



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Housing affordability and access remains one of the biggest challenges we face as a community working toward equity and opportunity for all.

In 2021, the federal housing moratorium and the COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program (CERA) provided a reprieve to thousands of Washtenaw County households who continued to face housing instability due to the ongoing global pandemic.

Combined, the eviction moratorium, rental and utility assistance, additional housing choice vouchers and construction of new affordable housing units allowed our community to experience the lowest level of chronic homelessness since we started tracking it. Evictions were at an all-time low.

As these benefits end, we will be faced with ongoing need, and less resources available to address ongoing challenges. Many of our prepandemic issues remain, including how to expand our overall housing supply, and add affordable housing units for our many residents whether it's seniors, families, returning citizens, survivors of domestic violence, or those experiencing homelessness.

Even with the challenges ahead, I couldn't be more proud of the work done by our incredible OCED team and our many County and community partners. I continue to invite you to join us in working on solutions to these challenging issues together.

- Teresa Gillotti

Thank you to the Washtenaw County Boards, Committees, and Commissions in support of our work:

- Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners
- Washtenaw County Brownfield Redevelopment Authority
- Washtenaw Urban County
- Community Action Board
- Continuum of Care



Historic District Commission



Photo: Washtenaw County Administrator Gregory Dill and U.S. Representative Debbie Dingell with Commissioners Sue Shink, Caroline Sanders, Justin Hodge, and Jason Morgan at the April 2021 groundbreaking of the Ypsilanti District Library Superior Branch | Photo bv Peter Lindeman





From homelessness to housing: Continuum of Care

Photo: Aerial shot of Hickory Way | by Washtenaw County resident, Ganesh Pariyar

The grand opening of **Avalon Housing's Hickory Way Apartments** was a momentous event for new tenants exiting from homelessness into permanent housing. Phase I of the development was completed in spring 2021, and construction for phase II was finalized in late 2021. A total of 70 new affordable units were leased up to tenants throughout the year.

OCED was proud to partner with Avalon Housing, providing HOME Investment Partnerships Program funds for construction and Community Mental Health partnership for support services. Most of the prospective tenants were identified through the Community Housing Priority by-name list*. **54 out of the 70 units at Hickory Way were dedicated to community members experiencing homelessness**, including 36 people who had experienced homelessness on a frequent or long-term basis. Washtenaw County resident, Britton Morrison, was among them:

Battling addiction and substance misuse, Britton found himself homeless and spent years living in a tent and visiting rotating shelters. His caseworker assisted him in securing a spot on a housing voucher waitlist and in Spring 2021, he moved into his new apartment at Hickory Way.

"I sat on the bed in my bedroom and let everything sink in. I let the tears fall. I felt an overwhelming sense of joy, appreciation, relief, and comfort. **Finally, I thought, Home. I am home.**"

Living in a supportive housing community with help from case workers at Avalon, Britton has safe, stable housing and has maintained his sobriety. *a list of every person currently experiencing homelessness in the county



56 —

So many times, I had given up on myself.... but the feeling I had in my heart and felt in my body when I unlocked my door was a feeling I can't describe. There is no price in the world you can pay to feel safe or home.

- Britton Morrison, Hickory Way tenant



Photo: Britton Morrison | Courtesy of Avalon Housing



The **COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance Program (CERA) provides rental, utility and internet assistance to eligible households.** Administered through a partnership between OCED, Housing Access for Washtenaw County (HAWC), and SOS Community Services (SOS), CERA and the eviction moratorium (effective September 2020 to July 2021) not only helped families stay housed but kept evictions at record lows.



COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance

OCED **prioritized communities hit hardest by COVID-19** and provided funding to Buenos Vecinos for outreach efforts to Hispanic and Latinx populations in an effort to **minimize barriers to language access and provide support from trusted community partners**. Maria G. is among those residents that received assistance from Bueno Vecinos:

When the pandemic hit, Maria was earning an average of \$500/week as a house cleaner, which made it difficult to cover the rent for her trailer lot, utilities, and basic expenses for her family.

