

# ECONOMIC SUPPORTS

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MORE EQUITABLE SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION

When you work to help communities have the economic supports they need to thrive, you are also doing equitable sexual violence prevention. **Economic supports** are one of the critical protective factors against sexual violence. In communities with equitably distributed economic resources, financial stability, and increased access to generational and community wealth, it is less likely that people will experience violence.

People hold many intersectional social identities, such as race/ethnicity, disability, gender, and sexuality, which together affect the forms of oppression and inequality they face. Approaching sexual violence prevention (SVP) with an anti-oppression, intersectional lens is helpful for identifying root causes and creating more effective supports for communities that are most impacted. In Michigan, there is a critical need for such equity-focused attention on SVP in Black, Native/Indigenous/American Indian, LGBTQ+, and Disability communities\*. The 2022 Michigan Community Sexual Violence Prevention Assessment (CSVPA), led by Michigan Public Health Institute (MPHI), was a first step to listen and learn from these core communities about what sexual violence looks like in their communities, how risk and protective factors for violence unequally affect them, and what their prevention resources and needs are. (For more information about the CSVPA process, visit Appendix A.)

### **This brief focuses on recommendations for strengthening economic supports in these communities as a key protective factor against SV.**

For those unfamiliar with this idea, risk and protective factors make it more likely (risk factors) or less likely (protective factors) that individuals, communities, and societies will experience violence. Personal or relationship factors could include someone's past experiences with violence, or a teen's connection to school or a caring adult. Community or societal factors could include the lack of good-paying jobs in a neighborhood or widely held beliefs about violence. Each factor affects Black, Native, LGBTQ+, and Disability communities in Michigan in similar and unique ways depending on their diverse identities, histories, and contexts.

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*\***IDENTITY AND LANGUAGE** are very complicated. The authors of this report intentionally use terms endorsed by the project's Advisory Council to describe the core communities and their members. We recognize that identity language is always evolving and that not all identity terms are captured here. As a reflection of the varied preferences within the disability community, we will use both person-first language (e.g., "people with disabilities") and identity-first language (e.g., "disabled people").*

# COMMUNITY-INFORMED RECOMMENDATIONS

The community-informed recommendations that follow include examples of the kinds of actions you can do to support this work. You can be part of a movement to end sexual violence by creating partnerships, educating policymakers, and strengthening programs to meet these community needs.

**NOTED AT THE END OF EACH EXAMPLE** are the specific communities where that action was supported by data from the assessment. Just because a core community is not listed does not necessarily mean that the example is not relevant or important for that core community; it simply means it was not mentioned by interviewees or found in the literature review that informed this assessment.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

### **Improve employment opportunities by paying living wages, improving benefits packages, and implementing workplace policies and practices that promote accessibility and diversity, equity and inclusion.**

- + **Increase full-time employment opportunities with livable wages and benefits.**
  - + Educate and support employers in offering fair wages and benefit packages. **All**
  - + Educate employers on the financial incentives and value of having disabled employees on their team. **Disability**
  - + Advocate for laws that require employers pay disabled people the same as non-disabled people in Michigan. **Disability**
  - + Improve existing workplace and job training models and programs for hiring disabled employees and ensuring job advancement using data driven approaches. **Disability**
  - + Support improved pay for caregivers and personal assistance services. **Disability**

## + Develop workplace policies and practices that are equitable and inclusive.

- + Help employers to develop and implement workplace policies and practices that ensure equitable career growth opportunities. [LGBTQ+](#), [Native](#)
- + Teach employers to develop and implement anti-discrimination workplace policies and practices that ensure an inviting and comfortable workplace environment for everyone. [LGBTQ+](#), [Disability](#)
- + Educate employers on how to use universal design in the workplace, address disability accessibility issues, and set up disability friendly workplace accommodations. [Disability](#)
- + Help employers identify ways to support childcare needs. [Native](#)
- + Help employers in designing inclusive benefits packages. This should include comprehensive health insurance coverage that provides appropriate coverage for chronic health conditions, mental health, paid leave (sick, maternity, family, parental, Native cultural/ceremony leave, disability leave) and benefits for families and same-sex partners of employees. [All](#)



## RECOMMENDATION 2

# Increase housing security by increasing affordable, accessible housing options, expanding housing supports, and addressing historic and current discriminatory policies and practices.

- + Address policies and practices that have led to historical and current discrimination in housing.
  - + Advocate for revised home loan processes that address discrimination and barriers to obtaining home mortgages (such as income barriers that prevent leasing or down payment assistance). **All**
  - + Identify bias among leasing agents/property owners that prevent individuals from obtaining rental housing and assist them in establishing inclusive policies. **Black, LGBTQ+, Disability**
  - + Advocate for deeper racial equity in HUD standards to improve housing accessibility. **Black**
  - + Re-evaluate housing policies in Native communities that may disproportionately prioritize families over single persons. **Native**
  - + Advocate for Statewide Housing Plans to include ADA compliant building code requirements in the Standards of Design for all new residential construction. **Disability**
  - + Work with local leaders and housing authorities to increase housing affordability of housing, regulate unfair leasing practices, and address waitlists for available housing with an equity lens. **All**
  - + Advocate for increased state, local, or Tribal funding for building affordable and accessible new housing and modifying existing housing to include disability accessible units. **All**



## + Expand and improve available housing supports.

- + Enhance the capacity of housing and homeless shelters to be inclusive of men, disabled persons, and middle-class individuals who often get excluded. **All**
- + Increase housing options for youth that have been disowned or cannot return to their families. **LGBTQ+**
- + Fund new organizations and the scaling up of existing programs that provide equitable housing assistance, rental support, and address housing insecurity. **Black, LGBTQ+, Disability**
- + Identify groups in the community where mutual aid housing support is frequently needed (such as borrowing or crowdsourcing money for rent) and prioritize them for more equitable economic support resources. **Black, LGBTQ+**

### RECOMMENDATION 3

## Close the generational wealth gap by reforming policies with strict income limitations on benefits, expanding programs to alleviate generational debt, and increasing home ownership and entrepreneurship.

