



Strategy Session:

Building a Collaborative Strategy to Win on Water Affordability

DISCUSSION FACILITATED BY:

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Webinar Logistics



Mute & Video

- All attendees will be muted & not allowed to unmute during the presentations



Previous Sessions

- Videos from previous sessions are now available on our website



Chat Boxes

- Use Chat Boxes to answer & ask questions



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- Visit www.freshwaterfuture.org for resources and previous session information

Mute Start Video Security Participants 1 Polls Chat Share Screen Record More End



Learning from the First Five Sessions

Dr. Peter Hammer: Race, Rates & Infrastructure



- **Structural Racism: The inter-institutional dynamics that produce and reproduce racially disparate outcomes over time**
- **Structural racism requires a bureaucracy, administration and infrastructure to operate**
- **Water infrastructure can be used as a metaphor to understand the dynamics of structural racism in a region over time**
- **Rate structures: Oppression manifested through the bureaucratic administration of a public asset**

Sujata Shetty and Kimberly Panozzo: Local View of Affordability (Toledo)



- **Spatial clusters of shutoffs and water disconnection orders exist**
- **The Junction neighborhood is similar to average neighborhoods in Toledo, not a significant hotspot over time**
- **Many of the highest water bills in Junction are on locations where houses have been demolished.**
- **Proximity to social services does not impact # of disconnection orders**
- **Owner occupied / Non-owner occupied water access differences can be seen in the data**
- **The majority of disconnection orders are for Non-owner occupied units**

Dr. Hope Bland: Systemic Racism



- **Environmental Racism and Water Access and Affordability**
Millions of ordinary Americans are facing rising and unaffordable bills for running water, and risk being disconnected or losing their homes if they cannot pay, a landmark Guardian investigation has found.
- **Millions of Americans can't afford water as bills rise 80% in a decade**
- **How we can expect those facing poverty to be in positions to afford these rising costs?**

Nina Lakhani, The Guardian, 2020

Dr. Pam Oatis: Ending Racism



Racism Is:

- NOT born
- Aggressively, thoroughly taught
 - Family
 - Neighborhood
 - Faith community
 - Story books
 - TV
 - School
 - Health care
 - Sports
 - Arts
- Created, embedded in culture, institutions, minds for generations

Evonda and Amanda Haith: Dismantling Institutional Racism



Health Inequity:

- History of access
- Food deserts
- Medical treatment
- Clean Water

Disease outcomes:

- Mineral deficiency
- Soft Tissue Disease
- Asthma

Resolution:

- Funding
- Education

Donald Wiggins Jr., Esq.:

Community Benefit Agreements



Community Benefit Agreement (CBA)

is a contract created by the key partners involved in community development projects. The list usually includes a private developer, community-based organizations, public officials, and local government agencies

Aisha Sleiman, Esq.: **Community Lawyering**



Themes of Community Lawyering

- 1. Community identified issue**
- 2. Builds power, capacity and leadership in a disinvested or disenfranchised community**
- 3. Addresses a root cause (and not only a symptom) of racial and class discrimination and oppression**
- 4. Interdependent relationship: organizers and lawyers work together to transform the client-lawyer relationship**

Dr. Peggy Berry: Water A Life Source



THREATS TO OUR WATER

Climate change

Chemical spills and storm water runoff

Fracking

Coal ash – arsenic, radiation

Agriculture pollution

Chemicals including lead, PFAS

Repeal/replacement of the Clean Water Rule

Dr. Nadia Gaber & Professor Emily Kutil: Community Research Collective (WPD)



Shutoff Moratorium On August 23, 2016, Authority Health released a statement calling for a moratorium on water shutoffs for select vulnerable groups.

