



The Michigan Statewide Workforce Plan



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
**LABOR & ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY**



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

MiLEAP
Michigan Department of Lifelong
Education, Advancement, and Potential

**The Michigan Statewide
Workforce Plan will train
workers, grow the middle
class and power our business
and entrepreneurial spirit.**



A Message From Governor Whitmer

Michigan has a diverse and growing workforce of highly skilled talent across industries that reflect our state's grit, resilience and innovation. Over the past five years, our state has made significant strides in cultivating a skilled and adaptable workforce, laying the foundation for economic growth and prosperity. Right now, Michigan's workforce system is #1 in credential attainment for adults, #2 in helping adults get employed, top 10 in the nation for registered apprenticeships, and Michigan serves more workforce participants than any other state in the Midwest.

**But our journey is far from over.
We're just getting warmed up.**

That's why I'm proud to introduce the Michigan Statewide Workforce Plan—a bold vision that helps Michiganders acquire the skills and earn the credentials they need to compete while growing opportunities for the middle class and supporting our businesses and entrepreneurs throughout Michigan.

That means increasing the number of working-age adults with a skill certificate or college degree from 51.1% today to 60% by 2030, moving 75,000 households into the middle class by the end of 2027 and making Michigan a top-10 state for labor force participation growth by 2027.

This new plan rolls out the red carpet for Michigan, providing an all-access strategy to address the challenges and opportunities facing our state. By fostering collaboration across sectors and investing in lifelong learning and career advancement opportunities, we will unlock the full potential of our workforce and unleash new possibilities where everyone can make it in Michigan.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to Michigan's future. Together, we will continue to write the next chapter in our state's storied history—one that supports our workers, grows the middle class and powers our businesses and entrepreneurial spirit.

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Closing Statement

Our Vision

From preschool to postsecondary to prosperity, Michigan has a strong network of local, regional and state partners that are helping children, students and working adults develop the skills they need to thrive.



Our youngest learners have access to nearly 8,000 early learning and care providers. Michigan's K-12 students are enrolled in 537 public school districts and 293 public school academies. The state has 31 public and tribal community colleges, 15 public universities and 24 independent colleges and universities. We have 16 Michigan Works! Agencies (MWA) operating 100 service centers. Michigan learners can choose from hundreds of registered apprenticeship opportunities in diverse industries. Together, these education and workforce leaders strive to help each and every Michigander master the skills they need and position our state to be a national leader on talent.

Regardless of where we support learning, we share common goals. We want Michigan to be a place where:

- People have the skills, opportunities and support needed to thrive and prosper in the new economy.
- Employers can hire the talent they need to locate and grow in Michigan.
- Communities, regions and the state catalyze workforce, education and economic development assets to set up Michigan as a leading state in income mobility, good jobs and equity for decades to come.

To achieve this vision, Michigan must have shared, clear strategies with sufficient scale and reach to truly move the needle in talent development. And because this work is embedded in many state departments, local and regional agencies, colleges and universities, community organizations, businesses and labor groups, we must have a cohesive and coordinated statewide plan.

Michigan's Statewide Workforce Plan represents the State's comprehensive plan to drive the change needed to make this vision a reality.



STATEWIDE WORKFORCE PLAN GOALS

Help More Michiganders Earn a Skills Certificate or Degree

→ Increase the number of working-age adults with a skill certificate or college degree from 51.1% today to 60% by 2030.

Increase Access to Opportunities that Grow the Middle Class¹

→ Move 75,000 households up into the middle class by the end of 2027 (moving our ranking from 28th to Top 10 nationally).

Support Business & Entrepreneurial Growth through Talent Solutions

→ Make Michigan a Top 10 state for labor force participation rate growth by the end of 2027.

¹ Michigan Middle Class Income Range: \$44,657 - \$133,972

The Data is Clear

To achieve our vision of a prosperous Michigan for workers and businesses, we must continue to build upon our state's history as an economic engine of opportunity that propels workers up into the middle class and continue the progress we have recently made in bringing people off the sidelines and into the labor force. While there is more to do, this plan is positioned to build on this momentum to achieve our goals.

JOBS

Michigan is growing jobs. Michigan's top industry clusters are projected to have thousands of well-paying jobs over the course of the next decade. In 2023 alone, online job postings in Michigan's priority sectors included:²

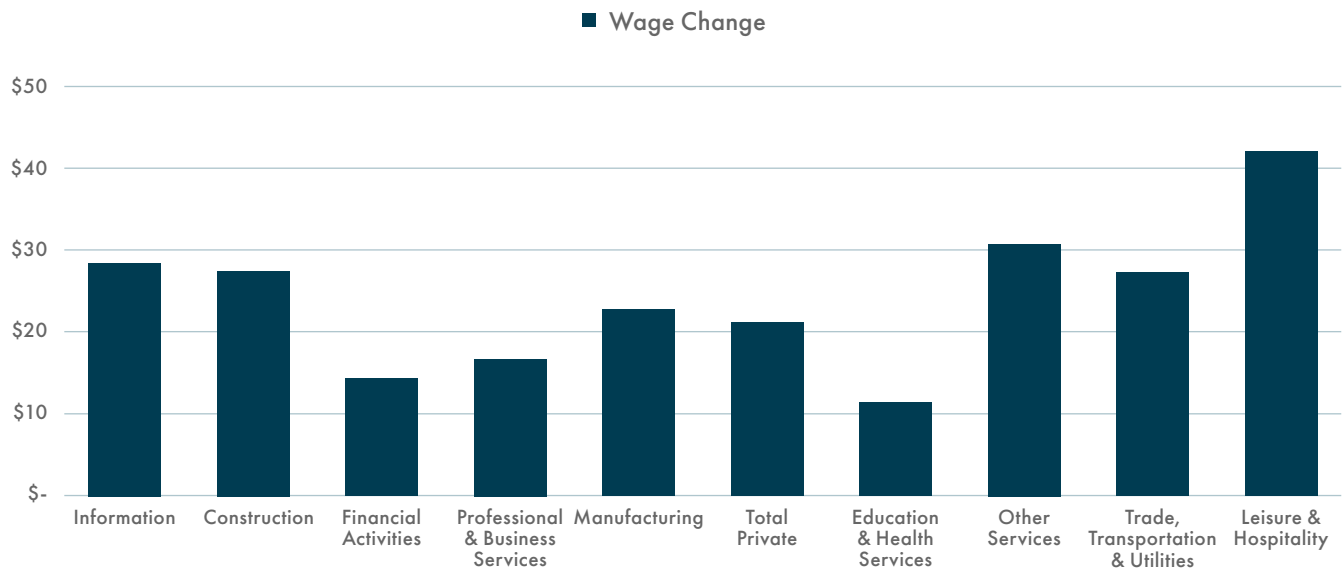
- **Agriculture:** 10,500 online job postings, average salary \$49,600
- **Construction:** 44,100 online job postings, average salary \$76,500
- **Energy:** 18,600 online job postings, average salary \$90,100
- **Healthcare:** 147,400 online job postings, average salary \$25,200
- **Hospitality, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation:** 69,700 online job postings, average salary \$61,500
- **Information Technology:** 42,700 online job postings, average salary \$98,700

- **Manufacturing:** 86,700 online job postings, average salary \$71,700
- **Mobility:** 61,500 online job postings, average salary \$71,900

These critical sectors are primed for growth and most offer average salaries above the statewide average (currently \$61,700). We also want to focus on those industries that are critical to the quality of life in Michigan, such as Hospitality, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation, Healthcare and Child Care. These industries are crucial to Michigan's growth despite not offering wages on average that meet the state median, but still offer tremendous opportunities for growth and a middle-class lifestyle if paired with robust career pathways. In addition, wage growth in these sectors has often exceeded wage growth in other sectors. These pathways, in tandem with our Job Quality Principles, will ensure that our talent needs are met, while also growing the middle class.

