Welcome to the 2018 Poverty Solutions Impact Report. This report provides a snapshot of our accomplishments of the past year. Our work aims to address the most pressing economic mobility challenges of our time, and progress is only possible because we do it together—through partnerships with university units, community, policymakers, and practitioners across the state and nation. We invite you to learn more and to join us in these efforts.

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Poverty.umich.edu | #PovertySolutions

120
Faculty Affiliates across U-M’s three campuses, specializing in economic growth, health, housing, and more

More than 30
Projects supported across campus

15+
Projects supported in the city of Detroit through the Partnership on Economic Mobility

100+
Students involved through:

- Research Assistant Opportunities providing technical assistance on more than 20 projects
- The Casc Certificate Program
- The Speaker Series Course

Attracted an additional $8+ million in external funding for important projects happening across U-M
We know that effectively addressing the complex causes and consequences of poverty cannot be done by any one government, organization, or society; we have collaborated to launch bold partnerships to bring the best solutions to the table.

Our Detroit Partnership on Economic Mobility, a collaboration between Poverty Solutions and the city of Detroit, is off to a fast start, with projects pairing dozens of U-M experts with city departments and community groups.

This past October, we enhanced our efforts by launching a new collaboration with Harvard University's Opportunity Insights Initiative. Together, we are applying knowledge from big data on a neighborhood level in Detroit, providing insight on successes and failures in serving children within the city, helping to identify key included supports, and gaining a better understanding of what interventions are productive.

In Ann Arbor, the Summer Youth Employment Program has significantly expanded in size, giving more young adults access to enriching summer work and exposure to our campus. Tyisha Thompson (p.15), who worked as an office assistant at the Institute for Social Research, found the program to be so beneficial she returned the following year to U-M’s Athletic Department. There, she worked alongside the department’s career counselors, following a number of Detroit students to U-M's Athletic Department. There, she found the program to be so beneficial she returned the following year to U-M's Athletic Department.

Poverty Solutions brings together U-M’s academic excellence and the commitment of the Michigan family to address some of society’s biggest challenges. The depth and breadth of our academic excellence ensure that the University of Michigan is uniquely positioned — and therefore uniquely obligated — to address complex issues such as poverty and inequality.

Sincerely,
Mark Schlissel
President, University of Michigan

Poverty Solutions has come a long way since it was formally announced in fall 2016. We have supported nearly 30 projects in 15 of U-M’s 19 schools and colleges.

We collaborate whenever possible, both with internal partners at U-M and with external policymakers and community organizations. We work toward being responsive to the needs and interests of our partners, rather than alienating our own priorities to drive the work. And we seek to address concrete challenges faced by disadvantaged families across systems such as housing, transportation, employment, and health.

Building on this progress, we’re looking forward to deepening our impact this year, especially in Detroit.

We know Detroit is a city with a proud history. The city is blessed with rich cultural institutions and natural assets. Yet for too long, Detroit has ranked as the poorest large city in America. But today there is significant reason for optimism. A revitalized city government means that core services to the city are unrecognizable from two decades prior. Midtown and downtown are vibrant; businesses are making in and rents have skyrocketed. The true test of a recovery, however, is whether it can lift everyone up. Can we, collectively, do something transformational to radically bolster economic mobility and reduce poverty? How does a major city even do such a thing?

First and foremost, action is required across all systems and sectors. Government can’t do it alone, nor can community-based groups. Employers, universities, and decision-makers from the broader region must be a part of the solution. Collective impact means identifying common goals and organizing the actions of all involved to achieve those goals.

Thank you for your interest in Poverty Solutions. I invite you to learn more about our efforts in the pages that follow. We look forward to deepening our partnerships with policymakers and communities to grow and alleviate poverty in Michigan, the nation, and the world.

