

# ANNUAL REPORT

2015 - 2016





The Michigan Civil Rights Commission was created by the Michigan Constitution to safeguard constitutional and legal guarantees against discrimination. The Commission is charged with investigating alleged discrimination against any person because of religion, race, color or national origin, sex, age, marital status, height, weight, arrest record, and physical and mental disability.



We are pleased to share with you the 2016 Annual Report from the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) – the agency created in 1965 to carry out the work of the Commission.

2016 proved to be a pivotal year for the Commission. In our first meeting, in the midst of what had become a crisis of immense and historic importance, the Commission voted unanimously to conduct hearings into alleged discrimination involving residents of the city of Flint and their public water supply. After three public hearings, site visits, and the testimony of more than 150 residents, experts and government officials, the Commission issued a 130-page report outlining our findings and recommendations for action. While the final report was published early in 2017, we believed it was important to include the outcome of our efforts in the same report with the year-long investigation into this crisis.

Although the Flint water crisis dominated the Commission's focus in 2016, it was far from the only challenge we faced.

This was the year of an unprecedented spike in reports of hate and bias incidents, which led to a number of public actions and collaborative efforts to respond, providing help and direction to schools in particular and increasing the public's awareness of their right to file a complaint of discrimination.

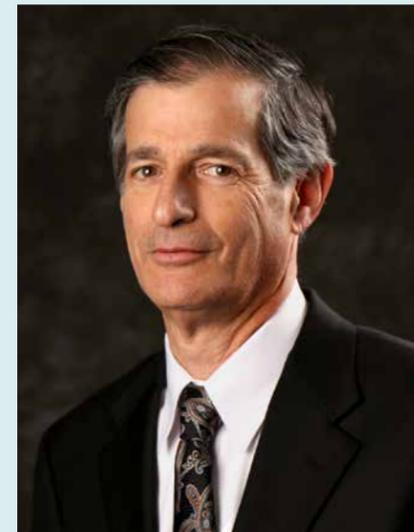
This was the year that brought new concerns for migrant and seasonal farmworkers, with the possible loss of the minimum wage and protection against child labor on small Michigan farms.

This was also a year of positive, proactive accomplishments, from launching the service animal registry, to developing a communication tool for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and initiating a pilot program to put MDCR investigators in community centers, churches, and NAACP chapters – making it easier for individuals to get answers to their questions or file a complaint at a location they know and trust.

And it was this year that the Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing published new rules for sign language interpreters, ensuring that individuals interpreting in legal, medical, and other sensitive and technical settings were fully qualified to do so.

Most importantly, throughout the year, our intake staff, investigators, and legal team were focused on the work that is at the heart of our mission: investigating alleged discrimination and securing the equal protection of civil rights.

We are proud to offer this accounting of our combined efforts in 2016.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rasha Demashkieh'.

Rasha Demashkieh, Co-Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Arthur M. Horwitz'.

Arthur M. Horwitz, Co-Chair



In this photo from 1964, Governor George Romney swears in Damon Keith and John Feikens, the first co-chairs of the newly-created Michigan Civil Rights Commission.

## Who We Are

The Michigan Civil Rights Commission and the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) have one of the most important roles in state government – so important that it is enshrined in the Michigan Constitution: to investigate alleged discrimination and to secure the equal protection of civil rights.

MDCR is also home to the Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing, the Michigan Women’s Commission, the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver Program, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliance Office for the State of Michigan and a number of strategic civil rights initiatives.

## What We Do

### Enforce Civil Rights Laws

MDCR’s primary purpose is to investigate complaints of discrimination in employment, education, housing, public accommodation, law enforcement and public service.

The alleged discrimination must have taken place in the last 180 days and must be based on religion, race, color, national origin, arrest record, genetic information, sex, age, height, weight, marital status or disability.

When conducting an investigation, MDCR is neutral. If the investigation shows that discrimination has occurred, we will attempt to reach a resolution between the parties. If they cannot agree on a resolution, MDCR will enforce civil rights law and may bring a charge before the Michigan Civil Rights Commission.

### Prevent Discrimination

MDCR is committed to preventing discrimination and working to bridge gaps in understanding and trust. We engage with community and faith-based organizations, advocates and law enforcement agencies to address civil rights issues and build partnerships to promote voluntary compliance with civil rights laws.

MDCR offers training on a range of topics including cultural competency, disability, sexual harassment, housing discrimination, hate crimes and civil rights law. We also partner with communities to examine racial and ethnic disparities and the role they play in Michigan’s economic and social environment.

### MDCR-led initiatives:

- **Advocates & Leaders for Police and Community Trust (ALPACT)** brings together law enforcement and community leaders to build trust and facilitate communication and cooperation.
- **The Michigan Alliance Against Hate Crimes (MIAAHC)** works to eliminate hate crimes and bias incidents in Michigan.
- **The Farmworker Policy, Advocacy, & Civil Rights Committee** promotes, tracks and reports on recommendations to improve conditions for Michigan’s migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families.
- **West Michigan Leadership Collaborative** brings organizations, education and government agencies together to address racial and ethnic disparities, advocate for equal opportunity and develop community resources.
- **Michigan Service Animal Registry** offers individuals with disabilities who use trained service animals the opportunity to register with the state and obtain an official identification card and patch. Registration is voluntary and designed to ensure the legal right to access businesses, schools and other public accommodations.

### Serve Communities

MDCR works to support diversity and inclusion, and to serve the needs of specific residents.

- **The Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing** serves Michigan residents who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing. The Division enforces the Deaf Persons Interpreters Act and the Michigan Interpreter (Administrative) Rules, and provides sign language interpreter testing and certification. It also offers information and technical assistance to entities required to provide interpreters or other communication-related accommodations.
- **The Michigan Women’s Commission (MWC)** addresses issues of concern to Michigan’s women. Current MWC priorities are women in business, women veterans and human trafficking. MWC also acts as a referral agency to help women access federal, state and local resources.
- **The Relentless Tour with Anthony Ianni** reaches students and adults throughout Michigan and beyond to fight bullying, to inspire individuals to overcome disabilities, and to empower everyone to “Live Your Dream.”
- **The State of Michigan Office of ADA Compliance** works to ensure all aspects of Michigan government are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other state and federal disability-related laws.
- **The Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver** program waives tuition costs for eligible Native Americans in Michigan’s public colleges and universities.

## Created by Constitution

In 1964, Michigan became the first state in the nation to include civil rights protections in its constitution. Article 5, Section 29 calls on the Michigan Civil Rights Commission to “...investigate alleged discrimination against any person because of race, religion, color or national origin in the enjoyment of the civil rights guaranteed by law...” The Michigan Department of Civil Rights was created in 1965 to carry out the work of the Commission. Passage of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act and the Persons with Disabilities Civil Rights Act in 1976 further clarified the specific protections guaranteed under Michigan law.



## MDCR Partners on Trust-Building Program for Youth and Police in Southwest Michigan

On January 6, Benton Harbor and Berrien Springs High School students participated in Choose2Live, a program designed to teach youth how to interact in safe and positive ways with law enforcement and to improve the relationship between young people and police.

Berrien County Commissioner Marletta Seats led the effort to bring Choose2Live to schools in her area. Anthony Lewis helped plan and facilitate the program, which was partially underwritten by the Whirlpool Corporation.

The Founder and Chairperson of Dedication to Community, M. Quentin Williams, shared his experience of growing up in New York City's lower east side, at a time when encounters with police were common. He developed a skill set that enabled him to respond in ways that built relationships of trust with officers.

Director Arbulu explained our support of the initiative: "MDCR is actively engaged in improving communication and relationships between communities and the law enforcement agencies that serve them. Choose2Live gives us an opportunity to engage young people in that process and help them build the skills and the trust required if we are to reduce the risk of tragic situations like we've seen in other states."

Choose2Live is produced by the organization Dedication to Community and includes safe law enforcement engagement and anti-violence strategies for middle school, high school and college students, as well as police agencies, companies and community advocacy groups.



## Laura Reyes Kopack Joins Commission

The first MCRC meeting of the year was held at Peckham, Inc. in Lansing, and featured the swearing-in of recently-appointed Commissioner Laura Reyes Kopack.

Commissioner Reyes Kopack is the Director of Government Affairs and Community Relations for the Mechanical Contractors Association, Detroit. She is also a trustee on numerous business trusts and Boards of Directors in both the community and the construction/business industry. Reyes Kopack practiced law for over thirty years at Creighton, McLean and Shea PLC, at her own law firm, and in the corporate sector.



## Commission Pays Tribute to Daisy Elliott

At their first meeting of 2016, the Commission commemorated the passing of Michigan civil rights icon Daisy Elliott with a tribute to her life, presented by Commissioner Deloris Hunt to Elliott's granddaughter, Badriyyah Sabree.

Former State Representative Daisy Elliott, author and co-sponsor with Representative Mel Larsen of Michigan's cornerstone civil rights law, the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act (ELCRA), died in December 2015 at the age of 98.

Among a broad range of civil rights protections, ELCRA provided the first statutory protection from discrimination for women in educational facilities and public accommodations. Elliott was also a co-author of the 1963 Michigan Constitution, which created the Michigan Civil Rights Commission.

"Daisy Elliott stands as one of the greatest civil rights leaders this state has ever produced," said Arthur Horwitz, Chair of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission. "All of us who strive to make Michigan a more just and equitable place are indebted to her for her courage and foresight."





## New Law Gives MDCR Responsibility for Service Animal Registry

In the fall of 2015, Governor Snyder signed into law the Service Animals for Persons with Disabilities Act, and MDCR promptly went to work developing an application process, designing patches and ID cards, and training staff to administer the new law.

On January 13 — five days before the law went into effect — MDCR kicked off a series of news conferences around the state to showcase the law which was designed to help ensure that people with disabilities who use trained service animals have easier access to businesses, schools, hospitals and other public accommodations. Registering a service animal is voluntary and free of charge.

