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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY  
LANSING

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DIRECTOR

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 1, 2022

**TO:** The Honorable Ken Horn, Chair  
Senate Committee on Economic and Small Business Development  
Appropriations Subcommittee on LEO/MEDC

The Honorable Beth Griffin, Chair  
House Committee on Workforce, Trades, and Talent

The Honorable Greg VanWoerkom, Chair  
House Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government

**FROM:** Kim Trent  
Deputy Director for Prosperity  
Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

**SUBJECT:** Public Act 84 of 2020 and Public Act 68 of 2020  
Michigan Reconnect Legislative Report

Pursuant to PA 84 of 2020 and PA 68 of 2020, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity shall provide an annual report on the Michigan Reconnect program for the immediately preceding academic year.

If you have any questions, please contact Todd Cook, LEO Director of Legislative Affairs at [CookT15@michigan.gov](mailto:CookT15@michigan.gov) or 517-230-8900.

cc: Members, Senate Committee on Economic and Small Business Development  
Members, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on LEO/MEDC  
Members, House Committee on Workforce, Trades, and Talent  
Members, House Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government

## Public Act 84 of 2020, Section 5

### Michigan reconnect grant act Legislative Report

Public Act 84 of 2020 and Public Act 68 of 2020, the Michigan reconnect grant act and Michigan reconnect grant recipient act respectively, are intended to provide last-dollar financial assistance to individuals age 25 and older seeking associate degrees or industry-recognized certificates or credentials; to provide those individuals with greater access to the education and skills needed to succeed in, and meet the demands of, an evolving economy in which there is continuing demand for a talented local workforce; and to achieve the goal of increasing the number of residents ages 25 to 64 with a college degree or skill certificate or credential to 60% by 2030.

Sec. 5 of Public Act 84 requires:

*(l) By not later than February 1 each year, beginning in 2021, provide a written report detailing the progress of the Michigan reconnect grant program to the chairpersons of the standing committees and the appropriations subcommittees of the house of representatives and senate having jurisdiction over legislation or oversight of appropriations pertaining to workforce development. The report, at minimum, must include all of the following information for the immediately preceding academic year:*

*(i) The total amount of Michigan reconnect grants awarded to Michigan reconnect grant students.*

*(ii) The total amount of funding used for oversight and implementation of the Michigan reconnect grant program, including, but not limited to, total funding used for each of the following:*

*(A) Full-time equated positions.*

*(B) System improvements.*

*(C) Training costs.*

*(iii) The total amount of funding used for program support services, including, but not limited to, total funding used for each of the following:*

*(A) Full-time equated positions.*

*(B) Case management.*

*(C) Technical assistance.*

*(iv) The total amount of funding used for marketing.*

*(v) The total number of navigators employed by the department; the total number of navigators assigned to each eligible institution; and the number of Michigan reconnect grant students assigned to each navigator, organized by eligible institution.*

*(vi) The total number of eligible institutions to which Michigan reconnect grants were paid for credit to student accounts under section 17 of the Michigan reconnect grant recipient act; a list of the names of those eligible institutions; and the total number and amount of Michigan reconnect grants that were awarded, organized by eligible institution.*

- (vii) The total number of individuals who applied for Michigan reconnect grants; the total number of individuals awarded those grants; and the total number of grant recipients who earned either an associate degree or industry-recognized certificate or credential.*
- (viii) Any other relevant information, as determined by the department.*

## **Program Design and Operation**

**Reporting Period:** October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021

The Michigan Reconnect (Reconnect) scholarship program is administered by the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) in partnership with the Michigan Department of Treasury's (MDT) Office of Student Scholarships, Grants, and Outreach (SSGO).

The application and website for Reconnect were publicly launched on February 2, 2021. Interested applicants within the state of Michigan were invited to apply for the scholarship program online at [www.Michigan.gov/Reconnect](http://www.Michigan.gov/Reconnect) or over the phone, with the support of SSGO's Customer Care Center. Customer Care Center staff received training on the scholarship program and received guidance from LEO and MDT on supporting applicants.

