



2023 Innovate Michigan! Summit Recap

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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!**

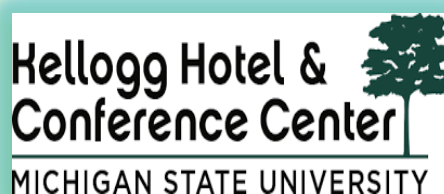
2024 Project Awards

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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