



Project Proposal Form 2021-2022 Academic Years

M Partner is a community engagement effort that seeks to improve quality of life in Mississippi communities. This initiative offers a framework through which community and university representatives can cultivate mutually beneficial partnerships that will lead to the co-creation of knowledge and ideas to enhance community wellbeing. M Partner is one of the pillars outlined in the university’s comprehensive strategic plan, *Flagship Forward*, and underpins institutional efforts to promote healthy and vibrant communities. The inaugural M Partner communities were Charleston (Tallahatchie County), Lexington (Holmes County), and New Albany (Union County). Currently, M Partner is working with Ecu and Pontotoc, both located in Pontotoc County.

M Partner aspires to create substantial and sustainable results by aligning university resources and expertise with community-identified goals and needs. This initiative also holds the potential to enhance the student educational experience, university research, and community engagement. To that end, M Partner seeks to affiliate with credit-bearing courses, community service projects and organizations, and university programs and entities that can provide research and technical assistance to facilitate the partnership goals.

M Partner has funds available to support faculty, staff, and students as they work to advance these community-driven projects. The table of projects is available on the following page. To request funds through M Partner, please complete this form and return it to Laura Martin, M Partner Director, at lemartin@olemiss.edu.

Name: _____	Title/Department: _____
Phone: _____	E-mail: _____
M Partner Project Title: _____	
Semester: Spring 2021 Summer 2021 I / II / Full Fall 2021	
Course Number and Title (if applicable): _____	
Faculty Member 25 Account Number: _____	
Signature: _____	Date: _____
Chair’s Signature: _____	Date: _____

Sponsored Class/Budget Line Item	Description	Budget
Travel		
Contractual Services		
Scholarships and Waivers		
Postage		
Telephone		
Commodities		
Office Supplies		
Research/Lab Supplies		
Other Than Equip (Library Books)		
Equipment (less than \$5,000)		
Subcontract Payments		
Tuition		
Total		



M Partner Projects 2021-2022 Academic Year

The projects below are the product of community meetings and ongoing dialogue with stakeholders in the partner communities. The focus areas for this phase of M Partner are **economic development, educational enrichment, local history, and tourism and recreation**. Additional details are available on the following pages.

This document will be updated as project statuses change and as new opportunities for collaboration are identified.

Project Title	Community	Status
Develop Integrated Marketing Campaign to Promote the Town of Ecu	Ecu	Available
Establish Framework for a Main Street/Economic Development Association	Ecu	Available
M.B. Mayfield Home Restoration and Relocation	Ecu	In progress
Research and Compile Priorities for MS Humanities Council Mini-grant	Ecu	In progress
Expand College Readiness in North Pontotoc Schools with MS College Access Project	Ecu	In progress
Ecu and Northeast Mississippi Oral History Project	Ecu	In progress
Preliminary Land Use Survey	Ecu	Available
Grant Database for Parks and Recreation Department	Ecu	Available
Design and Paint Murals in Downtown Area	Ecu	Available
Research Local History to Create Outdoor Museum on Tanglefoot Trail	Pontotoc	Available
Design and Paint Mural Depicting History of Pontotoc	Pontotoc	Available
Promote Economic Development and Retail Opportunities	Pontotoc	In progress
Emergency Preparedness Training	Pontotoc	Available
Mental Wellness Initiative Pontotoc City School District	Pontotoc	Available
Promote Family Literacy through the Pontotoc County Library	Pontotoc	Available
Strategic Planning for Pontotoc Chamber	Pontotoc	In progress
Study the Economic Impact of the Tanglefoot Trail	Pontotoc	In progress
Develop an Interactive Virtual Map of the Tanglefoot Trail	Pontotoc	In progress
Curate the Arts and Entertainment Gallery at the Town Square Museum	Pontotoc	Available
Research Housing Security and Relief for Renters and Homeowners	Pontotoc	In progress

Table updated February 18, 2021



ECRU

Develop Integrated Marketing Campaign to Promote the Town of Ecpu

The Town of Ecpu is interested in driving tourism to the community and along the Tanglefoot Trail through an integrated marketing campaign, as well as by refurbishing the public spaces surrounding the Tanglefoot Trail. Community leaders in Ecpu would like to enhance the community's online presence as the town grows and attracts new businesses and residents. This project will unify tone and content developed on behalf of the town across social media channels, the town's website, and printed materials.

- *Community Partner:* Office of the Mayor
- *Deliverables:*
 - Website design for Town of Ecpu
 - Establish and develop content for social media channel(s) for the Town of Ecpu
 - Create a calendar of events and ensure that it can be easily updated beyond the duration of the academic course
 - Brochure featuring photography and copy highlighting history, cultural attractions, culture, and business
 - Develop marketing and communication plans that outline initiatives to increase tourism

Establish Framework for a Main Street/Economic Development Association

A Main Street Association or dedicated economic development entity can focus efforts to promote tourism and economic growth in Ecpu. Creating a framework to establish such an association can incorporate the perspectives of local community stakeholders and outline how to best drive tourism.

