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Who We Are


BridgeDetroit launched in 2020 as a daily news and engagement organization. The purpose: To build deep connections with Detroiters and provide critical journalism that helps residents better understand and participate in their civic lives.

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BridgeDetroit Reporter Micah Walker canvases on Detroit's east side before an event. *Credit: Quinn Banks for BridgeDetroit*

Letter from the Executive Director:

Who is taking note of this? That was the question an attendee of our Community Conversation on housing and home repair asked the crowd. Everyone had shown up with their questions, comments and concerns. But who was actually making sure these highly engaged Detroiters would be heard outside of the meeting room?

BridgeDetroit was there. BridgeDetroit was taking notes. And BridgeDetroit will use what we heard that night at the Johnson Recreation Center to continue reporting on and addressing issues residents have about housing and home repair.

The topic is consistently the top priority for Detroiters we talk to, and there is never enough money to solve the problems of old housing stock and expensive rents, high utility costs and derelict landlords.

I've heard stories of people sweltering with no air conditioning after prolonged power outages who have to move their families to cooling centers to keep little ones safe. I've heard of seniors who've had their porches disintegrate right off the fronts of their houses who don't have enough money to secure a loan to fix it but also aren't low-income enough to qualify for help. And we've all heard stories of Detroiters who can't secure safe housing and end up having to rely on a patchwork of nonprofit and city services and then still end up on the street.

Detroiters deserve better.

In our second issue of BridgeDetroit's magazine, we wanted to dedicate some space for these issues and to offer some resources for folks facing difficulties. We hope that we can help Detroiters who need it and empower them to take steps in a better direction.

Thank you for reading!



Laurén Abdel-Razzaq
Executive Director, BridgeDetroit



Community Health and Social Services Center family medicine physician Dr. Shaina Shetty speaks with Debbie Cieslak, 50, of Detroit, while checking on her needs during a street medicine outreach visit to the Pope Francis Center in Detroit on Monday, August 12, 2024. Photos by Ryan Garza, Detroit Free Press

Medical care for Detroit's homeless gets half a million dollar boost



By Nushrat Rahman

A Detroit street medicine team is seeking to get care to a hard-to-reach population — the homeless. Here is how they are doing it.

NOTE: This story also appeared in the Detroit Free Press

They sleep along a main road in Detroit or near the whooshing sound of cars whizzing by on the freeway. They stay outside of a downtown church or at a local park.

They are unhoused Detroiters, living out on the streets of the city, struggling to find an open shelter spot in one woman's case or, for another man, finding a place to live, despite working. Through it all, medical care can be hard to come by. Transportation can be unreliable and keeping a health care provider can be daunting while moving from place to place.

A man with a foot wound had walked to a hospital — about eight blocks — to get it checked out. He was referred to a wound clinic, he said, but didn't have a way to get there. Another person hadn't been seen by a doctor in about eight years, she said, or a dentist in well over a decade.

These are the individuals Dr. Shaina Shetty, a family physician with the Community Health and Social Services (CHASS) Center, and a team, including a housing specialist, visit. They were out early Monday bringing medical care to people experiencing homelessness in Detroit.

The practice is known as street medicine and involves delivering primary medical care to people facing unsheltered homelessness who have trouble getting to a physical location or struggle to get the prescriptions they need. The program, a partnership between the Neighborhood Service Organization (NSO) and CHASS, recently received \$562,868 in American Rescue Plan Act dollars to expand services through June, allowing the nonprofits to help more people, pay team members

and offset costs for lab tests and supplies. The outreach marries medical care, while helping people access housing and other wraparound services.

“You bring care to where people are at,” Shetty said.

It’s also the first time the city of Detroit has funded a street medicine outreach program, according to the Housing and Revitalization Department. The city already funds five street outreach teams, but that generally connects people to emergency shelter.

Homelessness, according to housing experts, has multiple causes, from mental health challenges and substance abuse to evictions and affordability hurdles. In 2022, there were about 200 people counted as homeless on the streets of Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park, according to a one-night tally conducted by the Homeless Action Network of Detroit (HAND) in January. Last year, those experiencing unsheltered homelessness were not counted but there were 1,280 people living in shelters or other housing programs. These numbers are likely an undercount.

“Street medicine has been shown to be a promising model for improving physical and behavioral health outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness. Street medicine teams provided critical, non-emergent, services to this population,” said Terra Linzner, homelessness solutions director within the city’s Housing and Revitalization Department, in a statement.

‘It’s hard to get to the doctor’

On Monday’s street medicine run, Shetty — joined by a family nurse practitioner, a medical student and an NSO peer support specialist who helps connect people to housing — hopped into a van and visited what they call “hotspots” to meet regular patients.

Throughout the morning, they drove through an alley near Eastern Market and then checked in on a client at a nearby inn. They made stops at the Pope Francis Center downtown, then went on to a meal program outside St. Peter’s Episcopal Church. They checked with patients at two parks in Corktown and behind an auto repair shop above a freeway. They set up a makeshift pop-up clinic at a soup kitchen. Along the way, the doctor spoke to her patients and dropped off medication.

Crouching down at the steps of the Pope Francis Center downtown, Shetty, with her orange medical duffel bag in tow, talked to Debbie Cieslak.

Cieslak said she has been homeless for four months. Cieslak and her husband are sleeping outside on the sidewalk, but don’t have a tent, she said. She had her clothing, phone, purse and medications stolen from her. Cieslak, who said she requires an oxygen machine but didn’t have one on her, said she keeps getting sick.

“It’s hard to get to the doctor,” she said because, without a phone, she can’t make an appointment or get a ride. Cieslak, 50, said she has missed appointments. Shetty has been “a great help” and without her care, Cieslak said she doesn’t know where she’d be.

Cieslak said she visits the Pope Francis Center — which provides meals, laundry and showers to people experiencing homelessness — often.

“It gives me time to like just sit and relax,” she said, about the respite when she’s having trouble breathing and her body aches.

The team dropped by the Manna Community Meal program outside of St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, where they met Daniel Lewis and tended to a wound on his foot. He hopes he doesn’t



Community Health and Social Services Center family medicine physician Dr. Shaina Shetty, center, does a blood pressure check on Jacqueline Bowers, 51, of Detroit, at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen on August 12, 2024. Credit: Ryan Garza, Detroit Free Press

have an infection and is a bit sore, he said. Lewis, 60, had walked to the hospital over the weekend, but hasn't had a way to get follow-up care. He has been staying outside of a downtown church for the past few months, he said.

"I do need some transportation," he said.

Krystal Arzadon is among the patients seen by Shetty at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen. Arzadon has been homeless on and off for about a decade, living with friends and family. She has been at a shelter with her wife since April. She hasn't seen a family doctor or dentist in years because Arzadon, who grew up in Taylor, hopped around from city to city — from Detroit and Roseville to Mount Clemens and Rochester Hills.

"I haven't been to a doctor in a while, so I might have diabetes and not know it, I might have whatever and not even know," Arzadon, 29, said.

On Monday, she scheduled an appointment to see Dr. Shetty at a clinic.

Federal dollars will grow program's reach

The federal pandemic funding for the street medicine outreach will allow the nonprofits to serve an additional 80 individuals and families, in about 1,000 encounters, said Dr. Felix Valbuena Jr., CEO of CHASS. These are repeat face-to-face visits with the same people who may have chronic illnesses, but who struggle to get to a doctor.

