CIVIL RIGHTS SUMMIT SUMMARY

2022

**Racism and other 'Isms'-
Shaping Systemic Change
Through An Equity Lens**

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PRESENTED BY THE MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL RIGHTS

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2022 Civil Rights Summit: Initial Summary Report

On June 15, 2022, the Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) and Michigan Civil Rights Commission (MCRC) hosted the 2022 Civil Rights Summit. More than 200 people registered to attend the physical event at the Lansing Center in Lansing, Michigan, and an additional 500 registered to attend virtually. The Summit Planning Committee was made up of individuals representing some of the most active and influential civil and human rights organizations in the state.

Whereas the 2006 Summit was designed to prioritize specific issues, this event focused on examining the roots of systemic socio-cultural conditions. The plenary and breakout sessions explored equity in healthcare, education, housing, voting rights and democracy, and economics. The final plenary session was a call to action where statewide Equity and Inclusion Officers shared their thoughts on effective, research-based strategies to operationalize equity at the institutional and structural levels.

Session Summaries

The content below highlights information collected from each breakout and plenary session, including key challenges, potential solutions, and next steps. One of the main goals of the Civil Rights Summit was to identify opportunities to work collectively on dismantling a particular "ism" based on the issues presented in each session. This summary also includes a participant evaluation form to gather feedback from panelists and attendees to narrow down the path forward. We appreciate your contributions and look forward to working with you to achieve our common goals.

Opening Plenary: Foundation – Systems Lens/Structural "isms"

The opening plenary focused on the importance of recognizing structural "isms" (racism, ageism, sexism, classism, ableism, etc.) and the historical and cultural impact they have had on marginalized communities. Director Johnson set the tone by comparing the current social and political environments to the period preceding the 2006 Summit. Secretary Fudge and Rev. Dr. Anthony both highlighted the stakes of civil rights work and the critical importance of examining the roots of problems first. Alfredo Hernandez Corsen closed the plenary with background information on an equity lens.

SPEAKERS:

- **Kimberly Woolridge, MDCR Deputy Director**
- **Portia Roberson, Chair, Michigan Civil Rights Commission**
- **John E. Johnson, Jr., MDCR Executive Director**
- **Garlin Gilchrist II, Lieutenant Governor of Michigan**
- **Secretary Marcia L. Fudge, U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (Virtual)**
- **Rev. Dr. Wendell Anthony; Pastor, Fellowship Chapel; President, Detroit Branch NAACP; NAACP National Board of Directors**
- **Alfredo Hernandez Corsen, MDCR Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Morning Breakout 1: Education Equity Summary

In this session, we reviewed the root causes of inequity in education and explored strategies to think and act in service to students. Topics included literacy as the cornerstone for personal and professional development; implicit bias education; equity planning; and solutions that create and sustain more diverse, equitable, and inclusive opportunities for all students.

PANELISTS:
- **Jametta Lilly, CEO, Detroit Parent Network**
- **Nicholas Buckingham, Campaign Director, Michigan Liberation**
- **Paula Herbart, President, Michigan Education Association**
- **Rachel Yamakura, DEI Director, Lansing Community College**
- **Pamela Good, President, and CEO, Beyond Basics**

Education Equity: Key Takeaways and Next Steps:

The 2022 Civil Rights Summit session on Education Equity centered on operationalizing equity at the institutional/structural level (in schools, government agencies, community organizations, public/private entities, etc.) Panelists concluded that to dismantle education inequities in Michigan, a multi-pronged approach is needed, including using data-driven approaches to invest in institutional educational equity action plans and at the same time advocating for equitable and accountable education funding.

Main Goals:
- **Building data-driven approaches to craft institutional educational equity action plans.**
- **Engaging in political advocacy efforts to target reinvestment of education funding to those in need (e.g.: high poverty districts and historically marginalized communities.)**
- **Targeting and investing in programs to elevate literacy efforts to ensure every child can read, with emphasis on students who have been identified as falling behind.**

Strategies to Increase Equity:

- **Collaborate with parents, administrators, educators, students, and community organizations to build and collect survey results about education issues to drive strategic plans.**
- **Conduct an advocacy campaign to address educational inequities in Michigan using this data.**
- **Coordinate a collective effort to advocate for funding pre-kindergarten and mandating full-time kindergarten in Michigan.**
- **Launch a campaign to advocate for a more equitable and transparent education funding model with accountability measures to ensure the funding is used to improve equity.**

Action Item:

MDCR developed a template for operationalizing equity in education in collaboration with MDCR's Council for Government and Education on Equity and Inclusion. Our [Resource Guide to Developing a School Equity Plan](#) was inspired by [MCRC's 2021 Education Equity Report](#). A suggested approach: bringing together Council and Summit participants to narrow down our goals and to promote the resources found in MDCR's and MCRC's education reports and resource guide.

Morning Breakout 2: Health Equity

In this session, we reviewed how social determinants of health (e.g., poverty, unequal access to healthcare, lack of education, social stigma, maternal health, discrimination, racism, etc.) shape disparities. We also considered the intersectionality of health and environmental justice where marginalized communities are unfairly exposed to pollutants and health risks, and reviewed strategies that can effectively help to dismantle structural practices that increase health disparities.

