

ISSUE BRIEF

Celebrating 10 Years of Detroit's Community Benefits Ordinance: How CBAs Can Improve Public Health

Private sector [community benefit agreements \(CBAs\)](#)¹ have the potential to greatly improve public health by improving many of the conditions that drive health outcomes. CBAs are binding agreements between private developers and community coalitions that include meaningful benefits for those living in the impact area of a development project. Benefits obtained in a CBA range widely but often include local hiring and vendor requirements, affordable housing commitments, and benefits to mitigate anticipated environmental impacts of a project. CBAs are an incredible community power-building tool that has the potential to run across the categories of the social determinants of health (SDOH). Yet this community-led movement is rarely considered in the context of public health or as a mechanism to advance health equity.

To celebrate the 10-year anniversary of [Detroit's Community Benefits Ordinance](#) (CBO), this issue brief explains how CBAs facilitate better health outcomes through a Health Justice framework, provides background on Detroit's CBO as well as specific information on individual CBAs, and includes a chart to show how CBAs improve conditions for those who would have otherwise been impacted by private development without the opportunity to mitigate the damages they pose or exercise power over public resources that subsidize these developments.

Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) are binding agreements between private developers and community coalitions that include meaningful benefits for those living in areas that will be impacted by a development project.

Health Justice and the Private Sector Community Benefits Movement

To understand why the community benefits movement is so important, we need to take a step back to look at broad efforts to advance health equity. Over the years, public health practitioners have increasingly focused on advancing the SDOH, or [“the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age”](#)², to promote better health outcomes and advance health equity. Present-day conditions that make up the SDOH were shaped by racism and other forms of discrimination, which were then translated into laws and policies often designed to deprive and cause harm to many, like communities of color and those with disabilities, while benefiting few. The resulting disparities are clear when examining the SDOH. For example, disparities are well-documented in health and access to healthcare across [racial and ethnic groups](#)³, [gender](#)⁴, and [income levels](#)⁵.

One approach to improving the conditions that make up the SDOH is referred to as Health in All Policies (HiAP), which may be defined as [“a collaborative approach to improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas.”](#)⁶ This approach acknowledges that policymakers must consider public health consequences of all law and policy, even when law and policy is not centered on health or healthcare. However, for the HiAP approach to take root, it must be implemented, and it must be implemented with an understanding of how unjust systems were built, law by law and policy by policy. It also requires time to embed this approach into all laws and policies to truly dismantle oppressive systems.

Community coalitions bring their history and their community’s history to the table while exercising power over public resources in CBA negotiations.

Unfortunately, this approach has not been implemented in a manner that instills an understanding of the root causes of these harmful systems, meaning it has not yet yielded a better understanding of how to progress health equity. This critical component, the need for public health practitioners, policymakers, and others to understand that structural discrimination is an underlying cause of health disparities, has been missing from this approach and from the traditional SDOH.

A [Revised SDOH Framework](#), put forth by Ruqaiyah Yearby, J.D., M.P.H., does however highlight structural discrimination as a root cause of these disparities and factors in how “[l]aw is the tool used by the government to structure the four key systems (public health and healthcare, neighborhood and built environment, education, and economic stability) in a manner that disadvantages less privileged groups.”⁷ Combining the Revised SDOH Framework with principles of Health Justice bridges the gap between what the HiAP approach acknowledges and what is needed to effectively implement this approach and create more equitable health outcomes. As stated by Yearby:

Health justice provides a community-driven approach to transform the government’s efforts to address the SDOH and eliminate health disparities. Based in part on principles from the reproductive justice, environmental justice, food justice, and civil rights movements, health justice includes three guiding principles: 1) truth and reconciliation; 2) community-driven structural change; and 3) financial supports. By using these principles, the government can improve their efforts to address the SDOH and eliminate health disparities by acknowledging the problem of structural discrimination; empowering less privileged groups to create and implement structural change; and providing support to redress harm.⁸

That brings us to the community benefits movement. Not only does this movement meaningfully address the SDOH while bringing the concept of HiAP to life, but it naturally incorporates Health Justice principles throughout the process. Community coalitions bring their history and their community’s history to the table while exercising power over public resources in CBA negotiations. This remains true whether a CBA is being negotiated between private developers in urban areas, or the emerging area of rural development to [accommodate AI infrastructure](#).⁹ CBAs are gaining wider recognition, and the movement is growing stronger as historically disenfranchised communities use this tool to move closer to Health Justice.

