



InnovateGov

2017 Impact Report



What is **InnovateGov?**

InnovateGov prepares and delivers MSU's most vital resource – talented and motivated students – to Detroit's civic institutions while providing our students with a one-of-a-kind opportunity to do real and impactful work on the city's most critical social challenges.

Over the last three summers, we have embedded nearly **100** MSU students from **22** academic units alongside key decision makers in **29** Detroit civic organizations. Our students work to provide the city's civic leaders with the critical capacity and human capital necessary to tackle high-impact projects that help to build a thriving and equitable future for all Detroit residents.

This report highlights the work of InnovateGov students and faculty leadership from 2015 to 2017. It showcases the program's efforts and impacts in two key areas:

Community Impact: Students deliver high-impact projects to our civic partners in a range of areas critical to the quality of life of Detroiters – from chronic absenteeism, to property vacancies, to small business development – and plan and lead service projects within the city's diverse neighborhoods.

Student and Cohort Impact: InnovateGov students and faculty leaders represent a diverse range of backgrounds, academic disciplines, and Detroit experiences – from lifelong Detroiters to those who are new to the city. This blending of perspectives has produced a network of civic leaders and champions of the city of Detroit.

Impact: Detroit

During the three years of the InnovateGov program, our students have worked in 29 different organizations and government agencies in Detroit. By supporting these partners, *our students have contributed to projects that touch every neighborhood in the city.*

Students worked on projects to improve services and respond to a wide range of pressing challenges in the city, such as: property vacancy, government fiscal stability, foreclosures, chronic absenteeism, water shut-offs, economic development, immigration, prisoner re-entry, and more.

Improving Fiscal Health

Since the inception of InnovateGov, our interns have worked in the income tax division in the City of Detroit. These students have helped the city gain a more sustainable stream of revenue from income taxes. In 2015, the students created a master database identifying whether residents of downtown apartments filed income tax returns. For tax year 2013, only 20% of the units complied with City income tax laws and there was a 40% compliance rate for tax year 2014. Based on this significant noncompliance rate, the city filed a series of lawsuits against landlords requiring them to produce tenant lists. According to Deputy Treasurer Debra Pospiech, “The court ruled in our favor based in large part upon the students’ empirical data to support our position.”

Preventing Foreclosure

Our intern team in the Wayne County Treasurer’s Office in 2017 devised a process to assist 1,000 Wayne County residents in danger of foreclosure. The interns reached 900 residents and successfully arranged payment plans to cancel the foreclosure process. With some assistance from the business and philanthropic communities, the other 100 households were also covered—and no one lost their homes. This work not only keeps people in their homes, it contributes to the long term stability and homeownership rates in Detroit neighborhoods.

Growing Business in Detroit

InnovateGov interns worked with the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation to launch the D2D program—a system to connect businesses in Detroit with local suppliers. D2D provides a database to help buyers procure supplies and services within the city—supporting the growth of local business. The students created, organized, and analyzed a comprehensive dataset to enable the re-launch of the D2D system.

DEGC anticipates that D2D will generate \$2.5 billion in new revenue and 7,700 new jobs in the city.



WHO ARE OUR PARTNERS?

InnovateGov began in 2015 with one partner agency—the Finance Department of the City of Detroit. Since 2015, the program has grown each year to support a broader array of partners. Each year, our partners from the previous year have requested more interns, and the intern supervisors have spread the word to other agencies about the strength of our program and our talented students. The tables below list our civic partners from 2017.



Partner Governments

Detroit Public Schools Community District

City of Detroit

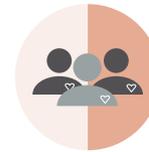
Buildings, Safety Engineering and Environment Department
Water and Sewerage Department
Department of Neighborhoods
Office of Immigrant Affairs
Lean Process Management
Office of Faith Based and Community Affairs
Office of the Treasury, Income Tax Division
Office of the Treasury, Property Tax Division
Office of Grants Management
Assessor's Office

Wayne County

Department of Health, Veterans & Community Wellness
Department of Treasury

State of Michigan

Michigan Office for New Americans



Nongovernmental Partners

Data Driven Detroit

Detroit Future City

Detroit Economic Growth Corporation

Chalkbeat Detroit

Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit

International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit

Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services

Community Development Advocates of Detroit

Wayne County Treasurer Eric Sabree:

"I am over the moon about the work ethic, interpersonal skills in working with the residents, and out of the box thinking of the MSU interns."

