

## **Project Overview**

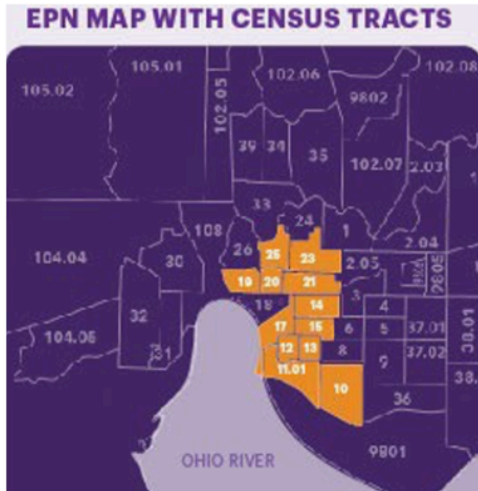
Through the *IMPACTT - Technology Transfer for Impact Ventures* curriculum, Indiana students identify, research, and critically analyze technology inventions and patents available for license through universities and U.S. federal agencies. The program encourages students of all backgrounds and disciplines of study. They explore and familiarize themselves with potential career pathways through regional manufacturing partners, a multitude of venture-building services, and additional resources for further exploration. With assistance from statewide partners, the program is expanding across the state of Indiana to additional colleges and high schools.

Through the Concept, Progress, and Impact prize phases, multiple milestones have been reached, including hiring a full-time curriculum facilitator; receiving three additional funding awards from state and federal agencies; receiving private funding; and securing multiple new partnerships. Our initial plans included establishing the Indiana Center for Emerging Technologies in late 2025. The entity has already been established fully and funded, operating as a technology research firm and venture partner with a statewide presence. These additional funds and partnerships were made possible in large part due to the concept validation provided by the CEIP awards.

## **Community Engagement and Partnerships**

In March of 2023, our main project partner - the University of Evansville's Center for Innovation and Change - led proposal efforts and were awarded a \$30m Evansville Promise Neighborhood (EPN) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Additionally, \$32m in matching funds were secured from 23 regional partners. The successful 2023 proposal was the fourth attempt made by the regional team, and was one of only three national awards made that year. Securing the transformational EPN award demonstrated an unwavering commitment to our community.

The EPN consists of twelve census tracts and six area schools. Its foundation includes four pipelines for youth development, while providing access to robust family and community support systems. These resources will help prepare our future workforce to make the transition to college and ultimately embark on a successful career. Since late 2023, our collective IMPACTT program efforts have focused on the overlapping 12 EPN census tracts and the 16 Evansville disadvantaged census tracts (Fig. 1).



WH Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool  
16 Disadvantaged Census Tracts in Vanderburgh County, IN

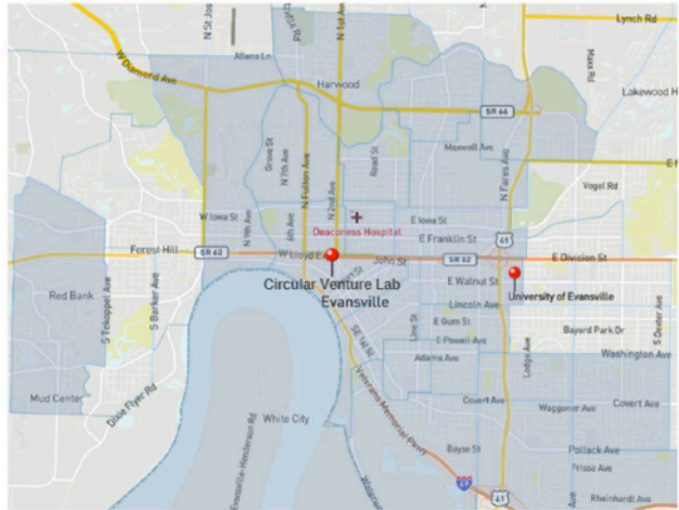


Fig. 1

Inclusion of the EPN from the initial concept proposal was critical to the success of our community engagement and outreach efforts. Of the 23 partners included in the EPN award, we worked closely with nine of them through November 2024. That number will increase to eleven by the end of this year. These partners have been embedded in our disadvantaged communities for ten, twenty, and even forty-plus years. EPN partners were the conduit for multiple introductions to community gatherings, neighborhood association meetings, and annual neighborhood events. Without these partner introductions, we would have had difficulty asking the appropriate questions and receiving honest feedback from residents. A key lesson learned, one we have shared with other groups in other regions, is that these local partnerships are absolutely necessary for community members to build trust and respect.

