvious solutions.

Wicked problems are complex and persistent. They require both a capacity to build a broad community consensus on the nature and scope of a problem and, to the extent that they may already exist, identify evidence-based methods that may be feasibly implemented to address the concern. The professional and organizational capacity to conduct a broadly participatory process to identify, design, implement and assess the impact of new tools, models, policies and programs intended to mitigate the negative impacts of *wicked problems* is a role higher education is often well positioned to undertake.

Government agencies and non-profit organizations that risk piloting untested tools, models, policies, and programs may run the risk of failure and face dire consequences as a result. The private sector, driven in large part by competitive market forces, may have greater incentive to try new ideas and take risks but only in those situations where there is a likely “profitable” outcome. However, where there exists no reasonable expectation of profitability, the capacity of private sector institutions to develop and test new methods declines. This is particularly true in areas of social and community development. It is in this context that the unique role of universities to identify, develop, and implement evidence-based interventions becomes extremely valuable to addressing *wicked problems* in society.

In carrying out our mission as a research and outreach unit of MSU committed to addressing society's *wicked problems*, CCED adheres to a set of *Community Development Principles*. These principles have been developed and refined over several decades by scholars and practitioners in the field of community development and provide a framework for CCED in co-creating with community partners well informed innovative tools, models, policies, and programs that address some of our most challenging 21st century issues. ###

The **Community Development Society** has established and embraces the following **Principles of Good Practice** for the field of community development:

Co-Learning

Engage in mutual learning and capacity building among professionals and community members through reflective practice, experiential knowledge, professional development, and scholarship.

Collaboration

Bridge boundaries of place, sector, discipline, identity, and interest to integrate diverse perspectives and resources in shared decision-making and co-creation.

Community-Driven Practice

Center those most directly impacted in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of community initiatives, policies, programs, and research that affect their lives.

Community Power

Respect the ability of community members to develop and sustain a strong self-image, create shared power, and think and do for themselves.

Dignity within Diversity

Practice and foster cultural humility, nonjudgmental listening, and accountability for any harm done.

Economic Autonomy

Strengthen local ownership and stewardship of community assets and wealth building opportunities.

Social Justice

Identify, resist, and dismantle systems of oppression experienced by both historically marginalized groups and emerging social identities.

Sustainability

Practice and foster careful deliberation of the cultural, social, economic, and environmental impacts of actions and inactions over time.

Tech Hubs Strategy Development



By Jeffrey Smith, jothum@msufoundation.org
 Director of the University Corporate Research Park at the MSU Foundation

In October of 2023, the Michigan State University Research Foundation, Michigan State University (MSU), and a consortium of their research partners were selected for a Tech Hubs Strategy Development award from the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration (EDA). The Strategy Development Grants are planning awards that amount to approximately \$500,000 (including \$100,000 of in-kind support), allowing the consortium to further develop its efforts and propose against any potential additional funding should the EDA continue to expand the program.

The Hub for [Materials Advancement and Research Solutions \(MARS\) Strategy Consortium](#), focuses on transforming the Lansing 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, power electronics, and other applications essential to U.S. national and economic security. Michigan State University and the Research Foundation have deep expertise in this domain.

The EDA Tech Hubs Program is an investment in the future of the United States and was created as part of the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022. The program 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 MARS Hub is led by the MSU Research Foundation, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to advancing research and economic development objectives. MARS Consortium members include:

- MSU Research Foundation
- Michigan State University
- Fraunhofer USA
- Lansing Community College
- Great Lakes Crystal Technologies
- Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
- Capital Area Michigan Works!
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- Lansing Economic Area Partnership
- The Lansing Regional SmartZone
- LIFT (Manufacturing USA Institute)
- Melanated Business Alliance
- Red Cedar Ventures

The goal of the grant funding is to identify and address key inhibitors to the region’s global competitiveness in synthetic diamond and rare isotopes. Currently, there is an absence of an applied research and commercialization platforms that marshals assets and capabilities to help advanced materials companies scale. The MARS vision is to leverage unique expertise and assets to develop a suite of coordinated programs, including corporate innovation, business incubation and more.

There are four key activities included in the approved *Scope of Work* to be completed between November 2023 and the end of June 2024:

Activity 1: Consortium Development and Activation – To engage the Consortium in regular meetings to establish a vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the Consortium, as well as to refine the key focus areas of intended outcomes: workforce development, technology commercialization, and economic growth of the region/state. To also identify programming that lines up with Consortium Strategy.

Activity 2: Strategic Planning and Focus Group Development – To develop a *Community Benefits Plan* focused on workforce development, equity and inclusion, sustainability, and long-term community building tactics. To develop a *Technology-Based Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan* and better create a vision for the Lansing region as it applies to competitive advantages in advanced materials.

Activity 3: Preliminary Engineering Report - To develop a *Preliminary Engineering Report* based on EDA guidelines, allowing the MARS Consortium to better determine the feasibility of proposed projects within the Implementation Plan and based on the Economic Development Strategy.

Activity 4: Grants Management – To comply with EDA grant requirements including reporting, disbursements, check-ins and technical assistance sessions with EDA project officers and program staff, and other activities as needed.

These programs will serve as a force multiplier to transition advanced materials technologies upward in Technology Readiness Levels and build regional and national capacity to commercialize and domestically manufacture advanced materials and the applications that rely on them. The end result will position the Lansing region to be a nationally and globally recognized hub for advanced materials manufacturing. For more information please contact Jeff Smith at (517) 353-9268 or email jothum@msufoundation.org

###

Rafael Auras, PhD. Named Amcor Endowed Chair in Packaging Sustainability

By Judi Melena Smelser, smelserm@msu.edu
Communications Manager, Department of Entomology

Michigan State University (MSU) [School of Packaging](#) professor [Rafael Auras, Ph.D.](#), has been named the **Amcor Endowed Chair in Packaging Sustainability**. This position will focus on research and teaching in the areas of full lifecycle and environmental modeling and analysis, development of novel sustainable materials and solutions, and provides sustainability through leadership across all stakeholders in the packaging value chain.

“The endowment for a faculty position for sustainability represents Amcor’s shared commitment with MSU to excellence and innovation in the future of packaging,” said [Matt Daum, Ph.D.](#), director of the MSU School of Packaging and assistant dean of corporate relations and strategy for the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR).

Global packaging innovator Amcor established the endowment as part of a [\\$10.8 million commitment](#) to the MSU School of Packaging in 2021. Their investment also supported [renovations to the School of Packaging building](#).

“This investment in the School of Packaging is not only exciting for Amcor, it’s important to the future of the industry and to responsible packaging in the U.S.,” said Amcor CEO Ron Delia. “We’re making significant progress in how we design and how we recycle packaging. The students at MSU’s School of Packaging today will be the packaging leaders that will lead this ongoing push for responsible packaging tomorrow.”

According to Auras, “My research and teaching have evolved to include the development of packaging systems, studying their end-of-life scenario, and trying to understand the decisions people make around packaging. So, when I saw the description of the Amcor chair position, it matched everything I was doing professionally.”

Auras’ research examines the mass transfer in polymers, biodegradable and compostable polymers, life cycle assessment (LCA), packaging waste, and sustainable packaging systems. He has led research projects for Fortune 500 companies and government-sponsored grants. He has also been a featured speaker at national and international conferences regarding the biodegradation and composability of packaging systems, the environmental footprint assessment of packaging using LCA methodologies, and the creation and design of sustainable packaging systems.

Additionally, Auras has coauthored over 150 publications and recently published a book titled *Life Cycle of Sustainable Packaging: from Design to End of Life*.