"Our ultimate goal is to try and have these individuals be as healthy as they can," he said.

The team goes out twice a week, but their goal is to add another day. That's an increase from once a week, before the funding. A lot of street medicine teams in Detroit are volunteer run, Shetty said,

but it's hard to continue care out on the streets on a volunteer basis. Medical students from Wayne State University, University of Michigan and Michigan State University take part in street medicine teams. Student teams are expected to partner up on outreach efforts, Shetty said. The team is also slated to get a van that can help increase access to medical care.

The program allows CHASS and the Neighborhood Service Organization to combine street outreach — connecting unhoused people with case workers, housing navigators and therapists — and street medicine, said Linda Little, president and CEO of NSO. The federal dollars allow the program to have enough staff and support. Before, she said, NSO had to pull together "threads and strings," in the form of grants and donated medical supplies, to offer street medicine.

"It's pulling them out of the shadows and into the mainstream system of care," Little said of the patients the street medicine team serves.

Street medicine has been around since the early 1990s and has grown across the country. People who are homeless typically have a lifespan that is decades shorter than the general population, according to a 2017 study, and they face roadblocks retaining primary care because of previous negative encounters, a distrust of medical professionals, challenges navigating health care systems, mental illness and substance abuse, a 2022 study found. Other barriers, according to the city of Detroit's Linzner, include language, literacy and being underinsured.

"Connecting these individuals with physical and behavioral health care can significantly improve health outcomes but requires building trust with the population and providing services where they are," she said.

The city of Detroit will be monitoring the implementation of the street medicine program, including success and challenges, which will determine ongoing funding. Over the past year, Detroit has ramped up its safety net, including 24/7 street outreach, more shelter beds and a housing resource hotline. The increased homeless services and outreach is supported with ARPA funding, as part of the city's broader \$203 million housing plan. 🇺🇸



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Belongings of a home sit on the curb for trash pickup after an eviction in Detroit on March 19, 2022. Credit: Kimberly P. Mitchell, Detroit Free Press

What happens when a court officer comes knocking during an eviction?



By Nushrat Rahman

Evictions in Detroit are rising rapidly now that major COVID-19 pandemic housing protections have ended.

NOTE: This story also appeared in the Detroit Free Press

The number of eviction cases against tenants is approaching pre-pandemic levels, surpassing 23,000 filings last year. During the first four months of 2023, judges in Detroit's 36th District Court signed more than 1,800 eviction orders — a 136% jump compared with the same period last year. Eviction orders allow a court officer to remove a tenant and their personal belongings from a rental property. There's no data on how many evictions resulted in a tenant being forced out, but it's a step that both parties like to avoid.

Physical evictions are a jarring experience that can take a mental and emotional toll, housing advocates say. For landlords, it's a bill they have to foot, costing hundreds of dollars. Still, the option is available. And in the middle, there are court officers whose job it is to conduct the actual eviction, but not much is known about their role.

Here's a breakdown of the events that typically lead up to an eviction, why they're on the rise and what happens when a court officer comes knocking on a tenant's door.

Why someone could be evicted

There are many reasons a landlord may evict a tenant, according to state law. Those include:

- Not paying rent
- Not moving when a lease ends
- Violating a lease term
- Causing extensive physical damage to a property
- Creating a health hazard
- Illegal drug activity
- The landlord thinks there is a "just cause" to evict someone from a mobile home park or federally subsidized housing.
- The eviction notice
- An eviction notice — sometimes called "notice to quit" or "demand for possession" — explains why a landlord wants a tenant to move and how much time the tenant has to act before court action.

What is an eviction notice?

An eviction notice — sometimes called "notice to quit" or "demand for possession" — explains why a landlord wants a tenant to move and how much time the tenant has to act before court action.

The notice must be in writing and include the following: the tenant's name, address or description of the rental property, reason for eviction, amount of time for the renter to address any issues, date and the landlord's signature. It must be delivered in-person to the tenant or a family member living in the household and request that it be given to the renter, through mail or electronically via email (if that is a method of communication the tenant agreed to).

After receiving a notice, the tenant has a specified amount of time to remedy the problem. That time frame varies based on the reason for the eviction and ranges from 24 hours to 30 days. Here are some examples, according to Michigan Legal Help: 24 hours for illegal drug activity and 7 days if a tenant hasn't paid rent or created a health hazard.



A notice is not the same thing as an order of eviction, meaning a renter does not have to move when the notice expires. There are certain conflicts that can be resolved, such as paying back rent. However, there are other issues, such as breach of a lease or illegal drug activity, causing a tenant to have to move out otherwise the landlord could sue them, according to the MSU College of Law guide for landlords and tenants.

After the notice time period ends, the landlord can file a lawsuit and take the tenant to court. A landlord does not have to provide notice or go to court if someone forced their way into a home and decided to stay in it — also known as squatting or trespassing.

But the landlord can't do anything to prevent someone from accessing the property before getting a court order. The landlord can't, for instance, destroy property, board up a home, put belongings out on the street and refuse to make repairs. Michigan Legal Help says that there are instances in which a landlord can come into a home. That's called lawful interference and can happen if the landlord is acting on a court order, entering a home with permission to make repairs or believes the renter abandoned the place or died.

What are the steps in an eviction?

The eviction process can take anywhere from 21 to 57 days, according to the MSU guide. Briefly, here's what that usually entails:

Before a landlord can evict, in many cases they must provide notice to the tenant to pay their delinquent rent or remove a health hazard. If the tenant doesn't comply, a landlord can initiate the eviction process by filing a civil lawsuit in district court. The tenant will then receive a summons letting them know they are being sued and to show up for a hearing.

At the first hearing, attorneys from local agencies are available free of charge for defendants, according to the 36th District Court.

If the parties don't agree to resolve the dispute, a judge is required to make a decision on whether a tenant has to move out.

If a judgment sides with the landlord, the tenant can be evicted. The landlord can apply for an eviction order if the tenant doesn't leave by a certain time or follow through on other required action.

Once that order is filed and signed by a judge, it can be executed by a court officer hired by the landlord plaintiff.

In Detroit, when someone is physically evicted, a city ordinance requires landlords to place the tenant's belongings in a "large movable container," or a dumpster, for 48 hours. Otherwise, they are at risk of receiving a blight violation.

"You go from all your stuff being in your house to all your stuff being in a big garbage can," said Ted Phillips, executive director of the Detroit-based United Community Housing Coalition.

Why are evictions on the rise?

The number of eviction orders at the 36th District Court nearly doubled last year compared to 2021, jumping from about 1,500 to 3,400. Still, that's far below the roughly 10,000 eviction orders signed in 2019, before the pandemic. The court does not track how many eviction orders ended with a court officer at the door. Occupants may leave before that step.

In 2022, there were more than 23,000 eviction cases — civil lawsuits filed by property owners to remove an occupant of their property. The majority of the cases are for nonpayment. Through April 2023, there have been about 7,300 such cases. Pre-pandemic eviction cases averaged more than 29,000 a year in Detroit, according to a report for the University of Michigan's Poverty Solutions group.

