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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **MCR Helps Community Groups Turn Vacant Lots into Revenue-Generating Assets**

Michigan Community Resources (MCR) is pleased to announce the release of its newest publication—*Greenfill Development: A Guide to Repurposing Vacant Lots for Flower Farming Enterprises*. The *Greenfill Development Guide* helps identify how community groups can grow crops on vacant land and generate enough money to not only pay for the taxes, insurance, and long-term maintenance of the lots, but also supplement other community programs.

The publication is the result of MCR's work as a 2015 Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit planning grantee. The Guide contains two neighborhood-scale business plans for community groups seeking to develop coherent, long-term strategies for repurposing land in environmentally and financially sustainable ways. Both plans include detailed budgets, revenue projections, and operational requirements for flower farming enterprises that can be used by other groups citywide. The plans are designed to be scaled up or down for implementation on single or multiple lots.

The *Greenfill Development Guide* is unique from existing vacant lot publications. "This innovative guide will help community groups turn vacant lots into revenue-generating assets," said Jill Ferrari, chief executive officer of Michigan Community Resources. "This is critical, as we are seeing more and more groups taking on vacant parcels throughout the City. The guide will increase the capacity of groups interested in revitalizing their neighborhoods, while easing the financial burden these groups often face when maintaining vacant lots."

"This promises to be an important new tool for community groups in confronting vacant land across the city. That's a key reason why we supported this effort," said Bryan Hogle, a Kresge Detroit Program officer who is deeply involved in the Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit initiative. "MCR, furthermore, has a deep understanding of community engagement, participatory planning and Detroit's lower eastside. That gives us confidence the guide will be in tune with community needs and desires."

"Community groups across the city are looking creatively at how to make transformative changes – often turning what seem like liabilities into assets," added Hogle. "We're excited by the opportunity to support them through initiatives like Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit."

You can view and download the *Greenfill Development Guide* at <http://mi-community.org/greenfill-development/>



**Caption:** Nancy Weigandt, of Jefferson Chalmers Community Food System, assembles bouquets of specialty cut flowers for market. Photo courtesy of Jefferson Chalmers Community Food System.

**Attachment:** Nancy and Flowers.jpg

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#### **About Michigan Community Resources**

Michigan Community Resources provides vital services to help nonprofit and neighborhood organizations navigate through legal, community organizing and urban planning issues so they can continue to make a positive impact on their communities. Established in 1998 with our pro bono legal referral program, which has leveraged over \$13 million in free legal assistance from the private bar, we have helped thousands of nonprofits improve the quality of life in their communities. Today, Michigan Community Resources is a statewide organization providing legal, urban planning and educational resources to nonprofit organizations that serve low-income communities. Our newest resource, Neighborhood Exchange ([www.neighborhood-exchange.com](http://www.neighborhood-exchange.com)), connects residents and organizations to resources, ideas, events and a peer network to strengthen Detroit neighborhoods.

#### **About The Kresge Foundation**

The Kresge Foundation is a \$3.5 billion private, national foundation that works to expand opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and investing in arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services, and community development in Detroit. In 2014, the Board of Trustees approved 408 awards totaling \$242.5 million. That included a \$100 million award to the Foundation for Detroit's Future, a fund created to soften the impact of the city's bankruptcy on pensioners and safeguard cultural assets at the Detroit Institute of Arts. A total of \$138.1 million was paid out to grantees over the course of the year. In addition, Kresge's Social Investment Practice made commitments totaling \$20.4 million in 2014. For more information, visit [kresge.org](http://kresge.org).