

THE REINVENTION OF MICHIGAN CONTINUES.

2015 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

GOVERNOR RICK SNYDER

ISSUE BRIEFING: THE RIVER OF OPPORTUNITY

WHAT IT IS

- ▶ The River of Opportunity is a new way of structuring government that puts people first, with the goal of helping all Michiganders succeed, no matter their stage in life. We'll do it with collaboration and cooperation on a scale never seen, and effective, efficient and accountable government that better services people.

THE PROBLEM

- ▶ For the past 50 or 60 years, we've tried to solve problems by creating new programs, segmenting programs, and adding layers of government. Each program focuses on a finite segment of someone's life without looking at the whole person and understanding what's holding them back from success. For example, today there are over 35 health programs, over 40 programs that deal with workforce, and over 70 programs for child services – that's over 145 programs. The result? Government keeps getting bigger, the root of someone's problem isn't solved, and people are maintained in a status quo, outside of the River of Opportunity.

THE SOLUTION

- ▶ We can reorganize the way government does business from a people point of view – to focus on the person and solve their problems. If someone falls by the wayside – whether it's from lack of education, an illness, or a difficult life event – we need to get them back into the River of Opportunity as fast as possible so they're successful. This won't be about creating new programs. It will be about efficient, effective, and accountable government that collaborates on a scale never seen to provide good service to our customers.

IT'S WORKING ALREADY

- ▶ We've already made this work in Michigan with the Community Ventures program. We looked at the problem of structurally unemployed Michiganders and asked, "What is their barrier to success? Do they have a transportation problem? An education problem? How can we solve it?" With this approach, today we've placed over 3,000 people in jobs at over 100 companies with an average annual retention rate of nearly 70%.

It's worked in schools, too, with the Pathways to Potential program. We put caseworkers into schools – instead of in government offices – so they could focus on the person. We looked at the whole student and their families to help solve the problems that they face. Pathways has brought down chronic truancy by about one-third in the schools where caseworkers are placed.

NEXT STEPS

- ▶ **Skilled Trades:** We've already reorganized our economic development and talent programs to ensure better coordination. Through the new Department of Talent and Economic Development, we will make reforms to programs so that more and better jobs will be created and that Michiganders have the talent to fill those jobs.
- ▶ **Health and Human Services:** Another place that is ripe for this kind of reform is health care and human services. We have hundreds of programs meant to support Michiganders, often during times that are very tough because of an illness or loss of a job. Our challenge is to transform our current health and human services programs to better assist people to lead more productive lives. To help make that happen, Governor Snyder will issue an executive order reorganizing the Departments of Community Health and Human Services, and creating the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. This reorganization will entail looking at every program government offers to see how we can achieve more flexibility to become more person-centric, reforming how we interface with our customers through technology, and making the service delivery system more focused on the customer's needs in an efficient way.