Beginning in January of 2024 and continuing throughout the year, team partners hosted five events and attended five others hosted by partners in the EPN network. In these, we were able to speak 1:1 and in groups to over 300 total residents of disadvantaged communities, ranging in age from 13 to 85 years old. Our most notable event was in January, when four representatives from Sandia National Laboratories' Boost Platform hosted a half-day workshop, attracting 35 diverse attendees from our region (Fig. 2). This marked the first time the DOE had purposefully visited our region. Additionally, we hosted two breakfasts, two lunches, and a half-day workshop from Heritage Group, an Indiana-based chemical and materials firm. Events we attended included a mix of neighborhood and community meetings, ranging from 15 to 100 residents and community leaders.



In these meetings, we had casual and formal conversations with residents and leaders about manufacturing ecosystem-related needs of the disadvantaged community workforce. The most pressing needs were the A) ability to gain new and advanced skills to enhance their current or desired role; and B) hyperlocalized development programs tailored to community specific needs. There were several interesting findings related to workers in the communities that stand out versus other communities. There were multiple workers skilled in a variety of roles that prohibited or limited them from entering the workforce due to A) refugee status; B) lack of any transportation to worksites; C) non-proficiency in English; and D) lack of access to childcare or prohibitive costs.

We presented results of our engagement to two larger community organizations in September. These included A) The Welborn Foundation, who has served our communities since 2000 and understands the magnitude and complexity of our community issues, and how they exceed the capacity of any one organization to address; and B) Leadership Everyone, who forms collaborative community impact movements to make change and solve problems. Together, we are working on a detailed report titled *Where You Live Matters*, in which we expect a reviewed final draft to be published in January 2025. The first draft is included in our resources for public dissemination. We have personally engaged ten manufacturing-embedded or connected individuals in industry and six community EPN partners in the formation of this report.

Our initial findings through disadvantaged community engagement and the in-progress *Where You Live Matters* report are relevant to the entire regional population. As well, it is highly relevant to our target audience of 16-24 year-old students. This report is the greatest success of our community engagement efforts and informs challenges we will face throughout our state. Meetings we held or attended produced multiple new

partnership opportunities, as well as new friendships. The insight into the root causes of our underdeveloped workforce was invaluable for our work on this program and new ones going forward.

One conversation focused specifically on our disadvantaged community workforce was held in September with Berry Global, an Evansville-based Fortune 500 plastics manufacturer. Of particular note, their VP of Strategy Deployment, Chad Kleist, stated, “Since 2022, more than 300 refugees have joined our *OneBerry* team through our immersive and inclusive refugee program. We have expanded our network of agency partners to continue making a positive difference in the lives of refugees.” Kleist also elaborated on transportation issues, noting an agency partnership with Enterprise for rideshare vans to select communities. We have had ongoing meetings with multiple other manufacturing-specific groups, further detailed in the next section.

## **Fostering a Clean Energy Manufacturing Ecosystem**

The mission of our IMPACTT program is to provide an empowering path forward for young students and solutions for growing and aligning our workforce and talent pipelines. We believe our work will enhance the overall connectivity of our entrepreneurial and industrial ecosystems, creating a future generation of leaders and entrepreneurs who understand and reach their full potential.

