



Welcome!

Hi!

Welcome to the Michigan Student Power Fellowship Program! We are so excited to have you joining us, and joining the fight for a radically different future for our state!

Your welcome packet consists of some intro materials about the topics our organization focuses on, as well as some brief introductions to the fellowship program!

In solidarity,

MSP Staff



Michigan Student Power: Who we are & what we're all about:

Vision

We as young people have been brought up to see the present system, with the current arrangement of power, as the only option for our futures. The persistence of racism, *cis-hetero-patriarchy, and other forms of capitalist exploitation have been portrayed as unfortunate but inevitable holdovers from a contentious past. However, as we grew we have learned that our nation, far from moving beyond these systems of oppression, depends upon them. Rather than advancing toward a prosperous shared future, our home state of Michigan, has spent our entire lives cutting budgets, defunding communities, placing whole populations in sacrifice zones. The mantra of “running the state like a business” rang out clearly across the Great Lakes region; all while our communities were poisoned, our friends taken from us, our jobs made part time, and our futures transformed into part time internships.

Young people have refused to accept this prescribed future. Over the past years there has been a resurgence of organizing, activism and protest across our state. Students and young people have been at the forefront of a wave of moments and movements: organizing locally, regionally and nationally on a huge array of issues.

One of the key things weakening our movements has been the separation of specific struggles from one another. Across location, identity and issue, our work is too frequently divided, weakening the strength that should lay in a collective movement. In response to this weakness we are organizing across Michigan to build relationships, community, and skills; and collaborate in resistance. Michigan Student Power (MSP) believes that any one of our causes will not truly succeed unless we are connected to each other's work.

Michigan Student Power is a statewide association of progressive student organizations and organizers, started in 2014 and currently operating on 8 campuses across Michigan. MSP works to connect student struggles across campuses, issues and identities, in order to share skills and build statewide movements capable of effecting radical change. MSP uses a variety of tactics and strategies to effect change in Michigan and on our campuses, including direct member education, voter engagement, issue based campaign organizing, and direct action.

MSP Meeting Spaces

*Notice: * Due to Covid-19 our work has adapted in order to prioritize everyone's health and wellness. We've shifted the ways in which we expect fellows to engage in this work. Since the spring of 2020 our work has been fully digital! Last summer our trainings were all digital via weekly zoom calls. We have and are continuing to adjust our digital work to ensure that it's still engaging and fits the intentions of our program. This 2022-2023 year, we intend to implement a hybrid structure to engage fellows in both in-person and online ways. Those who chose to attend in person are expected to follow all covid precautions we outline and can include but are not limited to: wearing a mask, 6ft social distancing, and the use of hand sanitizer. No one will be required to do in person work unless they're interested in doing so and can do so safely.**

Strategy sessions

Happens once a semester (Fall & Winter), The purpose is to bring together leaders of MSP in one place to decide our approach to the semester; setting up statewide goals and programs!

Statewide calls

Happens every two weeks, This is the space where members from different campuses share what's going on locally, and connect with each other's work at the statewide level.

MSP Racial Justice caucus:

MSP PoC caucus ([our mission statement!](#))

Happens once a month, This is an in person and online space for students and young people that identify as a Person of Color to center the healing, community building, and leadership development of lefty leaders of color.

MSP Accomplice caucus, This is an in person and online space for white identifying folks that employs an anti-oppressive organizing curriculum to challenge white people to examine whiteness critically and to engage in multicultural organizing while disrupting anti-Blackness and white-centering while working in solidarity with folks of color.

Structure:

Board of Michigan Student Power Alliance:

Current members: Alex, Darian, Fiana, Hoai an & Teia

The board is a group of up to 11 alumni who advise the network, and make hiring recommendations for the network's statewide organizers, and facilitate the fellowship hiring process!

Staff:

Current members: Monica, Sam/Karalyn, Emily

Bottom Lines statewide programs and outreach. Travels to support local organizing efforts. Provides across the board logistical and capacity support. Coordinates fundraising and outreach. **Current members are full-time MSP staff.**

Monica is a 25-year-old Black Woman who's been working with MSPA since she was a student organizing fellow at Michigan State University in 2017. She has shifted from a variety of leadership roles within the organization including full-time Electoral Organizer (2018) and Special Projects Manager (2019). She planned MSPA's *Transforming Ourselves, Building Our Futures* summit, which gathered 100+ students and youth to participate in workshops around issues such as **environmental racism, disability justice, and racial justice**. The plenary session centered a conversation of panelists who discussed "Decolonization in the context of Black Liberation, Indigenous Sovereignty, and Immigration." She has been the organization's director since summer 2020.