Photo: Courtesy of Community Action Network | by Skylar Woodman



Photo: Aerial shot of Arbor Meadows Mobile Home Park | by Ganesh Pariyar

During the pandemic, many households were reluctant to have nonfamily members entering the home, which left little available work for Maria and others. If it were not for CERA assistance, Maria and her family could have faced eviction by the trailer park and lost their home. **Thanks to case managers at Buenos Vecinos and HAWC, Maria's family was able to access CERA funds to stay safely in her home**.



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMEN COVID-19 Emergency Rental Assistance washtenaw.org/CERA





persons served in permanent supportive housing system



of shelter exits were individuals moving to permanent or temporary housing

Coordinating homelessness response in Washtenaw County

In June 2021, due in part to the eviction moratorium and shelter in place mandates, the Continuum of Care (CoC) saw the **lowest number of individuals experiencing homelessness since 2018 with 275 people on the by-name list**. This success can also be attributed to a number of key programs and new funding aligning: rental assistance through CERA, additional housing choice vouchers through CARES funding, and new permanent housing units with support services coming on line at the same time. OCED was also able to direct federal CARES Act funding to Legal Services of South Central Michigan to provide **legal representation and eviction prevention services** to tenants in rental housing.



I don't know where to begin but I do know that without the assistance of the Legal Services of South Central Michigan, I would be homeless.

- LSSCM Client

"Legal Services helped so much with the court proceedings against the Park at River Woods," said an LSSCM Client, who wished to remain anonymous. "Without the assistance of the Legal Services of South Central Michigan, I would be homeless."

Staff attorneys assisted her with filing an answer to the complaint that she received, complete documents that enabled her to remain in her residence, and put pressure on management to complete repairs to her unit.

"Every attorney and student attorney that I had contact with were **knowledgeable**, **helpful**, **and sympathetic to the hardship that I faced** when trying to work with the management of the Park at River Woods."



Photo: (top) Headshot of LSSCM client | Courtesy of LSSCM (bottom) the Park at River Woods Apartments in Ypsilanti

Photo: Courtesy of the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County

Washtenaw County Continuum of Care

washtenaw.org/CoC

Eviction Diversion Services <u>https://lsscm.org/</u>

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Supporting health and nutrition for older adults

Christine's battle with a debilitating autoimmune disease began years ago, but it wasn't until the onset of the pandemic that she turned to **Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels (YMOW)** for help. Shopping and preparing food was already difficult, the 68-year-old said, but the need to protect herself from COVID made it essential to have a safer option. **Having meals delivered to her door by YMOW**, **one of the participating agencies in the home delivered meals program, meant Christine could stay safe while also getting the nutrition her body needs**.

All of it makes a huge difference in my everyday life. They truly care about making my life better. I feel like I have support and like I'm more a part of the community.

- Christine, YMOW client

YMOW staff offered **additional support services to ease the burden of being homebound**, including the following: the CAPABLE team assisted with modifications to Christine's bathroom to increase accessibility, a staff occupational therapist provided exercises to support mobility, and the YMOW PALS program gave her beloved canine pal dog food, leaving more funds for medical expenses.

Photo of Christine in her home | Courtesy of Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels

1,179

participants served through the Home Delivered Meals Network

284,838



nutritious meals delivered to homebound seniors

Photo: Volunteers prepare curbside cuisine, also known as on-the-go meals

Home Delivered Meals Network has provided uninterrupted services since 2020

OCED partners with numerous agencies to administer the Senior Nutrition Network. Beginning in 2021, the Home Delivered Meals Program provided full coverage throughout the County, serving nearly **285,000 meals to 1,179 individuals** and expanded to include a **25% increase in meals for seniors**. The program has provided uninterrupted services to clients since 2020. While Senior Cafes remained closed due to COVID-19, the program adapted to provided a curbside cuisine or on-the-go (carry out) option and served **22,437 meals** to **615 individuals** in 2021.



Photo: Ypsilanti Meals on Wheels volunteers



Senior Nutrition Program washtenaw.org/snp



Cultivating cross-generational connections

Despite higher attrition rates as a result of the pandemic, **41 Foster Grandparent (FGP) volunteers returned to classrooms.** 36 volunteers were in person and 5 volunteers supported remote classrooms. Program staff provided monthly in-service trainings via Zoom, weekly educational activities, and referrals to wrap-around services for volunteers.