If the individual meets the initial eligibility criteria for the scholarship, their application is accepted. The applicant is then notified of their acceptance and the next steps required to begin participation in the scholarship program. Applicants are notified of this at the end of successfully submitting their scholarship application, via the email they provided when submitting the application, and in SSGO's Michigan Student Scholarships and Grants (MiSSG) Student Portal system.

To initiate participation in the scholarship program, accepted applicants are then required to complete the following steps:

- Apply and be admitted to an eligible institution
- File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Enroll at least half-time towards their program of study

To assist applicants and accepted applicants with navigating the scholarship program, the Reconnect website also includes:

- Frequently asked questions
- The list of eligible institutions with contact information and in-district information
- Calculating the costs of returning to school
- High-demand career information
- Additional information specific to veterans, service members and their families
- Instructions on checking their Reconnect application and award status in the MiSSG Student Portal system

- Resources and guidance for accepted applicants to navigate initiating applying to college, filing the FAFSA, and enrolling in classes

Once an accepted applicant initiates participation in the scholarship program, the eligible institute is responsible for packaging the student’s financial aid. The eligible institution must then request a reimbursement from or report the student as Eligible No Reimbursement to MiSSG according to SSGO’s quarterly reimbursement/certification cycle.<sup>1</sup>

Eligible institutions were provided with a Handbook for College Aid Administrators by LEO, collaborative guidance from administrative staff from LEO and MDT, and a MiSSG Manual specific to Reconnect for staff with MiSSG user access at the eligible institutions to ensure appropriate measures are taken place when billing for and reporting students to LEO and MDT.

**The total amount of Michigan reconnect grants awarded to Michigan reconnect grant students in FY 21 was \$14,166,236.44.**

\$22,000,000 was encumbered in an interagency agreement with MDT towards tuition reimbursement costs. The remaining encumbered funds were put into a work project towards the next fiscal year, which was approved.

**Total amount of funding used for oversight and implementation of the Michigan reconnect grant program, including, but not limited to, total funding used for each of the following:**

| Oversight and implementation | Total amount(s)      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| FTE positions                | \$ 823,411.49        |
| System improvements          | \$ 136,581.98        |
| Training costs               | \$ 0                 |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>\$ 959,993.47</b> |

In addition to the above listed costs, \$658,465 was expended or encumbered in grants for facilitating the developmental education workgroup (Sec. 5 (i)), awarding student success grants to select eligible institutions, and expanding the Michigan College Access Network’s (MCAN) College Completion Corps to provide support to students in persisting and completing.

**Total amount of funding used for program support services, including, but not limited to, total funding used for each of the following:**

| Program support services | Total amount(s)      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| FTE positions            | \$ 0                 |
| Case management          | \$ 321,981.99        |
| Technical assistance     | \$ 92,840            |
| <b>Total</b>             | <b>\$ 414,821.99</b> |

## **Total amount used for marketing**

The Communications Department of LEO engaged in a campaign to publicize the tuition-free opportunity to Michiganders statewide.<sup>1</sup> Total amount spent was \$750,000.

Campaign goals and priorities included, but were not limited to:

- An internal goal of:
  - 60,000 applicants by May 31, 2021
  - 40,000 Michiganders applied in the first two weeks of the application launch.
  - 15,000 enrollees by Fall 2021
- Broad awareness statewide to adults 25 or older
- Targeted campaigns to:
  - Adults 25 – 44 with some college, no degree
  - High-population markets, urban and rural areas, including areas surrounding eligible institutions
  - Leverage Career Exploration and Awareness Month (December) to highlight HOT jobs made possible by Reconnect
  - Motivate key audiences to act towards enrollment with targeted media placements, aspirational messaging

As part of the campaign, following the initial launch on February 2, 2021, four news conferences were held across the state which continuously featured the Acting Director of LEO, bipartisan legislative representation, local leaders of the relevant communities and a future Reconnect student:

- February 22: Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan
- March 1: Mid-Michigan and Flint
- March 15: West Michigan
- March 29: Metro Detroit

Campaign tactics included earned media, TV, radio, digital display, paid search, outdoor placement, digital video, digital audio, social media, and storytelling.