“I think we need to change the conversation around packaging so we can tackle the real problems of waste in our society,” Auras said. “But there are other things that happen around the world, like malnutrition, scarcity, and food preservation, that also need to be solved, and packaging can be a good vehicle to do that, too.”

Auras earned a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering from the National University of Misiones in Argentina, a master’s degree in materials science and technology from the National University of San Martin in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and a Ph.D. in packaging from Michigan State University.

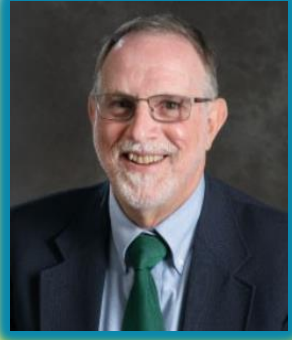


On behalf of the Center for Community & Economic Development, congratulations Dr. Auras!

Additionally, in collaborative efforts between the Center, School of Packaging, College of Natural Science, Animal Science Department, Department of Political Science, and the School of Engineering, Dr. Auras is also supporting faculty in the development of a Circular Economy Institute at MSU. For more information about circularity and the growth of a more regenerative economy, please see [Circular Economies](#) and check out the faculty forums, videos, webinars, podcasts, other research and more.

To find out more about the Amcor Endowment and School of Packaging, please contact Judi Melena Smelser at smelserm@msu.edu. To connect with Dr. Auras directly, please email aurasraf@msu.edu.

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Community Benefits Planning

By **John Melcher**, Associate Director
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*Interested in working on community benefits? Apply to the 2024/2025 AmeriCorps*VISTA position at CCED. A job description is provided at the end of this newsletter with instructions.

In Spring 2024, the Center for Community & Economic Development (CCED) began investigating opportunities for community members and leaders at the local level to utilize community benefit planning strategies. As developers seek funding from the public sector for communities, those impacted by the development process can negotiate different types of plans to ensure that the investment will benefit the local economy as well. These plans are called Community Benefit Agreements and Community Benefit Plans, both of which serve the interests of a locality with varying degrees of protection. The Center has recently identified a growing interest in how federal and local funding is distributed to developers and is preparing a policy brief to identify current trends and opportunities in community benefit planning. This policy brief will explore case studies of community benefit planning at the local and university levels to create recommendations that could help Michigan's stakeholders implement these policies and practices.

Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) are legally binding contracts between developers and the community-based organizations that represent the interests of the residents of an area, like ensuring amenities or mitigating property decline. On the other hand, Community Benefit Plans (CBPs) are often non-binding agreements between community organizations and developers that outline community priorities. CBPs are designed to increase the potential influence of a community in the development process and ensure more community engagement, while CBAs represent a longer legal process usually involving a Community Benefit

Ordinance (CBO). A CBO is an ordinance, resolution, or policy adopted by a country, city, or township within a state that requires entry into a CBA. Requiring a CBA protects communities from predatory development practices, especially disadvantaged areas. In turn, they assist small businesses and job seekers in finding or obtaining construction contracts, jobs, and training opportunities for residents who live in those areas. CBPs are much easier to draft, but impossible to fully enforce, giving much more leeway to developers.

The Community Benefit Movement (CBM) began between the 1990s and early 2000s. The CBM began in California with the goal of expanding social justice, economic development, and land use planning. The community benefit movement was later adopted by organizations in the cities of East Bay, Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Jose. The movement also spread across many metropolitan areas such as Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Miami, Milwaukee, Minneapolis/St. Paul, New York City, Seattle, and Washington D.C. The first CBA was arranged in 1998 for the development of the Hollywood and Highland Center, including over 4,000 theater seats, parking lots, and hotels. However, the first "full-fledged" Community Benefit Agreement also took place in California in 2001 which was heavily involved in the sports and entertainment district of Los Angeles, through the Staples Center Expansion Pack. Projects like these helped popularize the use of CBAs and CBPs within the larger movement, advertising their use for municipalities across the United States.

A CBA campaign success depends on the cooperation from government officials and a lack of political support has created failed or co-opted CBA attempts in cities such as Chicago, Atlanta, and New York. Some cities employ a community engagement requirement before a project is approved by the public book,

while other policies require a meeting or several with community members, stakeholders, or designated representatives. Alternatively, CBPs are meant to be flexible to produce the best approaches from applicants and their partners. Generated plans must be actionable, measurable, and specific.

A community benefit plan can create a newfound level of trust in relationships with local stakeholders, set expectations around access to jobs and economic opportunities, address needs in communities, and develop innovative programs. A CBP campaign involves engaging communities and labor, investing in America's workers through quality jobs, advancing in DEI values and accessibility through recruitment and training, and implementing the [Justice40 Initiative](#). The goal of this initiative is for 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal investments to flow to disadvantaged communities. While CBAs are more certain, both methods have their strengths and weaknesses.

As more research for this project continues, the Center seeks to create a broad-based advisory taskforce that can provide more insight into the community benefit planning process and facilitate circulating the report among key stakeholders. As more community leaders, policy makers, scholars, and economic development professionals become involved in community benefit planning, CCED hopes to provide them with a resource that can help inform their decision-making process.

Additionally, the Center looks forward to welcoming a future full-time AmeriCorps*Volunteer in Service to America member focused on community benefits – both agreements and plans this summer. For more information, or to apply for this position, please see *Open Positions* listed under *Student Opportunities* at the CCED's website. This hyperlink will take readers directly to Handshake for the application, or readers may download a PDF application. Please inquire with Mary ZumBrunnen, Assistant Director, with resume and cover letter at zumbrun1@msu.edu.

###

The Resident Specialist Model

By Bob Brown, Assoc. Dir.
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An enduring strategy at the Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) is that of the *Resident Specialist*. Working in distressed communities over the past 50 years, CCED faculty have found that a “Resident Specialist” model has been one of the most effective and efficient ways to enact our principles. Resident Specialists have foundational understandings and competencies gained from long-term engagement with the communities they serve. Foundational understandings include deep knowledge of wicked problems, asset-based community development, collaboration – or stages of working together, and their community’s demographics. Competencies include cultural competency, intersectionality, inclusive communication, systems thinking, collaboration and partnership building, advocacy and policy change, capacity building, data analysis and evaluation, reflection and self-critique.

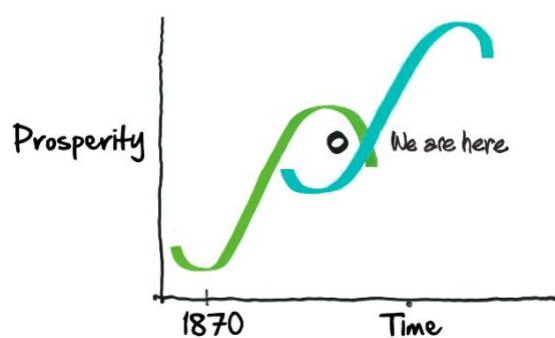
Bob is the Resident Specialist for the greater Flint area. As a lifelong community development practitioner, he has unique foundational understandings and competencies gained from working and living in Flint for over 45 years. At the CCED, his work is situated within three major socio-environmental understandings of distressed and marginalized cities:

First, distressed communities experience a wide range of wicked problems embedded in complex systems. Wicked problems are social or cultural problems that are very difficult to solve because:

- There is no one source of the problems. If there were a single source, a solution would probably already have been implemented. Rather, there are multiple contributing factors that make it hard to figure out exactly what is driving the problems and how to respond.
- A new program or individual initiative will not make a significant difference. There may be a number of ideas about things that would be helpful, but there is no simple panacea at hand.
- No single organization – *much less a single individual* – can play the superhero role to bring about a happy ending. The scale of the issue(s) is such that communities must find ways to effectively work together in order to address the challenge.