Grandma Hazel is warm and wonderful. She can reason with children who are refusing to follow directions and goes above and beyond. She is always eager to offer advice when it's needed.



- Melanie Love, 1st Grade Teacher

Photo: (above): a group of Foster Grandparent volunteers (right) Grandma Hazel and Ms. Love at Perry School (below) Grandma Hazel working with a student at Perry School



Hazel Sanders, age 91, celebrated 16 years with the **Foster Grandparent Program** last year. Melanie Love, first grade teacher at Perry School, said she enjoys having Hazel to support her classroom.

Grandma Hazel and her fellow FGP peers provide youth with supportive relationships to guide their social and academic success. Volunteers spend 20 hours per week in the classroom, providing both one-on-one and group mentoring activities, for 2-4 students per classroom. The annual Parkridge SummerFest and Joe Dulin Community Day was back in-person in August 2021, with **65 community organizations in attendance to provide crucial resources to the community**. The resource fair, sponsored annually by OCED and the Community Action Board, offered services such as COVID-19 vaccinations, free expungement assistance, various health care screenings, and information about local health and social service agencies.

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After SummerFest, we continued to work with individuals who were eligible for expungement. Those individuals are now working with partners to wipe their old criminal records. Once the process is complete, these individuals will have increased access to better jobs, housing, financial aid, educational opportunities, and more.

- Frances Walters, Director of the Washtenaw County CIEU

The Conviction Integrity and Expungement Unit (CIEU) at the Washtenaw County Prosecutor's Office was able to connect with dozens of community members to share information and resources on expungement laws, said Frances Walters, Director of CIEU.



Connecting to community



Photo: (top) CIEU Director, Frances Walters, helps a resident sign up for expungement (bottom) community organizations table at Parkridge SummerFest

Foster Grandparent Program washtenaw.org/FGP Parkridge SummerFest Check out the event Facebook page <u>here.</u>

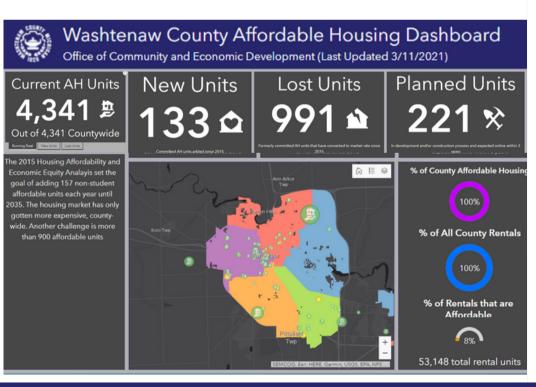
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Housing costs continue to rise throughout Washtenaw County. The eviction moratorium and related rental assistance kept vacancy rates low, putting additional pressure on the housing market.

In 2015, Washtenaw County and five other jurisdictions committed to the Housing Affordability and Economic Equity Analysis. **The goal was to add 167 units of affordable housing in Ann Arbor and Pittsfield each year for 20 years.** Adding more affordable units in the more expensive markets makes progress toward this goal by balancing out the different markets in and and around Ann Arbor, and on the east side of the county in particular.

In 2021, OCED released the **Affordable Housing dashboard**, which tracks progress since 2015 on those goals, along with an inventory of all committed affordable housing units throughout the county.

The dashboard will be updated regularly and can be found at https://bit.ly/Housing-Dashboard.





Data Driving Equity

In April 2021, OCED held the virtual event, **Data Driving Equity**, to officially launch the **2020 Opportunity Index**. Washtenaw County leadership, OCED, the University of Michigan Poverty Solutions, and various partnering organizations presented key findings of the Opportunity Index, demonstrated how to navigate the tool, and explored how to use the data to inform decisions about programming and policy making. More than 90 community members attended the event.

We rely on the data from the Washtenaw County 2020 Opportunity Index to inform policy decisions within transportation.

- Emily Lake, WATS Associate Transportation Planner

An example of applying the index to policy and funding decisions comes from the Washtenaw Area Transportation Study (WATS). **WATS uses the Opportunity Index to measure the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) investment within areas of low economic mobility.** The organization measures investment in areas identified as "low access to opportunity" and "very low access to opportunity." Transit projects are an additional benefit to households in low opportunity areas, improving access and mobility. Similar to WATS, the Board of Commissioners took formal action to require a review of the Index prior to all Board policy decisions.