Team members and their respective organizations are grassroots catalysts for change across Indiana and are focused on this mission. Core members include Logan Jenkins of Circular Venture Lab (CVL); Erin Lewis of the University of Evansville’s Center for Innovation and Change (UE CIC); Tyler Stock of the Evansville Regional Economic Partnership (EREP); and Don Wettrick of the STARTed UP Foundation. Together, our team members and partners have worked collaboratively with multiple manufacturers and the manufacturing ecosystem as a whole. The most relevant entities include:

*EREP*, one of four major partners in the 2023 Evansville Promise Neighborhood award. EREP leadership has been very involved in multiple early, current, and ongoing meetings concerning the scoping and planning of IMPACTT and our work in disadvantaged communities.. With 40+ employees, they are the parent organization of three relevant entities to our work:

The *Tri-State Manufacturers’ Alliance* (TSMA) is a collective of 150+ businesses representing our region’s dynamic manufacturing sector. Members of TSMA, including IMPACTT lead Logan Jenkins and CVL, work together to create a vibrant and attractive manufacturing environment in Southwest Indiana. The Alliance facilitates peer group discussions and provides an outlet for sharing best practices.

The *Evansville Regional Sustainability Alliance* (ERSA) is an industry working group of 18 regional executives in three distinct domains - the energy transition, regional

sustainability, and the circular economy of materials. Members of ERSA represent a majority portion of our region's total manufacturing activity.

*Talent EVV* is a workforce and talent development organization managed under EREP, which is driven by three main goals. These include 1) Bringing 5,000 high-paying new job opportunities to our region; 2) Preparing a highly-trained workforce; and 3) Upward mobility. The IMPACTT program and its outcomes are relevant to these stated goals. Additionally, the below stakeholders and the resources they provide are essential to our regional manufacturing ecosystem and to our work:

*Conexus Indiana*

Works to develop and grow Indiana's advanced manufacturing industry by developing statewide talent.

*Purdue University Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP)*

Helps manufacturers cut costs, increase profits, and train workforce via consulting and training from industry experts.

*Applied Research Institute*

Provides a multitude of options to leverage Indiana's research and higher education institutions.

*CDFI Friendly Evansville Region*

Provides resources for flexible capital through financial institutions to address a range of unmet financing needs in our communities.

*Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC)*

Includes an enrollment of more than 22,000 K-12 students.

*STARTedUP Foundation*

A statewide program for entrepreneurship and innovation among high school students.

*Berry Link*

An embedded manufacturing training program for high school students, offered by Evansville's Berry Global, in partnership with EVSC.

*Elevate Ventures*

Early-stage investment capital fund run by the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC), providing financial and technical assistance to entrepreneurs.

*IEDC*

Charged with helping businesses launch, grow and locate in the state.

*Leadership Everyone*

Founded in 1976 by a group of future-thinking Evansville leaders, the 800+ member organization focuses on community transformation.

Identifying the appropriate stakeholders is necessary, but our program success has been driven by the actual implementation of strategies devised with those stakeholders. Relevant examples include:

- UE CIC's Lewis and CVL's Jenkins shared plans to expand IMPACTT with STARTedUp Foundation's Wettrick in April 2024. The Foundation is now leading efforts to deploy the curriculum to 100+ high schools in early 2025, including 65 in disadvantaged communities.
- We have met with several leaders from EVSC and relevant individuals within the district. Discussions are centered on a roadmap for additional manufacturers to institute a program similar to BerryLink. This would be facilitated through the district's Applied Science and Mathematics program, serving 700 students.
- The Applied Research Institute has worked with team members and our partners in establishing our Youth Innovation Network. Through easy to access resources and network connections for our youth, the network will help empower the diverse young talent from every corner of our community.
- Collectively, our team members are planning a March 2025 event in conjunction with Conexus Indiana, the Purdue MEP, and EREP. Held in Evansville, this event will focus on the initial successes of our IMPACTT program, the regional manufacturing ecosystem, and the opportunities for manufacturing leaders to better utilize the workforce in our disadvantaged communities.
- CVL's Jenkins serves as chair for the ERSA Circular Economy group. Group members include Berry Global, SABIC Innovative Plastics, Toyota, LyondellBasell, and AstraZeneca - allowing personal connections with our leading regional manufacturers.
- Through EREP, TSMA coordinated the comprehensive "Evansville Region Strategic Manufacturing Roadmap", released in February 2024. This roadmap led to the creation of the Indiana Center for Emerging Technologies by CVL's Jenkins, further detailed in the following section.

