



## CENTER FOR SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

We envision a world without social inequity and systemic disenfranchisement, where opportunities and resources are more evenly distributed.

The mission of the Center for Social Solutions (CSS) is to cultivate collaboration, leadership, and scholarship in order to create a more equitable and inclusive world. In this way, the center is a critical component of LSA's vision of a diverse intellectual community working to reimagine the world and create positive, purposeful change.

We seek to identify, develop, and implement scalable, data-driven solutions that address societal inequities. In this spirit, our four founding initiatives—diversity and democracy, slavery and its aftermath, water equity and security, and the future of work—aim to redress systemic injustices through interdisciplinary research and community engagement.

The center recognizes common threads of vulnerability and inequity throughout each focus area and acknowledges that to address one issue is to address, in some way, all of them. Issues of societal inequities are often nebulous and abstract; in specifying our scope to these tangible focus areas, we are mobilizing both academics and community members to address pressing societal challenges.

As a truly interdisciplinary team, the Center for Social Solutions embodies the LSA ideals of exploration, inclusion, and integrity. Spanning from anthropology to environmental sciences; from public policy to linguistics; from sociology to history; and psychology to philanthropy, we value the unique backgrounds and expertise of all the staff and students who walk through our doors.

Beyond academic disciplines, we firmly believe in the power of diverse lived experiences and the amplification of historically oppressed and traditionally excluded voices. We represent a multitude of racial and ethnic backgrounds, languages, and faiths all working toward the common goal of combating inequity and injustice. Creating such a future requires that we come to terms with the past. The center works to identify gaps in research and practice, contemplate how to bridge these gaps, and develop programs and avenues to combat inequity and injustice.

## PRIORITY GOALS

### DIVERSITY AND DEMOCRACY

This fund supports CSS research and projects that demonstrate that differences—in identity, religion, heritage, cognition, geography, language, information, goals, and values—are powerful and positive forces. For example, Our Compelling Interests (OCI) project seeks to advance the understanding that diversity and inclusion are essential to sustaining democracy and a prosperous society. The Academic Leadership Institute (ALI) provides access to aspiring leaders in higher education with principles, strategies, mentoring, and coaching so that the future includes individuals who lead their institutions with respect and values. Your gift may support the ALI residential program for future presidents and provosts or future volumes of the OCI book series.

### SLAVERY AND ITS AFTERMATH

The fund for the Slavery and Its Aftermath initiative sponsors our efforts to look at culturally sensitive, place-based solutions to racial inequities. We aim to connect scholars, organizations, and institutions doing work on systemic racism and its omnipresent effects on American life in order to seek methods of repair. Your gift might enable the continuation of the Crafting Democratic Futures project, a CSS housed project including nine higher educational institutions across the United States as they collaborate with community leaders in historical, educational, media, and cultural institutions to address community-based reparations. With the help of these institutions, community partners, graduate students, and more, we hope to disseminate their research in reports, books, and future documentaries like *The Cost of Inheritance*, which premiered on PBS in January 2024.



**Our differences uniquely position us to explore the complexities of the issues we undertake and develop thoughtful, data-driven, and tangible solutions to real problems experienced by real people every day.**

## WATER, EQUITY, AND SECURITY

This fund finances the progress of our Water, Equity, and Security initiative, the goal of which is to address the effects of flooding and drought, increasing in severity due to climate change. Our research aims to show how geographies around the world exhibit racially and ethnically charged patterns of heightened risk and weakened resilience and how we can work to join these social and physical landscapes towards equitable, reparative solutions to disaster resilience in housing, infrastructure, health, and more. Your gift could support our Community Kids initiative, which aims to place lead filtration systems in Flint area schools and educate students on the functions of these machines to help strengthen their participation and trust in these devices. Your gift will empower our sociology and environmental science experts to convene interdisciplinary teams of engineers, city planners, tax experts, transportation analysts, and public policy experts that can expand emergency management models to other areas encountering similar issues.

## THE FUTURE OF WORK

The Future of Work initiative fund underwrites our efforts to craft solutions as we probe the meaning and dignity of labor in a highly automated world. Previous and ongoing efforts to understand how work is changing globally as a result of Artificial Intelligence and advanced robotics have been largely disparate and undefined, resulting in much overlap but little discussion between institutions and industries. Recognizing a need for a centralized source and increased collaboration, the center aims to develop resources that bring this vast network together. Contributions will support national convenings, educational webinars and panel discussions, and projects that position the center as the hub of interactive databases on global future of work projects. These projects and inquiries will center the human worker experience, while paying particular attention to past and present inequities driven by race, class, and gender.

## WAYS TO FUND YOUR GIFT

Your partnership connects the college's rich past to a boundless and bright future. You can change lives with gifts of cash, pledges, or appreciated securities, and create a meaningful legacy through your bequest, trusts, gift annuities, and other planned gifts. Your generosity makes an impact on what's next, for a better tomorrow.

*for what's next ▶*

**Look to Michigan**

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