- + Create and expand programs, education, and funding sources that help people build generational wealth through home ownership, banking and savings, asset building, estate planning, and retirement planning **All**
  - + Establish financial support for business ownership and entrepreneurship. **Black**
  - + Scale up programs that focus on increasing home ownership and providing homebuyer education. **Black, LGBTQ+**
  - + Establish and expand programs that focus on increasing financial autonomy for disabled individuals and individuals with cognitive disabilities. **Disability**



- + Increase programs that help individuals and families understand credit and savings options, such as establishing savings accounts, special needs trusts, and ways to put aside money tax free for disabled children. [All](#)
- + Advocate for equitable funding for economic development in Native communities and rural areas. [Native](#)
- + Assist credit unions and banking institutions to expand their mortgage and loan program criteria to be more inclusive of underserved people. [Native](#)
- + Identify and change federal, state, and local laws, policies, and programs that prevent wealth building.**
  - + Advocate for revisions to laws and programs (such as Medicaid and Social Security, food stamps, etc.) that limit the amount of assets, savings, and income that disabled individuals and their spouses are allowed to have to receive benefits. [Disability](#)
  - + Support expanded Tribal sovereignty and autonomy. [Native](#)
- + Advertise and encourage broad support for local businesses owned by community members in the core communities.** [Black, LGBTQ+, Native](#)
- + Identify the conditions in which community members often rely on intra-community financial support from family, friends, or community fundraising when in need or experiencing debt, and develop programs to directly support those needs.** [Black, LGBTQ+, Native](#)



## RECOMMENDATION 4

# Streamline and expand services and programs that help people meet basic needs.

- + **Increase funding for existing programs and resources that provide support for everyday needs like transportation, food, healthcare, and childcare.**
  - + Invest in the development of new affordable childcare options. [Black, LGBTQ+](#)
  - + Invest in accessible and affordable transportation options throughout Michigan, including expanding available hours and service in rural areas. [All](#)
  - + Support local food assistance programs, including food banks, pantries, and farmers markets. [Black, LGBTQ+, Disability](#)
  - + Support efforts to organize funding streams for life affirming surgery, name changes, mental health, and medical assistance for trans individuals. [LGBTQ+](#)
- + **Support expanding the eligibility criteria and extent of coverage of government assistance programs.**
  - + Advocate for stronger state-sponsored bill payment programs and relief. [Disability](#)
  - + Expand eligibility and covered services for Medicaid, SNAP, Indian Health Services dental and vision coverage, and stimulus funds. [All](#)
  - + Formalize state support for caregivers of disabled individuals in navigating medical care, benefits planning, emergency planning, housing, and financial support to cover extraneous costs incurred while caring for loved ones. [Disability](#)
  - + Advocate for state policies that reduce the impact of inflation on costs of everyday tangible needs. [Black](#)
  - + Advocate for new Native community general fund policies that can support emergency needs of Tribal members. [Native](#)
- + **Create a resource database that includes information on available resources from major financial and basic needs programs and regularly advertise them through communications outlets, social media, flyers, email listservs, etc.** [Native, Disability](#)



## RECOMMENDATION 5

# Break down barriers to higher education and employment through expanded financial supports, student loan forgiveness, and job searches, placement, and skills.

- + Create community-tailored training programs for those seeking employment that includes job skill and vocational training, interview training, assistance with understanding employment benefits, and direct job placement, connection to hiring employers, and job fairs. **Black, LGBTQ+, Disability**
- + Increase financial supports for higher education.
  - + Support ways to alleviate high student loan debt and high interest rates on student loans. **Black, Native**
  - + Encourage Tribal leadership to establish educational scholarship funds for Native community members. **Native**





# What's Next

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**Community-driven strategies and strong partnerships will help Michigan meet the needs of communities most impacted by sexual violence. We hope this information helps you to:**

- + See how your work contributes to sexual violence prevention by building and strengthening community connectedness.
- + Expand current perspectives and explore new community-driven prevention solutions.
- + Center community-informed recommendations, like those outlined above, to guide SVP work.
- + Prioritize partnership with leaders, programs, organizations, and systems that serve under-resourced communities, specifically the Black, LGBTQ+, Native, and Disability communities.

For more information on the CSVPA assessment, detailed briefs on the other protective factors, and updates on how the Michigan Rape Prevention & Education program is enacting some of these recommendations, visit our website: <https://mph.org/svp/>

## **WE INVITE YOU TO REACH OUT!**

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## **SUGGESTED CITATION:**

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Appendix A: Methods

Appendix B: Citation List