Sincerely,
H. Luke Shaefer
Director, Poverty Solutions
Through the Partnership on Economic Mobility between Poverty Solutions and the City of Detroit Mayor’s Office, we have committed to making our work in Detroit a signature effort of our initiative. With staff members embedded at City Hall, others active in the community, and deeply engaged faculty from across U-M’s campus, we aim to be a backbone organization for working in partnership with Detroit communities and the city to catalyze an anti-poverty agenda, build capacity to implement key elements of that agenda, and pursue an effort to radically bolster economic mobility and reduce poverty citywide.

Partnership projects are already underway pairing dozens of U-M experts with the leadership of city departments including health, workforce, housing and revitalization, jobs and economy, and police to serve three critical roles:

- ADVISE CITY OFFICIALS on evidence-based strategies to enhance economic mobility.
- PROVIDE TECHNICAL SUPPORT and data analysis in the implementation of mobility initiatives.
- EVALUATE CITY INITIATIVES to measure both short- and long-term impacts on economic mobility.

“We are beginning to make progress in reducing the rate of poverty in Detroit, but we still have a long way to go. This partnership between the University of Michigan and the city will be a great help in our efforts to provide pathways out of poverty to our residents who are still struggling.”

Mike Duggan, Mayor, City of Detroit

**AREAS OF FOCUS**

**JOBS: A THRIVING WORKFORCE**

Even as the economy has improved, unemployment among low-educated workers, especially those living in high-poverty areas in Detroit, remains high. Poverty Solutions is collaborating with several agencies in Detroit to help more residents find family-supporting work. Some of our recent activities in the city:

- Providing research and data analysis to support Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation’s (DESC) workforce development system redesign.
- Analyzing completion and employment outcomes for individuals provided with a training voucher through DESC’s Detroit at Work centers.
- Informing residents about opportunities to eliminate driver’s fees and expunge criminal records as part of an effort to reduce barriers to employment.

**HOUSING: A STABLE PLACE TO CALL HOME**

Housing policies that keep Detroiters in their homes and allow for the housing market to improve are critical to stabilize the population and set the city on an upward trajectory. Poverty Solutions is working with city agencies to:

- Evaluate the impact of the Right of First Refusal program, which enables low-income tenants to purchase their homes following tax foreclosure.
- Examine policies around the poverty tax exemption and provide recommendations for future improvements.
- Identify strategies for maintaining affordability in Detroit properties developed through the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit.

**EDUCATION: A PATH TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE**

Education, poverty, and socioeconomic mobility are closely linked. A quality education can improve labor markets and non-pecuniary outcomes that help individuals and families escape poverty.

Poverty Solutions is collaborating with the community to:

- Evaluate a collective impact neighborhood strategy to improve third-grade reading outcomes.
- Help track the progress of the citywide Campaign for Grade Level Reading.
- Set and track postsecondary completion goals for the metro Detroit region.
- Help track students experiencing homelessness in Detroit.

**BOLSTERING MOBILITY AND REDUCING POVERTY IN AMERICA’S POOREST LARGE CITY**

DETROIT
DETROIT PROJECTS

PRESEVERING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN DETROIT: U-M researchers mapped out thousands of units at risk of losing affordability requirements to inform the city’s efforts to preserve affordability.

EVALUATION OF RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL: U-M researchers are evaluating a program meant to keep thousands of Detroiters in foreclosed homes, helping to stabilize Detroit neighborhoods.

REFORMING THE PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PROCESS: U-M researchers studied the property tax relief process in Detroit and worked with City Council to codify reforms.

WORKFORCE REDESIGN: Poverty Solutions staff provided the Office of Workforce Development with best-practice research for streamlining workforce services to best serve Detroiters.

RELIABLE PUBLIC OPINION DATA: U-M researchers developed a citywide survey tool that queries residents to gather critical data on resident quality of life and economic opportunity.

U-M/DETROIT FELLOWS PROGRAM: Poverty Solutions is sponsoring a group of policy fellows placed directly in city departments to add capacity on strategic projects.

COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER PILOT: U-M researchers helped to design and are currently evaluating the outcomes of a community health worker program in one Detroit neighborhood.