Based on their recommendations and our study, more than 82% of households would be ineligible for shutoff on health exemption criteria

The following are non-redundant counts)

- **Infants and children under the age of 18: 51%**
 - **Seniors age 62 and above: 31%**
 - **Persons with mental illness: 6%**
 - **Persons with disabilities: 25%**
 - **Expectant and/or breastfeeding mothers (needs further study)**
 - **Persons dealing with chronic diseases: 63% (excluding disabilities and mental health)**
- * Persons otherwise in need of critical and/or medical care: 25%**

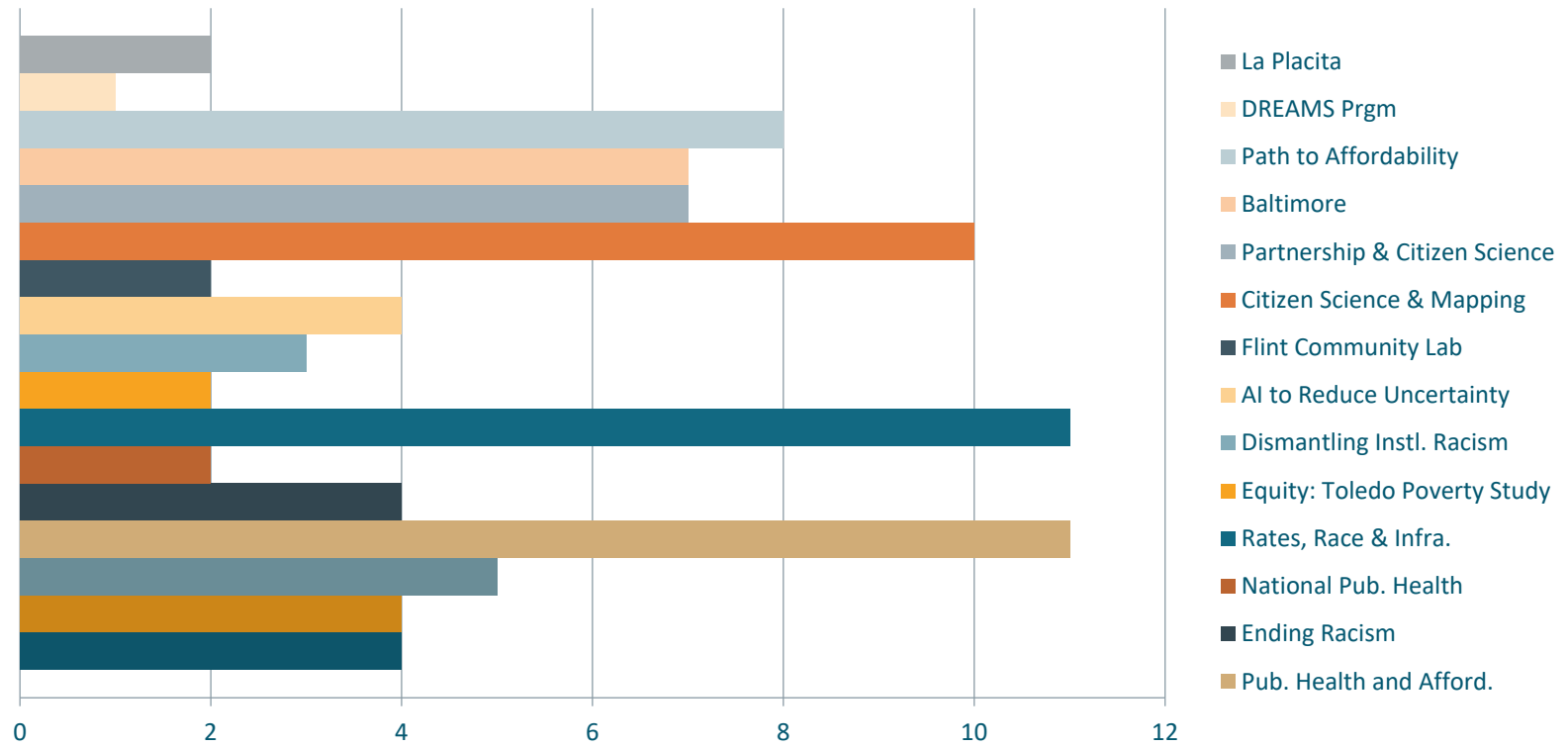


Learning from the Participants

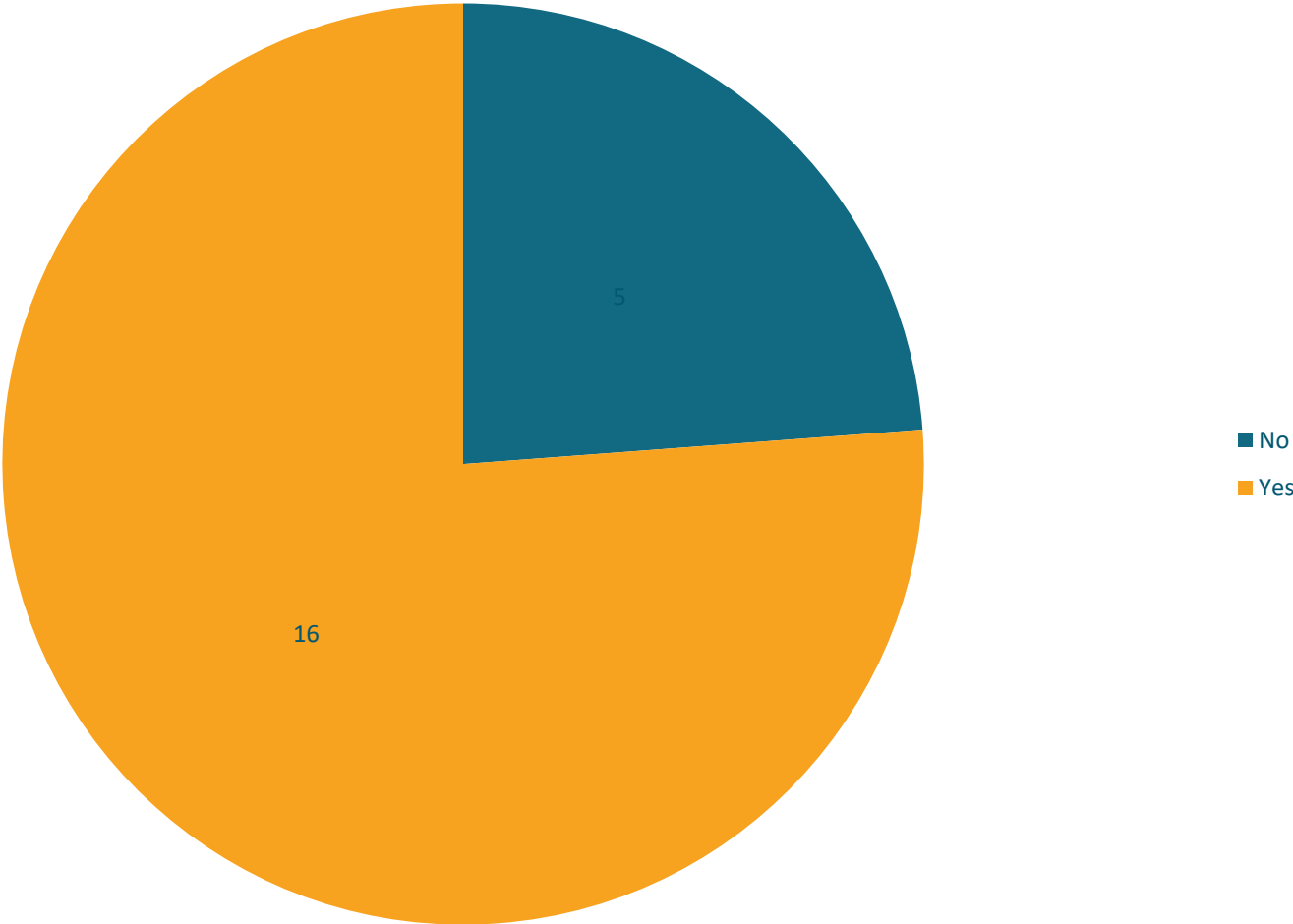


Survey of All About Water Participants

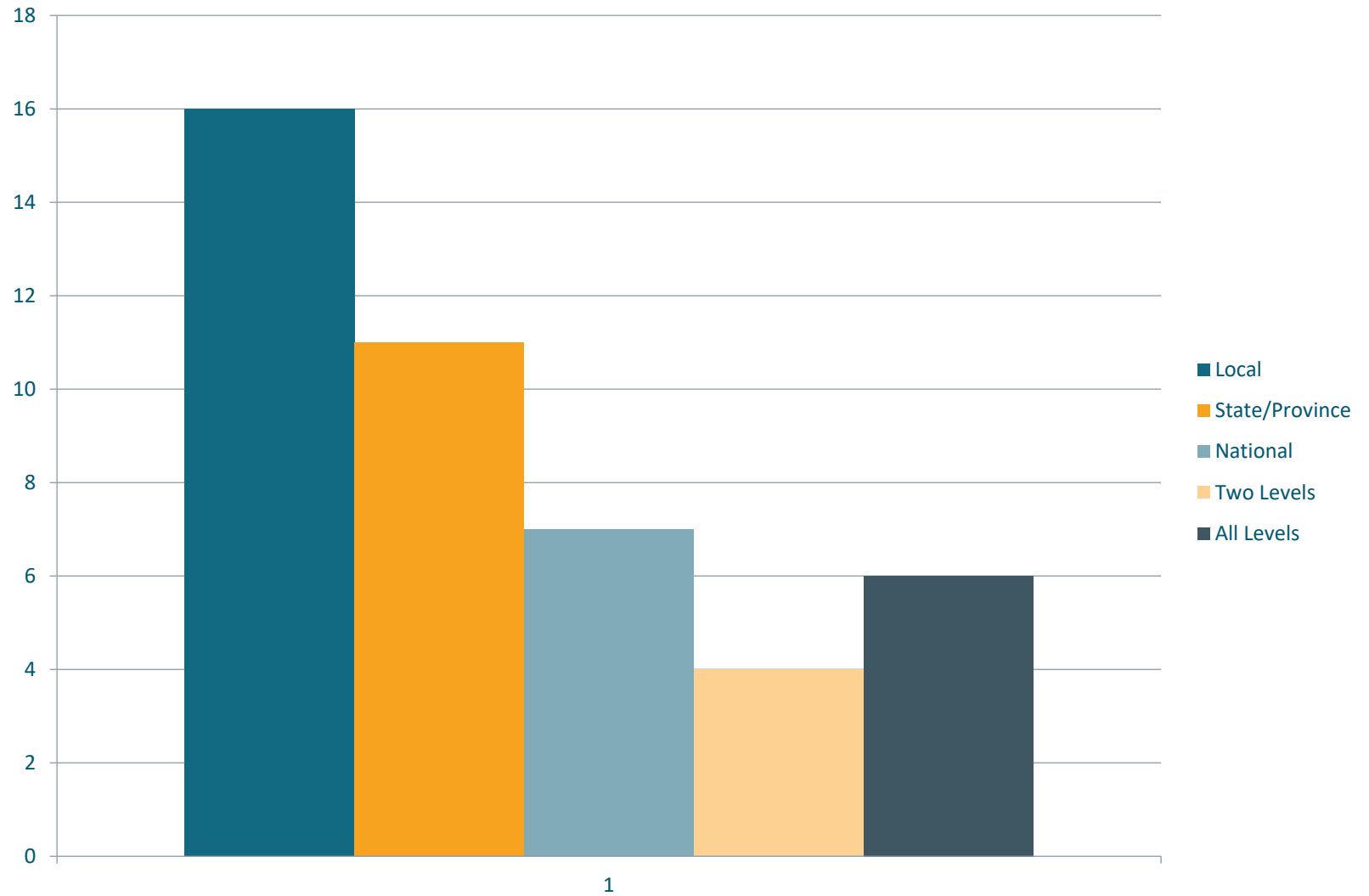
Topics That Most Resonated with Individual Work



Interested in Forming a Water Affordability Collective Based on 10 Points



If Interested, At Which Level(s)



Strategy Questions 1

Utility Financial

- How do we afford cleaning water into the future?
- How can we improve my community financial return ?
- How 2 collaborate w utilities, esp when it comes to THEIR financial health?
- How do we make people pay for the real price of their water?
- How to get the federal gov't to assist with water affordability?