The increase in filings and orders, after a drop throughout the pandemic, is likely due to the end of a statewide rent aid program and moratoriums on evictions. The \$1 billion COVID Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA) program, to help people behind on rent and utility payments catch up, stopped taking new applications last fall.

"It's concerning, and it's also more of the same. One of the reasons that I think we're seeing more eviction filings and judgments now is because we've not dealt with the root cause of housing instability. We've never dealt with it," said Shawnita Sealy-Jefferson, a Detroit resident and associate professor of social epidemiology at Ohio State University, who is leading a study about the impact of court-ordered and illegal evictions on Black women and families in Wayne, Macomb and Oakland counties.

Sealy-Jefferson said people are paying more for rent and there is a shortage of affordable housing.

What happens during a physical eviction?

One court officer at the 36th District Court, who did not want to be identified to protect his family's privacy, described his role as "the middleman."

"It's a job and if everybody did what they were supposed to do, we wouldn't have a job," he said. "But we have families to feed. We understand they have families to feed, we understand people fall on hard times. But there are resources out there to help you through them hard times, and it's not our fault that we're here."

The number of evictions he is hired to complete fluctuates on any given week. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, he would do up to five a day, he said. Court officers, he said, dealt with loss of work

and income throughout the pandemic, when moratoriums halted evictions for more than a year.

Now he conducts anywhere from two to three evictions a day. Some days he may not conduct any at all.

Here's what this court officer says happens during an eviction: he goes to the property with the signed eviction order in hand and explains to the tenant that he's there to move them out. He tells them they can gather important documents and medicine. Then he starts moving the tenant's belongings and placing them in a dumpster. Depending on how many items there are, it can take anywhere from 20 minutes to a couple hours. Some people leave before that can happen, while others remain because they have nowhere else to go. In his view, tenants have had ample time and notification that an eviction is coming.

What is the impact of evictions on families?

Evictions leave lasting scars on families, housing experts say, making it harder to find housing in the future and often leaving people with little choice but to live in poor living conditions, a situation exacerbated by an affordable housing crunch. Evictions can also have a destabilizing effect on families. Children may have to move to different schools, disrupting their education. Jobs may be inaccessible because of distance.

"It's an emotional situation. It's trauma. Nobody wins, at all," said Soummer Crawford, a Detroit housing advocate.

As part of her research, Sealy-Jefferson hears from study participants — mostly Detroiters — who have been evicted and the ripple effect that event has on children and the surrounding neighborhood.

"One woman reflected on how she lost her children's father's ashes, which really just took my breath away because I never anticipated that that would be part of the trauma of an eviction, that you would lose your children's father's ashes and other keepsakes. One woman reflected — and this is something that was kind of seared into my brain now — she said she lost her peace of mind," she said.

Who are court officers at 36th District Court?

The 36th District Court approves a list of officers whom landlords may hire to conduct an eviction. They are not employees of the court but rather independent contractors. That wasn't always the case. About a decade ago, the court moved officers who conduct evictions off of its payroll and made them independent contractors as part of a cost cutting measure that the union representing officers at the time resisted.

The officers are paid by the landlord, or the plaintiff in the case, and per eviction. The costs depend on how many items must be removed from the home that is vacated, said David Jones, CEO of DLJ Properties LLC, a Detroit-based property management company that oversees 150 homes across the city for investors within and outside the country. The price tag, he said, can range from \$2,000 to \$3,000 for the average eviction. The dumpster alone, he said, costs \$500.

Matthew Paletz, CEO of Paletz Law, a Troy-based firm that represents landlords and property owners, said he's seen evictions that cost as much as \$2,500, though that is not typical.

"Landlords do not want to evict their tenants. That is the last resort. So, if they can exhaust all avenues to try and work with their tenants, and try to work out financial arrangements with their tenants, then they're going to try to do that," Paletz said.

Jones said he tries to avoid physical evictions as well, offering tenant defendants "cash for keys" instead of paying a court officer to conduct the removal.

"At the end of the day, it's a cheaper alternative than the bailiff and the dumpster and a clean out," he said.

Of the 150 properties his company manages, there have been 20 evictions this year. Two ended with a physical eviction, while the remaining left before it reached that point. The evictions his company has done over the past two years, throughout the pandemic, have been for nonpayment. He said he tries to work with tenants who communicate that they've fallen behind.

"If you're ducking and dodging, we're making multiple phone calls and leaving notices — we're just not going to chase you. Those automatically go

to termination. The people who don't communicate, we terminate," he said.

Can court officers carry weapons?

Yes. Court officers may obtain a license to carry a concealed firearm, according to the 36th District Court.

"They may go through the process as any other citizen may, however, firearms and the appropriate licensure are not provided for by the court," McConico said in a statement earlier this month.

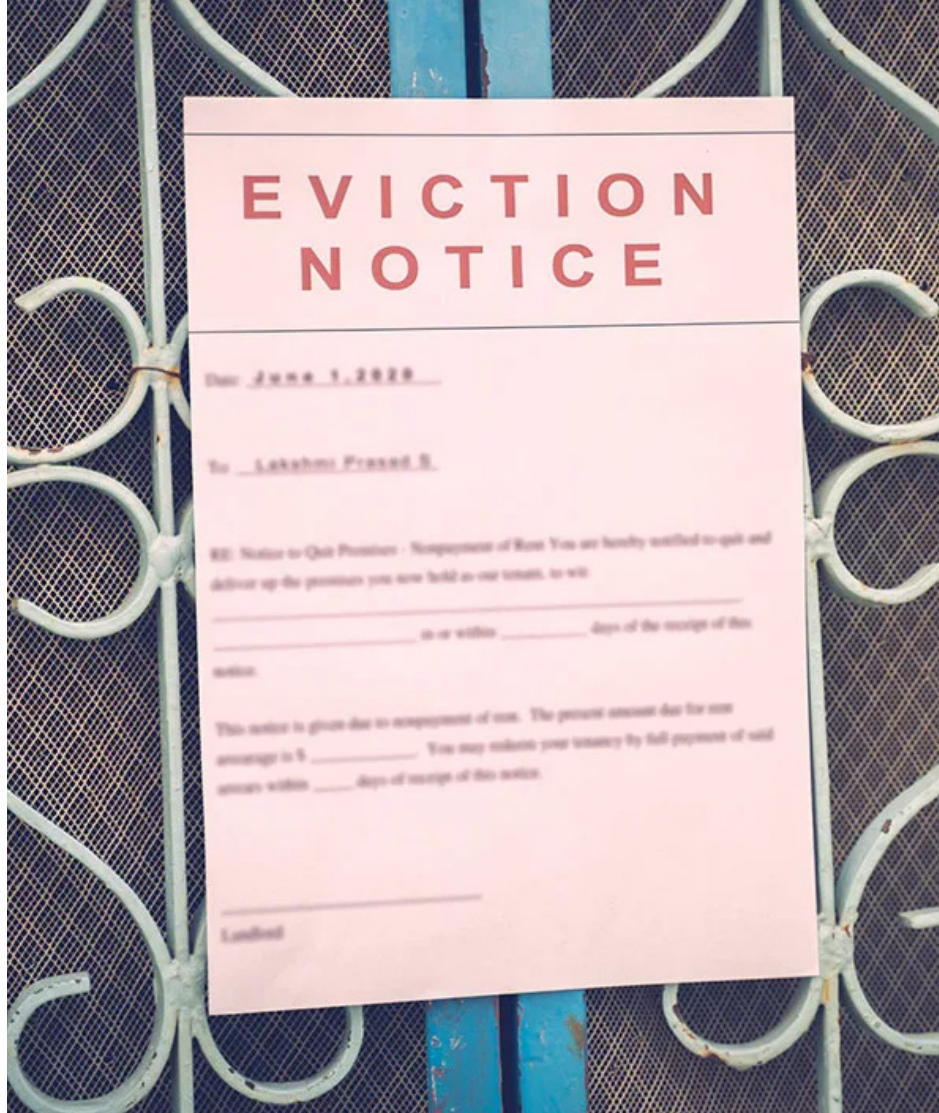
Who oversees court officers?

