2027 Call for Student-Led, Faculty-Guided Technical Assistance Projects

Background

Since 2011, the Regional Economic Innovation (REI) initiative at MSU's Center for Community and Economic Development (CCED) has supported over 200 innovative economic development projects in Michigan, spurring high-growth entrepreneurship, job creation, and economic innovation. Of these projects, 111 have been Student-Led, Faculty-Guided (SLFG) projects. These projects provide students with practical, real-world experience addressing needs identified by Michigan local governments and communities and involve Faculty oversight ensuring academic rigor and alignment with community impact goals.

Call for Projects

MSU REI is excited to fund **2-3 student-led, faculty-guided technical assistance projects** for the 2027 year with support up to $2,500. These projects, historically open to colleges and universities across the state of Michigan, will only be open to MSU faculty and students this year due to a significant loss of federal funding. Practicum courses and similar experiential learning formats have proven to align well with this project type. At its core, an SLFG Project should assist a Michigan community—particularly an urban or rural area that is distressed—in completing a local or regional economic development initiative. Details are included below.

Student-Led, Faculty-Guided Technical Assistance Projects should:

1. Include both a faculty member and team of students
2. Support or provide research for ALICE populations (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed);
3. Focus on Redevelopment Ready Communities or areas with concentration of opportunity zones;
4. Assist an economically distressed community or region in Michigan;
5. Engage the community throughout the project period;
6. Have a strong community or economic development component;
7. Provide community leaders and/or economic developers with access to technical assistance and data analysis that would otherwise not be available to them;
8. Be completed in one semester.

Deliverables

Completed Technical Assistance Projects should produce the following deliverables.

- 10-page (max) ADA compliant summary of your project that describes the problem, research undertaken, results, findings and recommendations.
- 2-page dissemination plan, including: who/what/where/how (social media, video, press release, presentation, etc.) and when (timeline with benchmarks) along with acknowledgment of REI support.
- Present at the REI Innovate Michigan! Summit in July/August 2027, if applicable.

Deadline & Contact Information

The deadline for submissions is **5:00 pm EST Friday, December 11, 2026**.

If you have any questions or would like to talk through the particulars of your situation, please don't hesitate to reach out to REI Project Coordinator Kyle Hess at hesskyle@msu.edu.

Prior Projects

You can view the Student-Led, Faculty-Guided Technical Assistance Projects from 2026 on our website at reicenter.org/projects.

2027 Application for REI Student-Led, Faculty-Guided Technical Assistance Projects

Contact Information

College or University Name:

Faculty Member:

Address:

Email: Phone:

General Description

Describe the project you wish to pursue with your students (200-300 words).*

Additional Questions

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe This project can be completed in one semester (15 weeks).

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe This project will focus on a distressed area of Michigan.

Budget

Explain the proposed budget for the project.*

Project Investment

Indicate which type of support your institution is contributing. Please provide details.

☐ Time

☐ Funding

☐ Data

☐ Other

Specify the amount of financial assistance ($500-$2,500/project) you are requesting.

Commitment

☐ Yes ☐ No I will commit to presenting at the REI annual event in the late summer/ early fall, alongside a few of my students and/or members of the community where the project took place.

*If additional space is needed for your response, please attach a separate document with this application. Please combine all documents into a single PDF.

Once finished, please submit your completed application **as a combined PDF** to the REI Project Coordinator at the Center for Community and Economic Development by emailing rei@msu.edu or via mail to: *Michigan State University, 1615 E. Michigan Avenue, Lansing, MI 48912*. Thank you for your interest in REI and sharing your project with us. We hope to work with you in the future.