Michigan Infrastructure Office Technical Assistance Center Guidelines for Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot Applications

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Introduction

In 2022, the Governor signed P.A. 166 of 2022 to establish a technical assistance program within the Michigan Infrastructure Office (MIO). In 2023 MIO opened the Technical Assistance Center (TAC) to provide technical assistance, planning, and matching grants to local units of government, planning organizations, and federally recognized Tribal nations to help draw federal infrastructure money to Michigan's communities.

Since its opening the Technical Assistance Center (TAC) has expanded to offer additional technical assistance to help communities meet their infrastructure goals. The new Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot (PDAP) program will provide small pre-development grants ($20,000–$50,000) for early-stage surface transportation, transit, and drinking/wastewater infrastructure projects.

This document provides guidance for accessing pre-development funding and related support through the MIO Technical Assistance Center Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot grant program.

About the Michigan Infrastructure Office and Technical Assistance Center

The Michigan Infrastructure Office (MIO) is responsible for organizing and executing the State of Michigan's vision for infrastructure, coordinating across state government, marshalling resources, and partnering with local officials, federal partners, and outside stakeholders to ensure federal resources sent to Michigan through such vehicles as the BIL, also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), are used efficiently and effectively.

The MIO Technical Assistance Center (TAC) provides a suite of resources to support Michigan communities in identifying, developing, and preparing infrastructure projects for funding and implementation. TAC offers key support services: pre-development funding, project planning support, grant identification, grant readiness assessment, grant writing, and grant match funding. These services are available by application to TAC in specified application windows.

This document explains the Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot (PDAP) program in detail – **please read it in full**. The **FAQs** also cover a range of relevant questions. Reach out via the contact information provided in the **Key Contacts** section if you still have questions.

The PDAP program is administered by MIO with support from the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

Eligibility for TAC Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot program

Eligible applicants for PDAP in the application window include:

- Federally recognized Tribal nations
- Municipalities and local governments with the support of their MPO/RPA
  - Applications must include a letter of support from the applicant's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or Regional Planning Agency (RPA). MPOs and RPAs are responsible for prioritizing applications from their member communities. If you need help identifying the MPO or RPA to coordinate with, please see the **List of MPO/RPAs** section at the end of this document.
- MPOs and RPAs in partnership with an eligible entity or entities who have a project or projects leading to a federal grant application
  - Applications must include a letter of support from the partnering eligible entity(ies) which provides information about the local infrastructure project(s) in the pipeline, details which federal funds they are preparing to apply for, and a projected timeline for application and project commencement.

Overview of TAC Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot program

Only **surface transportation, transit, and drinking water/wastewater projects** are eligible for support through the TAC Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot. These categories reflect Michigan's strategic positioning for leveraging federal infrastructure funding and advancing projects positioned for federal grant applications. All projects must demonstrate a clear connection to future federal funding opportunities and that they contribute to Michigan's broader infrastructure investment goals.

- For **surface transportation**, eligible pre-development work includes projects supporting roads, bridges, and culverts that could pursue federal programs such as the *BUILD Transportation Grants* and the *Bridge Investment Program*.

- For **transit**, eligible work could include capital investments that align with the purpose expressed in the Michigan legislature's Fiscal Year 2026 budget to provide $100 million annually through 2031 for impactful transit capital projects. Pre-development assistance may help communities prepare for federal opportunities such as the *BUILD Transportation Grants, Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program,* and *All Stations Accessibility Program*.

- For **drinking water and wastewater**, eligible activities should help communities prepare for federal programs like the *USDA Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants*, or *EPA Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA)* loans.

