

A LEGACY

OF LEADERSHIP
& SERVICE▶▶▶



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Michigan Nonprofit Association

A REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

DONNA MURRAY-BROWN, PRESIDENT & CEO

WRAPPING UP A 12-YEAR CHAPTER WITH MNA

LEADERSHIP THROUGH SERVICE



The Michigan Nonprofit Association looks back on the legacy of its soon-to-be former President and Chief Executive Officer



As a chapter closes, it's important to look back to celebrate successes and examine lessons learned. There has been no better time to do this than over the past two years, and the Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA), and its member nonprofits, have certainly learned a great deal during the pandemic.

But, as 2021 draws to a close, MNA also looks back over the legacy of its most senior leader.

Donna Murray-Brown, MNA President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), closes her chapter with the organization after 12 years of service. Murray-Brown has been at the helm of MNA during some of the most challenging times. Her tenure includes leading through the pandemic, focusing even more on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) efforts, as well as orchestrating a complete reorganization of the Association, known as One MNA.

Under her leadership, MNA committed anew to its core values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and added justice (J) to those values in 2019. Murray-Brown not only spearheaded many DEIJ efforts for MNA and its members, but her very role as MNA's CEO broke some of the organization's own internal glass ceilings. She is the first woman, as well as the first woman of color, to lead MNA in its 31-year history. It is something about which she feels strongly.

"Being a woman of color in the workforce is an added layer of 'I've got to succeed' because there are so many other people who might not have this opportunity and they're looking at me to be their gateway," said Murray-Brown.

She provided a critical perspective at a time when situations such as the pandemic and the Breonna Taylor and George Floyd incidents raised fresh concerns of systemic racism.



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— Donna Murray-Brown,
President & CEO

Leading through service

MNA is committed to examining its work and evaluating its effectiveness, all with the goal to create a better tomorrow for nonprofits and their communities. This includes successfully planning for future challenges, opportunities, and trends, and creating a strategy to move forward.

This is the legacy Murray-Brown leaves at the close of her time with MNA. While leaders don’t get to pick the time they lead, they have to do their best with whatever situation arises, and Murray-Brown has certainly done that. She led the organization through undeniably challenging times with strength, vulnerability, and a heart to serve. She hopes that this will be what people remember of her time at MNA.

“Leadership is always about service to others,” said Murray-Brown. “And, I’m hoping my life is one that people can say she did serve others and I hope they find that inspiring.”

She offered the following message to the next leader of MNA. “There is a lot of work to be done, but you can do it,” said Murray-Brown. “Be strategic and do it by being focused. Remember to inspire and be vulnerable—there’s power in that. And, remember it’s service first. If you do those things, I think you will be wildly successful. However, do them the way you would do them, not the way I would. This is your moment.”

Doubling down on DEIJ efforts

MNA has always been committed to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ). Current events over the past few years have shown how much work has yet to be done, and MNA has doubled down on its DEIJ efforts.

Tammy Pitts, MNA Director of Communications and Marketing, traces how MNA has woven those core values into every strategy, communication, and discussion. “We strive to be diverse and inclusive in everything that we do, especially when it comes to our programs and initiatives including redistricting, Census 2020, and the launch of the first-ever Nonprofit Leadership Census survey to name a few,” said Pitts.

The Nonprofit Leadership Census survey’s aim was to build a solidarity network among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) led nonprofits in the city of Detroit. MNA focused anew on engaging nonprofits that exist in and serve communities historically underserved and underrepresented, most specifically those BIPOC communities. “BIPOC-led organizations and those organizations that are leading communities of color or serving those communities are integral to the success of thriving communities,” said Murray-Brown.

MNA launched the Community Conversations series in the fall of 2020, creating a platform for BIPOC-only leaders to gather and freely discuss issues they may be facing

The organization also responded to George Floyd’s violent murder and other incidents of racial injustice through a number of other external programs, as well as building more internal awareness. MNA released DEIJ statements that included every MNA staff member’s signature.

This, and other MNA democracy programs, focused on historically underrepresented communities. These programs demonstrated MNA’s commitment to addressing injustice in these communities, as well as learning from them and nurturing new relationships. All this is an effort to produce results and build a better tomorrow.

COLLECTIVE SOLUTIONS TO COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

Lessons learned from 2020 Census Campaign

One initiative MNA demonstrated more DEIJ efforts with was the 2020 Census Campaign. Even amidst the pandemic shutdown, MNA quickly pivoted to provide nonprofits the tools, resources, and strategies for continuing to reach and educate their communities to participate in the census. According to Joan Gustafson, MNA External Affairs Officer, part of this included more intentional work to identify nonprofits serving those underrepresented and hard- to- reach community members.



“The more MNA can lift up and really be able to find viable capitalization strategies through a diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice lens, that’s the work that still needs to be done.”

