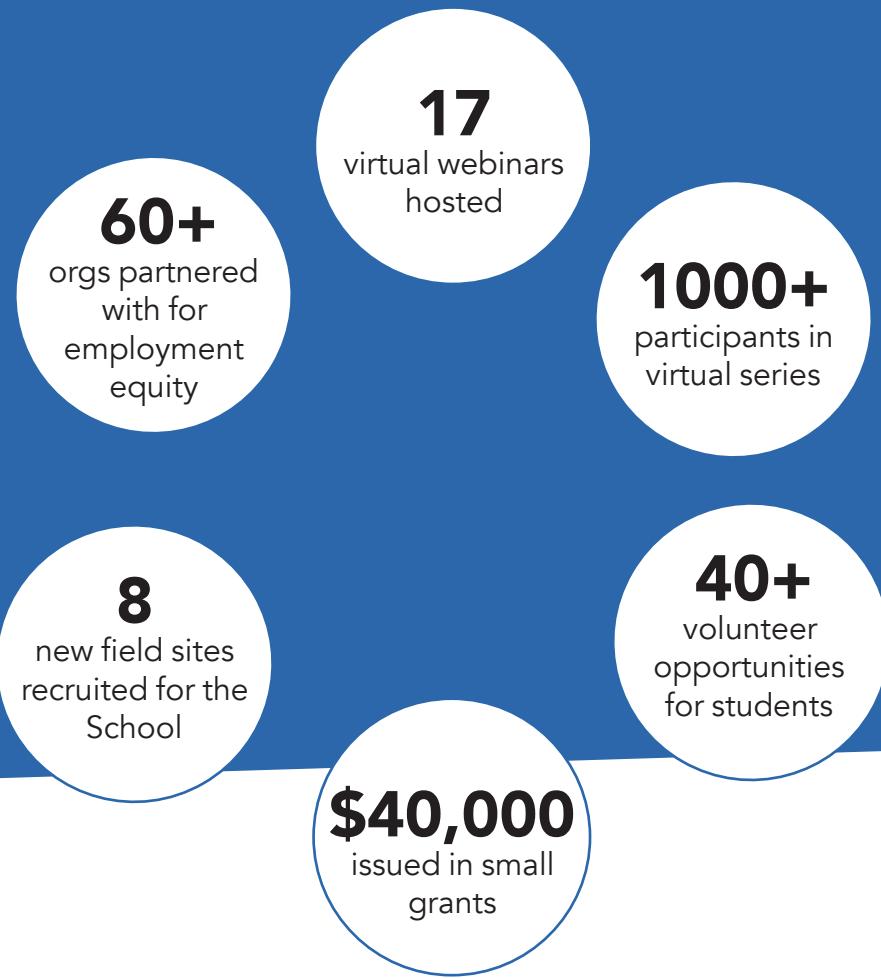




# **SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK ENGAGE**

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN**

**Annual Report  
2020  
Engage Year in Review**



#### Values

- Real authentic connection
- Radical respect
- People-centered mission
- Innovative ideas and

#### Mission

To promote students and faculty engagement with the community to address social justice issues, facilitate student learning and support community engagement efforts across the school.

**ENGAGE is a strategic effort connecting the school to community issues, partners and movements for greater equity and social change.**

During the last year, in the midst of the pandemic, ENGAGE was able to:

- Respond quickly to communities in crisis;
- Host a monthly virtual conversation series that connected students to movements for social change;
- Engage and support students in community change through independent study, field experience and effective communication;
- Implement social impact projects that focused on employment equity, economic opportunity and equitable development;
- Administer a small grants program to encourage faculty engagement with community-based organizations and
- Create reciprocal partnerships with community partners and across the University Michigan.

**The ENGAGE team** has decades of experience working with communities and building its capacity to engage meaningfully with partners and work toward social change.



**Dr. Trina Shanks** is Harold R. Johnson Collegiate Professor of Social Work and director of the Center for Equitable Family and Community Well-Being.

Since 2018 she has overseen the School's strategic goal of community engagement, and she leads the evolving ENGAGE team. Shanks also serves as faculty advisor to the New Leaders in African-Centered Social Work Scholars Program.

From 2010 to 2012 Shanks was appointed by Michigan Governor Granholm to serve two years on the State Commission on Community Action and Economic Opportunity. She is currently one of the national network co-leads for the Social Work Grand Challenge: Reducing

Extreme Economic Inequality and a nonresident fellow at the Urban Institute.