Second, distressed communities are legacy cities which are defined as older, industrial urban areas that have experienced significant population and job loss, resulting in high residential vacancies and diminished service capacity and resources. Legacy cities tend to be areas of disinvestment with populations frequently viewed as disposable.

Third, development and change occur along an S-curve. An S-curve is a graph depicting data points plotted against a timeline. Please see the example provided below.



The chart looks at the United States economy. Currently, Americans are between two S-curves – or “grandfathers’ vs. grandchildren’s” economies. Our grandfathers’ S-curve was the golden age of industrial growth. As industrial growth began to decline the next S-curve of globalization and information began to take off. Some communities are able to make the transition more smoothly than others. Some are left behind. Flint, Detroit, Benton Harbor, and other similar communities are and continue to be largely left behind.

Additionally, the lower S-curve (left) from a community and economic development perspective is characterized by problems to solve such as: funding driven; agency and program centered; professionals and experts who operate “the system”; clients needing help; expert knowledge informing solutions; operating plans; strategic plans, and; multiple facets of self-interested collaboration. This curve is on the decline. It doesn’t work well in the context of wicked problems.

The right S-curve is characterized by: opportunities to realize; relationships driven; people and neighborhood centered; viewing the neighborhood as a system operated by residents; people building capacity; community wisdom and science informed; gifts (assets) and generosity; networks; strategic doing; authentic and deep collaboration. This curve is beginning to rise and is critical to addressing wicked problems.

Ultimately, community and economic development are moving from the left curve to the right curve. This means we are moving out of the current context as it wears out and becomes increasingly less valid. In contrast, we are moving toward innovation and transformation, moving upwards on the S-curve. Resident Specialists help community members understand and embrace this transition.



One example of this work on the ground in Flint is focused on building safe neighborhoods. Bob works with community-based organizations to help generate conversation around very hard topics, ignite action and collaboration among neighborhood residents and organizations, and most importantly supports work that can give hope and relief to youth and families living in historically disinvested neighborhoods. Collectively,

staff have done this at the Center in the past, in the present and will continue to do so into the future by:

- Convening residents to take action;
- Strengthening those relationships between residents and community leaders;
- Bridging the gap between law enforcement and neighbors;
- Enacting violence reduction and prevention strategies;
- Creating safe places for children and youth, and;
- Connecting Faith, Time, Talent, and Treasures



Thank you to Kenyetta Dotson, Director of WOW Outreach in the City of Flint, for permission to use these photos. Kenyetta says, “What an Amazing day! We cleaned a lot in a high traffic areas, walked through the neighborhood, provided resources, offered prayer, hope, and even distributed ice cream & cold water - with young people leading the way as part of larger revitalization efforts.”



By Mary ZumBrunnen, Assistant Director, zumbrun1@msu.edu

MSU RURAL READINESS TRIBAL FELLOWSHIP PLANNING

In early January of this year, the Michigan State University (MSU) Center for Community & Economic Development (CCED) was awarded a *Rural Readiness* grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development to promote community-specific solutions that build planning and capacity in rural communities and regions across Michigan. Supporting cross-sector collaboration, development readiness, partnership and planning as well as rural capacity building and collective impact, the Center proposed utilizing this 18-month planning award to craft an economic resiliency Native American Tribal Fellowship pilot model.



In partnership with the MSU Native American Institute (NAI) and with support from MSU Extension, the Center will facilitate this project through June of 2025 serving the five sovereign nations of: the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomi Indians (Gun Lake Tribe), Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe, and Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi.

To begin this grant period, planning will focus on refining and prioritizing tribally identified resiliency needs to help lay a framework for more equitable development and long-term investment. The pilot project has grown as a direct response to tribal focus group activities conducted by MSU Extension in June of 2023 through “*Building Strong Sovereign Nations, Anishinabek Leadership for Seven Generations*” programming with support from the CCED and NAI. After experiencing disruption and loss of income due to the pandemic, the following areas were identified by tribal economic developers and other leadership as areas of resiliency need including climate resiliency support, food sovereignty, infrastructure, and renewable energy upgrades, contracting capacity development, government and business structuring, public health, entrepreneurial advocacy and more.



Over the course of the next year and a half, partners will work to craft a professional development and 12-month work experience for competitively selected tribal community members residing in their nations who also demonstrate a commitment to living there and applying their skill building long-term. Assisting to help develop local leadership to buffer against future shock and crises is critical. Therefore, throughout this spring the CCED and Extension partners will meet with each of the five fellowship pilot model tribes and conduct additional asset mapping and resiliency prioritization activities. Fellow workplans will be developed accordingly and by spring of 2025 the initial candidate recruitment and interviews will be underway for Cohort I.

In addition to conducting economic resiliency needs assessments, building out partnership frameworks and leadership development, the anticipated impacts include identifying funding streams, developing stipend incentives and identifying, recruiting, and training talent. Long-term investment opportunity will also be cultivated. Lastly, working together with tribal nations and harnessing institutional support, CCED hopes to leverage other university and community college opportunities for fellow immersion experience, co-creation of talent pipelines and leveraging of problem-solving networks to aid resiliency efforts. A joint sense of social responsibility and spirit of community engagement may assist to help connect tribal communities, rural areas and urban through shared resources. Please contact Mary ZumBrunnen at zumbrun1@msu.edu for details.



The Center would also like to thank nonprofit partner, Michigan Center for Employee Ownership (MCEO), for offering their services pro-bono to participating tribes on this project. The MCEO will: 1) work with tribal communities to start, retain, and grow businesses in their rural communities, 2) offer valuation assessments, company development, exit planning and employee ownership services, and 3) develop and deliver appropriate fellow training programs valued at approximately \$1,000. For more information about the MCEO please contact Executive Director, Roy J. Messing, at rmessing@eoxnetwork.org.

###



2023 Innovate Michigan! Summit Recap

By Jenan Jondy, REI Coordinator
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The *Innovate Michigan!* Summit and Michigan Inventors Coalition Expo took place on August 17th at the Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center in Lansing. A first for the CCED, the 12th annual conference was electronically streamlined by using a software application that allowed attendees to interact with Summit organizers, provide their feedback, network with colleagues, share their bios and resumes, and download presentations and reports. It was a networking success! The American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Certification Maintenance (CM) credits were also offered for certified planners at various sessions with steep discounting. Throughout the day, hundreds of inventors and attendees also participated in the Michigan Inventors Coalition (MIC) Expo and event by visiting and casting their vote for their favorite invention.

[Dr. Nabil Nasr, CEO of ReMade Institute](#), the *Innovate MI!* Summit's keynote highlight spoke to attendees about sustainability challenges, innovations, and economic development opportunities to help transition Michigan towards a more circular economy. Partners presented on collaborative models, electric vehicle impact on vulnerable communities, leveraging the planning process to improve regional efforts in communities, community capital impact investing, benefits of worker-owned cooperative businesses, informal economies, and a revitalization study.

The Summit is also the time when attendees rate topical areas REI has received throughout the year through the "Ideas to Innovation (I2I)" networks (*that's you!*) anonymously suggesting pertinent and timely critical areas of foci for future community champions. These ideas and their ratings are then taken to REI's consultative panelists, knowledge-based and experienced experts, who help competitively evaluate the topical ideas for the next funding cycle. This work informs our 2024 call for proposals that are most likely to *create or retain jobs and/or businesses in economically distressed communities* and regions of Michigan.

