

Local, accountable, informed.

**Miriam Marini**

**Reporter**

**[www.outliermedia.org](http://www.outliermedia.org)**

**TEXT: "DETROIT" TO 67485**

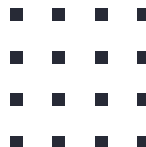
# A SHORT HISTORY

Outlier was founded in 2016 by Sarah Alvarez. Even in public radio, where she worked, she saw the information needs of low-wealth communities of color being devalued.

**Leaving information needs unfilled allows misinformation to thrive and accountability to wither.**

Outlier was founded to put the information needs of Detroiters at the center of our work.

We let community information needs dictate our news cycle. We use data journalism and traditional reporting to investigate the information needs of our community and then design news products that can fill those information gaps and create more accountability. These conscientious information needs studies are now being used in [communities around the country](#).



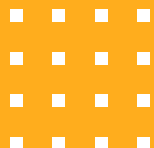
# OUR WHY

- If journalism serves those with the highest and most difficult to fill information needs it can serve all
- Journalism is civic infrastructure in a high functioning community
- Collaboration is the future of journalism
- We can build newsrooms that value the lives of the people it serves and the people employed therein





By keeping residents first, *we hope to give more than we take*, and leave people with the information they need to create change in their own communities.



# DIRECT TO CONSUMER REPORTING

Text **DETROIT to 67485**  
(you can test it for yourself and rest assured your info won't be sold to the latest and greatest spammer.)

Outlier Media is a free, non-profit Detroit news service making it easy to get info you need.

Use these texts to get info automatically. Or, you can choose to speak 1-on-1 with a reporter who can try to help. Msg & data rates may apply. HELP for help or STOP to unsubscribe. Privacy/terms: <https://input.li//1314645>

Text 1 for housing problems  
Text 2 for electric/water issues  
Text 3 for need a reporter to get in touch  
Texto 4 por Español

نص 5 عربي

# DIRECT TO CONSUMER REPORTING

Please Help them , We Love and miss them

Hi, this is Joey from Outlier Media. I've been reporting on health and safety during the pandemic. Have you had recent contact with your son? And is there any information I can look into for you?

Yes" He's wearing a mask and separate , somewhat" I Pray he stay Health to come home, date is in May for hearing

I hope he stays healthy, too! Would you mind if I called you from this number, 401-525-0008, to talk more about the information you've been receiving from the correctional facility? I'm curious how they're communicating with loved ones and family members.

Offices at Wayne Metro are closed today for Juneteenth, but they are a good resource for housing needs. The number is (313) 388-9799 and here's the website: <https://input.li/I/K40667> I will call them for you on Monday to see what your options look like.

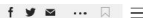
Thank you so much for your time n concern as well as going the extra mile getting me the assistance In my time of need

# Accountability

NEWS

The 'fake landlord' scam destroys lives in Detroit. But culprits rarely face consequences.

SHARE & SAVE



U.S. NEWS

## The 'fake landlord' scam destroys lives in Detroit. But culprits rarely face consequences.

As many as 1 in 10 tenants facing eviction in Detroit say they've been duped by con artists who've sold or rented out houses they didn't own.



June Walker, 65, sits outside her home on Alcock St. in Detroit. Sylvia Jones for NBC News

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Nov. 10, 2021, 5:00 AM EST / Updated Nov. 20, 2021, 3:27 PM EST

By Erin Einhorn and Aaron Mondry

This article was published in partnership with [Outlier Media](#), a Detroit-based service journalism organization.

DETROIT — The day she made the final payment on her house last spring, June Walker could barely contain her jubilation.

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Psychologists Say These '10 Kids Books' Make



State of Michigan  
Attorney General Dana Nessel

Media contact:

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517-599-2746

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, November 16, 2021

## AG Nessel Reissues Consumer Alerts Following Report of Fake Landlord Scams

LANSING - Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel is reissuing consumer alerts related to housing scams following reported instances of bad actors taking advantage of unsuspecting Detroit residents.

Last week, NBC News and Outlier Media published findings from a [four-month investigation](#) focused on the "fake landlord" scam in the city.

The report notes that in some cases, "people who have lost their house to foreclosure have kept collecting rent from tenants without letting on that they're no longer the landlord. In others, con artists have broken into vacant houses, changed the locks, listed them for sale or rent, then collected payments from victims. Some fake sellers have even filed false deeds to make fake sales look legitimate, lawyers and experts say."

"I was appalled and saddened to read the hardship these victims are facing at the hands of scam artists who target tenants," Nessel said. "The best way to prevent a scam from happening is to know the red flags to look for, so you can spot them before a bad actor tries to take advantage of you or someone you know. It's also important to remember my team is ready to investigate consumer complaints. We just need help from the public in reporting suspected scams."

In response, Nessel is reissuing two consumer alerts that are among her [library of resources](#) consumers can review anytime on a variety of topics.

The AG's [Home Lending and Foreclosure Rescue Scams Consumer Alert](#) highlights ways scam artists have targeted consumers in danger of losing their homes or homeowners who have equity in their homes but not cash. The elderly and those with low incomes or poor credit are particularly vulnerable.

