



Antrim County

Economic Development Corporation

Mission Statement: Retain, expand, and promote County-wide economic growth and stability

MEMBERS

Sherry Comben
12/31/2026

Garry Ellison
12/31/2026

Peter Garwood
12/31/2025

Cherie Hogan
12/31/2027

Rachel Krino
12/31/2027

Dawn LaVanway
Annual Appointment

Kathleen Peterson
12/31/2026

Tim Timmer
12/31/2028

Christy Wilson
12/31/2028

STAFF

Jeremy Scott
County Administrator

Janet Koch
Deputy Administrator

Gayle Rider
Administrative Asst.

Margie Boyd
Secretary

OFFICE ADDRESS

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Bellaire, MI 49615

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SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

If you wish to attend a meeting and require special assistance, please contact the Administration Office.

The Antrim County Economic Development Corporation meeting is scheduled for

Tuesday, August 20, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

Antrim County Building

Board of Commissioners Room

203 East Cayuga Street, Bellaire, Michigan

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Minutes – [June 18, 2024](#)
4. Village of Elk Rapids Letter of Support
5. Review of [FAQs on EDC Webpage](#)
6. Public Comment
7. Adjourn

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Administration and Planning Office at 231-533-6265. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter. Thank you.



Antrim County
Administration Office
Memorandum

August 20, 2024

TO: Antrim County Economic Development Corporation

FR: Administration Office

RE: Approval of Minutes (04/16/2024)

You received the minutes from the June 18, 2024 Economic Development Corporation meeting electronically on June 24 and again in your agenda packet on August 16. If there are no corrections to those minutes, please consider the following motion:

Approve the minutes of the June 20, 2024 meeting as presented.



Antrim County Administration Office Memorandum

August 20, 2024

TO: Antrim County Economic Development Corporation
FR: Administration Office
RE: Letter of Support - Village of Elk Rapids DDA application for CEDAM Community Development Fellowship

The fellowship program managed by Community Economic Development Association of Michigan (CEDAM) places fellows in communities that are certified as Redevelopment Ready Communities (RRC) or are engaged in the RRC process. CEDAM fellows are in the communities for fifteen months and, according to the CEDAM website, “work on a variety of projects to expand organizational capacity, increase local collaboration, and remove barriers to development.” Additional information can be found on CEDAM’s website under the “Programs” dropdown (<https://cedamichigan.org>).

On Monday, August 12, the EDC president received an email from John Mach, the Executive Director of the Village of Elk Rapids DDA:

The Elk Rapids DDA is applying for the Community Development Fellowship. If selected, it is our hope that the CEDAM fellow will collaborate closely with the Village of Elk Rapids, the Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce, NLEA and the Antrim County EDC on several projects:

1. Economic Development Plan (RRC Certified requirement)
2. Incentive Program for New Businesses (RRC Certified requirement)
3. Business Incubator

The application is due next Monday, and I have attached it for your review. We would be grateful if you could provide a letter of support.

A phone call with Mr. Mach resulted in the information that the Elk Rapids DDA would value a letter of support from the EDC, even though the application deadline was previous to the EDC’s meeting. A draft of the DDA’s application and a draft letter of support are included in the packet. The following motion is presented for your consideration:

To authorize the Economic Development Corporation President to sign a letter of support for the Village of Elk Rapids DDA application for a CEDAM Community Development Fellowship.

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

Describe why the person identified to manage the fellow locally is best suited to do so.

John Mach, the Executive Director of the Elk Rapids Downtown Development Authority (DDA), is exceptionally well-suited to manage the CEDAM fellow locally. With over a decade of experience at Deloitte Consulting, John specialized in talent development, change management, and strategic communications, making him a seasoned mentor and leader. His extensive background includes advising senior clients at leading global financial institutions on navigating talent implications during large-scale transformations and other business disruptors.