The impetus for the new law came from Michigan veterans and others with so-called “hidden disabilities” who often face hassles and embarrassment when they attempt to enter a business or public facility with their service animal.

Lt. Governor Brian Calley joined Director Agustin Arbulu for the Lansing news conference, along with three of the bill’s sponsors — Sen. Margaret O’Brien, Sen. David Knezek and Rep. Tom Barrett — and State ADA Compliance Director Sharon Ellis.

A Whippet named Icey and a Doberman named Sun were also in the spotlight at the Lansing event. And after their owners submitted the required paperwork, Icey and Sun became the first registered service animals in Michigan.

MDCR didn’t just create the colorful patches and ID cards; we also designed posters and flyers to educate business owners and their employees about their duties under the law, and to help the public understand the rights of individuals and their service animals to access.

In 2016, MDCR registered a total of 313 service animals under the law. And while the law says properly-trained miniature horses can also be registered as service animals, we’re still waiting for that first equine applicant!



## Service Animal Registry: Spreading the Word

Within days of MDCR’s media tour announcing the new Service Animal Registry, State ADA Compliance Director Sharon Ellis took the story on the road, meeting with businesses and organizations to explain the law, to outline rights and responsibilities under the law, and to provide tips and tools to help both employees and the public understand that individuals and their registered service animals have a right to access public buildings.

Throughout 2016, Sharon conducted at least 40 formal presentations and a number of informal talks on the new law. She was a featured presenter at the State Bar of Michigan Elder Law & Disability Rights Section Annual Conference in October. Sharon and her service animal registry overview was also featured at the annual conference on disability rights held by MARO, one of the leading advocacy organizations for people with disabilities in the state.



## Governor’s Executive Order Moves Ethnic Commissions to LARA

On January 26, Governor Snyder signed an Executive Order (EO) moving the Hispanic/Latino Commission of Michigan, the Michigan Asian Pacific American Commission and the Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs from MDCR to Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA).

As he signed the EO, the Governor expressed his belief that the reorganization will help streamline human resources and budgetary functions within each commission. LARA is also home to the Office of New Americans, which will work closely with the ethnic commissions on issues related to economic development and jobs.

Director Arbulu thanked the commissions, and expressed his determination to continue their work together. “I want to take a moment to thank the members of the three ethnic commissions housed within our department. The move to LARA is in the best interest of the commissions and their communities, allowing them to align their work more closely with the work of the Office of New Americans. I also want to stress that this is not goodbye. MDCR is committed to working with you to protect the civil rights of the communities you represent, and to partner with you on worthwhile projects well into the future. We will continue to send representatives from MDCR to Commission meetings and work with the Commissions to address civil rights issues. Thank you all for your continued service to the great state of Michigan.”



## MDCR Kicks Off LPI Process to Better Serve Michigan Residents

On January 12, a group of MDCR colleagues from the Enforcement and Legal Divisions kicked off a Lean Process Improvement process, or LPI, designed to improve our procedures in order to provide better service to our clients – the residents of Michigan.

The Michigan Lean Consortium (MLC) describes LPI as “a dynamic process of continual improvement and learning by engaged team members, in a culture of mutual trust and respect, focused on eliminating waste and maximizing value for customers.”

Facilitators from MLC and the Office of Good Government led an initial day of training in January, followed by four days in June to help guide the team’s evaluation of the Enforcement process. Team Lead Kenya Cooper presented the team’s recommendations to the project sponsors - Director Arbulu, Colleen Pero, Lori Vinson and Dan Levy - on June 21. By August 4, the Team was ready with their findings. LPI sponsors approved the following changes:

- Establish a Fun Committee to boost morale, with representation from different divisions and offices.
- Institute a legal review focus group.
- Coordinate enforcement training and the use of student assistants/interns for enforcement-related projects.
- Make technology changes to Contact Management System (CMS).
- Research future case management systems.
- Increase outreach and visibility.
- Institute effective and relevant training.
- Updating the Enforcement process, including 1) modifying office hours for intake, 2) instituting optional team investigation, 3) uniform administrative closures, 4) standardizing docketing changes, 5) providing printers/scanners at home.
- Implement new Pilot Program on 1) Change in Extenuating Circumstances, 2) Disciplinary Policy, and 3) Monthly Expectations.
- Recommend creation of future LPIs to begin in FY 2017.

Along with Team Lead Kenya Cooper, participants include Yarkpazuo Bah-Deh, Christina Beltz, Matt Galvan, Karyn Griffin, Ann Marie McCullough, Gwen Moffitt, Mike Pelot, Kylie Piette, and Rochelle Ricks.



## MDCR and U-M Launch Youth Civil Rights Academy

On Saturday, March 5, MDCR partnered with the University of Michigan School of Social Work to launch a new Youth Civil Rights Academy. The program is based on the U-M Youth Dialogues Program and MDCR’s former Youth Academy, with the goal of developing and inspiring a new generation of civil rights leaders.

Director Arbulu fired up the students in the morning keynote, encouraging them to lead the charge on the next leg of our national journey toward justice.

“One of the pitfalls of learning about civil rights history from the distance of a half-century is a tendency to cloak civil rights icons – people like Martin Luther King and John Lewis, Ralph Abernathy and Rosa Parks – in greatness,” said Arbulu. “Make no mistake – they were among the greatest heroes this country has produced. But the civil rights movement in this country was made up of hundreds of ordinary people who dared to try extraordinary things and speak truths that many did not want to hear.”

More than 100 students from a number of schools took part. Student groups from each school came prepared to discuss issues they’ve identified as important to their group, and left with specific plans for a school or community project. Upon completion and documentation of their projects, students will receive a University of Michigan certificate of completion for inclusion in their college applications.

MDCR’s Anthony Lewis led two breakout sessions on the students’ civil rights. Other breakouts focused on issues facing youth of different ethnicities and cultures, such as LGBT, Arab American, African American, Hispanic American, and American Indian.

The students received tools and information on developing and implementing social justice projects in their schools. Here’s a peek at the website where tools, resources and work products will be housed: <http://www.youthcivilrights.org/>





## MDCR Educates on Fair Housing

2016 marked the 48th anniversary of the Fair Housing Act - a law that protects people from discrimination when they rent, buy, or secure financing for housing. It's a law that MDCR's Housing Unit knows inside and out, which makes them ideal educators on fair housing, for everyone from buyers and renters to owners, management companies and real estate professionals.

In 2016, MDCR's Housing Unit conducted 16 fair housing trainings, reaching approximately 700 people with important information on their rights and responsibilities under fair housing law. In addition to the 16 MDCR-led trainings, the Housing team partnered with Fair Housing Centers around the state to conduct joint trainings throughout the year. Fair Housing training can target a range of individuals and organizations, including claimants, property managers, property management companies, condo associations, attorneys as well as individual landlords and owners. The 2016 trainings were specifically designed to reach claimants, residents of homeless shelters, disability organizations and those groups that assist seniors, immigrants, LGBT individuals and other vulnerable populations.

Housing Unit Manager Marlene Cain notes: "Conducting fair housing trainings provides the community with their rights and responsibilities as residents, landlords, owners and housing providers. Staff provide the training in an interactive way, using power point presentations, providing examples of cases and scenarios on video to assist in understanding fair housing laws and their application, and a quiz to help pull together everything the attendees learned. The fair housing trainings also allow MDCR to partner with our Fair Housing Centers around the state, providing a resource for those who have questions or concerns so they can follow up with us."



Tyra Khan, Jenny Scheid and Marlene Cain presenting "A Fair Housing Playbook for Rental Housing" May 19 in Grand Rapids.

## MDCR Works with Bipartisan Caucus to Pass Law Removing Offensive Language

In the spring of 2016, a twelve-bill package amending various statutes to refer to "deaf", "deafblind", and "hard of hearing" rather than "deafness", "hearing impaired", and other outdated and offensive language worked its way through the legislative process. MDCR was the lead agency on the bills, working closely with the Legislature's bipartisan Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing Caucus in support of their passage. Founding members of the DDBHH Caucus are Representative Martin Howrylak, Representative Phil Phelps, Senator Marty Knollenberg and Senator David Robertson.

DODDBHH Director Annie Urasky testified on behalf of the bills, saying, "This package seeks to correct the outdated, and in some instances, even offensive language used in Michigan laws... Caucus members have met with many different and diverse groups, often representing individuals with different concerns and priorities. The bills are not substantive changes in law, but they are important changes in language that show Michigan law respects those who are Deaf, DeafBlind or Hard of Hearing."

In addition to removing offensive and outdated language used in a variety of Michigan laws, the legislation updates the Telecommunications Act to require providers to provide text-telephone communication devices to various groups at a reduced or no cost.

In May, Governor Snyder signed the bills into law.



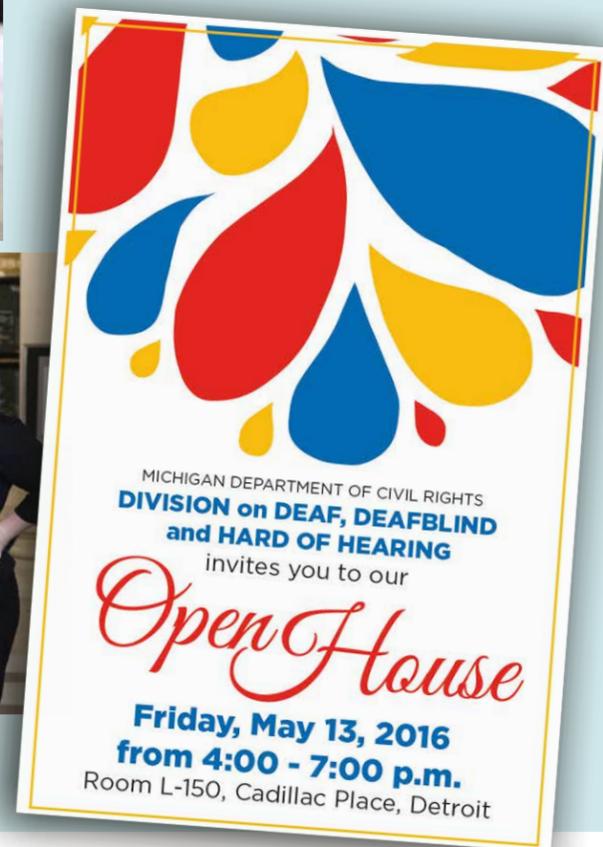


## DODDBHH Makes the Move to Detroit

In the spring of 2016, the Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (DODDBHH) began the transition from MDCR's Lansing office to their new home in the Department's Detroit office. Once the staff (and their office equipment) were settled in at Cadillac Place, the Division hosted an Open House on Friday, May 13.