Detroit's Community Benefits Movement

The community benefits movement has a rich history that started in Los Angeles with organizers and activists who developed CBAs as a tool to create binding agreements between private developers and community coalitions. This movement has prospered and has spread around the country due to the efforts of community coalitions working towards individual agreements with developers. Outside of a handful of cities with community benefits ordinances, that is still how CBAs are created.

In 2016, Detroit was the first city in the U.S. to adopt a [Community Benefits Ordinance](#) (CBO).¹⁰ It was first implemented in 2017 with the Detroit Pistons Performance Facility agreement but was later amended by the City Council in 2021. The CBO applies when a development project is expected to incur investment of \$75 million or more and where a developer seeks public support in the form of city-owned land with a market value of \$1 million and/or is seeking \$1 million or more in city tax breaks. These projects are referred to as Tier 1 Development Projects. The CBO also includes a lower tier for projects that incur significantly less investment.

The community benefits movement began in Los Angeles, but in 2016, Detroit was the first city in the country to adopt an ordinance.

Once a project meets the Tier 1 level, the community benefits process kicks in, which includes meetings with a Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC) that represents the area that will be impacted by the proposed development. The City Planning Department staff is heavily involved in the process and, among other obligations, must provide information to the NAC as well as a Community Benefits Report to the City Council prior to any requests for approval related to the project. Detroit's Civil Rights, Inclusion, & Opportunity Department (CRIO) is also involved in the process and in compliance.

The Community Benefits Report must include a list of concerns raised by the NAC, a method for addressing each concern (or an explanation for why the concern is not addressed) and community outreach strategies. There is also an Enforcement Committee that is required to provide a biannual compliance report to the City Council and the NAC. The NAC may report any findings regarding allegations of violations of the community benefits provisions to the Enforcement Committee, who are then obligated to investigate the allegations and present findings to the NAC. If the NAC is not satisfied with these findings or further response from the Enforcement Committee, they have the option of requesting a hearing before the City Council.

In the decade since the ordinance was first passed, 14 Tier 1 CBAs have been approved. The list below provides details on some of the benefits obtained through each Tier 1 CBA as stated in publicly available biannual reports accessed through the [CRIO webpage](#). Benefits are provided by developers in partnership with the City of Detroit, which also contributes benefits to impact areas. As you review the agreements below, take note of the evolution of CBAs and the range of benefits gained through the years.

1. Detroit Pistons Performance Facility - Agreement Approval Date: 6/6/2017

This was the first CBA approved after the CBO was passed in 2016. The project was for the development of the Detroit Pistons' Performance Center. As of the September 2025 CBO Biannual Report, CRIO reported that all 24 of the Community Benefits Provisions (CBPs) were fulfilled. Those commitments included but were not limited to:

- Complying with applicable local hire requirements¹¹;
- Reporting 280 jobs created with 54 held by Detroiters;
- Donated \$100,000 to a nonprofit that supports workforce development opportunities for Detroit residents;
- Providing scholarships for Detroit high school students;
- Provided youth mentorship opportunities;
- Participating in a summer jobs program and donating \$100,000 to the program;
- Renovating over 60 basketball courts in the city;
- Providing free annual youth basketball camps in 10 Detroit city parks; and
- Providing free and open to the public Pistons practices and over 170,000 free game tickets to city residents.

This first CBA shows how benefits can cut across several of the SDOH. Here the benefits included jobs, scholarship opportunities, revitalization of neighborhood amenities, and opportunities to come together as a community to cheer for the home team, free of charge.

2. Book Building/Tower and Monroe Block - Agreement Approval Date: 6/13/2017

This second agreement involves mixed-use developments that include retail, office, and residential space as well as a hotel. As of September 2025, CRIO reported that, for the total Book Building CBP commitments of 20, 15 were fulfilled with 5 being on track. For the Monroe Block, out of 26 commitments 12 were on track with 3 fulfilled and 11 were not started. Those completed or on-track commitments included, but were not limited to:

- Providing affordable housing units¹²;
- Requiring staff to attend annual Fair Housing Seminar trainings to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations when marketing housing;
- Maintaining clear paths of access in relevant areas during construction and replacing sidewalks with new paving;
- Restoring the façade of the National Theater building and incorporating it into the new development as an entrance to a public space to host arts and cultural events;
- Creating public and green spaces as well as free bike parking for area residents; and
- Complying with applicable local hire and purchase requirements.¹³

Benefits in this agreement focused largely on housing and job creation, though public spaces and opportunities for community socialization are also featured. In addition, attention was paid to potential traffic congestion and improving public amenities.