State court rules lay out some provisions for how evictions are to be conducted, including who can execute them. Ultimately, it's up to chief judges to choose and supervise the court officers.

Complaints related to court officers are also submitted to the chief judge. McConico said he has not received complaints pertaining to the conduct of court officers during an eviction in 2022 or 2023. During his tenure, he said no court officers have required disciplinary action. Court officers are not required to submit reports in instances when they may use force while conducting an eviction. Detroit police are "called to keep the peace when necessary," McConico said.

McConico said court officers "have been the victims of violence in the course of their legal, official duties. ... The threat against their physical safety is rising exponentially, and that cannot continue." He pointed to an incident in March where two people working with a court officer were shot while an eviction order was being executed.

"They are carrying out lawful court orders that have been signed by a judge after the judicial process has been followed," he said in a statement.



How to get help

- Read the full Justice for All Commission report on evictions, including a breakdown of the eviction process in Michigan, at bit.ly/MichiganEvictionProceedings.
- For more information about evictions and resources for assistance, visit Michigan Legal Help at bit.ly/MichiganLegalHelpEvictions and the Michigan Attorney General's website for landlords and tenants at www.michigan.gov/ag/about/landlord.
- For an in-depth run down about eviction proceedings go to www.legislature.mi.gov/Publications/tenantlandlord.pdf.
- Reach out to the United Way for Southeastern Michigan's 2-1-1 helpline for additional assistance.
- Eligible Detroiters facing eviction can go to bit.ly/DetroitOfficeofEvictionDefense or call the Detroit Housing Resource Helpline at 866-313-2520. 



Gwendolyn Wilson, 93, and her daughter Kathryn Wilson, 64, were recruited to do phone banking for the Kamala Harris campaign. Credit: Quinn Banks for BridgeDetroit

Black women a powerhouse in getting out Detroit vote



By Malachi Barrett

Black women are institutions within Democratic campaigns, dedicating themselves to making phone calls, knocking on doors and building relationships.

Kathryn Wilson was serving up lobster from her food truck at Hart Plaza this summer when she learned Black women were organizing a conference call to support Kamala Harris for president.

She hopped on close to midnight and was inspired to hear hundreds of women still talking about how Harris as the Democratic nominee re-energized their interest in the 2024 election.

"It's a moment of pride," Wilson said. "If she can be president, it gives every young Black girl an opportunity to see herself in that role."

After President Joe Biden stepped down, Wilson's 93-year-old mother Gwendolyn reached out.

A member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority since 1950, Gwendolyn said AKA asked her to participate in phone banks, something she hadn't done since Barack Obama ran in 2008. Wilson, 64, said her mother convinced her to sign up too.

Black women have long been a loyal voting bloc for the Democratic Party, and



The Harris-Walz campaign held an Aug. 8, 2024, campaign event at the United Auto Workers Hall in Wayne, Michigan. Credit: Malachi Barrett, BridgeDetroit

the prospect of Harris becoming president is fueling a local movement to support her in the November election.

Harris supporters who spoke with BridgeDetroit said her campaign is not only historic—she’s the first Black and Asian American woman on the presidential ticket—but it affirms their political power is growing after decades of sticking with Democrats.

Women historically vote at higher rates than men, and the gender gap in turnout is the largest among Black voters. Black women are institutions within Democratic campaigns, dedicating themselves to making phone calls, knocking on doors and building relationships.

“We have been saying for a long time, if you give us a chance, if we can get in the driver’s seat, we can take the White House,” said Lavonia Perryman Fairfax, a longtime Democratic activist and political commentator. “We have to come together and organize.”

Gwendolyn grew up in Mississippi at a time when voting rights were not guaranteed. By the adoption of the 1964 Voting Rights Act, less than 7% of Black people in the state were registered to vote.

She also was alive before the landmark Roe v. Wade decision of 1973 enshrined the right to abortion and witnessed its reversal in 2022. Harris’ campaign tagline “we’re not going back” resonates for Gwendolyn. It does feel like the country is going backward, she said.

“I think Trump might fool with democracy, you know, he looks out for himself,” Gwendolyn said. “I couldn’t believe it when they said he won. I didn’t know anybody who voted for Trump. Now here’s a woman who is going to do some things that always should have been done.”

‘I can’t not participate’

The Harris-Walz campaign views Black women as the backbone of its coalition. By mid-August, the campaign contacted 140,000 Black women living in Detroit and hosted more than a dozen events to recruit volunteers.

“People listen to women when we get involved in movements,” said Dee Jones, a Detroit and Democratic Party organizer who previously worked to elect former Gov. Jennifer Granholm. “That campaign needs to send people out into the neighborhoods, especially where Black men are who feel like their vote doesn’t matter.”

Jones was in the audience when Harris came to Romulus for her first Michigan campaign rally. The Democratic precinct delegate felt there was “no hope” that Biden would win. Jones, a Democratic precinct delegate, said she witnessed a vibe shift from “doom and gloom” over another Biden term to “happy and positive” with Kamala running in his place.

In Michigan, Harris described herself and running mate Tim Walz as “joyful warriors.” Supporters say it’s a way of staying positive

while also going on the offensive against Trump.

"I don't tell people 'you should vote for Harris,'" Jones said. "I tell them what's at stake."

Jamil Scott is a professor at Georgetown University who studies how race and gender identity impact political behavior. She said efforts by the Harris-Walz campaign to turn out Black voters are important in swing states like Michigan and Georgia, which helped propel Biden to victory in 2020.

But Democrats will face challenges in courting younger voters who are interested in civic engagement but don't identify with either political party, she said.

"There's a generation of younger people who don't feel that level of connection and duty (to the Democratic Party) in the same ways that older people do," Scott said. "We're in the door now, and younger people are questioning, is this enough?"

Cidney Calloway, 32, considers herself an independent voter who is more driven by policy than partisan loyalty. Calloway voted uncommitted, snubbing Biden in the February primary, but is planning to support Harris in November.

"I can't not participate; I believe this is an opportunity for (Harris) to break barriers to set up this next group of Black female politicians," Calloway said. "That's why I'm voting for Kamala."

Stephane Bond, 53, said Biden's decision to step down encouraged her to vote. Bond said "willful blindness" by Democrats about Biden's age made her disinterested in voting altogether this year. When Biden dropped out, she took another look at candidates in the August primary and decided to vote in down ballot races.

Bond said a sense of personal connection drew her to Harris.

