

THE BETTER ARGUMENTS PROJECT

BETTER ARGUMENTS PROJECT: LONGTIMERS & NEWCOMERS IN DETROIT

The Better Arguments Project is partnering with the Urban Consulate to host a pilot event in Detroit, Michigan to address tensions between longtime Detroiters and newcomers as the city adapts to a time of rapid change and growth.

Issue: Tensions Between Longtime Residents and Newcomers in a Changing Detroit

Detroiters are currently grappling with how to ease divisiveness between newcomers and longtime residents in a changing city. In 2016, for the first time in 60 years, Detroit's population began to move towards growth. Today, this growth has continued. Faced with an influx of newcomers, Detroiters are balancing the need to preserve cultural richness that has been at the heart of the community, with positive community investments and contributions that [newcomers](#) may bring. Many Detroiters wonder if they are contributing to the positive and negative change or if this [change](#) is happening to them with uncertain outcomes. Major underlying themes are at play in this conversation. For example, Detroit is home to the largest majority-African American population in the United States, and approaching recent tensions requires a nuanced understanding of racial divides. Another major influence is economics: Detroit has experienced economic growth in recent years, which is welcome news. However, challenges remain. For example, only 33% of African American residents have jobs, compared to 61% of white residents. This unique state of affairs poses a multitude of unanswered questions, and the opportunity for a dialogue that probes on both these issues and provides guidance toward a brighter, more inclusive future for all who call Detroit home.

Objectives: Our Upcoming Event

Over the course of two days, in partnership with the Urban Consulate, the Better Arguments Project partners will bring together a wide range of Detroiters, including both longtime residents and newcomers. This event will entail remarks by local and national leaders, facilitated conversations across difference, interactive trainings on better arguments, and invitations to participate in follow-up actions in the community. As a result, every participant will be equipped with skills to engage more productively across difference. Based on this event, the Better Arguments Project will develop a comprehensive event guide that can be used by anyone anywhere in order to have a Better Argument.

About the Local Partner: The Urban Consulate

[The Urban Consulate](#) launched in 2016 as a network of parlors for urban exchange. Since then, they have hosted over 200 conversations in Detroit, Philadelphia & New Orleans to bring people together & share ideas for better cities. The Urban Consulate is dedicated to promoting a culture of learning, to create more informed and engaged communities with a greater sense of belonging and connection. They host dialogues, cross-city field trips & exchanges, video & podcast recording sessions, focus groups and workshops, and civic group meetings. They host parlor talks, urban exchanges, city study trips, workshops, dinner & dialogues, and more.