The following table outlines the categories of eligible pre-development activities supported through the TAC Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot. Examples are illustrative and not exhaustive; applicants may propose other activities that align with the program's goals and federal funding readiness requirements:

Category	Example Uses
Planning	Creation of asset management plans, capital improvement plans, asset mapping, creation of planning documents that serve as pre-requisites to federal funding applications, transit development plans, creation of multi-county or regional collaborative plans for infrastructure including prioritization of projects.
Preliminary Engineering & Design	Conceptual design drawings, preliminary roadway cross-sections, bridge type selection studies, roadway alignment studies, water/wastewater system schematics, water system mapping, preliminary transit facility layouts, bus stop design concepts.
Feasibility Studies & Alternatives Analysis	Transportation corridor alternatives analysis, traffic modeling, pump station or water treatment plant expansion studies, lifecycle cost comparison, transit route optimization analysis, multi-modal connectivity studies.
Environmental Review Support	NEPA/MEPA scoping documents, categorical exclusion preparation, wetland delineation, endangered species review, historical/cultural resource screening, Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, FTA environmental documentation.
Permitting	Preparation of early permit applications; hydrologic/hydraulic modeling for water infrastructure permits, transit facility site permits.
Regulatory Pre-Consultation	Preparation for regulatory meetings with EGLE, MDOT, FHWA, or other agencies, consultation with FTA on early transit project scoping or environmental requirements.
Public Engagement & Outreach	Facilitated town halls, public input sessions, pop-up engagement events, online public surveys, project flyers, fact sheets.
Site Identification & GIS Mapping	Parcel mapping, utility infrastructure overlays, right-of-way mapping, floodplain mapping, environmental constraint layers, transit corridor mapping.
Cost Estimation & Funding Strategy	Capital project impact assessments for increasing project competitiveness, engineer's opinion of probable construction cost, benefit-cost analysis, funding match strategy development, bundling opportunities with other projects.
Specialized Technical Studies	Pavement condition analysis (PASER), bridge load rating preliminary work, water quality sampling, infiltration/inflow studies, preliminary geotechnical borings, transit fleet electrification readiness assessments.
Contingency for Readiness Gaps	Addressing unexpected technical requirements discovered throughout pre-development. Up to 10% of award.

In order to support projects that are most likely to advance toward future federal funding opportunities, the State will prioritize projects that it deems to be viable and strategically positioned for successful pre-development.

MIO TAC Goals for the Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot program

These are the goals that MIO TAC has established for the PDAP program. When considering projects to request technical assistance funding for, communities should select projects that will help MIO TAC reach these goals:

1. Advance surface transportation, transit and drinking/wastewater infrastructure projects to be competitive for federal and state grants within a 1–2-year timeframe.
2. Strengthen Michigan's project pipeline for large-scale investments.
3. Distribute technical assistance resources across all three targeted project types, community sizes, geographic locations and tribes.
4. Invest at least 40% of all funds in underserved communities.
5. Provide small grants ($20,000-$50,000) to ensure projects can meet the technical, environmental and public engagement requirements of funding programs such as BUILD, Bridge Investment Program, Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities, and EPA Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loans.
6. Invest in infrastructure projects that will yield a return on investment and can demonstrate a 1:1 leverage ratio or better.
7. Identify projects that are designed to alleviate a critical infrastructure issue that has been prioritized by the community, but-for this assistance would not be able to move forward.
8. Provide technical assistance to infrastructure projects that align with State of Michigan infrastructure priorities.

How to Procure a Consultant with PDAP Funds

Eligible applicants have two options for procuring consultants to complete pre-development activities under the TAC Pre-Development Project Accelerator: through MiDEAL or through a local procurement process. MIO TAC does not require bids to already be procured to apply for pre-development grants.

Option 1: Procuring a Consultant through MiDEAL
The **MiDEAL Extended Purchasing Program** allows eligible Michigan public entities to purchase goods and services directly from State of Michigan contracts. MiDEAL membership is available to cities, counties, townships, villages, school districts, universities, community colleges, and nonprofit hospitals for a nominal annual fee. Using MiDEAL enables applicants to access pre-qualified consultants and technical service providers already under State contract, saving both time and resources while ensuring compliance with competitive procurement standards.

Before applying for membership, applicants should first check whether their community is already a MiDEAL member. A searchable list of current members is available on the Michigan.gov/MiDEAL website. Applicants may also search the MiDEAL vendor directory to determine if their preferred consultant or contractor is already available through an existing State of Michigan contract. If a community already has an ongoing project with a contractor under MiDEAL, they may retain that contractor for the pre-development work through the Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot.

Benefits of MiDEAL Procurement:
- **Best Value Purchasing:** The State of Michigan evaluates vendors based on price, quality, expertise, and performance.
- **Time and Cost Savings:** Avoids duplicating local bid processes and leverages the State's purchasing power for reduced rates.

