

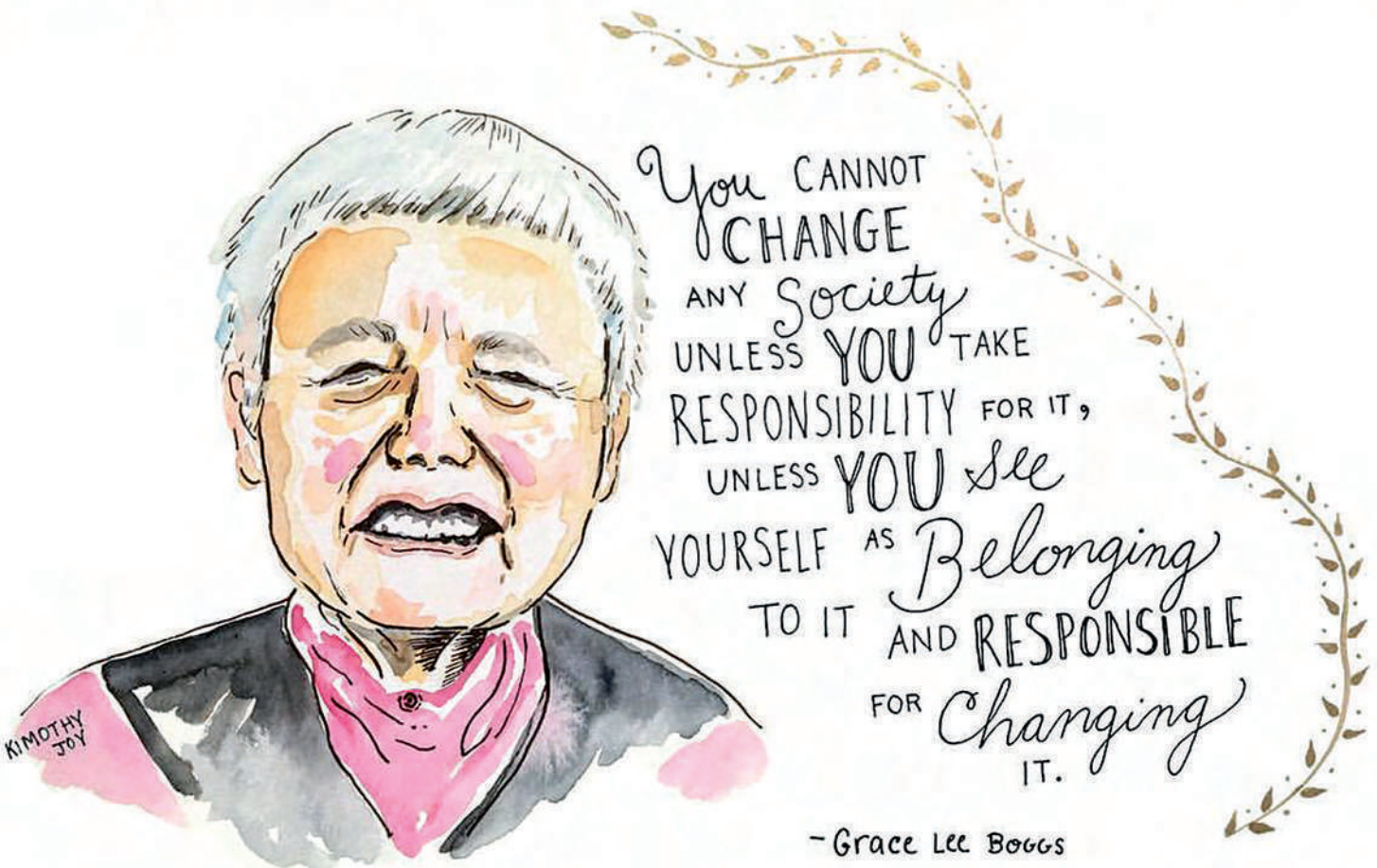
# INTRODUCTION

Rooted We Rise is a collection of information from many organizations and coalitions working on one or more issues of gentrification specific to Detroit. There are thousands of resources and assistance programs that the public doesn't know about and are not easy to find. The goal of this resource is to give Detroiters a guide of organizations, programs, and other resources that have been found useful by those resisting impacts of gentrification including increased housing taxes, police misconduct, and tenant rights.

This guide is intended to grow and evolve as new resources are created and identified. Are there any resources you know of that you believe should be included in this packet but are not? If so, please send your information to Breathe Free Detroit so that we might pass it along to the rest of our community.

