

# MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**CONTACT:**

Director, Rex LaMore  
517-353-9555  
1615 E. Michigan Avenue, Lansing, MI 48912

February 2, 2024

## MSU EDA University Center for Regional and Economic Innovation (REI) Announces Student Led Faculty Guided Project Awards for 2024

Lansing, MI - Student-Led Faculty-Guided (SLFG) projects focus on providing assistance to Michigan communities in completing local and regional economic development initiatives. Work is completed by students at colleges and universities throughout the state, under the supervision of experienced faculty. Through these projects, students gain firsthand and practical experience in the application of previously studied theory, and economic development professionals receive technical assistance that might not otherwise be available. Funded by the U.S. Department of Commerce - Economic Development Administration (EDA), and with additional support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), REI is excited to announce eight SLFG project awards for 2024.



### University Outreach and Engagement

#### Center for Community and Economic Development

1615 East Michigan Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48912-2822

517-353-9555  
Fax: 517-884-6489  
ced.msu.edu

MSU Urban and Regional Planning Professor, Dr. Zenia Kotval is being awarded for six SLFG projects. The first project, *Lady Bug Center at Churchill Gardens*, in Lansing, aims to transform into a regenerative development, addressing environmental challenges exacerbated by Michigan's automotive industry. This project aims to go beyond sustainability by actively eliminating carbon and achieving a net-zero future.

The City of Flint adopted the Imagine Flint Master Plan in 2013, which led to the development of neighborhood plans in subsequent years. One such plan was for the Civic Park Neighborhood (2019), home to the historic Civic Park subdivision. Originally established for plant workers in Flint, the neighborhood experienced a rapid decline following the closure of the automotive industry and the subsequent departure of workers from the area. This second SLFG project aims to build upon the existing neighborhood plan, particularly focusing on economic development and identifying historic business corridors.

*St. Johns North Gateway* project will address creative ways to honor the history of this region, provide visionary ways to redevelop this property via mixed uses of housing and retail/commercial spaces, and gain support for line-item funding for blight elimination/demolition of all or some of the remaining silos on this site.

Additionally, *City of Utica: Downtown Sub-Area Plan Proposal* will focus on the City of Utica, including brownfield sites. The focus is on completing a Comprehensive Master Plan update and creating a sub-area plan for the Downtown District to address issues such as vacant parcels, automotive and industrial uses, and empty storefronts.

Another SLFG project is the *East Lansing 2024 Master Plan Update*. As part of the planned 2024 Master Plan update, the City of East Lansing seeks to engage all members of the community, including MSU students living on- and off-campus. The objective is to design and implement an engagement strategy to accomplish this goal.

Dr. Kotval's final award is *MorningSide Neighborhood on Detroit's East Side*. This neighborhood is well positioned to receive significant funding to upgrade its aging single-family housing stock. To receive such funding, a professional analysis of current housing conditions and needs is required. Exterior and interior building conditions of vacant and occupied houses across the 190-block neighborhood will be surveyed and compared to previous condition studies such as the Detroit Residential Parcel Survey.

Northern Michigan University, Jelili Adebisi, PhD, was awarded for his SLFG project titled, *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 solid waste management authority.

*Co-Constructing Circular Economic Opportunities Through University Waste to Organics Diversion Program*, will also be led by Dr. Adebisi. More than 108 billion pounds of food is wasted in the U.S. yearly, causing enormous economic loss and negative enviro-climatic impact. This project addresses this as it explores the opportunities for the diversion of food waste that is generated at Northern Michigan University dining to produce vermicompost.

Congratulations to the 2024 SLFG awardees! If you are interested in submitting an application for support in a Student-Led Faculty Guided Project, please visit, <http://tinyurl.com/4hmzst9c> . For questions, please contact Jenan Jondy, REI Coordinator at [jondyjen@msu.edu](mailto:jondyjen@msu.edu).

-----END-----