Human Right to Water

- Should clean water access be of concern to school boards in areas affected?
- How to outlaw water shutoffs.

Strategy Questions 2

Process

- Can we create a holding space for all local legislation, ordinances, etc.?
- Where is it most effective to focus efforts—local, state or national?
- What strategies can be employed for influencing the influencers?
- What does the process entail?
- How can we enlist those affected by shutoffs to join the movement?
- What strategies effect the 'will' of voters to raise their voices?
- How can we teach children to see the value in water?
- How to get the federal gov't to assist with water affordability?
- Can water quality be added to criteria for receiving public housing voucher

Strategy Ideas Summary

- Share information, victories, resources
- Get a permanent ban on shutoffs
- Work with most impacted communities
- Locally and regionally coordinated teams
- Collaboration/Big Tent/Multi-Sector
- Increase federal financial resources
- Technological tools for connecting and sharing

Discussion

- What resonated most for you in the presentations?
- Share any ah-ha moments from the survey results.
- Share what you are most excited about.



How Change is Made?

Goal:

- What is your ultimate goal? What are you looking to achieve? What are you looking to influence?

Objectives:

- How will you do this? Policy changes? Comments on rules?

Tactics to make change:

- Identify targets and power map those targets:
 - Who do you know that knows them well?
 - What do they care about?
 - Who are the biggest contributors to their campaigns?
- Development of a Campaign Plan that includes the goal, objectives, targets, and tactics/tools

How Change is Made?

Tools to pressure your target for change:

- Meetings with the target: take note of the items they display in their office and what they talk about, which will provide you with intel about what they care about; have a few facts, but definitely people who can provide a story of impact; establish yourself as a resource; **make an ask!**
- Pressure tactics (**always make an ask**)
 - Media: press events, press releases, meeting with editorial boards, opinion-editorials, letters-to-the-editor; tv and radio interviews, social media (even tagging the target in your social media)
 - Action alerts, petitions, comments (if rules), and testifying (if legislation - you can even submit written testimony at the federal level), ballot initiatives if needed (super expensive)
 - Build the power circle: public health care professionals always poll as the most credible spokespeople for environmental issues; but always power in numbers
 - Lawsuits can be effective for violation of rules and regulations
 - Any big “VIPs” that would be a spokesperson in some way for your issue? Then enroll them in becoming one.



How Change is Made?

Tools to pressure your target for change continued:

- Rallies that get people fired up, but have a clear next step
- Canvassing to inform people of an issue, but has a way for people to engage
- Townhall meetings, informational webinars and meetings that include ways for people to engage

Helpful tips:

- **Relationships are everything!!!**: build them and nurture them. Be a resource. Become friendly with your target, influencers, and journalists and reporters.
- Inside/Outside game: Sometimes you may find yourself at the table, but need a strong hammer outside to force change. Continue your seat at the table, if you choose, and then coordinate and work with other people not at the table to push hard on the target.
- Make sure whatever you are saying is grounded in facts: your credibility is at stake. You want to be seen as a resource or someone that knows what they are talking about if pushing a target, otherwise people will tune you out.
- Follow the money: if there is a big supporter of your target and they will support your issue, have them send letters or have meetings with your target



Applying the Learning: Strategy










Michigan Water Unity Table





Date	Action Highlight
February 1, 2018	Planning and Selection of Design Team
March 7, 2018	Design Team's 1st Call : 1) Defined common goals; 2) Outline strategies to move goals; 3) Identify joint work that will improve outcomes
March 20, 2018	Statewide Drinking Water Strategy Session
April 2, 2018	Identified 4 urgent needs: 1) Address emergency needs of Detroit residents; 2) Flint's water shutoffs, water rates, affordability plan need; 3) 501 c 3 election plans, platforms; 4) Meet again under the Water is Life banner
May 23, 2018	Drinking Water Strategy Group plans Power Mapping work, selects Dr. Ife Kilimanjaro for assistance
June 5, 2018	Power Mapping Session: Key concerns about Detroit, Flint, Highland Park and what people should know to build support around a water affordability policy
June 14, 2018	Action Planning Meeting: AGREEMENTS: 1) One-pager on need for water affordability; 2) Two-Page vision that lays out short and long term action list
June 27, 2018	First Power Mapping Strategy Session
October 27, 2018	Michigan Water Unity Table Reconvening in Flint--Topics: 1) Water Affordability vs Water Assistance; 2) History; 3) Educational Campaign; 4) Water Affordability Must Haves