Shanks earned a Ph.D. in Social Work from Washington University and an M.S. in Comparative Social Research from the University of Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar.



**Sonia Harb** has 31 years of experience promoting the alleviation of poverty and development of communities of color across south-east Michigan. Currently Sonia serves as engagement strategist for the School of Social Work and has served as strategic advisor for the provost's office on Detroit engagement. Prior to joining the University of Michigan she led the establishment of a multimillion-dollar employment and training operation for ACCESS, developed youth and education programming and innovative initiatives for the organization and launched ACCESS Growth Center, a department focused on community and economic development. She has served on numerous boards and state commissions, most recently as present vice chair of the

Michigan League for Public Policy's board of directors and past chair of Michigan's Commission on Community Action and Economic Opportunity.



**Ayesha Ghazi Edwin**, MSW '10, is a political social worker and community organizer with over 10 years of experience in various social justice areas, including labor, healthcare, voting, immigration, housing and disability. Ayesha, a certified Six Sigma Green Belt, is the current program manager of the ENGAGE initiative at the School of Social Work.

Prior to her work at the School, she served as the former executive director of American Citizens for Justice (ACJ), an Asian American civil rights organization.

In 2020 she was appointed chair of the Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission by Governor Gretchen Whitmer and appointed

for a two-year term to the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission by Mayor Christopher Taylor.

Ayesha received the University of Michigan James T. Neubacher Certificate of Appreciation in October 2020. In 2021, she received the DEI Impact Award from the School of Social Work, and was one of five faculty university-wide to receive the University of Michigan Provost's Teaching Innovation Prize (TIP).



**Fatima Salman** is part of the ENGAGE team, serving as program manager for the Employment Equity Action and Learning Collaborative. Fatima completed her undergraduate education at the University of Michigan in 2000 and taught language and linguistics at a local private school. For three years she lived in Madison, Wis., and worked as the principal of a local elementary school. She came back to Michigan, completed her MSW from U of M and worked as the executive director for the Muslim Students Association during the organization's time of transition. She currently is the president-elect of the NASW-MI, serves on the Program Committee for The Children's Center in Detroit, Mich., is a Racial Equity Fellow with Detroit Equity Action Lab and is a committee member of the Protect Michigan Commission.



**Blake Newman, LMSW**, is an alum of the School of Social Work, MSW '21. While earning her master's degree, she was part of the National Community Scholar Program and worked with the ENGAGE team as a field student. Blake now fills the role of program assistant for ENGAGE's Employment Equity Learning and Action Collaborative project and supports the team in a variety of other ways. Blake received her B.S. in social work from Defiance College, where she was a Pilgrim Medal Award winner, a Mallot Service Award winner, an Ohio Compact Charles J. Ping award recipient, a Wanda May Le Master Service Award recipient, and a McMaster Certificate Scholar. While attending Defiance College she developed a passion for social justice and equity in community development and poverty alleviation.