- **Direct Vendor Contact:** Members work directly with contracted vendors to scope, price, and deliver services.
- **Support for Michigan Businesses:** A majority of MiDEAL vendors are Michigan-based firms.

To join MiDEAL, complete the online member application. Annual membership fees range from $180 to $510 for local governments, depending on population size. More information is available at Michigan.gov/MiDEAL.

Option 2: Following Local Procurement Requirements

Applicants may also procure consultants through their own local procurement processes in accordance with applicable local, state, and federal requirements. Procurement must follow competitive bidding or qualifications-based selection procedures as required. If applicants choose not to use MiDEAL, the municipality bears responsibility for documenting and justifying the procurement process. Specifically:

- Document how the contractor will be selected following the community's established local procurement policies.
- If awardee has a vendor currently under contract, applicant must show how the vendor was selected using local procurement procedures. Additionally, the contract must have been bid or bids refreshed within the past three years. Documentation of this process must be provided.
- Demonstrate that the price to be paid with PDAP funds is consistent with rates under the existing contract and recent work (within the past 2–3 years).
- Attach a bid or scope of work amendment showing how the proposed pre-development work fits into the existing contract.

This documentation ensures that local consultant costs are eligible for reimbursement under the TAC Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot and demonstrates that the municipality secured a fair deal consistent with best practice.

Recommendation: MIO recommends using the MiDEAL program whenever possible, as it streamlines procurement, ensures compliance with State standards, and provides access to experienced vendors familiar with Michigan's infrastructure projects.

How to Apply for TAC Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot program

Eligible applicants seeking pre-development technical assistance funding need to fill out a Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot program application for the support they are requesting, including a letter of support where applicable (please see the Eligibility section for more information). Planning organizations should work with their member localities to prioritize the projects they want to submit for pre-development support. Applicants are allowed to apply for more than one type of pre-development support and can submit more than one application for each type of support.
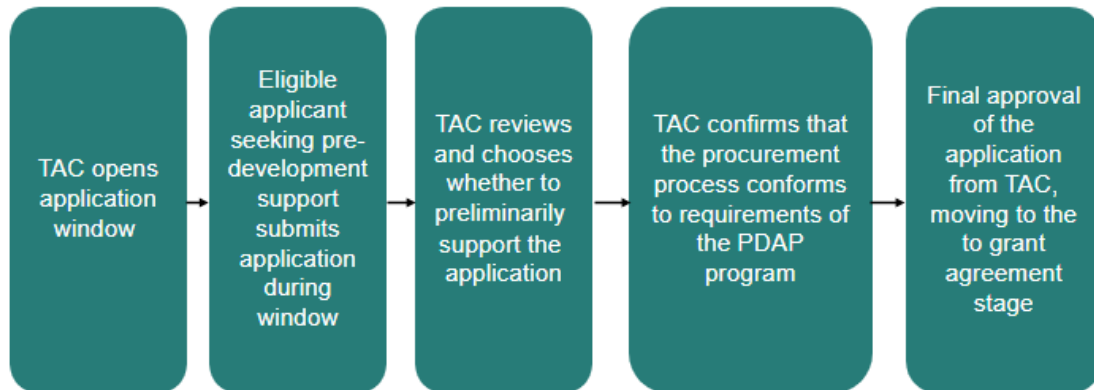
TAC will provide guidance on the criteria it will use to select which applications to award pre-development grants. After the window closes, TAC will review the applications and select a set of pre-development grant recipients for preliminary award review.

Application Instructions Flow Chart

Pre-development support application process

High-level overview of Pre-development application

```
TAC opens          Eligible           TAC reviews        TAC confirms that   Final approval
application        applicant          and chooses        the procurement     of the
window             seeking pre-       whether to         process conforms    application
                   development        preliminarily      to requirements of  from TAC,
                   support            support the        the PDAP            moving to the
                   submits            application        program             to grant
                   application                                               agreement
                   during                                                    stage
                   window
```

TAC Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot Application

TAC will be accepting applications from **11/03/25** for the **Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot Window.**

The online application portal is available here: PDAP Application

Please see the **Guide to Online Application** section below for more information on how the online application works.