Manufacturing in the Evansville region accounts for one in five jobs and contributes \$22 billion in annual GDP. This represents 41% of the region's total economic activity. While our local and state leadership are well-aware of the importance of manufacturing here, there are significant challenges and barriers in the overall ecosystem:

- Across a large majority of relevant stakeholders, there are significant organizational bandwidth and capacity issues. The lack of bandwidth in many of these organizations hinders their ability to absorb and process our ideas and long-term vision; prioritize our program and its importance to our region; and slows their decision-making. A lack of any technology background or expertise in the staff of many local entities contributes to significant time spent in initial meetings helping develop a basic understanding of our work, where it is well-understood in other regions across our state.

- Our region is not a primary area of focus to statewide leadership when compared to many other Indiana regions. While our local organizations are helpful in every way possible, it is quite difficult to work with stakeholders outside of our region. West Lafayette, South Bend, and Bloomington are home to major research universities, with the closest being two hours away. Indianapolis and surrounding areas have seen unprecedented investments in biotech, pharmaceuticals, and semiconductors. These regions are bringing continued investment, high-paying jobs, and attracting new residents now, making it difficult to garner stakeholder attention outside of Southwest Indiana.
- In general, our metropolitan region's primary focus is on immediate needs to its population. Long-term planning, development, and growth are often secondary as resources are diverted to address more urgent crises.

With a focus on the EPN and disadvantaged communities, our team has spent considerable time on engaging residents and assessing needs. Key activities included workshops and events that allowed us to survey participants, identifying local champions of our work, and the building of multiple partnerships. For our particular program with a technology transfer focus, our tangible next steps in advancing our region's clean energy transition include:

- Emphasizing the overall need to educate residents and stakeholders on the importance of inclusive innovation on upskilling future and current workforce. This will be done in collaboration with multiple entities, such as those listed previously and numerous additional organizations, including our universities and specialized workforce nonprofits. A top priority is promoting Evansville's Excel Center, a free public school for adults that gives adults the opportunity to earn an Indiana Core 40 high school diploma.
- Working outside of our region to secure partnerships that allow for specific training on jobs of the future. Specific examples include training opportunities in robotics and automation from Vincennes University; online courses on energy storage and battery components through the Battery Innovation Center; and identifying programs from Indianapolis that can be replicated in our region.
- Securing sustainable funding to grow and expand the IMPACTT program in 2026 and beyond. While we have sufficient funds through 2025, the program will still be in its early stages. To maximize impact across the state, we must secure funding from revenue generating activities, foundations, industry partners, and through multiple statewide allocations.

## Program Implementation and Results

\$200,000 in CEIP awards have been distributed to nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations Circular Venture Lab, the University of Evansville, and the STARTed UP Foundation. The period of performance for use of these funds is April 2024 to December 2025.

CVL has allocated a total of **\$112,500** towards the salary of Dr. Jason Salstrom, a full-time Program Manager, effective June 1, 2024. The position will last a minimum of 18 months, at a yearly salary of \$75,000. Health insurance and other benefits for Salstrom will be paid through existing capital.

CVL has distributed a total of **\$52,500** to UE in April of 2024. From these funds, UE will pay two interns from the Center for Innovation and Change a rate of \$20/hour, for 40 hours of work with CVL each month, over an 18 month period. Costs for the two internships totals \$28,800. The remaining \$23,700 distributed to UE will be used specifically for program assistance. This includes \$15,000 in faculty stipends over the course of five ChangeLabs; a \$5,000 administration fee for the operation of ChangeLab courses; and approximately \$3,700 for materials needed for the five classes.