² Help Wanted Online, Lightcast Developer, data for 2023 for the job postings. Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QECW), data for 2021 for average salaries

Wage Change since Feb. 2020 and Current Avg. Hourly Wage (Dec. 2023)



Source: Current Employment Statistics (Unadjusted), U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

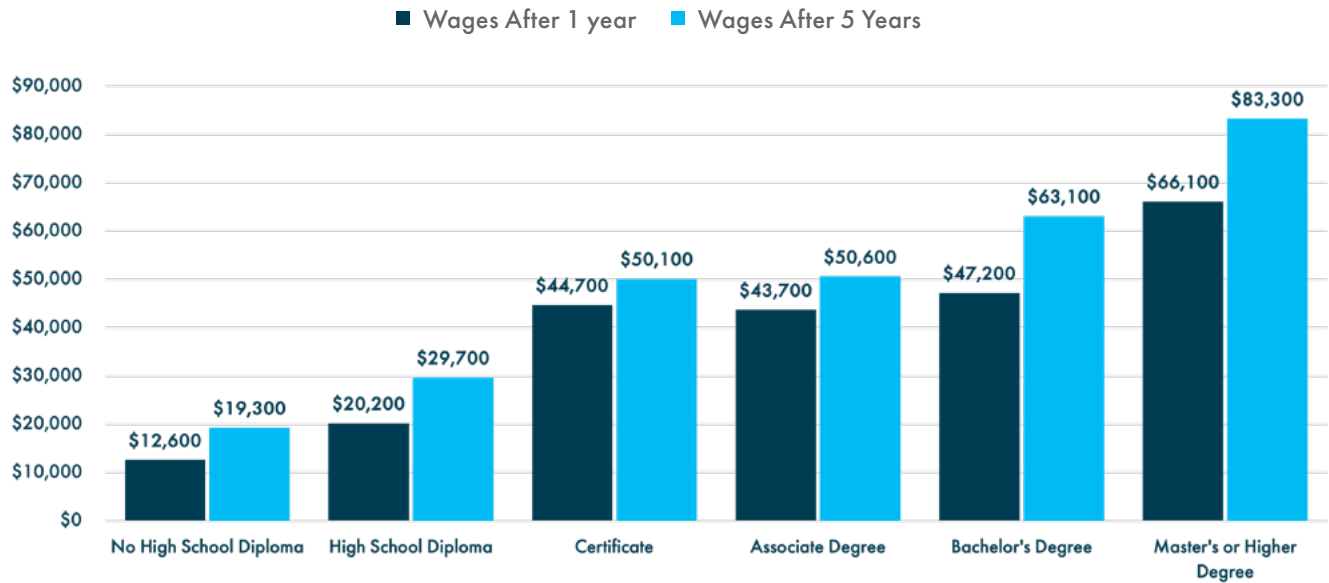
Building the workforce needed by these industries is critical to our success.

By ensuring that the credentials and degrees that Michiganders receive prepare them with the skills needed now and as they evolve, we can move more workers up into the middle class and provide pathways for new workers and those reskilling for new positions. At the same time, we must prepare our industries for transitions brought on by new technologies and market opportunities, as with the transition to electric vehicles and emerging artificial intelligence technologies, which are poised to transform skill needs in the future.

Michigan's economic ecosystem is further bolstered by its vibrant small business sector, with over 900,000 small businesses employing 1.9 million people. Michigan is primed for even more growth, provided there is a continued focus on expanding and enhancing the skills of its workforce to meet the evolving demands of these businesses and industries.

And wages are growing. Since 2020, wages across these industries have grown by an average of 17%, although they have not recently kept pace with inflation. Prioritizing sectors that offer middle class salaries and pathways to quality jobs is imperative to offsetting rising costs and continuing the progress Michigan has made in rebuilding the middle class.

Median Annual Wages by Educational Attainment



Source: MiSchoolData, 2023

SKILLS

Skills pay. Education in our state serves as a critical lever for economic mobility, with each level of educational attainment correlating to higher wages.³

But not all workers have the skills they need, and increasing skill attainment is a key to achieving gender and racial equity in the labor force. Ensuring students and workers – regardless of age, ability, or experience – have the support they need to access and complete training and education, broadband access and digital literacy and the community resources (such as family care and transportation infrastructure) needed to attend school and work as outlined in this plan can carve pathways to prosperity for all Michigan residents.

THE MIDDLE CLASS

Researchers from the [Brookings Institution](#) write: “Concern about the fate of the middle class is now almost universal. But there is nothing approaching a universal definition.” The near universal concern comes from the recognition that people living with lower incomes often don’t have the means to afford the necessities to thrive in America, causing a variety of compounding challenges. In reviewing the variety of ways to define the middle class, Michigan has adopted the Pew Research Centers’ definition of 66 to 200% (two-thirds to twice) the median household income.

³ MI School Data

For Michigan, that translates to \$44,657–\$133,972 in household income. Michigan’s middle class is made up of over 1,921,000 households. Michigan ranks 28th in size of the state’s middle class (at 47%), 23rd in size of the upper income class and 29th in size of the lower income class. Michigan now seeks to expand the middle class through improving job quality, increasing skills and removing barriers to both education and employment.

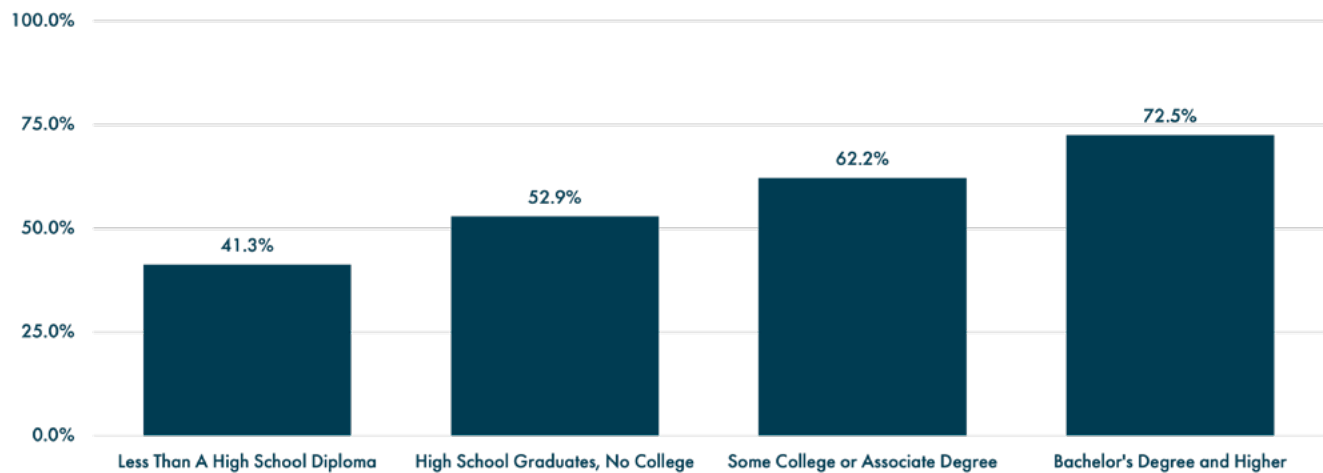
PARTICIPATION

The data shows that the benefits of increased education and skills go beyond wages and correlate with increased labor force participation. While labor force participation in Michigan has historically

lagged the U.S. average, we are beginning to see progress as more people return to the workforce and enter the labor market for the first time.

Michigan now ranks 4th nationally and 1st in the Midwest in percentage of workers added to the workforce, with a 4.1% increase in 2023. And we have seen even greater momentum for Black and women workers. In the last year, the Black labor force participation in Michigan increased 5.5% (Top 10 in the nation), and women in the workforce rose 4.6% (Top 5 in the nation). To continue this momentum, we must also grow and attract quality jobs that will bring new workers to the state and keep our skilled workers here.

Labor Force Participation Rate by Educational Attainment



Source: Current Population Survey Annual Averages, U.S. Census Bureau, 2023

The Plan for Michigan's Workforce

To tackle these challenges, Michigan must double down on an ambitious, coordinated and purposeful plan of action. The State has a once in a generation opportunity to leverage federal and state investments in infrastructure, build on the momentum of the State's educational innovations and retool its workforce to transform Michigan's economy, create good jobs and ensure all Michiganders have access to opportunity.



To move the needle on our goal of creating a Michigan where businesses and families can prosper, we must work together to build on the successes we have seen over the past five years and add new strategies to accelerate our progress. Michigan must expand its labor force, both by removing barriers too many face and encouraging and embracing immigration and migration of workers into our state.

We must support all students and workers as they move through training and education – including re-skilling for new jobs as our economy changes. And we must provide the support that businesses need to grow quality jobs in Michigan – both those that are new to the state and those that have long called Michigan home. This plan lays out the path forward to achieve these goals, at the speed and scale needed to create transformational change. To achieve this, we must:



PILLAR 1: SKILLS

**Help More Michiganders
Earn a Skills Certificate
or Degree**

Increase the number of Michiganders with the skills needed for the jobs of today and tomorrow by creating a nimble, responsive education and talent pipeline.