View the Opportunity Index at www.opportunitywashtenaw.org.



Affordable Housing Dashboard <u>bit.ly/Housing-Dashboard</u>

Opportunity Index opportunitywashtenaw.org After facing deep cuts in work shifts due to the pandemic, Washtenaw County resident Ciera Billups found budgeting to be especially challenging for her family. With help from the Barrier Busters Unmet Needs Fund, which distributed a **total of \$530,000 in financial assistance to 951 households county-wide in 2021**, Ciera and her sons were able to maintain housing stability & working utilities.

"Barrier Busters and OCED have served as a lifeline for Ciera's family," said Skylar Woodman, Director of the Bryant Community Center. "As a casework and youth worker, it is so empowering to be able to call upon Barrier Busters when the community appeals for help. I will always be grateful, in the utmost way, for this partnership."

Addressing emergent needs

41%

of total requests supported Black households



of total requests supported immigrant households

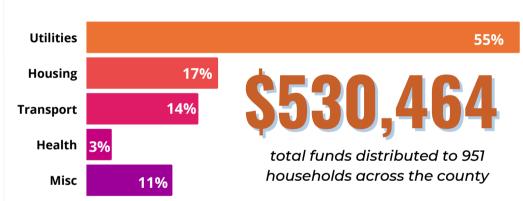


of requests were distributed to zip codes 48197 & 48198



Barrier Busters washtenaw.org/BarrierBusters As a single mother raising three, sometimes there is just not enough money to cover everything. To know there is community help for those in need is very reassuring to a parent like myself.

- Ciera Billups, Barrier Busters beneficiary



Like many who have turned to Barrier Busters for assistance over the last 20 years, one-time direct assistance allowed the Billups Family to remain in good standing within their townhome community, keep their water flowing, and ensured their power stayed on and uninterrupted during the peak of winter.

"Funding like this has been very helpful to my family. As a single mother raising three, sometimes there is just not enough money to cover everything," said Billups, "To know there is community help for those in need is very reassuring to a parent like myself. Thank you for all of your help and dedication."

Photo: Ciera Billips and her three children | Courtesy of CAN

OCED is responsible for activating and coordinating human services response during emergency or disaster situations. In February of 2021, a **fire broke out at Clark East Towers**, a senior living apartment complex in Ypsilanti. In conjunction with the Red Cross and numerous social service agencies, **OCED helped facilitate coordination of 150 displaced residents' transportation, food, emergency supply, emotional and communication needs over a three month period until they could return home**.

Responding to community need after emergency and crisis



Photo: Huron Ridge/Huron Heights flood damage | Photo by Commissioner Ricky Jefferson

In June of 2021, FEMA declared Washtenaw County a disaster area due to widespread flooding. Focusing on the Ypsilanti region, **OCED gave information and resources to impacted County residents, connecting them with disaster safety net services**, and provided technical assistance to Washtenaw County Administration who were dispersing \$600K+ in disaster assistance.

OCED provided **support to displaced domestic violence survivors** starting in September 2021, **screening 24 households for connection to community resources and emergency financial assistance**. In 2021, **104 homes received services through OCED's Home Improvement Programs** -- 55 households received weatherization services to make their residence more energy efficient and 49 homes received CDBG rehab program services, which focus on critical repairs such as furnace water heater emergencies, and roof replacements. The Weatherization program will expand in 2022 with new American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding approved by the County Board of Commissioners to provide services to more residents in Washtenaw County.



claimed in DTE furnace rebates for Furnace Test & Tune clients - the most rebate funds ever received in a single year



Home Improvement Programs

104

households received assistance to make their home more energy efficient and make needed repairs to stay safely in their residence

Thank you very much for the Weatherization Program. It totally saved me. The program has replaced my furnace and water heater -- they completely weatherized my home!