## **Total number of navigators employed by the department; the total number of navigators assigned to each eligible institution; and the number of Michigan reconnect grant students assigned to each navigator, organized by eligible institution**

Beginning in November 2020, LEO received technical assistance and support from The Graduate Network! (TGN) in designing the navigational system including developing position descriptions, hiring, training Navigators. A customer relationship management (CRM) database was developed, with the support of TGN, a contracted Data Analyst, and the Department of

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<sup>1</sup> Link to the full campaign report:

[https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MILEO/2022/03/22/file\\_attachments/2109918/2022.03.03\\_Reconnect%20Campaign%20Report.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/MILEO/2022/03/22/file_attachments/2109918/2022.03.03_Reconnect%20Campaign%20Report.pdf).

Technology Management and Budget (DTMB), to manage the applicant data and track the navigational outreach.

Navigators provide one-on-one assistance and support to Michigan Reconnect applicants in moving from application to enrollment, including, but not limited to:

- Accessing the scholarship
- Enrolling in school and registering for classes
- Setting a career goal and finding the right program of study
- Completing the FAFSA
- Finding additional financial resources
- Finding their program of study and finding job opportunities

In May 2021, LEO hired and trained 10 navigators to provide support to Michigan Reconnect applicants across the state of Michigan. The Navigators were divided into two teams of four, each overseen by a Navigator Lead. Each Navigator (and lead) was then prescribed a region and assigned to the eligible institution(s) within their respective assigned regions.

The furthest northern eligible institutions were clustered together for specialized outreach, combined with other colleges, to reach the caseload amount. For all remaining eligible institutions, a strong effort was made to group together institutions in proximity where possible and using combined applicant volume to reach a designated caseload amount. To the degree that there was no nearby college with complimentary numbers, the best possible numerical match was assessed regardless of location.

Beginning in May 2021, a caseload of approximately 5,000 Reconnect applicants were assigned weekly divided amongst the Navigators based on initial key priority. As the role of Navigator is to assist applicants with the steps necessary to successfully enroll in school, initial priority of assignment to a navigator was given to Reconnect applicants who indicated they were a first-time student or had not been enrolled in college for a year or more on their Reconnect scholarship application.

Priority was further provided by those applicants based on the semester the applicant planned to enroll in to ensure immediate and time-sensitive support was being offered. Reconnect applicants were then assigned to a Navigator based on the institution the applicant indicated they planned to enroll in. Reconnect applicants who indicated they were 'not sure' which institution they wanted to attend were also assigned to a specific navigator to assist them in choosing an eligible institution and taking their next steps.

Once a Reconnect applicant was assigned to a Navigator, Navigators would send out an initial mass outreach to introduce themselves and the support they could offer the accepted applicant. Assigned applicants who did not respond to initial outreach then received a follow-up email a week later. If no response was received to the follow-up email, a second follow-up email would be sent a week later.

To ensure Navigators were working effectively within existing structures, Navigators were partnered with a liaison at the eligible institutions and at the local Michigan Works! offices within their prescribed regions to ensure students were receiving programming and assistance offered by their colleges and receiving the needed resources (e.g., equipment, non-tuition funding) to enroll, persist, and complete.

