

Mayors for Peace – Michigan (MFP-Mi)

Mayors for Peace is an international organization of cities dedicated to the promotion of nuclear disarmament. Its vision statement reads:

The purposes of the "Mayors for Peace" campaign are to contribute to the attainment of lasting world peace by arousing concern among citizens of the world for the total abolition of nuclear weapons through close solidarity among member cities as well as by striving to solve vital problems for the human race such as starvation and poverty, the plight of refugees, human rights abuses, and environmental degradation.

As of March 2021, Mayors for Peace counted 8019 member cities in 165 countries and territories around the world. This includes 218 cities within the United States (www.mayorsforpeace.org). In Michigan, four communities are registered as member cities. These include Ann Arbor, Benton Harbor, Detroit and Grand Rapids.

Mayors for Peace:

1. Acknowledges that nuclear disarmament will not occur unilaterally. It will come about only when nations of the world work together to bring about complete nuclear disarmament.
2. Acknowledges that nuclear disarmament will not occur quickly. None-the-less, a commitment to bring about nuclear disarmament can be made now, and steps in that direction can be taken now.
3. Acknowledges that nuclear disarmament will not occur in a vacuum. Nuclear disarmament will come about in conjunction with other steps to prevent war and provide security for people everywhere.

Why cities? Why should cities take the lead in nuclear disarmament efforts? Consider the following:

1. Cities have the most to lose from nuclear war. Nations aren't destroyed by nuclear weapons; cities are.
2. Cities have the most to gain from nuclear disarmament. Some of the resources committed to development and maintenance of nuclear weapons could be given back to the cities to help solve the many problems faced by their residents. Today more than ever, every city needs resources to address problems faced by its citizens.
3. Cities can effectively lobby for nuclear disarmament. Decisions concerning nuclear weapons policy are the prerogative of national governments. Support for nuclear weapons comes from well-entrenched and well-funded organizations that have ideological and corporate self-interest at heart. Anti-nuclear activists do not compete effectively with pro-nuclear supporters. Activists, typically, are small-in-number and under-funded. Anti-nuclear efforts often compete with multiple other legitimate causes. Cities occupy a position between the federal level and the citizenry. The city is small enough that its government can be responsive to citizen requests but large enough that its voice can be heard at higher levels. Coalitions of cities acting out of common purpose can speak with a greatly magnified voice. International coalitions of cities can be even more powerful.

MFP – Mi goal: The goal of MFP - Mi is to encourage communities in Michigan to become member cities of the international organization, Mayors for Peace. Once a sufficient number of communities have become member cities, we can start to build a coalition of Michigan cities to more effectively lobby our elected officials than can be done by single anti-nuclear activists acting alone. Once we have demonstrated support for Mayors for Peace among Michigan communities, we can encourage similar efforts in other states.