



Advisory Council on Reparations

Tuesday, July 15, 2025

4 PM – 5:30 PM

Meeting in person and via Zoom

[Join by Zoom](#)

JULY MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
4. Public Participation (up to 3 minutes per speaker)
5. Council Response to Public Participation
6. Committee Working Groups
 - a. Research
 - b. Community Engagement
7. University of Michigan Poverty Solutions
 - a. Amanda Nothafft
 - i. Data and Evaluation Manager
8. Adjourn



Advisory Council on Reparations

Tuesday, June 17, 2025

4 PM – 5:30 PM

Meeting in person and via Zoom

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JUNE DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order
 - a. 4:08 PM
2. Attendance
 - a. Present: Justin Hodge, Derrick Hodge, Asha Jordan, Leo Pittman, Alfreda Rooks, Michael Steinberg, Conan Smith, Anna Taylor-McCants, Daniel Fryer
 - b. Absent: Bri Carpenter, Naomi Norman, Debi Khasnabis,
3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
 - a. Alfreda Rooks
 - b. Daniel Fryer
4. Public Participation (up to 3 minutes per speaker)
 - a. Alice Klein: happy to be here to listen and learn
 - b. Intern from Michael's office
5. Council Response to Public Participation
6. Committee Working Groups
 - a. CS: what members of AC on these groups but also folks who aren't direct appointees can inform the work.
 - b. Research
 - c. Public Engagement/Education
 - i. CS: two part – receiving and giving out information. Must think critically about communications
 - d. CS: Andre Watson came into the meeting last month and he is now the new Chair of the NAACP.

7. University of Michigan Presentations

a. Dr. Rita Chin

- i. Role is as a facilitator through the Rackham Graduate School that has invested in an interdisciplinary work on grand challenge problems. Committed to working with community-based organizations that we can help with work surrounding harms.

ii.

b. Dr. Trina Shanks

i. Partnership and collaboration

- 1. Detroit Reparations Tasks Force (DRTF) – gave the blueprint
- 2. Create multiple task forces
- 3. Created a scope of work

ii. Strategy

- 1. Brought an interdisciplinary approach
- 2. Had an end of year symposium and brought findings/takeaways to DRTF
- 3. Scope of work

a. Sam S. (poverty solutions):

i. five focus areas

- 1. Housing
- 2. Policing
- 3. Quality of life

a. Health

- i. How healthy people are but also healthcare discrimination is occurring

4. Education

- 5. Economic development and economic insecurity

iii. Offerings

- 1. Poverty solutions is staff based, which requires payment, but the Detroit taskforce was not interested in providing payments.
- 2. Rackham created an educational experience that would reach them both a kind of disciplinary expertise in their own subject area but also get them into conversation with other experts to understand academic collaboration.
- 3.
- 4. Gathered experts around UM to participate in this project
 - a. History, political science, education, social work, climate science, and public policy

5. Anchor a project in Willow Run?
6. PoliSci students interested in healthcare projects
7. Everyone is committed to give students an interdisciplinary experience
 - a. Seeing how these factors inform each other

iv. Offerings – methods

1. Inte
2. rviews/oral histories
3. Opportunity index – expanded
4. Mapping – housing segregation, climate risk, income, education access, health care access
5. Databases
6. Qualitative analysis
7. Synthesized report

v. Next steps

1. ACR priorities
2. Develop scope of work/research plan
3. Establish ongoing dialogue
4. CS: JH, the products we create will guide BOC decision making. We want to make sure the articulated harms are harms by the county and the modern day county is accountable to address those past harms they themselves did not cause. Do you think the commission would find that valuable?
5. JH: I could see a report that lists out the harm our county has caused with recommendations would be helpful as well as information on what other municipalities have done
6. NN: I'm thinking about some of the resources offered in other places (books, articles, research) other places have, so maybe we're starting in a different place. A year might be too ambitious. Maybe we should have a phased approach. My instinct is we'll have to take time to do the research.
7. SS: Detroit is still in the process of research. So it's a matter of figuring out what can be done while the research is being conducted.
8. RC: DRTF had a very clear timeline. So even though there were extensions that felt immovable. So something you all need to think about is this a one- or two-year project, can we do it in phases? NN you're right, Detroit has a whole body of research existing on this topic and washtenaw county doesn't have it. I'm not sure if we need that depth but we need a baseline. A detailed account of the history on housing, policing, etc needs to be established.

