



Fall 2024 Newsletter

The Detroit URC hopes that you had a healthy and enjoyable summer! This issue includes information about several events we hosted over the last few months, including our 2024 Networking Social, Project HEARD Showcase, and the CBPR Partnership Academy Virtual Symposium. We hope you take advantage of the connections, resources, and new ideas that stemmed from these events. This issue also includes information on a leadership transition within the URC, as well as highlighting the manual for Community Rights in Research: Collaborative Research Capacity for Community-Based Organizations, Detroit URC Small Planning Grants, and Community Action to Promote Healthy Environments (CAPHE). Learn more about how community-based participatory research (CBPR) is at work in Detroit and beyond!

New Leadership at the Detroit URC



Enrique Neblett
Director, Detroit Community-Academic
Urban Research Center



Katrina Ellis
Associate Director, Detroit Community-
Academic Urban Research Center

We are pleased to announce that Enrique Neblett, a professor of Health Behavior and Health Equity at the University of Michigan, has been appointed director of the [Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center](#). Enrique previously served as the center's associate director and assumed the role of director on September 1, 2024.

Neblett is a leading scholar in the area of racism and health, studying the impact of racism on the mental and physical health of African American youth. His work has been funded by leading research organizations and foundations, including the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the William T. Grant Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Professor Neblett's experience with Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) dates back to 2016 when he and Melvin Jackson partnered to participate in the CBPR Partnership Academy to learn more about this type of research and implement a CBPR project. At the time, Enrique was at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill working at the nexus of psychology and neuroscience, and Melvin Jackson had been practicing CBPR for many years. Enrique and Barbara Israel, founder and then director of the Detroit URC, kept in touch after the academy.

For almost 30 years, the Detroit URC has been the "glue" that joins academic researchers with community entities in Detroit. Enrique highlighted that community impact continues to be a guiding principle for him as the new director of the Detroit URC. "Coming together in partnership and figuring out how we take what we are learning, from research, to promote health and health equity is what most excites me," he said. Enrique also identified working in partnership with fabulous people and leaders in the city of Detroit and CBPR

legends and greats at the university are one of the best parts of the job. Neblett affirms, “with principles of equity and power sharing at the core, the Detroit URC brings together collaborators with a shared common purpose: promoting health equity.”

Katrina Ellis, associate professor of Social Work and Health Behavior and Health Equity, came aboard as the associate director of the Detroit URC on September 1st. She has had significant experience with CBPR, including a postdoctoral fellowship at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with Geni Eng, a leader in the field of health disparities in cancer and CBPR. Professor Ellis’s research centers on family health interventions, particularly in the areas of cancer survivorship and chronic disease prevention and management. Improving racial and ethnic health equity is a key driver of her work.

With unending gratitude, we would also like to thank Barbara Israel for conceiving and, with community partners, founding the Detroit URC 30 years ago. Her research career at UM has been defined by her unwavering commitment to CBPR, health equity, and understanding and addressing social determinants of health. She leaves a rich legacy of work in the Detroit URC. Barbara kicked off an endowment fund for student internships at the Detroit URC and has given a legacy gift to support the Detroit URC.

If you would be interested in giving to the Detroit URC, please click [here](#) to contribute to the [Internship Endowment Fund](#) or to give a [gift to the Detroit URC](#).



Enrique Neblett, Director, and Barbara Israel, Founding Director
Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center

Annual Detroit URC Networking Social - 2024

Thank you to those who were able to join us for the Detroit URC Networking Social on May 9, 2024 - at the Outdoor Adventure Center! Special thanks to all of our sponsors and partners, the Edward Ginsberg Center, Michigan Center for Diabetes Translational Research, Michigan Institute for Clinical Health & Research, Michigan Lifestage Environmental Exposures and Disease Center, Poverty Solutions, UM School for the Environment and Sustainability, UM School of Social Work, and the UM Detroit Center. We were led and humored by our MC Dr. Richard Bryce (CHASS), and appreciated the beautiful tribute Angie Reyes (DHDC) and Amy Schulz (UM) did for our own Barbara Israel who is officially retired from UM. She is still working on a variety of grants and projects. You will still see her at some events and on zoom calls!

We were delighted that many attendees met people with similar research interests and that the gathering helped spark productive conversations about potential collaborations. During the event attendees were asked to sit at a table with a specific research interest, and engage in dialogue surrounding the topic. Through this activity, attendees were able to form new connections, share contact information, ask for advice, and much more!