3. Herman Kiefer - Agreement Approval Date: 2/7/2018

This agreement focuses on the renovation of a hospital complex and former school buildings. As of the September 2025 CBO Biannual Report, CRIO reported that out of 12 CBP commitments, 3 are fulfilled, 4 are on track, and 4 were not fulfilled. The completed or on-track commitments for this project included, but were not limited to:

- Ensuring that vacant property on land acquired is secured;
- Preserving historically designated buildings;
- Hosting educational, cultural, and recreational events; and
- Restoring existing recreational amenities.

Though at the time of the 2025 report several project commitments were not yet fulfilled, benefits were still gained for the impact area, including opportunities for community connection and recreation.

4. Lafayette West - Agreement Approval Date: 4/16/2018

The Lafayette West agreement involves a residential campus. As of September 2025, CRIO reported that 15 of the CBP commitments were fulfilled for this project with 39 on track out of 55 total commitments. The completed or on-track commitments included, but were not limited to:

- Limiting construction schedule and noise-making activities with advanced notice for work conducted on Saturday or Sunday, with no work being permitted on Sundays when a Detroit Lions football game occurred;
- Donating funds to a local elementary school;
- Ensuring adequate parking and enforcing parking along impacted streets;
- Avoiding road closures and providing communication where closures were needed;
- Providing up to 50 percent of costs for properties located in the impact area for two window cleanings following the demolition;
- Removing all hazardous materials from the site;
- Providing an environmental and demolition related report with a dust plan and adherence to special pre-demolition notifications;
- Implementing a full pest and vermin control program; and
- Providing security at the project site as well as appropriate lighting.

This CBA addressed concerns related to noise pollution and the need for adequate residential parking. It also addressed concerns regarding impacts to area properties following demolition and area environmental pollution as well as community safety needs in terms of security and lighting.

5. Michigan Central Station - Agreement Approval Date: 10/17/2018

This development project focused on the transformation of Detroit's iconic Michigan Central Train Station and included the development of office, retail, parking, residential, and public space. As of the September 2025 CBO Biannual Report, CRIO reported that all 43 CBP commitments were fulfilled for the Michigan Central Station CBA. The commitments included, but were not limited to:

- Investing \$2.5 million into the Affordable Housing Leverage Fund;
- Investing \$2.5 million to support neighborhood implementation projects, including a park project, a 0 percent home loan program, and a home repair grant program;
- Contributing \$750,000 to the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan to benefit initiatives led by impact area residents and managed by the NAC;
- Developing a traffic control plan;
- Partnering in neighborhood planning work, donating more than two dozen parcels of land for construction of affordable housing;
- Contributing \$1 million for adult and youth job training on emerging technologies;
- Creating a local hiring hall as an entry point for area residents to apply for Ford job openings and be referred to job training resources;
- Contributing \$250,000 to celebrate culture and heritage;
- Contributing \$250,000 towards childhood education;
- Contributing \$110,000 towards Western High School scholarships;
- Contributing \$220,000 towards the Mobility Fund for the Detroit School District;
- Making a \$1 million payment to support skilled trades and training services;
- Complying with applicable local hire and purchase requirements¹⁴;
- Providing services, including entrepreneur training programs, for residents and entrepreneurs in the impact area;
- Providing a greenspace for public use; and
- Installing public art that reflecting the city's history.

This large CBA spanned several SDOH categories, including affordable housing and home repair, area park rehabilitation, traffic and street calming, contributing to a community foundation, and making improvements to address traffic and road concerns. It also dedicated a significant amount to job training while demonstrating a commitment to local hiring. Significant contributions were also made to support childhood education and to celebrate art, culture and heritage.

6. Midtown West/Wigle Development - Agreement Approval Date: 11/20/2018

As of the September 2025 CBO Biannual Report, CRIO reported that out of 23 CBP commitments 11 were on track and 8 were completed for this mixed-use development that includes public amenities. The completed or on-track commitments included, but were not limited to:

- Contributing \$50,000 to the Cass Corridor Neighborhood Development Corporation;
- Ensuring the project is pedestrian friendly and focused on urban design;
- Ensuring that affordable units will be available and mixed throughout the building;

- Contributing non-monetary support of art installations;
- Ensuring that retail rental rates in the development reflects market rates and what tenants found affordable, including one tenant, Detroit Dance Center, that “can set its prices” reflecting the developer’s belief in childhood education in the arts;
- Commitment to local contractor hiring;
- Commitment to including certain Enterprise Green Community Standards;
- Including street trees to serve as a road buffer;
- Installing a new playground;
- Identifying land for additional parks and recreation; and
- Engaging residents through a public design process.