— Donna Murray-Brown, President & CEO

MNA also served as a champion for the nonprofit sector, something close to Murray-Brown’s heart as well. She has used her role at MNA to serve as a sponsor for other individuals and nonprofits, bringing them into rooms with her that they otherwise may never have entered. While Murray-Brown believes mentorship is important, to her, sponsorship, is something different and even more important. “Mentorship can be very private. Sponsorship is more public,” said Murray-Brown. “It’s me being able to speak for others not in the room, to be able to advocate for them.”

Part of those efforts for Murray-Brown include bringing awareness of underserved and underrepresented communities and nonprofits into rooms where financial decisions and legislation are taking place. But she knows there is still more work to be done to ensure access to capitalization strategies necessary to finance change. And that will continue to be the work MNA must focus on with its new leader at the helm.

“The more MNA can lift up and really be able to find viable capitalization strategies through a diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice lens, that’s the work that still needs to be done,” said Murray-Brown.

Redistricting – the road ahead

The lessons from the census work have become an important start for the new redistricting campaign, spearheaded by Gustafson. She is mobilizing these same strategies for the redistricting campaign, with the goal of making sure communities have their voices heard. This includes providing funding to 38 nonprofits representing historically underrepresented communities and providing technical assistance and training to submit maps and narratives. All of which will later have voting implications.

MNA provides education and resources to help nonprofits navigate the Paycheck Protection Program

One very specific way MNA helped nonprofits happened during the pandemic in 2020, when the federal government opened the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to nonprofits for the first time ever. This program was an unfamiliar landscape for organizations and MNA provided nonprofits with many resources to navigate it.

First, MNA partnered with other organizations, attorneys, and CPAs to put on regular webinars to educate on the PPP and other programs to help with employee retention. They also provided technical assistance as organizations completed their applications.

Kelley Kuhn, MNA Vice President, represented MNA in the multi-organization collaboration on the PPP and other pandemic responses. “Through the course of the technical assistance we set up, we successfully secured over a million dollars for nonprofits through the Paycheck Protection Program,” said Kuhn.

With her background in banking, Murray-Brown was also uniquely positioned to lead MNA through the PPP. “I was able to recognize very clearly what the barriers might be for nonprofits to be successful [with the PPP],” said Murray-Brown. She was able to advocate for Michigan nonprofits, as well as ensure they took full advantage of the resources available to them. MNA is now focusing its efforts on helping those organizations with full PPP loan forgiveness.

LOOKING AHEAD

Preparing IT tools for a modernized future

If there's one thing the pandemic taught the nonprofit sector, it was how much work needs to be done to create a modern workplace. The pandemic forced most organizations to work remotely.

Adam King, Technology Director of MNA Technology Services, worked with his team to help many organizations get systems and networks set up in the early days of the sheltering in place. While some organizations are returning to in-person work, King believes many will not and that much of the work nonprofits do in the future will be accomplished virtually.

"As we saw with the pandemic, organizations that had been on track before were in a much better situation when the pandemic hit," said King. "It's very important to be exploring your options as much as you can. Engage the people in your office, work with your IT provider to make a plan, and start progressing forward."

Nonprofits have seen just how critical it is to have technological support to perform their missions. From performing the day-to-day work, to engaging with communities on important issues such as the census and redistricting, to applying for necessary assistance such as the PPP, nonprofits have had to embrace IT tools more than ever before. These are the lessons MNA continues to promote for the nonprofit sector.



MICHIGAN NONPROFIT ASSOCIATION

2020-2021 Fiscal Year Financials

REVENUE	DOLLARS	% OF TOTAL REVENUE
Grant Revenue.....	\$2,856,045.....	47.9%
Contributions.....	\$956,098.....	16.03%
Membership Dues.....	\$271,243.....	4.55%
Program Fees & Sponsorship.....	\$1,026,810.....	17.22%
Sublease Revenue.....	\$442,466.....	7.42%
Payroll protection program loan forgiveness.....	\$255,242.....	4.28%
Investment Income.....	\$58,373.....	0.98%
Misc. Income.....	\$96,620.....	1.62%
Total Revenue.....	\$5,962,897	

PROGRAM SERVICES	DOLLARS	% OF TOTAL REVENUE
Educational Services.....	\$3,142,408.....	57.08%
Public Policy.....	\$121,763.....	2.21%
Nonprofit Outreach.....	\$890,628.....	16.18%
Public Grants.....	\$665,571.....	12.09%
Volunteerism.....	\$117,536.....	2.13%
Sub Total: Program Services.....	\$4,937,906.....	89.69%
Administration.....	\$563,292.....	10.23%
Fundraising.....	\$4,361.....	0.08%
Total Expenses.....	\$5,505,559	

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Detroit Urban League

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Michigan Nonprofit Association

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