9. MS: assuming we have time to get a detailed account, is that something RC's collaborative is willing to do?
10. RC: I have funding for the next two years so I'll say that. I am seeking more funding to make an institute for this work. An extension of this project could also be pursued. But given the funding now I the two year timeline works
11. TS: we need to also think about what can be done when given the academic calendar.
12. Mickey: many of these things (formal research) will take a long time. But going through the county's newspapers and recording accounts will be less of a lift. These things can be more powerful as well
13. RC: especially if things are digitized this could be done very quickly. The exhaustive history wouldn't be our goal anyway
14. MS: because of lack of time?
15. RC: time yes and we don't necessarily care about a year by year development of the county. Around certain questions maybe. We want an overview. Specifically when the shift happen to the county becoming "liberal".
16. MS: we don't want something too extensive on everything. Ideally we'd like a comprehensive history of discrimination, trends and patterns would be helpful against any lawsuits against reparations.
17. NN: a part of it is knowing which threads to pull. What has happened when in what areas. In small groups we were discussing going out in the community and learning what threads to pull. From a school system point of view, knowing what threads to pull is something we're still figuring out
18. TS: with my class I was going to have the students go through the Black Bottom interviews/transcripts. We didn't get a lot of individuals to do interviews, that's very hard.
19. RC: there are intentional strategies that we can use for outreach. There are a lot of complications in oral history collections – making people feel heard is vital. Doing that, learning what threads to pull are additional layers of the scope of work. We have to think about what is possible in a term, a year, two years.
20. Mickey: UM partners can bring people in for interviews much easier
21. DJ: that's what our group was discussing. How each part of this group can leverage their circles of influence to mobilize individuals

22. DF: a lot of this depends on what a final harms report will look like. Different groups are doing this differently. In the DRTF harm report, the harm is mainly not Detroit, but Detroit-caused harm was woven in. I'm not opposed to doing that. So this idea of not just County-caused. What would be good enough for our purposes? I have also been thinking about how there is not a lot of research on this topic in Washtenaw County, which makes me think the lift will be higher for research. But based on how you've all spoken that's not necessary. But going back, what will be necessary to legitimize the harm report? A couple more things – the way you've broken down the groups of harms, I think that's the easiest way to approach based on the passed resolution. Lastly on who constitutes the team, is there more team for LSA faculty? I think additional social scientists would be beneficial such as a sociologist (Sasha Kilewald).
23. RC: with adding, I may be able to get more money, but Moe is a trained sociologist. I would be happy to pursue adding another person.
24. JH: RC you mentioned being interested in the opportunity index. We will be updating that soon. What updates do you foresee?
25. TS: it partly depends on what the county wants. If you want things only found in census? Do you want to include climate information? Once it's done this year maybe we don't take five years but RC's group can explore what can be improved. Specifically what other types of equity issues can be include. That's the beauty of RC's group, it's so interdisciplinary.
26. RC: the index to us was a way to get at what temporary disparity looks like. We need to marry historical harms with contemporary outcomes. The opportunity index seems like a great way to do that. We just weren't sure if the project was put on hold
27. JH: could you ballpark the cost?
28. RC: free!
29. MS: because there aren't major stories, this report is exciting to me. It will document the harm. This report will be super important in understanding the residents in this county. A lot of us didn't know you were doing work in this area until the last meeting. If I'm understanding, you are willing to do work for two years to figure out the precise direction.

- 30. TS: we put a pretty narrow scope of work on Detroit and it shifted then expanded. Figuring out what is realistic is important.
- 31. Mickey: we also don't need to have a phased timeline. We can have touchbases and then go based on those
- 32. RC: I don't think they're mutually exclusive. We could have a phased approach with touchbases. There will be a need for flexibility based on interest, findings, and who (faculty) is available to do the work.
- 33. It would be great to see the harm done by UM and Michigan Medicine. As of right now there are still issues of trust.
- 34. DJ: I have a meeting with Milton and the city next week and I'll include UM. If they are willing to partner with us, we should consider what that will look like. Even if we don't have in your face harm I think knowing the context and how the different parts of the county move have impacted residents will be impactful.
- 35. RC: if Michigan Medicine is willing to partner and even hire someone that would be helpful. The rest of the UM team is bound to the academic calendar here. Many other groups have hired outside consulting firms to do this work quickly.
- 36. TS: detroit hired someone to do this work.
- 37. ATM: i think there's something beautiful in UM investing in this work. They have inadvertently caused harm, so this is a great way to address that.