You will find this guide useful in your efforts to strengthen community and preserve your home. Each year we will be compiling new resources to update Rooted We Rise; as some of these programs move on and resources discontinue. Resources found in this second edition have been selected with care and represent the best programs, resources, and entities responsible to their field of work.

If this guide is useful, let us know! If not, we also appreciate your suggestions and feedback, so please reach out. No resource guide is perfect. If any errors are found, kindly notify us so that they can be corrected in the next issue.



# ROOTED WE RISE

*A Resource Guide to Help Detroiters Stay in our Homes and Strengthen our Neighborhoods*

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## EXPLANATION

Breathe Free Detroit began as a campaign to shut down Detroit's incinerator. In 2019, we achieved this goal and it shut it down for good! After our big win, Breathe Free Detroit's work has grown to advocate for a related change: a just transition for our community, our waste, and our workers. In these efforts for a just transition, we work to ensure that our neighbors who are long-term Detroiters living around the incinerator are not pushed out by incoming gentrification and new development.

Here you will find chapters of available resources for protecting homes from foreclosure, utility assistance, renter protection, legal assistance, civil liberty assistance, and more. This is intended to be an anti-gentrification resource guide for our community, which has lived through generations of severely harmful pollution from the incinerator. We work to be sure our community will stay and live through the better, healthier times for generations to come.

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FOR INFORMATION CONCERNING THIS GUIDE COMMUNICATE WITH

**BREATH FREE DETROIT**  
**3434 CHENE ST. UNIT #7312**  
**DETROIT MI, 48207**

FIND THIS GUIDE ONLINE AT:

[WWW.SUGARLAW.ORG/ROOTED](http://WWW.SUGARLAW.ORG/ROOTED)

CALL : (313) 312-0134

[BREATHEFREEDETROIT@GMAIL.COM](mailto:BREATHEFREEDETROIT@GMAIL.COM)

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# **IMPORTANT DATES TO CONSIDER**

**JANUARY** - City property assessment completed. The assessment shows property information for the year including the taxpayer name, the assessed value of the home, and if there is a PRE exemption. The size of the assessment reflects how big the property tax bills will be in July and December.

**JANUARY** - "Show Cause Hearing" for homeowners to make arrangements to stop foreclosures.

**JANUARY 15** - Your winter property taxes from the previous year are due. If you have not paid your Summer tax bill, the balance will be included.

**FEBRUARY 1 THRU 15** - Appeal your Property Tax Assessment. *(See Page 69)*

**MARCH 1** - Any unpaid property taxes owed to the City of Detroit become delinquent and transfer to the Wayne County Treasurer.

**MARCH 31** - Deadline to make arrangements to avoid foreclosure if you owe taxes for 2018 or prior. *(See Page 8-10)*

**APRIL 5** - The Board of Review releases decisions on Homeowners Property Tax Assistance Program (HTAP). You are encouraged to apply two weeks prior to the review dates. *(See Pages 8, 17-20)*

**MAY 1** - Applications for Summer Tax Deferments and Senior Solid Waste Discounts are available at the Detroit Taxpayer Service Center *(See pages 21, 26-28)*

**JULY** - Summer tax bill arrives. This is the first property tax bill for the year. It is much higher than the Winter bill. To minimize costs, pay in full by August 31, or pay in two installments August 15 and January 15.

**JULY 1 THRU SEPTEMBER 15** - General Application period for Senior Solid Waste Discount Applications and Summer Tax Deferment. *(See pages 21-22, 26-28)*

**JULY 20** - The Board of Review releases decisions on Homeowners Property Tax Assistance Program (HTAP). You are encouraged to apply two weeks prior to the review dates. *(See Pages 8, 17-20)*

**AUGUST 31** - Summer property taxes are due in full.

**SEPTEMBER 15** - Summer Tax Deferment Application is due to the City Treasurer before September 15, or before the date your summer taxes are due, whichever is later. *(See pages 21-22)*

**SEPTEMBER THRU OCTOBER** - Foreclosed homes will be sold in the online auction to the highest bidder. Residents of foreclosed homes may have to prepare to buy their home in auction if they did not qualify for, or missed the deadline for Right of Refusal. *(See page 31)*

**OCTOBER THRU DECEMBER** - Properties at risk of foreclosure in 2022 get a "yellow bag" on the door.

**NOVEMBER THRU DECEMBER** - Properties sold in the auction will have new owners. The residents might buy back the home, rent it, or face eviction. *(See page 31)*

**DECEMBER** - Winter tax bill arrives, this is the second and last property tax bill for the year.

**DECEMBER 13, 2021** - The last day to submit the 2021 Homeowners Property Tax Assistance Program Application (HPTAP) for 2021. *(See Pages 8, 17-20)*