**Mark your calendars for
the 2024 Innovate
Michigan! Summit on
Thursday, August 15th!**

2024 Project Awards

Student-Led/Faculty-Guided Projects

Kicking off 2024, awards for Student-Led Faculty-Guided (SLFG) projects offer a unique avenue and model for community technical assistance while also engaging students in real-world economic development challenges. In 2024, the Regional Economic Innovation (REI) Center, supported by the U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration (EDA) with additional support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), will fund eight to eleven innovative SLFG projects across Michigan. Project summaries are as follows:

Dr. Zenia Kotval, MSU Professor of Urban and Regional Planning, was granted an [award for six SLFG projects](#), each providing technical assistance in diverse Michigan communities. One project, the *Lady Bug Center at Churchill Gardens* in Lansing, seeks to transform the area through regenerative development to mitigate environmental issues tied to the automotive industry's legacy moving towards a carbon-neutral future. Another capital region project will focus on *East Lansing's 2024 Master Plan Update*. Kotval's third SLFG project in Flint builds on the *Imagine Flint Master Plan* which will focus on revitalizing the Civic Park Neighborhood through economic development strategies and historic preservation. The *St. Johns North Gateway* project plans to blend history with modern mixed-use development while also addressing blight through targeted demolition efforts. Additionally, Utica's *Downtown Sub-Area Plan* SLFG project aims to revitalize its downtown through strategic planning for underutilized spaces, fostering economic vibrancy. Lastly, the *Morning Side Neighborhood* project in Detroit will emphasize housing improvements and historic preservation that are critical for securing funding and enhancing community resilience.

At Northern Michigan University, Jelili Adebisi, PhD, was also [awarded for his SLFG project](#), *Consumer Plastic Consumption, Reuse and Recycling in Upper Peninsula Michigan*. The proposed research project aims to conduct a case study on consumer plastic behaviors in Marquette, Michigan, exploring factors influencing plastic consumption, reuse, and recycling knowledge and behaviors. The study would be undertaken in collaboration with Recycle906, Marquette County's solid waste management authority. Another of Dr. Adebisi's projects explores the potential of food waste diversion to vermicompost, addressing food waste challenges while generating economic opportunities.

REI anticipates an additional two SLFG projects from other universities/colleges in Michigan.

Co-Learning Plans

In January, REI also announced [awardees for the 2024 Co-Learning Plans](#), focusing on diverse economic challenges and opportunities within Michigan. Co-Learning is a process in which multiple parties collaborate to generate new knowledge, innovative economic development tools, models, strategies, policies, and practices are researched, and the findings and recommendations serve as a key resource for economic development practitioners and policymakers in Michigan. Co-Learning Plans can be written by practitioners, decision-makers, community leaders, entrepreneurs, scholars, or other stakeholders. This year, these plans include an analysis of Michigan's licensed appraisers, an initiative to foster a welcoming community in Flint for international talent, and a study on the effectiveness of Michigan Works! services in supporting small business development in Northwest Lower Michigan.

Innovation Fellows

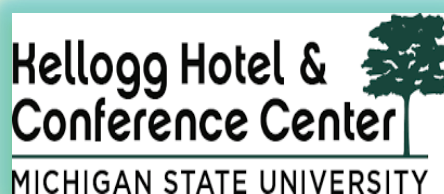
The Innovation Fellows program seeks to incorporate the tools, models, and policies identified in Co-Learning Projects into practice in communities around Michigan. Established in 2016, the program works to attract and support top champions in communities and organizations to tackle the tough economic development issues that our distressed communities face every day. Innovation Fellows provide on-the-ground support and coordination to move concepts to actions.

Randy A. Yagiela, Development Director of Lenawee Now, is this year's 2024 Innovation Fellow. Yagiela's fellowship will focus on building an approach to workforce development, integrating financial empowerment and training within a collaborative ecosystem. This work is aimed to revitalize the City of Adrian and more broadly Lenawee County through education, training, and economic development.

These awards reflect the REI University Center's commitment to fostering innovation, collaboration, and economic growth across Michigan. They also showcase the power of partnerships between academia, communities, and economic development professionals. The SLFG projects, Co-Learning Plans, and Innovation Fellowships continue to make significant contributions to Michigan's economic vitality in distressed regions through innovation and community engagement.

Past awards and co-learning plans are available at [Completed Projects](#) on the CCED website at ced.msu.edu.

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Inspiring MSU Museumgoers to Consider a Circular Vision of the Built Environment

By Jayla Simon, Research Assistant, simonjay@msu.edu

In January 2024, the MSU Museum put on an Opening Ceremony for the *Domicology—The Life Cycle of Our Built Environment* exhibition, which was made possible by a team made up of CCED staff and partners from the MSU Surplus Store & Recycling Center, School of Planning, Design and Construction at MSU, and the state exhibit of Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy. The opening ceremony ended with hopeful sentiments towards the future and potential of the exhibition and broader Domicology initiatives for the exhibition team.



Therefore, the exhibition team has been working on developing a ‘travel package’ for the exhibit, containing all of its content, which will allow for easy installment as the exhibit is expected to be displayed at various showcases or conferences in the future, as well possibly being displayed as highlighted research within an MSU on-campus building. The team is also preparing for the installment of the exhibit in various other museums across the country, as a continuous, ever improving, traveling exhibition.



The Opening Ceremony for the exhibition kicked off with some key remarks about the importance of Domicology and the exhibition team’s efforts to promote circularity within the built environment, made by Interim President Woodruff.



More recent and local uses of the exhibition have been the events put on by the Museum throughout the months of February and March. Before the end of the

MSU Museum Director Devon Akmon also spoke at the ceremony, sharing his unique experiences tying him to the Domicological field. Liz Browne, director of the Materials Management Division in the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, concluded the key speakers, expressing advocacy for MSU CCED’s continuation of Domicological efforts.

exhibition’s stay at the MSU Museum at the end of March, the Museum team hosted three events: a private network Zoom Q&A panel, which facilitated productive conversations surrounding Deconstruction and Domicology among dedicated, knowledgeable partners; a public Q&A panel encouraging Domicological thought provocation among the Lansing community, and; public hands-on events, which engaged the MSU community in domicological thinking with a fun ‘reuse competition’ involving a race to deconstruct a structure, salvaging the most materials possible.

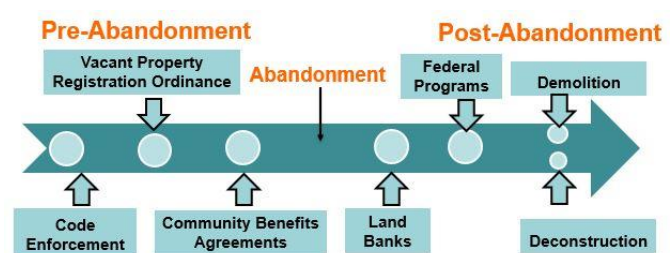


Such supportive words provided by the ceremony’s key speakers were reflective of the sentiments shared among the rest of the reception attendees. Exceeding expectations, the opening Ceremony was attended by well over 30 partners from EGLE, MSU Surplus Store, EGLE, MSU IPF, and various other related dedicated faculty, students, and community partners.

In the upcoming months, following the exhibition's removal from the MSU Museum, there will continue to be developments on its’ traveling logistics and adaptive capabilities. The content of the exhibition will continue to be utilized in various avenues, and its future potential uses will continue to adapt and grow, as the discourse surrounding Designing for Deconstruction expands and innovations of the Domicology field perpetuate.

Following the successful opening ceremony, there has been much press circulating about the exhibition and about Domicology as a whole, including stories on WGVU NPR, WLNS, and the Michigan Recycling Coalition newsletter.