This project features local hiring commitments, affordable housing and engaging residents in a pedestrian friendly design process. The project also addresses noise pollution and environmental concerns along with other community amenities.

7. Hudson’s Site - Agreement Approval Date: 7/11/2019

The Hudson’s Site project includes office, retail, residential, parking and public space. The September 2025 CBO Biannual Report found 15 out of 22 CBP commitments were on track with 7 commitments fulfilled. The fulfilled and on-track commitments included, but were not limited to:

- Providing affordable housing units;
- Requiring staff to attend annual Fair Housing Seminar trainings;
- Partnering with the city to address traffic management issues;
- Complying with applicable ordinances to manage
- Complying with applicable ordinances to manage fugitive dust and responding to any newly discovered contaminants in accordance with applicable protocols established by relevant agencies;
- Committing \$250,000 to a career technical program and \$1 million in cash and in-kind contributions to a technical center;
- Complying with applicable local hire and purchase requirements ¹⁵;
- Spending 50.9 percent of total contracting dollars with Detroit-based businesses;
- Dedicating premier corner retail spaces for a community activation space and providing rotating community programming free and open to the public;
- Investing \$1 million directly into block groups, neighborhood organizations, and community nonprofits as well as a \$10 million commitment to the Detroit Housing Network and the Detroit Housing resource Helpline by the developer’s affiliates;
- Contributing \$15 million to the Strategic Neighborhood Fund to support inclusive neighborhood redevelopment in each City Council District; and
- Contributing \$1.7 million for Detroit’s digital equity programs.

This major project came with some significant benefits including affordable housing, environmental controls, education support, and commitments to hire Detroiters as well as Detroit-based businesses. The project

also brought investment for community neighborhood redevelopment, community programming, and pushed forward digital equity initiatives.

8. Fiat Chrysler Automotive (Stellantis) - Agreement Approval Date: 5/13/2019

An expansion of an existing assembly plant, as of the September 2025 CBO Biannual Report, CRIO reported 60 out of 67 CBP commitments for the Fiat Chrysler Automotive project were fulfilled with the remainder on track. The completed or on-track commitments included, but were not limited to:

- Spending approximately \$8.07 million for 359 demolitions of identified Detroit houses;
- Investing \$500,000 in rehabilitation of Detroit Land Bank Authority owned homes;
- Investing \$1.8 million in home repair grants in the project impact area;
- Committing to complete or partial rehabilitations of homes in the impact area;
- Investing \$500,000 towards a community plan for parts of the impact area;
- Performing tree and weed removal in the city and vacant lots;
- Postponing interruptions in water and sewer services to allow impact area residents two weeks to apply for assistance for those behind on payments;
- Paying \$800,000 to fund recommended neighborhood planning projects, including neighborhood beautification projects;
- Directing \$5.8 million to the Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation to support recruitment, training, and hiring of Detroit residents;
- Prioritizing hiring for impact area residents, including veterans and returning citizens;
- Paying \$4 million to fund a manufacturing and career program;
- Fundraising \$50,000 for an area elementary school's computer lab and library;
- Investing \$500,000 towards funding the Grow Detroit's Young Talent program;
- Funding \$500,000 in scholarships through the Detroit Promise;
- Developing the Automotive Manufacturing Program at Wayne County Community College; and
- Supporting small business through supplier matchmaking and business development events.

This CBA provided benefits in terms of demolitions and home rehabilitation and repair as well as work towards a community plan. One unique feature of this CBA is the postponement of water and sewer shut offs to allow residents to catch up on bills. The development further supported education and training, provided scholarships, as well as prioritized residents for job placement while boosting small businesses.

9. The MID - Agreement Approval Date: 7/15/2019

None of the 26 CBP commitments made for this mixed-use development project were started at the time of this resource as construction has not commenced. We have included some of the intended benefits from the September 2025 Biannual Report below:

- Intention to clearly mark alternative paths around sidewalk closure and limit construction to the hours of 7am to 7pm while providing 48 hours advance notice to the public of any work that will take place on the weekend;
- Commitment to work with neighboring properties to contribute to window cleaning expense as well as implement a pest control plan and minimize light pollution;
- Commitment to designate a minimum of 12,000 square feet of the 80,000 square feet of available retail space for local and small businesses and will request the NAC's assistance in soliciting and compiling retail tenant suggestions; and
- Commitment to ensure that the public space created is well lit with adequate seating, includes a pet relief area as well as a dog park with a lit and fenced area; and
- Intention to consider the use of historic street names.

