

January 2026

The Tackle Box

MI AFS DEIJB Committee Newsletter

Awareness Month & Days

- [National Mentoring Month](#)
- [Poverty in America Awareness Month](#)
 - Michigan Resources:
 - [Assistance Programs](#)
 - [Public Benefits - Michigan](#)
 - [Financial Assistance Resources for Families](#)
- [Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month](#)
 - Resources:
 - [National Human Trafficking Hotline: 1-888-373-7888](#)
 - [Human Trafficking Resources \(michigan.gov\)](#)
 - [Human Trafficking \(michigan.gov\)](#)
- [World Braille Day](#) - Jan 4th
- [Korean American Day](#) - Jan 13th
- [Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#) - Jan 15th
- [International Day of Education](#) - Jan 24th
- [International Day of Commemoration in Memory of Victims of the Holocaust](#) - Jan 27th

Honoring the Past, Sustaining the Work

January 19th marks Martin Luther King Jr. Day, honoring not only a great leader but also the broader Civil Rights Movement. When we reflect on Dr. King and this movement, we often envision key moments—such as the March on Washington, Bloody Sunday, and the Montgomery Bus Boycott—while overlooking the true scope and duration of the struggle. The Civil Rights Movement is commonly defined as occurring between 1954 and 1968, but the fight for equality extends far beyond those 14 years, both into the past and the present. Moreover, progress was—and is—not linear, and periods of regression can take a serious emotional toll on those working toward change.

Just as participants in the Civil Rights Movement did not allow setbacks to deter them from pushing forward, it is important that we do not allow recent shifts in public sentiment surrounding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to halt efforts toward positive societal change. Part of this work includes acknowledging the presence of DEI fatigue, or the feeling of frustration or emotional exhaustion that arise from slow or ineffective efforts to build diversity, equity, and inclusion, particularly in the workplace. Aparna Rae's Forbes article, "[DEI Fatigue: Resistance or Opportunity? Unpacking This Moment and Navigating the Path Forward](#)," offers an excellent overview of this topic within the workplace. Recognizing the symptoms of DEI fatigue and reflecting on the events or challenges that triggered it are important first steps. Practices such as prioritizing self-care, setting healthy



A classic portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr reimagined as a colorful geometric painting of the civil rights icon.

boundaries, and cultivating supportive networks of colleagues and friends can help counter its effects.

Social change takes time and requires sustained, emotionally demanding work—whether in the historic fight for civil rights or in contemporary efforts to embed DEI principles in our institutions. To help illustrate the breadth of the Civil Rights Movement the timeline below highlights key moments. This timeline is not intended to capture the full depth or complexity of the movement but rather serves as a reminder that social progress depends on time, coordination, determination, and collective commitment.



The timeline above was sourced from [History.com](https://www.history.com). For more information about these and other important moments of the Civil Rights movement please visit the Britannica's [Timeline of the American Civil Rights Movement](#), PBS's [Milestones of the Civil Rights Movement](#) and the Jim Crow Museum's [Civil Rights Era](#).

Featured Artist: Matthew Pawlowski

Matthew Pawlowski, a Michigan native now located in St. Paul, MN, works exclusively with embroidery and textiles. He creates his work by shaping and weaving the materials in ways that “invert expectations of traditional textile practices”. The repetitive and rhythmic practice of hand-stitching his pieces not only creates beautiful and thought-provoking art, but it fosters the opportunity for him to reflect on the people, the love, and the loss he has experienced in his lifetime.

Pawlowski sees his creations as a way to mourn the friends and the culture that have been lost to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. In his most recent sculpture “Code Ghost”, Pawlowski memorializes the individuals lost to the virus – a figure of a ghost draped in bandanas, a nod to the lost culture of flagging, where one could quietly display their preferences without detection. Millions of people have lost their battle with HIV/AIDS, and with those lost goes their contribution and continuation of queer culture. Matthew Pawlowski mourns the memories, the shared language, and the community that once enveloped his life.

