



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Lansing Branch

Dale Copedge, President

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Lansing NAACP Contributes \$50,000 to Legal Advocacy Group to Help Eliminate Eligible Convictions

Contribution helps pay for fees and services associated with expungement

LANSING – The Lansing Branch NAACP has partnered with the Legal Services of South Central Michigan (LSSCM) and allocated \$50,000 to the group to help clients living in Ingham, Eaton and Clinton counties seeking expungement of eligible convictions.

Expungement is critical because it breaks down the barriers that would otherwise prevent a person from being approved for a loan, returning to school, purchasing a home, or obtaining a better employment opportunity. The expungement process generally takes 8 to 10 weeks or more if a person has the necessary resources, such as an attorney. However, members of the black and brown community are disproportionately impacted and tend to have limited access to an attorney and other resources necessary to begin the expungement process.

“People are in need of many resources to help with their expungement process,” said Curtis O’Neil, Lansing Branch Legal Redress Chair. “Imagine the frustration people feel when they have filled out the paperwork but can’t afford the attorney fees to move the process along. We want to provide a means through our partnership to expedite the expungement process.”

The funding will be used to pay for Michigan State Police background check fees. It will also be used to pay a \$500 stipend to recruit and incentivize pro bono attorneys affiliated with LSSCM to represent clients with pending expungement cases. The stipend would be paid upon proof of court-ordered expungement.

According to the University of Michigan, only 6.5% of residents who qualify for expungement obtain it within five years of eligibility. When the state’s Clean Slate Law went into effect in April, an estimated 1 million residents became eligible for expungement. Under the new law, people are eligible to remove up to three felonies, an unlimited number of misdemeanors, most traffic offenses, and misdemeanor marijuana convictions.

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the largest and most pre-eminent civil rights organization in the nation.

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Membership is Power! No Membership, No Power: Join the NAACP Today”