Please see the **Criteria** section for an overview of what TAC is looking for in the projects it selects.

TAC Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot Application Key Dates:

- **Window Opens on 11/03/25 and Closes on 12/01/25 at 11:59pm.**

- **Webinar on 11/10/25 at 11:00am – 12:00am ET.**
    - MIO TAC hosted an informational webinar explaining the PDAP and the application process. **Click here to watch the recorded webinar:** MIO TAC Infrastructure Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot Program Application Webinar.

- **Window Closes on 12/1/25 at 11:59pm ET.**

- **For additional assistance, please email: BradyK4@michigan.gov**

Criteria for Application Evaluation

TAC will weigh several criteria when deciding. The application will have questions that provide an opportunity for applicants to demonstrate their alignment with the criteria.

Pre-development *support evaluation criteria*

1. **Project quality and alignment with PDAP goals:** How well does the project help MIO meet the goals of the Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot? Is the description detailed and compelling, with defined next steps for pre-development work?
2. **State priorities**: Assess whether the project aligns with state priorities.
3. **Applicant need and capacity:** Assess whether the applicant has demonstrated need for pre-development support and lacks alternative funding or technical resources.
4. **Project readiness and feasibility:** Assess the extent to which the project is at an appropriate stage for pre-development support, with clear understanding of next steps, defined gaps, and a feasible timeline.

FAQs

Application process

1. Q: I'm a local government unit, but not an MPO/RPA. How do I apply?
    a. To apply for TAC support you will need to coordinate with your local planning organization (MPO/RPA) and receive a letter of support from them confirming that they have reviewed and selected your project to be submitted to TAC. When you have received the letter of support, you will then use the application links in the above section of the document to apply. Please see the list of MPOs/RPAs to find your local planning agency.
2. Q: I'm an MPO/RPA. Can I apply for PDAP myself?
    a. Yes, in one of two ways:
        i. MPOs and RPAs can submit applications on behalf of their member localities or eligible community entities who will be the recipients of the funds and carrying out the pre-development activity awarded. When doing so, the MPO/RPA serves as the applicant and is responsible for coordinating with the community to prioritize projects and gather the necessary information for the application. MPOs/RPAs must ensure that the community or eligible entity has the capacity to complete the pre-development work funded or will provide a description of how they will assist the community in completing the work. MPOs/RPAs will still provide letters of support prioritizing the projects in the region.
        ii. MPOs and RPAs can submit applications for direct funding as long as the pre-development work they perform results in local projects within their region applying for federal funding within 12 – 18 months. MPOs/RPAs must provide a listing of the projects in the pipeline to benefit from their activities, the federal funding sources being targeted, and a timeline for applying for federal funds. Funded activities undertaken by MPOs/RPAs may benefit more than one project/municipality. Additionally, each municipality with a benefitting pipeline project must provide a letter of support detailing the project, the federal funding source to sought and the timeline.
3. Q: How many projects can I submit for PDAP?
    a. There is no cap on how many project applications you can submit. Each application should correspond to a single project and can include multiple types of pre-development activities to be funded as needed. If an applicant wishes to request support for a different project, a separate application must be submitted for that project. This structure allows TAC to evaluate each project on its own merits while providing flexibility for communities to request a combination of services tailored to their needs.
    We highly recommend to only submit applications for projects that are top priorities across the region, and to ensure they align with the application criteria provided. If you need help prioritizing projects and services to apply for, please contact us.
4. Q: Is there a local match requirement?

a. There is no formal matching fund requirement for TAC pre-development activities. However, communities are expected to demonstrate a commitment to the project that is at least equal to the amount of funding requested. This can include the value of staff time dedicated to the project, in-kind contributions, or other resources that support pre-development work. TAC considers this commitment an important indicator of the community's engagement and capacity to advance the project through pre-development and toward future federal funding opportunities.