Karlee Rose Gruetzner put to good use her ample videography and editing skills to create a shot-on-location video invitation in American Sign Language (ASL)!

Division Director Annie Urasky, along with Karlee Rose, Cara DiGiovanni, and Alayna Zerlentes served up refreshments and shared social time with a long list of guests. Joining Annie and her team were the members of the DODDBHH Advisory Council; some Division constituents and ASL interpreters, and friends from state and national advocacy groups and partner organizations.



## MDCR Training Featured and Marlene Cain Honored at West Michigan Fair Housing Conference

On May 19, fourteen MDCR colleagues attended the Fair Housing Center of West Michigan's 29th Annual Fair Housing Luncheon and Workshop series, "Expanding the Fair Housing Playbook," held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Grand Rapids.

Conference participants could choose among four workshops, including one conducted by MDCR superstars Marlene Cain, Tyra Khan, and Jenni Scheid. The workshop, A Fair Housing Playbook for Rental Housing, provided training for rental professionals and emphasized ways to promote compliance with fair housing laws. Division Director Lori Vinson enthusiastically noted, "They did an EXCELLENT job!"

The FHCWM recognized Marlene Cain for her outstanding contributions to fair housing and tireless efforts in eliminating housing discrimination.

Marlene expressed her surprise and gratitude for the recognition. "I was very surprised and felt truly humbled and honored to receive this award from the FHCWM. The work we do is so very important and I have always felt that this is more than a job as we are out there making a huge difference for citizens around the state of Michigan. I feel that I am nothing without my wonderful team and because of all their hard work and efforts, we are able to come together and touch the lives of many."





Dr. Arbulu speaking at the MI Response to Hate Conference

**“I’m excited that HUD trusts MDCR to further our shared mission of creating strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. Our staff has the skill sets and relationships to carry this work into the community. I’m confident that we’ll succeed with all four projects.”**

- Agustin Arbulu, Director

## MDCR Wins HUD Grant to Fund Fair Housing Training and More

In May, MDCR received the welcome news that the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) was awarding MDCR a \$50,000 grant to fund a number of projects designed to reach at-risk populations and support education on and enforcement of fair housing laws. The grant:

- Funded continuous fair housing training with the goal of eliminating housing discrimination;
- Relunched the MI Response to Hate conference to build capacity to respond to organized hate and bias and create safer, more inclusive and welcoming communities;
- Improved outreach to underserved communities and populations, including persons with disabilities, immigrants and ethnic minorities;
- Provided funding for a study to examine disparities in education, health care, housing and government services in southeast Michigan.

Marlene Cain and her capable staff were charged with the training portion, working with partner organizations to identify participants, market events and customize messages for target audiences. Each training session was designed to educate specific communities on fair housing law, rights and responsibilities, and how to file discrimination complaints.

The “MI Response to Hate” conference (see more in October) focused on reaching people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ people, individuals with disabilities and those with felony convictions, to help strengthen their ability to avoid, report, and survive bias incidents and hate crimes. A team of MDCR staff, led by Mark Bishop and Martha Gonzalez-Cortes, worked with MIAAHC members to host what was the most successful hate crimes conference in years.

MDCR Communications developed methods, materials, and messages designed to reach individuals in one hard-hit community – Flint. Michigan – and raise awareness of fair housing law and what to do if you’re the victim of discrimination, particularly among underserved populations and people facing language barriers.

The equity and disparities project mirrors research MDCR conducted last year in west Michigan. With this grant, MDCR will dig deep into how disparities in access to services like housing, employment and health care, can destabilize neighborhoods and damage the greater community. The final report is expected late in 2017.



Interior bus ad artwork displayed on buses in Flint

## New Communication Tool Helps Drivers who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Communication with law enforcement will be easier for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, thanks to a newly-designed, printable visor card from MDCR’s Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing.

Lt. Gov. Brian Calley joined Director Arbulu, DODDBHH Director Annie Urasky and statewide law enforcement partners to unveil the new card designed to fit over a car’s sun visor, in a bag or backpack, or on the passenger seat for easy access.

“Having an easy-to-access tool, in my hand or on my phone, will make traffic stops safer and less stressful for both the driver and the police officer,” said Annie Urasky.

“Removing barriers for Michiganders with disabilities is instrumental in helping them live self-determined independent lives,” Calley said. “This new communication tool is a positive step that improves safety for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing as well as law enforcement partners across Michigan.”

Designed to print on a standard 8.5” x 11” sheet of paper and fold in half, the visor card is available to download at the Division’s website, [www.michigan.gov/doddbhh](http://www.michigan.gov/doddbhh). The card can also be saved to an iPhone screen, giving users access to the card with one tap. Android users can save the card to their phone’s files storage app for quick access.

“One of the most important skills of a police officer is the ability to communicate effectively, whether it is during a traffic stop, criminal investigation or rendering aid to someone in need,” said Col. Kriste Kibbey Etue, Director of the Michigan State Police. “We appreciate the leadership of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights in developing this card that will make interactions with persons who are deaf or hard of hearing more effective and ultimately safer for everyone.”





## DODDBHH Outlines New Rules for Sign Language Interpreters

In July, MDCR's Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (DODDBHH) announced new rules that define the required qualifications for Michigan Certified Sign Language Interpreters – rules that apply to every lawyer, doctor, business or other entity that is required under law to provide interpreters. The rules are designed to ensure that individuals who are deaf and deafblind will have equal access to communication, especially when accessing important medical and legal information and services.

"In Michigan, providers have always been required to secure a qualified interpreter, but until now, there was no definition to help a provider know what that meant," said Director Arbulu. "Now, medical and legal offices, courts, hospitals and doctors' offices will be able to identify an interpreter with the specific training and credential required to effectively and accurately handle the situation at hand."

The new requirements establish the skill level and training required for professional sign language interpreters, dividing them into three minimum certification levels based on the complexity, difficulty, and risk of harm inherent in the interpreting situation. The new standard levels provide clear guidance and ensure that medical and legal practitioners and organizations can provide interpreters that meet the appropriate minimum requirements necessary to interpret in a given setting.

DODDBHH Director Annie Urasky explained that the credentialing of interpreters is a recognition that not all interpreting assignments are the same, and for legal and medical matters in particular, interpreters need additional training and competence in the subject matter in order to effectively communicate.

"When hiring an interpreter," said Urasky, "the first step after discussing the individual needs of the person requesting the accommodation, will be to consider the type of information you need to share with that individual, and then determining which standard level applies."

"Improving access to our justice system is a top priority of the Supreme Court," said Justice Bridget M. McCormack at a news conference announcing the rules. "Whether it is tearing down the barrier of language access for those with limited English proficiency or providing qualified sign language interpreters for individuals who are deaf or deafblind, the ability to communicate effectively in court must be afforded to everyone."



## Commission calls on Legislature to Pass Anti-Bias Crime Legislation

Citing the need to beef up Michigan laws prohibiting bias-based crimes, in July the Commission unanimously passed a resolution calling on the legislature to amend Michigan's Ethnic Intimidation Act to add gender identification, sexual orientation and disability.

"For almost two decades, the Michigan Civil Rights Commission has called for closing the loopholes that allow criminals to get away with committing bias-based hate crimes," said Commission co-chair Arthur Horwitz. "Now, with the support of Senators Jones and Bieda, we have an opportunity to protect some of our most vulnerable citizens."

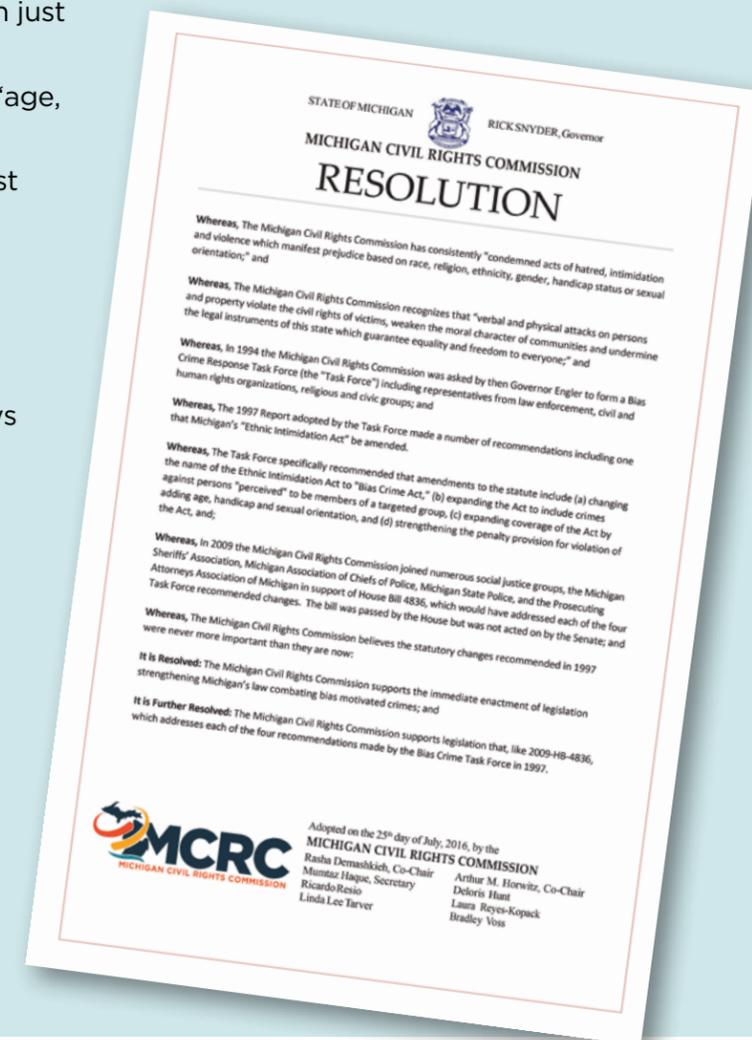
The Commission and the Department have a decades-long history of advocating for expansion of Michigan's anti-bias laws.

