

Press Release

LIFT Dane™ is Awarded Five-year Grant to Advance Health Equity for Wisconsinites

Madison, Wisconsin—OCTOBER 20, 2020—The Economic Justice Institute Inc.'s LIFT Dane initiative is proud to announce that it has received a Community Impact Grant Award from the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. With its innovative technology, LIFT Dane's Legal Tune Up app will advance health equity and improve health and well-being throughout Wisconsin.

LIFT Dane will receive a grant of \$1 million over five years that will support expansion, first to Racine County and then across Wisconsin. With strong community-academic partnerships in both Dane County and Racine County, LIFT Dane is focused on improving employment, economic stability and access to care through its easy-to-use mobile friendly app. The Legal Tune Up app is designed to improve health outcomes by addressing legal problems that influence health and well-being over the course of a lifetime.

Civic legal issues like child support, consumer and medical debt and evictions influence economic and employment stability, housing access and poverty, and chronic stress, disproportionately impacting Black and Brown families and individuals. LIFT aims to transform the legal aid system, court procedures and the policy environment through community-driven policy and a technology response to make legal services more accessible to Black, Indigenous and People of Color in Dane County (LIFT Dane), Racine County (LIFT Racine) and statewide (LIFT Wisconsin). By addressing issues that can be resolved with a legal intervention, through a system that is modern and accessible, this initiative will work to improve health and well-being for people throughout the state. In addressing its impact on the Racine community, Jennifer de Montmollin, Chief Program Officer at the YWCA of Southeast Wisconsin, notes, *"This means that our communities won't experience health that is segregated by race or economic status."*

Lonnie Berger, who leads the DreamUp initiative on behalf of the Institute for Research on Poverty at UW-Madison, commented: *"WPP's investment in LIFT Dane will allow it to expand its innovative model for solving civil legal problems that impede upward economic mobility to include Racine, and will also support a rigorous evaluation. These are key steps to both expanding the model throughout the state and ensuring that the intervention is evidence based."*

Mayor Cory Mason, City of Racine adds: *"This is a tremendous win for Racine's residents. LIFT Racine will give our residents the tools they need to overcome civil legal barriers that are blocking their paths to success. Tech-driven solutions to pressing problems is key to our efforts to become a smart, equitable, and inclusive City, and LIFT Racine represents exactly that sort of innovative problem-solving. We're proud to partner on this exciting initiative, and are thrilled that this resource will soon be available in our community."*

This project is one of six grants funded by the Wisconsin Partnership Program at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health through its Community Impact Grants program. The projects were selected for their potential to create conditions, systems and policy solutions that advance health equity and lead to equitable and sustainable improvements in health.

LIFT Dane™, a joint venture created to improve the financial and legal well-being of Wisconsin residents, is a collaboration of the Economic Justice Institute, Inc., the University of Wisconsin Law School's civil legal clinics, the Center for Patient Partnerships, Legal Action of Wisconsin, and the Employment and Training Association of Dane County.

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