# Thousands of Detroit flood victims still waiting for aid 9 months later

**Dana Afana** and **Miriam Marini** Detroit Free Press

Published 11:27 a.m. ET April 8, 2022 | Updated 11:22 p.m. ET April 8, 2022

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Financial help from the government may never materialize for some Detroit victims of last summer's devastating flooding while thousands of others already have been denied recovery aid.

Federal data shows that nearly 39,000 households in the city had gotten some money from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as of March 1 for flood damage. But another 8,204 families are still waiting and 14,163 have been denied.

In addition, there's been no action on more than 40,000 separate damage claims filed with the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department or the Great Lakes Water Authority, as both agencies await the final investigation of backups in sewer systems that caused widespread flooding in mostly east-side neighborhoods after historic rainfalls. DWSD has already predicted most claims will be denied because initial findings blame heavy rain as the main cause, despite power failures at key east-side pumping stations.

## Nonprofits step in while claims in limbo

A final report detailing an investigation into the June flood is expected in April or May, GLWA officials said. But that likely won't mean much for flood victims.

DWSD predicts most of the nearly 20,000 claims it received will likely be denied because preliminary engineering studies have found that the significant volume of rainfall was the leading cause of flooding and subsequent basement backups — not defects in the system.

Under Michigan law, the city can be held responsible if there was a sewer defect — it knew about or should have known about — that it didn't fix and was 50% or more at fault for the flooding.

In addition to the DWSD claims, none of the approximately 24,000 claims filed with GLWA across metro Detroit, including about 3,900 claims filed by Detroit residents, have been resolved. GLWA and DWSD estimate that responses are expected in May. GLWA hasn't commented on what will happen to claims it has received, saying the final investigation is pending.

Nonprofits have stepped in to help fill the need for repairs.

Josh Elling, CEO of Jefferson East Inc., said his group has spent approximately \$700,000 — a combination of grant money from the Michigan State Housing and Development Authority Neighborhood Enhancement Program and A.A. Van Elslander Foundation — in disaster recovery work, including home repair grants, appliance replacements and staffing.

The association represents the neighborhoods along the east Jefferson Avenue corridor, a portion of the city that was severely impacted by the summer flood.

# DETROIT DOCUMENTERS



## **D** Detroit Documenters *People-powered news on your local government, published by Outlier Media*

Hey **Detroit**,

Tax foreclosure is imminent for thousands of Wayne County residents. Those facing foreclosure for delinquent taxes from 2019 or earlier have until March 14 to set up a payment plan. Failure to do so would leave only one way to avoid foreclosure: pay the back taxes in full by March 31. "This year we're foreclosing," Wayne County Treasurer Eric Sabree [said last month](#). "We're not making any special category on what we're not going to do. Everything that's scheduled for foreclosure is on schedule for foreclosure."

To check the tax status of your own or another property, [search by address](#) on Wayne County's online payment page.

If you are facing foreclosure and are unable to make a payment, the [Wayne County Payment Plans](#) webpage offers numerous ways to get help. Payment plan agreements, hardship applications and resources for veterans and first responders can all be found there. If you need to apply for a payment plan, you must act this week. Next Monday is the deadline. To contact the Wayne County Treasurer's Office, email [taxinfo@waynecounty.com](mailto:taxinfo@waynecounty.com) or call 313-224-5990. Office hours and location may be found [here](#).

# The end may be near for virtual public meetings in Detroit: What it could mean

**Miriam Marini** Detroit Free Press

Published 3:45 p.m. ET May 25, 2021 | Updated 9:05 a.m. ET May 26, 2021

[View Comments](#)



To keep the coronavirus from spreading, almost every group interaction has been digitized over the past year. Grocery shopping, weddings, funerals, and some government meetings have been taking place in our homes for more than a year.

Now, amid a decrease in coronavirus cases and an increase in vaccination rates, a local public health emergency order that would keep public meetings virtual expires June 30. The order was extended May 20 by Detroit Chief Health Officer Denise Fair.

In Detroit, technical difficulties and features of virtual meeting software — namely the mute function — have given officials more latitude to control the way the public participates in decision making over the city's future. In more than a year of virtual meetings, a [city councilmember was forced to resign](#), the [city is looking for a new police chief](#) and [millions of dollars have been approved in city development projects](#).

## Barriers to access

The digital divide — the gap between those who have computers and the internet and those who do not — has also posed a critical challenge to the public accessing virtual meetings during the pandemic. More than [21 million Americans](#) do not have access to high-speed internet. Data Driven Detroit estimates [that as many as 40%](#) of the city's population does not have a reliable internet connection at home.

If a resident is able to join a virtual meeting, there can of course be technical difficulties that make a meeting difficult to truly attend or follow along with.

An April 15 community input meeting hosted by the Detroit Department of Transportation, for instance, was plagued by technical difficulties. The first 30 minutes of the meeting was spent admitting participants into the meeting. Even DDOT Executive Director Mikel Oglesby couldn't join. A statement to the Free Press from a DDOT spokesperson said the issues were due to connectivity and software problems with the meeting host's computer. The host's computer defaulted to an earlier version of Zoom, which limited certain functions such as screen sharing, closed captioning and view options.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. GIVE MORE, TAKE LESS
  - a. CLICKS VS. IMPACT
2. INDIVIDUAL VS. SYSTEM
3. CONTEXT
4. COLLABORATION, NOT COMPETITION
5. ACCOUNTABILITY



# THANK YOU!

REACH OUT WITH QUESTIONS

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