Contact us if you'd like assistance fostering a dialogue with a potential research partner. We are happy to do matching with faculty and community-based organizations and provide resources and tools on CBPR. We can put you in touch with relevant members of the Community-Academic Research Network (CAR-Net). We look forward to working with you in this capacity.



Community Action to Promote Healthy Environments (CAPHE)

People living and working in Detroit are exposed to elevated levels of multiple air pollutants, including particulate matter in the air, diesel exhaust, sulfur dioxide, and ozone pollution. Air pollutants have a devastating effect on asthma, cardiovascular risk, cancer, and adverse birth outcomes.

[Community Action to Promote Healthy Environments](#) (CAPHE) is a research partnership that includes community-based and health organizations, representatives from governmental organizations along with academic partners from the University of Michigan School of Public Health working to develop and implement components of a public health action plan to improve air quality and health in Detroit. “Air pollution exposures and their accompanying health effects have long been a concern among Detroit residents, who disproportionately experience many adverse health effects linked to air pollutants,” explained [Amy Schulz](#), professor of Health Behavior and Health Education at Michigan Public Health and co-principal investigator of CAPHE. Air pollution continues to be identified as one of the top public health priorities by Detroit community members and community-based organizations.

In 2017, CAPHE released a [Public Health Action Plan](#), which presented a wide range of recommendations, from clean fuels in city transportation to planting more trees to instituting and promoting the use of air filters in schools, businesses, and homes. Six years later, “work is moving forward on a number of CAPHE’s public health recommendations,” said CAPHE co-principal investigator [Stuart Batterman](#), professor of Environmental Health Sciences and Global Public Health at Michigan Public Health.

Several projects are addressing the expansion of air quality monitoring and indoor air quality improvement, and informing policy decisions to take air pollutants into account. One such [research study](#) from CAPHE looks at child serving organizations (e.g., schools, child care centers) in Detroit and surrounding communities with high levels of outdoor air pollution. This intervention study involves monitoring indoor and

outdoor air quality and installing indoor air filters in the organization's buildings.

Another initiative CAPHE is working on with a coalition of community-based organizations ensures that leaders and policy makers have information about the cumulative impacts of multiple air pollutants on health. Truck routes, land use zoning, environmental permitting, and other decisions all have implications on public health and, more specifically, air pollution's effects on health.

CAPHE is also working on building up the next generation of informed leaders, citizens, and scientists. The Environmental Health Research to Action (EHRA) program, led by [Natalie Sampson](#), associate professor of Public Health at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, and [Carmel Price](#), associate professor of Sociology at UM-Dearborn, engages high school students from Dearborn, Detroit and other nearby communities that experience high levels of air pollutants and other environmental threats. Participants learn about the science of air pollution and health, as well as developing skills in working with decision-makers in their communities to assure that decisions made are informed by scientific evidence.

Under Sampson's leadership, CAPHE also recently completed a new curriculum for middle school students focused on environmental health and justice, adapted from the EHRA program. The curriculum meets Michigan's Next Generation Science Standards for middle school science and social studies teachers and provides an exciting and engaging learning experience for middle school students on air quality and health. The curriculum was piloted with Dearborn schools over the summer.

The success of CAPHE, Schulz explains, comes from the partnerships with community and government organizations. "Relationships with partner organizations are central to CAPHE's ability to achieve goals related to improvements in air quality and health," she says. "These include the relationships that partner organizations have with schools, other community groups, and decision-makers. Without these community partnerships, it would be much more difficult for CAPHE to build trustworthy relationships with key decision-makers and to use research-based evidence to inform the decisions that they are making related to air pollutants and community exposure."

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INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & JUSTICE IN-PERSON • UM-DEARBORN THURSDAY JULY 6 - 10AM-4PM	SUMMIT: HONORING WOMEN OF COLOR IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT IN-PERSON • KENNEY CENTER SATURDAY JULY 8 - 9:30AM-4PM				
AIR POLLUTION & HEALTH VIRTUAL MONDAY JULY 10 - 10AM-12PM	WATER & HEALTH VIRTUAL TUESDAY JULY 11 - 10AM-12PM			ENERGY & HEALTH VIRTUAL WEDNESDAY JULY 12 - 10AM-12PM	
COMMUNITY-LED SCIENCE IN-PERSON • UM-DEARBORN THURSDAY JULY 13 - 10AM-4PM	DATA FOR PUBLIC GOOD VIRTUAL MONDAY JULY 17 - 10AM-12PM				
MAPPING THE ISSUES VIRTUAL TUESDAY JULY 18 - 10AM-12PM	COMMUNICATING CLEARLY VIRTUAL WEDNESDAY JULY 19 - 10AM-12PM				
POLICY ADVOCACY & STORYTELLING IN-PERSON • UM-DEARBORN THURSDAY JULY 20 - 10AM-4PM	CLOSING CEREMONY IN-PERSON • ECOWORKS SATURDAY JULY 22 - 10AM-1PM				
LEARN MORE & APPLY BY MAY 12 TO BECOME A 2023 EHRA fellow at: bit.ly/EHRA2023app				<small>THE 2023 ACADEMY IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN EHRA & ECOWORKS DETROIT. IT IS SUPPORTED BY COMMUNITY ACTION TO PROMOTE HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS & THE MICHIGAN CENTER ON LIFESTYLE, ENVIRONMENTAL EXPOSURES & DISEASE.</small>	