| No.          | Eligible Institutions                   | Total no. of assigned applicants per Navigator |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 1            | Alpena Community College                | 293                                            |
| 2            | Bay College                             | 536                                            |
| 3            | Bay Mills Community College             | 117                                            |
| 4            | Delta College                           | 4,011                                          |
| 5            | Glen Oaks College                       | 323                                            |
| 6            | Gogebic Community College               | 250                                            |
| 7            | Grand Rapids Community College          | 6,521                                          |
| 8            | Henry Ford College                      | 4,243                                          |
| 9            | Jackson College                         | 1,872                                          |
| 10           | Kalamazoo Valley Community College      | 3,521                                          |
| 11           | Kellogg Community College               | 1,995                                          |
| 12           | Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College   | 22                                             |
| 13           | Kirtland Community College              | 563                                            |
| 14           | Lake Michigan College                   | 1,550                                          |
| 15           | Lansing Community College               | 4,767                                          |
| 16           | Macomb Community College                | 8,474                                          |
| 17           | Mid Michigan College                    | 852                                            |
| 18           | Monroe County Community College         | 1,497                                          |
| 19           | Montcalm Community College              | 553                                            |
| 20           | Mott Community College                  | 4,761                                          |
| 21           | Muskegon Community College              | 1,968                                          |
| 22           | North Central Michigan College          | 439                                            |
| 23           | Northwestern Michigan College           | 957                                            |
| 24           | Oakland Community College               | 8,642                                          |
| 25           | Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College         | 23                                             |
| 26           | Schoolcraft College                     | 3,947                                          |
| 27           | Southwestern Michigan College           | 595                                            |
| 28           | St. Clair County Community College      | 1,064                                          |
| 29           | Washtenaw Community College             | 3,763                                          |
| 30           | Wayne County Community College District | 10,055                                         |
| 31           | West Shore Community College            | 272                                            |
|              | No College Selected                     | 4,556                                          |
| <b>Total</b> |                                         | <b>83,002</b>                                  |

**Michigan reconnect grants awarded to Michigan reconnect grant students – total and by eligible institution<sup>2</sup>**

| No.          | Eligible Institutions                   | Total no. of awards | Total amounts           |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1            | Alpena Community College                | 89                  | \$ 80,125.25            |
| 2            | Bay College                             | 169                 | \$ 201,709.00           |
| 3            | Bay Mills Community College             | 23                  | \$ 9,355.00             |
| 4            | Delta College                           | 992                 | \$ 888,846.00           |
| 5            | Glen Oaks College                       | 92                  | \$ 85,797.00            |
| 6            | Gogebic Community College               | 49                  | \$ 36,512.00            |
| 7            | Grand Rapids Community College          | 1354                | \$ 1,439,930.57         |
| 8            | Henry Ford College                      | 865                 | \$ 560,483.82           |
| 9            | Jackson College                         | 609                 | \$ 757,824.86           |
| 10           | Kalamazoo Valley Community College      | 830                 | \$ 771,384.40           |
| 11           | Kellogg Community College               | 525                 | \$ 514,249.61           |
| 12           | Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College   | 5                   | \$ 8,750.00             |
| 13           | Kirtland Community College              | 205                 | \$ 167,272.00           |
| 14           | Lake Michigan College                   | 294                 | \$ 250,357.38           |
| 15           | Lansing Community College               | 948                 | \$ 733,947.50           |
| 16           | Macomb Community College                | 1663                | \$ 1,208,769.66         |
| 17           | Mid Michigan College                    | 271                 | \$ 217,180.92           |
| 18           | Monroe County Community College         | 304                 | \$ 261,957.90           |
| 19           | Montcalm Community College              | 195                 | \$ 157,882.00           |
| 20           | Mott Community College                  | 876                 | \$ 1,059,846.05         |
| 21           | Muskegon Community College              | 495                 | \$ 536,451.63           |
| 22           | North Central Michigan College          | 142                 | \$ 113,346.00           |
| 23           | Northwestern Michigan College           | 262                 | \$ 228,577.00           |
| 24           | Oakland Community College               | 1767                | \$ 923,221.36           |
| 25           | Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College         | 3                   | \$ -                    |
| 26           | Schoolcraft College                     | 1113                | \$ 1,102,054.70         |
| 27           | Southwestern Michigan College           | 130                 | \$ 121,551.89           |
| 28           | St. Clair County Community College      | 378                 | \$ 461,306.25           |
| 29           | Washtenaw Community College             | 1115                | \$ 694,514.00           |
| 30           | Wayne County Community College District | 1243                | \$ 529,314.69           |
| 31           | West Shore Community College            | 79                  | \$ 43,718.00            |
| <b>Total</b> |                                         | <b>17,085</b>       | <b>\$ 14,166,236.44</b> |