John's passion for talent development is reflected in his recognition as a Chicago Human Capital Counselor/Mentor, receiving awards in 2015, 2017, and 2018 based on team member nominations. His expertise in employee onboarding, learning strategy, and project management ensures that he can provide comprehensive guidance and support to the fellow.

By leveraging his skills in mentoring, strategic planning, and team management, John will provide the fellow with invaluable professional growth opportunities. His ability to foster a collaborative and supportive environment will help the fellow thrive and successfully contribute to the Elk Rapids community.

Are you applying with any partner organizations? Describe the nature of the partnership.

Yes.

The Elk Rapids DDA maintains strategic partnerships with key local and regional organizations to enhance the vitality of the Elk Rapids business community. Collaborating closely with the Village of Elk Rapids, the Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce, the Northern Lakes Economic Association (NLEA), and the Antrim County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), the DDA focuses on promoting economic growth, supporting local businesses, and strengthening the Elk Rapids brand. These partnerships foster a cohesive approach to economic development, ensuring that Elk Rapids remains a vibrant and thriving community for businesses and residents alike.

Letters of support from our partners are on file and can be provided upon request.

What do you love about your community?

The Village of Elk Rapids, nestled in the heart of Northern Michigan, is a true gem. The Chain of Lakes, with its 14 different lakes, offers residents and visitors a unique opportunity to explore the breathtaking natural beauty of the region. Elk Rapids stewards 2 square miles, of which 1.65 square miles is land and 0.36 square miles is water, and 60% of the region's watershed flows through this charming town of 1,881 people.

What I love most about Elk Rapids is its deep commitment to both preserving its natural beauty and fostering economic development. The Village is home to 108 businesses, all supported by a community dedicated to their growth and success. Living here, you can walk or bike from one end of the village to the other, enjoying social nights at local businesses and participating in a variety of planned events throughout the year.

The sense of community in Elk Rapids is unparalleled. People here are always ready to lend a hand, and getting involved is a way of life. Whether it's helping a neighbor or volunteering for a local project, the spirit of cooperation and mutual support is evident everywhere. This vibrant community, combined with its stunning natural surroundings, makes Elk Rapids a truly special place to call home.

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

What are 1-3 opportunities for community economic development in the next year in your municipality? (ex. downtown revitalization, public art, recreation)

In the next year, our municipality has several promising opportunities for community economic development that the CEDAM Fellow will focus on:

1. Economic Development Plan (RRC Certified requirement)
2. Incentive Program for New Businesses (RRC Certified requirement)
3. Business Incubator

What do you hope can be accomplished/prioritized this year related to the above goals with the additional capacity of a fellow?

With the additional capacity of a CEDAM Fellow, we aim to achieve the following key priorities:

- 1. Economic Development Plan:** Collaborating with the Elk Rapids DDA, Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce, NLEA, and Antrim County EDC, the fellow will develop a comprehensive economic plan. This plan will focus on retaining, growing, and attracting employers that offer year-round, family-sustaining jobs. It will also emphasize creating 'vibrant places' that attract and retain the workforce necessary for a robust and resilient economy.

The fellow will seek business and community input to cultivate a strong social fabric, fostering deep and lasting relationships across all age groups. Research shows that young people with fond memories of their hometowns are more likely to engage and return when they are ready to settle down and raise families. By involving the community, we aim to create a supportive environment that encourages long-term engagement and loyalty.

The fellow will utilize the expertise of NLEA's team of economic and community development professionals, who bring skills in planning, property rehabilitation and development, grant management, and policy. Additionally, the Antrim County Economic Development Corporation's Business Connector series will be leveraged to navigate area business resources, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises.

