

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

FACTS MATTER



MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK FOR 107 YEARS

THE YEAR BY THE NUMBERS

5

Policy
Reports

15

Podcasts

62

Blogs

107

Media
Mentions

137,140

Website
Visits

The goal of the Citizens Research Council is to secure good government for the citizens of Michigan. Our research holds policy makers accountable for the efficient use of public resources. We create an environment where government is representative, responsible and accountable to the public.

**"THE RIGHT TO
CRITICIZE
GOVERNMENT IS ALSO
AN OBLIGATION TO
KNOW WHAT YOU'RE
TALKING ABOUT"
-LENT UPSON**

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

After 106 years of operations, the Citizens Research Council of Michigan is as strong as it's ever been. Our financial condition is strong. The size of our research staff is as big as it's been in many years. Increasing numbers of people in government, the media, and everyday residents are aware of the great work we do. Our research makes a difference.

As part of our continued efforts to achieve greater diversity in all areas of our organization, we have assembled a Board of Directors and Council of Trustees that more closely resemble the population of Michigan with diversity of gender, race, geography, industry, and sexual orientation. Check out the list of directors and trustees later in this report and ask one of them why they lend their time and resources to the Research Council.

One of the highlights of 2022 was our September annual dinner, where we posthumously honored Kelly Rossman-McKinney, a former board member and long-time friend of the organization. Before losing her battle with cancer, Kelly was well known for her distinctive approach to public relations and dedication to ethics and professionalism. She embodied a spirit of bipartisanship and built relationships with lawmakers and staff from both political parties. We thank the many sponsors that supported this important evening and our panel that discussed how Kelly shaped their lives and careers.

The Research Council was founded in Detroit, and in 2021, we returned to those roots with the opening of our Detroit Bureau. Our May analysis of FY2023 City of Detroit Budget reviewed Mayor Duggan's budget recommendations. We hope our attention to the city's fiscal sustainability and service delivery will be used as an unbiased data-driven guide to help keep the city on a path to recovery after bankruptcy was declared a decade ago.

Our 2021 report on Michigan's overlapping property tax limitations showed how these limitations create pressures to either increase tax rates or attract development. Our 2022 report, *Local Governments Respond to Property Tax Base Limitations by Raising Tax Rates*, documents how property tax rates have increased and the average tax rates have increased sharply.

With proposed constitutional amendments on the November 2022 ballot dealing with term limits, elections procedures, and abortion rights, we resumed our role as the most trusted source of unbiased information for voters. Thousands found our proposal analyses on our website and the research staff was engaged by television, radio, and newspapers throughout the state enabling us to share our analysis with their audiences.

We knew our 2022 published research was making an impact as our website received more unique views - especially in the days leading up to and Election Day - and we received more media citations than ever before.

In a period that was very unusual for the Research Council, we had a relatively large amount of turnover in staff. Timothy Michling, Jill Roof, Monique Mansfield, and Esmat Ishag-Osman departed to explore different opportunities. We wish them well. We welcome Karley Abramson, Chelsea Dowler, James Tatum, and Maureen McNulty-Saxton to the staff.

We thank you for your interest and support of our work and assure you that we remain committed to tackling state and local policy issues important to Michiganders.



Chase L. Cantrell Eric W. Luper

2022 ANNUAL POLICY DINNER



The 2022 Annual Dinner was held at the Kellogg Center in East Lansing on the evening of September 21st. The annual meeting of the Research Council's Board of Directors and Council of Trustees was held in the afternoon where nominations to both Boards took place.

Over 250 guests enjoyed dinner and drinks as we posthumously honored Kelly Rossman-McKinney. Alex Rossman accepted the Eugene A. Gargaro Public Service Award on behalf of his late mother, who was known for her bipartisan work ethic and trailblazing nature.

The night's focus was women in policy and the panel discussion featured women who were close to Kelly as well as blazing their own unique path in the policy space.

Panelists included (from left to right in photo):

- **Rachael Eubanks**, State Treasurer at Michigan Department of Treasury
- **Megan Brown**, Executive Director for Corporate Communications at Consumers Energy
- **Kathleen Wilbur**, Executive Vice President for Government & External Relations at Michigan State University
- Moderated by **Carol Cain**, Detroit Free Press; Host "Michigan Matters", CBS



"KNOWLEDGE IS POWERFUL AND
YOU HAVE TO UNDERSTAND BOTH
SIDES OF AN ISSUE TO PERSUADE
ONE WAY OR THE OTHER"



ANALYSIS OF FY2023 CITY OF DETROIT BUDGET

"THE CITY HAS SEEN REVENUE GROWTH BEYOND INITIAL PROJECTIONS AND APPROPRIATED FUNDS IN THE NEW FY2023 BUDGET ARE SET TO RESTORE ALL PANDEMIC-RELATED BUDGET CUTS."