FORECLOSURE PREVENTION: Poverty Solutions is leveraging U-M grad students to help residents successfully apply for federal funds to pay down back property taxes and avoid foreclosures.

EVALUATING WORKFORCE PROVIDERS: Poverty Solutions staff produced a report card for Detroit workforce providers, helping to inform the city’s workforce strategy.

MEASURING ECONOMIC MOBILITY: Poverty Solutions staff is working with city staff to develop a framework for measuring economic mobility in neighborhoods across Detroit.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: Poverty Solutions staff is working with a group of partners in one Detroit neighborhood to evaluate the impact of their collective efforts to improve early literacy.

FORGING PARTNERSHIPS

“One of the most exciting dynamics in Detroit is our partnership with U-M Poverty Solutions. Side by side, we are using data and information to better inform how we mitigate work-readiness barriers and improve access to opportunities for those with the fewest resources.”

Nicole Sherard-Freeman, President, Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation

“In our collaboration with the University of Michigan, Poverty Solutions has demonstrated a thoughtful and robust approach to community engagement. Detroiters are recognized as experts throughout the research process.”

Dr. Jon Leigh S. Khaldun, Director and Health Officer of the Detroit Health Department

“Across the country, the workforce development space is focused on programs and barrier removal initiatives most effective in helping move individuals out of poverty and into family-supporting work. Our partnership with Poverty Solutions enables our staff to access critical data and best-practice research helping inform our efforts to promote economic mobility in Detroit.”

Jeff Donofrio, Executive Director, Workforce Development, City of Detroit

“I am grateful to U-M alumni Paul and Amy Blavin for connecting our early literacy project in the Detroit Public Schools with Poverty Solutions. We could not ask for a better partner! We are delighted to work with them to find ways to bridge the reading gap in our neediest and most challenged families. Thank you!”

Maura Corrigan, former Director of the Department of Human Services (2011–2014)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: poverty.umich.edu/detroit
In September 2018, U-M formed a new partnership with Harvard University designed to spur economic mobility and reduce poverty in Detroit. Poverty Solutions is working with Harvard’s Opportunity Insights led by Prof. Nathaniel Hendren of Economics and Dr. Raj Chetty, professor of economics. Opportunity Insights (formerly the Equality of Opportunity Project) is known for analysis of large sets of demographics and income tax data that reveal the economic, educational, and racial constraints on mobility in America. This new partnership will explore that data on a neighborhood level in Detroit, providing insights on what works and doesn’t work to achieve better outcomes.

In 2017, stakeholders came together at Munger Elementary-Middle School to invest in moving the needle on third-grade reading. The idea was relatively simple: invite all players involved in the K-8 education continuum to a table to better align their work. Poverty Solutions was invited to join the initiative shortly thereafter to help evaluate the group’s efforts. To date, we’ve provided literature reviews, developed a theory of change, and started sharing data among the many partners.

Magie Hanna (also see p. 27), a doctoral student at the School of Education, joined the evaluation team as a subject matter expert. After teaching outside Austin, Texas, Hanna came to U-M to pursue her PhD, focused on family literacy and engagement. The engagement in the Munger Reads When Munger Leads project has led to deeper involvement in the city of Detroit to improve the tax exemption application process.

Out of 104 residents surveyed, they found that 82 percent reported severe housing cost burden, with more than half of their income going toward housing. Moreover, 72 percent indicated they had to decide between paying for housing and other necessities, like food or medical care, during the past year. Of Detroit homeowners, 82 percent reported severe housing cost burden, with more than half of their income going toward housing.

They also found that a lack of awareness about the exemption is one of the biggest hurdles, and with additional funding from Poverty Solutions, produced an informational video that reached over 20,000 Detroiters. The team also collaborated with other community-based organizations to design educational and outreach materials used to train organizations across the city to assist residents in completing the application.