Example Abandonment Continuum Model Domicology, 2024



###



Diversity Research Showcase Highlight

By Sean Farnum, Research Assistant

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With contributing author Gabrielle Teachey, Research Assistant

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On Jan 19th, CCED research assistants Gabrielle Teachey and Sean Farnum attended Michigan State University’s [7th Annual Diversity Research Showcase](#) to present their work from the Center for Community & Economic Development’s *Community Investing Study*. Titled “A Study to Determine the Feasibility of Michigan State University Investing in Community Development Financial Institutions,” its 2023 project team consisted of a community advisory board and faculty working group. Contributing authors include Dr. Rex LaMore, Dr. Stephen Gasteyer, Mary ZumBrunnen, Emma Gilbert, Raquel Acosta, Gabrielle Teachey, Diego Morales, Sean Farnum, Jho Fernandez and Jayla Simon. This project was supported by an MSU [Creating Inclusive Excellence Grant](#) (CIEG).



The report discusses the feasibility of the Michigan State University’s Board of Trustees expanding their investment portfolio to community development financial institutions (CDFIs). Broadly speaking, CDFIs are lender institutions that target underserved populations and economically disadvantaged investment areas. They help promote community development initiatives through businesses, housing, and other activities. As a growing number of universities and institutions look to invest in underserved communities through CDFIs, this working group recommends MSU fund more community development ventures – suggesting it as a critical priority.



During the 7th annual Diversity Research Showcase, featuring the work or work-in-progress of undergraduate students on issues of diversity and inclusion, Gabrielle and Sean provided a presentation with question and answer period on the study. During this, they acknowledged the efforts of the working group and board of advisors, summarized the findings and recommendations of the study, and advocated for further action to be taken by the Board of Trustees on community investment models.



Throughout this project, the working group highlighted several national and state-level examples of CDFIs for the Board of Trustees, as well as a variety of university-community investment partnerships under a wide range of endowment sizes. The working group also assessed the financial viability of investing in CDFIs over other traditional investments and consulted foundation lenders on their experience working with local CDFIs. As a result, the study calls for the creation of a diverse advisory committee to oversee the launch of a Community Development Investment Fund (CDIF) at MSU to adopt more proactive community investing practices.



###

From Investment Practices to Grant Writing: My Journey at CCED



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

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



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

building a pre-plan and laying the groundwork, lastly, for three AmeriCorps*Volunteers in Service to America who will serve in Lansing beginning in mid-June of 2024.

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



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

###



A Working Visit Back Home

By Jimmy Ndishokubwayo
2024 Humphrey Fellow, Burundi
ndishokub@msu.edu

During the '24 winter break MSU Humphrey Fellow, Jimmy Ndishokubwayo, flew from Michigan to his home country, Burundi, in East Africa. Jimmy was pleased to visit his mother and siblings and enjoy his hometown. Though his time was limited, he was able to complete professional activities related to his work at the nonprofit child and family services, [Tabitha Community in Action](#).

During his stay in Bujumbura, Jimmy met with public institutions and organizations to conduct a community needs assessment and organize gatherings. He was thrilled to visit his former campus at the University of Burundi and discuss the possibility of a partnership between Burundi University and Michigan State University via the Alliance for Africa Partnerships. He was also received by the USAID Burundi Team and engaged in a working visit to strengthen existing relationships and explore opportunities for collaboration. Following, Jimmy met with the Education Advisor at the Burundi US Embassy to share his experiences at Michigan State University.

Community Needs Assessment

Together with a team from Rotary Club Bujumbura, "Umucio Club" and Tabitha Community in Action, a hybrid formed to conduct a **Community Needs Assessment** identifying the specific needs and challenges faced by the capital region's community. This helped identify stakeholders' perspectives and gain understanding regarding future interventions and support.

The Bujumbura Province has been affected by repetitive wars and conflicts that faced Burundi a few decades ago. As such, the following issues were identified by community leaders and villagers as major socio-economic challenges to be addressed.

In Bujumbura Province, there are limited economic and learning opportunities, food insecurity and malnutrition, gender inequalities, and limited awareness of resources or other opportunities. The most affected populations also tend to be children and women. According to the local administration and annual report, with a population of 5.000 households,

8,600 children are malnourished, 689 girls dropped out from their studies due to unwanted pregnancies, and 1,297 dropped out due to poverty and conflicts. The numbers continue to grow. Addressing this, Jimmy helps mobilize resources and distribute them to various nonprofit organizations and individuals to help further the project [FEED THE COMMUNITY](#). This project aims to improve the food security and nutrition skills of approximately 600 female youth



and women as well as six pilot schools from rural communities.

Ultimately, it is hoped this also helps promote social cohesion within the communities. Results are still being compiled; however, it should be noted that the community needs assessment revealed that 80% of households in the village live below the poverty line, with an average income of less than \$1 per day. To learn more about this project and other ongoing initiatives in Burundi reach out to Jimmy at ndishokub@msu.edu or donate at www.tca-help.org/donate



Finally, as Jimmy is currently leading the YALI Alumni in Burundi - [Young African Leaders Initiative](#) (initiative of Barack Obama, former U.S. president), during the winter break, he organized a cultural-community gathering. This event helped to provide a platform for dialogue and engagement, allowing for the exchange of ideas, concerns, and aspirations between the YALI Alumni and community members. YALI Burundi is currently composed of about 270 young leaders trained by the YALI Regional Leadership Centers in Nairobi and Dakar. It is a US Government fully founded program to empower young African leaders and inspire change across Africa. Selected young leaders are trained in the above-mentioned regional centers in civic leadership, public management, and business and entrepreneurship. After the completion of the program, they come back to their respective country and integrate the YALI Alumni Country Chapters.

By January 9th Jimmy returned to East Lansing. In the new year, readers can find Jimmy focused on his Humphrey Professional Affiliation at the Lansing Economic Area Partnership (LEAP).

LEAP focuses on economic development by growing, retaining, and attracting businesses in the capital region. At this placement, Jimmy will gain practical experience, develop community and economic development skills, and continue to build his professional network.



During the fellowship, Jimmy took the leadership for community sustainability and developing strategic business courses, along with the Humphrey Seminar every Friday. The program offered fellows various trips and the Global Leadership Program in Washington DC. "I will never forget the day I entered the White House; it was a dream come true. Visiting all memorials in Washington DC and being invited to the Voice of America Radio, surely all those make the trip to Washington DC my favorite trip," he said.

In addition to the Humphrey Fellowship and building up his professional networks, Jimmy Ndishokubwayo has been meeting different people, professionals, educators, and community members and visiting nonprofit organizations based in Michigan. He has attended many speaking engagements and meets regularly with his new contacts. Jimmy strongly believes social capital is a key to success - globally.

Four months before the completion of his fellowship program, Jimmy feels optimistic for the future and is getting ready to apply his newly gained skills back in his hometown and abroad. He is also looking forward to furthering his education in Community Sustainability within the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at MSU. "If people ask me how I found Michigan, I will be right if I say that Michiganders are kind, welcoming, and supportive," Jimmy says with a smile.



At the Center, faculty and staff will all miss Jimmy! Wrapping up his Humphrey Fellowship at the end of April, Jimmy is working to extend his VISA and developing a work partnership with the Refugee Development Center. Congratulations, Jimmy! Please come back and visit us...

###

The Chapter After Graduation



By Emma Gilbert,
Former 2023 CCED Senior
Research Assistant, and Economic Development Planner at
the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission
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One of the most common phrases college students come to know and love is, “the time spent in the classroom is just the beginning of a lifelong journey of learning, growing, and re-learning.” Much of life as a young adult, in general, mirrors that insight. However, one of the least tangible things about nearing one’s sunset of their college career is anticipating what the transition and expectations of the workforce will entail.

