



# GOVERNOR GRETCHEN WHITMER

## INVESTING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES



Governor Whitmer is focused on delivering for rural families, communities, and small businesses. She will work with anyone to lower the cost of child care, build more housing, empower rural economic development, and expand access to high-speed internet.

### Key investments in rural communities

- [Established](#) the [Office of Rural Prosperity](#) to support rural economic growth.
- Connected more than 23,000 unserved families, small businesses, and communities to high-speed internet, with a goal to [connect everyone by the end of the second term](#).
- [Signed a budget](#) investing in economic growth and supporting projects that enhance rural infrastructure including job training, child care, housing, and broadband expansion, as well as new funds to protect Michigan's agriculture industry from threats.
- [Signed budgets](#) investing more than \$76 million in food and agriculture economic development projects and agricultural climate resiliency to help farmers implement regenerative agriculture, support agriculture supply chains, invest in minority owned food and agriculture ventures, and more.
- Signed bills to [boost the food and agriculture industry](#) by ensuring Michigan food and agriculture businesses can export their products to other nations.
- Increased funding to support [local conservation districts](#) and [farmers](#) implement conservation practices.
- Created the [Food and Agricultural Housing Task Force](#) to address the impediment housing accessibility has had on rural economic development.
- [Established](#) a Farm to Family program, focusing on building agricultural diversity, food security, climate resilience, and economic growth in agriculture.

### Creating jobs and expanding access to childcare, education, and skills

- Invested over \$53 million in Michigan State University's [dairy center and greenhouses](#).
- [Opened](#) the hemp market to Michigan's producers, bringing a new commodity to Michigan's diverse agricultural market.
- Highest ever per-student state funding and [closed the funding gap](#), ensuring every school district has the same baseline funding.
- [Expanded](#) access to free pre-K to every four-year-old while prioritizing families who need it most so every kid can arrive at kindergarten ready to learn.
- Funded programs like [Reconnect](#), [Futures for Frontliners](#), and [Michigan Opportunity Scholarship](#) to provide hundreds of thousands of Michiganders tuition-free higher education or skills training that leads to a high-skill, good-paying job.
- [Delivered](#) on the Michigan Guarantee, giving every Michigan high school graduate the chance to earn an associate's degree or skills certificate at their local community college, tuition-free.
- [Signed a budget](#) investing \$15 million to recruit and retain educators in rural areas.

### Key investments in rural communities

- Extended [Healthy Michigan](#) to [over 1 million people](#), and [eliminated red tape](#).
- Expanded access to [telemedicine](#) and required all insurers to [cover telehealth](#).
- Established the [Michigan Opioids Task Force](#), secured [\\$80 million in federal funding](#) to combat the opioid crisis, and supported Attorney General Nessel's work to sue major opioid distributors and win a [historic \\$800 million settlement](#).
- Secured [funding to respond to mental stress](#) and fatigue of Michigan farmers and agricultural workers and their families.
- Created the [Food Security Council](#) to identify opportunities to reduce food insecurity.

### Strengthening relationships with Michigan's tribal communities

- [Signed legislation](#) creating the Office of the Tribal Legislative Liaison to support tribal relations.
- [Signed legislation](#) requiring schools to allow Native American students to bring traditional objects or wear traditional regalia during ceremonies of honor, including graduation ceremonies.