Accountability for Dearborn

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**Accountability for Dearborn Responds to Dearborn Police Brutalization of a Black Man**

On the evening of March 30, 2021 a video was posted on The City of Dearborn (TCD) Instagram Page showing a Black man being brutalized by a Dearborn Police Officer and other members of Dearborn’s communities. This situation illustrates the violence of our community’s response to Blackness, poverty, and mental illness.

In the video, a white Dearborn Police Officer approaches a tall Black man wearing a red jacket on the side of a busy road. The officer begins to place the man under arrest over the hood of the squad car. The man attempts to straighten up, and the officer slams him down, prompting the man to physically resist being restrained. The trajectory of the altercation sends the man and the officer into the middle of a busy street. Bystanders join to restrain and roughly carry the struggling man towards the squad car.

The caption for the video asserts that police were called multiple times throughout the day and the past week because people did not like the way this man was asking for resources from the community. Because panhandling is legal in the state of Michigan the police will likely weave a narrative that this man was disorderly and resisted arrest. Following the events of the video, according to the Dearborn Police Station and the 19th District Court, the man was not booked. If he was not arrested, how was he resisting arrest?

The abuse shown in the video is not an isolated incident, it is part of an uninterrupted pattern. When Dearborn Police perceive a person of color as disobedient they respond by escalating the use of force. Mental illness and disability compound this perception and response. The clear parallels to Luther Gonzalez-Hall, Janet Wilson, Kevin Matthews, Ali Beydoun, and Ernest Griglen can not be understated.

This video does not show an example of public safety, it shows the many ways our City has failed to serve our communities. It shows what the police are trained to do: criminalize Blackness, criminalize poverty, and criminalize mental illness. Police response to this issue was unnecessary, and our dependence on police as the sole responders to problems in Dearborn’s communities will continue to threaten our most vulnerated community members.

Other communities have identified solutions to these types of problems. Look at the CAHOOTS program in Eugene, Oregon. Look to the Caring 4 Denver Initiative in Denver, Colorado. Allow our dispatchers to send the right responders who can provide immediate care. Demand investment in wrap-around services to provide ongoing support. These situations are not inevitable, they are preventable, and we must invest in preventing them. We must shift resources and responsibility from the Police towards these investments.

It is time to divest from the violent legacy of policing so that we can begin investing in community care.

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[Accountability for Dearborn](https://www.accountabilityfordearborn.org/) is organizing to hold the city of Dearborn accountable for eliminating institutional racism by identifying policies, ordinances, and procedures that result in racial disparities; and replacing those mechanisms with anti-racist ones. We demand transparency, accountability, and divestment from Dearborn Police, and investment in community-based care solutions. We envision a community that is invested in Black Liberation and carceral abolition.