Strategies:

- Increase Degrees and Certificates
- Reskill for Industry Transitions
- Expand Pathways to Lifelong Learning and Career Success



PILLAR 2: OPPORTUNITY

**Increase Access to
Opportunities that
Grow the Middle Class**

Build Michigan's middle class by removing barriers to education, employment and quality jobs.

Strategies:

- Expand Career Exposure, Exploration, Experience and Navigation
- Address Barriers to Employment for Underrepresented Groups
- Expand Access to Affordable, Reliable Child and Elder Care
- Address Transportation Barriers



PILLAR 3: GROWTH

**Support Business and
Entrepreneurial Growth
through Talent Solutions**

Grow good jobs by connecting businesses with the talent needed to start, stay and thrive in Michigan.

Strategies:

- Make Michigan the "Go-To State" for Business Growth
- Provide Dynamic and Responsive Business Solutions
- Support Michigan's Small Business and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Key Factors for Success and Values

RACIAL AND GENDER EQUITY

This work must address inequality. The success of this plan must be evaluated based on how well it addresses historic racial and gender inequities in income, educational achievement and access to opportunity.

The Plan for Michigan's Workforce — Equity Goals:

- **Increase enrollment of Black and Hispanic Michiganders in credential programs.**

The credential attainment rate⁴ is 46.5% for White Michiganders and only 27.4% for Black Michiganders which is lower than every other race/ethnicity group in Michigan.

- **Add 30,000 Black and Hispanic households into the middle class.**

The median white household in Michigan has an income of \$71,609 while the median Black household income is \$42,056 and Hispanic/Latino median household income is \$62,497.

⁴ Figures do not include certificates and certifications



- **Reduce the gender labor force participation gap.**

In Michigan, women had a participation rate of 57.3 percent which is nearly 10 percentage points below the rate of 67.2 percent for men.

JOB QUALITY

This work will prioritize good jobs. Growing the number of jobs that offer wages that can support a family, benefits, advancement opportunities and fair and safe working conditions is critical to meeting the State's goals.



The U.S. Departments of Commerce and Labor have partnered to create eight principles to create a shared vision of job quality:

- 1. Recruitment and Hiring:** Qualified applicants are actively recruited – especially those from underserved communities. Applicants are free from discrimination, including unequal treatment or application of selection criteria that are unrelated to job performance. Applicants are evaluated with relevant skills-based requirements. Unnecessary educational, credentials and experience requirements are minimized.
- 2. Benefits:** Full-time and part-time workers are provided family-sustaining benefits that promote economic security and mobility. These include health insurance, a retirement plan, workers' compensation benefits, work-family benefits such as paid leave and caregiving supports and others that may arise from engagement with workers. Workers are empowered and encouraged to use these benefits.
- 3. Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA):** All workers have equal opportunity. Workers are respected, empowered and treated fairly. DEIA is a core value and practiced norm in the workplace. Individuals from underserved communities do not face systemic barriers in the workplace. Underserved communities are persons adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality, including Black, Indigenous, people of color; LGBTQ+ individuals; women; immigrants; veterans; individuals with disabilities; individuals in rural communities; individuals without a college degree; individuals with or recovering from substance use disorder and justice-involved individuals.
- 4. Empowerment and Representation:** Workers can form and join unions. Workers can engage in protected, concerted activity without fear of retaliation. Workers contribute to decisions about their work, how it is performed and organizational direction.
- 5. Job Security and Working Conditions:** Workers have a safe, healthy and accessible workplace, built on input from workers and their representatives. Workers have job security without arbitrary or discriminatory discipline or dismissal. They have adequate hours and predictable schedules. The use of electronic monitoring, data and algorithms is transparent, equitable and carefully deployed with input from workers. Workers are free from harassment, discrimination and retaliation at work. Workers are properly classified under applicable laws. Temporary or contractor labor solutions are minimized.
- 6. Organizational Culture:** All workers belong, are valued, contribute meaningfully to the organization and are engaged and respected especially by leadership.
- 7. Pay:** All workers are paid a stable and predictable living wage before overtime, tips and commissions. Workers' pay is fair, transparent and equitable. Workers' wages increase with increased skills and experience.
- 8. Skills and Career Advancement:** Workers have equitable opportunities and tools to progress to future good jobs within their organizations or outside them. Workers have transparent promotion or advancement opportunities. Workers have access to quality employer- or labor-management-provided training and education.



COLLABORATION AND COORDINATION

This work cannot be done in silos. The many state, regional and local agencies and institutions with a stake in workforce and talent development must be aligned toward our common goal in order to achieve success.

To meet the needs of Michigan's workers and employers, we need innovative solutions and continuing, long-term collaboration among many stakeholders to prepare the state for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

Michigan's Statewide Workforce Plan provides the vision for this work and is accompanied by coordinated and committed leadership and accountability to create a new "business as usual" for workforce development.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

This work must demonstrate success. To meet the ambitious goals laid out in this plan, the state must create a transparent process to evaluate impact, mechanisms to adjust and pivot as economic conditions and skill needs change, and support the feedback and communication necessary to continuously improve our efforts.



How to Read the Plan

- What we must do – Pillars
- How we will do it – Strategies
- Tools we need to achieve our goals:
 - **Success to Build On**
Tactics we will sustain and grow
 - **Next Steps**
Tactics that provide new tools to further enhance our efforts

PILLAR 1: SKILLS

Help More Michiganders Earn a Skills Certificate or Degree



GOAL: Increase the number of working-age adults with a skill certificate or college degree from 51.1% today to 60% by 2030.

Michigan faces a twin challenge: employers are consistently struggling to fill their talent needs and too many Michigan workers lack the skills and post-secondary educational credentials needed to obtain those jobs. Michigan is experiencing a significant increase in high-wage job opportunities, driven by a growing technology sector, advanced manufacturing and the evolution of the automotive industry. At the same time, Michigan's workforce and demographic shifts have increased the demand for essential occupations – such as healthcare and child care – that require skilled professionals. This surge in job opportunities coincides with a pressing talent shortage and skills misalignment, posing a challenge for employers and job seekers across the state.

Michiganders need opportunities to attain post-secondary degrees, technical certificates, industry

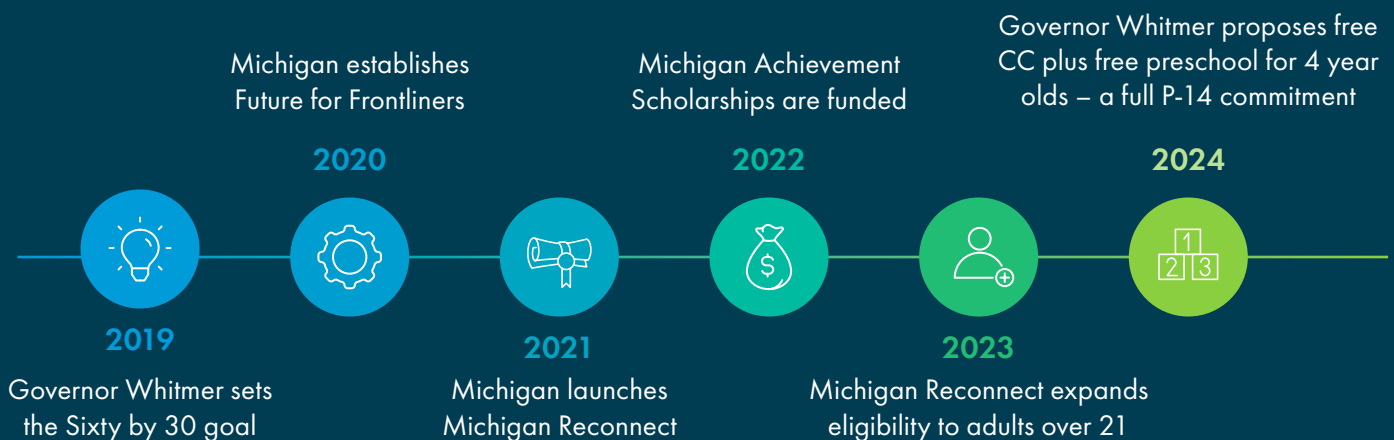
certifications and other credentials, adapt their skills and thrive in the industries that will define Michigan's future economy. To address this skill shortage, we must continue to decrease the financial burden of education, increase support needed to complete credentials and degrees and expand the many ways that people attain skills throughout their lifetimes. After all, the need to gain new skills doesn't end when you finish high school or college. Building and sustaining career paths and family-supporting income requires the continuing acquisition of skills and credentials as the skill needs of industries change. By embedding workforce preparation into the skills and education ecosystem, Michigan can ease skills mismatches and ensure Michiganders are prepared for the 21st century economy to come.

