



June 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the undersigned members of the WeROC/MOSES Justice Matters Task Force, are calling for your support to encourage the Washtenaw County Sheriff, Prosecutor, Public Defender, and Trial Court Judge to take a leading role in implementing a Pre-Arrest Juvenile Diversion Program as a matter of policy. This policy will exempt juvenile offenders from arrests for low-level misdemeanors and instead, will require law enforcement to divert youth offenders to caseworkers, who will then assign them to relevant mentoring, restorative justice, educational, job training, and/or social service programs. This initiative represents a critical step towards fostering a more equitable, effective, and rehabilitative justice system for our youth.

The benefits of pre-arrest diversion are manifold and far-reaching:

- **Positive Youth Outcomes:** Pre-arrest diversion keeps young people out of the formal criminal justice system, reducing the likelihood of a criminal record that can severely impact their future educational, employment, and housing opportunities. It allows them to remain in school and maintain stable family and community connections. It also avoids the severe trauma that can accompany even the early steps of interaction with the criminal or juvenile legal systems.
- **Reduced Recidivism:** By addressing root causes such as mental health challenges, substance abuse, educational deficiencies, or family instability, pre-arrest diversion programs are more effective in reducing recidivism rates than traditional punitive measures. When youth receive appropriate support, they are less likely to re-offend.
- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Diverting youth from the formal justice system is not only a humane approach but also a practical one. It can significantly reduce the financial burden on taxpayers by decreasing court costs, incarceration expenses, and long-term supervision costs, making it a cost-effective solution for our community.
- **Racial and Social Equity:** Pre-arrest diversion programs can reduce race disparities in juvenile arrests in Washtenaw County. In our county, law enforcement is 3-4 times more likely to arrest Black males from low-income and working-class families than others.
- **Community Strengthening:** By investing in our youth and equipping them with the essential tools for success, we not only reinforce the fabric of our entire community but also help pave the way for a safer and more prosperous future. These programs cultivate a sense of hope and create pathways for young individuals to become productive and

engaged citizens, reflecting our collective commitment to the well-being of our community.

With your support, we are confident that we will persuade our Prosecutor, Public Defender, Sheriff, and Trial Court Judge to sign a Memorandum of Understanding, documenting their commitment to implementing a Juvenile Pre-Arrest Diversion Policy. Please record your support for this policy by signing below.

Sincerely,

Community Members:

(Printed Name, affiliation if any (for identification only))

Local Congregations:

(Congregation Name and Clergy)

Community Stakeholders:

(Organization/Group Name and leader(s))