The insight we’ve gained has the potential to inform efforts that state and local governments can take to ensure that the exemption is readily available, easily obtainable, and equitably provided to all eligible homeowners. "I make little to nothing, so my housing costs — utili- ties, taxes, all of that — you’re not going to believe what my biggest bill right now is the back taxes. With utilities, if those are turned off they can always be turned back on. But with your taxes, that’s your house, it’s gone," said one study participant.

The engagement in the Munger Reads When Munger Leads project has led to deeper involvement in the city of Detroit to improve the tax exemption application process.
At the heart of our effort is an initiative to build capacity across agencies and community-based organizations in Detroit to conduct research, analyze data, and achieve results in a timely manner. While progress in Detroit is being made, city officials and staff at community organizations are often constrained by the demands of their day-to-day work, the need to address immediate crises and lack of resources for technical analysis. Poverty Solutions piloted a fellowship model to provide accelerated training to recent graduates and address this critical need for talent and capacity. The program also offers access to the resources of the University of Michigan and its world-class experts and technical resources. Fellows are embedded in city departments for a period of two years, helping officials and Poverty Solutions address strategic goals and move beyond what we have been able to accomplish thus far.

KAREN OTZEN,
CITY OF DETROIT MAYOR’S OFFICE AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY FELLOW

Based at the city of Detroit’s Housing and Revitalization Department, Otzen supports efforts to develop plans and strategies for lasting housing affordability and single-family housing stabilization in Detroit. Fellows are also working on homelessness and digital inclusion with the city.

ASHLEIGH JOHNSON,
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND RELATIONSHIP MANAGER

Ashleigh Johnson wants Detroiters to have a community engagement ecosystem that they can be proud of—a system built on respect, where community vetting is expected. Her role is a dual appointment between U-M’s Ginsberg Center and Poverty Solutions, designed to build bridges between the university, city, and community organizations.

“Working in city government, you’re always in need of more policy staff — people who can work with data, evaluate and inform city initiatives, and bring to bear evidence-based practice. Poverty Solutions dramatically increases our capacity in this area and is as focused on results as we are, and that’s rare to find in an academic partner.”

Arthur Jemison, Chief of Services and Infrastructure, City of Detroit

COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY

Poverty Solutions engages community organizations and individuals in seeking new solutions to prevent and alleviate poverty. We also partner with centers at U-M deeply embedded in this work such as the Ginsberg Center, the Detroit Urban Research Center, and the Institute for Healthcare Policy and Innovation, and look for ways the university can contribute to solving poverty challenges at the community level.
POVERTY SOLUTIONS FY18 GRANT AWARDS

COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY-ACADEMIC RESEARCH AWARDS

Assessing the Impact of Intergenerational Asset Building Programs on Self-efficacy, Academic Achievement, and College Going Culture of Low-income Black and Latino Girls

Trina Shanks, School of Social Work
Melody Moore, Alternatives for Girls

Overcoming the Chilling Effect: Identifying Strategies for Improving Immigrant Families’ Acceptability and Accessibility to Health and Social Services that Alleviate Poverty

Paul J. Fleming, School of Public Health
William D. Lopez, School of Public Health
Richard Bryce, Community Health and Social Services Center (CHASS)

Breaking the Cycle: Redefining the Trauma-informed Climate: Ethnographic Narrative Intervention

Laura E. Gullabon, School of Nursing
Barbara L. Brash, School of Nursing
Denise Saint-Arnaud, School of Nursing
Delphina Simmons, Coalition for Temporary Shelter
Richard Bryce, Community Health and Social Services Center (CHASS)
Shariq L. Leopold, 500 Community Services
Kathleen Durkin, Department of Psychiatry

Supporting Economic Mobility Through Community Health

Tawenna Ollahunt, School of Information
Diana Greene, Eastside Community Network
Angela Brown Wilson, Eastside Community Network

FACULTY RESEARCH PROJECTS

New Norms Unlimitedly Prevent Obesity? Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial

Martha J. Bailey, Institute for Social Research
Paula Fomby, Institute for Social Research
Alfia Karimova, Institute for Social Research

Eliminating the Path to Energy Poverty: A Multi-state Analysis of Equity in Energy Efficiency Investments