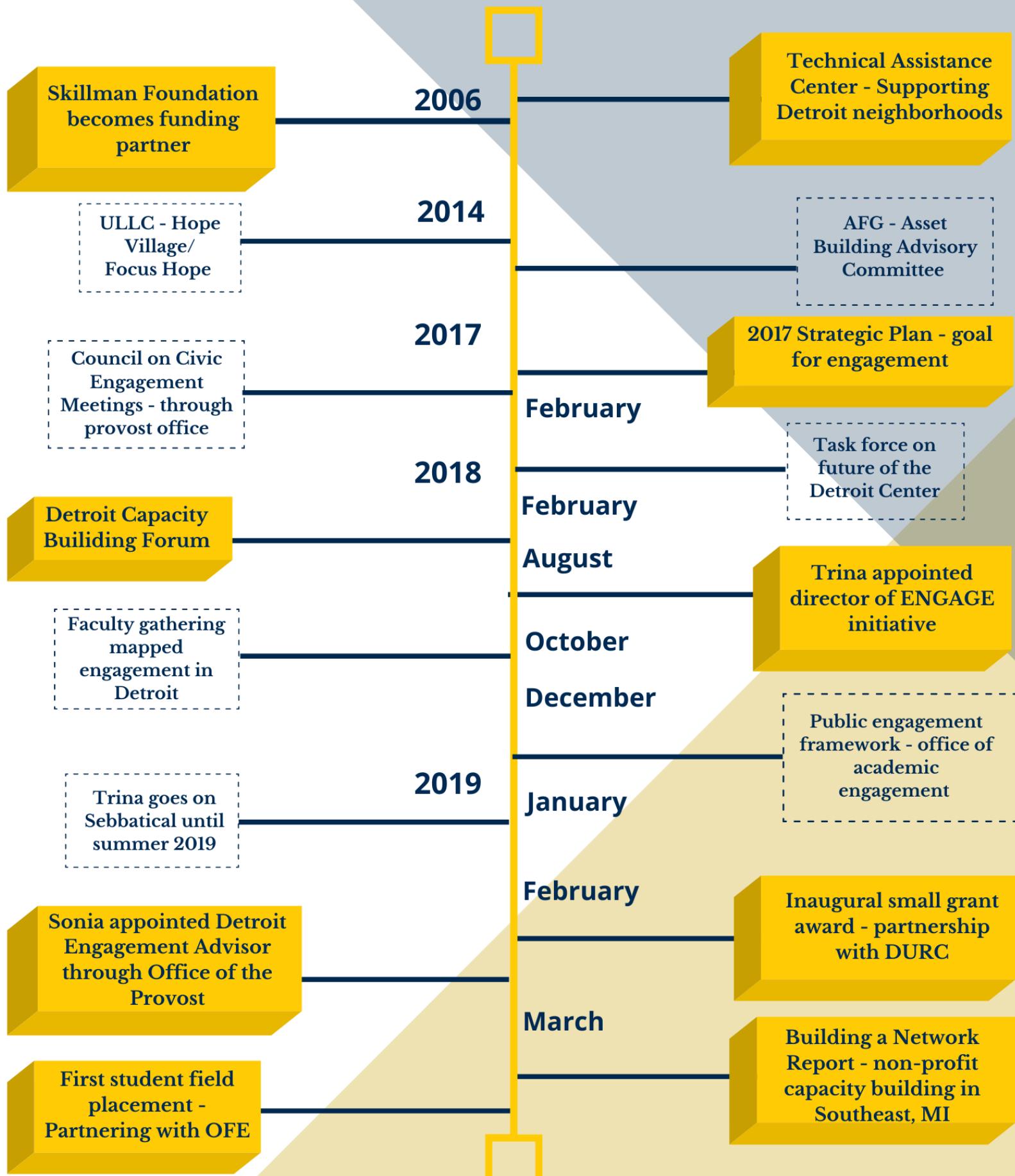


**Clio Walsh** is a 20-month MSW '22 candidate. She received her B.A. in philosophy: ethics and social responsibility at the University of New Hampshire. Her academic experiences combined with her time working as the coordinator of a local food pantry led to her interest in the field of social work as a way of furthering equity and social justice. She will use the skills and relationships built during her MSW to support work in community organizing and direct service efforts.

With ENGAGE Walsh works as a field student coordinating virtual discussions to share community efforts around social justice with the U of M campus. Walsh also helps directly with the Employment Equity Learning and Action Collaborative project as well as other projects.