After winning the Progress Phase, we distributed **\$20,000** to the STARTed UP Foundation. These funds are held and managed by them for the cost of course creation, platform hosting fees, and stipends to their team members.

An additional \$10,000 will be awarded after qualifying for the Grand Prize. From the **\$25,000** in prize money that remains/is to be awarded, we have set aside \$5,000 for team member travel, including the Finals event in Chicago and at least one visit to a cohort member's city in 2025. The remaining \$20,000 is earmarked for matching funds for the following assistance:

- \$5,000 - 1:1 matching funds for INTAP, a technical assistance program through the Indiana SBDC. We have specifically requested ongoing intellectual property legal assistance through Gutwein Law.
- \$5,000 - 1:1 matching funds for equipment required for our workspace, including drafting tables, furniture, and miscellaneous prototyping supplies. This amount has been matched already.
- \$10,000 - We sought partners to match these funds to create an initial stipend to attract qualified program participants. This amount has been matched already. We will provide \$1,000 to certain high-achieving students and to teachers in our high school program who otherwise would not be able to participate. We currently have five qualified recipients for 2025 and can support 15 more.

Logan Jenkins of CVL ideated and designed the initial IMPACTT curriculum, goals, and outcomes. He serves as the project lead and is responsible for all program finances, milestones, and partnerships. Jason Salstrom of CVL has begun development of the high school, university, and mid-career entrepreneur curriculum. He is the liaison to high school educators and their students and is responsible for reporting all metrics. Erin



Lewis of the UE CIC is responsible for local, regional and statewide connections in higher education. She is responsible for all funds allocated to UE and for managing student interns and faculty assistance. Tyler Stock of EREP serves as a conduit to our region's entrepreneurial and manufacturing ecosystems, regional partnerships, and our young talent pipeline through our school districts. Don Wetrick of the STARTed UP Foundation is leading efforts to expand IMPACTT across 100 Indiana high schools through their existing Innovate WithIN program.

In April 2024, Circular Venture Lab executed a license agreement with MetalImpact, allowing full access to their digital impact network platform. This partnership is critical to our long-term success with new and existing stakeholders in Indiana and across the nation. Throughout the three phases of the CEIP, team members have met regularly with the Entrepreneur Futures Network (EFN), a Power Connector for this prize. Their team has been extremely helpful in multiple regards, including providing connections to organizations and entities outside of our region. Additionally, our team has met with numerous community-based organizations in and outside of our region that specifically work with residents and industry within our disadvantaged communities. Since January 2024, we have met with and visited regional Economic Partnerships in all six Indiana regions. We have accumulated a multitude of insights into best practices, innovative talent attraction and retention efforts, and entrepreneur support mechanisms from these regional entities.

The peer learning sessions hosted by EFN featured prominent panelists and breakout room opportunities for cohort teams. The most significant findings include: A) There are two large organizations in this cohort that we can model future programming from, and B) There are several smaller, regional organizations with similar missions that we can partner with in the future, when applicable. The June 20<sup>th</sup> event featured a Ford Motors panelist, which catalyzed early and ongoing planning that is significant to our program. This plan is centered around *Toyota Motor Manufacturing Indiana* and their 8,000+ regional employees. Students who finish our program are more apt to be intrapreneurs and can be personally introduced to Toyota through site visits. This presents Toyota with a viable avenue to proactive talent identification. This is not yet an official partnership between our organizations, but is planned for 2025.

The IMPACTT program is exceeding our initial expectations and potential outcomes described in previous submissions. In the Concept phase, we presented the program and a list of specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and timebound (SMART) goals to achieve through December 2025. For the Progress phase, we detailed the initial milestones we had hit in the first seven months. Below, a summary of the most relevant milestones achieved to date is detailed in the condensed table (Table 1), followed by descriptions of each.