<sup>2</sup> AY 2020-2021 data provided by MDT. This data includes participants who are provided a reimbursement and/or reported as eligible no reimbursement. If a student received a reimbursement or eligible no reimbursement at multiple schools, they are counted at each school.



**The total number of individuals who applied for Michigan reconnect grants; the total number of individuals awarded those grants; and the total number of grant recipients who earned either an associate degree or industry-recognized certificate or credential**

Reconnect received 83,002 applications between February 2 and September 30, 2021. Applicants are only able to successfully submit the application if they meet the initial eligibility criteria for the scholarship program. The total number of distinct individuals awarded those grants in academic year (AY) 2020 – 2021 was 17,059.<sup>3</sup>

| <b>Total no. of degrees or credentials earned in AY 2020-2021<sup>4</sup></b> |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| <b>Associate degrees</b>                                                      | 384 |
| <b>Industry-recognized certificate or credentials</b>                         | 250 |
| <b>Total</b>                                                                  | 634 |

**Any other relevant information, as determined by the department.<sup>5</sup>**

**a. Demographics on enrolled students in AY 2020-2021**

| <b>Race/Ethnicity</b>                            | <b>Total no. enrolled</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Asian                                            | 135                       |
| American Indian/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander | 72                        |
| Black/African American                           | 2,584                     |
| Hispanic/Latinx                                  | 512                       |
| White/Caucasian                                  | 6,377                     |
| Two or more                                      | 311                       |
| No preference                                    | 1,282                     |
| <b>Total</b>                                     | <b>11,273</b>             |

| <b>Age</b>   | <b>Total no. enrolled</b> |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| 25-34        | 6,430                     |
| 35-44        | 3,209                     |
| 45-54        | 1,380                     |
| 55-64        | 244                       |
| 65+          | 9                         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>11,272</b>             |

| <b>Gender</b>       | <b>Total no. enrolled</b> |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Female              | 7,954                     |
| Male                | 2,715                     |
| Other/no preference | 603                       |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>11,272</b>             |

<sup>3</sup> AY 2020-2021 data provided by MDT. This data includes participants who are provided a reimbursement and/or reported as eligible no reimbursement.

<sup>4</sup> AY 2020-2021 data provided by CEPI. AY data provided by CEPI has data reporting lag of June 30.

<sup>5</sup> AY 2020-2021 data provided by CEPI. AY data provided by CEPI has data reporting lag of June 30.