## TIMELINE OF WORK



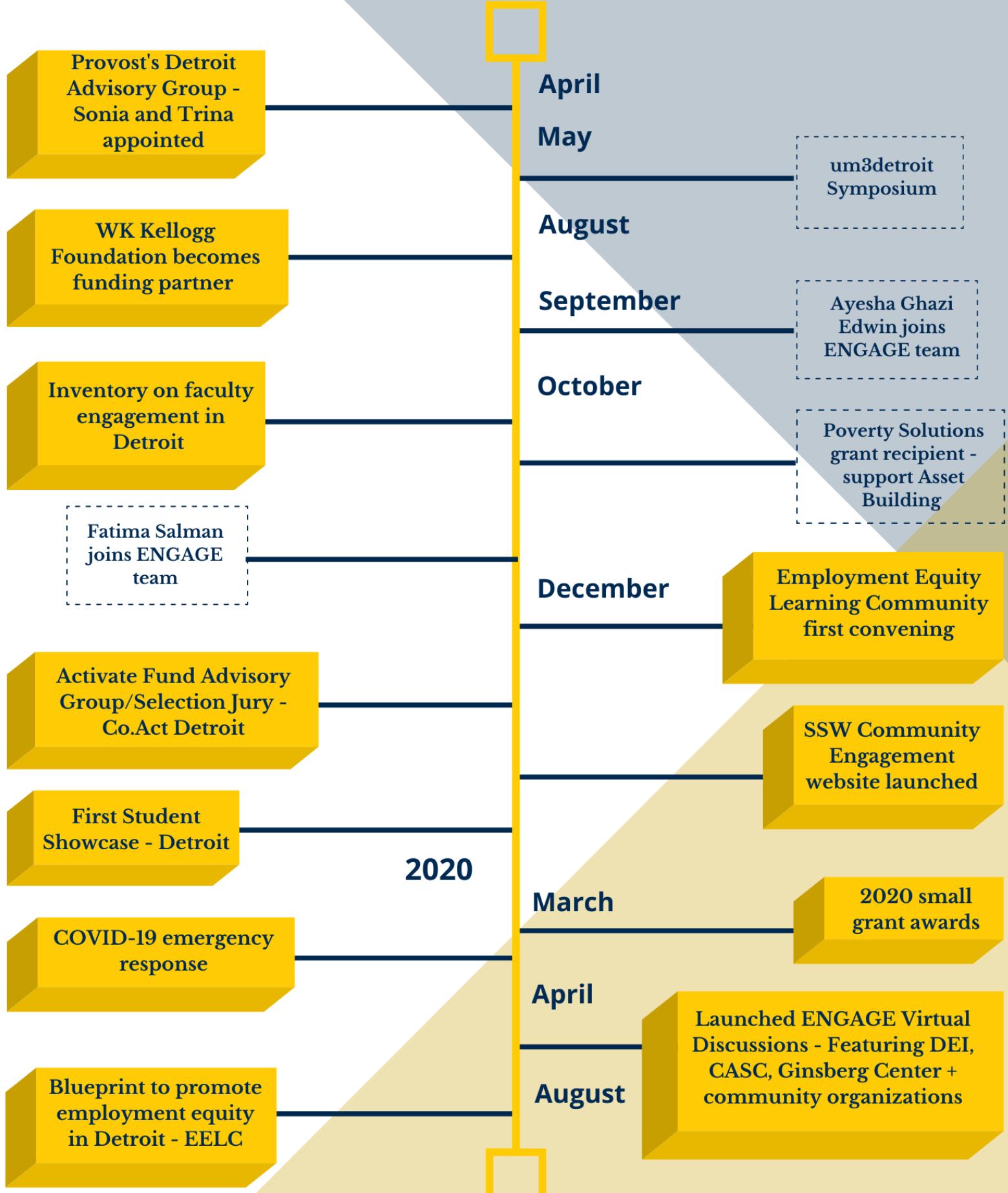


SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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## TIMELINE OF WORK





## COVID-19 Emergency Response

During the pandemic ENGAGE was contacted by community organizations and initiatives asking if SSW students were able to help their communities in crisis. From surveying residents and delivering basic needs like food, water and medication to residents to joining a University of Michigan Medical School partnership where social workers worked closely with medical students to assist patients diagnosed with COVID-19 at risk of developing depression due to isolation, ENGAGE helped our students respond to community needs. Within a week the ENGAGE team curated a list of 40+ opportunities for students to help communities impacted by COVID-19. Students helped impacted communities for field credit, working with organizations including Habitat for Humanity of Huron Valley, Historic King Solomon Baptist Church in Detroit, Detroit Action, Detroit Disability Power and Asian Pacific Islander American Votes - Michigan, among many, many others.

*"During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic my entire life (similarly to many other students at the SSW) was virtual, with my classes, internship and social life all occurring through the lens of a screen. I was struggling to find a sense of purpose and practical application for the topics I was learning in class and in my internship. In short, everything felt like it was at a standstill. Thankfully, after attending an ENGAGE session which connected me with the incredible work at the Historic King Solomon Baptist Church in Detroit, I was able to safely engage with my community by delivering much-needed food and essential supplies. The church happened to only be 10 minutes from my home and gave me an opportunity to meet some of my neighbors, share resources and supplies and participate in a service that was so necessary. I was incredibly thankful for the opportunity presented by the SSW ENGAGE department in partnership with Rev. Charles to be able to show up for my own community during such a crucial moment in time. And this experience has now led to a long-term connection with the church, giving me the opportunity to continue volunteering at community events geared toward filling the resource gap among Detroit residents."*