## Milestone Summary (Table 1)

Milestone (Mi) and Go/No-Go (GNG); Months after Jan 2024; Schedule and Description

| (Mi) or (GNG), SMART | Month | Milestone/GNG Description  |
|----------------------|-------|--|
| (Mi1)                | 2     | Outreach/marketing Workshop 1, 6 students. April start/June end  |
| (Mi2)                | 2     | Regional industry outreach/marketing complete  |
| (GNG1)               | 3     | \$100k CEIP Concept Phase Award  |
| (Mi3)                | 4     | Outreach/marketing Workshop 2, 6 students. June start/August end   |
| (Mi4)                | 4     | Begin collaboration with CEIP Concept cohort   |
| (GNG2)               | 4     | Finalize DOE Boost platform partnership  |
| (Mi5)                | 4     | First industry partnerships secured, \$10k total   |
| (Mi7)                | 5     | Outreach/marketing for Fall UE ChangeLab, 12 students  |
| (Mi8)                | 6     | Full-time Program Manager/Facilitator hired  |
| (GNG3)               | 7     | \$100k CEIP Progress Phase Award   |
| (GNG4)               | 9     | Partnership secured with STARTedUp Foundation, initial rollout to additional IN regions in January 2025        |
| (GNG7)               | 20    | Finalize stakeholders and budget necessary to build the Indiana Center for Emerging Technologies in Evansville |

**(GNG1)** Concept Phase awarded.

**(Mi3)** became a joint effort with **(Mi1)** and **(Mi6)**. On May 29<sup>th</sup>, our first cohort of eight students was hosted by the University of Evansville's ChangeLab program. We held the course for six consecutive Wednesdays and ended July 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Of the eight students in this cohort (Fig 3), three were from Bosse High School, a disadvantaged school located in the Evansville Promise Neighborhood. Five UE undergrad students also participated. Five females and three males enrolled. All participants finished the course. Seven have continued engaging with our team after completion. Two have shown interest in licensing technologies from Sandia National Labs, while one has applied to a FedTech studio, and all three will compete in the American-Made EnergyTech University Prize in 2025. These three students have officially organized their ventures. We have engaged Elevate Ventures for advice on a

\$20,000 pre-seed investment for all three. These metrics are all in line with our initial Concept Phase expectations.



Eight IMPACTT students on a live presentation with NASA Glenn Research Center June 5, 2024

Fig. 3

**(Mi4)** Peer exchanges have concluded, our team will attend the Grand Prize event in Chicago with other cohort members.

**(GNG2)** This FedTech partnership was secured April 19. A contract for \$11,220 was awarded to Jenkins as a Coach for the Fall 2024 Boost technology transfer cohort.

**(Mi5)** The Indiana Economic Development Corporation awarded a \$31,000 grant to our program.

**(Mi7)** There are currently 12 students from UE participating in our Fall 2024 ChangeLab for course credit. Eight are female and four are male.