In 1994, Governor Engler charged the Commission with forming a Bias Crime Task Force, which included representatives from law enforcement, civil and human rights organizations, religious and civic groups. In 1997, the Task Force issued their recommendations:

- Changing the name of the Ethnic Intimidation Act to "Bias Crime Act," to cover more than just intimidation based on ethnicity;
- Expanding coverage of the Act by adding "age, handicap and sexual orientation";
- Expanding the Act to include crimes against persons perceived to be members of a targeted group;
- Strengthening the penalty provision for violation of the Act.

In 2009, the Commission joined statewide police organizations, the Prosecuting Attorneys Association and social justice organizations in support of House Bill 4836, which would have addressed each of the four recommendations. The bill was passed by the House but was not acted on by the Senate.

"These changes to Michigan hate crimes law have never been more important than they are today," said Rasha Demashkieh, co-chair of the Commission. "We urge the legislature to waste no more time in updating this law, and saying to the rest of the country that the state of Michigan will not stand by and allow crimes of hate to continue unanswered."





## 10,000 Visor Cards for 10,000 Patrol Cars

After designing a new tool to aid communication between police and drivers who are deaf or hard of hearing, law enforcement agencies across the state began expressing interest in putting the visor cards in their patrol cars. In response, MDCR's Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing announced a plan to print and distribute 10,000 visor cards for use in 10,000 patrol cars throughout Michigan.

"Since we first created the visor card, the response from law enforcement has been overwhelmingly positive," said Agustin Arbulu, Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. "They immediately recognized its utility in easing communication with individuals who may not be able to hear their questions or instructions. It was their response that prompted the Department of Civil Rights to make the decision to equip as many patrol cars as possible with this simple but effective tool."

The Division announced the plan at a press briefing at the Ingham County Sheriff's office in Mason, and began the distribution by supplying hundreds of cards to police agencies participating in the event, including the Ingham County Sheriff's Department, the East Lansing Police Department, and the Michigan State Police.

"This distribution of 10,000 communication visor cards to 10,000 patrol vehicles is the first of what I hope will be many collaborative efforts between the Division and law enforcement to ensure effective communication between police and individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing," said DODDBHH Director Annie Urasky. "The visor card is just one tool, but it is an important start in helping ensure the safety of both drivers and police officers and limit misunderstandings."

The visor card communication tool is endorsed by prominent statewide law enforcement organizations including Michigan State Police, Michigan Sheriff's Association, Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police, Michigan Fraternal Order of Police, and Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards (MCOLES).

The card was created as a resource for drivers who are deaf or hard of hearing to have at the ready when they interact with law enforcement officers, and the Division provides the cards free of charge to any deaf or hard of hearing individual who requests one.

For a high resolution jpeg of the visor card to print or download to a cell phone, go to the Division website at [www.michigan.gov/DODDBHH](http://www.michigan.gov/DODDBHH).

*"This distribution of 10,000 communication visor cards to 10,000 patrol vehicles is the first of what I hope will be many collaborative efforts between the Division and law enforcement. . ."*

*- Annie Urasky,  
DODDBHH Director*



## MDCR Launches Intake Pilot

Beginning on September 1, MDCR launched an Intake pilot program to post MDCR Enforcement Division staff at a range of community organizations. This new offering, in partnership with organizations like the NAACP, LaSed, ACCESS and more, is designed to bring our services closer to the people who need them, in a place they know and trust.

Individuals can file a complaint of discrimination, ask for help and a referral to another state or local agency, or request training. In the first four months of the pilot, Enforcement Division staff held office hours at community organizations in Detroit, Dearborn, Grand Rapids, Flint and Kalamazoo, and is exploring expanding into new communities in 2017.



*Amy MacDonald is working out of ACCESS in Dearborn*

## MDCR Trains Emerging Leaders

The 2016 MDCR Leadership Development Academy began with a kick-off meeting in February, and over the course of eight months, participants completed the Emerging Leaders curriculum through Civil Service. From April to September, the trainees gathered in monthly meetings to work through the curriculum and hone their leadership skills.

The final meeting and graduation ceremony was held in Detroit on September 7. The 2016 graduates of the MDCR Leadership Development Academy were Tonya Barry, Debra Bell, Trasonya Felton, Karyn Griffin, Karmisha McBeth and Rochelle Ricks.

Graduates received honor cords, framed certificates of achievement, the book "The Leadership Challenge" by Kouzes and Posner and a custom bookmark on the "Qualities of a Leader" as identified by the group.

Trasonya Felton shared the impact of the training on her life and work:

*" 'You manage things and you lead people.' That was a very powerful statement to me! Before hearing it and taking this course, I really didn't think there was a difference between the two. Successful leaders aren't born, they are made and groomed continuously (something else I didn't realize.) After the Leadership Development Training, I have a newfound respect and appreciation for our management staff. Kudos to you all!"*





## MDCR, MIAAHC Host 9th Annual MI Response to Hate Conference

On Monday, October 24, MDCR and the Michigan Alliance Against Hate Crimes (MIAAHC) hosted the 9th Annual “MI Response to Hate” conference at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing. The sold-out event featured both Michigan and national speakers and panelists, presenting on a wide array of topics touching on preventing and responding to hate crime and bias incidents.

Bryan Greene, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), delivered the morning keynote, making the connection between hate crimes and housing discrimination.

“Hate crimes are often committed to maintain segregation,” said Greene. “Communities that receive HUD funding must demonstrate meaningful action on eliminating segregation. Fund recipients receive data, mapping tools and can overlay other data elements.”

Greene also spoke of the importance of residents having a voice in these discussions, and most importantly, answering the question, “How does the community want to move the needle to address segregation?”

The conference was structured with breakout, plenary and panel sessions throughout the day. One panel showcased the Fair Michigan Justice Project, a collaborative effort of the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office and Fair Michigan to investigate and prosecute capitol offenses committed against members of the LGBTQ community.

A second panel addressed Best Practices in Police Relations and Community Engagement. Law enforcement officers from Kalamazoo, Flint, Grand Rapids and Muskegon participated in the panel moderated by Nikki Pardo, former MDCR colleague and now CEO of Global Alliance Solutions.

Ronald L. Davis, Director of the US Department of Justice COPS Office delivered the luncheon keynote. COPS supports national efforts to implement the recommendations outlined in the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing report, designed to help law enforcement agencies and communities strengthen trust and collaboration while ushering in a new phase of community-focused policing.



After his presentation, Davis took questions and led a thought-provoking discussion comparing the Kerner Commission Report, issued in 1968, to the 21st Century Community Policing Report of 2015.

Various presenters shared tools for use in combating and responding to hate crimes. Herman Millholland, Former Director, Crime Victim Services Division, Texas Office of the Attorney General, showcased the Mass Violence and Terrorism Technical Assistance Toolkit, a web-based program to help communities provide timely and effective responses to victims of mass violence and develop comprehensive victim-assistance plans.

FBI Victim Specialist Carmen Kucinich described the work of the Victim Assistance Rapid Deployment Team and led an exploration of Kalamazoo’s community policing strategy compared with that of four other jurisdictions.

Michigan’s two US Attorneys, Patrick Miles and Barbara McQuade, also addressed the conference.

Some common themes emerged from the conference:

- Relationships are crucial, and it is especially important to have partnerships in place before an incident occurs;
- Knowing how to build trust and be aware of one’s own biases helps us to see through another’s eyes as we try to best serve the public;
- “The truth may hurt, but selective ignorance is fatal.” Ron Davis, US Dept. of Justice COPS Office;
- Knowing about a community’s resources is key, especially when responding to mass victim incidents;
- Humans can be stronger than we know in the face of adversity, but it is important to remember not to overpromise or inflate your organization’s role in an incident.

MIAAHC Steering Committee members Mark Bishop, Karen Bolsen and Martha Gonzalez-Cortes report feedback from attendees was exceptional. From one attendee: “Kudos - Great conference, content was spot-on and the attendance was off the charts. Congratulations and well done!” Another said, “This was an amazing conference. Thank you for working to put together such a fantastic group of speakers.”

MIAAHC and MDCR are currently in the planning process for the 10th Annual MI Response to Hate Conference, tentatively scheduled for fall of 2017.





## Relentless Tour Reaches New Audiences, Finds National Recognition

2016 was a year of expanded reach, national recognition, and a refined focus for Anthony Ianni and the Relentless Tour, MDCR's first-of-its-kind anti-bullying initiative.

First, the reach: In 2016, more than 56,000 students in Michigan and beyond heard Anthony's message of resilience and determination. He took his Relentless Tour to 135 schools, another 25 summer programs and community events, spoke at 10 conferences and 5 colleges and universities.

Second, new national recognition: In April, CBS News named Anthony one of the year's most inspiring stories of people on the autism spectrum.

In November, Sports Illustrated published an in-depth look at autism in sports which featured Anthony's story, including his work to eradicate bullying and inspire everyone to "Live Your Dream."