Though the MID project has yet to begin construction, it provides another example of the versatility of agreements to reflect the needs of those in the impact area. This agreement aims to ensure that the NAC has a voice in the choice of businesses that will be available in their community and addresses the need for well-lit public spaces.

10. Michigan and Church - Agreement Approval Date: 7/16/2021

As of the September 2025 CBO Biannual Report, CRIO reported that out of 62 CBP commitments 52 are fulfilled with 9 are on track for the Michigan and Church project. The development project includes retail, residential, and parking space. The completed or on-track commitments included, but were not limited to:

- Ensuring best practices for dust mitigation efforts;
- Providing an online portal for project information and a phone and email for resident complaints;
- Distributing a local business directory to project contractors during onboarding;
- Complying with applicable local hire requirements ¹⁶;
- Installing new sidewalks;
- Ensuring an amenity deck will be raised to limit noise pollution;
- Reconstructing two ADA accessible alleyways and providing a public easement and lighting;
- Providing affordable housing units;
- Filling retail spaces with neighborhood retailers, including a small grocery store; and
- Contributing \$150,000 to the [Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan](#) to benefit initiatives led by impact area residents and managed by the NAC.

The report reflects complaints made by residents in relation to the commitment for contractors to refrain from street or neighborhood parking and regarding the reconstruction of the alleyways. The developer also committed to providing a neighborhood patrol, but the report reflects that the developer felt the Detroit Police Department would offer enough security for residents. Though the project appears to have fallen short in some areas, it provided several positive benefits for those in the impact area, including addressing noise pollution and lighting to improve community safety.

11. Fisher Body 21- Agreement Approval Date: 7/26/2022

This project focuses on converting a former auto body plant, vacant since 1993, into retail, commercial, residential, and parking space. As of the September 2025 Biannual Report, CRIO reported that out of 41 total CBP commitments 1 is fulfilled, 19 are on track, and 21 have no action taken yet as the project is still in process. The completed or on-track commitments included, but were not limited to:

- Ensuring that testing of on-site workers will be conducted and a commitment to cease work related to or impacted by violations of environmental issues;
- Identifying all hazardous materials to make sure that removal, transport, and disposal of such materials is done by qualified professionals and in accordance with applicable laws and that city approved routes will be used for transportation of hazardous materials on residential streets;
- Implementing rodent control measures;
- Establishing communication sources on a website to keep residents informed on project related matters;
- Paying all direct employees a minimum of \$17.00 per hour;
- Ensuring that any security employees or contractors employed during the project receive racial, disability and neurodivergence sensitivity training;
- Working with the Detroit School District to identify mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities for vocational tech students on the project site;
- Scanning surfaces to consider existing graffiti for inclusion as building art displays; and
- Obtaining approval from City Council for an affordable housing commitment.

Though the commitment has yet to be fulfilled, as the project nears completion discussions will be held on a potential increase in additional bus routes to accommodate residents' needs. The project otherwise features commitments related to employment, education, bias training, affordable housing, and environmental concerns.

12. District Detroit - Agreement Approval Date: 3/2/2023

This more recent project, which focuses on residential and commercial space in addition to the development of two hotels, includes 100 CBP commitments that had 36 on track and 14 fulfilled as of the September 2025 CBO Biannual Report. The completed or on-track commitments included, but were not limited to:

- Providing affordable housing units;
- Donating \$3.5 million to Detroit's Affordable Housing Development and Preservation Fund over 10 years with 3 out of 10 payments being made as of the date of the Report;
- Hiring a consultant specializing in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance;
- Establishing an on-site opportunity connector to provide information on access to job placement, affordable housing, workforce training, and more;

- Creating a fast track training program to offer exposure opportunities for the local workforce as the project continues;
- Sponsoring internships in a real estate development training program for the Detroit Public Schools, Wayne State University students, and Wayne County Community College as well as for other Detroit high school graduates;
- Refraining from performing drug tests for marijuana or other substances legal in the state of Michigan, unless required by work rules or union policy, and refraining from inquiring or considering criminal convictions of applicants until they are interviewed and determined to qualify;
- Hiring an experienced “minority business recruitment consultant”;
- Designing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to create opportunities for emerging developers who are disadvantaged businesses or Detroit-based businesses;
- Constructing a pedestrian and green space in the impact area;
- Commissioning a study to research, document, and memorialize the history of Detroiters in the impact area; and
- Ensuring a traffic and parking plan is a part of the project development as well as including bus shelter renovations that are ADA compliant.