8. Public Participation (up to 3 minutes per speaker)

- a. Emma Merrit-c: it was great to hear all the updates from this meeting!

9. Next meetings

- a. CS: let's work collaboratively to create a scope of work to discuss
- b. RC: how do you envision doing this?
- c. CS: let's set up a meeting to plan
- d. Next location:
 - i. AR can host (free parking and snacks)

10. Adjourn

Committee Charter

Name: Research Committee

Committee Type: Standing

General Volunteer Commitment: 30-50 hours per year

Committee Statement of Purpose

Insert ACR Mission

Committee Purpose: The Research Committee works closely with the County staff and community partners to

develop strategies to better steward and grow Michigan's environmental movement. There are over a thousand environmental organizations across the state and this committee will work to bring more of these voices into the Michigan Environmental Council's network. The committee works to foster collaboration between existing member groups and MEC staff to better advocate for sound policy in Lansing and to support member organization's work on the ground across the state.

The Committee also advises the Board and CEO on organizational practices that ensure fair representation and treatment of and a supportive environment for everyone who engages with the organization. The committee has a special focus on racial equity as a critical challenge facing the environmental movement.

Membership

General Structure: The Committee comprises at least 3 members approved by the Council. Committee members serve terms coincident with their appoi; there are no term limits. Members serve until their resignation or their successors are appointed.

Chairperson: Debi Kasnabis

Current Membership:

Daniel
Michael
Derrick Jackson*

* The County Equity Officer is an ex officio member of all committees

Activities, Duties, Responsibilities

The Committee is specifically charged with:

- Developing and recommending to the Council a research agenda aligned with the goals of the reparations framework adopted by Washtenaw County.
- Formulating and recommending research partnerships to advance the research agenda.
- Gathering historical data on systemic racial harms, including but not limited to housing discrimination, economic exclusion, policing, education, health disparities, and environmental injustice within Washtenaw County.
- Conducting literature reviews of national and local reparations models, policies, and best practices.
- Collecting qualitative and quantitative data, including archival records, oral histories, and community testimony to inform recommendations.
- Identifying data gaps and proposing strategies for additional research, including collaboration with academic institutions and community-based organizations.
- Engaging community expertise, especially from Black residents with lived experience, to co-produce knowledge and ensure research reflects community priorities.
- Synthesizing findings into accessible reports, memos, and presentations for the full Advisory Council and County staff.
- Supporting evaluation efforts by identifying potential metrics and indicators of harm, repair, and impact.
- Coordinating with other subcommittees to ensure alignment and avoid duplication of effort.
- Upholding ethical standards in all research activities, including informed consent and respectful engagement with communities affected by historical and ongoing injustice. Recommending a general research agenda and specific research projects to the Advisory Council.

Out of Scope:

No issues have been specifically identified as out of scope to date.

Standard Committee Procedures

Meeting & Quorum Procedures: Meetings will be called and led by the Committee Chair. A quorum shall consist of the presence of a majority of committee members. Meetings may be conducted in any manner in which the participants can easily and openly communicate with each other, including in person or by phone or video conference. Subcommittees operate on a consensus basis.

Regular Meetings: The Committee will convene monthly and may schedule additional regular meetings at the discretion of the Chair.

Special Sessions: The Committee may convene working sessions or ad hoc subcommittees as necessary to conduct its business, including receiving updates on projects or briefings from the staff.

Communications: Committee members will be included in an group email and have access to archived committee conversations. Committee documents will be stored on a shared drive accessible to all current committee members, staff and Advisory Council members.

Staffing: The Committee is supported by a County staff member assigned by the County Equity Officer who will ensure the Chair has any necessary information and support to ensure the smooth operation of the Committee.