- *Community Partner:* Office of the Mayor
- *Deliverable:* Study of similar local and regional entities and recommendations to establish Main Street Association or similar entity

M.B. Mayfield Childhood Home Restoration and Relocation

In an effort to increase visitors to Ecpu on the Tanglefoot Trail, the Town of Ecpu intends to restore and relocate the home of Ecpu native and painter, M.B. Mayfield. Mayfield was a folk artist and worked as a janitor at UM in the 1950s. He audited classes in the Art Department and was likely the first Black student to attend classes at UM, though he never formally registered. The relocation of Mayfield's home serves to add a site of cultural and historical significance to the trail and to boost tourism to Ecpu.

- *Community Partner:* Office of the Mayor; Jeannie Thompson, Curator
- *Deliverables:*
 - Study similar museums and historical preservation efforts and compile best practices into a set of recommendations for museum development and curation of artifacts
 - Coordinate with local stakeholders to establish nonprofit status for the Mayfield Museum
 - Tourism and marketing plan to advertise M.B. Mayfield House and Tanglefoot Trail

Research and Compile Priorities for MS Humanities Council Mini-Grant

Utilizing grant dollars available through the Mississippi Humanities Council, the Pontotoc County School District (PCSD) and VISTA members can research and identify priorities in literature, languages, and social sciences to apply for an MHC mini-grant. Potential priorities include expanding classroom libraries, soliciting Mississippi writers to speak to Middle School and High School students, and encouraging virtual and at-home literacy programs.

- *Community Partner:* Dr. Loretta Hartfield, PCSD Curriculum Coordinator
- *Deliverable:* Grant application, including references from successful programs in Mississippi



Introduce MS College Access Project to Pontotoc County School District

Former McLean Institute Public Service intern and SMBHC student Ainsley Ash has established a network of free college resources to share with Mississippi high schoolers via virtual tutoring and website content. The initiative—Mississippi College Access Project—is seeking partnerships in the form of north MS high school counselors and teachers who wish to introduce their students to additional, extracurricular college advising. Students can participate as volunteers or through preparing background research and compiling data on ACT preparedness in North MS.

- *Community Partners:* NHS and SHS counselors and principals from the Pontotoc County School District
- *Deliverable:* Background research and supporting materials for Fall 2021

Oral History of Ecu and Northeast Mississippi

Through conversations with the mayor and other community stakeholders, an oral history project can be developed in Ecu to highlight and preserve the rich changes in the region over the course of its changes in industry.

- *Community Partner:* Office of the Mayor; Jeannie Thompson, Curator
- *Deliverables:*
 - Conduct oral history interviews with local persons of importance; review archival material and prepare a report that preserves its history
 - Create a tourism and marketing plan based on the findings from the oral history interviews and archival research. Offer recommendations around public and private partnerships that can strengthen these tourism and marketing efforts.

Preliminary Land Use Survey

The Town of Ecu is in the process of expanding and enhancing its Parks and Recreation infrastructure. Town officials are interested in obtaining preliminary survey data on town property to ensure that park layout maximizes available land.

- *Community Partner:* Office of the Mayor and Department of Parks and Recreation
- *Deliverable:* Preliminary land use survey with recommendations on how to maximize extant park space

Grant Database for Parks and Recreation Department

As the town develops its parks and recreation programming, city officials would like to pursue external funding to support those efforts. This project will conduct research to compile a grant database that includes funding opportunities from public, private, and nonprofit agencies.

- *Community Partner:* Office of the Mayor and Department of Parks and Recreation
- *Deliverable:* Grant matrix with funding agency information, requirements, permissible uses, award ranges, competitiveness, and deadlines

Design and Paint Murals on in Downtown Area

There is a cluster of public storm shelters behind City Hall that are available to be painted to increase access to public art in the downtown area. This project offers the opportunity to design and create murals, potentially in partnership with the local school district.

- *Community Partner:* Office of the Mayor
- *Deliverables:*
 - Present multiple concepts and designs for murals
 - Coordinate painting day(s) with local youth organizations



PONTOTOC

Research Local History to Create Outdoor Museum on Tanglefoot Trail

The Tanglefoot Trail is a 43.6 mile rails-to-trails conservation and a major cultural and recreational attraction in the region. The City of Pontotoc recently added lighting, creek development, a bridge, parking area, and a large new pavilion alongside the Tanglefoot Trail. The City recently constructed a large pavilion, where residents and visitors can learn about the history of the community. City officials would like to document the history of Pontotoc and convert that narrative into exhibits to create an outdoor walking museum alongside Tanglefoot Trail.

- *Community Partner:* Mayor Bob Peeples
- *Deliverables:*
 - Catalog of artifacts pertaining to the history of Pontotoc
 - Historical narrative that can be used to create exhibits alongside the Tanglefoot Trail
 - Produce text that can be used on plaques at sites of historical and cultural interest along the Tanglefoot Trail

Design and Paint Mural Depicting History of Pontotoc

Alongside the newly-constructed pavilion on the Tanglefoot Trail, there is a sizable brick wall that is a suitable space for a mural to depict the history of Pontotoc. The mural can serve as an additional cultural attraction along the Tanglefoot.

