Practical Community Learning Project
Project Proposal: Peace and Justice in Detroit Fall 2020

Introduction

This Practical Community Learning Project (PCLP) consists of a semester-long policy-based community project. Your group will meet in a remote setting regularly with the Community Engagement Manager of P3E to work with an organization around a mutually agreed upon initiative. The project will provide you with opportunities for dialog, research, and service. PCLP is open to Ford School of Public Policy undergraduate and graduate students. Participating students will receive two credits of independent study credit.

Peace and Justice in Detroit seeks to partner with the University of Michigan’s Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy to host independent study students to support grassroots efforts to improve police and community relations in the City of Detroit. Peace and Justice in Detroit looks to understand the intersections of poverty, policing and equity throughout Detroit. This includes working directly with the Detroit Police Department, Detroit City Council, and grassroots activists.

Scope of Work

Your team will be charged with examining the correlation between poverty and interactions with police. This research is a quantitative analysis of Detroit residents and their likelihood to interact with the criminal justice system. Following the murder of George Floyd and continued protests nationwide, police reform activists Campaign Zero has launched 8 Can’t Wait. Research shows that the employment of eight policies is proven to curtail police violence. The eight policies include banning chokeholds and strangleholds, banning shooting at moving vehicles, exhausting all alternatives before shooting, requiring that all use of force be reported, requiring a warning before shooting, requiring officers to stop another officer from using excessive force, and limiting the types of force and/or weapons that can be used to respond to specific types of resistance. The Detroit Police Department currently uses 7 of the 8 Can’t Wait policies. You will work with the community partner to create a policy recommendation addressing the usefulness in adopting and employing all 8 policies. In addition, your team will research and potentially recommend the use of more intensive de-escalation training and trauma training for both police officers and residents.

You will have the opportunity to attend Peace and Justice in Detroit planning committee meetings, as well as meet and/or contact key stakeholders that can help guide your research and understanding of the relevant topics. This project will also afford you room for creativity in exploring the complexity of policies that interact with law enforcement and race relations. The planning committee will help guide the process and identify directions for the research to support the overall work.

Expected Results

At the end of the independent study it is expected Peace and Justice’s policy capacity and programming will be strengthened. Your work will assist in the ongoing relationship between the community and local law enforcement. By highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the Detroit Police Department’s police community relations, your community partner will be presented with valuable information for policy recommendations. Upon completion of the project, the compiled data and policy research will serve as a toolkit for Peace and Justice in Detroit to present information to policy makers, community activists, and collaborators around similar issues. It is also expected that the crafted policies may serve as a model for other municipalities to introduce and adopt. You will gain an in-depth knowledge of the public policy process on a grassroots level and the legislative process. In addition, you will be given
the skills and experience necessary to obtain employment in various public policy disciplines. Most importantly, residents in the City of Detroit will be empowered to work collaboratively with local law enforcement and government.