- Janet Alford, Weatherization Client



Home Improvement Programs washtenaw.org/HIP



The image above represents pedestrian improvement being considered in the MacArthur/Harris area

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY PLANNING GRANT PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

In partnership with Superior Township, OCED secured the **Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) Planning Grant** to implement pedestrian improvements near the intersection of MacArthur Blvd and Harris Road. Preliminary planning began in Fall 2021. A series of community input sessions were slated to begin in February 2022 to engage residents who live in close proximity to the intersection, especially tenants of Sycamore Meadows and Danbury Park Manor.

NEW HUMAN SERVICES PARTNERSHIP PLANNING

In summer of 2021, OCED led a joint Washtenaw County and City of Ann Arbor Elected and administrative Leadership Team to develop the New Human Services Partnership. The new program, replacing Coordinated Funding, focuses investments on addressing racism, poverty, and trauma, while incorporating equity throughout the process

In August 2021, five virtual community engagement sessions were conducted with a total of 150 participants in attendance.

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS SURVEY

OCED's Economic Opportunity team **surveyed small businesses throughout Washtenaw County to better understand what services and programs would align with their professional goals and needs**.

The survey has helped guide OCED in creating future initiatives and will inform work for the Economic Stabilization Program for COVID Impacted Microenterprises funded with CARES (CBGV-CV) Act funding, slated for summer/fall 2022.



Prioritizing community informed decision making

Photo: residents discuss community improvement priorities at New Parkridge Community Room

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) - COMMUNITY INPUT SESSIONS

Aligning with the county's 5-Year Fair Housing Plan and a commitment to reinvest all CDBG program income within two census tracts that HUD defined as racially/ethnically concentrated areas of poverty, Washtenaw Urban County and OCED **collected resident input through a series of community sessions**. Five input sessions were held in community spaces on the southside of Ypsilanti (census tract 4106) to **gather eligible reinvestment ideas from residents**. A total of **33 responses** were provided from the community in the following categories: public facilities improvements, housing improvements and homeownership assistance programs, and street and neighborhood safety improvements.



OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT Collaborative solutions for a promising future New Human Services Partnership www.washtenaw.org/NHSP CDBG Input Sessions washtenaw.org/Ypsi-Investments



Investing in community

The construction for Hilltop View Apartments in Dexter began in 2021 and will result in construction of 24 new affordable rental units, targeting households at or below 60% AMI.

OCED worked alongside Avalon Housing to **rehabilitate 8 affordable rental units in the City of Ann Arbor - 4 units on Glendale Drive** and 4 units on **Broadway Street**, which included both interior and exterior repairs, lead remediation work, and improvements to playground area.

Increasing equity through curb cuts:

11 ADA sidewalk ramps, or curb cuts, were constructed at 3 intersections in a residential areas of Ypsilanti, creating more accessible pedestrian access for all residents.

Developing safer pedestrian crossings: Street lights were installed along MacArthur Blvd near Danbury Park Manor & Sycamore Meadows.

Building active communities:

The tennis courts at Community Park in Superior Township were re-surfaced

Photos: (top) Hilltop View Apartments construction site (bottom) completed curb cuts at intersection of Mansfield/Collegewood



Along with the City of Saline, the Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) approved a **Brownfield Plan for Maple Oaks** -- an inclusive neighborhood of 34 townhomes, single family homes and condominiums. The **brownfield assistance of \$550,000 helped the first phase overcome challenging environmental conditions.**

The BRA awarded over **\$255,000 in Environmental Assessment and Remediation Grants to eight different brownfield sites**. This includes \$50,000 to the City of Saline to remediate soils for a new visitor parking lot for Salt Springs Park and \$125,000 to the City of Ypsilanti for continued remediation of the Water Street Brownfield Redevelopment site. Three additional sites were awarded \$20,000 in funding for assessment grant assistance.



Photo: The former site of Forbes Dry Cleaning in Ypsilanti Charter Township - before and after demolition

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy began **major demolition and site remediation efforts for two former drycleaning sites**: Forbes Dry Cleaning in Ypsilanti Charter Township and Armen Cleaners in the City of Ann Arbor. The **remediation efforts of these long-contaminated sites exceed millions of dollars in cost**, and are being funded by the State of Michigan. They will be completed in 2022.



Affordable Housing washtenaw.org/Housing Brownfield Redevelopment washtenaw.org/Brownfield-Program In May 2021, OCED released the *Reimagining Economic Opportunity in Washtenaw County* report, which summarizes key findings and recommendations made by a BIPOC steering committee members in efforts to better understand the challenges faced by BIPOC entrepreneurs and small business owners in Washtenaw County.