The project appears to be steadily fulfilling commitments and that is expected to continue as development progresses. Benefits here include training, employment and business opportunities as well as affordable housing and public green space. The project also features a study to memorialize the impact area’s local history.

13. Future of Health- Agreement Approval Date: 2/27/2024

This development project includes a major hospital expansion and a research center as well as commercial, residential, and parking space. As of the September 2025, CBO Biannual Report CRIO reported that 53 of 64 commitments are on track and 2 are completed for this project. Completed or on-track commitments included, but were not limited to:

- Providing affordable housing units;
- Prioritizing accessibility and universal design;
- Donating \$2 million to a local nonprofit to administer a home repair fund;
- Donating \$500,000 to a local nonprofit to administer a rental assistance fund;
- Expanding area hospital facilities with a \$2.2 billion expansion that includes enlarging the emergency department, dedicated behavioral health space, and an improved intake processes;
- Providing two community health workers to engage with the impact area;
- Providing medical resources for area high schools;
- Continuing to operate a program called “Readying Youth Scientists for Excellence in Medicine, Health Equity and Discovery” and accepting area high school students;
- Dedicating research and direct care resources to address infant/mother mortality;
- Including implicit bias training as part of the developer’s employee training programs;
- Providing tuition free scholarships to area students;

- Participating in job fairs hosted by HBCUs;
- Prioritizing applicants from the impact area for a nurse assistant apprenticeship;
- Refraining from inquiring or considering criminal convictions of applicants until the applicant is interviewed;
- Providing infrastructure improvements to the impact area including road resurfacing, a pedestrian bridge upgrade, and integrated greenspace;
- Supporting community events in collaboration with area organizations;
- Creating a new Community Land Trust for the impact area; and
- Complying with applicable local hire requirements.¹⁷

Future of Health is one of the newest agreements resulting from the hard-won CBO. This project touches on every single SDOH category. Providing affordable housing that prioritizes accessibility, funds for rental assistance and home repair, significantly expanded health services, a scholarship program, community land trust, and implicit bias training. The project also features support for community events and local hiring commitments. And, though the benefit has yet to commence, the agreement also boosts a \$2 million donation to the Detroit Affordable Housing Development and Preservation Fund. The benefits listed above are just some of the features of this impactful CBA created in partnership with Henry Ford Health Systems, the Detroit Pistons, Michigan State University, and others.

14. Hotel Water Square - Agreement Approval Date: 4/16/2024

This newest CBA, focused on the development of a convention center hotel, has a total of 35 CBP commitments, with 7 fulfilled and 26 on track. The fulfilled or on-track commitments include, but are not limited to:

- Providing an informational website and contact information for resident concerns or questions;
- Holding quarterly meetings for the impact area and other interested Detroit residents;
- Establishing a truck route, banning street parking for contractors, and installing needed fencing for the project;
- Implementing a pest control plan;
- Constructing a park on the project site for public use;
- Establishing a scholarship fund for current students and recent high school graduates;
- Encouraging the hotel operator to connect with Detroit at Work for resident hiring;
- Contributing funds for an internship program for local youth;
- Spending, to date, over 40 percent of developer costs with Detroit based businesses;
- Contributing funds to local nonprofits that serve the impact area; and
- Contributing funds to be used to upgrade a local mass transit station.

Though the Hotel Water Square project is on a smaller scale, the benefits provided for scholarships, employment training and opportunities, and contributions to local organizations are significant for the impact area. This is especially true in looking at the history of comparable agreements.

Community Benefit Agreements and Benefits Across the Social Determinants of Health

The chart below pulls from each of the CBAs listed above to demonstrate how each touched one or more categories of the SDOH, thereby contributing to better health outcomes for residents within the impact areas. Please see the legend at the bottom of the chart.