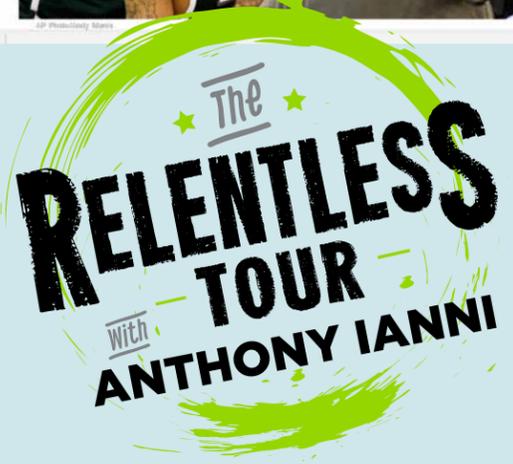
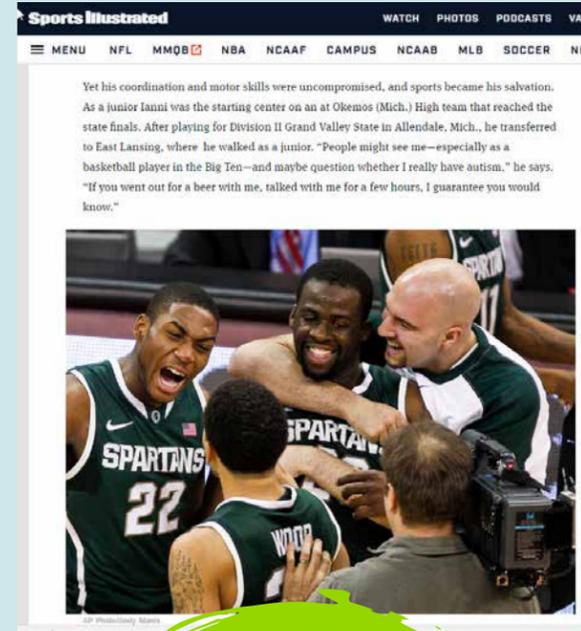
And third, a new focus: In order to reach more Michigan students, the Relentless Tour now waives all fees for any school with 40% or higher participation in the free and reduced lunch program.

Before launching the Relentless Tour, Anthony was a member of Michigan State University's 2010 and 2012 Big Ten Champion and Tournament Championship teams and the 2010 Final Four team.

At the age of 4, Anthony was diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and was the victim of bullying. Doctors told his parents he would struggle to graduate high school, would never go to college, and would likely grow up to live in a group home.

But he defied the odds, graduating with a degree in Sociology from Michigan State University and becoming the first athlete with autism to play Division I college basketball in NCAA history.

Anthony's mission, in his own words: "Everyone is affected by bullying in some way and students with autism are at incredibly high risk to be victimized. Our hope is that through my story and spreading our message we can not only inspire kids to take a stand against bullying but also make bullies rethink their actions."

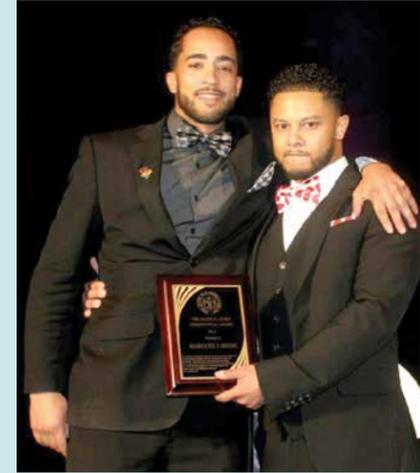


## GR NAACP Honors CRI Marques Beene

Each year, the Greater Grand Rapids NAACP recognizes community members for their outstanding work. On October 21, Marques Beene was honored at the organization's 50th Annual Freedom Fund Dinner and awards ceremony.

Marques, a Civil Rights Investigator in the Grand Rapids office, received the Hazel R. Lewis Presidential Award, given annually to a person who has demonstrated outstanding leadership ability and concern for his or her community, has been an asset to the local branch, and stands up for the beliefs and values of the organization.

"I truly appreciate the recognition given to me by the Greater Grand Rapids Branch NAACP. I was also very proud to tell the audience that I am a Civil Rights Investigator for the State of Michigan and to have such distinguished colleagues from the department be present to see me receive such an award."



## Mary Engelman Named Executive Director of the Michigan Women's Commission

In November, Governor Snyder appointed Mary Engelman Executive Director of the Michigan Women's Commission, filling the vacancy left by Suzy Avery's retirement in July. During her first week on the job, we caught up with Mary by cell phone as she was traveling across the state to meet with each of the Commission's 15 members.

"I feel honored and humbled to have a way to make things better for women and girls," said Mary. "I am the mom of twin 16-year-old daughters, and this is the first time they were excited and proud of my opportunity to make a difference."

Mary intends to work with Commissioners to develop a strategic plan. "I'd like to fine-tune our mission and vision and bring clarity to it, attacking it with purpose and determination. Everything we do at Civil Rights gives people an opportunity and a chance - we all work for a noble cause. Not all government entities get to say that."

Mary joins state government from OpTech LLC in Troy, where she was the Director of Government Affairs and Public Relations. She also served as Executive Director of the Greater Farmington Area Chamber of Commerce, as President/CEO of the Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber, and as the Political Director for the Michigan Republican Party.

Mary graduated from Evangel University in Springfield, MO. She is a self-described 'military child' born in Seoul, Korea, and she is fluent in the Korean language.





## MCRC and MDCR: Taking a Stand Against Hate

In December of 2015, in response to a rise in reports of hate crimes and bias incidents across the country, Commission Co-Chairs Arthur Horwitz and Rasha Demashkieh published an op-ed in the Detroit News calling on all Americans to denounce acts of bias and hate based on religion and ethnicity.

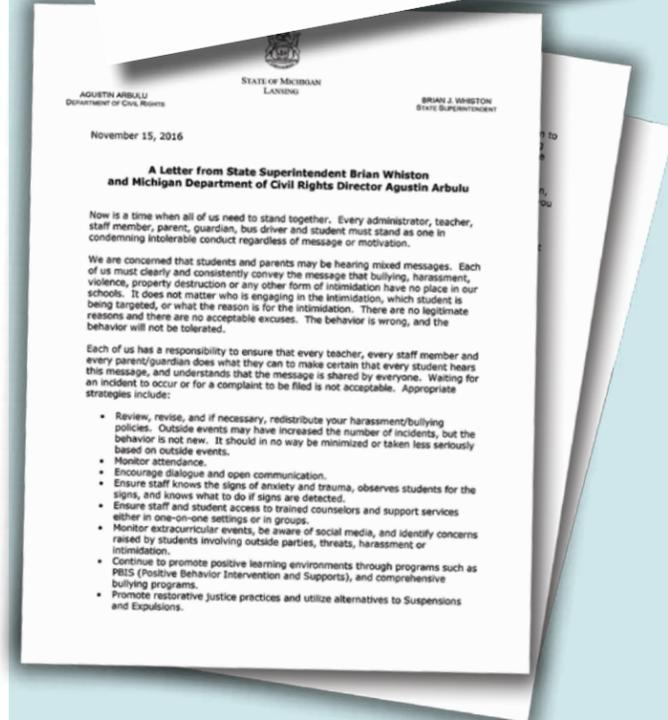
The op-ed foreshadowed an ongoing surge in hate and bias incidents in Michigan that reached a crescendo late in 2016. In a decision consistent with our mission and more than 50 years of fighting on behalf of civil and human rights, the Department issued a statement in response to reports of serious bias incidents in schools.

“As the Director of the Department of Civil Rights, I am gravely concerned about recent reports of harassment in Michigan schools and colleges targeting students of color or of a different race or ethnicity. We urge schools and parents throughout the state to be vigilant and to intervene immediately when incidents such as the one in Royal Oak take place.”

As reports of school incidents continued, Director Arbulu joined with State Superintendent Brian Whiston and the Michigan Department of Education to send a joint letter to all public, private and charter schools in the state, to “...clearly and consistently convey the message that bullying, harassment, violence, property destruction or any other form of intimidation have no place in our schools.”

The letter included recommended strategies for combatting bias incidents, and a long list of resources available to schools to help them in their efforts to deal appropriately and effectively with bias incidents on their campuses.

“Now is a time when all of us need to stand together. Every administrator, teacher, staff member, parent, guardian, bus driver and student must stand as one in condemning intolerable conduct regardless of message or motivation.”



## Commission Reaffirms Commitment to Minimum Wage for Migrant Farmworkers

At their December 5, meeting, the Commission called on the state of Michigan to continue a long-standing policy that provides minimum wage protection to migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Michigan and prohibits the use of illegal child labor on the state’s small farms.

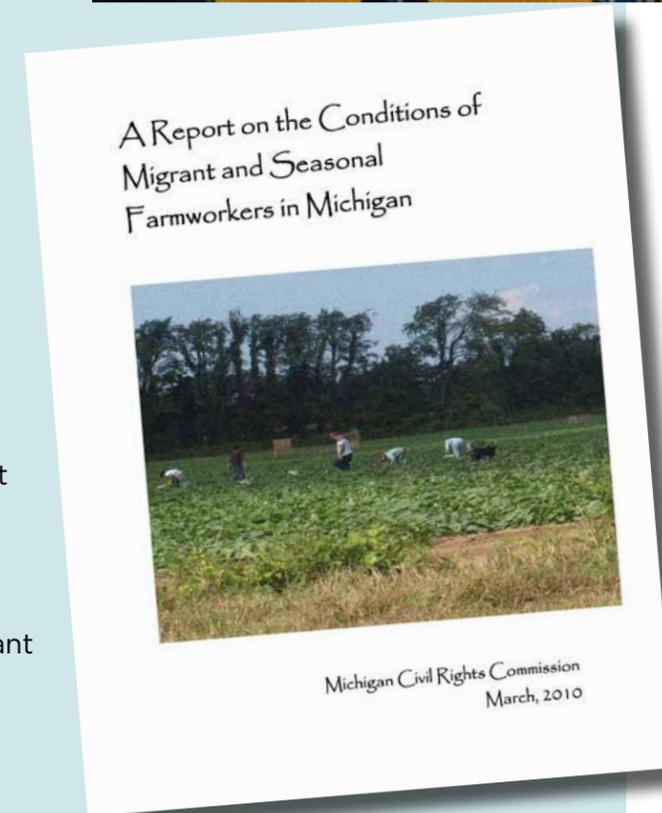
“Migrant farmworkers labor long hours under challenging conditions, earning every penny of a minimum wage paycheck,” said MDCR Director Arbulu. “Their work is worth the minimum wage, and state and federal law establishes their right to the minimum wage. It is important that the state of Michigan stand by its decade-long position that these wages are protected under law, allowing farmworkers to support their families and contribute to a strong agricultural economy.”