By and large, the college experience is very structured. Responsibilities, timelines, and steps for success are typically laid out by professors, faculty, or staff at the beginning of a semester or before a research project takes off. There are no true mysteries for how to excel, but each person must decide for themselves the amount of effort they are willing to dedicate to reap the outcome they desire.

The Center for Community & Economic Development (CCED) offers a unique bridge between the spelled-out structure and expectations common in settings of higher education and needing to lean into one’s curiosities, knowledge, and humility to grow, learn, and discover new lenses and opportunities in addressing challenges faced by communities. This blend of explicit expectations and open-endedness, coupled with mentorship offered by the Center’s staff and community and university partnerships, helps unknowing young adults get a taste of what to expect in the chapter following graduation. Working at the Center softens the transition to the professional world by encouraging students to synthesize their skills, knowledge, inquisitiveness, determination, and thirst for growth, the same attributes essential to embracing the leap forward into the professional community.

Personally, with interdisciplinary educational backgrounds, asking difficult questions and

having a deep desire to explore the multiplicity of factors wrapped into the policies, processes, and outcomes came naturally; however, engaging with partners of and staff at the Center cultivated and refined these characteristics, while drawing connections between these traditional research traits and applied practices in the professional world. For example, a key foundation in all research work is exploring gaps in what is “known” about a topic, framed as a question. Many times, the pursuit of addressing these gaps is accomplished through the pursuit of coalition-building and external funds.

The professional world of planning requires one to pursue the same steps. Listen to the community, including members of the public and partners; identify priority goals and appropriate, attainable steps and timelines in partnership with the broader community to work towards accomplishing the goals; assess gaps faced in addressing the community’s goals and the appropriate role the agency or department can provide in filling one or more gaps; and evaluate the resources, structures, and partners needed to successfully close those gaps, while leveraging existing relationships, capacity, and other funds/materials. With tailoring, these steps commonly drive the core strategic planning processes most departments and agencies are required to routinely complete, update, and maintain on behalf of their communities.

Master plans, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies (CEDs), and Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTPs) are just a few real-world examples of community blueprints that require the community engagement, partnership identification and building, critical thinking and analysis, storytelling, communication, and outreach, data gathering, and synthesizing skills the Center helps to cultivate in its students. These mentored experiences ease the transition into the real-world of planning and set the tone that one can never expect to know everything, must be open to learning and growing, which can be uncomfortable, and should always expect to leave a room with more questions than with which they entered. These themes lie at the core of being a dynamic, responsive planner and partner in and with your community. Embrace the next chapter with these principles in mind and you will thrive.

###

A Warm Welcome to Our Newest CCED Research Assistants!

Abigail Bies



Graduating in Spring 2024 with double majors in Social Relations and Policy & Political Theory and Constitutional Democracy, Abigail Bies is also concurrently pursuing a Master of Public Policy.

In her new role at CCED, Ms. Bies will primarily support research on Community Benefits Plans and Community Benefits Agreements, aligning with her policy interests in income inequality, government transfer programs, and community development. She will also be offering technical and planning assistance to the Center’s biannual Thinkers and Doers forum to be held at the end of March on community benefits.

Dedicated to community service, she serves as a University Student Commissioner in the City of East Lansing, a position aimed at elevating student voices and working with both the City Council and staff to accomplish harmony and shared goals between permanent and student residents. Her past extracurricular involvement has offered knowledge into food assistance programs, drug policy inequities, and the intricacies of municipal governance.

biesabig@msu.edu

Charlotte Peterson



Charlotte Peterson joined the CCED team of research assistants in Spring ‘24. She is a soon-to-be-graduate of Michigan State’s Urban and Regional Planning undergraduate program with plans to pursue a master’s degree next year. Beyond academia, Charlotte enjoys exploring personal interests such as hiking and honing her culinary skills in the kitchen. She also has a love for travel and to discover new cities whenever the opportunity arises.

One of her roles at CCED is continuing research on the topic of construction and demolition debris diversion. Including a future update of the CCED’s previous publication, *A Guide to Local Ordinances: Deconstruction and the Management of C&D Material Waste*. Another of Charlotte’s roles at the Center for Community and Economic Development is continuing research on community benefit planning and community benefit agreements (CBAs). She has been preparing for upcoming "Thinkers and Doers" events with the topic of community benefit planning and supporting preparation for an AmeriCorps CBA member.

pete1426@msu.edu

Kiera Tierney



Kiera Tierney is a Junior at Michigan State University. She is studying international relations at James Madison College and is pursuing a double minor in business and political economy. Kiera is passionate about her studies and looks forward to using what she has learned to help communities recognize disparities in equity and to build strategies that help remove them. She believes enabling economic development in communities by sharing valued knowledge through collaborative and innovative methods is essential for ensuring fair and equitable management.

Kiera joined the CCED in February of 2024 and is working with Dr. LaMore to advance the Circular Economy initiative. Kiera plans to pursue a domestic and international public affairs career, ideally engaging in social, political, and economic issues to advocate for equality and justice. Kiera is excited about her work at the Center and hopes to continue to contribute to the pursuit of creating environmental and economic improvements.

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Jenna Salhab



Jenna Salhab is a research assistant for MSU’s Center for Community and Economic Development for Regional and Economic Innovation (REI). She is also a third-year Information Science major at Michigan State University with minors in Computer Science, Information Technology, and Graphic Design.

Jenna is primarily interested in the intersection of technology and social innovation, aiming to use her skills to drive positive change in community welfare and sustainable development. Outside her academic pursuits, Jenna is actively involved in student organizations, serving on the UX team for VIM Fashion Magazine and as secretary for AIGA, MSU’s graphic design club.

Her leadership in the Faircare Awareness campaign, which brought attention to health and healthcare disparities, exemplifies her commitment to impactful projects. Jenna is eager to deepen her knowledge in the field of technology-driven social change.

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THANK YOU!

To Our Graduating Research Assistants

Sarah Dennis



I started working for the MSU Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) in March of 2023. My interests lie in social policy, economics, and community and economic development in addition to my experience and education in political economy and the care economy. Since my time here at CCED, I have honed and developed skills that will prepare me for future employment opportunities.

As I graduate in the spring with a Bachelor of Arts in Social Relations & Policy with minors in Political Economy and Educational Studies, I am looking to pursue a career in research, policy, and economic development. With my rigorous liberal arts education from the James Madison College at MSU, my professional experiences combined with my passion for economics and public policy, I am excited for the opportunity to continue to assist underserved communities in Michigan.

I would like to thank the MSU CCED for the wonderful and enriching experiences it has provided me as well as my supervisor, Jenan Jondy, for her exceptional guidance and mentorship throughout my time at the center.

Marianna Coelho Uchoa



As a student of International Relations and Environmental and Sustainability Studies, I get to learn about international affairs, global governance, cultural studies, and sustainable initiatives done at the national and international levels. The skills I developed in and outside of class allowed me to feel prepared to work as a Research Assistant at the Center for Community & Economic Development.

Working at the Center has prepared me for a career in development while practicing my writing, research, and analysis skills in the areas of policy, economic development, and sustainability.

After graduating from MSU in the spring semester of 2024, I will be pursuing my Master's Degree in Environment and Sustainability focusing on Environmental Policy at the University of Michigan. I want to address the issue of climate change which is the area I am most interested in. My focus, specifically, is resiliency response to climate change injustices and how this affects the population's public health.



Gabrielle Teachey



During my time at the Center for Community and Economic Development, I have learned many ways community development financial institutions (CDFIs) can help with economic development along with community benefits and presented this project at the Diversity Research Showcase. I have also helped with the formatting and editing of the Fall'23 Newsletter.