[Matthew Pawlowski website](#)



Top: Code Ghost, 2024. 100 bandanas sewn together to create a phantasm;
Left: Memorial Sampler 2, 2024. Hand-stitched embroidery, styled to resemble Victorian coffin plates with text “Heretics in Love”



2026 Women of Fisheries Gives Back

Women of Fisheries is providing a \$250 early career development award for women in fisheries science.

Eligibility is for women who graduated within the last 5 years and are currently in the field. More information is available [here](#).



On a blue background a black silhouette of a swimming women is surrounded by fresh and marine fish.

MIAFS DEIJB Travel Award



The MIAFS DEIJB Travel Award is again available to assist individuals with meeting-related expenses for the [Michigan AFS](#)

[Michigan AFS Annual Meeting](#) (February 25 - 27, 2026). Travel award details are available [here](#), and applications can be submitted confidentially to the DEIJB committee via [Google Form](#) by **February 1st**.

Ally Corner: Making Healthy Food Choices When Costs Keep Climbing

It was hard to avoid noticing the steady increase in the cost of living during 2025. Food prices rose by about 3% over the course of the year, leaving many people feeling stretched and anxious about their ability to afford groceries. A recent NORC poll conducted for The Associated Press found that concerns about grocery costs have outpaced worries about rent, health care, and student debt for nearly half of all Americans. It is well established that people with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to turn to low-cost, low-quality foods, especially during periods of economic hardship. This pattern can lead to nutritional deficiencies and, ultimately, an increased risk of serious and costly health issues.

Low-cost, low-quality food is often marketed very effectively. Its low price and promise of convenience can grab the attention of any savvy shopper, especially someone feeling short on funds. This clever marketing can obscure the fact that there are many affordable, healthy options available in less flashy packaging. Healthline's article "28 Healthy Foods That Are Incredibly Cheap" highlights numerous budget-friendly choices, while the Cleveland Clinic's "12 Inexpensive Healthy Food Choices" not only lists affordable options but also offers practical tips for shopping on a budget. Although healthy, cost-effective foods do exist, it can be difficult to know what to cook with them. Fortunately, there are many websites (e.g., Good Food, Frugal Nutrition, among others) and influencers—such as Dollar Tree Dinners (Instagram:



A stylized image of a smiling short haired person with a thought bubble holding dollar signs pushes a shopping cart while healthy grocery items swirl into it.

dt dinners, TikTok: dollartreedinners) and Budget Bytes (Beth Moncel, Instagram: @budgetbytes) — that offer a wide variety of healthy, budget-conscious recipes. There are even creative ways to elevate the humblest ingredients; for example, Delish features "25 Recipes For Upgrading Your Ramen Noodles".

While it can be fun to joke about dressing up ramen or mac & cheese, food scarcity is no laughing matter. No one should have to choose between paying a bill and going hungry. Fortunately, there are many food banks across Michigan that serve as vital sources of support. Websites such as Findhelp, Feeding America, 211 Michigan, Food Finder, and the Food Bank Council of Michigan can all help you locate food pantries in your community. Remember, if you are feeling financially stretched right now, you are not alone—there are many organizations ready and willing to help.

Today, many hard-working Americans with good-paying jobs are looking into their wallets and wondering how there can be so little left. After following the "recipe" we were taught as children—combine a college degree with a successful career—many are realizing that the result doesn't taste as sweet as promised. Just because Americans are currently swallowing a bitter financial pill does not mean our meals have to be bland or lacking in healthy components. With a little planning, it is possible to cook meals that are nutritious, flavorful, and affordable—perhaps even offering a sense of accomplishment and control that may be missing in other areas of life right now.

Happy New Year from the MIAFS DEIJB Committee! We hope that your 2026 will be filled with triumph, good fortune and adventure. The DIEJB Committee is excited to continue our work in the New Year and remain committed to fostering an inclusive chapter culture. If you'd like to connect, share resources, or contribute thoughts, we're here. Contact us at mifishcastafs@gmail.com or submit suggestions anonymously.

Happy New Years -

Dana Castle (she/her), Lydia Doerr (she/her), Kynzie House (she/her), Maggie Haite (they/them), Taylor Skiles (she/her), Kathleen Quebedeaux (she/her)