The decision to voice their support for minimum wage came in response to an announcement by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) Wage and Hour Division that the state minimum wage would no longer cover some farmworkers on small farms.

The Commission has long been a leading voice for protecting the rights of Michigan’s migrant and seasonal farmworkers. In 2009, the Commission launched an investigation into the working and living conditions of migrant farmworkers in the state. In March of 2010, the Commission released “A Report on the Conditions of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in Michigan” with a list of recommendations, including:

- Providing a minimum wage for migrant and seasonal farmworkers in Michigan,
- Improving the living and working conditions of migrant farmworkers, and
- Eliminating illegal use of child labor in agriculture.

Michigan employs the largest number of migrant and seasonal farmworker families in the Midwest, with a population of more than 94,000 individuals, including more than 42,000 who are 19 years of age or younger.





## Flint Water Crisis: Three Hearings and a Final Report

In the wake of one of the worst environmental disasters in the history of the state of Michigan - the contamination of Flint's water with toxic levels of lead - the Michigan Civil Rights Commission unanimously passed a resolution in January of 2016 to hold public hearings on alleged discrimination involving the residents of Flint and their public water supply.

"What is happening in Flint will have far-reaching consequences for the people who live and work there, many of whom are protected by state and national civil rights laws," said Commission Co-Chair Arthur Horwitz. "We have an obligation under our constitutional mandate to investigate allegations of discrimination, including disparate treatment based on race, color, national origin or any other protected status."

The first public hearing on April 28 began with a public comment period, with priority given to Flint residents to share their stories of coping with the contamination, the impact on

their health and their ability to work and take care of their families.

Public comments were followed by a panel from various state agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Talent and Economic Development, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and the Michigan State Police discussing the state's response. Flint residents were given the opportunity to respond to the state agency panel.

The Commission convened the second hearing on July 14, with a focus on the city's housing situation. On a tour of the city, Commissioners visited neighborhoods hard-hit by the water crisis, listening to residents still struggling more than two years after it began.

They visited a local food bank, the public housing community of Howard Estates, and held a town hall-style dialogue at Joy Tabernacle Church, in the heart of the Civic

Park neighborhood. By taking their forum directly to Flint residents, the Commission was better able to reach individuals who may have been reluctant to share their stories at a formal hearing.

At the hearing that followed, Commissioners heard from expert panelists who offered both historical and current perspectives on housing in Flint, including redlining, reduced housing values, property taxes, the inability to obtain appraisals, and disparities in how properties are maintained after foreclosure.

On September 8, the Commission held their third and final public hearing, taking comments from residents as well as three panels of experts on the environmental justice implications of the water crisis. Also in September, the Commission issued a call for written testimony, with an emphasis on housing or housing discrimination, environmental justice, and personal testimony from Flint residents affected by the crisis.

More than a year later, after three public hearings and testimony from more than 150 residents, experts and government officials, the Commission released its 130-page report on the investigation. In it, they conclude that race and racism played roles in causing the Flint water crisis, that people of all races were victims, and that the actions resulting in the poisoning of the city's water supply had abridged the civil rights of Flint residents.

Three key report recommendations include:

- The Michigan Civil Rights Commission and the Department must do a better job of listening to the constituents we represent and of making their priorities our priorities.
- MDCR will develop a mechanism for Department staff to identify and inform the Commission of instances in which the civil rights of a community or constituency are being ignored.
- MCRC and MDCR will acknowledge the role that race and racism have played in our history and how it continues to impact our present, in order to adopt policies that consider and address it.





At a press conference on February 17, MDCR Director Arbulu summed up his thoughts on the Commission’s historically significant investigation and report:

“Policy makers, government leaders, and decision makers at many levels failed Flint residents. By not challenging their assumptions, by not asking themselves the tough questions about how policy and decisions play out in different communities, especially communities primarily made up of people of color, those decisions and actions – or in some cases, lack of action – led to the tragedy taking place in Flint.”

Find the full report, including an executive summary and the full list of recommendations at [Michigan.gov/MDCR](http://Michigan.gov/MDCR) and click on the button that says “Flint Water Crisis Report.”

“People all over the country are concerned about the people of Flint, and many are working tirelessly to solve this crisis. Everyone – those who are directly impacted as well all who are trying to help – deserves our best effort to find out if discrimination played any role.”

- Rasha Demashkieh,  
MCRC Co-Chair



## MCRC Supports Flint Residents

The Flint water crisis brought together individuals from throughout state government to tackle a wide variety of tasks – from securing and distributing water and filters, to developing response strategies and providing information to the news media and the public.

The headquarters for the state’s efforts was the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), housed in the Michigan State Police Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division. The SEOC provides for a coordinated response and recovery effort on behalf of all state agencies during times of emergency or disaster.

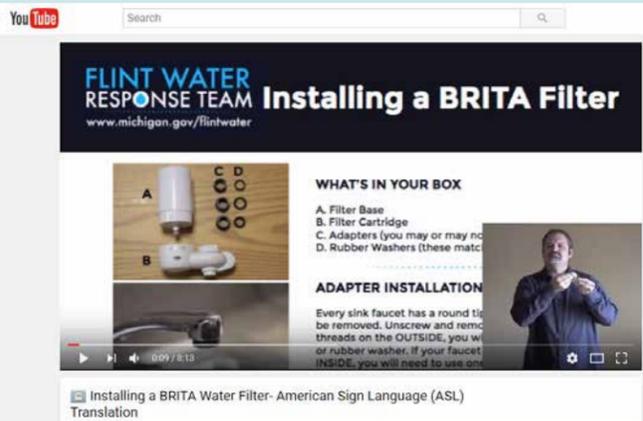
Mark Bishop is a member of the State Emergency Operations Team, representing MDCR at the SEOC. Mark participated in daily briefings, relaying relevant information back to the appropriate MDCR staff. Mark also carried messages and suggestions from MDCR back to the SEOC. It was as a result of these SEOC briefings that Mark helped identify the need

to have materials translated into additional languages.

DODDBHH Director Annle Urasky met with the manager of the SEOC Joint Information Center, or JIC, in early February and successfully advocated for translating important documents into American Sign Language (ASL).

These ASL videos provide facts on adult exposure to lead, boiling water, cleaning aerators and adding phosphate to water. The state has also translated several documents and forms into Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Arabic and Hmong.

Lee Gonzales, Martha Gonzalez-Cortes and members of the Public Affairs staff worked to identify trusted local leaders and community resources to help ease communications with the Hispanic/Latino population, and established communications networks among local community groups, law enforcement



“Not every act we undertook - large or small - to help Flint recover from this crisis is recorded in this brief record, but your work was noticed and will not be forgotten. The cumulative effort MDCR has made to help in Flint is something all of us can take pride in.”

- Agustin Arbulu, Director



agencies and other organizations to keep the flow of accurate information reaching Flint families of all races, religions and ethnicities.

MDCR Communications periodically worked at the Flint-based JIC, which was staffed by communications professionals from throughout state government. JIC workers are tasked with answering the media hotline, responding to reporter questions, monitoring news coverage and trending topics on social media, writing and issuing press releases, arranging interviews, and messaging on social media.

And Director Arbulu, with assistance from Lee Gonzales and others on staff as needed, represented MDCR at Mission Flint - the state government committee created by the Governor's office to coordinate efforts, monitor progress and resolve issues related to the Flint water crisis.

#### Grants Fund Work with Flint Youth

From the early days of the crisis, MDCR has been actively involved in efforts aimed at helping - and hearing from - the young people of Flint.

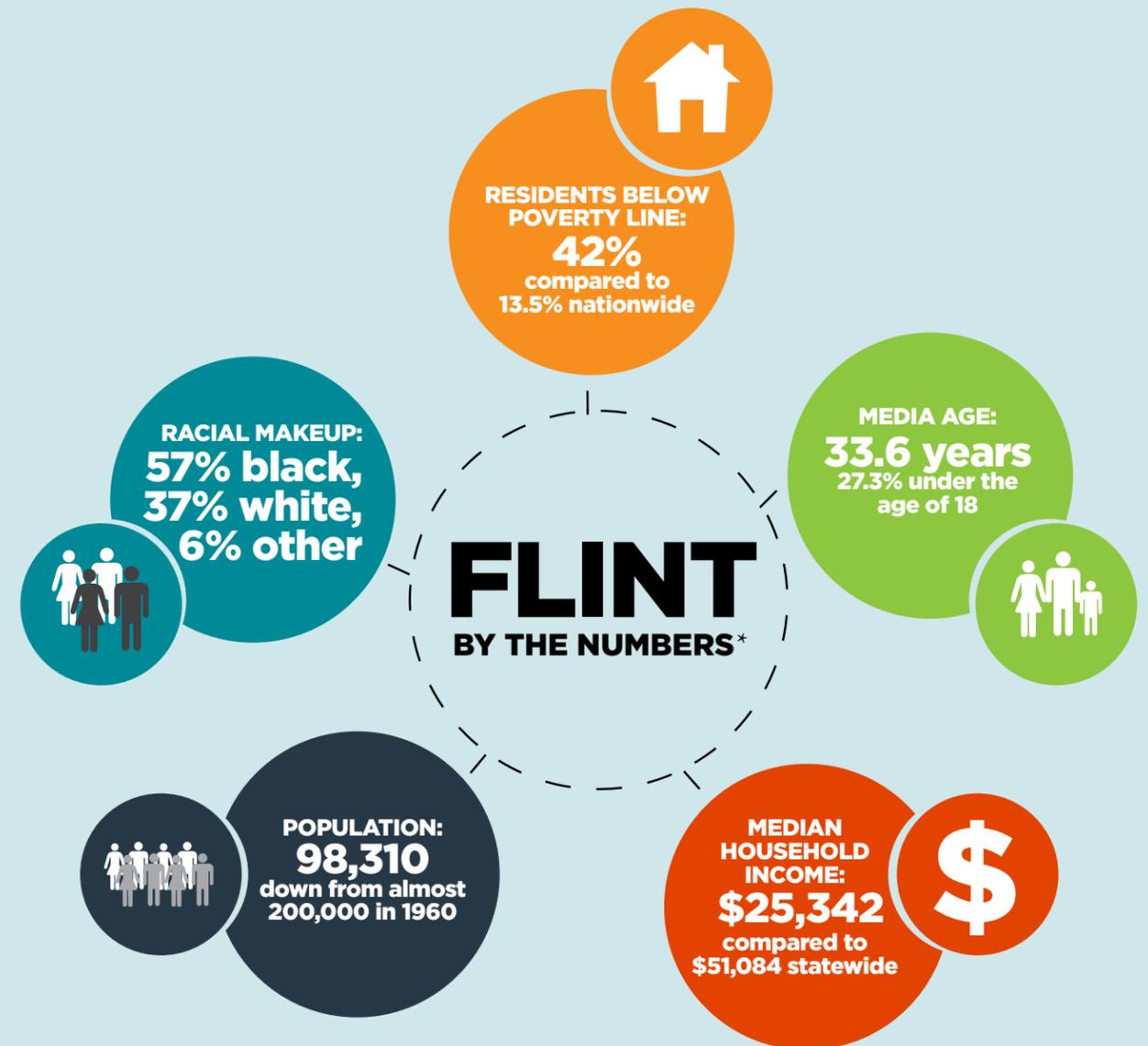
MDCR, the Department of Health and Human Services, the University of Michigan-Flint and more than a dozen local partners received a \$5 million/five year grant from the federal government for community trauma recovery on behalf of people living in Flint. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) funded the proposal, called Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma, or the ReCAST Project.