5. Q: How do I calculate the percent of MiEJScreen census tracts in my project area that are at the 60th percentile or above?
   a. [MiEJScreen](#) is Michigan's environmental justice mapping tool that identifies census tracts with higher environmental or social vulnerability. For this question, you should determine which census tracts fall within your project area and identify those with MiEJScreen scores at the 60th percentile or above (meaning the tract is in the top 40% statewide for EJ concerns). Then, calculate the percentage by dividing the number of high-percentile tracts by the total number of tracts in your project area and multiplying by 100. This percentage indicates the share of your project area that serves communities with elevated environmental justice needs.

6. Does MIO TAC prioritize between surface transportation, transit, and water projects?
   a. No. All three categories are equally eligible. MIO TAC does not prioritize one type over another; competitiveness is based on project readiness, need, and alignment with federal funding opportunities.

7. If a community has been awarded a federal grant already and still need to do activities required by the federal grant, do these activities qualify under PDAP?
   a. No. PDAP funding is intended for communities that need pre-development support before applying for federal grants. Activities tied to the implementation of a previously awarded federal grant are not eligible.

8. If a community have previously applied for a federal grant and were unsuccessful, would the community be eligible for PDAP to strengthen the application for resubmittal for the federal grant?
   a. Yes. Communities that were not awarded federal funding may apply for PDAP to complete the pre-development tasks needed to make a future application more competitive. This includes filling gaps identified in prior feedback.

9. If a community does not require a competitive bid for $50,000 or less for services, how can the community participate in PDAP?
   a. Communities using a local no-bid process must still demonstrate that costs are reasonable. They must provide historical contracts or invoices with the proposed vendor, evidence that pricing is consistent with past work, and documentation showing the vendor was originally selected through a fair process (or choose a MiDEAL vendor). MiDEAL remains a streamlined alternative.

10. What is the time frame for MIO TAC PDAP awards?
    a. Award timing depends on the volume of applications received. MIO TAC anticipates notifying applicants of preliminary awards by the third week of December and issuing final award decisions by January 2026, allowing communities to begin work promptly.

11. How can I know what grants my project would qualify for?
    a. MIO TAC maintains fact sheets for federal programs for which the TAC has previously provided free grant writing support. These are available on the MIO TAC website. Communities may also review the full database of federal funding opportunities on Grants.gov to identify additional eligible programs.

12. What is the total amount of MIO TAC funds allocated for PDAP?
    a. The Pre-Development Accelerator Pilot is funded at $1,500,000, which will be awarded across eligible communities based on project need, readiness, and alignment with PDAP priorities.

TAC Services

13. Q: Does the MIO TAC offer other services?
    a. Yes. In addition to pre-development support, the TAC offers other services such as grant identification, grant writing support, and assistance with matching funds to help communities advance their infrastructure projects for federal funding.
14. Q: Is reporting required if I receive TAC support?
    a. Yes. The provider delivering the pre-development support is responsible for reporting progress to MIO TAC throughout the service delivery process. In addition, each recipient will be asked to complete a feedback form at the conclusion of the technical assistance, and recipients are expected to report whether the project ultimately received a federal grant or funding award. This ensures TAC can track outcomes and evaluate the effectiveness of pre-development support.

Key Contacts

Kristin Brady, Director
Technical Assistance Center
Michigan Infrastructure Office
BradyK4@michigan.gov

Scan to go to MIO TAC website:

List of MPOs/RPAs

Name of planning organization	Type	Counties (or municipalities)	Website
Battle Creek Area Transportation Study	**MPO**	**City of Battle Creek, Springfield City; Townships of Bedford, Emmett, Pennfield, Leroy**	https://www.bcatsmpo.org/
Bay County Area Transportation Study	**MPO**	**Bay City, Essexville, Bangor, Monitor, Hampton, Portsmouth, Kawkawlin, Frankenlust**	https://www.baycounty-mi.gov/Transportation/
Central Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Regional Commission	**RPA**	**Alger, Delta, Dickinson, Marquette, Menominee, Schoolcraft**	https://cuppad.org/