Currently, I am working on a briefing that focuses on community benefit plans and agreements. This briefing is being created to allow readers to have a better understanding of what community benefit plans and agreements are and the reasons as to why they are important.

I will be graduating from Michigan State University with my Bachelor of Arts in Information Science and Criminal Justice with a concentration in Media and Information and a minor in Security Management this spring. Following, I plan to further my education by enrolling into a graduate program focused on information systems.

Charlotte Cox



In the last two years at the Center for Community & Economic Development working with the REI (Regional Economic Innovation) team, I not only gained knowledge regarding projects that help promote equity and innovation in communities, but also had the opportunity to learn from fellow research assistants and form meaningful connections. This May I'll have earned my Bachelor of Arts in International Relations with a minor in Spanish.

Throughout my undergrad degree, I also was an undergrad learning assistant for MTH101 and a childcare provider at a local gym. Moving forward the future is somewhat unknown. I hope to stay in the research realm and move to D.C in pursuit of a job with a private company researching policy. Far down the road, I see myself in the State Department as a foreign service officer.

However, before entering the workforce, I'd like to travel and make it back to Budapest. This is where I spent the '23 spring semester on study abroad. Lastly, I'd like to thank my fellow research assistants and supervisors for being a system of support and guidance during my time at MSU. I'm grateful to be surrounded by ambitious and like-minded individuals.



New AmeriCorps*VISTA Positions!

~ come serve with us ~



Campus Compact



AmeriCorps

For more information and/or to apply please contact Mary ZumBrunnen, Center for Community & Economic Assistant Director, at zumbrun1@msu.edu and include your resume and cover letter.

Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA Member

Michigan State University, Center for Community & Economic Development, Blue Zones Lansing, (Ingham County),
Michigan

The Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA program places AmeriCorps VISTA members in full service with our campus and community partners for a one-year period. During this year, members spend 35 hours per week on their host site's campus or with one of that campus's community partners to work on building systems and programs that support low-income college students and community members. The VISTA member's work is to build capacity, meaning that rather than directly serving the community, they're enhancing or creating systems, structures, and resources that support the direct anti-poverty work. Campus Compact functions as the central VISTA program hub, performing program administration, offering training and support to VISTA members and their projects, and connecting the work happening in individual projects both to similar work happening nationwide and back to AmeriCorps. For detailed program information and FAQs, please visit our website.

Service Term:

June 17, 2024 - June 16, 2025

Please note that this start date is subject to change. Start dates are based on a federal calendar and are not flexible. Regardless of start date, the term of service lasts exactly one year.

Summary of Position Details:

Within Ingham County, Michigan, a nexus of low-income population census tracts and high social vulnerability, there are nine opportunity zones and a "level of vulnerability" score of medium to high on the Health and Place Index (Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, 2020). The Lansing region also scores particularly high on the Michigan Environmental Justice Screen map ranging from 51 to the 100th percentile of average exposures and environmental effects multiplied by the average of sensitive populations and socioeconomic factors representing level of vulnerability to pollution and related climate change. With this as a backdrop, the Blue Zone VISTA will assess the built and natural environmental factors that influence health and lifespan. This member will also assist to document related factors of poverty, circular transition and community wealth building on health and longevity.

Additionally, initiatives that lend themselves to "priming" the ecosystem of circular transition to healthier futures will be compiled, analyzed and assessed in regards to outcomes related to increased well-being and longevity. Across the globe, five cities including: Ikaria, Greece; Loma Linda, California; Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan, and; Nicoya, Costa Rica have been identified as original "Blue Zones". Blue Zones are areas reflecting lifestyle habits of: "natural movement, purpose, stress-less, appropriate proportions, inclusion of antioxidants, sense of community, care-giver support, and socialization as supported by "healthy behaviors" leading to the average life space increasing by 10-12 years.

Therefore, the Blue Zone VISTA will assess related health factors, influenced at the local and state levels within a circular transition hotspot that are known to extend life span. An example of this might be a percentage of healthy housing stock being inaccessible for those socially disadvantaged yet identified as a requirement for circular businesses' growth. To fill this gap, nonprofit, tri-county and state partners might participate in a community benefits planning session that identifies housing needs and ultimately generates gap funding addressing the intersectionality of affordable housing as a green jobs catalyst. As a first for Michigan, the intersectionality of circular economic transitions, community benefits planning and longevity based on environmental factors influenced will be documented. This will be assessed through a lens of critical environmental justice including: 1) emphasis on intersectionality of inequalities and oppression, 2) attention to spatial and temporal scales, 3) focus on state power as reinforcing social inequalities, and 4) recognition of the indispensability of marginalized populations according to Holifield and Pellow's "What is Critical Environmental Justice?" (Polity Press, 2018) Ultimately, this will

help pave the way for a traditional Blue Zone assessment and future designation that positively impacts those marginalized populations in distressed areas who will age in place throughout Ingham County.

Responsibilities

- Develop a community advisory board and foster synergies leading to collaboration (both internal and external) with University partners
- Utilizing circular economy and community benefits data local to Ingham County, include social factors and environmental indicators to project out the potential effects of transitioning to a healthier future where residents are more likely to positively age in place.
- Prioritize areas of Blue Zone intervention recommendation
- Conduct fund development research and complete non-federal grant applications as appropriate for Blue Zone-related project funds
- Access Blue Zone Challenge “bundle” and sample assessment
- Attend orientation, weekly meetings, days of service, and trainings/retreats coordinated by Campus Compact
- Complete data collection and reporting activities required by Campus Compact and AmeriCorps

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience at recruiting and engaging community stakeholders
- Knowledge of community and economic development
- Strong reading, writing and researching skills
- Interest or experience in health disparities as well as natural and built environmental influencers
- Awareness of and participation in social and environmental justice initiatives
- Grant writing and fund generation development
- Experience in creating media and conducting outreach such as hybrid meetings and webinars

Requirements

- BA/BS or equivalent experience
- US Citizen, national, DACA status, or legal permanent resident
- Must be able to complete federal background check

Logistics ○ Status: [In-person]

- Hours
 - M – F [9 A.M. - 5 P.M., flexible and may be negotiated, such as 8 A.M. - 4 P.M.]

Benefits

AmeriCorps VISTA Benefits:

- Bi-weekly living allowance of \$877.66
- End of service award (AmeriCorps member must choose one of two options; requires completion of full term of service to receive)
 - Segal AmeriCorps Education Award (\$7,395)
 - End-of-Service Cash Stipend (\$1,803.10)
- Relocation stipend for candidates moving more than 50 miles (\$750)
- Mileage reimbursement for candidate moving more than 50 miles (\$0.40/mile) ● Healthcare benefits (AmeriCorps member must choose one of two options)
 - Healthcare allowance for out-of-pocket expenses
 - Basic healthcare coverage
- 10 Days Personal Leave
- 10 Days Sick Leave
- 14 Days Holiday Leave
- Child care assistance for children under 13 years of age **(income dependent)**
- Student loan forbearance or deferment for certain loans
- 1 year of noncompetitive eligibility for federal positions*
- Access to professional development opportunities provided by Campus Compact & AmeriCorps

Additional Host-Site Benefits:

- “Life After VISTA” job search and networking support
- Local budget innovation support such as “double up food bucks”
- Potential anti-racist book club participation and access to lending library

How to Apply:

You can apply to this position two ways:

1. My AmeriCorps.gov Application

- a. Visit this [link](#) and apply to the position through the my.AmeriCorps.gov system
 - i. Note: The myAmeriCorps system is sometimes finicky and can be hard to update – if that website says “no longer accepting applications,” please feel free to reach out to our team via email at vista@compact.org to check.
 - ii. For support using the myAmeriCorps portal, please see this [document](#).