The work will focus on youth and families, helping to improve their resiliency and strengthen their relationships with law enforcement and government.

As part of The ReCast Project, MDCR and MCRC will host at least one forum or hearing with Flint youth, age 12 to 21. They will be invited to give sworn testimony on the impact of the Flint water crisis and their suggestions for helping the community recover. The information MDCR gathers from this forum will help shape the ReCAST Project Strategic Plan.

MDCR also partnered with a coalition of Flint-based Hispanic/Latino organizations, Latinos United for Flint (LUFF), to seek funding from the Community Foundation of Flint. The Foundation awarded the coalition \$68,410 to support capacity development and the distribution of free, nutritious food to Flint families.

And, MDCR helped LUFF apply for a Nutrition in Community (NIC) grant. The Michigan Health Endowment Fund will administer the grant which supports culturally and linguistically appropriate nutrition education classes to Spanish-speaking Flint residents.



\*2015 estimate, U.S. Census Bureau

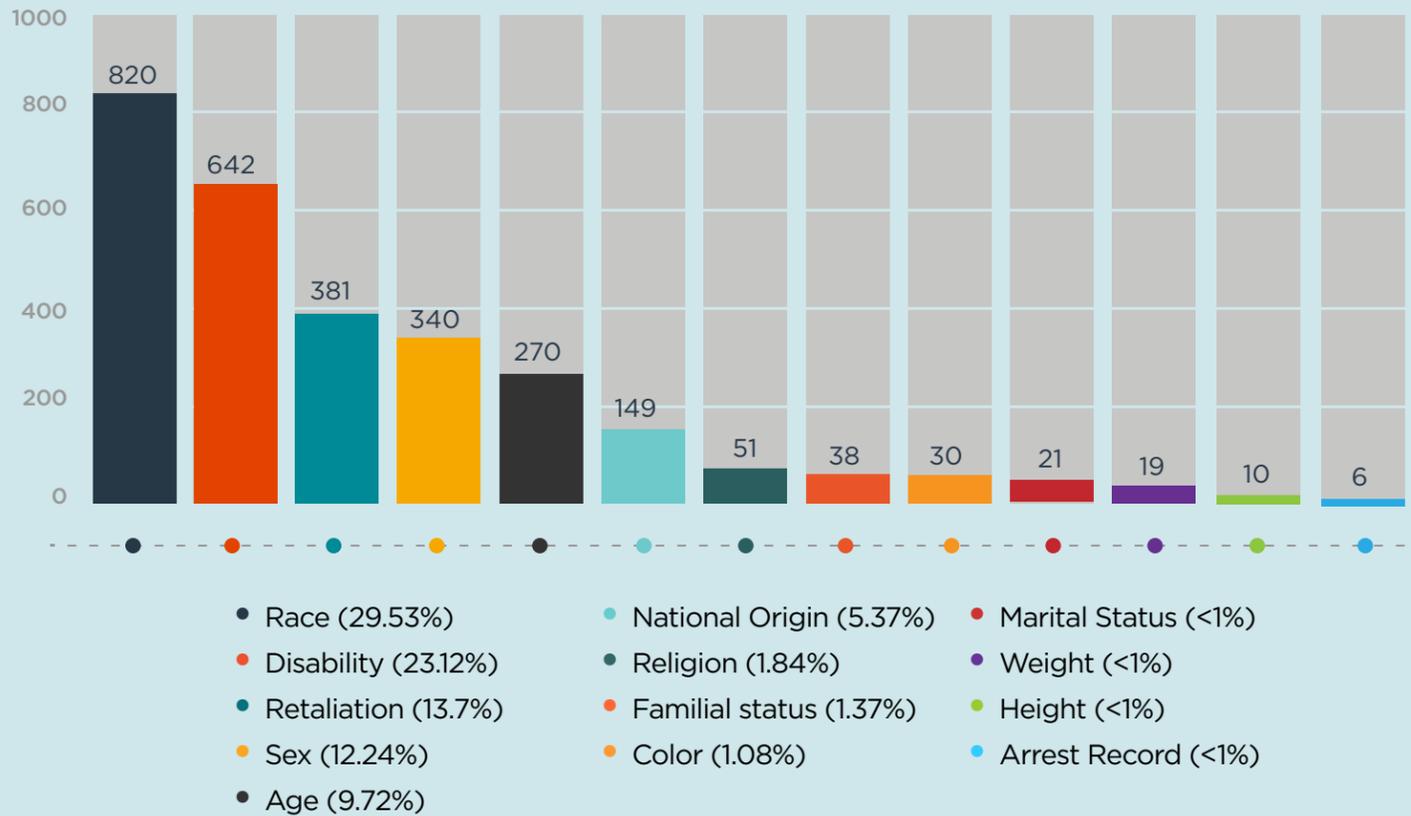
### Customer Contacts and Complaint Investigation

At the core of MDCR's mission is investigating complaints of unlawful discrimination. In FY16, MDCR received 8,692 contacts. These include requests for service by phone, through our online portal, in person or by email. Contacts include complaints of discrimination, training requests, information requests or referrals, and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests.

At MDCR, a complaint refers to a request for service specifically regarding an allegation of unlawful discrimination. In FY16, the Enforcement Division closed 2,052 complaints. Settlements totaling \$1,178,584.91 were provided to claimants, including cash awards, back pay, 401(k) contributions, and legal fees. Of this total, \$208,484.72 were cash awards.

The basis for a complaint is the characteristic under which an individual pursues a civil rights case. In other words, it is the protected class according to the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act and other civil rights laws. Complaints may have multiple bases, therefore, these total more than 100%.

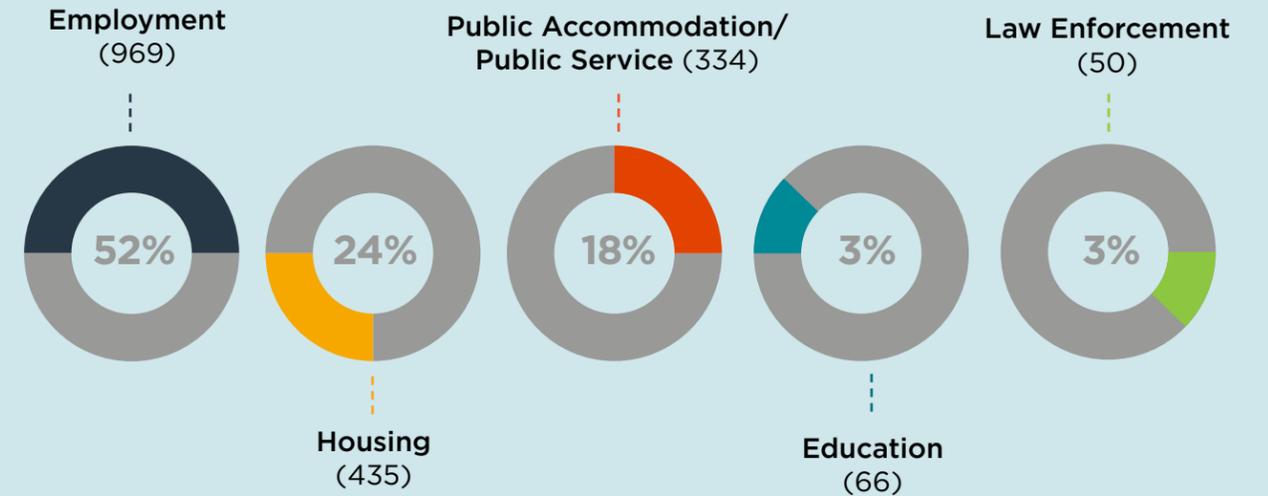
**FORMAL COMPLAINTS FILED BY BASIS FY16**  
October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016



In addition to the protected class characteristic(s), complaints also are categorized by area or setting. For example, someone might file a complaint based on their race in an employment setting, or their disability in a housing setting.

The majority of complaints MDCR received are in the area of employment (969), followed by housing (435), public accommodation/public service (334), education (66) and law enforcement (50).

**FORMAL COMPLAINTS FILED BY AREA FY16**  
October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016



### Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver

MDCR is responsible for administering the Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver (MITW), a program that waives tuition for eligible Native American students attending Michigan's four-year public universities and community colleges.