"When Barack Obama was running for his first term, I felt so empowered as a Black person," Bond said. "This time I feel doubly empowered on so many levels. Kamala Harris is Jamaican, I'm Jamaican. She is part of a sorority, I have family and friends in Black sororities. I have a lot of things in common with her."

Taylor Harrell, a native Detroit who works on Democratic campaigns, organizes weekly phone calls to put those feelings of connection to work. She helps run a "Black Women for Kamala" Facebook page with nearly 300,000 members and other social media mobilization efforts.

"Detroit's most reliable voter is a Black woman over the age of 53," Harrell said. "They carry elections."

Harrell was with a group of Black women who sipped cocktails at Rosa, a west side cafe, and compared organizing strategies while waiting for Harris to accept the nomination and cap off the DNC.

"It's more than one day, one phone call, it's about getting out there and educating people who feel like Trump brought them a stimulus check," Harrell said. "Seniors are good at phone banks. Gen Z is good at social media, the millennials and Gen Xers want to send postcards.

"Progress is a process and we can't afford to lose momentum."

Voters support Harris for reasons beyond her identity, expressing urgency around defending abortion rights, securing economic prosperity and rebuking the conservative Project 2025 agenda.

Residents also recall Trump's effort to negate their votes through false voter fraud claims that mobilized harassment of election workers, many of whom are Black women.

Considering the options

Detroiters said enthusiasm for Harris spiked after she replaced Biden as the Democratic nominee in July, but they had few policy proposals to latch onto. Campaign events in August were avenues to introduce Harris and celebrate her candidacy.

Recent polls show inflation, particularly the rising cost of household expenses, is the most important issue for Black women in Michigan. Economic issues ranked higher than abortion and threats to democracy in a survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation released in July.

Harris outlined her economic agenda for the first time at an Aug. 16 rally in North Carolina. Proposals were focused on delivering "economic security" with tax

cuts and new investments. Harris said the Biden administration has tamped down inflation, but the cost of food and housing remains too high.

She called for expanding a child tax credit for low-income and middle-class families and creating a \$6,000 tax credit for new parents. She pitched a \$25,000 down-payment program for first-time homebuyers, modeled after a similar grant in Detroit. Harris said she'd seek new tax incentives to build affordable housing, committed to eliminating medical debt and pledged to ban price gouging.

Calloway, who is the daughter of a City Council member and co-leads a city task force on reparations, said Harris' pitch is a "great start." But she wants to see more focus on eliminating racial wealth gaps, capping rent increases and affordable childcare.

"We want to start our families, and we do need that help because of inflation," she said.

Focus on so-called "kitchen table issues" has been a successful strategy for Democrats in Michigan who swept into power in the wake of Trump's presidency, securing control of the state Legislature and governorship for the first time since 1984.

Some voters have been waiting for more details on how Harris will tackle the rising cost of living. While economic indicators show low unemployment and declining inflation, consumers are less optimistic about their personal finances than before Biden and Harris took office.

LaDuanna Allen, 49, said she's "straddling the fence" between Trump and Harris based on the economy.

"Republicans can help with a more stable economy, that's important to me," Allen said in August. "But Trump incites hatred. I'm not cool with hatred. The presidential thing is rough for me right now, it's going to take a little bit of homework for me. I'll see what she's about and what she's doing."

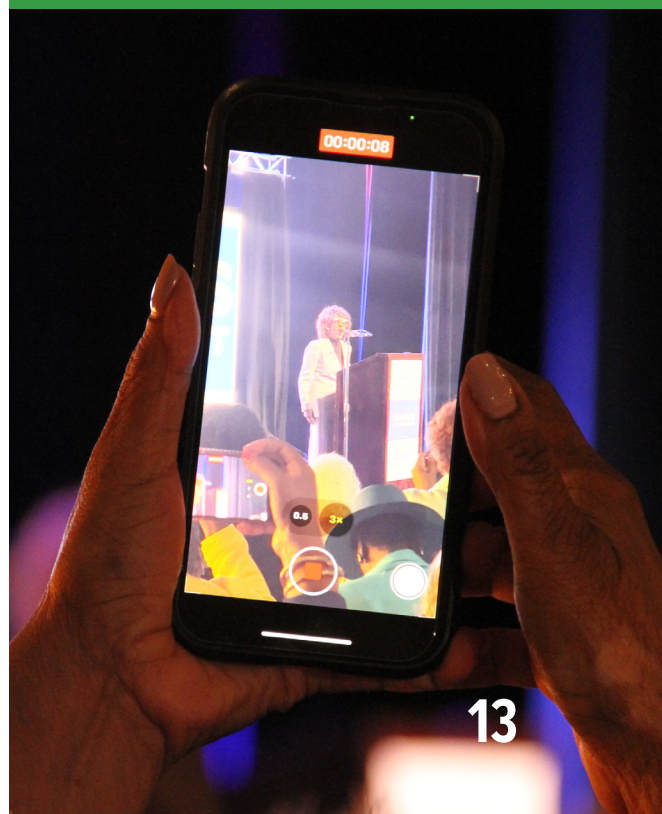
Tyshawna Black, 34, said she considers herself a Democrat but trusts Trump on economic issues. She's planning to vote for the former president, despite some reservations. The former president has claimed Harris is responsible for price increases for food, energy and housing.

"I can't agree with all of Trump's politics," Black said. "But he doesn't care about color, he cares about green. That's what we need. We don't need somebody who cares about race." 🇺🇸



Above: Detroit City Council President Mary Sheffield speaks at an Aug. 12, 2024 campaign event at the Garden Theater in Detroit, Mich. *Credit: Malachi Barrett, BridgeDetroit*

Below: The Harris-Walz campaign held an Aug. 8, 2024 campaign event at the United Auto Workers hall in Wayne, Mich. *Credit: Malachi Barrett, BridgeDetroit*





BridgeDetroit reporter Nushrat Rahman, left, moderates an Aug. 20, 2024, panel talk on housing and home repair with Executive Director of the Rocket Community Fund and the Gilbert Family Foundation Laura Grannemann, Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency CEO Louis Piszker and Renew Detroit Program Director Darlene Caro.

A guide to housing and home repair in Detroit

Here are some resources Detroiters can use to get help finding a home, staying in a home and paying bills.

As director of Renew Detroit, Darlene Caro wants to feel good about the work she does. At the same time, the leader of the city home repair program said she knows it's not enough.

"It's like trying to fit a round peg in a square hole," Caro told a frustrated contingent of an audience inside the Johnson Recreation Center on Aug. 24.

"The answer is not her, it's not him, it's not me. It's us," she said, gesturing to the dozens of Detroiters who took part in a BridgeDetroit Community Conversation on housing and home repair. "Yes, there's money, but it's not enough. So now what? We need to be in this room. It's hard work every single day. You still have to get up and do it anyway because it's better than nothing."

Caro joined with Wayne Metropolitan Community Action Agency CEO Louis Piszker and Rocket Community Fund and Gilbert Family Foundation Executive Director Laura Grannemann for the two-hour event moderated by BridgeDetroit and Detroit Free Press economic mobility reporter Nushrat Rahman.

The panelists reiterated the **\$5 billion to \$20 billion scope** of the city's home repair crisis and that the "fragmented" system for aid among federal, state, philanthropic and local programs impairs awareness and access. Making the issue worse: much of Detroit's single-family housing stock is **more than 75 years old**.