Sam is a 26-year-old white, trans, class-ascended, disabled comrade born and raised in Lansing, MI, their organizing home. They have always been called to justice, but became strategic and organized in college through peer-to-peer mentorship. They believe that **students play a critical role in all our movements**. They're a member of a trans gardening and land repatriation network and are called to tell stories of queer joy in resistance and defiance. They understand themselves in relation to whose legacy they walk in specifically: Malcolm X, Marsha P Johnson, Bayard Rustin, eli claire, and all members of the Student National Coordinating Committee. They tell truth to power as the Storyteller and Strategist at MSPA where they hold down Development and Operations.

Emily is a 24 year old, white, cis-woman born in Flint and raised in a suburb of Flint, MI. Emily is a trauma survivor, child of a single parent, low income household, a first generation college graduate of Central Michigan University, and an experienced former MSP Fellow/Trainer. Emily was a part of the 2020 fellowship cohort. Her start to was during her Freshman year in college as a member of a feminist organization and eventually served as the Vice President and President of that organization. After years of struggling to find an organization that aligned with what she wanted to see in the world, she started New America Project, a leftist organization on campus to build power around forms of socialism/communism. Emily is now a healthcare organizer focusing on national, improved Medicare for All and is the Organizing Director for MSP. She **deeply believes in student development and collective youth power** in achieving radical change in Michigan and beyond.

Fellows:

Stipended yearly or semesterly position. Fellows attend a 3 month summer training course. Responsibilities include, bottomlining MSP events on their campuses, attending MSP calls, weekly capacity commitment to the network, organizing a base, as well as active participation in the racial justice caucuses.

Resources

Fellows-Go-To Folder on Google Drive

More information on this folder during Orientation when you are granted access.

Calendar*

June - Aug Orientation & Summer Training

Sep - Dec Semester 1 Fellowship

Jan - May Semester 2 fellowship

***this calendar will be more fully fleshed out as dates are confirmed, so check back often**

A quick note on non profit status!

The entity ***Michigan Student Power Alliance***, which fundraises for and runs the Fellowship, is a 501(c)3 federally recognized non-profit charitable organization, because of this it must remain non-partisan and focus on education work. This means that it can't endorse specific candidates or parties, it has to talk about issues.

Hopefully, this isn't too tricky to wrap your head around, it just means when you're doing work as a MSPA fellow you can only focus on issues not parties or candidates. But you can educate folks on what issues a party or candidate does or doesn't support/align with.

Some examples:

c3 compliant statements:

- *We are an org that upholds socialists oriented values.*
- *Karl Marx supports infrastructure and the expropriation of the wealthy.*

Non c3 compliant statement:

- *We are a socialist organization.*
- *You should vote for Karl Marx!*

Fellowship Program

A little bit about our theory of change: Co-liberatory Socialism ([Learn more in this Zine!](#))

Michigan Student Power believes that our society is confronted by large scale structures of oppression, including racism, cishetero-sexism {[cisexism](#)}, and capitalism. We believe that the key systems of oppression that operate in our lives are all inextricably linked. They have been shaped by each other over time and cannot be broken up and defeated in isolation. At the same time we want to go beyond opposing the current organization of society to think critically about what we want for our communities. We believe that the world we are trying to build will take the form of some kind of economically liberated society: where value is not defined by an individual's profitability, where reparations are made for the centuries of oppression that have come before, where no private individual controls the lives of others through jobs or wealth, where we are able to labor to meet our needs and democratically control our future. This theory of change comes from a long tradition of Black, PoC, radical thinkers reaching back into the 1800's (and beyond), and seeks to build an understanding of past movements as we continue the work today.

So what does that mean?

We believe that the key systems of oppression that operate in our lives are all part of the same whole. Liberation for any one of us is tied to the liberation of the others. That means that as an org we try to work and build relationships in ways that begin to deconstruct our current society, taking time to do the hard work of understanding and caring for each other. It means we've approached our statewide campaigns as a broad framework, not a single issue campaign; working to connect issues of affordability, on campus gendered/sexual violence, and white supremacy to each other and fighting to win on multiple fronts at once. It means our training team wants to build *with* you, not just unilaterally impose knowledge on you. We believe we have a lot to learn from each other, and the future will only get better if we can all shape it! *And* it means that we're dedicated to long term power building- not just showing up during an election or for a year and then disappearing. We're Michigan based and we're gonna be here fighting for Michigan for as long as we can!