In order to be eligible for the waiver, applicants must:

- Be a legal resident of Michigan for at least 12 consecutive months immediately prior to applying;
- Be one-quarter or more Native American blood quantum as certified by the student's Tribal Enrollment Department;
- Be an enrolled citizen of a U.S. federally-recognized tribe; and
- Be enrolled at one of Michigan's public community colleges or universities.

**588**

During the 2015-2016 academic year, **588** students submitted MITW applications.\*

A total of **2,297** waivers were provided during 2015-2016 to students attending Michigan's public universities.\*

**2,297**

**1,456**

Another **1,456** waivers were granted to students attending Michigan's community colleges.\*

\*Because of the number of years required to complete a degree, the number of students enrolled at eligible institutions benefitting from the MITW program fluctuates over time, and each student typically receives the waiver several semesters in a row.

### Working to Prevent Discrimination through Training and Education

Along with investigating complaints of discrimination, MDCR is committed to preventing discrimination and working to bridge gaps in understanding and trust. We engage with community and faith-based organizations, advocates and law enforcement agencies, businesses and government agencies to address civil rights issues and build partnerships to promote voluntary compliance with civil rights laws.

The Public Affairs Division provides a range of training and educational services on topics such as:

- Sexual and Discriminatory Harassment,
- Building Cultural Competence,
- Michigan Indian Tuition Waiver,
- Bias-motivated Crime Law, and
- General Civil Rights.

The Public Affairs Division provided 108 training and educational sessions in 2016, reaching a total of 4,123 individuals.

#### MDCR PUBLIC AFFAIRS TRAINING FY 2016



The Enforcement Division Housing Section offers training on fair housing rights and responsibilities, emphasizing the importance of putting an end to discrimination in housing.

The Housing Section conducted 16 training sessions in 2016, reaching 700 individuals.

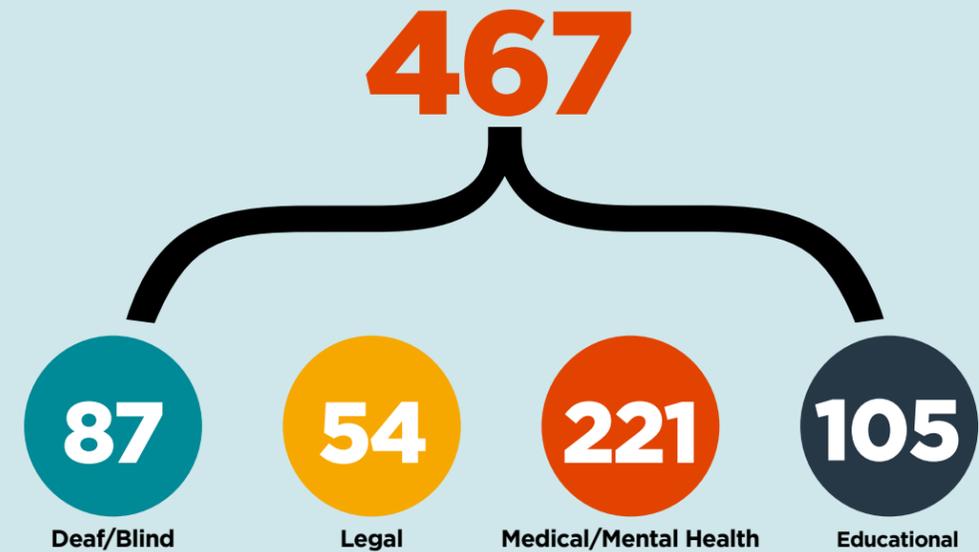


### MDCR's Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing

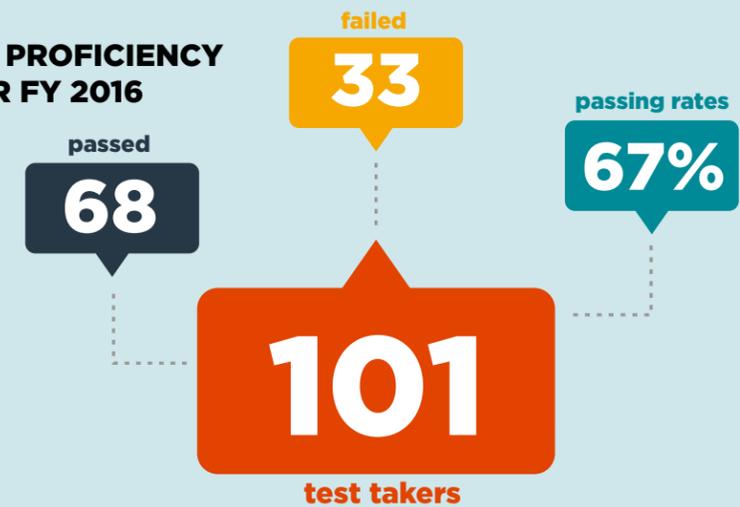
MDCR's Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing (DODDBHH) works with American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters in the areas of testing, continuing education, and endorsements. Michigan leads the nation in requiring special endorsements to interpret in medical/mental health settings, legal settings, educational settings, and for individuals who are DeafBlind.

As of the end of 2016, DODDBHH had approved 467 ASL interpreter endorsements (Medical/Mental Health - 221, Educational - 105, DeafBlind - 87, Legal - 54.)

### MICHIGAN CERTIFIED INTERPRETERS AND ENDORSEMENTS FY 2016



#### TEST OF ENGLISH PROFICIENCY RESULTS FOR FY 2016



LEVEL	TOTAL	PASS	FAIL	PASS RATE
BEI* I	98	48	50	49%
BEI* II	55	6	49	11%
BEI* III	8	4	4	50%
TOTAL	161	58	103	36%

#### TOTAL PERFORMANCE TEST LEVEL PASSING RATES FOR FY 2016

\* BEI stands for the Board for Evaluation of Interpreters, the body which developed a program for testing of ASL interpreters. There are two parts to the test: candidates must first take and pass a written test before proceeding to take the performance test. There are three distinct Interpreter Performance Tests—BEI I, BEI II, and BEI III. The tests are similar in terms of the sections they contain and the tasks they ask the candidates to perform

MCRC offers the following recommendations for consideration by Governor Snyder and the Michigan Legislature. Along with those outlined below, we offer a more detailed list of recommendations for action that arose out of our year-long examination of the Flint water crisis on the MDCR website, [michigan.gov/mdcr](http://michigan.gov/mdcr), at the button entitled “**Flint Water Crisis Report.**”

▶ **RECOMMENDATION: Focus on the Eradication of Systemic Racism**

As a result of the Michigan Civil Rights Commission holding public hearings that culminated in the Flint Water Crisis Report, the Commission adopted the following recommendations which require legislative and executive office attention.

- State government must develop a deeper understanding of the role of structural racialization and implicit bias and the impact on institutions and society.
- State government must provide environmental justice to all people in Michigan that includes meaningful public participation and a public appeal process.
- Michigan must replace or restructure the state’s emergency manager law to allow voter representation at the community level.
- Acknowledge the role race and racism have played in our history and how it continues to impact our present.
- Rebuild trust and credibility through the creation of a “Truth and Reconciliation Commission” and the integration of a racial equity framework within state government and other institutions.
- Create and implement a form of regional government - or at least regional cooperation - that requires suburbs and the urban cores from which they grew to work collaboratively to solve problems.

▶ **RECOMMENDATION: Protect Farmworker Minimum Wage**

Agriculture is one of Michigan’s top economic sectors - a sector that must attract and retain a skilled workforce, season after season, in order to remain competitive. To ensure Michigan farmers will have the ability to plant, maintain and harvest their crops this year and every year, and to protect the rights of all workers to be treated fairly, we support providing minimum wage protection for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and prohibiting illegal child labor on the state’s small farms.

▶ **RECOMMENDATION: Protect Civil Rights and Religious Liberty**

Expand the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to include LGBT protections while preserving religious liberty. MCRC urges legislative action and recommends holding hearings as a follow-up to MDCR’s Report on LGBT Inclusion under Michigan Law and other related issues affecting the LGBT community. The report can be found on the MDCR website, [michigan.gov/mdcr](http://michigan.gov/mdcr), under “**Reports.**”

▶ **RECOMMENDATION: Address Civil Rights Issues in the Field of Education**

As a result of the multitude of civil rights issues in education, create a cross-sectional committee to present recommendations to address the following:

- Michigan lags behind other states in educational achievement. Develop a plan to turn around Michigan’s failing schools and students.
- Michigan received the grade of “F” in the Southern Poverty Law Center’s national report card on the state of civil rights education. Michigan must integrate civil rights education into the Michigan school curriculum.
- Acknowledge the school-to-prison pipeline and its impact on schools, society and employment. Create alternative strategies to address the problem in consultation with prisons, communities and businesses.
- Strive to achieve equity in school funding across the state and in urban areas. Develop a plan to deal with declining enrollment in the state and a plan for equitable funding.

▶ **RECOMMENDATION: Partner to Fight Hate and Bias**

Bias and hate not only harm the Michiganders who are their direct targets (usually members of minority communities), they encourage division and make Michigan a less desirable place to live for everyone. We recommend that the Governor, in partnership with relevant state agencies, cities, counties and industry/small businesses, develop a strategic initiative to make it clear that Michigan will not tolerate hate and bias directed toward any individual or community. This initiative should include replacing the current “Ethnic Intimidation Act” with a more comprehensive and effective anti-bias motivated crime law.

MICHIGAN CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION



**Arthur M. Horwitz**  
*Co-Chair*



**Rasha Demashkieh**  
*Co-Chair*



**Mumtaz Haque**  
*Commissioner*



**Deloris Hunt**  
*Commissioner*



**Laura Reyes Kopack**  
*Commissioner*



**Ricardo Resio**  
*Commissioner*



**Linda Lee Tarver**  
*Commissioner*



**Bradley Voss**  
*Commissioner*



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