Charter History

Committee Creation: July 15, 2025

Charter Update: July 15, 2025

Charter Author: Conan Smith

Resolution Authorizing the Research Subcommittee to Develop an MOU with the Rackham Reparative Justice Research Group

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw County Advisory Council on Reparations (ACR) was established to study and develop proposals for reparations for Black residents of Washtenaw County;

WHEREAS, the ACR recognizes the need for rigorous, community-engaged research to document the historical and ongoing racial harms experienced by Black communities in Washtenaw County;

WHEREAS, the Rackham Reparative Justice Research Group (RRJRG), a pilot project of the Rackham Graduate School's Interdisciplinary Problem-Solving Initiative at the University of Michigan, has offered to partner with the ACR to produce a comprehensive report detailing such harms;

WHEREAS, a draft Scope of Work outlining the goals, methodologies, deliverables, and timeline of this partnership has been prepared for discussion;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the ACR authorizes its Research Subcommittee to engage with the RRJRG to finalize the Scope of Work and develop a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ACR and RRJRG;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Research Subcommittee shall present the finalized MOU to the full Advisory Council for review and approval prior to execution.

Historical and Ongoing Racial Harms Report for
Washtenaw County Advisory Council for Reparations
Scope of Work
DRAFT
July 15, 2025

Overview:

The purpose of this document is to define the scope of work, methodology, and terms of partnership between the Washtenaw County Advisory Council for Reparations (ACR) and the Rackham Reparative Justice Research Group (RRJRG), which is a pilot project of Rackham Graduate School's Interdisciplinary Problem-Solving Initiative.

The overall objective of this project is to prepare a report that clearly outlines the historical and ongoing racial harms to black residents in Washtenaw County in a way that lays the groundwork for the development of a reparations program or a reparative justice framework for future Board of Commissioners investment. Acknowledging at the outset that the jurisdiction of Washtenaw County has historically been relatively weak and fluctuated over time, a further goal of this project is to identify the specific discriminatory policies and their jurisdictional bodies (whether township, county, university, city, state, or federal) for the racial injustices and harms experienced by black residents of Washtenaw County.

The research for this report will be undertaken by members of the RRJRG. The report itself will be co-produced in conjunction with other University of Michigan units (Poverty Solutions, Center for Social Solutions, Center for Equitable Family and Community Well Being, and the CREATE Center), as well as in collaboration with the ACR and relevant Washtenaw County community organizations and leaders.

Background:

In January 2023, the Washtenaw Board of Commissioners established the Advisory Council on Reparations for the purpose of studying and developing reparations proposals for black Washtenaw County residents. The resolution called for a Washtenaw Reparations Plan that would address the following areas: homeownership and access to other quality affordable housing; increasing business ownership and career opportunities; strategies to grow financial equity and generational wealth; closing the gaps in health care, education, employment and pay; and neighborhood safety and fairness within criminal justice.

Before it can make recommendations for reparations programs to address structural discrimination against black communities in Washtenaw County, the ACR requests U-M support in preparing a report that documents the range of historical and ongoing injustices committed against black residents of Washtenaw County. This report will then serve as the basis for broader consultations with the affected communities to assess the impact and enduring consequences of these harms and to help determine what reparative measures can best address these harms and prevent their recurrence.

Unlike other Midwestern metropolitan areas such as Detroit, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, and Cleveland, for which there are well-established historical literatures that address racist harms as

well as their social, political, and cultural effects, Washtenaw County has received little attention from scholars. Several projects at the University of Michigan, including Justice InDeed (led by Michael Steinberg) and The Black Washtenaw County Collaboratory (co-led by Matthew Countryman and Jennifer Jones), as well as the independently-developed project, South Adams Street @ 1900 (led by Matthew Siegfried), have undertaken research to document the racialized experiences of black people in Washtenaw County, but there is much more to investigate.

The Rackham Reparative Justice Research Group intends to build on this work and engage the RRJRG affiliated faculty and students to conduct further research that will shed light on the historical and ongoing harms to black residents in Washtenaw County.