2. Apply Directly to the Site

- a. Reach out to the site contact, Mary ZumBrunnen via email at zumbrun1@msu.edu with your resume, cover letter and information

Deadlines:

The last day to submit an application for this position is May 14th, 2024; however, positions are filled on a rolling basis, and we recommend applying as soon as possible.



Campus Compact



AmeriCorps

Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA Member

Michigan State University, Center for Community & Economic Development, Circular Economy Lansing, (Ingham County), Michigan

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Summary of Position Details:

*A circular economy (CE) stands opposite of the current linear models such as the "take, make, waste" paradigm. CE proposes a fundamental shift from extraction to consciously designing communities for reuse, repair, and recycling. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation identifies three goals of CE as (1) eliminating waste and pollution, (2) recirculating products and materials, and (3) regenerating nature. With a holistic view to developing Michigan circular economies, the Center takes an asset-based approach to community and equitable economic development centered in justice. This is one of the first in the country focused on CE at the local levels for low-income business owners. With the intention of priming at-risk ecosystems, the Center and partners will identify low-income entrepreneurs and assist to build strategy to support their business within the unique contextual framework of their communities and value chains for economic resiliency. This includes data collection and assessment in year one that ultimately builds into holistic methodologies by year three. Asset mapping for ecosystem alignment and research to bring down procurement barriers to local sourcing are examples. The VISTA member will also support partner recruitment and meetings, building a database of contacts and conducting outreach. Lastly, the member will also connect with MI Healthy Climate Plan AmeriCorps*State members to identify ecosystem linkages for climate justice that facilitate knowledge transfer and resource sharing.*

Responsibilities

- Call for external (outside of University) advisory board community members
- Finalize circular economy literature review for small business transition to be utilized within an MSU professional certification program
- Work with economic development organizations to craft and conduct a small business circular transition needs assessment
- Utilizing the micro and macro data provided by the entrepreneurs and owners, assist to "connect the dots" between broader ecosystems that strengthen Michigan networks for circular change
- Attend orientation, weekly meetings, days of service, and trainings/retreats coordinated by Campus Compact
- Complete data collection and reporting activities required by Campus Compact and AmeriCorps

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience at recruiting and engaging community stakeholders
- Knowledge of economic and business development
- Strong reading, writing and researching skills
- Interest or experience in data collection and analysis
- Experience in creating media and conducting outreach such as hybrid meetings and webinars
- Knowledge of innovation ecosystems is a plus

Requirements

- BA/BS or equivalent experience
- US Citizen, national, DACA status, or legal permanent resident
- Must be able to complete federal background check

Logistics

- Status: In-person
- Hours
 - M – F [9 A.M. - 5 P.M., flexible and may be negotiated, such as 8 A.M. - 4 P.M.]

Benefits

AmeriCorps VISTA Benefits:

- Bi-weekly living allowance of \$877.66
- End of service award (AmeriCorps member must choose one of two options; requires completion of full term of service to receive)
 - Segal AmeriCorps Education Award (\$7,395)
 - End-of-Service Cash Stipend (\$1,803.10)
- Relocation stipend for candidates moving more than 50 miles (\$750)
- Mileage reimbursement for candidate moving more than 50 miles (\$0.40/mile) ● Healthcare benefits (AmeriCorps member must choose one of two options)
 - Healthcare allowance for out-of-pocket expenses
 - Basic healthcare coverage
- 10 Days Personal Leave
- 10 Days Sick Leave
- 14 Days Holiday Leave
- Child care assistance for children under 13 years of age (**income dependent**)
- Student loan forbearance or deferment for certain loans
- 1 year of noncompetitive eligibility for federal positions*
- Access to professional development opportunities provided by Campus Compact & AmeriCorps

Additional Host-Site Benefits:

- “Life After VISTA” job search and networking support
- Local budget innovation support such as “double up food bucks”
- Potential anti-racist book club participation and access to lending library

How to Apply:

You can apply to this position two ways:

1. My AmeriCorps.gov Application

a. Visit this [link](#) and apply to the position through the my.AmeriCorps.gov system

- i. Note: The myAmeriCorps system is sometimes finicky and can be hard to update – if that website says “no longer accepting applications,” please feel free to reach out to our team via email at vista@compact.org to check.
- ii. For support using the myAmeriCorps portal, please see this [document](#).

2. Apply Directly to the Site

- a. Reach out to the site contact, Mary ZumBrunnen via email at zumbrun1@msu.edu with your resume, cover letter and information
 - i. Title the email “VISTA Application: Your Name” to ensure it’s not missed

Deadlines:

The last day to submit an application for this position is May 14th, 2024; however, positions are filled on a rolling basis, and we recommend applying as soon as possible.



Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA Member

Michigan State University, Center for Community & Economic Development, Community Benefits Lansing, (Ingham County), Michigan

The Campus Compact AmeriCorps VISTA program places AmeriCorps VISTA members in full service with our campus and community partners for a one-year period. During this year, members spend 35 hours per week on their host site's campus or with one of that campus's community partners to work on building systems and programs that support low-income college students and community members. The VISTA member's work is to build capacity, meaning that rather than directly serving the community, they're enhancing or creating systems, structures, and resources that support the direct anti-poverty work. Campus Compact functions as the central VISTA program hub, performing program administration, offering training and support to VISTA members and their projects, and connecting the work happening in individual projects both to similar work happening nationwide and back to AmeriCorps. For detailed program information and FAQs, please visit our website.

Service Term:

June 17, 2024 - June 16, 2025

Please note that this start date is subject to change. Start dates are based on a federal calendar and are not flexible. Regardless of start date, the term of service lasts exactly one year.

Summary of Position Details:

Community Benefits (CB) are defined as "legal agreements" (or binding and non-binding contracts) to bring stakeholders such as labor organizations, racial justice groups, environmental entities, faith communities and more together and to ensure the benefits of government dollars are optimized for their communities. For example, benefits may include commitments to hire directly from a community or region, contributions to economic trust funds, local workforce training guarantees and more according to the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Impact and Diversity. In Michigan, many communities are unaware of this opportunity for local wealth building. Therefore, to serve Michigan "hotspot" communities, a VISTA member will assist to research, draft, share for feedback, compile and assist to evaluate CB plans and agreements of action for both rural and urban spaces as part of a larger Michigan-oriented toolkit. They will also support the convening and facilitation of a community advisory board and help develop impact analyses. This will assist to determine if CB plans and agreements are effective ways to leverage investment from those who can afford it to directly meet the community-identified stakeholder needs.

Responsibilities

- Help build a statewide network of community advisory board representatives
- Review Health Care Benefits plan
- Generate a toolkit for community development professionals and volunteers on how to be effective in community benefit plans and agreements
- Assist communities to develop local ordinances that support community benefit agreements
- Create and provide workshops, webinars and other media on community benefits plans and agreements for educational outreach and engagement statewide
- Attend orientation, weekly meetings, days of service, and trainings/retreats coordinated by Campus Compact
- Complete data collection and reporting activities required by Campus Compact and AmeriCorps

Preferred Qualifications

- Experience at recruiting and engaging community stakeholders
- Knowledge of community organizing and economic development
- Strong reading, writing and researching skills
- Interest or experience in urban and regional planning is a plus
- Experience in creating media and conducting outreach such as hybrid meetings and webinars

Requirements

- BA/BS or equivalent experience
- US Citizen, national, DACA status, or legal permanent resident
- Must be able to complete federal background check

Logistics

- Hours
 - M – F [9 A.M. - 5 P.M., flexible and may be negotiated, such as 8 A.M. - 4 P.M.]

Benefits

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