- 2. Incentive Program for New Businesses:** The fellow will work with the Elk Rapids DDA, Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce, and NLEA to develop an incentive program that offers financial and logistical support to businesses. This program will help new businesses navigate the various steps involved in utilizing incentives that facilitate development and redevelopment. Key incentives may include:

- Public Act 210: Commercial Rehabilitation Act
- Public Act 255: Commercial Redevelopment Act
- Public Act 198: Industrial Facilities Exemption Act
- Public Act 381: Brownfield Redevelopment Act
- Public Act 425: Intergovernmental Transfers Act
- Public Act 57: Tax Increment Financing Act

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

By lowering barriers to entry, stimulating local investment, and providing comprehensive support, the program aims to create a more vibrant and dynamic business environment in Elk Rapids.

3. **Business Incubator:** The fellow will collaborate with the Elk Rapids DDA and Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce to develop a plan for a business incubator. By partnering with 20Fathoms in Traverse City, whose mission is to accelerate the growth of tech startups, entrepreneurs, and scalable businesses in the Grand Traverse Region, the DDA will provide essential startup services, identify a community workspace, and connect entrepreneurs with crucial resources. This partnership will cultivate innovation and ideas, fostering business growth in Elk Rapids by offering mentorship, networking opportunities, and support for startups and small businesses.

If chosen to host a fellow, what would your goal be for the progress they help the community make on RRC essentials/certification/recertification?

If chosen to host a CEDAM fellow, our goal would be for the fellow to help Elk Rapids DDA achieve significant progress on the following Redevelopment Ready Community (RRC) certification requirements:

- Goal 1: Develop an Economic Development Plan
- Goal 2: Develop an Incentive Program for New Businesses

By achieving these goals, Elk Rapids DDA will make substantial progress toward meeting the RRC certification requirements, advancing our community's economic development, and enhancing our readiness for redevelopment projects.

How could a fellow support your community in researching and applying for funding opportunities to support community economic development?

Once Elk Rapids achieves RRC Essentials certification, the CEDAM fellow will play a crucial role in identifying and securing funding opportunities to support our community's economic development. The fellow will coordinate and apply for various state, MEDC, and foundation funding available to RRC certified communities to support key projects outlined in the Economic Development Plan. The Elk Rapids DDA is also on-track to achieve Michigan Main Street Engaged Level status by the end of 2024. Attaining this status will provide additional opportunities to leverage grants and funding. Specific funding initiatives the fellow might pursue include:

- **Developing an Entrepreneurial Business Incubator:** The fellow will seek funding to establish a business incubator, providing essential resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities to nurture startups and small businesses in Elk Rapids.
- **Establishing a Young Professional Organization:** The fellow will identify and secure funds to create a Young Professional organization, aimed at attracting and retaining young talent in the community, fostering leadership, and encouraging civic engagement.
- **Advancing Community Engagement:** To enhance community involvement, the fellow will pursue funding for tools such as the VolunteerLocal app, which would help coordinate volunteers and assign leaders for periodic community projects.

By leveraging these funding opportunities, the fellow will help Elk Rapids implement strategic initiatives that drive economic growth and community development.

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

What barriers or challenges does your organization face that would make it difficult to host a successful fellowship position?

One of the main challenges our organization faces is the cost of commuting for the fellow if the drive exceeds 15 miles one way. The expense of gas could become a significant burden relative to the income received. This year, we addressed this challenge while hosting the Michigan Healthy Climate Corps Fellow by allowing them to work remotely up to two days per week. This arrangement helped balance income and expenses, and we would consider implementing a similar solution for the CEDAM fellow to ensure a successful and sustainable fellowship position. We are committed to fostering an environment of predictability and flexibility for our CEDAM fellow.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about what makes your community a good host for a fellow?

The Village of Elk Rapids is an ideal host for a fellow, offering a supportive environment and a wealth of opportunities for professional and personal growth. Our Village Manager, John Matthews, has over 30 years of experience onboarding new employees and integrating them into our team. He is currently supervising Alexis Goward, a Michigan Healthy Climate Plan Fellow, and has successfully mentored and guided her through her fellowship.