### **Theresa Beckley-Amaya (She, Her, Hers)**

Master of Social Work, 2020 | University of Michigan  
[beckleyt@umich.edu](mailto:beckleyt@umich.edu)

## Virtual Conversations

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, ENGAGE facilitated a school-wide conversation about how students can help local communities impacted by the pandemic. This conversation turned into ongoing monthly discussions open to the university at-large on pressing equity issues. From discussing police violence against the Black community, the fight for water justice, food sovereignty and urban farming in Detroit, to the importance of voting and political participation, these conversations have become central spaces that allow students and others to learn about and engage in local and national social movements for change through participating in collective action. Virtual discussions have featured renowned national and local speakers and activists, including Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson; United States Representative for Michigan's 13th Congressional District Rashida Tlaib; lawyer and leading social justice activist Deepa Iyer; human rights activist and Director of We the People Detroit Monica Lewis-Patrick and poet and artist, CEO of Moore Black Press, Executive Producer of Black WOMEN Rock! and founder of the Jess Care Moore foundation Jessica CARE Moore. Every session intentionally features Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) activists who are changing the world, and the topics of each session always include discussion on racial equity in and for BIPOC communities.

During the winter 2021 semester the ENGAGE virtual discussion series was turned into a minicourse titled "ENGAGE: Community," attracting students from both the SSW and other schools in the university. Students of the course had a chance to reflect and debrief on the virtual discussions, discuss implications for their own work and future careers and meet featured panelists after each session to continue the conversation.

Ty Moreno, an MSW candidate, was recently quoted in the RECORD about the mini-course, saying: *"Social work is a community-informed profession, and the ENGAGE sessions are bridging the gap between classroom concepts and the work being done in the real world. This course rightfully positions community members as the experts of their own experience and offers future practitioners like myself a way to connect with and learn from others on the front lines during a pandemic."*



**Rashida Tlaib**  
Congresswoman of Michigan's 13th District

**ENGAGE: Shifting the Culture of Anti-Racist Organizing**  
Featuring Tawana Petty



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SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION  
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**ENGAGE Team Virtual Conversation on Volunteer Opportunities During COVID-19** April 9, 2020

with Charles E. Williams II, Pastor of the Historic King Solomon Baptist Church in Detroit; Dan Fischer, Director of Office of Field Education; and Dominique Crump, MSW '19

[Session Recording](#)

**ENGAGE Team Virtual Conversation on Volunteer Opportunities During COVID-19** April 16, 2020

with the Ginsburg Center and Dominique Crump, MSW '19

[Session Recording](#)

**COVID-19 Response** April 30, 2020

with Deepa Iyer, Strategic Advisor at Building Movement Project and Director of Solidarity Is, and Briana Tetsch, MSW '20 and Student Union President '20

[Presentation Slides](#)

**ENGAGE Community Volunteer Discussion** May 7, 2020

with Sarah Teare, Community Development Director at Habitat for Humanity at Huron Valley

[Session Recording](#)

**ENGAGE and OFE Field Debrief and Discussion** May 14, 2020

with Rebeka Islam, Executive Director of APIAVote-Michigan

[Session Recording](#)

**ENGAGE SSW: The Impact of COVID-19 on Detroit** May 28, 2020

with Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib of Michigan's 13th Congressional District and Jamila Martin, Michigan State Advisor of Movement Voter Project and Cofounder of 482forward

[Session Recording](#)

**ENGAGE SSW: Activists and Organizers Leading the Uprising in Defense of Black Lives** June 11, 2020

with Trische' Duckworth, social worker, activist and Founder and Executive Director of Survivor's Speak, and Piper Carter, Detroit artist, activist and Founder of We Found Hip Hop

[Session Recording](#)

**Shifting the Culture of Anti-Racist Organizing** June 18, 2020

with Tawana Petty, Detroit organizer, scholar, author and human rights activist

[Session Recording](#)

**ENGAGE: Equity Issues in Clinical Practice: COVID-19 and Beyond** June 25, 2020

with Andrea Smith, social worker and Director of Clinical Practice Improvement of Detroit Wayne Mental Health Authority; Daicia Price, SSW Assistant Professor; Richard Barinbaum, social worker and clinical practitioner and Sophie Skochelak, MSW candidate