**(Mi8)** A full-time Program Manager/Facilitator has been hired as of June 1.

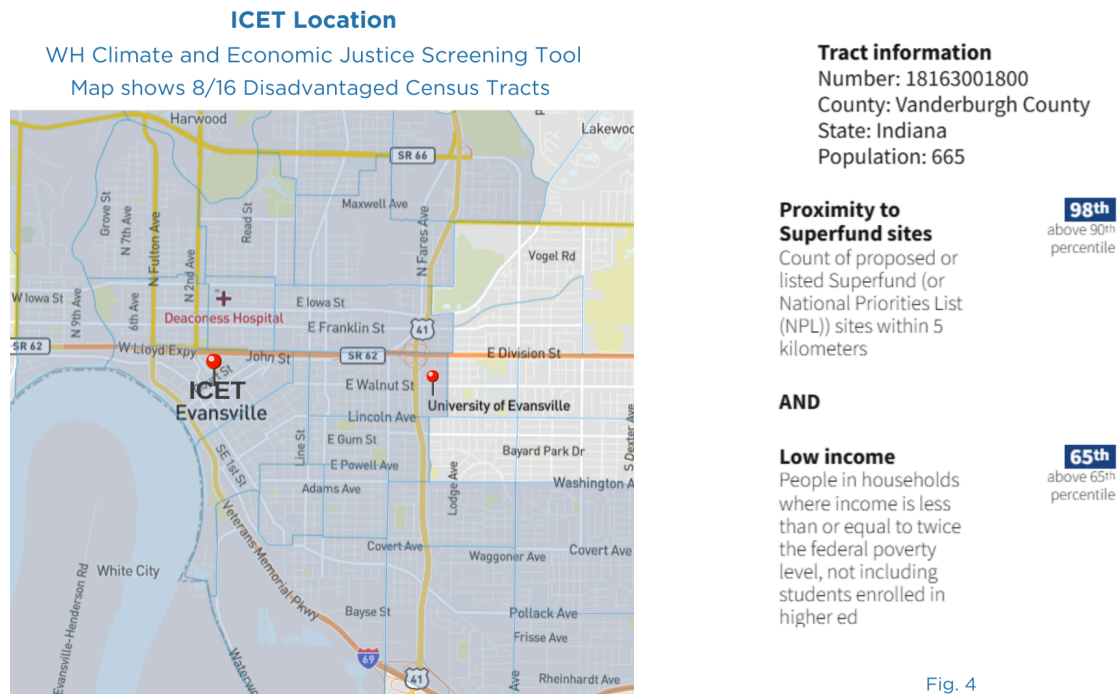
**(GNG3)** The Progress phase award was made in August.

**(GNG4)** Our partnership agreement was signed July 1.

**(GNG7)** The CEIP awards provided the critical concept validation that allowed us to secure an additional \$558,019 in outside funding. This enabled the *Indiana Center for Emerging Technologies* (ICET) to fully launch in August - a full year sooner than originally anticipated in our Concept submission. These awards included:

- \$100,000 total from the U.S. Small Business Administration’s *Growth Accelerator Fund Competition*.
- \$458,019 from Elevate Ventures, a one-time donation to support Southwest Indiana’s entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems until August 2027.

The IMPACTT program is the cornerstone of our Evansville-based manufacturing and emerging technology cluster. Our Center is located in a disadvantaged community in Vanderburgh County, census tract 18163001800 (Fig. 4).



Our team and the ICET have catalyzed initial efforts in developing Southwest Indiana’s domestic clean energy manufacturing innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystems. The newly established ICET now serves as a:

- Knowledge center for industry leaders to explore opportunities for collaboration between academia, government research agencies, and existing manufacturers.
- Hub for the attraction of new entrepreneurs and new businesses, and for the retention of current entrepreneurial talent.
- Substantial investment in the Evansville Promise Neighborhood's long-term prosperity, by exposing young students in disadvantaged communities to a research and development center.
- Showcase for our regional manufacturing capabilities and strengths in a physical space, serving a multitude of economic and talent development purposes.

## **Projected Impacts and Sustainability Plan**

The IMPACTT program supports regional economic development through entrepreneurial education, manufacturing talent pipelines, and building a resilient community powered by local innovation. In 2024, we began meeting with active community members and stakeholders through multiple events, gatherings, and sessions. We have encouraged and supported innovative ideas that address community needs. Partnerships between diverse stakeholders have been formed and utilized, including our regional manufacturers, government, non-profit organizations, and funding sources. The benefits of innovation have been shared among our most vulnerable community members.

Our vision for a just and equitable clean energy transition is dependent on a community that leverages the creativity, knowledge, and resources of all of its residents. Together as a co-creating community, they will collaborate to research, identify, and analyze sustainable solutions to local, regional, and national problems. They will be encouraged to participate if they are curious and simply exploring new ideas. They will receive support and resources if they wish to utilize a breakthrough lab technology to build a scalable startup with venture capital backing. If they choose to explore working with a local manufacturer or continuing their education, our community will wholeheartedly support that as well. Our young regional talent must feel like they belong here and that they are connected to our community. Otherwise, they will migrate to one where their sense of belonging, inclusion, and support is stronger. Our region and our state cannot afford to lose any of our talented community members. IMPACTT will be the catalyst for ongoing efforts with regional partners to attract and retain entrepreneurial talent.