STRATEGY 1 Increase Degrees and Certificates

Michigan has made impactful investments in efforts to support people in gaining postsecondary skills and credentials, particularly in increasing access to financial aid and supporting an ambitious postsecondary attainment goal set by the Governor five years ago. The creation of the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential (MiLEAP), a new department with a Director serving as a member of the Cabinet, alongside the Office of Higher Education, reinforces the state's commitment

to leading a statewide agenda to lower the cost of college, improve completion rates and prepare more students for jobs in Michigan. We must continue to advance and strengthen these efforts and increase access to the supports students need to complete their degrees. At the same time, the state will look to both proven strategies and innovations in skill attainment to broaden the scope and scale of postsecondary choices for all students.

Governor Whitmer's actions have made education more affordable.
Michigan has established itself as a leader in financial aid.



SUCCESS TO BUILD ON

Michigan Reconnect

Michigan Reconnect offers Michiganders ages 21 and older the opportunity to earn a tuition-free associate degree or skill certificate at their local community college. So far, nearly 150,000 people have applied for Reconnect, more than 32,400 people have enrolled at a community college and more than 4,400 have graduated. Michigan was the second state in the nation to offer this type of support for adults seeking a skill certificate or degree.

Michigan Achievement Scholarship

The Michigan Achievement Scholarship is the state's largest investment in student financial aid, lowering the cost of college for 7 in 10 recent high school graduates. The first awards were made in fall 2023 to 24,500 students.

Starting with the class of 2023 and beyond, students can receive up to:

- **\$27,500** in aid while earning a bachelor's degree at a public university
- **\$20,000** in aid while earning a bachelor's degree at a private college or university
- **\$8,250** in aid while earning an associate degree at a community college
- **\$4,000** in aid while earning a skill certificate at a career training program

MI College Completion Corps

The Michigan College Access Network's College Completion Corps is pivotal in promoting degree attainment and enhancing access to Michigan's middle class. This statewide AmeriCorps program strategically places 30 full-time AmeriCorps members across 25 college campuses. The program offers crucial support to students, specifically targeting first-generation, low-income and/or students of color. Completion Coaches address challenges through one-on-one interactions, facilitate group activities to foster a sense of belonging and leverage technology to raise academic awareness. This comprehensive approach aims to boost college persistence and completion rates.

The Michigander Scholars

The Michigander Scholars program is part of a comprehensive plan for a long-term talent pipeline. It provides Michigan university students earning technology or engineering degrees with access to networking opportunities, industry education, internships and jobs. Scholars are also eligible for scholarships up to \$10,000 if they complete an internship or accept a full-time offer and agree to remain in the role for a year.

WHAT'S NEXT

- **Continue to Lower the Cost of College and Establish the Community College Guarantee.** The Governor recently proposed making two years of community college or trade school tuition-free for all Michigan's high school graduates, creating a transformation opportunity for graduating seniors and their families, a momentous opportunity to eliminate financial burdens for Michigan students and their families.
- **Partner with Colleges to Increase Graduation Rates.** Eliminating the financial burden of education will be complemented by a robust system of supports that help these students to complete their certificates and degrees. This forward push includes programs that provide for basic needs, promote supportive services for underserved students, and provide counseling and career services such as those offered by the MCCA Student Success Center and the MWAs.

We must also increase access to programs that provide for students' basic needs and support services.

- **Recognize All Learning.** Students enter colleges with diverse backgrounds, knowledge, skills and abilities and need more opportunities to show their mastery and have their experience count for credit as they work toward degrees. Recognizing all learning, regardless of how it was acquired, shortens the time to a certificate or degree and lowers costs. Michigan can help all students more efficiently attain certificates and degrees by expanding use of credit for prior learning, continuing to improve transfer agreements, supporting more portable and stackable credentials with employers and workforce development leaders and continuing to show prospective students that all learning counts.



STRATEGY 2 Reskill for Industry Transitions

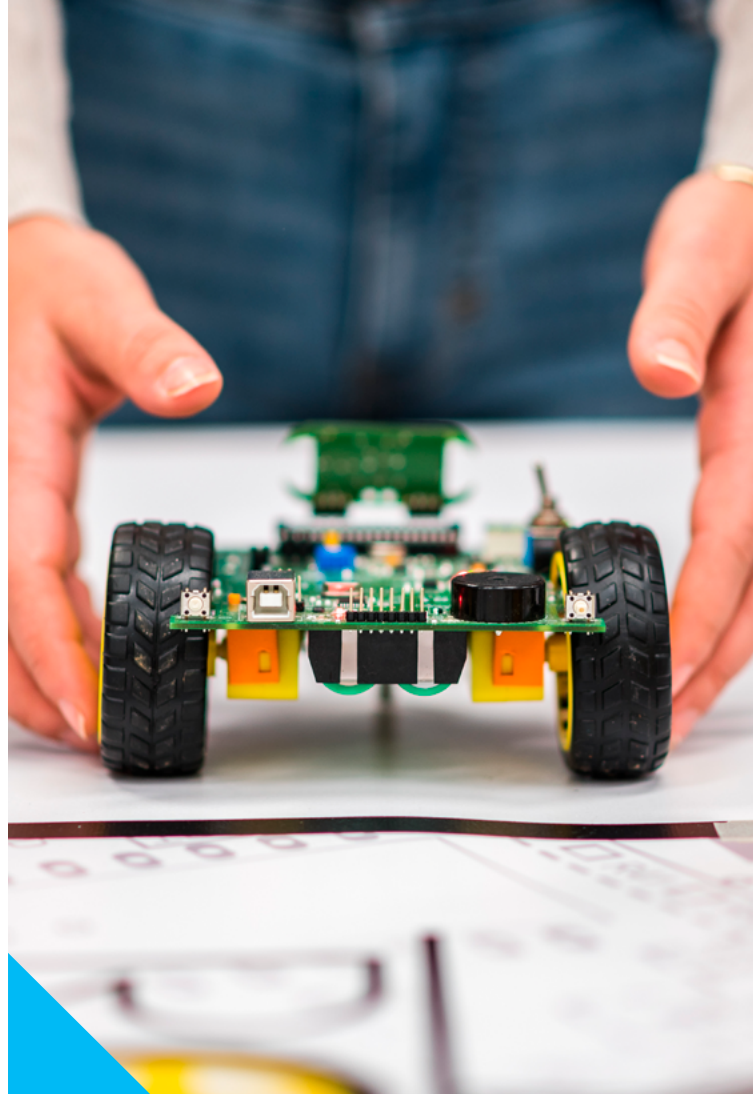
Michigan's job market has undergone dramatic shifts in the types of employment and skills needed for family-supporting jobs. The pace of those changes is likely to continue to be rapid. Therefore, our strategies need to make Michigan a state in which working adults can quickly and affordably gain in-demand skills to thrive in their current roles and seamlessly transition to new opportunities. Michigan will continue to provide significant investments for workers to reskill, to stave off painful and disruptive periods of unemployment and retain its workforce through retraining. This agile and adaptive approach to reskilling will ensure that Michiganders are fully prepared to navigate industry shifts, secure high-demand jobs in our priority sectors and build fulfilling careers.

SUCCESS TO BUILD ON

Partnerships for Industry Transition

Sector partnerships and employer-led collaboratives (ELCs) have been a cornerstone of Michigan's workforce development strategy, fostering collaboration between businesses, labor, K-12 through higher education and workforce development agencies. By strengthening these partnerships and providing targeted support to transitioning industries and occupations, Michigan can ensure its education and training programs align with the evolving needs of priority sectors. The EV Jobs Academy exemplifies this approach, designed to address the needs of employers within

the automotive mobility and electrification industry. Education, workforce development, labor, economic development and community organizations are all working together to build talent pipelines, addressing skill gaps and creating career pathways for workers in this critical industry. Incentivizing additional "Academy" models that are highly attuned and responsive to rapid shifts in technology and markets, and creating the workforce infrastructure for future industry attraction and growth, will keep Michigan competitive nationally and globally, and lead to a stronger, more resilient economy with a highly skilled workforce.