Commented [MR1]: I changed this just to keep the door open that we might end up working with Siegfried

Focus Areas:

As a starting point, the ACR would like research that documents injustices experienced by black residents of Washtenaw County in the following areas:

1. Race relations in the county
 - a. General history – overview of major flashpoints, everyday harms, controversies, conflicts, and chronology from the 1850s to present
2. Housing/Homeownership
 - a. History of racial covenants and their patterns in the county
 - b. Black settlement patterns in the county and how they have changed over time
 - c. Tools of residential segregation, both past and present
 - d. Public housing, subsidized housing, co-ops
 - e. Institutional actors – banks, realtors, universities
 - f. Observed and projected environmental risks within the county – flood, air quality, extreme temperatures
 - g. County investment in green spaces, accessible public transportation
 - h. Location of toxic or polluted spaces in relation to black residents and neighborhoods
3. Business ownership
 - a. History of black business ownership in the county
 - b. Urban renewal projects (I-94 in Ypsilanti) may have disrupted black businesses
4. Generational wealth/Financial equity
 - a. Estimate loss of generational wealth through homeownership/lack
 - b. Probate analysis
5. Education
 - a. Willow Run-Ypsilanti School Districts, decisions to merge or close schools
 - b. Examine records held by Superintendent for Intermediate School District of Washtenaw County
 - c. Budget allocations
 - d. Racial segregation, racial incidents in Dexter, Chelsea, Saline, other more rural townships
6. Healthcare/Health impacts
 - a. Washtenaw County Farm Park – poor house
 - b. History of county health department (relatively recent)
 - c. Role of U-M in offering or denying medical treatment to black residents
 - d. Effects of differential environmental risk exposure
7. Criminal justice

- a. History of Washtenaw County prosecutor and office, public defender, legal services
- b. Major cases and decisions of prosecutor around how to charge the crime
- c. Prosecutor's handling of allegations of police misconduct
- d. History of the County jail and sheriff's office

These areas are just a starting point. As the work progresses, the ACR and RRJGR may agree to prioritize certain areas, add new areas, and/or drop others.

Research Methods and Sources:

The RRJRG faculty and students will use a variety of methods and sources to investigate these focus areas, including research with oral histories and interviews; newspapers, city directories, census reports; documents in city, county, and state archives; Bentley Archives; the Ann Arbor Public Library; private collections; satellite data, EPA air quality data, high-resolution climate reanalysis data, green area maps; ARC GIS technology; and more.

Methodology:

It is important to acknowledge the ways in which many universities across the United States have historically engaged with black communities in a one-way extractive relationship, where research is *done* in a community, not *with* a community. Typically, this research has tended to serve the interests of academics rather than respond to the specific needs of various communities. It is also important to acknowledge the economic barriers and discriminatory practices that have presented obstacles to many Black Americans from accessing higher education and have led to higher academic institutions being primarily white-dominated spaces.

This partnership is rooted in the belief that as part of the efforts to advance reparative justice in the U.S., it is essential for universities to shift their approach and carry out research that is in service of communities. The guiding principle of this research project is co-creation between the ACR, its community partners, and the RRJRG (representing the University of Michigan).

Final Product:

The RRJRG will produce a written report that synthesizes archival and historical research, oral histories and interviews, as well as statistical and other forms of data to present a holistic look at the historical and ongoing harms experienced by black residents of Washtenaw County.

Time Frame:

- The RRJRG has funding from Rackham Graduate School to support faculty for this project for AY2025-26 and AY2026-27.
- The expectation is that the bulk of the research for the project will be complete by May 2027, with the final report submitted no later than August 30, 2027.

Milestones and Benchmarks:

Before the final report is submitted, there will be a number of milestones and benchmarks to maintain progress and accountability.

- Finalization of the Scope of Work between ACR and RRJRG
- Members of RRJRG will attend monthly ACR meetings from Aug 2025-May 2026 to keep the lines of communication open

- Members of ACR will be invited to attend RRJRG student presentations in December 2025 and May 2026 to offer feedback, direction, guidance
- RRJRG team will offer preliminary presentation of findings from first year of research at June ACR meeting
- ACR will have opportunity to refocus, redirect project based on preliminary presentation/report in July-August 2026
- Members of the RRJRG will attend monthly ACR meetings from Aug 2026-May 2027 to keep the lines of communication open
- Members of ACR will be invited to attend RRJRG student presentations in December 2026 and May 2027 to offer feedback, direction, guidance
- RRJRG team will offer preliminary presentation of findings from second year of research at June ACR meeting
- RRJRG team will produce final report based on both years of research no later than August 2027

DRAFT