Tony G. Reames, School for Environment and Sustainability
Ben Stacey, School for Environment and Sustainability, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

Can Peer Support Specialists Deliver Technology-Based Job Interview Training for People with Psychiatric Disabilities? An Assessment of Community Needs and Priorities

Adrienne Lapidos, School of Social Work
Matthew Smith, School of Social Work
Michele Heisler, Michigan Medicine

The Politics of Technology for the Poor: Between India and the World

Shobita Parthasarathy, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy

Supporting Economic Mobility Through Community Mentorship

Tawanna Ollahunt, School of Information
Diana Greene, Eastside Community Network
Angela Brown Wilson, Eastside Community Network

Leveraging Health Data to Inform Asset-building Policy

Matthew J. Bailey, Institute for Social Research
Faisal M. Miller, Institute for Social Research
Rashmi Mehta, Human Development and Psychology
Candida Berey, Combined Program in Education and Psychology

Breaking the “Starving Student” Myth: Understanding And Addressing Food Insecurity Needs On Campus

Cindy Leung, School of Public Health
Alexis Cohen, Medical School
Nicole Kasper-Cusick, School of Public Health

Assessing the Effectiveness of Bioretention Rain Gardens in Removing Pollutants Associated with Tire Dumpling and Roadside Pollution

Laura L. Leventhal, Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning
Sarah H. Grant, South East Detroit Environmental Vision
Andrea R. McFarland, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering
Nancy G. Love, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering

FUNDING A BETTER FUTURE

Since our founding in 2016, Poverty Solutions has provided more than $800,000 in seed funding to 33 projects and 34 faculty and community partners working on promising solutions to poverty. Having begun on the Ann Arbor campus, grants are now available to faculty on all three U-M campuses.

Assessing the Impact of Intergenerational Asset Building Programs on Self-efficacy, Academic Achievement, and College Going Culture of Low-income Black and Latino Girls: Program participants tour Detroit’s Channel 4 studios.

SEEDING SOLUTIONS

Nicole Carstater and Laura Walker at the Coalition on Temporary Shelter, and Laura Gullabon, associate professor at the School of Nursing, discuss their work at a community-academic partnership workshop led by the Detroit URC.
If life-changing opportunities such as high-quality education, mentorship, and job training are beyond reach, achieving economic stability becomes more difficult. Making these opportunities more accessible to young people in our communities may not only change their current economic situation, it will ultimately prepare them for future success and upward mobility.

In year two, U-M deepened its partnership with Washtenaw County and MichiganWorks! Southeast to increase access to these critical experiences through the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP), an employment and mentorship program that pairs local businesses and the university with young adults in Washtenaw County.

Students like Tyisha Thompson, who worked as an office assistant for the Population Studies Center at the Institute for Social Research in 2017, learned skills applicable to a variety of future jobs and career paths, from organization and time management to more technical skills like policies for handling sensitive information. Thompson found the program to be so beneficial, she returned in the summer of 2018 to work with U-M’s Athletic Department. Her time spent in the SYEP helped Thompson discover her passion for psychology and criminology, spurring her decision to enroll at Washtenaw Community College after high school.
The Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development and Poverty Solutions came together to create updates and enhance metrics for the Washtenaw County Opportunity Index. Originally created in 2015, the process for updating the Opportunity Index has involved county-level stakeholders from across departments contributing their expertise and vision. Poverty Solutions has offered technical assistance through research on indicators, mining data, mapping, and implementing the community vision for the Opportunity Index. Several governmental entities and community organizations currently depend on the Opportunity Index for various reasons, including spreading awareness about disparities across the county, informing stakeholders about where to prioritize county investments, and developing innovative policy solutions.

As of 2017, much of the data on adults who struggle to read was out of date. This caused ripple effects for organizations that hoped to serve this population. It was harder to gain funding, as it was challenging to demonstrate the depth of the problem. Projecting for services was challenging, because there was no robust information on how many individuals in a community may need them.