WHAT'S NEXT

- **Launch the Community and Worker Economic Transition Office.** As Michigan shifts to renewable energy and a manufacturing shift from ICE (internal combustion engine) vehicles to EV (electric vehicles), the Community and Worker Economic Transition Office is rolling out proactive strategies to reduce risks and boost positive economic impacts for the workers, communities and businesses impacted by this transition. This newly created state office is singularly focused on ensuring that the workers, companies and communities have the tools and support they need to take part in Michigan's growing economy powered by industry change, technological advancement and the transition to renewable energy resources.
- **Seek Additional U.S. Department of Labor Waivers for Flexible, Responsive Use of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (or Funding).** Leveraging U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) waivers on Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds is a critical strategy to empower the workforce system in assisting individuals in gaining essential skills and employment opportunities more efficiently. These waivers, specifically focused on amending training requirements and increasing responsiveness to state challenges, offer a valuable tool for Michigan to further tailor workforce development programs to meet the specific needs of job seekers and employers alike. By granting this flexibility, workforce agencies can streamline their services, reduce bureaucratic barriers and expedite skill acquisition for workers.

STRATEGY 3 Expand Pathways to Lifelong Learning and Career Success

To ensure all Michiganders can build fulfilling careers and reach the middle class, we need to create more equitable, accessible and adaptable pathways to skills and credentials. This means scaling and strengthening programs that combine skill development with relevant basic education, supported job placements and earn-while-you-learn opportunities. At the same time, we can help students move more quickly and efficiently along their career journeys by breaking down the steps to credentials and degrees and creating smooth transitions to and through education and training. These comprehensive on-ramps to education and careers serve as important infrastructure in developing a skilled workforce and achieving equity for workers who have been disconnected from these opportunities. Additionally, by encouraging employers to broaden their hiring practices and move beyond traditional criteria, we can unlock new opportunities for these workers and create diverse, skilled talent pools for in-demand jobs.



SUCCESS TO BUILD ON

Registered Apprenticeship and Work-based Learning Programs

Michigan can significantly boost economic mobility by expanding work-based learning programs. This includes pre-apprenticeship programs tailored to industry needs, internships and “earn while you learn” opportunities. These programs offer students clear paths to higher wages, valuable industry experience and stable careers. To fully leverage registered apprenticeships, Michigan should invest in employer education. This will dispel myths and misconceptions about these programs’ benefits, particularly among non-construction industries.

Career and Technical Education

High-Quality Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs provide Michigan students with an aligned, seamless transition from secondary to postsecondary education through dual and concurrent enrollment opportunities, CTE Early Middle College programs and local and statewide articulation agreements. Michigan Department of Education (MDE)-Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE) and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) collaborate with college access organizations to develop and support statewide associate to bachelor’s degree transfer pathways. Business and industry representatives on secondary and postsecondary advisory committees provide ongoing guidance on the knowledge and skills required in the industry and offer students work-based learning opportunities, creating the full continuum of support needed for student success.

WHAT'S NEXT

- **Expand Food Assistance Employment and Training.** Enhancing the utilization of Food Assistance Employment and Training (FAE&T Plus) programs, particularly for low-income parents, and establishing a general fund equivalent for non-eligible low-income Michigan residents are essential measures to foster economic stability by providing skills, resources and support for better employment opportunities, addressing immediate financial needs and strategically investing in long-term economic well-being.
- **Strengthen and Scale Adult Education.** To equip residents with the skills they need to succeed, we must strengthen education pathways and increase access for adult learners. We must also scale programs to address gaps in foundational skills and tailor these to shrink the gaps between skills and jobs. This includes providing additional targeted and Integrated Education and Training (IET), contextualized remediation and on-ramps to higher education, workplace literacy programs, including English as a Second Language.
- **Adopt Incremental Credentialing.** Incremental credentialing records learning as it is acquired along an individual's learning journey from K-12 onward, and formally recognizes and connects

the skills they have gained in the larger context of their career. Incremental credentials can be non-credit or credit-bearing; undergraduate or graduate level; of any size, from small units of learning that can be "stacked" leading to larger technical certificates and industry certifications, up through degrees. Incremental credentials ensure learners are recognized for what they know and can do, providing Michiganders with the security of formal documentation of their growth.

- **Encourage Employer Innovation.** To increase the talent available to employers struggling to fill jobs we must support and incentivize businesses to embrace lifelong learning, skills-based hiring and non-traditional recruitment strategies. Evaluating traditional degree requirements, and instead hiring based on skills and experience has been a successful strategy adopted by both the public and private sector and is gaining momentum nationally. Eliminating barriers to on-site training in the workplace can help incumbent workers balance education and career responsibilities. And encouraging innovative strategies such as "returnships" can help women who have been out of the workforce due to family obligations re-engage with support during the transition period.

PILLAR 2: OPPORTUNITY

Increase Access to Opportunities that Grow the Middle Class



GOAL: Move 75,000 households up into the middle class by the end of 2027.

Michigan's economic landscape poses significant barriers for aspiring middle-class families. Michigan plans to invest in workers, especially those facing barriers to employment, to address the challenges holding them back from good jobs. These challenges impact Michiganders at all stages of life, from young adults needing access to their first job to mid-career workers training for a new occupation. Growing the middle class in Michigan requires a strategic focus on investing in workers of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds and addressing the critical challenges that hinder access to training, education, and jobs.

The Governor has made significant investments to help Michigan families achieve their dreams. These investments range from providing free school meals to expanding affordable housing options and increasing the Michigan Earned Income Tax Credit.

This comprehensive approach tackles the challenges that many Michiganders face in getting ahead. The plan addresses key workforce barriers:

- **Information:** Easy access to learning about and getting hands-on experience with career and education options.
- **Work-life balance:** Support for working parents and family caregivers.
- **Employment barriers:** Tailored programs to help those facing specific challenges find jobs.

These targeted efforts will remove obstacles and create more opportunities for Michiganders to join the middle class, leading to a more inclusive and skilled workforce for our state.

Governor's Priorities to Grow the Middle Class

- Michigan Earned Income Tax Credit
- Caring for Michigan Family Tax Credit
- Michigan School Meals
- Great Start Readiness Program
- MI Bridges
- Out of School Grants
- Free Child Care for Child Care Workers and State Employees
- Michigan's Children's Saving Accounts
- Broadband Access and Affordability – ROBIN Grant Program
- Affordable Housing and Homeownership Programs

STRATEGY 1 Expand Career Exposure, Exploration, Experience and Navigation

Helping people find the right career path that matches their skills and interests can be difficult. Many people – high-school students, recent college graduates, workers transitioning to a new career – are left without guidance, leading to wasted time, frustration, underemployment and a growing skills gap. To address this, Michigan will prioritize increasing tools and knowledge about diverse careers through tactics such as career exposure, experiential learning experiences – particularly in STEM fields, hands-on work experience, internships and effective navigation. In doing so, Michigan can ensure all students and workers leave school ready for further education or careers and have the resources and support needed to stay competitive in the ever-evolving job market.

SUCCESS TO BUILD ON

Oakland80, MWA and Reconnect Navigators

Oakland80, an initiative spearheaded by Oakland County, is strategically designed to assist residents in achieving post-secondary degrees or credentials beyond high school. Oakland80 plays a pivotal role in contributing to more significant career preparation, equipping individuals with the skills needed for success and ultimately increasing access to the middle class for residents of Oakland County. A key strategy has been the creation of a team of Oakland80 Navigators, who help county residents understand their options for post-secondary education and available supports they may need to successfully pursue that education. MWAs across the state provide Career Navigation services for job seekers to assist them in choosing a career pathway,



and the many options available for training and supports. Michigan's Reconnect Navigators likewise assist students beginning their journey to access the support needed for success, from applying for financial aid, to selecting a program of study and creating a tailored plan to graduate.

Young Professionals Program

The Young Professionals initiative increases career awareness and preparation while reducing youth unemployment. This is accomplished by introducing under-represented young adults, ages 14-24, to the world of work while providing participants and their families with income. These services will place young adults on the right path to gain the skills necessary to achieve lifelong economic self-sufficiency.

