

## **Proposal for USBIG (and BICN) to Host the 2019 BIEN Congress at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor**

The US Basic Income Guarantee Network (USBIG) with support from the Basic Income Canadian Network (BICN) proposes to host the BIEN Congress in 2019 in conjunction with the NABIG Congress on host-nation(s) day.

### **Local Organizing Committee:**

Luke Shaefer <[lshaefer@umich.edu](mailto:lshaefer@umich.edu)> co-organizer, Julia Weiner, <[weinertj@umich.edu](mailto:weinertj@umich.edu)> co-organizer, Juliana Bidadanure <[j.bidadanure@stanford.edu](mailto:j.bidadanure@stanford.edu)>, Karl Widerquist <[Karl@widerquist.com](mailto:Karl@widerquist.com)>, Michael Howard <[mhoward@maine.edu](mailto:mhoward@maine.edu)>, and others to be named later

**Conference location:** the Poverty Solutions initiative at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

**Sponsoring organizations:** USBIG, BICN, and the Poverty Solutions Initiative

**Funding:** The conference organizers are applying for \$50,000 in funding from the Economic Security Project, and the University of Michigan, which, together with conference fees, will fund speakers, accessibility, refreshments, and other expenses.

**Timing:** Summer 2019, date to be determined

There are many reasons why a conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan, United States, would be ideal for BIEN's 19<sup>th</sup> Congress.

First, we have received a generous offer of support from the Poverty Solutions initiative, which has access to the University of Michigan's facilities, and will be able to provide a 400-seat auditorium and as many breakout rooms as the conference will need. The initiative's director, Luke Shaefer, will be a coordinator, and we will have access to administrative support from initiative's staff. The University of Michigan is only 35 minutes from a major international airport, Detroit, which has direct flights to almost every major city in the United States and Canada as well as to many foreign countries. Ann Arbor is only 42 miles from the Canadian border, and it will provide an excellent opportunity for US and Canadian participants to attend the host nations' day pre-conference.

Second, the United States, has never hosted a BIEN Congress. Of the first 18 BIEN Congresses held by 2018, only two will have been in the Americas (Brazil 2010 and Canada 2014). The discussion on basic income has boomed in US public opinion over the past 2 years. Former Secretary of Labor, Robert Reich; former President of the Service Employees International Union, Andrew Stern; and futurist, Martin Ford, all published books in 2016 offering UBI as an inevitable solution for technological unemployment, poverty and precariousness. What's more: the Movement for Black Lives has endorsed basic income as part of their manifesto; the Tech Incubator Y Combinator is experimenting with UBI in sites in Oakland and Michigan; and the Economic Security Project (ESP) has dedicated \$10 million to UBI research and policy in the next 2 years. The time is thus opportune for a BIEN congress in the US to reflect on those recent developments and think about their international impact and relevance.

Third, the local organizing committee will be made of people who have a great deal of experience organizing conferences and working with BIEN, USBIG, and BICN.