10 Point Water Affordability Must-Haves

This plan was [developed by members of communities](#) currently struggling with water that is not affordable to all in their communities. To be effective, the authors believe that all ten points are necessary in a water affordability plan. As such, we ask that any reproduction of this plan be done only in its entirety, and that anywhere it is used authorship should be credited to communities struggling with unaffordable water.

1. Any water affordability plan must acknowledge that [water is a public trust](#), the provision of water is a public good and water is [not a commodity subject to privatization](#).
2. Any water affordability plan must be situated within a broader commitment to [ensuring access to clean, safe, affordable water for all](#).
3. Any water affordability plan must be modeled along the lines of a [sliding-scale, income-based rate system](#), such as that devised in Roger Colton's 2005 Water Affordability plan prepared for the City of Detroit.
4. Any water affordability plan must be centered within a framework of [preserving and maintaining public health](#).
5. Any water affordability plan must maintain a commitment to principles of [conservation and providing assistance to low income residents to ensure they can be proper stewards of their water resources](#).
6. Any water affordability plan must enshrine [quality customer service](#) as a central value along with a commitment to acknowledge the [human dignity of all the people it serves](#).
7. Any water affordability plan must find appropriate ways to deal with [past consumer debt](#), such as the policies being implemented in Philadelphia.
8. Any water affordability plan must [eschew water shutoffs](#) as a policy for being inconsistent with the values of public health and the commitment to acknowledge the human dignity of all the people it serves.
9. [Water assistance plans](#) are not the same as water affordability plans and [must be rejected](#) as such.
10. [Tiered water pricing plans](#), where water is priced by volume, are not the same as water affordability plans and [must be rejected as such](#).

Water Affordability Plans Mandatory Elements	Water Affordability, Transparency, Equity and Reliability (WATER) Act of 2019 (H.R. 1417/S. 611)	Emergency Water is a Human Right Act (H.R. 6552)	Ohio Legislation--Water for all	Presentations	Other
1. Water is a public trust, not a commodity subject to privatization.				Water Is Life Source	
2. Ensuring access to clean, safe, affordable water for all.				Structural Racism, Renter Protections	State Covid Reconnection Orders
3. Modeled along the lines of a sliding-scale, income-based rate				Structural Racism, Ending Racism	
4. Preserving and maintaining public health.				Health Inequities	State Covid Reconnection Orders
5. Conservation and providing assistance to low income residents to ensure they can be proper stewards				Ending Racism, Structural Racism, Water is Life Source	

Water Affordability Plans Mandatory Elements	Water Affordability, Transparency, Equity and Reliability (WATER) Act of 2019 (H.R. 1417/S. 611)	Emergency Water is a Human Right Act (H.R. 6552)	Ohio Legislation--Water for all	Presentations	Other
6. Quality customer service as a central value along with a commitment to acknowledge the human dignity of all the people it				Community Lawyering, Commu nity Benefit Agreements	
7. Appropriate ways to deal with past consumer debt .				Structural Racism, Community Lawyering, Community Benefit Agreements	Chicago Utility Bill Relief
8. Eschew water shutoffs .				Water is Life Source, Ending Racism, Health Inequities, Renter Protections	State Covid Reconnection Orders
9. Water assistance plans must be rejected .				Structural Racism, Community Lawyering, Community Benefit Agreements	
10. Tiered water pricing plans must be rejected .				Structural Racism, Community Lawyering, Community Benefit Agreements	

Thank You!!!



Monica Lewis Patrick, President and CEO
We the People of Detroit



Jill Ryan, Executive Director
Freshwater Future

