

Guest Commentary

Opinion | Homelessness is solvable. We're committing \$5 million toward it



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[Kate Levin Markel](#)  Guest

[Commentary](#)

More than 10,000 Detroiters experienced homelessness in 2018, enough to fill one quarter of Comerica Park, and representing the largest share of people experiencing homelessness in the state. The McGregor Fund thinks about this every day. We believe that while homelessness is a large, complex, persistent challenge, it is solvable. That is why we are committing \$5 million over two years to fund what works in ending homelessness.



There are bright spots — in Detroit and across the nation — where agencies serving people experiencing homelessness provide quick access to housing and services tailored to the needs of each person, creating the platform from which they can improve their quality of life.

Kate Levin Markel is president of the McGregor Fund.

As a longtime funder of homelessness services in Detroit, the McGregor Fund has witnessed local steps to end homelessness. Local organizations we proudly support are operating at national standards of practice. Our system partners are using data to focus on citywide housing outcomes. Catching up to peer communities, Detroit has prioritized supportive housing as something proven to end homelessness, and our grantees are leading the way in developing innovative, high-quality housing and services.

The Ruth Ellis Center is an example of this in action, with its new supportive housing development for LGBTQ youth experiencing homelessness. Supportive housing is a proven intervention, providing housing as quickly as possible without restrictions or conditions. We are investing in their new development which will be Detroit's first youth-focused supportive housing. The Ruth Ellis Center has been meticulous in the design and development of this project every step of the way, from thoughtful selection of development partners to learning from the Corporation for Supportive Housing, the national expert in high-quality services. We know that high-quality services result in better outcomes for youth well into adulthood and the new building's design reflects key practices of quality: connection to community and responsiveness to tenant needs.

Housing outcomes are also the focus of the City of Detroit's recently adopted three-year plan to implement performance-based funding. This is a significant and critical step to embracing high standards of service for the most vulnerable residents of our community and we applaud the city for this. We understand that ending homelessness means a shift in thinking from activities to outcomes; from a focus on counting nights of shelter to improving the services people need now and in the years to come.

Inspired by the progress of the Ruth Ellis Center, the City, and others, the McGregor Fund is changing, too. We recognize that this evolution for Detroit is ongoing, continues to be difficult, is not adequately resourced, and has a long way to go. But following the lead of our partners, and national examples of communities who have made progress, we must do what is best for Detroiters and support others in doing the same.

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