**b. Students Earning 12 Credits in AY 2020-2021**

| <b>No.</b>   | <b>Eligible Institution</b>             | <b>Total no. earning 12 Credits</b> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1            | Alpena Community College                | 35                                  |
| 2            | Bay College                             | 68                                  |
| 3            | Bay Mills Community College             | 10                                  |
| 4            | Delta College                           | 256                                 |
| 5            | Glen Oaks College                       | 23                                  |
| 6            | Gogebic Community College               | 20                                  |
| 7            | Grand Rapids Community College          | 386                                 |
| 8            | Henry Ford College                      | 258                                 |
| 9            | Jackson College                         | 129                                 |
| 10           | Kalamazoo Valley Community College      | 253                                 |
| 11           | Kellogg Community College               | 162                                 |
| 12           | Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College   | 2                                   |
| 13           | Kirtland Community College              | 78                                  |
| 14           | Lake Michigan College                   | 69                                  |
| 15           | Lansing Community College               | 306                                 |
| 16           | Macomb Community College                | 332                                 |
| 17           | Mid Michigan College                    | 97                                  |
| 18           | Monroe County Community College         | 40                                  |
| 19           | Montcalm Community College              | 53                                  |
| 20           | Mott Community College                  | 245                                 |
| 21           | Muskegon Community College              | 98                                  |
| 22           | North Central Michigan College          | 46                                  |
| 23           | Northwestern Michigan College           | 85                                  |
| 24           | Oakland Community College               | 344                                 |
| 25           | Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College         | 1                                   |
| 26           | Schoolcraft College                     | 304                                 |
| 27           | Southwestern Michigan College           | 41                                  |
| 28           | St. Clair County Community College      | 107                                 |
| 29           | Washtenaw Community College             | 318                                 |
| 30           | Wayne County Community College District | 231                                 |
| 31           | West Shore Community College            | 19                                  |
| <b>Total</b> |                                         | <b>4,447</b>                        |

**c. Percentage of Credits Completed in AY 2020-2021**

| No. | Eligible Institution                    | Michigan reconnect grant students |                            |
|-----|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
|     |                                         | Reconnect                         | Dual Eligible <sup>6</sup> |
| 1   | Alpena Community College                | 100.0%                            | 91.3%                      |
| 2   | Bay College                             | 88.8%                             | 85.8%                      |
| 3   | Bay Mills Community College             | 100.0%                            | 100.0%                     |
| 4   | Delta College                           | 81.7%                             | 79.3%                      |
| 5   | Glen Oaks College                       | 78.3%                             | 89.3%                      |
| 6   | Gogebic Community College               | -                                 | 93.2%                      |
| 7   | Grand Rapids Community College          | 100.0%                            | 100.0%                     |
| 8   | Henry Ford College                      | 95.3%                             | 89.8%                      |
| 9   | Jackson College                         | 97.1%                             | 92.1%                      |
| 10  | Kalamazoo Valley Community College      | 100.0%                            | 100.0%                     |
| 11  | Kellogg Community College               | 91.9%                             | 91.1%                      |
| 12  | Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College   | 100.0%                            | 100.0%                     |
| 13  | Kirtland Community College              | 93.2%                             | 89.5%                      |
| 14  | Lake Michigan College                   | 100.0%                            | 100.0%                     |
| 15  | Lansing Community College               | 93.3%                             | 88.8%                      |
| 16  | Macomb Community College                | 84.0%                             | 78.3%                      |
| 17  | Mid Michigan College                    | 100.0%                            | 100.0%                     |
| 18  | Monroe County Community College         | 74.4%                             | 66.1%                      |
| 19  | Montcalm Community College              | 89.2%                             | 89.4%                      |
| 20  | Mott Community College                  | 93.0%                             | 88.2%                      |
| 21  | Muskegon Community College              | 97.1%                             | 86.0%                      |
| 22  | North Central Michigan College          | 97.3%                             | 89.2%                      |
| 23  | Northwestern Michigan College           | 100.0%                            | 100.0%                     |
| 24  | Oakland Community College               | 89.0%                             | 83.4%                      |
| 25  | Saginaw Chippewa Tribal College         | -                                 | 100.0%                     |
| 26  | Schoolcraft College                     | 81.9%                             | 77.3%                      |
| 27  | Southwestern Michigan College           | 100.0%                            | 100.0%                     |
| 28  | St. Clair County Community College      | 93.3%                             | 88.8%                      |
| 29  | Washtenaw Community College             | 86.0%                             | 85.0%                      |
| 30  | Wayne County Community College District | 87.2%                             | 86.1%                      |
| 31  | West Shore Community College            | 100.0%                            | 92.3%                      |

<sup>6</sup> Dual eligible are F4F participants who qualify for Michigan Reconnect and are funded by the Michigan reconnect grant act. Data could not be combined.