John Mach, the Executive Director of the DDA, brings a wealth of experience in talent development and leadership. He spent over a decade with Deloitte Consulting, advising clients of leading global financial institutions on navigating talent implications associated with large-scale transformations and other business disruptors. Before his tenure at Deloitte, John worked in federal and state tax compliance. He has a proven track record of delivering exceptional client service and successfully managing large teams across multiple, complex projects. His expertise includes change management and adoption, strategic communications, learning strategy and transformation, training development, project management, talent strategy, organization development, employee onboarding, advanced analytics and modeling, and mergers and acquisitions. John is passionate about talent development and was honored with the Chicago Human Capital Counselor/Mentor Recognition Award, based on team member nominations, as a Manager at Deloitte in 2015, 2017, and 2018.

Elk Rapids is a beautiful treasure of northern Michigan, known for its friendly and helpful residents who are generous in mentoring others. The proposed work will have a marked impact on the local businesses, fostering economic growth and community development. In addition to professional opportunities, Elk Rapids offers a variety of recreational activities, including boating, kayaking, fishing, walking, biking, and enjoying daily sunrises and sunsets. These experiences, coupled with the strong mentorship and leadership opportunities, will provide a fellow with a fulfilling and enriching experience that will last a lifetime.

Project 1: Describe the project in a few sentences and include the goal of the project.

Economic Development Plan: The fellow will be instrumental in crafting a comprehensive economic development plan to guide sustainable growth and prosperity in the community. This plan will identify key areas for investment, strategic initiatives, and long-term goals to enhance the local economy.

Will this project engage local residents or business owners? Yes

If yes, how?

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

Research shows that successful communities actively engage businesses and residents in crafting and implementing a long-term vision. We recognize the importance of extending citizen engagement to school children and young adults, as those with fond memories of their hometowns are more likely to get involved and return when they are ready to settle down and raise families.

Examples of engagement include:

- **Business Engagement:** Leverage Antrim County EDC's business connector series to engage Elk Rapids businesses, providing them with valuable resources and opportunities for input.
- **Citizen Engagement:** Offer a 'meeting in a box' kit, which community groups, neighborhood associations, or friends can use to share their opinions about the project. The kit includes instruction sheets, discussion questions, worksheets, feedback questionnaires, and directions for returning and recording responses, facilitating widespread community involvement and feedback.

Would the fellow work with any community partners (local or regional) on this project? Yes

If yes, how?

Under the mentorship and guidance of the Elk Rapids DDA Executive Director, the fellow will collaborate with several key community partners. These include the Elk Rapids DDA, Village of Elk Rapids, Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce, NLEA, and Antrim County EDC. The fellow will attend meetings, engage with these organizations, and leverage their resources to effectively contribute to the Economic Development Plan.

Does this project have a positive impact on a historically underrepresented community? Definition found [here](#).* Yes.

If yes, how?

The economic development plan and business incentives will prioritize support for all businesses, with a special focus on minority-owned and women-owned enterprises. Elk Rapids High School has a minority enrollment of 9%, and 28% of its students are economically disadvantaged, yet the school boasts a 99% graduation rate. This demonstrates that Elk Rapids is a community where minority and economically disadvantaged students can and do succeed. By fostering an inclusive economic environment, the project aims to create opportunities for these students and their families, further enhancing their chances of long-term success and integration into the local economy.

Does this project promote equitable development in your community? Yes

If yes, how?

Equitable development ensures diversity in all its forms, including race, ethnicity, economic circumstances, zip code, age, health and ability status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, resident or immigration status, national origin, veteran status, or religion.

How:

Through business and community engagement, the project aims to address the lack of diversity, which often leads to comfortable discussions and conformity, resulting in unchallenged assumptions and poor decisions.

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

Embracing diversity, although it may add discomfort during discussions, has been repeatedly proven to lead to better decisions for organizations and communities.