CBA	BENEFITS	\$	🎓	⊕	🏢	👥
<u>Detroit Pistons Performance Facility</u>	Benefits include job creation, revitalization of neighborhoods, scholarship opportunities, and social opportunities through youth camps and free Piston events admission.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
<u>Book Building/Tower and Monroe Block</u>	Benefits include affordable housing and job creation, construction and traffic planning, sidewalk improvement, as well as creation of public spaces and opportunities for socialization.	✓			✓	✓
<u>Herman Kiefer</u>	Benefits include vacant property being secured, historic buildings being preserved and enhanced for community connections and recreation.				✓	✓
<u>Lafayette West</u>	Benefits include addressing community safety, noise and environmental pollution, funds for an area elementary school, ensuring adequate residential parking, and avoiding road closures.		✓		✓	
<u>Michigan Central Station</u>	Benefits include public green spaces, affordable housing and home repair, area park rehabilitation, traffic and street calming, contributions to a community foundation, improvements to address traffic and road concerns, job training and local hiring, as well as support for education, culture and heritage, and art.	✓	✓		✓	✓
<u>Midtown West/Wigle</u>	Benefits include affordable housing, resident informed and pedestrian-friendly design process, as well as addresses noise pollution and environmental concerns. It also includes the construction of a new playground.	✓			✓	✓
<u>Hudson's</u>	Benefits include affordable housing, environmental controls, education support, and commitments to hire Detroiters as well as Detroit-based businesses as well as investment in community neighborhood redevelopment, community programing, and digital equity initiatives.	✓			✓	✓

CBA

BENEFITS



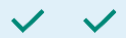
Fiat Chrysler Automotive (Stellantis)

Benefits include vacant lot demolitions, home repair and rehabilitation, community planning, and postponement of utility bill payment where needed, education and training, scholarships, job placement, and for area small business.



The MID

Benefits include well-lit public spaces and a voice in the choice businesses to serve the community, addressing noise pollution and requiring advanced notice for weekend construction.



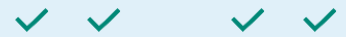
Michigan and Church

Benefits include addressing potential noise and light pollution, reconstruction of a public alleyway, installation of public sidewalks, local hiring commitments, providing affordable rental, monetary donations to a local foundation, as well as school and government entities.



Fisher Body 21

Benefits include commitments related to employment, education, implicit bias training, affordable housing, and environmental concerns.



District Detroit

Benefits include affordable housing, job placement and workforce training support, internship sponsorships for area students, public space creation, and a study to research, document, and memorialize impact area history.



Future of Health

Benefits include affordable housing, rental assistance and home repair funds, significantly expanded health services, a scholarship program, support for community events, implicit bias training, a community land trust, and local hiring commitments.



Hotel Water Square

Benefits include opportunities for small businesses and job-seekers, creation of a park, scholarships for local youth, as well as job training and significant contributions to local nonprofit organizations.



- Economic Stability
- Education Access and Quality
- Healthcare Access and Quality

- Neighborhood and Built Environment
- Social and Community Context

Community Benefit Agreements Improve Conditions That Shape Health Outcomes

When public health practitioners and others look to improve health outcomes through improving the conditions that drive them, they often examine areas outside the traditional health sectors where [“health consequences may not be commonly recognized by practitioners, but health consequences are nevertheless at least plausible and worthy of exploration.”](#)¹⁸ The community benefits movement may be new to many in the public health space but looking over the substantial benefits CBAs have brought to areas impacted by development projects, it becomes clear that Detroit’s CBO should not only be celebrated but should be carefully studied by those in the business of progressing public health and health equity.

This document was written by Phyllis Jeden, J.D., Deputy Director for the Network for Public Health Law’s Mid-States Region, in partnership with [the Detroit People’s Platform](#), [the Sugar Law Center for Economic and Social Justice](#), and [Wayne State University Law School’s Damon J. Keith Center for Civil Rights](#). The Network promotes public health and health equity through non-partisan educational resources and technical assistance. These materials provided are provided solely for educational purposes and do not constitute legal advice. The Network’s provision of these materials does not create an attorney-client relationship with you or any other person and is subject to the [Network’s Disclaimer](#).

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¹ [What is a CBA?. Community Benefits Resources](https://communitybenefitsresources.org/what-is-a-cba/). <https://communitybenefitsresources.org/what-is-a-cba/> (last visited March 24, 2026). Though there is no connection, private sector community benefit agreements (CBAs) are sometimes confused with community benefit requirements charitable hospitals must satisfy to maintain nonprofit tax exemption under federal law.

² HEALTHY PEOPLE 2030, *Social Determinants of Health*, U.S. OFFICE OF DISEASE AND HEALTH PROMOTION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, <https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health> (last visited March 24, 2026).

³ David C. Radley, Arnav Shah, Sara R. Collins, et al., *Advancing Racial Equity in U.S. Health Care*, THE COMMONWEALTH FUND (April 18, 2024) <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/fund-reports/2024/apr/advancing-racial-equity-us-health-care> (last visited March 24, 2026).