Do you have to be a socialist?

Nope! As a 501 c3 we are not affiliated with any party including the socialist party our values are simply informed by that of socialist ideology. But we are boldly anti-capitalist. We are gonna talk about various leftist ideologies, and why we support an end to capitalism, this is about winning on many different fronts! We will be working toward a basic analysis that rich people shouldn't control our society, but if you're not comfortable

identifying with any formal political party that's totally cool! Let's work on the things we agree on, and redistribute money, power and resources into the hands of working and oppressed peoples!

Fellows: Who are they and what do they do?

The fellowship grew out of a need to address two major struggles that campus organizing faces: ongoing leadership changes and financial need. Campus organizing cycles through leaders rapidly. Often strong local leaders will graduate, change organizations, or remove themselves from the work. Oftentimes when this occurs we are left scrambling to gather crucial things like account passwords, access to documents, and understandings of how to strategize, do outreach, and attract people to our spaces. The fellowship program addresses this problem by working to institutionalize our collective knowledge through a mentoring program and support system of organizers and student leaders.

The other issue faced by student leaders is that our time is limited. Many of us are often also students and workers. These important parts of our lives can make it difficult to consistently show up to do the justice work that matters in addition to these things. Not only that but often we are expected to take on these emotionally and physically taxing tasks for no compensation. This is unjust. By paying our Fellows a stipend we seek to mimic the world we are building by paying people for their labor and open the door for them to prioritize the work they are passionate about.

What do fellows do?

During the summer the fellows will attend and actively participate in our weekly digital summer trainings and engage with trainers and other student leaders via video call. During the school year fellows will work with trainers and statewide leaders to identify issue areas that they can work to address in their area and across the state. At the local level fellows will identify projects to take on (such as campaigns to actively support, trainings to create and facilitate, coalitions/organizations to build or support, etc.) and they will check in with the statewide leaders to develop methods for supporting their project. On the statewide level fellows will use Statewide meeting spaces to share what's happening in their area, troubleshoot each other's obstacles, and share resources that will lead to their success (such as supplies, mass turnout, training, etc.).

Expectations for the Fellowship

The intention of the fellowship is to do three things: expand the capacity of Michigan Student Power at the statewide level, invest in and develop local leaders, and to intentionally support marginalized folks who are frequently pushed out of organizing.

Based on these intentions we plan on using part of our training sessions to collaboratively craft some shared goals and expectations with each of the fellows. However there is a baseline of expectations for each of the fellows that we want to make explicit up front, and that can form the foundation of our shared work moving forward!

MSP Organizing Fellows are expected to:

- Attend all statewide gatherings and calls
- Recruit fellow students from their campus to join them on the statewide calls and connect them to Michigan Student Power
- Connect with other student leaders on their campus, with the intention of building relationships between them!
- Assist in the statewide functioning of the Michigan Student Power, by joining a working group or committee and participating in the racial justice caucus spaces
- Check in weekly with a statewide organizer
- Represent MSP in their work on campus
- Participate in electoral work via voter education and participation
- Communicate with staff and fellows on various slack channels
- Do monthly metrics reports

Specific Goals for the Fellowship

As noted above MSP Fellows are expected to build a local team of organizers that connect local work to statewide projects. However, this can take the form of expanding an existing org, creating a new org, or building a strong network of relationships that engages multiple organizations. Each of these paths will have its own specific benchmarks and goals, and you'll be supported in identifying and executing those goals as part of your fellowship!

You'll also be a part of the statewide planning for our macro plan for 2022/2023, beginning with a network wide discussion. We'll work to craft our statewide plan for the Fall/Winter and beyond. Your voice will be crucial in shaping and guiding these plans as we move forward!

Sample Week

- 2 check in's with students on campus- *working with leaders from your campaign and org- working to develop your relationship and work*
- One on one with a new student org leader- *learning about what makes them do this work, sharing where you're coming from*
- Attend an on campus group meeting- *keep doing the on campus work that inspired you to join the movement!*
- Check in with a Statewide organizer- *how is the work going? Troubleshooting issues!*
- Participate in the statewide call- *share what's happening on your campus, connect with the other campuses*

Pre-Orientation questions:

Please fill out this short form prior to your fellows Orientation Monday June 6th 2-4pm.

We can't wait to see you!