The economic development plan will include:

- **Welcoming Community Initiative:** Develop a yearly initiative to create a welcoming environment for all community members.
- **Attracting Young Professionals and Remote Workers:** Implement processes to entice and attract young professionals and remote workers to the area.
- **Indigenous and Native Engagement:** Develop strategies for engaging Indigenous and Native communities within the region.
- **Cultural Events:** Plan unique cultural events that draw diverse populations into the community.
- **Master Plan Services and Amenities:** Include services and amenities desired by different populations, such as childcare needs, in the Elk Rapids Master Plan.
- **Policy and Procedure Review:** Initiate a review of policies and procedures to identify amendments that can encourage the participation of underrepresented, minority, and marginalized groups.

By incorporating these initiatives, the project will foster a more inclusive and equitable community in Elk Rapids.

Project 2: Describe the project in a few sentences and include the goal of the project.

Incentive Program for New Businesses: To attract and support new businesses, the fellow will develop an incentive program that offers financial and logistical support. This program will aim to lower barriers to entry, stimulate local investment, and create a more vibrant business environment.

**Will this project engage local residents or business owners? Yes
If yes, how?**

Examples of engagement include:

- **Business Engagement:** Leverage Antrim County EDC's business connector series to engage Elk Rapids businesses, providing valuable resources and opportunities for input.
- **Citizen Engagement:** Offer a 'meeting in a box' kit, which community groups, neighborhood associations, or friends can use to share their opinions about the project. The kit includes instruction sheets, discussion questions, worksheets, feedback questionnaires, and directions for returning and recording responses, facilitating widespread community involvement and feedback.

Would the fellow work with any community partners (local or regional) on this project? Yes

If yes, how?

Under the mentorship and guidance of the Elk Rapids DDA Executive Director, the fellow will collaborate with several key community partners to develop an incentives plan for new businesses. These partners include:

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

- **Elk Rapids DDA:** The fellow will work closely with the DDA to align the incentives plan with the broader economic development strategies of Elk Rapids.
- **Village of Elk Rapids:** The fellow will engage with village officials to ensure the incentives plan aligns with local policies and objectives.
- **Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce:** This partnership will facilitate outreach to local businesses and promote the incentives program within the business community.
- **NLEA:** The fellow will leverage NLEA's expertise and resources in economic development to enhance the incentives plan.
- **Antrim County EDC:** Collaborating with the EDC will provide additional support and resources for the incentives plan.

The fellow will attend meetings, engage with these organizations, and leverage their resources to effectively contribute to the Economic Development Plan. This plan will help businesses navigate the steps involved in utilizing various development and redevelopment incentives, including but not limited to:

- Public Act 210: Commercial Rehabilitation Act
- Public Act 255: Commercial Redevelopment Act
- Public Act 198: Industrial Facilities Exemption Act
- Public Act 381: Brownfield Redevelopment Act
- Public Act 425: Intergovernmental Transfers Act
- Public Act 57: Tax Increment Financing Act

Does this project have a positive impact on a historically underrepresented community? Definition found [here](#).* Yes

If yes, how?

The business incentives will be inclusive of all businesses, with a priority for minority-owned and women-owned businesses. This focus will ensure that these underrepresented groups have access to the resources and opportunities needed to succeed, fostering a more inclusive and equitable business environment in Elk Rapids.

Does this project promote equitable development in your community? Yes

If yes, how?

Through business and community engagement, the project will address the lack of diversity that often leads to comfortable discussions and conformity, resulting in unchallenged assumptions and poor decisions. Embracing diversity, although it may add discomfort during discussions, has repeatedly been proven to lead to better decisions for organizations and communities. The incentive program will:

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

- **Include Diverse Voices:** Ensure that diverse voices and perspectives are included in the planning and implementation of the incentive program.
- **Foster Innovation:** Promote innovative solutions by incorporating a wide range of ideas and experiences.
- **Support Underrepresented Groups:** Provide targeted support to minority-owned and women-owned businesses, helping to level the playing field and promote equity.
- **Enhance Decision-Making:** Improve decision-making processes by challenging assumptions and encouraging critical thinking.

