

Impact 100 Metro Detroit Grant Summary
Grant Finalist: **LifeBUILDERS**
Project: **Building Careers and Community in Regent Park**

Background:

LifeBuilders is a nonprofit community organization devoted to the revitalization of Regent Park. It is located on the East Side of Detroit, and bordered by Kelly Rd., Gratiot Ave., 8 Mile Rd., and 7 Mile Rd. Established in 2005 and in partnership with the community, the organization exists to bring revitalization to the largely neglected Detroit neighborhood by becoming instruments of Christ's love to its residents.

Over the last 15 years, millions of dollars, and thousands of volunteer hours have been poured into Regent Park that have resulted in new parks, an early childhood education facility, over 80 rehabbed houses that have been rented or sold to residents, high-quality after school youth programs, including early childcare options for working parents.

LifeBUILDERS is now considered a trusted advocate and beacon of hope to residents and has drawn significant interest from the private and governmental sectors for future community development and investments. When COVID-19 hit the community, LifeBuilders served as a stabilizing factor by responding to the immediate needs of families with meals, rent assistance and spiritual and emotional support.

Unmet Need: Regent Park is a predominantly Black neighborhood marred by decades of disinvestment, violence, and eroding wealth. In 2020, COVID-19 exacerbated these tribulations with the disproportionate impact of the disease within communities of color which suffered higher levels of unemployment and financial distress. To help residents reenter the job market and navigate new working environments, LifeBUILDERS will expand its revitalization efforts and offer residents personalized career coaching, skilled training, and support as they execute their personalized career plans.

Project Summary: LifeBUILDERS has partnered with CSW, a national workforce development policy nonprofit organization that has over 150 years of professional experience and has worked in hundreds of communities over 30 years to expand economic opportunity across our nation. Further, Brenda Belcher, a board member of LifeBUILDERS and former assistant superintendent for Career and Technical and Adult Education with Detroit Public Schools, has worked with CSW in the development of this program. Based on our deep roots in the community we have identified the need to provide career navigation resources, personalized coaching, and support services to help Regent Park residents acquire the skills to build careers. We plan to provide critical one-on-one support and confidence-building along with the necessary family support services to assure successful implementation. While these are key factors in the successful implementation of this program, LifeBUILDER's deep roots in the community and its history of listening and meeting real needs in the community will assure its success.

We request one year of funding to hire the Career Navigation Coach, implement the program, and provide the one-on-one career coaching and support services for up to twenty Regent Park residents. During this year, we will learn what works and what needs improvement, and will have the foundation for a scalable, sustainable model to roll out more broadly throughout all of Regent Park and other Detroit neighborhoods. The impact is far reaching and it is an immediate need.

Sustainability: We will sustain this program by securing additional philanthropic funding from

existing grantors and donors by documenting our success and building out the larger model for broader impact.