LEARN MORE & APPLY BY MAY 12 TO BECOME A 2023 EHRA fellow at:
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Detroit URC Small Planning Grants Recipients

We are thrilled to announce the recipients of the 14th annual Small Planning Grants sponsored by the Detroit URC. These grants are designed to support innovative projects that enhance community well-being and address critical local issues. Congratulations to the teams behind three exceptional proposals who have received \$5,000 each to put their projects into action.

Inclusive Community Development and Health Promotion in Grixdale Farms led by Andrew Lapetina (Grixdale Farms Neighborhood Association), Kiyana Sessoms (Hitha House), and Paul Draus (Professor, University of Michigan-Dearborn), aims to address neighborhood challenges such as perceived disorder and risks associated with street sex work. By engaging residents with practitioners and subject matter experts, this initiative will work to implement community-supported interventions and robustly monitor their effectiveness.

Empowering Detroit Together: Building Community Impact Partnerships, led by Dr. Yusef Shakur (Michigan Roundtable for Just Communities) and Abigail Eiler (Clinical Associate Professor, University of Michigan Ann Arbor, School of Social Work), seeks to foster a sustainable collective impact partnership among grassroots organizations, the Michigan Roundtable, and the University of Michigan School of Social Work. Their goal is to develop a shared agenda, create impactful metrics, and enhance collaboration

through resource sharing and capacity-building.

Black Ecclesiastical Intervention to Help Equip Affected Lives Enduring Mental Disorders (BE HEALED), led by Charles Williams II (Senior Pastor, King Solomon Baptist Church, Rich Tolman (Professor, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, School of Social Work), and Addie Weaver (Associate Professor, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, School of Social Work), focuses on improving mental health treatment for Black men in Detroit. This initiative will gather insights through stakeholder meetings and community conversations to develop accessible and effective mental health strategies.

We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all the recipients and look forward to the positive impact these projects will have on our communities.

Big thanks to the School of Social Work ENGAGE program and Michigan Clinical Health and Research (MICHHR) for providing funds for this program.

CBPR Partnership Academy Virtual Symposium - June 2024

The CBPR Partnership Academy Symposium held virtually on June 5, 2024, brought together academic and community partners from across the country to share innovations and discuss future directions in CBPR. This event showcased the accomplishments and ongoing work of those involved in the CBPR Partnership Academy over the past nine years, highlighting the collaborative efforts that have been central to the academy's and the field's success. The symposium featured community and academic partners throughout, and included a keynote address, lightning talks, small breakout group discussions to share partnerships' successes, and a moderated panel discussion on the future, including promising developments, challenges, and the role of CBPR in promoting equity. See the [Program Booklet](#) for more details on the Academy and the Symposium.

The Symposium opened with an engaging keynote by academic and community partners and leaders in CBPR, Dr. Tabia Akintobi, Professor and Chair of Community Health at Morehouse School of Medicine and Principal Investigator of the Morehouse Prevention Research Center (PRC), and LaShawn Hoffman, a distinguished civic leader and community board member on the Morehouse PRC. Reflecting on their experiences applying CBPR principles in practice, both speakers highlighted the vital work being done to advance the art and science of community-based participatory research (CBPR).

They emphasized the importance of prioritizing strong relationships as the foundation of this work, supported by collaborative infrastructure and annual evaluation of their community coalition board. What continues to draw them to this work is the mutual desire and benefit to improve the lives of people where they live, work, and play. They raised several important issues for the field: Is community engagement merely trending, or is it a lasting movement? How can we better train and integrate those interested in community-based research? While there is community-based funding for research initiatives, what about the necessary infrastructure? They also discussed new modes of engagement, especially in a post-pandemic, virtual world, and the institutional challenges for CBPR, including administration, faculty evaluation and rewards, investment (both human and fiscal), and the integration of community-engaged research within institutional review boards.