The FY2023 City of Detroit Budget has been lauded as a "return to normal" budget restoring the pre-pandemic status quo and managing risks with contributions to reserves and spending restraint. When the pandemic struck, the mayor outlined nearly \$350 million in pandemic-related spending cuts to maintain a balanced budget without laying off any full-time city employees. Since then, the city has seen revenue growth beyond initial projections and appropriated funds in the new FY2023 budget are set to restore all pandemic-related budget cuts.

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS RESPOND TO PROPERTY TAX BASE LIMITATIONS BY RAISING TAX RATES

This research built upon our 2021 report *Michigan's Overlapping Property Tax Limitations Create an Unsustainable Municipal Finance System*, which found that Michigan is one of the only states that limits growth of property tax revenues with a rate limit, assessment limit, and a levy limit.

We found that many local governments were addressing their constraints on the tax base by increasing tax rates. Perpetual tax rate increases, however, are unsustainable due to statutory caps and taxpayer tolerance.

Policymakers must address the root problem which is that Michigan depends too heavily on the local property tax to fund local government services.

"LOCAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE INCREASED TAX RATES PARTLY IN RESPONSE TO INCREASED PRESSURE ON THE TAX BASE FOLLOWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROPOSAL A."

2022 STATEWIDE BALLOT PROPOSALS

"IT'S HARD TO MEASURE THE IMPACT OF TERM LIMITS IN MICHIGAN AGAINST AN ALTERNATIVE REALITY THAT NEVER OCCURRED. BUT THE CITIZENS RESEARCH COUNCIL OF MICHIGAN DID AN ANALYSIS THAT FOCUSED LARGELY ON BUDGET DECISIONS."

The Citizens Research Council has been a trusted resource for policy analysis for 107 years. One of the most important needs for our research is informing Michiganders about policy issues that affect them. The November 2022 election confirmed this point.

Voters addressed three issues on the ballot, ultimately voting yes on all three. The Research Council published unbiased analyses of each issue. In addition to our publications and webinar covering these issues, our staff was featured many times in statewide and local news coverage to further educate on the proposals.

In the weeks leading up to the election, our research was cited 33 times by news outlets and our website saw a spike of over 50,000 visits, with 12,000 of those on election day and the two days prior. Our researchers were also heavily in demand by Michigan broadcasters, who sought interviews digging into the three ballot issues.

The impact that we had on voter education during this time is clear to us. We also received many donations, often with a note of thanks.

"Grateful for your research and clear explanations"

"Very helpful information on proposal issues"

"CRC is a great asset for Michigan and I'm a big fan"

"When seeking a credible analysis of a state policy issue, especially around the time of elections, I appreciate the service provided"

"I respect CRC's work and believe it is needed more than ever"

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The Board of Directors sets policy and provides stewardship of Citizens Research Council's assets and governance oversight. All directors are elected annually by the Council of Trustees, who serve as the membership of the Research Council. Directors and trustees held their joint annual meeting on September 21, 2022, to elect new board members and officers.

Eugene A. Gargaro Jr. and Terence M. Donnelly were elected as co-chairs of the Council of Trustees.

The trustees elected directors and trustees to replace those whose terms were expiring, and the directors elected officers. Seven new directors were elected for one-year terms: Darnell Adams, Stacie Behler, Paul Bryant, Mark Burton, Zenna Elhasan, Patrick McGow, and Glenn Stevens. They joined 27 reelected directors. Seven new trustees were elected to terms expiring in 2025.

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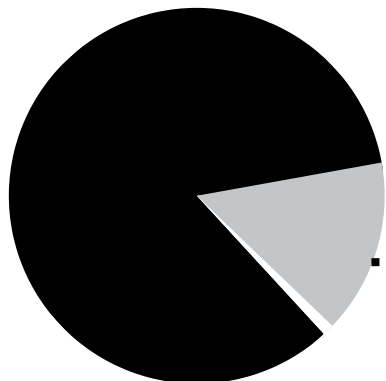
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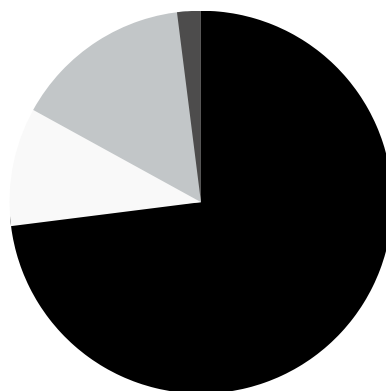
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2022 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



REVENUE

84% Programs & Research Support
15% Annual Dinner
1% Other



EXPENSES

73% Personnel
15% Operating Expenses
10% Consultants
2% Annual Policy Event



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66% Foundations
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