

Dessa Cosma, Executive Director

Dessa grew up in the Deep South, splitting her time between New Orleans, LA and Augusta, GA. She has been a social justice advocate for as long as she can remember, starting her environmental, LGBT, and reproductive justice efforts in high school. She attended the University of Georgia, and earned a Bachelor of International Affairs, Bachelor of Women's Studies, and Bachelor of Anthropology degrees. After graduation, Dessa moved to Detroit to work as the Senior Field Organizer for Planned Parenthood Affiliates of Michigan. Not only does she love organizing, she loves Detroit! Dessa helped organize the US Social Forum, which brought nearly 20,000 people to Detroit in 2010.

In 2014, Dessa graduated with a Master of Social Justice Degree from Marygrove College. At that time, she was the Michigan Program Director for the Center for Progressive Leadership, training hundreds of activists, candidates, and campaign managers across the state. She then became the Executive Director of the Economic Justice Alliance of Michigan, which she helped to start in collaboration with some of Detroit's most dedicated economic and racial justice champions. In many ways, but particularly as part of Allies for Change and the Detroit Equity Action Lab (DEAL), Dessa has been fortunate to learn from and be mentored by trainers, authors, professors, activists, artists, and thought leaders committed to racial justice, dismantling white supremacy, and creating equity.

In 2018, Dessa started Detroit Disability Power to grow the organizing power of the disability community and to continue bridging the gap between the disability community and larger social justice movements. She has particular interest in disability focused political work that is grounded in anti-racism and economic justice.

She is currently the Twink Frey Visiting Social Activist at the Center for the Education of Women at University of Michigan.