Three CBPR Partnership Academy teams presented lightning talks on their continuing and recent accomplishments.

Natalie Hernandez-Green and Jemea Dorsey (GA) presented their partnership between Morehouse School of Medicine and the Center for Black Women's Wellness (CBWW). Serving metro Atlanta, the CBPR partnership has built a foundation of research and intervention, community capacity and advocacy, and training toward improving Black women's physical and mental health.

LaPrincess Brewer and Clarence Jones (MN), discussed their collaboration between the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine and Hue-MAN, particularly their FAITH! (Fostering African-American Improvement in Health) Cardiovascular Health (CVH) and Wellness program. The CBPR Partnership Academy solidified their community-academic partnership, helping to foster relationship-building, equitable participation, and power-sharing. Among their accomplishments are securing grant funding and awards, as well as co-presenting at national and statewide conferences.

Jane Chung-Do (University of Hawaii at Manoa) and Kirk Deitschman (Pul Nui Oui Manolo) highlighted their partnership in Waimānalo, Hawaii. They discussed the historical and ongoing challenges faced by Native Hawaiians and the revival of Native Hawaiian cultural practices through community-led efforts that began in 2017, such as restoring traditional food sources and integrating traditional medicine. With support from the CBPR Partnership Academy, the team which was co-led by Ilima Ho-Lastimosa, developed the Waimānalo Pono Research Hui, a community-academic partnership that uses indigenous methodologies and principles of CBPR to engage Native Hawaiian community members in research. Their innovations included establishing protocols, rules of engagement, and ethics review to ensure that research benefits and aligns

with the values of indigenous communities.

Next, participants shared their partnerships' accomplishments and successes in small breakout groups. This promoted networking and sharing of ideas and practices across issues and communities, and sparked conversations about innovations and challenges of CBPR.

The symposium wrapped up with a **burning issues panel discussion among Academy participants from across the US** moderated by Laprisha Daniels, Detroit URC Board member and former Executive Director of Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice. Panelists included Enrique Neblett and Melvin Jackson, who were partners in North Carolina; Carman Valdez from Texas; and Annette Aalborg and Johanna Novak-Palmer from California. Panelists discussed challenges, opportunities, and promising developments in CBPR, such as a growing commitment to anti-racism in CBPR, increased funding opportunities, and expanding CBPR's reach to new populations and partners, such as youth and school districts. They also emphasized the importance of institutional support and proactive strategies to address challenges such as difficulty in securing long-term funding, sustainability, pushback against DEI initiatives, and ensuring CBPR is recognized as a valid scientific approach. Strategies included community-led grant submissions, creating networks to support CBPR across regions, and convening future discussions to share strategies and ensure that CBPR continues to support anti-racist practices despite these challenges.

The Symposium ended with a group toast and reaffirmed commitment to working together to advance community-academic partnerships to advance health and equity.

Project HEARD Showcase

The Detroit URC was well-represented at the Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association in Minneapolis. Project HEARD (*Health Equity via Advocacy for Resources in Detroit*) is a Detroit URC policy initiative to support community-led efforts to advance health equity in Detroit, co-led by Associate Research Scientist Chris Coombe and Associate Professor Paul Fleming, with a team of community and academic policy facilitators. Funded by the Total Healthcare Foundation, this 16 month project (February 2023 - May 2024) provided strategic and funding support for a cohort of 4 teams of community-academic partners who are each working towards a policy goal that they have identified using a community-based participatory approach. Building upon longtime efforts by community organizations and their collaborators, Project HEARD aimed to accelerate change by supporting community-driven efforts on a specific aspect of policy change that can be moved.

Approach: Equity, Co-learning, and Power-building for Impact

Project HEARD used an equity framework to address underlying determinants of health that contribute to systemic and structural inequities. The yearlong program used an action co-learning approach based on the expertise, experience, needs, and potential synergies among teams. Building off the Detroit URC's longstanding policy advocacy and CBPR capacity building efforts, the program was customized to the specific goals of cohort Policy Action Teams and included:

- **3 Policy Advocacy Workshops** - intensive 5-hour in-person facilitated workshops in Detroit with frameworks and tools for teams to apply both within and across teams;
- **4 Cohort Strategy Sessions** - facilitated by instructors/mentors for turning existing research into policy change;
- **\$20,000 Policy Action/Implementation Grant** for each team to develop and implement their proposed policy change strategy;
- **Mentoring/Technical Assistance** - from a pool of community and academic instructors/mentors with expertise and experience in policy change, organization and systems change, collaborative group processes, and CBPR; and
- **Policy Change Network** among policy teams to support co-learning, power, and impact.