⁴ Marika Cabral and Marcus Dillender, *Disparities in Health Care and Medical Evaluations by Gender: A Review of Evidence of Mechanisms*, AMERICAN ECONOMIC ASSOCIATION (May 2021) <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/pandp.20211016> (last visited March 24, 2026).

⁵ Munira Z. Gunja, Evan D. Gumas, Reginald D. Williams II, et al., *The Cost of Not Getting Care: Income Disparities in the Affordability of Health Services Across High-Income Countries*, THE COMMONWEALTH FUND (Nov. 16, 2023) <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/surveys/2023/nov/cost-not-getting-care-income-disparities-affordability-health> (last visited March 24, 2026).

⁶ Linda Rudolph, Julia Caplan, Karen Ben-Moshe, et al., *Health in All Policies: A Guide for State and Local Governments*, AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION (2013) https://www.apha.org/media/files/pdf/factsheets/health_inall_policies_guide_169pages.pdf (last visited March 24, 2026).

⁷ Ruqaiyah Yearby, *The Social Determinants of Health, Health Disparities, and Health Justice*, JOURNAL OF LAW, MEDICINE & ETHICS (March 8, 2023) <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/journal-of-law-medicine-and-ethics/article/social-determinants-of-health-health-disparities-and-health-justice/0554519547E536FC56CBF49ED68A01FE> (last visited March 24, 2026).

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Nicole Turner Lee and Darrell M. West, *Why Community Benefit Agreements Are Necessary for Data Centers*, THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION (Jan. 29, 2026) <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/why-community-benefit-agreements-are-necessary-for-data-centers/> (last visited March 24, 2026).

¹⁰ Detroit, Mich., Code of Ordinances § 12-8-1 et seq. (2025).

¹¹ [Exec. Order No. 2016-1 \(Dec. 16, 2016\)](#). In general, [Executive Order 2016-1](#), requires contracts involving construction projects with the city that are more than \$3 million and where city assistance is more than \$3 million include a provision that requires at least 51 percent of the workforce be “bona-fide Detroit residents”, referred to as the “Workforce Target.” The Workforce Target is measured by looking to the total work hours compared to hours worked by bona-fide Detroit residents. Compliance is monitored by CRIO and where a contractor falls short of the Workforce Target, they are required to make a monetary contribution to CRIO’s Workforce Training Fund. Later, [Executive Order 2021-02](#) included provisions to cover public-funded demolition/rehab projects in addition to publicly-funded construction projects. Then [Executive Order 2024-02](#) was issued to clarify potential ambiguity to for the Workforce Training Fund contribution calculation formula.

¹² Note that entries reflecting “affordable housing” benefits refer to housing units that are considered to be “affordable” at different percentage rates of area median income. For example, for this CBA the September 2025 Biannual Report states that the developer exceeded the requirements under the agreement with 710 out of 1,622 units being affordable and that the developer further agreed to an amendment of 30 percent of total future units being affordable at 60 percent area median income or lower. “The Area Median Income (AMI) is the midpoint of a region’s income distribution – half of families in a region earn more than the median and half earn less than the median. For housing policy, income thresholds set relative to the area median income – such as 50% of the area median income – identify households eligible to live in income-restricted housing units and the affordability of housing units to low-income households.” AMI AND HOUSING AFFORDABILITY , *Local Planning Handbook*, METROPOLITAN COUNCIL, <https://metro council.org/handbook/files/resources/fact-sheet/housing/area-median-income-and-housing-affordability.aspx> (last visited March 31, 2026). See the linked Biannual Report for specifics on each CBA that provides “affordable housing” as a benefit.

¹³ [Exec. Order No. 2016-1 \(Dec. 16, 2016\)](#), *supra* note 11. See also, [Exec. Order No. 2014-5 \(Aug. 22, 2014\)](#), which includes a goal to award 30 percent of the total dollar value of contracts to Detroit-based businesses.

¹⁴ [Exec. Order No. 2016-1 \(Dec. 16, 2016\)](#), *supra* note 11, and [Exec. Order No. 2014-5 \(Aug. 22, 2014\)](#), *supra* note 13.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ [Exec. Order No. 2016-1 \(Dec. 16, 2016\)](#), *supra* note 11.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Robert A. Hahn, *Two Paths to Health in All Policies: The Traditional Public Health Path and the Path of Social Determinants*, AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH (February 2019) <https://publichealth.washu.edu/app/uploads/2026/01/Jan-2026-Thinking-Two-paths-to-Health-in-All-Policies.pdf> (last visited March 24, 2026).