By including diverse voices and perspectives, the incentive program will foster a more equitable and dynamic business environment in Elk Rapids.

Project 3: Describe the project in a few sentences and include the goal of the project.

Business Incubator: The fellow will outline plans for a business incubator to nurture startups and entrepreneurs. This incubator will provide essential resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities, fostering innovation and helping new businesses thrive in Elk Rapids.

**Will this project engage local residents or business owners? Yes
If yes, how?**

The business incubator project will actively engage local residents and business owners in several key ways:

1. **Involvement in the Planning Process:** Local residents and business owners will be invited to participate in the planning and development stages of the incubator. This will include public forums, workshops, and focus groups where they can provide input, share their needs and ideas, and help shape the vision and goals of the incubator.
2. **Access to Resources and Opportunities:** Once established, the incubator will offer a range of resources to support local entrepreneurs. This includes access to office space, mentorship programs, business development workshops, and networking events. These resources will be designed to help startups and small businesses overcome common challenges and accelerate their growth.
3. **Community Networking and Collaboration:** The incubator will serve as a hub for local business owners to connect, collaborate, and support each other. Regular networking events and collaborative projects will encourage the sharing of knowledge, skills, and resources, fostering a strong sense of community among local entrepreneurs.
4. **Educational Programs and Workshops:** The incubator will host educational programs and workshops tailored to the needs of local businesses. These programs will cover topics such as business planning, marketing strategies, financial management, and technology adoption, equipping entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed.
5. **Mentorship Opportunities:** Experienced business owners and professionals from the community will be encouraged to become mentors, offering guidance and support to new and aspiring entrepreneurs. This mentorship will be a vital component of the incubator, providing personalized advice and fostering a culture of learning and development.

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

By engaging local residents and business owners in these ways, the business incubator will not only support individual businesses but also contribute to the overall economic vitality and sense of community in Elk Rapids.

Would the fellow work with any community partners (local or regional) on this project? Yes

If yes, how?

The fellow will collaborate with a range of community partners to ensure the success of the business incubator project. Key partnerships include:

1. **20Fathoms in Traverse City:** By partnering with 20Fathoms, a membership organization for entrepreneurs, intrapreneurs, tech professionals, and other innovators, the fellow will leverage their expertise in cultivating innovation and business growth. This collaboration will provide access to a network of experienced mentors, industry experts, and potential investors, bringing invaluable resources and insights to the incubator.
2. **Elk Rapids DDA:** The fellow will work closely with the DDA to align the incubator's goals with the broader economic development strategies of Elk Rapids. This partnership will help identify local needs, ensure community support, and integrate the incubator into existing development plans.
3. **Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce:** Collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce will facilitate engagement with local businesses and provide a platform for promoting the incubator. The Chamber's extensive network will be instrumental in reaching potential incubator participants and garnering community support.
4. **NLEA:** Partnering with NLEA will enable the fellow to access additional economic development resources, expertise, and funding opportunities. NLEA's experience in supporting regional economic growth will be crucial in developing effective strategies for the incubator.
5. **Antrim County EDC:** The fellow will collaborate with the Antrim County EDC to utilize their business connector series and other resources. This partnership will help entrepreneurs navigate the local business landscape and access vital support services.
6. **Local Educational Institutions:** By partnering with local schools, colleges, and universities, the fellow can create pathways for students and recent graduates to engage with the incubator. This will help attract young talent, foster innovation, and create opportunities for experiential learning.
7. **Local Government:** Working with the Village of Elk Rapids, Elk Rapids Township, Milton Township and other municipal departments will ensure the incubator aligns with local policies and regulations. This partnership will also facilitate access to public resources and support from local officials.

By engaging with these community partners, the fellow will ensure that the business incubator benefits from a wide array of expertise, resources, and support networks. This collaborative approach will enhance the incubator's ability to nurture startups, foster innovation, and drive sustainable economic growth in Elk Rapids.

Does this project have a positive impact on a historically underrepresented community? Yes Definition found [here](#).*

If yes, how?