In May 2024, the Detroit URC hosted a Project HEARD Showcase that featured a keynote address by Sylvia Orduño representing the People's Water Board Coalition, and presentations from the four teams who shared their successes and ongoing efforts in addressing critical issues in Detroit.

Project HEARD Policy Action Teams and Accomplishments

[Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice - Green Amendment Policy Brief](#)

The work of Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice ([DWEJ](#)) and the University of Detroit Mercy was guided by experts, Laprisha Daniels (DWEJ) and Nick Schroeck (UD-Mercy). Their team conducted a thorough policy analysis to evaluate the feasibility of amending Michigan's constitution to secure the constitutional right to a clean and healthy environment. Their analysis led to the recommendation for a statewide Green Amendment which was introduced and sponsored by Rep. Rachel Hood (81st House District) in 2024. This legislative step marks a significant milestone in addressing environmental justice issues at the constitutional level.

[Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation - Child Support Reform Policy Brief](#)

The child support reform team led by the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation's ([DHDC](#)) Tonya Medlock and Eladio Niño, and University of Michigan researcher William Lopez, tackled the complex issue

of pausing child support accrual for incarcerated individuals. They successfully engaged with key stakeholders, including the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) and the Friend of the Court Bureau. Their efforts are paving the way to obtain the goal of having a Friend of the Court Liaison at every prison in Michigan.

[Eastside Community Network - Air Quality and Truck Traffic Policy Brief](#)

Eastside Community Network (ECN) made significant progress in advancing their longtime efforts to address air quality and truck traffic in Detroit. Led by Erin Stanley and Roshawn Harris (ECN) and assisted by Kirsten Burgard from UM-Ann Arbor, the policy team collaborated with the Trucks Off Our Streets (TOOS) Coalition to engage community residents about air quality through town hall meetings, air monitoring, educational materials, and forums with local policymakers and experts. Their goal was to organize and build coalitions across the city, engage community in data-informed air monitoring and advocacy with policy makers to pass a semi-truck ordinance that is robust, enforceable and prioritizes community well-being, and create an enforcement solution that incentivizes and engages residents.

[SW Community Benefits Coalition Fugitive Dust and Protecting Health in Detroit Policy Brief](#)

The Fugitive Dust and Protecting Health in Detroit project addressed the pervasive issue of fugitive dust from polluting facilities across the city. This initiative was led by Simone Sagovac of [Southwest Detroit Community Benefits Coalition \(SWDCBC\)](#) and Natalie Sampson, UM-Dearborn. It involved organizing a webinar and community forum to educate residents and advocate for policy changes. The project also utilized social media platforms to discuss proposed amendments with Council Member Gabriela Santiago-Romero, ensuring ongoing community engagement and awareness. The ordinance passed the Detroit City Council on the day of the Project HEARD showcase, but without the enforcement mechanisms advocated by the community. [Fugitive Dust Ordinance Passes](#) On to the next fight!

See the links for more information on the projects and how individuals and communities can get involved with these continuing efforts to advance policies for health and equity.

Manual for Community Rights in Research: Collaborative Research Capacity for Community-Based Organizations

In an exciting new development, the Detroit URC, in collaboration with the Michigan Community Engagement Alliance (MICEAL), has unveiled a comprehensive training manual for its longstanding training, *Community Rights in Research: Collaborative Research Capacity for Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)*. This training workshop aims to bolster the capacity of community-based organizations to engage effectively and equitably with academic researchers in collaborative research. The manual, developed by Detroit Urban Research Center partners with substantial community leadership, including the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation and Friends of Parkside, provides a robust framework of principles and practical tools for fostering equitable research partnerships. The manual includes detailed instructions for organizing a customizable workshop tailored to community needs, ensuring that research initiatives are not only impactful but also fair, equitable and inclusive.

The training manual is designed for a team of experienced co-trainers to guide CBO participants through every facet of the interactive workshop. It features a comprehensive description of the workshop, an adaptable slide deck, facilitator instructions, and all necessary training materials and supplies. The workshop is divided into three parts: the first section introduces research and its potential challenges and benefits for organizations; the second emphasizes community rights and provides tools for establishing equitable community-academic partnerships; and the third introduces community-based participatory research (CBPR), a collaborative approach that champions mutual respect and shared decision-making. Participants will engage in hands-on activities to explore practical applications for their own community, making the workshop both educational and immediately applicable.

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