Growth: Partners

1
partner
2015

7
partners
2016

21
partners
2017



PARTNER TESTIMONIALS

**Bryan Barnhill,
Chief Talent Officer, City of Detroit:**

"On many occasions, Mayor's Office staff would remark that we had our best cohort of interns last summer. It is no mystery that has much to do with the selection, preparation, and talent of the InnovateGov team."

**Erica Raleigh,
Director, Data Driven Detroit:**

"This program is wildly valuable, not only to MSU and its students, but also to the organizations in which the students are placed. For the students, they tackle real-world policy issues on the ground. For the participating organizations, hosting students creates an opportunity to see old problems from a new perspective and brings additional capacity to important projects."

**Debra Pospiech,
Lead Council, DWSD:**

"I have worked with the InnovateGov program for three years. Without question, the program has provided the City with quality students who have a strong work ethic and who are intelligent, polite and eager to make a contribution to Detroit's rise. Each year there is a clamor for InnovateGov students such that we may need departments to formally "compete" for the opportunity to have a student assigned to its project or initiative. This is what one would call a good problem."

Who are our students?

Our goals for the students are to provide **professional experiences and connections** that will advance their career goals, learning experiences to increase their **skills for civic engagement**, and a deep dive into the history, culture, and politics of Detroit to enhance their **connection to the city**.



InnovateGov Participants 2017

- African American
- Caucasian
- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Hispanic
- MENA



S P O T L I G H T O N Placement

InnovateGov 2017 alumni have been offered full time employment in key civic institutions in Detroit including: Detroit Economic Growth Corporation; the City of Detroit, Office of Immigrant Affairs; the Wayne County Treasurer's Office; Goodwill Industries of Greater Detroit; and the United Way for Southeastern Michigan.

Recruitment

InnovateGov prioritizes diversity and inclusivity. We received over 125 applicants for summer 2017. During the application process, we excluded GPA and other quantitative measures of academic performance and focused on students' knowledge of issues facing the City of Detroit and their enthusiasm for civic engagement. The program offers students who may struggle in a traditional classroom environment the opportunities, resources, and connections to succeed in an applied policy setting. The final pool of students admitted to the program represented 7 different colleges and 18 different majors. In 2017, over a quarter of the students were Detroiters.

Impact: Students

Career Advancement

96% of students agreed that the internship experience was extremely valuable either professionally or personally.

Maya Arsenault, James Madison College

"Through my internship, I basically figured out what I want to do with the next steps of my life, which is so exciting, and working in the Detroit Public Schools Community District really helped shape that."

Anya Niehuas, Political Science and Social Work

"I'm fairly certain that the public sector or non-profit sector is where I would like to end up working. Interning at a large community nonprofit like ACCESS has been a great opportunity to learn more about the inner workings of a nonprofit."

Effective Citizenship

87% of students agreed that through their experiences in InnovateGov, they learned a great deal about being involved in the community.

Destiny Morris, Sociology

"As an intern with the City of Detroit Department of Neighborhoods, I learned so much about how city government works in my hometown. I also learned that I was not just an intern, but an advocate for the residents."

Ross Lee, President, Schad Refractory Construction Co, and Alumni Mentor to Rob Huguley, InnovateGov '17

"Detroit has a lot of job opportunities for MSU students, and InnovateGov provides talented students for those opportunities. But it is bigger than that, because they're actually having an impact on the community as well."

Connection to Detroit

53% of student agreed that they plan to live in the City of Detroit after graduation.

Silas Olson, Political Science

"Prior to this summer, I never thought I would have a desire to live in Detroit. I had no idea how much I would begin to care about the city as a whole and found myself wanting desperately to be a part of the massive web of projects that are geared towards helping the residents of the city enjoy and utilize their community."

Jasmine Jackson, Sociology

"Before spending my summer in Detroit, I didn't really want to work or live in the city post grad, but now I feel I can't leave when there's so much to do in my hometown. Simply gaining this outlook makes me think I learned and was exposed to much more than I was expecting in these last 10 weeks."



WHO WILL INNOVATE GOVERNMENT? SPARTANS WILL.

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