PANELISTS:
- **Rima Meroueh, Director, National Network for Arab American Communities, ACCESS**
- **Dessa Cosma, Executive Director, Detroit Disability Power**
- **Brenda Jegede, Office of Minority Health, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)**
- **Alexis Travis, Senior Deputy Director for Public Health Administration, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)**

VIRTUAL INTRODUCTION:
- **Bobby Mukkamala, MD, American Medical Association Board of Trustees**

Health Equity: Key Takeaways and Next Steps:

In the 2022 Civil Rights Summit session on Health Equity, the discussion centered on operationalizing equity at the institutional/structural level (in schools, government agencies, community organizations, public/private entities, etc.) Panelists examined how social determinants of health shape disparities and discussed the need for an approach that embraces intersectionality in healthcare settings. Panelists also reminded us that moving the needle on health equity and improving health outcomes for marginalized communities will require a targeted effort to share research about health equity, train healthcare workers on cultural competency, and ensure diverse representation and perspectives are embedded on every level within healthcare systems and healthcare public policy entities.

Main Goals:
- **Continuous efforts to identify and address health inequities in marginalized communities, particularly for people with disabilities.**
- **Ensuring that every community is counted, recognized, and represented in all healthcare efforts – from data gathering, policy decisions, programs and services, research, and training.**

Strategies to Increase Equity:
- **Conduct a targeted campaign to promote research about health equity to researchers and medical providers.**
- **Develop and provide a training curriculum for healthcare providers on cultural competency.**
- **Advocate for diverse representation via recruitment and promotion at all levels within healthcare facilities and throughout the healthcare industry.**

Action Items:
MDCR will use panelists' feedback to identify one goal we can collectively work on to help move the needle towards equity based on the possible approaches above.

To specifically address the second point in the list of main goals, MDCR will connect with the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) to learn how data will be collected for the mandatory implicit bias training for physicians and other healthcare professionals that went into effect on June 1, 2022.

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Lunch Plenary: Housing Equity

In this session, we reviewed the role that federal, state, and local governments have played in systematically implementing discriminatory practices. The speakers discussed how these policies resulted in a legacy of residential segregation and racial isolation that continues to impact equity in housing. We also explored inclusive solutions through an equity lens.

SPEAKERS:
- **Steve Tomkowiak, Executive Director, Fair Housing Center of Metropolitan Detroit**
- **Richard Rothstein, Distinguished Fellow of the Economic Policy Institute and Senior Fellow (Emeritus), Thurgood Marshall Institute of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund; author, The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America**

Housing Equity: Key Takeaways and Next Steps:
The 2022 Civil Rights Summit session on Housing Equity centered on operationalizing equity at the institutional and structural levels (in schools, government agencies, community organizations, public/private entities, etc.). Panelists discussed the serious lack of effort to address issues of homeownership rates, evictions, and segregation in Michigan. Making real progress in combating these inequities, which still exist today because of systematic discriminatory practices, will require researching: 1) place-based strategies that bring resources back to communities, and 2) mobility strategies that introduce policies and programs to protect integration in higher opportunity areas.

Main Goals:

- **Readdressing segregation in Michigan requires the adoption of multiple strategies.**
- **Dismantling barriers to homeownership.**

Strategies to Increase Equity:

- **Promote and distribute housing resources to Black and Latino neighborhoods directly impacted by discriminatory federal policies.**
- **Promote the increase of bank investments in lower and moderate-income communities through the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977 (requires banks to invest in communities that have been underserved by the financial industry.)**
- **Advocate for effective integration practices in higher opportunity areas such as lobbying legislators to pass a ban on income discrimination in housing.**

Action Items:

MDCR will use panelists' feedback to identify one goal we can collectively work on to help move the needle towards equity based on the approaches outlined above.

MDCR will connect with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) to discuss opportunities for collaboration and support based on the possible approaches for increasing equity suggested above.

Afternoon Breakout 1: Voting Rights and Democracy

In this session, we examined how voting rights are fundamental to democracy and the impact of past and present policies and procedures that jeopardize voting rights today. We explored strategies for change that promote equity long-term.

PANELISTS:
- **LaRhonda Wilson, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice/Education, St. Louis Community College**
- **Shanay Watson-Whitaker, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Michigan Voices**
- **Angelique Power, President and CEO, The Skillman Foundation**
- **Yvonne White, President, Michigan NAACP, NAACP Foundation Board Member**
- **Loren Khogali, Executive Director, ACLU of Michigan**

INTRODUCTION:
- **Jocelyn Benson, Michigan Secretary of State**

Voting Rights and Democracy: Key Takeaways and Next Steps:
The 2022 Civil Rights Summit session on Voting Rights and Democracy centered on operationalizing equity at the institutional and structural levels (in schools, government agencies, community organizations, public/private entities, etc.) Panelists focused on the idea that voting underpins democracy. They also discussed the importance of educating voters in ways that directly connect the practice of voting with its impact on everyday issues. This can also help to reclaim the power of the vote to address social justice issues.

