



HISTORIC DESIGNATION

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### **Wayne County Community College District Receives Historic National Underground Railroad “Network to Freedom” Designation by National Park Service**

DETROIT – Oct. 11, 2023 – Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) received a Historic National Designation for its Underground Railroad Historic programming from the National Park Service’s Network to Freedom with a Thursday, September 28 ceremony. The historic designation reflects WCCCD’s longstanding commitment to preserving and sharing the history of the Underground Railroad, a network that stretched across the nation that helped guide more than 1,000 freedom seekers.

The Network to Freedom’s National Park Service Historic designation adds to the Wayne County Community College District/Detroit Underground Railroad Site Historic District and was officially designated by the City of Detroit on November 23, 2021, encompassing the Curtis L. Ivery Central Educational Complex located at Third and Fort streets. Freedom Seekers knew that Detroit, code-named, “Midnight,” was a place of refuge which eventually allowed them safe passage to Canada, code-named “Dawn.” The Michigan Central Railroad’s Third Street Depot also served as a vital gateway for abolitionist activity because of its proximity to the Detroit River.

The Network to Freedom designation adds WCCCD's Underground Railroad District History programming as one of the 23 new listings from the 46th round of applications. These listings represent sites and programs in 14 states across the U.S. and Canada, expanding the reach and impact of the Network to Freedom.

“We are honored to receive this historic designation,” said WCCCD Chancellor Dr. Curtis L. Ivery. “And gratified that it will help us expand our continued mission of educating, inspiring, and fostering a deeper understanding and connection with the Underground Railroad’s enduring legacy and celebrating the triumph of the human spirit over adversity and the pursuit of freedom for all.”

The National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom is dedicated to honoring, preserving, and promoting the history of resistance to enslavement through escape and flight. This history continues to inspire people worldwide, reminding us of the fundamental human right to self-determination and freedom from oppression.

With over 750 sites, facilities, and programs already in the Network to Freedom, WCCCD's inclusion represents a significant contribution to the preservation of this vital history. The Network currently spans 40 states, along with Washington D.C. and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and continues to grow, ensuring that the stories of freedom seekers and their allies will never be forgotten.

For more information about Wayne County Community College District and its Underground Railroad programming, please visit [www.wcccd.edu](http://www.wcccd.edu).

### **About Wayne County Community College District**

WCCCD, one of the largest urban-suburban community colleges in Michigan, is a multi-campus district with six campus locations and educational centers, including the Mary Ellen Stempfle University Center, the Heinz C. Prechter Educational and Performing Arts Center, the Michigan Institute for Public Safety Education (MIPSE), the Curtis L. Ivery Health and Wellness Education Center and the Outdoor Careers Training Center. The District serves students across 32 cities and townships, and more than 500 square miles. WCCCD is committed to the continued development of innovative programs, workforce transformation, hosting community-based training sessions, and improving student facilities and services. [www.wcccd.edu](http://www.wcccd.edu).