Our 2024 CEIP awards cover all current and 2025 expenses associated with Circular Venture Lab staff, project partner services, and IMPACTT curriculum development services to execute our statewide entrepreneurial programming. Ongoing and additional funding can support some or all of these program aspects in our region, our state, and across the U.S. in the near future:

- Stipends to educators and community leaders who facilitate the program and provide support to students across the state.
- Paid internship and fellowship opportunities for high-achieving students.
- Financial support for promising ventures to cover initial fees including incorporation, legal services, and website development and marketing fees.
- Fees for initial option or research and development licenses paid to our national labs or universities.

- A statewide technology transfer pitch competition and showcase for students in high school, college, and for entrepreneurs.
- Additional reach to students outside of Indiana, beginning with neighboring Ohio, Illinois, and Kentucky.
- Specific training, technical assistance, and upskilling to empower additional community members to participate in the transition.
- Fees paid to a dedicated contractor who identifies relevant opportunities for program growth throughout our region and state, potentially national.

We have prioritized long-term planning to ensure a sustainable program going forward, where students of all backgrounds who want to participate are fully supported. We do not foresee the program generating sufficient licensing revenue to cover expenses in 2026 and beyond. Circular's Jenkins is leading fundraising strategies and efforts.

As a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization working in talent development and entrepreneurial programming in underserved areas of our region, we have identified and begun discussions with these future sources of sustainable funding:

- Specific allocations from regional foundations and entities. These include the Welborn Foundation, the Community Foundation Alliance, the Lilly Endowment, multiple statewide foundations, and private donor-advised funds.
- Partnership/subcontractor opportunities with U.S. DOE Laboratories. Currently, we are exploring opportunities in the *FY2025 Technology Commercialization Fund Base Core Laboratory Infrastructure for Market Readiness Lab Call* with two National Labs. This solicitation offers an opportunity for us to partner with the Labs to advance energy-related, Lab-developed technology toward commercialization. This presents a unique opportunity for our co-creation community to provide input on how these technologies can be integrated into the market. Our concept paper with the Labs will be submitted by December 12. We anticipate many new opportunities through the U.S. DOE specifically.
- Multiple organizations in the Midwest, including those in our NSF Regional Innovation Engines and Tech Hubs, have reached out to us regarding current and future solicitations and opportunities. With our work primarily in an underserved region with unique programming for young talent, these opportunities are mutually beneficial and under ongoing discussion.
- Opportunities outside of the energy sector. While we primarily focus on energy, additional opportunities with other federal agencies may supplement our program in the long-term.
- Potential for additional funds from the State of Indiana. We have received a one-time award of \$31,000 that can increase significantly in the future.

- Our \$458,019 donation from Elevate Ventures to support our region may be replicated with measurable impact and success metrics. There are several opportunities for others to match a portion these funds.

Sustainable economic growth in clean energy entrepreneurship and manufacturing in our region demands a robust local innovation ecosystem. Our team brings new viewpoints, ideas, and a vision for the future - while adding capacity to properly disseminate resources to all members of our communities. In 2025 and beyond, we will continue to promote new business formation and growth, strengthen our regional manufacturing networks, and improve public-private partnerships.

We will continue our focus on specific metrics of success achieved by students through our technology transfer classes. Additionally, we anticipate post-award results that impact our local economy and that improve our communities, including:

- A measurable increase of younger students that choose to stay in our region
- New job creation through upskilling of workers for our manufacturers
- Proactive identification of high-achieving talent for specific manufacturers
- Improvement of current and ongoing educational opportunities by increasing knowledge of technology transfer and entrepreneurial concepts.
- Development of critical thinking skills through the active process of questioning, analyzing, and evaluating information.
- New advocates for the improvement of current products and services with technology innovations.
- Enhanced social equity in our marginalized and underserved communities.
- An increase in positive mental health outcomes through our problem-solving community, with indicators to include an increase in belonging and connectivity.