Washtenaw Literacy approached Poverty Solutions to help pilot an idea. Amy Goodman, the executive director of Washtenaw Literacy, thought it was possible to get better data if they could reach people where they are. By surveying people who may be at risk for low literacy — homeless shelters, food pantries, and other locations — they could get an idea of what the scope of the problem was in Washtenaw County.

Surveying individuals on their reading ability is challenging. Ask anyone if they can read and their answer is always “yes.” However, Goodman had come up with a solution — her team was using the LoSac tool, an easy-to-implement, quick-reading assessment. Poverty Solutions provided undergraduate research assistants to administer this assessment. Washtenaw Literacy provided training and the Delonis Shelter in Ann Arbor agreed to allow students to administer the survey there. Through this partnership and others, Washtenaw Literacy has been able to gather the data necessary to better show the challenges faced by those with low literacy. This data has greatly improved their funding capacity. The hope is to train other organizations across the country to utilize this same model, so other places can uncover the depth of low literacy and provide more resources in their communities.

“Working on the Opportunity Index with the U-M Poverty Solutions team has been incredible. We reached out hoping to find a new partner to help us update the index, and we got so much more. With the depth and breadth of the team, we’ve been able to completely review and update the index — moving it from a deficit model to one that tracks realistic goals, still within a framework that will be useful to policymakers and practitioners alike.”

Teresa Gillotti, Director, Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development

“I have always believed that talent is ubiquitous in our society, but opportunity most certainly is not.”

Mark Schlissel, President, University of Michigan
Poverty Solutions partners with faculty experts and university units such as U-M’s Government Relations Office to link our work to policymakers and practitioners and help shape the policies and programs that can bring about positive change. This year we have met and coordinated work with more than 20 decision-makers, informed important policy discussions through our research, and continued to engage on statewide policy goals through interactions with lawmakers, commissions, and the governor’s transition team.

Studies show that children need stability to thrive, but for the more than 36,000 children in Michigan’s elementary, middle, and high schools who face homelessness and housing insecurity, stability is often elusive. This year, Poverty Solutions released a new analysis and interactive map that shed light on dramatic disparities in educational outcomes for students experiencing homelessness. The map focuses on the percentage and number of homeless students in each school district and the percentage of low-income students experiencing homelessness, where data is available.

Key findings include:

- In the school year 2015-16, Michigan ranked sixth among states for the most homeless students.
- Homelessness is a statewide issue impacting children in rural, suburban, and urban areas.
- Some of the highest rates of homelessness among students were found in the state’s smallest school districts.
- Data suggest that a significant undercount of homeless students is occurring in Detroit.

The analyses of Michigan’s homeless student graduation and dropout rates are proving to be important tools for advocates and policymakers on the state and federal levels. Shortly after its release, the brief was shared with Detroit Public Schools administrators who used the evidence to change policies and practices. Pam Kies, the state coordinator for homeless education for the Michigan Department of Education, also noted, “The data that was shared in the U-M Poverty Solutions policy briefs on Michigan schools’ homeless counts and the graduation rates of homeless students really provided new awareness. It also helped move forward the decision by DPS administration to strengthen their McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Program. It provides additional support for these vulnerable children and youth, identifying a trained point of contact for homeless students in every DPS school and adding a transportation coordinator to support the work of the Homeless and Foster Youth Liaison in maintaining those students in their schools of origin to ensure their educational stability. This added support will impact the program’s success and the students’ success immensely.”

“Poverty Solutions provided valuable research capacity that was otherwise beyond our reach. The analysis skills of the experts in this group yielded an invaluable policy brief with facts and opinions from credible sources to emphasize the existence and impact of disparate broadband coverage.”

