

TO: Community Partners and Interested Parties  
FROM: Dr. Jesus J. Lara, Professor Urban and Regional Planning  
SUBJECT: Practicum Opportunity for the Spring Semester (January-April 2026)

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### Practicum Overview

The Michigan State University Urban and Regional Planning (URP) Program invites community organizations, municipalities, and local agencies to participate as partners in the Spring 2026 Practicum. This capstone course allows graduating undergraduate and graduate students to apply their academic training to real-world planning challenges in collaboration with community clients. The Practicum bridges classroom learning and professional practice through a student-led, faculty-guided experience. Each project provides mutual benefits: students gain hands-on learning, while communities receive analytical and planning support.

### Learning Objectives

As an accredited program, the Practicum must meet learning objectives established by the Planning Accreditation Board (PAB). Each project must enable students to demonstrate competency in the following areas:

#### Planning Process and Engagement

- Planning process and community and stakeholder engagement
- Plan creation and implementation
- Methods of design and intervention to understand and influence the future

#### Analytical Skills and Tools

- Research and critical analysis skills for preparing and conducting research
- Quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis, and forecasting
- Methods of geo-spatial analysis, mapping and data visualization

#### Professional and Communication Skills

- Ability to work in teams and with professionals in allied fields
- Professional leadership in the planning context
- Written, oral, and graphic communication

### Project Proposals

We are currently soliciting project proposals for the Spring 2026 semester, beginning January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026. If your organization is interested in participating, please complete the attached two-page project proposal form and submit it to [jjlara@msu.edu](mailto:jjlara@msu.edu) by **December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025**. Projects will be selected based on their quality, variety, and educational value. Preliminary selections will be announced by December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025. Final confirmation will depend on student enrollment and team capacity.

*If your project is selected, your organization will play an active and ongoing role throughout the semester. Partners are expected to designate a primary contact who is knowledgeable about the project and engaged in the planning process, collaborate with the student team in January to refine the project scope and deliverables, provide timely feedback on draft work and remain available for periodic check-ins, and attend the **final student presentation on campus on April 24, 2026 (9:00 AM – 12:30 PM ET)**. This level of engagement ensures that project outcomes are relevant, actionable, and aligned with your organization's goals..*

As the number of projects we can accept depends on the number of students registered for the course, we are unable to guarantee project acceptance until the beginning of the semester in January. We will, however, make preliminary selections by **December 15<sup>th</sup>**. Your interest in participating in this program is appreciated. Should you have any questions regarding this solicitation or your possible participation, please do not hesitate to contact Prof. Jesus J. Lara at [jjlara@msu.edu](mailto:jjlara@msu.edu). For examples of previous Practicum projects, please visit our website at: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/urban-collaborators/Practical-Engagement/>



## MSU PLANNING PRACTICUM REQUEST FORM

**Please return your completed application** via email attachment to [jjlara@msu.edu](mailto:jjlara@msu.edu) by **December 1<sup>st</sup>**

For examples of previous Practicum projects, please visit our website at:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/urban-collaborators/Practical-Engagement/>

This form is intended to help the MSU Urban and Regional Planning (URP) Program to serve your community's needs better. We will use this information to match Urban Planning student interests/ skills with the specific needs of the community requesting services.

Your Organization's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person for this Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. General Description** (Please describe your project in brief – *Attach no more than 2 pages for project goals, expected outcomes and final deliverables*)

### **B. Community Timeline**

Do you believe the project can be completed in one semester (13 weeks):    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

If not, please explain? \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Scale of Project** – What is the scale of the community service project? (Check only one)

☐ Parcel/ Site

☐ Neighborhood

☐ District

☐ Town/ City

☐ County

**D. Project Development**

What is the current development phase of the community project? If project has not begun, please indicate at what phase URP would become involved. (*Using your best judgment*) (Check only one)

☐ Defining the Project

☐ Inventory and Analysis

☐ Design/ Plan Phase

☐ Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**E. Project Support**

What types of support can you lend to the project? (Check all that apply)

☐ Working space for students

☐ On-site access to computers, phones, copy services and other work-related supplies

☐ Access to project-specific data and information (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Mentoring students, providing project guidance and acting as a resource

☐ Networking for students to gain access to reports and local resources

☐ Other (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**F. Funding**

**Practicum projects require a minimum contribution of \$3,500.** This contribution is not project-based and goes toward supporting the entire Practicum Course. There will not be any itemized invoices for Practicum projects. If you do not have the required funds, you might qualify for a match from the REI program ([www.reicenter.org/](http://www.reicenter.org/)).

How much is the community able to contribute toward the project?

☐ \$1500-\$2500; ☐ \$3,500; ☐ \$4,000; ☐ \$4,500 ; ☐ \$5,000

☐ Other Amount (Please specify amount)\* \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Information**

For questions or additional information, please contact:

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