# **THE NEED FOR A JUST TRANSITION MOVEMENT ECOSYSTEM IN THE MIDWEST**

In a span of 100 years, economic, cultural and political transformation of the Midwest went from a place of Indigenous territory to immigrant dominance. The dual symbiotic development of industrialization and large-scale urbanization produced Rust and Grain Belt cities such as Detroit, Minneapolis and Chicago. These cities were critical loci for the national economic engine of the 20th century the birth centers of the corporate automobile industry (Detroit), electricity industry (Chicago), and food/agriculture industry (Minneapolis/St. Paul aka "Twin Cities"). This export based, fossil fuel driven economy created a system of cities and places that transformed communities, people and nature into capital, labor and natural resources for the purpose of growing the corporate economy. The result was that these cities were once considered places of economic opportunity for working-class migrants. Throughout the twentieth century, great migrations of working families from the US South, Latin America/Caribbean, and Native people were either pushed or pulled into urban communities and often found work in large scale industrial factories powered by extreme energy. As the home to the electricity, agro-industrial and automotive industries, the region was hit the hardest by the unJust Transition to deindustrialization.

Communities of color were particularly impacted by the loss of jobs and the creation of impoverished urban communities characterized by racial domination, dilapidated housing, the illicit drug economy, and environmental contamination. Once held as shining examples of U.S. economic might, many of our cities transformed into horrific examples of economic and environmental degradation. At the frontline of US economic decline, environmental justice communities throughout the Midwest Great Lakes region fully understand the need for economic justice and a Just Transition to a new economy freed of a dependency on fossil fuels. Our collaboration envisions a powerful network of organizations committed to building the sustainable institutions and cultural practices that will support the new economy.

As organizations at the forefront of local environmental justice struggles, we also agree that it is a pivotal moment to organize a Just Transition movement in our region. Environmental justice communities are challenging extreme energy and leading inspiring struggles for a new economy, but our very ability to remain rooted in our communities is threatened by state sanctioned plans operating on behalf of the extractive capitalist system. In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, states exercising power in Rust Belt cities have become further centralized, authoritarian, and committed to completing privatization. These strategic efforts to remake cities are causing unprecedented hardships in environmental justice communities throughout the region.

In Detroit, families are enduring water shutoffs and displacement produced by the Detroit Future City plan, communities in Chicago are witnessing endless violence and school closings, and gentrification in the Twin Cities is progressing at a startling pace. In the meantime, frontline environmental justice communities in our region are also bearing the brunt of the fracking industry with petcoke companies polluting neighborhoods and waterways. In addition to being the most vulnerable to climate change, low income and working-class communities of color are now faced with

ruthless attacks on our homes, collective bargaining rights, schools, transit services, and public spaces. Across the region our communities are treated as expendable populations and are experiencing intense practices of displacement.

As environmental justice organizations we share the understanding that these oppressive processes are imposed upon environmental justice communities by neoliberal policies of both Democrats and Republicans. Unfortunately, in the Midwest, even progressive sustainability advocates have not incorporated or understood the underlying race and class issues that undergird the present extreme energy economy. The result is that solutions and proposals are primarily focused on either sustaining the economic and political positions, or minimizing the negative effects, of the white upper middle class. Too often, this means that true transition for political and economic democracy that lifts the issues of low income, Indigenous and communities of color are considered less important than narrowly defined environmental goals.

In particular, our organizations have learned through experience that our struggle for a Just Transition confronts a powerful form of progressive racism that is distinctive to the Midwest Great Lakes region. We recognize that our effort to build a Just Transition movement must challenge progressive ideas of economic development and socio-economic advancement that currently structure the attacks on communities of color and displacement of poor people. Progressive racism must be challenged regionally as progressive tactics and narratives of economic growth are often incubated in one location and transferred to others. Planning projects and dominant narratives that celebrate the “revival of Detroit”, “widespread civic participation” in Minneapolis, and the “reinvestment in Chicago communities” epitomize progressive politics.

In reality our organizations continually confront paternalistic practices, and racist notions that poor people of color offer no contribution to the economic development of urban environments. In addition to effectively reproducing white supremacy, progressive racism reinforces hypermasculinity by supporting aggressive economic interventions by elected officials, and emergency managers in the case of Detroit. A regional Just Transition movement rooted in environmental justice principles has the potential to create an alternative vision of community and economic development based on true equity and dignity.

**Written by THE MIDWEST ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE NETWORK**  
**In collaboration with**  
**LITTLE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATION**  
**EAST MICHIGAN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COUNCIL**  
**CENTER FOR EARTH, ENERGY, AND DEMOCRACY**