



# GOVERNOR GRETCHEN WHITMER

## INVESTING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES



Governor Whitmer has been laser-focused on the kitchen-table fundamental issues that matter most to rural families, communities, and small businesses. She has made investments to make childcare more affordable, housing more attainable, and high-speed internet more accessible. As we continue growing our economy, Governor Whitmer is committed to creating good-paying jobs and building up transportation and water infrastructure in every community.

*“Hardworking rural communities make immeasurable contributions to our economy and are an integral part of Michigan’s culture. We have to help them thrive by investing in high-quality infrastructure, high-speed internet, affordable childcare, attainable housing, and economic development.”*

*- Governor Gretchen Whitmer*

### Fostering economic growth in rural communities

- [Created](#) the [Office of Rural Development](#) to address the unique challenges that face rural communities.
- Signed bills to [boost the food and agriculture industry](#) by ensuring Michigan food and agriculture businesses can export their products to other nations.
- Made infrastructure [investments to support the agriculture economy](#) in Ottawa and Muskegon counties, generating \$187 million in investment and supporting 145 jobs.
- Signed [budgets](#) that invested more than \$50 million in [food and agriculture economic development](#) projects and funded community revitalization and placemaking grants to spur economic growth in rural communities.
- [Launched](#) a ‘Buy Michigan’ marketing campaign to highlight Michigan growers and agricultural products.
- 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.
- [Requested federal relief](#) and signed a bill authorizing [\\$15M in loans for farmers](#) reeling from crop loss and damage during one of the rainiest years in state history.
- Invested \$15 million into the [Michigan Agricultural Safety Grant Program](#) and [Small Farm Safety Grant Programs](#) to support farmers and food processors during COVID-19.

### Rebuilding our infrastructure

- Leveraged over \$900 million through federal investments, the [Connecting Michigan Grant program](#), and the [Building Michigan Together Plan](#), to connect more families and small businesses to fast, reliable expand high-speed internet that meets their needs. and access to internet-capable devices for Michigan families.
- Signed the [Broadband Expansion Act of Michigan](#) a grant program to fill internet access gaps in underserved communities.
- Created the [Michigan High-Speed Internet Office](#) to coordinate the state’s high-speed internet work and align the work with economic development opportunities across the state.

- Since Governor Whitmer took office through the end of this year, Michigan fill fix over 16,000 lane miles of road and 1,200 bridges, supporting over 89,000 jobs.
- Launched the [Rebuilding Michigan Plan](#), a \$3.5 billion bond plan that expands hundreds of major new road projects, building up our state highways and bridges over the next 5 years, without an increase at the pump.
- Invested over \$4 billion to upgrade drinking water, stormwater, and wastewater facilities across the state, supporting 57,000 jobs.
- Invested the largest amount in history to reduce pollution in the Great Lakes and increased funding to [local conservation districts](#) and [farmers](#) for implementation of conservation practices.
- Signed the [Building Michigan Together Plan](#), which invests:
  - Over \$2 billion, supporting 27,000 jobs to remove lead service lines, reduce contaminants, build water infrastructure, and more.
  - \$450 million in state and community parks, trails, and recreation facilities.
  - \$316 million into roads and bridges.
  - \$249 million to expand access to reliable high-speed internet
  - \$100 million to expand access to [affordable, attainable housing](#).
- Released Michigan's first [Statewide Housing Plan](#) to leverage public and private investment in housing and ensure the state has a plan to address the housing shortage.
- Created the [Food and Agricultural Housing Task Force](#) to address the impediment housing has had on rural economic development.

### Expanding access to childcare, education, and skills

- Put Michigan students first with [\\$9,150 per student](#) funding, the highest ever state funding without raising taxes.
- [Closed the funding gap](#) between schools, ensuring every school district has the same baseline funding.
- Dedicated more state resources to students with the highest needs, including increased funding for at-risk and special education in the FY [20](#), [21](#), [22](#), and [23](#) budgets.
- Kept childcare businesses open and care affordable for families by [signing](#) a record \$1.4 billion investment in federal childcare funding.
- Created and fully funded the bipartisan [Michigan Reconnect](#) and [Futures for Frontliners](#) programs to provide a tuition-free path to a degree or skill certificate for Michiganders ages 25 and up. 170,000+ Michiganders have already applied.
- Created the [Michigan Achievement Scholarship](#) to make college more affordable for high school graduates. Starting with the class of 2023, students will be eligible for an annual scholarship worth up to \$5,500 depending on where they go to college and family need.

### Expanding access to health services

- Extended [Healthy Michigan](#) to [over 1 million people](#).
- 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.
- Expanded access to [telemedicine](#) and signed bipartisan legislation requiring all insurers to [cover telehealth](#).
- Secured millions to [support rural health care workers, employees and hospitals](#) with staffing shortages and COVID-19 [testing and mitigation](#).
- Secured funding to [respond to mental stress](#) and fatigue of Michigan farmers and agricultural workers and their families.