Ben Fineman, President, Michigan Broadband Cooperative

SHAPING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

IN SERVICE TO OUR STATE

STUDENT HOMELESSNESS WORK BRINGS AWARENESS TO THE STATE AND POLICY CHANGE TO DETROIT

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO BROADBAND

Reliable and high-speed broadband access is increasingly essential as vital services become more reliant on the internet. Poverty Solutions partners with the Michigan Broadband Cooperative to identify gaps and develop tools to advocate for policies that promote and protect broadband access. Data and evidence-based research can help cushion the impacts of policies on high-speed broadband access. Data and evidence-based research can help cushion the impacts of policies on high-speed broadband access.
Nearly 100 attendees including faculty, students, community organizations, and policymakers participated in this event, co-sponsored by the Urban Collaboratory and the Detroit School Series. Former U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx (left) kicked off an afternoon of sessions tackling transportation and economic mobility. The topics explored during the event led to policy briefs and a deeper understanding of best practices, and ultimately may help inform local- and state-level transportation policy.

From Baldwin to Detroit, this year Poverty Solutions hosted or co-sponsored activities to engage faculty, students, community organizations, and local policymakers in discussions about poverty. Our goal is to share knowledge with, and learn from, our larger community.

» Building Coalitions and Community in Lake County, Michigan: While Lake County struggles with challenges related to poverty, the region also has a committed group of individuals and coalitions working on the front lines to push these statistics down, while lifting residents up. Representatives from Poverty Solutions and the Ginsberg Center met with this coalition to share resources and data to help learn about and inform their important work.

» A data convening in Detroit with United Way for Southeastern Michigan provided an opportunity to engage communities, explore ways to collaborate, and learn how we can better utilize the data we acquire and analyze. The Detroit Thought Leaders United: Data, Discussion, and Collaboration event laid the foundation for a series of sessions that dove deeper into community organizing, advocacy, and innovative anti-poverty programs in the Detroit area.
Introduced in the fall of 2018, the Real-World Perspectives on Poverty Solutions Speaker Series featured experts in policy and practice from across the nation. Free and open to the public, the talks were also part of coursework for U-M students.

Along with the new speaker series, Poverty Solutions and our partners across campus hosted a number of other talks by experts on poverty issues.

“Indicates experts who spoke as part of the Real-World Perspectives on Poverty Solutions Speaker Series.”

Through a partnership with the Stanford Basic Income Studies Lab and the Economic Security Project, Poverty Solutions hosted a three-day workshop to explore basic income as a policy solution to poverty. Scholars from across the nation and world attended and a partnership with U-M’s Academic Innovation attracted an additional 1,400 online learners.

“I am grateful to understand the issues of poverty and alarmed by the number of people under poverty despite our country being wealthy. This course inspired me to help in the community.”

Participant in the U-M Academic Innovation online course

NEW DIRECTIONS IN BASIC INCOME

SPEAKER SERIES KICKS OFF

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“I am grateful to understand the issues of poverty and alarmed by the number of people under poverty despite our country being wealthy. This course inspired me to help in the community.”

Participant in the U-M Academic Innovation online course
Poverty Solutions engages students across the university through a diverse range of programs and opportunities. Our staff host social and networking events, offer expertise and background as guest lecturers in U-M courses, and work with university and community partners to offer interactive simulations and other learning opportunities, engaging hundreds of students. Since 2017, more than 100 students have had a formal sustained relationship with Poverty Solutions through the course, certificate program, or research assistant opportunities, and hundreds more have participated in a Poverty Solutions event or outreach opportunity. In 2019, students will begin to contribute to shaping future academic offerings through a Student Advisory Board.

Launched in early 2018 as a new option inside the popular Community Action and Social Change minor at the School of Social Work, the Poverty Solutions certificate program now has 44 current students. These students come from five schools across campus representing 20 unique degree programs.

“This certificate has helped me to learn and apply poverty alleviation theories and approaches to respectful community interaction. I believe that its impact goes beyond students involved in the program. The opportunities for research, networking, and direct impact give us the tools to fight systemic oppression of the poor.”

Payton Watt, U-M student (left)
 According to the USDA, 15.6 million households were food-insecure at some point in 2016. For these households, sources of free food — like food banks, churches, and other nonprofit organizations — are critical to their day-to-day survival.