[Session Recording](#)

**From Protests to Policy Reform: the Legislative Fight Against Police Brutality** July 9, 2020

with Amani Sawari, Campaign Coordinator for the #RightToVote Campaign; Baraka Sanders, SSW student, criminal justice reform activist and former juvenile lifer; Sophie Ordway, SSW student and criminal justice reform activist and Erika Geiss, State Senator Representing the 6th Senate District

[Session Recording](#)

**The Intersection of Disability, Race and Police Brutality** July 16, 2020

with Talila "TL" Lewis, attorney, social justice engineer, educator, organizer and artist; Dustin "DG" Gibson, community builder, educator, and disability justice and criminal justice reform activist and Teddy Dorsette III, Communications Manager and Organizer for Detroit Disability Power  
[Session Recording](#)

**Criminal Justice Reform and Debrief: What Can We Do as a School?** July 17, 2020

with open discussion from students, faculty and staff  
[Session Recording](#)

**Water Warriors from Flint to Detroit** September 10, 2020

with Monica Lewis Patrick, Chief Executive Officer of We the People Detroit and a longtime water justice advocate and Bryce Detroit, CEO and Founder of Detroit Recordings LLC and a longtime water justice advocate  
[Session Recording](#)

**Water Justice Debrief: What Can We Do?** September 11, 2020

with open discussion from students, faculty and staff

**ENGAGE: The Power of Your Vote** October 8, 2020

with Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson; attorney Khalilah Spencer, Inclusion, Equity and Social Responsibility Partner at Honigman LLP and member of the Detroit NAACP and moderated by Branden Snyder, longtime voting justice advocate and Executive Director of Detroit Action  
[Session Recording](#)

**Get Out the Vote SSW: ENGAGE** October 15, 2020

with Justin Hodge, Washtenaw County Commissioner and clinical assistant professor of social work; Erin Byrnes, Ginsberg Center Lead of Democratic Engagement and Sumaiya Ahmed Sheikh, the Michigan State Coordinator of the Campus Vote Project

**Appropriating Food: Food Justice is Racial Justice** November 12, 2020

with Malik Yakini, Executive Director of the Detroit Black Food Security Network (DBFSN); Michelle Jackson, Executive Director of Sustainable Community Farms and Jerry Hebron, Executive Director of Oakland Avenue Urban Farming and Northend Christian Community Development, INC  
[Session Recording](#)

**CASC + ENGAGE: Racial Equity in Washtenaw County** November 19, 2020

with Ashley Kryscynski, Communications and Public Relations Specialist at Washtenaw Intermediate School District; Justin Hodge, Washtenaw County Commissioner and clinical assistant professor of social work and Felicia Brabec, CASC alumni, psychologist, and former Washtenaw County Commissioner  
[Session Recording](#)

To learn more about the sessions and class, visit:

[detroit.umich.edu/news-stories/virtual-discussions-focus-on-equity-issues-in-detroit/](https://detroit.umich.edu/news-stories/virtual-discussions-focus-on-equity-issues-in-detroit/)

To watch our past sessions, visit:

[ssw.umich.edu/assets/community-engagement/](https://ssw.umich.edu/assets/community-engagement/)

## Engaging and Supporting Students in Community Change

Beyond the opportunities for collective action shared during our virtual discussions, the ENGAGE team has worked with students and student groups to connect their learning to engagement activities in communities, helping them create independent studies on topics such as anti-racism praxis, storytelling and other initiatives that have benefited the school and the broader university community.

*"The Asian Pacific Islander Coalition has deeply appreciated the support and guidance of the ENGAGE team. We have enjoyed being able to connect and work with passionate and knowledgeable professionals, and we are eager to collaborate regarding our upcoming advocacy efforts organizing against AAPI hate in the Michigan community. They have helped us access resources and have been readily available to support and advise us as we have begun envisioning our future goals. Our coalition is looking forward to our continued work together—and we are all excited to work with ENGAGE this upcoming semester!"*

- Sofie Aaron, MSW student,  
API SSW Coalition Member

ENGAGE also serves as a dynamic field site for students, giving them hands-on experience in planning and implementing DEI efforts within higher education institutions, project management, creating partnerships for community change, grant writing and curriculum development.