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

The entrepreneurial business incubator will have a significant positive impact on historically underrepresented communities by prioritizing support for minority-owned and women-owned businesses. Here's how:

1. **Targeted Outreach and Support:** The incubator will implement targeted outreach programs to identify and engage minority and women entrepreneurs. This will include partnerships with organizations that advocate for these groups, ensuring that they are aware of and have access to the incubator's resources and opportunities.
2. **Access to Resources:** The incubator will provide essential resources tailored to the needs of minority-owned and women-owned businesses. This includes access to affordable workspace, financial assistance, business development services, and specialized training programs that address the unique challenges faced by these entrepreneurs.
3. **Mentorship and Networking Opportunities:** The incubator will establish a mentorship program that pairs minority and women entrepreneurs with experienced business leaders and professionals. These mentors will provide guidance, support, and valuable industry insights. Additionally, the incubator will facilitate networking events and opportunities to connect with other entrepreneurs, investors, and potential customers.
4. **Capacity Building:** The incubator will offer workshops and training sessions focused on building the skills and capacities of minority and women entrepreneurs. Topics will include business planning, financial management, marketing strategies, and leadership development, empowering these entrepreneurs to effectively grow and manage their businesses.
5. **Access to Funding:** Recognizing that access to capital is a major barrier for minority and women entrepreneurs, the incubator will help connect these businesses with funding opportunities. This includes grants, loans, and investment programs specifically designed to support underrepresented groups. The incubator will also help with grant writing and navigating the funding application process.
6. **Inclusive Environment:** The incubator will foster an inclusive and supportive environment where minority and women entrepreneurs feel valued and respected. This includes promoting diversity within the incubator's staff and mentor pool, ensuring that the incubator's culture reflects its commitment to equity and inclusion.
7. **Community Engagement:** By involving the broader community in the incubator's activities, the project will help raise awareness about the contributions of minority and women-owned businesses. This will include community events, open houses, and success stories that highlight the achievements of these entrepreneurs, fostering a greater sense of community support and engagement.

By prioritizing these strategies, the entrepreneurial business incubator will ensure that minority-owned and women-owned businesses have the resources, support, and opportunities they need to succeed. This will contribute to a more diverse, equitable, and vibrant business community in Elk Rapids.

**Does this project promote equitable development in your community? Yes
If yes, how?**

The business incubator project will promote equitable development in Elk Rapids by fostering an inclusive environment where diverse voices and perspectives are actively included and valued. Here's how:

1. **Inclusive Business and Community Engagement:** The incubator will prioritize engaging a wide range of community members and business owners, including those from underrepresented and marginalized groups. By doing so, it ensures that the needs and perspectives of diverse populations are considered in the planning and implementation of the incubator's programs and services.

CEDAM Community Development Fellowship Application Questions

2. **Challenging Conformity and Encouraging Innovation:** Research shows that diverse teams are more likely to challenge assumptions and bring fresh perspectives to problem-solving. By embracing diversity, the incubator will encourage more innovative and effective decision-making processes. This approach will help avoid the pitfalls of conformity and unchallenged assumptions that can lead to poor decisions.
3. **Providing Equitable Access to Resources:** The incubator will ensure that resources, such as mentorship, funding, training, and networking opportunities, are accessible to all entrepreneurs, regardless of their background. Special efforts will be made to reach and support minority-owned, women-owned, and other underrepresented businesses, thereby leveling the playing field and promoting equity.
4. **Creating a Supportive and Diverse Community:** By fostering a diverse and inclusive community of entrepreneurs, the incubator will create a supportive network where individuals from different backgrounds can learn from and support each other. This community will help break down barriers and create opportunities for collaboration and mutual growth.
5. **Addressing Systemic Barriers:** The incubator will actively work to identify and address systemic barriers that hinder the participation and success of underrepresented groups. This includes reviewing and adapting policies, procedures, and practices to ensure they are fair and inclusive. The incubator will also advocate for broader community changes that support equity and inclusion.
6. **Hosting Diverse Programming and Events:** The incubator will offer programs and events that reflect the diverse interests and needs of the community. These activities will provide platforms for underrepresented voices to be heard and celebrated, fostering a culture of inclusivity and mutual respect.
7. **Tracking and Measuring Equity Outcomes:** To ensure that the incubator is effectively promoting equitable development, it will implement metrics and tracking systems to measure progress and impact. This data will be used to continuously improve programs and ensure that equity goals are being met.