Piszker touted the **Detroit Housing Network** hotline – (866) 313-2520 – facilitated by 13 to 16 partner agencies to aid residents.

"That's where you're going to get all of your answers," he said.

Here are some resources Detroiters can use to get help finding a home, staying in a home and paying bills:

Detroit Housing Network

The Detroit Housing Network is an alliance of housing agencies that connects Detroiters to a variety of housing services and programs, including counseling, downpayment assistance, will and estate planning and homebuyer education as well as offerings to help with foreclosure prevention, property taxes and home repairs.

For more details, go to detroithousingnetwork.org or call 866-313-2520.

0% Home Repair Loan Program

The city's 0% Home Repair Loan Program offers 10-year, interest-free loans from \$5,000 to \$25,000 to help Detroit homeowners invest in and repair their homes.

The program – a city-led partnership with the Detroit Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and Flagstar Bank – is meant to address safety hazards like lead, mold and asbestos, kitchen and bathroom remodeling, electrical, furnace and roof replacement, garages and driveways, plumbing and porches.

Detroit homeowners are eligible if they have owned and lived in a Detroit home for at least 6 months. Go to detroithomeloans.org for more information.

Detroit Water and Sewerage Department Lifeline Plan

Lifeline is a newer water affordability program offered by DWSD. Eligible participants receive an affordable fixed bill based on household income and size. The program has three plan tiers and helps participants erase past due balances, avoid shutoff and address minor plumbing repairs.

For more details, reach out to Wayne Metro's CONNECT Center at 313-386-9727 or via email at wmconnectcenter@waynemetrol.org.

DTE Energy Payment Assistance Programs

DTE Energy, along with government and private agencies, can provide assistance with energy bills. Visit dteenergy.com/help or call 800-477-4747.

DTE Energy has a number of programs that are income-qualified. Applicable for those at or below 150% of the federal poverty level (monthly income at or below \$3,750 for a household of four):



- **State Emergency Relief (SER)**
Administered by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, SER provides immediate help if you have a past-due bill or disconnect notice. To see if you qualify, call 2-1-1 or visit newmibridges.michigan.gov.
- **Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP)**
If you submit a SER application, you may be eligible for additional financial assistance through MEAP. This program also educates you on budgeting, energy efficiency and paying your bills on time. Visit michigan.gov/energyassistance.
- **Winter Protection Plan (WPP)**
A WPP can prevent service disconnection during the heating seasons (Nov. 1 - March 31). To remain on the plan, you must have a budgeted amount. Visit dteenergy.com/help.
- **Low-Income Self-Sufficiency Plan (LSP)**
This program allows you to keep up with energy bills through a fixed payment plan based on your income and energy use. Visit dteenergy.com/lsp.
- **Residential Income Assistance Credit (RIA)**
You can qualify for a \$8.50 per month credit on your electric account and/or a \$13.50 per month credit on your gas account. Visit dteenergy.com/help.

Applicable for those at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (monthly income at or below \$5,000 for a household of four):

- **Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)**
This program provides free home energy conservation services. Visit energy.gov/energysaver.
- **Shutoff Protection Plan (SPP)**
This plan provides year-round protection from service disconnects if monthly payments are met. You will need to pay a down payment to enroll. This program is also available to seniors 65+. Visit dteenergy.com/SPP.
- **Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)**
This program provides a monthly discount on internet service for households that participate in qualifying government programs. Visit affordableconnectivity.gov.

Wayne Metro's Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)

The Weatherization Assistance Program permanently reduces energy costs for low-income households by increasing energy efficiency and the health and safety of homes.

Among the areas WAP addresses are foundational, wall and attic insulation and ventilation, air leakage reduction, dryer venting and supplying free smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

To apply, visit waynemetrol.org/programs or reach out to the WM Connect Center at **313-388-9799**.

Energy Assistance Programs

The following agencies may provide energy assistance or connect you to additional resources.

- United Way of Southeastern Michigan: call **2-1-1**
- The Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW): call **800-866-8429** or visit thawfund.org.
- Salvation Army: call **855-929-1640** or visit sawmni.org.
- Michigan Community Action: visit mcaaa.org.
- The Accounting Aid Society: in SE Michigan call **866-673-0873**.
- St. Vincent de Paul: call **313-393-2930** or visit svdpdetroit.org/get-help.

- Lifeline: This program makes basic local telephone service more affordable for Michigan families at or below 135% of the federal poverty level. Contact your local telephone company for more information.

Detroit Home Accessibility Program

The \$6.6 million ARPA-backed program is expected to provide accessibility upgrades to at least 250 homes for seniors and residents with disabilities.

Among the repairs covered are the installation of ramps, lifts and grab bars and improvements to doors, thresholds, lighting and mobility devices.

Household income for the program must be 300% of the Federal Poverty Level – an individual earning up to \$45,000 per year, or a two-person household earning up to \$61,000.

For further eligibility details or to apply, visit the CHN Housing partners website at chnhousingpartners.org/detroit, call the Detroit Housing Resource Hotline at **866-313-2520**, or walk into a Detroit Housing Network location.

Down Payment Assistance

The Michigan State Housing Development Authority offers two programs for down payment assistance for would-be homeowners. Both programs assist with down payment, closing costs and/or prepaids. Get more information at michigan.gov/homeownership or call **1-844-984-4663**.

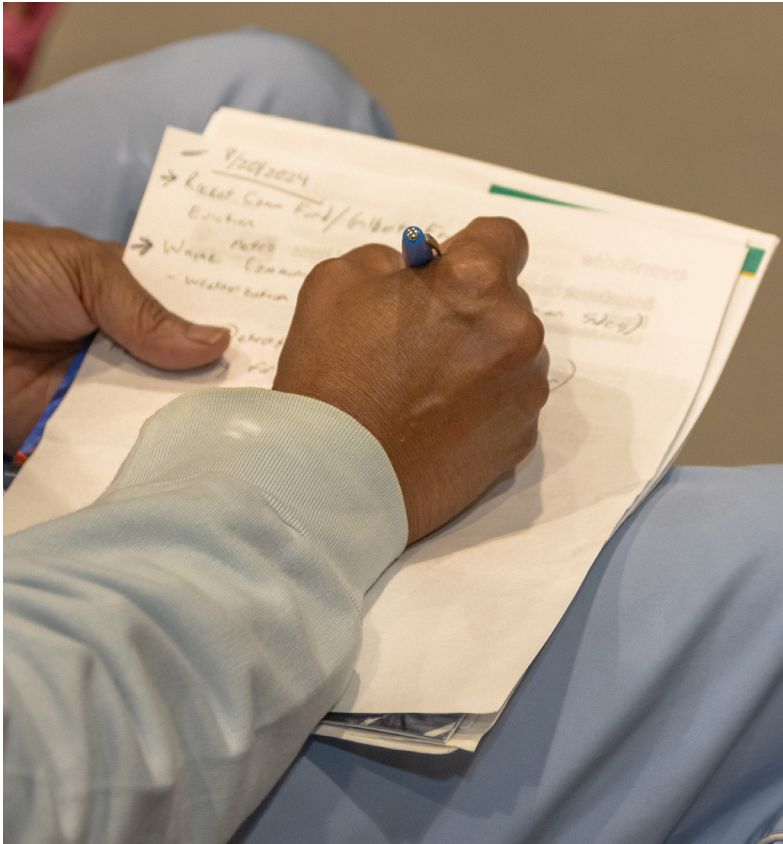
- MI DPA Loan is available statewide and can qualify you for a loan up to \$7,500.
- MI 10K DPA Loan is available in 236 zip codes across the state and could get you up to \$10,000.