*"For the last two semesters I have been working as a field student with ENGAGE. This experience has opened my eyes to the unique ways that social work can find its way into higher education and how that network can broaden the reach that our social work values have. I have been able to work closely on projects with so many different partners that ENGAGE has, like the massive network created by Employment Equity Learning and Action Collaborative or through the various virtual discussions we facilitate. These experiences have created within me unique insight into the field and have given me footing with many different organizations, projects and initiatives. As a field student I could not have asked for a better field placement that would allow me to gain the variety of experiences that I have had through working with ENGAGE."*

- Blake Newman, MSW Candidate

ENGAGE also actively worked with the Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW) during the George Floyd uprising and Black Lives Matter movement, helping students articulate their needs and work with administration to create a more intentional anti-racist school environment. ENGAGE Program Manager Ayesha Ghazi Edwin was nominated by students to sit on the DEI Taskforce charged with implementing anti-racist student demands in the school. ENGAGE Director Dr. Trina Shanks and ENGAGE Program Managers Fatima Salman and Ayesha Ghazi Edwin have since each also been part of the school's DEI Communications Taskforce, helping the school think about strategies and protocols around responding more effectively and sensitively to diversity issues that impact our school community.

Student groups interested in hosting symposiums, events or projects can contact ENGAGE to explore ways our team can lend support to power your work forward!  
SSW ENGAGE Team  
[sswcommunityengagement@umich.edu](mailto:sswcommunityengagement@umich.edu)

## Social Impact Projects

Our team has been implementing projects in partnership with community-based groups, the city of Detroit and philanthropic and intermediary organizations for decades. The purpose of this engagement is to leverage our collective expertise and resources to impact social challenges and upend the inequities pervasive in low-income communities of color.

These are two of our most recent projects:

### Employment Equity Learning Community

We convene the Employment Equity Learning Community (EELC) in Detroit, which brings together more than 60 organizations across sectors to promote employment equity and economic opportunity for Detroiters. This last year we created a Blueprint for Employment Equity for Detroit that provides a roadmap for Detroit-based organizations, policy makers and employers to create greater equity for residents of the city.

[All PDFs can be found here](#)

In the above Google Drive are the following documents:

- EELC 2020 Theory of Change
- EELC Equity Definition: A definition of equity for Detroiters created by the members of the Employment Equity Learning Community
- EELC Barrier Analysis: This document was created by the EELC after several data experts presented the barriers Detroiters face toward employment equity.
- EELC Gap Analysis: This document was created to determine the gaps in employment equity-focused interventions in the city of Detroit.
- EELC Ecosystem Map: This includes several maps of Detroit pinpointing the exact locations of those agencies and organizations that are helping to remove barriers to employment in Detroit.
- Blueprint for Employment Equity for Detroit: A roadmap for Detroit-based organizations, policy makers and employers to create greater equity for residents of the city



## Equitable Development Workgroup

ENGAGE facilitates a collaborative of like-minded individuals in the city of Detroit to come together to leverage resources and foster just and equitable development in the city of Detroit.

Just and equitable development is where Black people (the majority of Detroit's population) and all people representing the rich tapestry of cultures and abilities in the city are equitably represented in the development process and in their access to wealth creation/distribution, and the benefits of land use are shared more evenly, including residential and commercial development.

The first project on which this group is focusing energy is to develop an equitable development scorecard that can be used by community members, developers and the city of Detroit to help ensure that developments happening in neighborhoods are informed by and benefiting the residents most impacted.





## **Empowering Faculty and Student Engagement in and with Detroit Communities**

ENGAGE launched a small grants program in 2018 to encourage faculty to build partnerships with Detroit community-based organizations and work to support resident-led efforts to strengthen Detroit neighborhoods.

\$40,000 has been awarded so far!

These grants are supported by the Office of the Provost and are part of the school's strategic effort to connect Detroit engagement efforts and increase impact in the city. We partner with the [Detroit Urban Research Center](#) in the administration of this program.