By implementing these strategies, the business incubator will help create a more equitable and innovative business environment in Elk Rapids. This will not only support the success of individual entrepreneurs but also contribute to the overall economic and social well-being of the community.

Can you identify a space where the fellow could work full-time?

Yes

Does the identified fellow local supervisor have the capacity to meet with the fellow on a weekly basis to check on progress and provide guidance?

Yes

Fellows will be asked to meet with community leaders. Is the identified fellow local supervisor willing to facilitate introductions?

Yes

The fellowship funding model requires a financial commitment of \$10,000 from the host community. Can your community commit to paying this contribution by January 1, 2025?

**CEDAM Community Development Fellowship
Application Questions**

Yes

DRAFT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

OF THE COUNTY OF ANTRIM

August 20, 2024

Dear CEDAM Fellow Host Community Selection Committee:

At our meeting of August 20, 2024, the Antrim County Economic Development Corporation voted in favor of supporting the Elk Rapids DDA application for a 2025-2026 CEDAM Fellow.

The Antrim County EDC would be pleased to work with a CEDAM Fellow on a number of projects. We believe that this partnership would bring benefits to the Village of Elk Rapids and would also contribute to the broader economic health of Antrim County.

The EDC's current strategic plan notes action steps to "understand Antrim County's business makeup, challenges, growth opportunities, potential to diversify the County's economy, etc." and to conduct a Business Connector Series and Business Owner Meeting Program. We believe that a CEDAM Fellow placed in Elk Rapids would assist those efforts, helping us to advance our mission to retain, expand, and promote County-wide economic growth and stability.

We support the projects proposed by the Elk Rapids DDA for the CEDAM Fellow and look forward to the resulting positive impacts not only in Elk Rapids, but across our County.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this application,

Rachel Krino
President, Antrim County Economic Development Corporation
(231) 533-6265



Antrim County

Administration Office

Memorandum

August 20, 2024

TO: Antrim County Economic Development Corporation
FR: Administration Office
RE: Review of FAQ for EDC website

The EDC's Strategic Plan includes an action item to develop website FAQs. The EDC's webpage now has a FAQ link (at the top of the left column) with the following questions; a few answers have been completed, but most say "*Response coming soon.*" Additional draft answers are being developed and will be brought to future meetings for discussion.

Business growth questions (non-finance)

1. How do I develop a business plan?
2. Who are the key contacts in Antrim County?
3. How do I find information about zoning?
4. What kind of business assistance does the EDC provide?
5. What is an Opportunity Zone?
6. Is there already a business like mine in Antrim County?
7. How do I find land for development in Antrim County?
8. What are Antrim County's workforce demographics?

Finance-based questions

9. Who are the local Antrim County lenders?
10. How can I connect to different financing partners?
11. What incentives do you have to offer?
12. What other incentives are there?
13. Are any financial incentives specifically for women or minorities available?
14. Are any financial incentives specifically for veterans available?

Attraction questions

15. Why should we move to Antrim County?
16. What does Antrim County offer young families?
17. How can I find housing in Antrim County?
18. How can I find child care in Antrim County?
19. How do I find information about local infrastructure?
20. Do you have high speed internet services available?

Questions about the EDC

21. What is economic development?
22. Do all counties have an EDC?
23. What is Antrim County's strategy for economic development?
24. Do you partner with communities to provide specific development support?
25. Do you provide services to small businesses?