Food Finder, a new nonprofit started by U-M student Jack Griffin, verifies sources of free food for individuals in need and posts them to an app. Poverty Solutions partnered with Food Finder to expand capacity and accuracy — thereby connecting more people in need to food.

“Students from across campus worked a combined 300 hours to collect accurate data on sites across Michigan and in Washington, DC, Maryland, and New York City. From the student research assistants to the Poverty Solutions leadership team, the investment of countless hours and genuine desire to see our mission put into action were extremely appreciated over the course of our 10-month partnership. The technical assistance we received provided us with the most accurate data on hunger relief programs we’ve ever been able to offer to our users over the course of our four years in operation. Not only that, the roadmap and processes that were developed thanks to the Poverty Solutions team will lay the groundwork for us to help more food-insecure families than ever before.”

- Caroline Perkins, MSW ’18, School of Social Work

“I learned that in order to make sustainable social change, it is imperative to understand all systems involved with the social problem. I also learned the importance of empowering communities to make their own change and maintaining a social justice lens while brainstorming solutions for a problem that impacts others.”

Caroline Perkins, MSW ’18, School of Social Work

“Through the Poverty Solutions lectures, I’ve gained a greater understanding of the role of assets in poverty alleviation, the intersection of poverty with health, and the role community involvement and academia can play in some of these poverty solutions.”

Charlene Franke, BBA ’19, Ross School of Business
NOW THAT WE HAVE LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS, POVERTY SOLUTIONS WILL DEEPEN OUR COMMITMENT TO WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES AND POLICY-MAKERS TO PREVENT AND ALleviate POVERTY IN MICHIGAN, THE NATION, AND THE WORLD. THIS NEXT YEAR, WE AIM TO LEVERAGE THE COLLECTIVE EFFORTS OF OUR PARTNERSHIPS TO GAIN NEW GROUND ON A NUMBER OF GOALS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO:

» FURTHER OUR COMMITMENT TO THE DETROIT PARTNERSHIP ON ECONOMIC MOBILITY AND MAKE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS TOWARD POVERTY ALLEVIATION WITH OUR PARTNERS IN THE CITY.

» EXPAND OUR MODEL, BY LEADING A UNIVERSITY-BASED “MOBILITY FROM POVERTY NETWORK” OF ESTABLISHED UNIVERSITY CENTERS. THE NETWORK WILL INITIALLY FOCUS ON MIDWEST AND RUST BELT COMMUNITIES, AND IS BUILT ON THE POVERTY SOLUTIONS MODEL OF ACTION-BASED RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT.

» CONVENE NATIONAL EXPERTS, INCLUDING HOSTING A SYMPOSIUM ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN SPRING 2019.

» EXPAND DIRECT SERVICE AND EXPERTISE TO DECISION-MAKERS THROUGH A GROWING FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM THAT WILL PLACE MORE UNIVERSITY GRADUATES IN EMBEDDED POSITIONS WITHIN THE CITY OF DETROIT.

» DEVELOP NEW DATA TOOLS TO GIVE DECISION-MAKERS EASY ACCESS TO EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACHES.

» PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS TO ENGAGE THROUGH REPRESENTATION ON A NEWLY FORMED STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD, TRAINING IN RESEARCH AND RESEARCH PROJECTS, AND PARTICIPATION IN OUR ENGAGED LEARNING CERTIFICATE PROGRAM.

» ENGAGE FACULTY EXPERTS ACROSS U-M’S THREE CAMPUSES AND DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION.

MUCH OF OUR PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY THE GENEROSITY OF INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND FOUNDATIONS COMMITTED TO THIS WORK. WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING THE IMPORTANT WORK WE’VE BEEN DOING TO SUPPORT THE PHILANTHROPIC RESOURCES THAT HELP US ACHIEVE OUR COLLECTIVE GOALS.

We also look forward to building on and sharing our model of public service this next year while working alongside practitioners with deep expertise across the field.

Thank you for your partnership.