Tax Relief/ Help

The Wayne County Treasurer's Office has property tax payment plans available. For more information, call **313-224-5990** or visit treasurer.waynecounty.com. Options include:

- **Interest Reduction Stipulated Payment Agreement (IRSPA)**

This payment plan reduces the interest rate from 18% to 6% for eligible taxpayers. To sign up, you must own and live in your home and have a Principal Residence Exemption (PRE) and ID that proves residency.



- **Distressed Owner Occupant Extension (DOOE)**
If you own and live in the property and are suffering financial hardship, you may qualify for this program. Proof of ownership, occupancy and hardship are required.
- **Stipulated Payment Agreement (SPA)**
Available to everybody, this plan allows a taxpayer to pay taxes pursuant to a payment schedule. This plan will avoid foreclosure provided that payments are submitted per the agreed upon schedule.
- **Pay As You Stay Payment Agreement (PAYSPA)**
Only for those who have first applied for their local municipality's Poverty Tax Exemption (PTE) and received an approval. Once notified by your local assessor's office, the treasurer's office will mail you a notification letter with your reduced amount due. You will have the option of paying a lump sum (an additional 10% off) or enrolling in a stipulated payment agreement.

The Detroit Tax Relief Fund is another option for getting help paying back taxes. This program is for Detroit homeowners who live in and own their home and are struggling with property tax debt. For more information, call [313-244-0274](tel:313-244-0274).

Other organizations that can help with free property tax assistance include:

- Alger Theater, 16451 E. Warren Ave. Call 313-720-3904 (Saturdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.)
- U-SNAP-BAC, 14901 E. Warren Ave. Call 313-640-1100 ext. 16 (Tuesdays, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.)
- Jefferson East Inc., 14628 E. Jefferson Ave. Call 313-221-5281 (Thursdays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.)
- Eastside Community Network, 4401 Conner. Call 313-264-1416 (Mondays and Wednesdays, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.)
- Osborn Neighborhood Alliance, 13560 E. McNichols. Call 313-526-4000 ext. 1330 (Tuesdays and Fridays, 1-4 p.m.)
- MACC Development, 7900 Mack Ave. Call 313-732-9302, ext. 714 (Wednesdays, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.)
- Bailey Park, 2200 Hunt St, Suite 411. Call 313-484-3373 (Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12-2 p.m.)
- Hannan Center, 4750 Woodward Ave. Call 313-833-1300 (Tuesdays 10 a.m.-3 p.m.)
- Central Detroit Christian, 1550 Taylor St. Call 313-873-0064 ext. 22 (Fridays 10 a.m.-3 p.m.)
- Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance, 19321 W. Chicago, Suite 105. Call 313-397-9280.
- Greater Quinn AME, 13501 Rosa Parks Blvd. Call 248-752-1507 (Tuesdays, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.)
- Bridging Communities, 6900 McGraw. Call 313-361-6377 (Tuesdays, 9a.m.-5 p.m.)
- MISide-MIWealth, 2835 Bagley, Suite 800. Call 313-841-9641 ext. 374 (Tuesdays 10 a.m.-3 p.m.)

Get your income tax returns prepared by IRS-certified preparers with Wayne Metro. This is for SSA or SSI recipients who have a household income under \$63,000. For more information, visit waynemetro.org/taxes or call 313-388-9799/ 313-244-0274.



Affordable Housing Resources

- Search for affordable rentals at affordablehousing.com.
- Wayne County's low-income housing list: lowincomehousing.us/cty/mi-wayne.
- HUD Resource Locator: Search for subsidized housing, apartments and more at resources.hud.gov.
- Section 8/ Housing Choice Voucher waitlist: Sign up at mshda.myhousing.com.
- Additional open Section 8 waitlists at affordablehousingonline.com/housing-authority/Michigan/Michigan-State-Housing-Development-Authority/MI901#wl111824.
- Check your Section 8 waitlist status at mshda.myhousing.com/account.
- Other useful websites:
 - evictionmachine.org/tenant-resources
 - findhelp.org

Housing Stabilization through Black Family Development Inc.

The Bridges Housing Stabilization Program serves families and students who are at risk of homelessness. The 90-day program provides case management services, trauma assessments, resources like rent assistance and links to mentorship and entrepreneurial programs.

Appointments are typically Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Weekend and night hours are also available. Staff is on-call 24 hours a day to take calls. Call **313-758-0150** or visit blackfamilydevelopment.org to learn more.

Aging in Place with Hannan Center

Hannan Center offers the My Neighborhood Connections program to support older adults living in Detroit and Highland Park who want to age in place, be in their homes as long as they can and maintain optimum health. The services offered through this program include transportation, home repair/modifications, healthcare assistance, home maintenance, technology awareness and other in-home services. To learn more call **313-831-1300 ext. 43 or 44** or visit hannan.org/mnc.

Help for Veterans

No Veterans Left Behind is a nonprofit that assists U.S. military veterans with a variety of needs adapting back into civilian society. This includes housing services, legal council, job seeking, financial management, transportation and substance abuse treatment. Call **313-595-1262** or visit noveteranleftbehind.us.

Help for Homelessness

The Coordinated Assessment Model (CAM) is the coordinated entry system for Detroit, Hamtramck and Highland Park connecting people experiencing homelessness with access to shelter and housing resources as they are available. Any individual, youth, or family in need of a safe place to sleep can contact CAM for assistance.

- Call Center: 313-305-0311 (Hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-6 p.m.)
- For veterans: Detroit VA in person at 4646 John R, Red Tower, 2nd Floor, Detroit MI 48201 (Hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.)

Other options include:

- Noah at Central, a nonprofit operated out of Central United Methodist Church as a central hub for services, resources, and relationships for those experiencing homelessness. Call 313-965-5422 or go in person to 23 E. Adams Ave, 2nd Floor, Detroit, MI 48226. (Hours of operation are Monday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.)
- Cass Community Social Services, a nonprofit that offers warming centers, family shelter and rotating shelter. For more information go to 11850 Woodrow Wilson St., Detroit, MI 48206. (Hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m.)

Financial Literacy Programs

- **GreenPath Financial Wellness:** You may qualify to receive budget counseling, debt management and credit report help. Call **888-235-1003**.
- **Wayne Metro Workshops:** The nonprofit provides educational classes that cover topics like budgeting and credit, landlord-tenant rights and the homebuying process. Register for workshops and see more at waynemetro.org/housing.
- **Detroit Financial Empowerment Center:** The program offers free one-on-one financial coaching, assistance with banking access, managing debt, housing counseling, improving financial literacy and more. Call **313-322-6222** or visit detroitfec.org.