Career Exposure and Exploration Programs

In Michigan, several initiatives are actively shaping the landscape of career exploration and work experience for young Michiganders. MI Career Quest, initiated by Michigan Works!, offers an experiential approach to career exploration. Students engage with professionals in critical sectors such as agribusiness, advanced manufacturing, construction, health sciences and information technology, gaining valuable insights and connections. The Michigan Career Development Model (MCDM) is designed to provide all K-12 students in the Michigan educational system with the necessary knowledge and skills for success in a career of their choice and lifelong learning. MCDM activities assist students in their academic readiness, connect students to their career cluster of interest and prepare them for in-demand careers.

STEM Forward

STEM Forward, a statewide program, focuses on hands-on experiences in crucial STEM areas like EV and mobility, semiconductors, life sciences, clean energy, defense and aerospace and advanced manufacturing. STEM Forward fosters meaningful, hands-on career experiences for students interested in STEM-related positions and reduces financial barriers for Michigan companies that want to hire interns as part of their recruiting process by providing financial support towards intern wages.

WHAT'S NEXT

- **Build a Statewide Network of Career Navigators.** Marketing the existing career navigation resources in Michigan will allow individuals to make informed decisions, explore interests and successfully navigate education choices and the job market. This will be complemented by an increase in the number of navigators. Michigan will also increase the number of navigators working across all parts of the system, coordinated through a statewide network, aligned with the Michigan Workforce Development Board's design principles, to enhance career navigation services, creating streamlined access to the many workforce, education and support services offered locally and statewide.
- **Create Transparent Pathways.** Helping students and workers understand the skills needed and how to get them is key in meeting the evolving demands of industry. By creating comprehensive pathways that identify the specific roles and skills required for critical industry growth, we will empower individuals to make informed career choices and access the training and education necessary to succeed in these sectors. Tools such as the Pure Michigan Talent Connect, Michigan Career Portal and Michigan Pathfinder help jobseekers identify skills they currently have based on their previous and current jobs and experience to then understand how those skills translate into future opportunities or to identify new skills needed for career goals. This approach not only helps job seekers align their aspirations with industry demands, but also assists educational institutions and training providers in tailoring their programs to match identified skills gaps.

STRATEGY 2 Address Barriers to Employment for Underrepresented Groups

Michigan has a wealth of untapped talent waiting to be unleashed. To create a path to the middle class for all residents, we need to connect these diverse skillsets with the needs of our businesses. This means removing barriers for those who have not followed traditional paths, like addressing employment and education hurdles. We also need to ensure skills are recognized and transferable, allowing Michiganders to leverage their talents regardless of training location. By working alongside businesses to recruit, support and develop these individuals, we can significantly expand and diversify Michigan's talent pool.

SUCCESS TO BUILD ON

Michigan Works! Agency New American Navigators

Several MWAs, in partnership with local community organizations, offer comprehensive support to new Americans through dedicated navigators. These navigators connect individuals to specialized services such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and other skill-building workshops and connect participants directly with local employers. Navigators also ensure compliance with state and federal requirements to make the journey toward a satisfying and family-sustaining career as smooth as possible.

Michigan Incarcerated Veterans' In-Reach Program

The Michigan Incarcerated Veterans' In-Reach Program (MIVIP) is led by LEO's Veterans' Employment Services team, in partnership with the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) and the Michigan Works! Network. MIVIP provides pre-release education, employment assistance and career guidance to incarcerated veterans at correctional facilities. MIVIP was designed to complement the established programs of each correctional facility which include adult education, violence prevention, substance abuse treatment and counseling to address underlying mental health issues. This award-winning program builds on those services to provide intensive employment-readiness training. Veterans also receive post-release wrap-around services to help ensure each participant's success and reduce recidivism.

Michigan Offender Success

MDOC has established the Michigan's Offender Success (OS) model which develops a case plan for returning citizens that outlines the in-demand skills they need and potential employment opportunities available. MDOC also maintains a staff dedicated to recruiting and retaining a suite of employers to promote successful job placement and retention efforts. The staff are available to provide employment readiness services, case coordination,

enrollment into training programs and assistance with job searches. OS also connects participants to HSE/GED and higher education programs in the community and works with nine college partners helping nearly 900 students, many of whom are first generation college participants and from disadvantaged populations, pursue a college degree.

Job Court

Job Court is a prosecutorial diversion pilot program that aims to reduce recidivism and help businesses by providing Michiganders accused of low-level, non-assaultive offenses with the opportunity to obtain and maintain gainful employment.

The pilot program is serving up to 450 people in Genesee, Marquette and Wayne counties, who will be matched with participating employers to receive good-paying jobs, training to learn transferable career skills and community-based wrap around services to assist in successful completion of the program.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services – Talent Acquisition Portal

In Michigan, approximately 1.3 million individuals have disabilities and over half are of working age. Too often they face challenges in finding and retaining employment. Michigan Rehabilitative Services (MRS) offers specialized services and training to aid eligible teens and adults with disabilities in securing and maintaining jobs. MRS staff prepare students for employment through collaboration with educational institutions and offering services like job exploration and

workplace readiness training. MRS also developed the Michigan Talent Acquisition Portal (TAP) that directly connects employers to the broad talent pool of individuals with disabilities and provides ongoing support post-employment to ensure retention and growth.

Project SEARCH

Project SEARCH Transition-to-Work Program is a unique, business-led, one-year employment preparation program administered by the Michigan Department of Education’s (MDE) Office of Special Education that takes place entirely at the workplace. Total workplace immersion facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration and hands-on training through worksite rotations for individuals with disabilities. The program assists young adults in their last year of high school make successful transitions from school to productive adult life and culminates in individualized job placement. Michigan has maintained approximately 20 Project SEARCH sites jointly developed by LEO, education and businesses.

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons

Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) is a vocational rehabilitation agency that works specifically with people who are blind and have low vision to provide specialized counseling, resources, education and training to enhance opportunities for employment. BSBP supports the capacity of people who are blind or visually impaired to achieve employment and independence and provides training and services that empower clients to achieve their individual goals.



WHAT'S NEXT

- **Innovate and Scale Programs for Underrepresented Groups.** Michigan has numerous programs supporting people with barriers to employment, and we must ensure these programs operate at sufficient scale, and are aligned with current and emerging jobs to ensure all Michigan residents can enter the labor force. Ensuring these programs have the capacity and resources needed to be nimble and responsive to changing skill demands, providing the supports needed through training and working with employers to ensure new hires are successful and can advance is critical to ensuring success for these populations.
- **Expand LARA Returning Citizen Licensing Guidebook.** The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) released a resource guide to help encourage returning citizens to enter the workforce in a licensed profession by outlining which industries under regulation have pathways to licenses. Michigan is expanding on this effort by coordinating MDOC's Michigan Offender Success model to incorporate licensing and registered apprenticeship programs.
- **Create Transferable Degree, Skill and Credential Rubrics.** Individuals who have gained degrees, skills and credentials outside of Michigan often are not able to work in their profession due to professional restrictions and licensing. This frequently closes doors to qualified workers in occupations where we have severe skills shortages such as within healthcare. Opening opportunities for immigrants and refugees educated abroad, workers licensed in other states and veterans to transfer skills gained in the military by creating the infrastructure and policies needed to recognize these credentials and support to ensure that they meet Michigan standards will increase opportunities for these workers to fully participate in the labor force.

STRATEGY 3 **Expand Access to Affordable, Reliable Child and Elder Care**

Many Michiganders have the responsibility to care for young children or seniors. When families have safe, affordable care options for their loved ones, workers can manage their care responsibilities and be highly effective at work. However, in too many communities, it can be difficult for families to find care that meets their needs. In those instances, individuals make tough choices to balance their family needs, career goals and budget. Michigan is committed to expanding access to quality, affordable care options for working families with young children and seniors in need of elder care to ensure every individual can make decisions that work for their family and career. While the state expands access and affordability to these services for families, we are also mindful of the need to improve compensation and create more career pathways for the professionals working in the care economy. We are also focused on providing high quality services that help all kids meet their milestones and seniors maintain the quality of life they deserve.