The report was developed by YMJ & Association and OCED and shaped by insights from the steering committee's vision of the future, national research, and best practices in anti-racist work.



Reimagining Economic Opportunity

Reimagining Economic Opportunity in Washtenaw County outlines a vision for economic opportunity in Washtenaw County that **centers the voices of BIPOC business owners and entrepreneurs while working toward the goal of eliminating the disparities we see in income and wealth between white and BIPOC entrepreneurs and communities in Washtenaw County.**



Photo: Asma Gund taking photos for social media content during her internship

SummerWorks has allowed me to become the person I want to be and have the opportunity to grow.



- Asma Gund, SummerWorks Intern

young adults completed paid summer internships



Photo: Asma Gund working with her supervisor, Meg Scaling, CEO of Galaxy Brain and Therapy Center



professionals shared insight during Career Sneak Peek Week



mentors from local businesses and organizations were matched with youth





SummerWorks summerworks.info

2021 OCED FINANCIALS

OCED Budget

Revenue

Total	\$9.9 million			
Other	\$0.3 million			
City/County	\$3.6 million			
State & Federal	\$6.0 million			

Expenditures

Expenditures:					
Total	\$9.9 million				
Misc.	\$1.1 million				
Economic Opportunity	\$0.6 millon				
Housing & Infrastructure	\$3.2 million				
Human Services	\$5.0 million				

OCED Leverage \$59 Million

OCED's budget is primarily state and federal funding. Leverage is additional funding for programs or projects from the private, foundation, nonprofit and other sectors, which allows programming to have a greater impact.

Washtenaw County and City of Ann Arbor general funds are key to ongoing operations, but make up a small percentage of total funding.

The total OCED budget of \$18.5 million leverages another \$59 million in public and private investment.

Total 2021 OCED Budget (OCED + COVID Relief): \$28,746,278

STATE OF MICHIGAN PASS THROUGH

Program Funds

MSHDA COVID Emergency Rental Assistance \$16,124,497						
	\$106,498					
Families Fi	\$40,240					
Coronavirus Relief Fund Plumbing Repair Program \$13,246						
TOTAL \$16,284,481						
Homelessness Funds Homelessness Funds			Low Income			
MSHDA Emergency Solutions Crost			ehold Support			
Solutions Grant COVID-19	\$435,677	Vouchers	\$58,790	Commur Services Grant CA	Block \$755 OFC	
TOTAL	\$435,677	TOTAL	\$58,790	TOTAL	\$355,056	
DIRECT FEDERAL FUNDS						
Homelessne	ess Funds	FE	МА		nity Development ant COVID Funds	
HUD Emergency		Emergency Food & Shelt	or	BIOCK UP		
Solutions Grant COVID-19	\$1,262,803	Program	\$1,983		\$114,865	
TOTAL	\$1,262,803	TOTAL	\$1,983	TOTAL	\$114,865	
Total COVID Reponse Funds \$18,513,655						





To learn more about the Washtenaw County Office of Community & Economic Development, visit us at washtenaw.org/oced

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ASIAN & AFRICAN AMERICAN SOLIDARITY







CELEBRATING UNITY PICNIC



SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 10TH FROM 1 – 5 PM Montibeller Park, 4305 Ellsworth Rd A2, 48108

Food, Fun, Music , New Friends & Old!

Special Thanks to:

Host: Pittsfield Township, Supervisor Grewal, & the Board of Trustees! Sponsors: Laborer's Local 499 and the Song Family!

We are asking for monetary donations & sponsorships (your name will be listed on publicity) - contact Kathy Wyatt (<u>Katherineawyatt@aol.com</u>) and Mary Hall-Thiam (<u>mhallthiamaka@gmail.com</u>). To volunteer contact Ayesha Ghazi Edwin (<u>ayesha.ghazi@gmail.com</u>). Checks can be written to: WCDP Black Caucus ("For Solidarity Picnic") 108 S. Adam's Street, P.O. Box 980586, Ypsilanti, MI 48198. PROOF OF RESIDENCY REQUIRED

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