Legal Aid Programs

- **Lakeshore Legal Aid:** This not-for-profit law firm provides a range of free civil legal services to people who are low-income, older adults and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. Apply by phone at 888-783-8190 or online at lakeshorelegalaid.org.
- **Michigan Legal Help:** You can access tools and information to help you manage and understand your legal problems and get guided to legal aid services. Among the areas of assistance: housing support for eviction, subsidized housing, home ownership, tenant's rights and foreclosure. Get more information at michiganlegalhelp.org.

If you are facing foreclosure and need assistance in starting a Wayne County Probate court case because a property is in the name of a deceased family member, contact one of the following community partners:


- Michigan Legal Services: 313-774-1527
- United Community Housing Coalition: 313-963-3310
- Legal Aid & Defender: 313-967-5800



Lead Testing

The City of Detroit's LeadSafe Housing program offers free lead home repairs if you are an eligible homeowner or tenant that:

- Lives in one of the following zip codes – 48202, 48203, 48204, 48206, 48208, 48209, 48210, 48211, 48212, 48213, 48214, 48215, 48217, 48227, 48234, 48238
- Meets the Housing and Urban Development limits for 80% of household income (\$76,700 for a family of four)
- Has children under the age of 6 living in or visiting the home.
- Is pregnant or someone pregnant lives with you.

Call **313-224-6380** or **313-498-2305** (Español) or visit detroitmi.gov/gettheleadout. 

Photos by Quinn Banks for BridgeDetroit



Kimochi Detroit
1337 Division Street, Suite 204
Detroit, MI 48207
313-462-4969 • kimochidetroit.com
Hours: Closed Monday
Tuesday-Friday: 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Detroit native returns home to open Eastern Market wellness center



By Micah Walker

Massage therapy is the gift Kim Yokely gives to the world and now she's offering it to Detroiters.

Alexandra DePorre sinks into a black lounge chair inside a spacious new wellness center in Eastern Market and dips her feet into a tub of warm water.

She closes her eyes and takes in the soft flute music playing in the background.

"Let me get another pillow for you, Alex," said massage therapist Kim Yokely.

The anesthesiologist is on her feet all day and said the 60-minute foot reflexology appointment is exactly what she needs to practice self-care.

But DePorre isn't just any customer. She and Yokely are business partners at Kimochi Detroit, a wellness retreat center that specializes in shiatsu massage. The traditional, holistic Japanese form of bodywork focuses on restoring balance to the natural flow of energy in the body.

Kimochi also offers reflexology, acupuncture, Thai and Swedish massage as well as cupping therapy, cranial sacral therapy, sound therapy and aromatherapy.

Kimochi celebrated its grand opening in August as a recipient of Motor City Match.

For Yokely, 55, it was like a homecoming celebration. Growing up on Mack Avenue and Bewick Street on Detroit's east side, she has spent the majority of her adult life in Atlanta and other cities around the globe. While Yokely ran a successful massage business in Atlanta, she longed to bring Kimochi to her hometown, she told BridgeDetroit.

"I finally made it happen and, in 2021, I moved here (to Detroit)," she said. "It was very important for me to have it in town and on the east side."

As a Black woman, Yokely's space in the massage therapy industry is uncommon nationally. The majority of people practicing massage therapy are white women, with Black people only making up 8% of the industry, according to a 2023 report from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics.

But Yokely would rather not focus on race, saying she doesn't want to be known as having just a Black space.

"Of course, I'm happy to have something for Black people now that we're learning and we're ready, but I pride myself that I attract everybody," she said. "To me, it is way more important that I'm trusted, no matter the hue. All of us want the same stuff, which is some peace of mind and some freedom in our bodies."

A life changing experience

Yokely's journey to learning shiatsu massage and other eastern holistic practices has taken her to 22 countries, like Thailand, China, South Korea and the Philippines. But initially, her career path was headed in a different direction.

In her 20s, Yokely was interested in becoming a lawyer. Thinking of a way to stand out from other law school applicants, she headed to Japan in 1994 as part of the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program (JET) and became an English teacher in the city of Fukuoka.

After a year overseas, Yokely had a frightening experience where she heard a voice she believed was from an angel while alone in her apartment one night. The voice told her she was meant to be in Japan to learn an ancient, healing art, she said. Then five days later, at a JET meeting, she met a woman from Hawaii who was studying shiatsu massage.

"I was still a little embarrassed back then, I didn't know how to explain the story, so I said, 'Somebody just told me I should do that,'" Yokely said. "And before I could even finish, she put the number in my hand to the man teaching her, like it was a movie. I took it as a sign and called that man the next day and then met him within two more days. And that's how it started."

Yokely began studying with teacher Minoru Oyama, who became her mentor. Plans of law school dissipated, she said.

"I knew that first day, law school was out of my mind immediately," Yokely said.

After her time with JET ended in 1997, she began traveling around southeast Asia and Europe, learning Thai massage, yoga and meditation.

Yokely grew her clientele and eventually opened her first location inside a salon and spa. By 2004, she opened Kimochi Body N Sole Sanctuary in Atlanta's Midtown neighborhood. Some of Yokely's customers included celebrities such as Kerry Washington, Mike Epps, Jill Scott and Sheryl Lee Ralph, according to her website.

In addition to working as a massage therapist, Yokely has become a workshop presenter and public speaker over the years.

She said massage therapy is the gift she gives to the world and now that Kimochi Detroit is open, Yokely is looking forward to offering her skills to Detroiters.

"I think we all have a gift, but if you get taught and told you must do this for money and do that for money, people lose their way on what really brings them happiness," she said. "I'm happy here. Sometimes I'm in here 10 hours before I get out."

Coming back home

The road to Kimochi Detroit started to gain traction shortly after Yokely moved back to the Motor City, she said. Yokely first met DePorre as a client at a Corktown wellness center. Yokely mentioned that she wanted to open her own space, but that she didn't have an investor, she said. But by the second appointment, Yokely knew they were going to be business partners.

DePorre, who works in the medical field, said massage therapy is relatively new to her. She often thought of massages as a luxury,

something to do when you go on vacation. However, she began getting massages regularly a few years ago and realized she wanted these types of services in her life.

"I could feel changes and stiffness going away and then I started to think of it more as a maintenance thing," DePorre said.

After the height of the pandemic, the physician wanted to create something meaningful and she saw that in Yokely and Kimochi Detroit.

"There was no specific goal," DePorre said. "It was more like Kim and I connected on the friendship level and then really imagining how cool it would be to create—at that time, we were thinking about a sauna and bathhouse as well—to create something like that in the city."

DePorre became an investor in Kimochi and she and Yokely visited at least five different places on the east side before they found the building in Eastern Market last year, 1337 Division Street.

To secure more funding, the women began working with Motor City Match. The entrepreneurial program awarded Yokely and DePorre a \$35,000 grant to help with equipment costs.

Prices range from \$30 for a 15-minute chair massage, a 50-minute acupuncture session for \$80, to a Swedish and shiatsu massage for \$300. Yokely has a variety of memberships to offer access to customers at any price point. The "Shine On" membership is free, but customers must be on-call to assist with volunteering at Kimochi events. Kimochi's other free membership is a bartering system where people can help the wellness center with social media, marketing, public relations or cleaning in exchange for massage and reflexology sessions. 

Photos by Quinn Banks for BridgeDetroit

DTE Foundation

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and resources is vital for
community wellbeing.

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BridgeDetroit and its various programs to ensure Detroit
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