SUCCESS TO BUILD ON

Caring for MI Future

Caring for MI Future is a statewide effort to help child care entrepreneurs open 1,000 new or expanded child care programs by the end of 2024. This initiative, led by the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential (MiLEAP), is focused on what entrepreneurs need most to open and expand child care businesses—help finding and renovating space, startup funding, help recruiting staff and support creating a business plan. Caring for MI Future has already surpassed its goal of opening more than 1,000 new child

care programs a year earlier than anticipated, and 2,159 home-based providers have expanded their programs, together adding 36,783 new spots in child care programs. By maintaining the momentum of Caring for MI Future, we can continue to increase child care access while empowering child care entrepreneurs.

MI Tri-Share Child Care Program

Employers have an important role to play in expanding access to child care and making it more affordable for employees. Tri-Share was created to encourage employers to offer child care benefits to lower-income workers that do not qualify for help paying for child care through existing state programs but are still struggling to pay tuition that can rival the cost of a monthly mortgage payment. Through MI Tri-Share, the cost of an employee's child care is shared equally among the employer, the employee and the State of Michigan — a three-way split — with coordination being provided regionally by a MI Tri-Share facilitator hub. Today, nearly 180 employers have signed on to participate, serving 600 children and growing.

Regional Child Care Coalitions

Child care needs vary widely across the state. To better understand local needs and possible solutions, the state funded 16 regional coalitions serving 81 counties. These coalitions have brought together economic development, employers, municipalities, parents and early childhood leaders together in regional coalitions to understand child care facilities and workforce needs and develop a plan that meets the needs and preferences of working families and address Michigan's pressing need for high-quality, affordable child care. Regions are releasing their plans now and identifying next steps.

WHAT'S NEXT

- **Pass the Caring for MI Family Tax Credit.** During the 2024 State of the State address, the Governor proposed a tax credit of up to \$5,000 to offset the costs of family caregivers such as transportation, counseling, nursing and respite care. This proposal provides financial relief for families and allows more seniors to age in place while receiving care in the comfort of home.
- **Expand Registered Apprenticeship Programs for Care Economy Professionals.** Scaling occupational pathways for professional family care workers and specialists by establishing registered apprenticeship programs that combine classroom education and on-the-job training can simultaneously increase availability of their services and improve job quality and advancement for these essential workers. Many MWAs are currently addressing both the supply and demand side of the child care industry, which has been a successful model. Several currently act as intermediaries to support child care registered apprenticeship pathways, in partnership with the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) and MiLEAP, while others are supporting child care employers directly in setting up registered apprenticeships.
- **Promote Low or No Cost Options to Earn a Skill Certificate or Degree.** High quality early learning and care and youth development programs require skilled professionals. Creating tuition-free pathways for aspiring early

educators, youth development professionals and child care professionals is a transformative initiative to alleviate workforce shortages in these crucial fields, removing financial barriers to education and addressing immediate staffing challenges, ultimately contributing to improved educational and developmental services for Michigan's children.

- **Expand Partnerships with Employers.** Michigan employers are critical partners in meeting employees' child care needs. They can lower costs by offering dependent care savings accounts and participating in Tri-Share, redesign shifts to better align with available child care options and family schedules and work with community partners to open and expand child care in their facilities and communities. For example, the Pulse Roadmap (created by Pulse at the Upjohn Institute) offers more practical strategies for employers to respond to child care needs.
- **Continue to Lower Costs for Working Families.** For many families, child care costs are among the biggest expenses in their monthly budget. Whether a child is enrolled in a licensed child care program, attending Pre-K, or participating in a before, after, or summer camp, the Governor and state are making continued investments to drive down costs. This includes building broader awareness of programs like the Child Development and Care Scholarship which provides low or no cost care for working families.

STRATEGY 4 Address Transportation Barriers

Reliable transportation is crucial for Michiganders to access education and employment opportunities, yet many residents – particularly those in rural areas and individuals with disabilities – face significant limitations. This lack of access hinders their ability to reach educational institutions and secure quality jobs. Addressing these transportation barriers is essential to empower Michiganders and drive economic growth and prosperity across the state.

SUCCESS TO BUILD ON

Job Access And Reverse Commute

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program was established to address the unique transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment. It is a joint initiative funded by LEO, MDHHS and MDOT. The project is administered in Genesee County and provides transportation services to Oakland and Macomb counties for TANF eligible and low-income individuals.

WHAT'S NEXT

- **Increase Virtual Training Options and Broadband Access.** By expanding flexible learning options like hybrid and virtual training, we can empower Michiganders to build skills and pursue education regardless of location. This adaptability caters to the evolving needs of learners and creates a more inclusive educational landscape. However, accessible, affordable broadband in all communities is

needed to realize this. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor have charged the Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) to ensure that 95% of all Michigan households have a permanent internet connection.

- **Support Transit Worker Training.** Aligning workforce and training programs to support the implementation of the Growing Michigan Together Council's Report on expanding regional and localized transportation system improvements will ensure these projects can recruit and retain the skilled workers they need and will create opportunities for quality jobs across the state.
- **Adapt Transportation to Meet Workers' Needs.** Developing tailored transportation innovations, such as public-private car buying programs for rural areas and 2nd/3rd shift transit routes, can promote a more inclusive and responsive system to support economic growth and diverse community needs. Wheels to Work, in West Michigan, offers a "ride to work" program with costs shared by employers and employees, coordinated through neighborhood hubs to ease transit barriers.
- **Launch the Vehicle Rebate Program.** The Governor recently announced a new \$25 million budget proposal to fund a vehicle rebate program that will match federal incentives with state rebates on electric, hybrid and combustion vehicle purchases. The program would not only support a crucial industry, but also can help support transportation options for Michigan workers, particularly in areas without robust public transit options.

PILLAR 3: GROWTH

Support Business and Entrepreneurial Growth through Talent Solutions



GOAL: Make Michigan a top 10 state for labor force participation growth by the end of 2027.

To unlock quality job growth for all Michiganders, we must prioritize support for business competitiveness, expansion and talent development, fostering opportunities for both established and incoming companies. Strong, vibrant communities attract families and talent. This requires both quality jobs, a strong Pk-12 system and businesses that cater to local residents. Additionally, it should empower entrepreneurial spirit. This translates to strategically investing in people, productivity and the skills required to fill existing jobs, adopt new technologies and foster innovation. Collaboration is key. Partnering with employers, educators (Pk-12 to post-secondary), workforce development agencies

and regional economic development organizations who support regional talent strategies strengthens our approach.

Building on Michigan's "Make it In Michigan" spirit, we will develop innovative, targeted solutions to create a thriving business ecosystem where companies can start, stay and grow. This fosters vibrant communities across the state, from Main Streets to tech hubs. A key factor in achieving this is shaping a robust talent pipeline through attraction, development and retention strategies. This will not only grow quality jobs but also diversify the workforce, ensuring all Michiganders share in our economic prosperity.

STRATEGY 1 **Make Michigan the “Go-To State” for Business Growth**

Michigan will build on successful programs like Renaissance Zones and the Strategic Outreach and Attraction Reserve (SOAR) Fund to expand economic development, attract businesses and support key industries. Additionally, the Governor’s proposed HIRE MI payroll tax incentive aims to encourage local hiring. To further accelerate business growth and improve job quality statewide, we need to strengthen collaboration in talent development. This strategy will address employer needs and fuel regional success by focusing on attracting, cultivating and retaining a skilled workforce that adapts to the evolving economy. This comprehensive approach fosters quality jobs for all by supporting business competitiveness, expansion and a robust talent pipeline.



SUCCESS TO BUILD ON

Going PRO Talent Fund

Expanding the Going PRO Talent Fund in Michigan strategically bolsters the state’s competitiveness for business attraction. This fund, designed to support employer-driven training for current and new employees, focuses on short-term, industry-relevant programs leading to recognized credentials. By broadening the Talent Fund’s reach, Michigan can position itself as a leader in addressing evolving talent needs, providing a crucial advantage to businesses. As it enhances talent attraction, productivity and retention, the expansion of the Talent Fund underscores Michigan’s commitment to developing a skilled workforce, making it more appealing to businesses seeking a well-supported

and adaptable talent pool. To date, 7,117 employers have utilized this fund across industries as diverse as construction, healthcare and manufacturing, and more than 175,000 employees have been up-skilled as a result.

Michigan New Jobs Training Program

The Michigan New Jobs Training Program (MNJTP), designed to incentivize economic development, authorizes community colleges to create a training pool to support employers that are creating new jobs or expanding operations in Michigan. Businesses and local community colleges access this flexible fund to provide free training for employees. The MNJTP was modified to incentivize employers that create quality jobs by tying training eligibility to jobs that pay a living wage.