Main Goals:

- **Shifting tactics to reframe how voting is seen in Michigan.**
- **Collectively working to connect public policy to everyday issues to combat voter apathy.**

Strategies to Increase Equity:

- **Organize direct action to challenge and address rhetoric from groups that support restricting voting rights or practices.**
- **Use compelling storytelling in a campaign to link voting with social justice issues.**

Action Item:

In collaboration with Summit participants and partners, MDCR will develop and execute a voter education campaign model based on transformational political participation.

Afternoon Breakout 2: Economic Equity

In this session, panelists explored discriminatory practices impacting marginalized communities and strategies to develop more access and opportunities in economic development, transportation, parks and recreation, social services, and more.

PANELISTS:

- **Peter Hammer, Director of the Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights, Professor of Law and A. Alfred Taubman Endowed Chair, Wayne State University**
- **Aileen Cohen, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Michigan Economic Development Corporation**
- **Shaquila Myers, Senior Advisor to Governor Whitmer**
- **Annie Urasky, Director, MDCR Division on Deaf, DeafBlind and Hard of Hearing**

Economic Equity: Key Takeaways and Next Steps:

The 2022 Civil Rights Summit session on Economic Equity centered on operationalizing equity at the institutional and structural levels (in schools, government agencies, community organizations, public/private entities, etc.). Panelists discussed strategies to ensure all Michiganders can truly see themselves as part of the state's economy as well as the need to change our mindset about how racism functions. Everyone must be a part of this journey.

Achieving that goal will require connecting with organizations embedded within local communities and developing dynamic and diverse approaches to undoing decades of disinvestment and promoting equitable policies which directly impact marginalized populations.

Main Goals:

- **Identify and remove barriers that exist and work to institute policies and practices that will ensure all Michiganders can see themselves as part of the state's economy.**
- **Advocate for investments in communities—communities Michiganders want to live and work in.**

Strategies to Increase Equity:

- **Work with organizations embedded within local communities to take dynamic and diverse approaches to address decades of disinvestment and promote equitable access to policies that impact marginalized populations.**
- **Promote programs such as the United Way 21-Day Challenge to reflect on the impact of systemic discrimination at a personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural level.**

Action Item:

MDCR will use panelists' feedback to identify one goal we can collectively work on to help move the needle towards equity based on the possible approaches above.

Closing Plenary: Call to Action

The Civil Rights Summit closing plenary explored strategies to operationalize equity long-term and discussed opportunities for expanding collaboration across the state based on DEI principles.

PANELISTS:
- **Poppy Hernandez, Director of Global Michigan; Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer (EIO) for the State of Michigan**
- **Peter Clark, EIO, Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA)**
- **Ashley Kuykendoll, EIO, Michigan Department of Treasury**
- **Ti'Kyra Napoleon, EIO, Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB)**
- **Gary Jones, EIO, Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS)**
- **Tiffany King, EIO, Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA)**
- **Alfredo Hernandez Corsen, MDCR Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

INTRODUCTION:
- **Chiraag Bains, Deputy Assist. to the President for Racial Justice and Equity (Virtual)**
- **Dana Nessel, Michigan Attorney General**
- **Gretchen Whitmer, Michigan Governor (Virtual)**

Call to Action: Key Takeaways and Next Steps:

The 2022 Civil Rights Summit Call to Action Closing Plenary centered on operationalizing equity at the institutional/structural level (in schools, government agencies, community organizations, public/private entities, etc.) Panelists discussed concepts centered on equity and core concepts such as:

- **Equity work cannot belong to one person.**
- **Equity work must be part of the organization's internal culture.**
- **Equity work must be part of the organization's practice.**
- **Equity work requires commitment, support, and intentionality from leadership.**

Main Goals:

- **Operationalizing equity requires leadership buy-in.**

- **Operationalizing equity takes intention, attention, and time.**

- **Operationalizing equity needs experts to oversee the work.**

Strategies to Increase Equity:

- **To operationalize equity, organizations need to identify and/or hire a dedicated DEI expert to oversee and guide DEI work.**
- **To operationalize equity, organizations need to develop a DEI strategic plan to integrate best practices and evaluate progress (Equity and Inclusion Officers have a statewide DEI strategic plan as well as internal ones).**
- **To operationalize equity, organizations need to develop a core DEI team (made up of directors, managers, decision-makers, and staff) dedicated to becoming more culturally competent in efforts to impact and shape the decision-making process within the organization through an equity lens (most state agencies have established a DEI core team).**

Action Item:
MDCR will work with other state agencies and organizations throughout the state to explore opportunities to implement the approaches outlined above.

What to Expect Next

The Summit is intended to be the first step in a long line of activities and collaborative action. This report represents our initial take on what will be an ongoing effort to digest the Summit sessions and create a concrete plan for the immediate and long-term future.

Note on Summit recordings: The Civil Rights Summit experienced technical difficulties on the day of the event. As a result, video and/or audio recordings of all sessions may not be available. We are working with a tech company to recover as much video and audio of the event as possible and will update Summit participants when we know more. We will be able to provide written transcripts of all Summit sessions.