2020 Awardees (faculty photos Niki can get we need titles added and checked)

### **2020 Awardees**

#### **"Building a Diverse Aging Network for Research, Service, and Knowledge Development in Detroit"**

[James A. Blackburn](#), Research Scientist and LEO Adjunct Professor  
[Angie Perone](#), Ph.D. Student, Social Work/Sociology Candidate  
[Vincent Tilford](#), Executive Director, Hannan Center

#### **"The LGBTQ Senior Housing Project"**

[Beth Glover Reed](#), Associate Professor of Social Work and Women's Studies  
[Angie Perone](#), Ph.D. Student, Social Work/Sociology Candidate, Executive Director,  
SAGE Metro Detroit

#### **"Expanding Youth Voice in Quality Assessment in Detroit: A Collaborative Project to Pilot and Disseminate a Youth-Led Evaluation Tool"**

[Katie Richards-Schuster](#), Director of Undergraduate Minor Programs and Associate Professor of Social Work  
[Alicia McCormick](#), Youth Development Director, Urban Neighborhood Initiatives  
[Sarah Plachta Elliott](#), PhD, Executive Director, Youth Development Resource Center

#### **"Increasing Access for Black Transgender Individuals in Detroit"**

[Daicia R. Price](#), Clinical Assistant Professor of Social Work  
[Layton Mykell Price](#), Director of Talent Development, Ruth Ellis Center

[See 2019 grant recipients](#)

## Partnering with Communities and across U of M

We build partnerships with community groups and activists to empower resident-led changemaking and support the pursuit of social justice and equity for all people. Each partnership leverages resources and expertise from the School of Social Work based on the needs and interests of our partners. We convene groups in communities and facilitate collective action processes, we engage in community-based research and evaluation, we connect students and faculty to support projects and events and help with storytelling and we provide training and technical assistance when called upon.

Our partners:

[We the People](#)

[Community Connections Grant Program](#)

[Detroit Disability Power](#)

[Alternatives for Girls](#)

[Historic King Solomon Baptist Church](#)

[National Action Network-Detroit](#)

[Center for Community-Based Enterprise](#)

[Doing Development Differently in Detroit](#)

[Building Community Value](#)

[Co.Act Detroit](#)

[Detroit Future City](#)

### Here is what some of our partners have to say about us:



"ENGAGE has stuck in there with us through all of the bumps in the road, and because of your dedicated support we have developed a program that will now be introduced to the 'world' outside of Alternatives for Girls (AFG). These are exciting times for AFG and the Asset Building program!"

Tanisha King, Director of Prevention, Alternatives For Girls

"Thanks ENGAGE for engaging students and providing opportunities to strategically keep the School of Social Work aligned with Detroit in a real and meaningful way!"

Charles Williams II, Pastor, Historic King Solomon Baptist Church



"Working with the ENGAGE team has been a tremendous boost to our work. Not only has it brought fresh perspective to our approach, but also has connected us to important resources that can help us implement our mission of furthering equitable development."

Sam Butler, Executive Director, Doing Development Differently in Detroit



"Co.act Detroit is appreciative of the meaningful and collaborative partnership with the University of Michigan School of Social Work ENGAGE team. They have been an invaluable thought partner in the codesign of the Activate Fund, a \$1.5 million pilot initiative supporting nonprofit capacity building and collaboration in southeast Michigan. They informed an evaluation strategy and theory of change to measure the short- and long-term impact of the fund, underscoring the opportunity for nonprofit and university partnerships to strengthen the nonprofit sector."

Allandra Bulger, Executive Director, Co.Act Detroit

"The ENGAGE team has created a wonderful learning community that has been a great resource for Detroit Future City's Center for Equity, Engagement, and Research. The work of EELAC informed our State of Economic Equity in Detroit report, and we know it will play an important role as we collectively work to advance economic and employment equity in Detroit."

Ashley Williams Clark, Director, The Center for Equity, Engagement and Research, Detroit Future City

**DETROIT  
FUTURE  
CITY**

We collaborate with units, schools and centers across the University Michigan to create efficiencies, learn from the expertise of others and bring greater resources and support to the communities we care about.

- We joined forces with the DURC to implement our small grants program.
- We collaborate with the SSW Office of Field Education to train field students and establish new field education sites.
- We've partnered with the Ginsberg Center, SSW DEI, Undoing Racism Group and CASC to host our virtual equity and social justice-centered discussions
- We coordinate with centers (Poverty Solutions, PEG) and labs (TIPPS) at the school, and U of M's Economic Growth Institute to bring resources to neighborhoods

**Thank you for joining us on this journey of civic and community engagement throughout the last year. We look forward to our continued work together!**

Dr. Trina Shanks  
Sonia Harb  
Fatima Salman  
Ayesha Ghazi Edwin  
Blake Newman  
Clio Walsh