East Michigan Council of Governments	RPA	**Arenac**, **Bay**, **Clare**, **Gladwin**, **Gratiot**, **Huron**, **Iosco, Isabella, Midland**, **Ogemaw**, **Roscommon, Saginaw, Sanilac, Tuscola**	http://www.emcog.org/
Eastern Upper Peninsula Regional Planning & Development Commission	RPA	**Chippewa, Luce, Mackinac**	https://www.eup-planning.org/
Genesee County Metropolitan Planning Commission	MPO	**Genesee County**	https://gcmpc.org/
GLS Region V Planning and Development Commission	RPA	**Genesee, Lapper, Shiawassee**	https://gcmpc.org/region-v-planning-and-development-commission
Grand Valley Metro Council	MPO	**Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm**	https://www.gvmc.org/about-mpo
Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study	MPO	**Cities of Kalamazoo, Portage, Parchment, Galesburg; Counties of Kalamazoo, Van Buren**	https://www.katsmpo.org/
Macatawa Area Coordinating Council	MPO	**Holland, Zeeland**	https://www.the-macc.org/
Midland Area Transportation Study	MPO	**Midland County, City of Auburn, Williams Charter Township, Tittabawassee Township in Saginaw**	https://www.midlandmpo.org/
Networks Northwest	RPA	**Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, Wexford**	https://www.networksnorthwest.org/
Northeast Michigan Council of Governments	RPA	**Alcona, Alpena, Cheboygan, Crawford, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle**	https://www.discovernortheastmichigan.org/nemcog.asp
Region II Planning Commission	RPA	**Hillsdale, Jackson, Lenawee**	https://www.region2planning.com/
Saginaw Area Transportation Agency	MPO	**Saginaw County**	https://satampo.org/about-sata/
Southcentral Michigan Planning Council	RPA	**Barry, Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph**	https://smpcregion3.org/
Southeast Michigan Council of Governments	MPO and RPA	**Livingston**, **Macomb**, **St. Clair, Monroe**, **Oakland**, **Washtenaw**, **Wayne**	https://www.semcog.org/about-semcog
Southwest Michigan Planning Commission	RPA	**Berrien County; Cass County; Van Buren County; Twin Cities Area Transportation Study; Niles, Buchanan and Cass Area Transportation Study**	https://www.swmpc.org/
Tri-County Regional Planning Commission	MPO and RPA	**Clinton, Eaton, Ingham**	https://www.mitcrpc.org/
West Michigan Metropolitan Planning Program	MPO	**Muskegon and Northern Ottawa County**	https://wmsrdc.org/program/transportation/services/

West Michigan Regional Planning Commission	RPA	Allegan, Ionia, Kent, Mecosta, Montcalm, Osceola, Ottawa	https://wmrpc.org/
West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development	MPO AND RPA	Lake, Mason, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana	https://wmsrdc.org/
Western Upper Peninsula Planning & Development Regional Commission	RPA	Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Ontonagon	https://www.wuppdr.org/

Guide to Online Application

WizeHive Online Application Portal

1. Go to the WizeHive MIO TAC web portal: https://webportalapp.com/sp/login/pdaccelerator

2. Create a new account (once you have made the account, you will continue to use it to log in)

3. Create your profile. You can edit your profile at any time.

4. Your dashboard is where you can edit your profile and find all your applications. In the example below, the applicant has 3 applications. Start an application.

5. Start with the name of the project your application is about. You can apply for more than one type of support and/or more than one project, but each must be on different application. There is no cap on how many applications you can submit per window.

6. Mandatory fields are marked with a red asterisk

7. Please list the supporting entity and include a letter of support for the specific project (see the **Eligibility** section of this document). Optional: list any co-applicants.

8. Fill out the rest of the form

9. You can save draft at any time using the "Save Draft" button; the application will not automatically save without clicking the button. **We recommend you save your draft frequently.**

10. If at any time you wish to return to your home dashboard, click the link at the top of the application page. The home dashboard is also where you can create a new application.

11. To submit the application, you must click the "mark complete" button at the top or bottom of the application page and then submit on the next page.

12. You will receive confirmation of submission. You can edit your application up until the application deadline, even after submitting. You can also view your completed application.

13. You can see the applications you have submitted and the application in progress on your dashboard. We currently do not have the functionality to delete applications, but you can begin an "in progress" application anew by deleting all the fields you have filled in. Applications not submitted will not be reviewed.

14. If you have any questions, please reach out to Kris at BradyK4@michigan.gov