WHAT'S NEXT

- **Align Economic Development Incentives with Skilling for the New Economy.** Aligning Michigan's workforce development with emerging economy demands is crucial for a business-friendly environment, involving program updates to match evolving job landscapes, prioritizing sustainable practices to attract businesses and ensuring a competitive workforce for the global marketplace. Synchronizing the resources available through LEO, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) and Michigan Works! Agencies, and aligning with higher education institutions and MiSTEM K-12 Network will attract new companies and position Michigan as a supportive environment for businesses, driving sustainable growth.
- **Retrain Fossil Fuel Workers.** Retraining workers in fossil fuel-based industries is a critical component of preparing for the new economy in Michigan, ensuring a smooth transition, minimizing disruptions and demonstrating a commitment to sustainability. Investing in such programs preserves workforce skills, fosters resilience and positions Michigan as a leader in addressing the challenges and opportunities of the new economy, ultimately improving the business environment with a skilled, agile and future-ready workforce.

STRATEGY 2 **Provide Dynamic and Responsive Business Solutions**

Michigan will continue to attract and retain businesses that offer quality jobs by strategically investing in tailored business services and solutions. We will prioritize timely, targeted and scalable support to meet the needs of expanding, adapting, or new companies. While these services exist elsewhere, ours are uniquely designed for Michigan, integrating equity and job quality. This competitive advantage helps businesses access essential resources for growth, fostering a thriving business environment. By taking this proactive approach, Michigan positions itself as a leader in economic competitiveness, inclusive growth and high-quality jobs.

SUCCESS TO BUILD ON

Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Talent Action Team

Working with a variety of partners, MEDC has formed the Talent Action Team (TAT) model, which

partners with MWAs and educational institutions to provide a concierge service matching businesses in strategically important industries to education and training partners and the talent pipelines throughout the state to meet their workforce goals. TAT leverages these cross-sector partnerships between businesses, education systems and training programs, workforce agencies and economic development entities to focus on systems alignment in key industries that have a demand for talent. This model identifies and develops programs that support the pipeline development, retention and attraction of talent needed in the state for years to come.

Higher Education Strategic Investments

Higher Education Strategic Investments offers catalytic funding to higher education institutions in Michigan to support and foster a talent pipeline more closely aligned with key industry employer needs. The funds support curriculum development, incumbent training programs, job seeker training and, historically, Pk-12 engagement.



WHAT'S NEXT

- **Promote Employer Services in Michigan Works! Agencies.** Establishing Michigan Works! Agencies (MWAs) as the hub for local employer services and engagement, supported by dedicated resources, strategically enhances Michigan's business community by providing streamlined access to comprehensive resources, ensuring an efficient and tailored response to diverse business needs, fostering collaboration between MWAs, businesses and stakeholders, simplifying engagement processes and strengthening the overall business environment through effective partnerships and centralized support.
- **Organize Regional Demand-Side Priorities.** Creating a common set of priorities to be tackled by the workforce, education and economic development ecosystem is critical to the success of regional economies. Business leaders and employers must organize among themselves to prioritize their needs and streamline communication of key gaps, challenges and opportunities. Strengthening this strategic connection between employers and post-secondary institutions, particularly community colleges and registered apprenticeship programs, workforce boards and nonprofit organizations is a pivotal strategy for advancing Michigan's business community by ensuring a dynamic and responsive workforce precisely attuned to evolving needs.



STRATEGY 3 Support Michigan's Small Business and Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Regaining Michigan's "Top 10" economic status hinges on attracting and nurturing entrepreneurs, especially those from underrepresented groups. However, challenges remain in fostering small business growth and community vibrancy. We must address these issues by empowering women and minority entrepreneurs while simultaneously supporting communities facing economic hardship due to worker dislocation. Targeted initiatives and equitable access to capital are key to creating a more supportive environment for all entrepreneurs and building resilient small businesses. This strategic approach will not only rejuvenate Michigan's economic landscape but also position the state as a magnet for innovative ventures, complementing the Governor's Revitalization and Placemaking Fund's focus on vibrant communities.

SUCCESS TO BUILD ON

Small Business Support Hubs

MEDC's Small Business Support Hubs are a recent \$73M investment into new and more comprehensive resources to small businesses across the state by providing funding to 27 entrepreneurial hubs for operations, programming and direct support to small businesses designed to meet regional needs. Resources available from the hubs will include one-on-one coaching, cohort-based learning and accelerators, mentor matchmaking, pitch competitions, networking events, access to capital, partner referrals and statewide resource navigation.

State Small Business Credit Initiative

The State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) program provides access to capital in partnership with Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs), credit unions, community and regional banks. MEDC leverages this fund to serve Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individuals (SEDI)-owned and Very Small Businesses (10 or fewer employees) and is surpassing its 40% incentive target, with 87% of funds deployed to date going to SEDI-owned and Very Small Businesses (VSBs). With support from the MEDC, CDFI Michigan Women Forward, Huntington National Bank and philanthropic partner the Ballmer Group, the Michigan Economic Opportunity Fund launched in 2023, creating a \$10 million microbusiness loan program for women, veterans and entrepreneurs of color in Michigan.

Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Entrepreneurship and Innovation Strategy

The MEDC's Entrepreneurship and Innovation team provides various opportunities and avenues for early-stage funding. The Michigan Innovate Capital Fund (MICF) is a new program to invest in pre-seed and start-up stage competitive edge technologies that require capital in the earliest stages of the commercialization process, with preference to be given to nonprofits in underserved locations that clearly address the funding gap in underrepresented communities.

WHAT'S NEXT

- **Establish an Innovation Fund.** The Governor has proposed the creation of a new Innovation Fund, to increase investment in high-growth startups in Michigan. This would be a brand new, state-level mechanism to attract and retain promising young companies. With the Innovation Fund, Michigan can launch hundreds of new startups and create thousands of jobs and build the infrastructure for innovation so founders can start and build their companies in the state.
- **Invest in Women Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurs of Color.** Investing in women entrepreneurs, entrepreneurs of color and rural-based entrepreneurs is a pivotal strategy for revitalizing Michigan's small business community by ensuring equitable access to resources and capital through increased collaboration with entrepreneurial ecosystem partners, ranging from small town and rural communities or Downtown Development Authorities, to counties, non-profit business service organizations, professional service providers and capital providers. Additionally, by expanding tailored internship and mentorship programs for entrepreneurs from these communities and specifically engaging with diverse Founders/Subject Matter Experts, we can cultivate a robust network of skilled professionals, encourage innovation and contribute to the overall growth and resilience of Michigan's small business ecosystem.
- **Incentivize Entrepreneurship in Distressed and Disconnected Communities – Establish the Trusted Connector Network.** To revitalize local economies, encourage entrepreneurship and foster innovation, Michigan will offer targeted incentives for immigrant entrepreneurs and businesses in rural and distressed communities. These incentives will include financial support, tax breaks and valuable resources. We will leverage the best practices of the Trusted Connector Network model to connect with micro-businesses, rural businesses and diverse-owned businesses. This flexible approach combines outreach with technical assistance. It recognizes the need for cultural competency and tailored expertise to effectively serve underserved communities.



Closing Statement

As the world and economy continue to evolve, the Michigan Statewide Workforce Plan represents the first, comprehensive, all-access roadmap that aligns state government and external partners to create jobs and support workers and employers.



This plan will guide the state in its efforts to help more Michiganders earn a skills certificate or degree, increase access to opportunities to grow the middle class and support business and entrepreneurial growth.

Using this plan as a roadmap, Michigan will increase the number of working age adults with a skill certificate or college degree from 51.1% to 60% by 2030, grow the middle class by 75,000 households by the end of 2027 and support business and entrepreneurial growth through talent solutions that add workers into Michigan's labor

workforce. Collaboration is a critical component of the Michigan Statewide Workforce Plan. All entities— from business to education institutions and labor organizations to state.

Together we will make Michigan the best state to live, work and raise a family for generations to come.

Visit Michigan.gov/AllAccess to learn more about resources available to businesses and workers.

We thank and acknowledge our state, business, workforce, labor, education, economic development, philanthropic and community partners for their contributions to this plan.

We also extend our gratitude to the Michigan Workforce Development Board and the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce for their partnership in making this plan possible.



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

