Practical Community Learning Project is a semester-long, two-credit independent study policy-based community project that provides students with opportunities for dialogue, research and service with a public, non-profit or philanthropic community partner. This year’s partners include the American Heart Association; UM-Flint Office of Economic Development; Homeless Action Network of Detroit; and City of Hamtramck, MI’s Community and Economic Development Department.

Schedule: Students are required to attend four session meetings virtually throughout the semester. All sessions will be held on Mondays from 11:30am-12:50pm. To maintain communication through the project, student teams will attend office hours with the PCLP program manager at a time determined based on everyone’s availability. The project will also provide students with opportunities for dialog, research, and service through four engagement meetings with the community partners. These engagement meetings will be scheduled on Tuesdays at a time determined based on everyone’s availability. Students are also expected to conduct independent and group research outside of the formal project meetings.

Projects

The American Heart Association: As a continuation of the PCLP Spring 2021 project, students will be charged with researching current school policies throughout the state of Michigan and the U.S. to identify best practices of reducing tobacco usage among student populations. Students will be encouraged to identify policies that use a lesser or non-punitive approach in terms of punishing offenders within a student body. Students will also be charged with using their findings to craft recommendations for current policies that could be adapted. Students will have the opportunity to attend monthly Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Tobacco Elimination Task Force meetings and AHA staff meetings, along with engaging with school officials in the AHA contact pipeline.

UM-Flint Office of Economic Development: Students will study both the local cybersecurity training ecosystem and best practices in other communities. Topics of interest include what types of training are available, how much they cost, and delivery methods. The primary focus will be on implementation of K-12 programs. Through virtual interviews with local stakeholders students will learn if there is a demand for this type of training, and if not, what are the reasons. For example, are the trainings cost-prohibitive, is there a need to raise awareness of the field, is there an overall lack of interest, or are there other barriers? For youth programming, what would be the preferred approach: in school, after school, summer camp, etc.? What would be the best grade to pilot a program, and what would that program look like? Students will connect with local organizations, such as the Sylvester Broom Empowerment Village (SBEV) and Berston Field House to help provide a scan of existing programs as well as future plans in cybersecurity education, if any. The
research findings will be used to help inform UM-Flint’s Office of Economic Development, as well as community stakeholders, school board officials, school administrators, policymakers, and potential funders.

The Homeless Action Network of Detroit (HAND): Students will conduct research that will inform the development of a coordinated approach to engage landlords to rent to persons experiencing homelessness in Detroit. Engagement currently happens at the agency level between practitioners and landlords within their individual networks. HANDetroit will use this information to create a system-wide database that will allow for an expansion of housing resources. Students will research and report on housing networks in similar municipalities to determine best practices for a coordinated systems approach to landlord engagement. In addition, the report will include an asset map that details the stakeholders, agencies, and organizations involved in housing, and local, regional, and statewide housing and property databases with landlord contact information.

City of Hamtramck, Community and Economic Development Department: Students will collaborate with the City of Hamtramck’s Community and Economic Development Department and Downtown Development Authority team. In a three-member team, the CED/DDA Manager, Assistant CED Manager, and the CED Coordinator will share responsibilities with University of Michigan’s P3E students to engage in meaningful conversations with the business and building owner community within the city and research resources available for this community. As part of this project, students will:

- Engage in community conversations with key business and building owner leaders;
- Use the feedback from these conversations to create a database of business and building owner resources from the federal, state, county and local levels;
- Create a one-page document summarizing key points and resources from the database in a visually appealing and multi-lingual in Arabic, Bengali and English format;
- Generate momentum for end of the semester merchant meeting in November by assisting with marketing of event within the city;
- Assist with coordination of merchant meeting by inviting the partners listed in the one-pager;
- Attend the merchant meeting (if possible considering COVID-19 protocol).

For more information contact DeAndre’ Calvert at calvertd@umich.edu