- *Community Partner:* Mayor Bob Peeples
- *Deliverable:* Present multiple concepts and sketches for historical mural

Promote Economic Development and Retail Opportunities

The City of Pontotoc has fared relatively well in the face of the economic disruption brought on by COVID-19. To promote economic recovery and resilience, city officials are interested in promoting economic development and retail opportunities in the area to continue to boost growth during these uncertain times.

- *Community Partner:* Mayor Bob Peeples, Pontotoc Chamber
- *Deliverables:*
 - Research and analysis to support existing businesses and identify opportunities for new businesses to locate in Pontotoc
 - Create materials to promote available retail opportunities

Emergency Preparedness Training

The COVID-19 pandemic is a stark reminder of the importance of emergency preparedness. An emergency preparedness project can benefit the city of Pontotoc by educating the residents through trainings and resources about disaster preparedness and emergency response.

- *Community Partner:* Pontotoc Emergency Management director, Rickey Jagers
- *Deliverables:*
 - Emergency preparedness trainings that can be delivered in person or virtually
 - Create emergency preparedness pamphlets, handouts, and social media content

Mental Wellness Initiative for Pontotoc County School District

The Mental Wellness Initiative for Pontotoc County School District could improve the wellness of children and adolescents in Pontotoc County by providing counseling and teaching coping skills to students in the school district.

- *Community Partner:* Counselors and Principals from Pontotoc City School District
- *Deliverables:*
 - Provide counseling for students
 - Create handouts to provide to students and their families about mental health and wellness



Promote Family Literacy through the Pontotoc County Library

Public libraries play a central role in making literature, music, film, and technology available to the broader community. The Pontotoc County Library is interested in creating a StoryWalk in a public green space to combine literacy, exercise, nature, and family bonding.

- *Community Partner:* Regina Graham, Assistant Director, Dixie Regional Library System
- *Deliverables:*
 - Conduct research on the StoryWalk program, including logistics, legal considerations, copyright information, and necessary permissions to implement StoryWalk
 - Develop an implementation plan that the library can present to agencies and boards with decision-making authority

Strategic Planning for Pontotoc Chamber

The Pontotoc Chamber works to improve quality of life for residents of Pontotoc County by promoting the area, creating quality job opportunities, supporting the business climate, and engaging residents in the goals and objectives of the Chamber. The Pontotoc Chamber is planning to hire a new executive director, and this leadership transition presents an opportunity to support strategic planning efforts for the organization.

- *Community Partner:* Pontotoc Chamber
- *Deliverables:*
 - Conduct a SWOT analysis to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for the next phase of organizational development
 - Collect data (through surveys and/or focus groups) to identify goals and objectives for the next phase of the strategic plan

Study the Economic Impact of the Tanglefoot Trail

Each year, the Tanglefoot Trail attracts outdoor enthusiasts from all 50 states and abroad. Utilization of the trail has increased during COVID-19 as more residents are seeking outdoor recreational opportunities. Many businesses are also seeking ways to operate within CDC guidelines, and the Tanglefoot Trail and adjacent park space presents opportunities for pop-up commerce along the Trail. An economic impact analysis of the trail can capture the value of the trail to local economies, and additional analysis can explore the benefit of opening the trail to pop-up business opportunities.

- *Community Partner:* Three Rivers Planning and Development District
- *Deliverables:*
 - Economic impact analysis of the Tanglefoot Trail
 - Analysis of consumer demand for and business interest in pop-up business models, such as “Sales on the Trails” events

Develop an Interactive Virtual Map of the Tanglefoot Trail

While local utilization of the Tanglefoot Trail has increased during COVID, many prospective visitors are unable to make the trip due to travel concerns. The Three Rivers Planning and Development District maintains a static map of the trail at tanglefoottrail.com, but an interactive map would provide greater opportunity to showcase local businesses and attractions.

- *Community Partner:* Three Rivers Planning and Development District
- *Deliverable:* Interactive, virtual reality map of the Tanglefoot Trail highlighting local businesses and cultural attractions



Curate the Arts and Entertainment Gallery at the Town Square Museum and Post Office

The Pontotoc Town Square Museum and Post Office features a large collection of historical exhibits, documents, books, and memorabilia, including a gallery devoted to local artists including painter M.B. Mayfield, singer Ruby Elzy, and songwriter Jimmy Weatherly. The museum would welcome proposals to update the curation and presentation of artifacts in the Arts and Entertainment Gallery.

- *Community Partner:* Martha Jo Coleman, Curator, Town Square Museum and Post Office
- *Deliverable:* Sample plans for alternative layouts and presentations to curate gallery items

Research Housing Insecurity and Relief for Renters and Homeowners

There is concern among community leaders that housing for low- to moderate-income households has been increasingly difficult to find during the COVID-19 pandemic. A report on housing insecurity can utilize public data to identify trends in income, employment, and housing, and discuss policy interventions available at the federal, state, and local levels.

- *Community Partner:* Beth Waldo, Executive Director, Pontotoc Chamber
- *Deliverable:* Research report incorporating public data, review of applicable public policies, and case studies of comparable towns that have been successful in providing affordable housing options across a range of income levels