



State of the State

Governor Gretchen Whitmer

Governor Whitmer State of the State Address: A Home for Opportunity
"We can build bridges and ensure that Michigan is the home for opportunity for generations to come."

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Governor Whitmer's first State of the State address outlined the challenges facing our state, highlighted actions taken to address these issues, and set a blueprint for legislative priorities.

MICHIGAN'S GROWING CHALLENGES

ROADS/INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Problem:** Michigan's crumbling roads, bridges and failing infrastructure are a physical, financial and health hazard, especially after the Flint water crisis and discovery of PFAS.
- **Supporting Fact(s):** Michigan received a grade of D- and D+ for our roads and infrastructure, respectively, from the American Society of Civil Engineers -- with just 18 percent of our roads are in "good" condition.
- **Quote:** "We need to act now, before a catastrophe strikes or the situation becomes truly unrecoverable." "... let's come together and pass a budget that actually fixes the damn roads."

EDUCATION/SKILLS

- **Problem:** Michigan's system of education is not preparing students to succeed and businesses are not investing in our state because our skills do not meet their expectations.
- **Supporting Fact(s):** Michigan has experienced the worst decline in childhood literacy, which coincides with the slowest growth in K-12 education spending of any state in the nation.
- **Quote:** "Our educators deserve our support -- not a funding crisis that undermines their work, weakens our schools and hurts our kids."

A GOVERNMENT THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE

PUBLIC HEALTH EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

- **Problem:** State departments did not alert officials to imminent threats to public health.



2019

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Governor Gretchen Whitmer

- **Solution:** An executive directive instructing all state employees to notify their agency or department of any imminent threats to public health, safety or welfare.
- **Quote:** “Valid concerns about public health and welfare will be acted upon.”

TRANSPARENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

- **Problem:** Our government has been plagued by a lack of transparency.
- **Supporting Fact(s):** Michigan ranked dead last in transparency and ethic.
- **Solution:** A series of executive directives establishing new ethical standards and rules for the executive branch, including new FOIA guidelines.
- **Quote:** “It’s time to make sure the sun shines equally on every branch of state government.”

NONDISCRIMINATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

- **Problem:** Discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity was permitted under previous administrations.
- **Solution:** An executive directive to strengthen the protections against discrimination in state employment, contracting and services.
- **Quote:** “Because nobody should ever be fired because of who they are or who they love.”

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

- **Problem:** Past discrimination hurt a woman’s future earnings in state employment.
- **Supporting Fact(s):** Women make 78 cents for every dollar that men make for doing the same job -- with women of color making even less.
- **Solution:** An executive directive prohibiting employers in state government from asking women applicants about their salary histories.
- **Quote:** “That’s how we build a stronger economy. That’s making Michigan a home for opportunity for women.”

DISADVANTAGED BUSINESSES EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE

- **Problem:** Small businesses are struggling to compete against big corporations.
- **Solution:** An executive directive instructing the state to increase contracting opportunities for small businesses in designated opportunity zones across our state.
- **Quote:** “That means small businesses in geographically disadvantaged communities will have a level playing field. Let’s keep Michigan dollars in Michigan.”

A STRONGER, HEALTHIER ECONOMY

POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT GOAL



2019

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- **Problem:** Michigan is only one of nine states in the country that hasn't established a formal goal for postsecondary attainment.
- **Supporting Fact(s):** A majority of jobs will require postsecondary credentials in the future.
- **Solution:** A new statewide goal of increasing the number of Michiganders with a postsecondary credential to 60 percent by 2030.
- **Quote:** "We must ensure that every Michigander has a path to skills that lead to a good job."

MICHIGAN RECONNECT (skilled trades)

- **Problem:** Michigan jobs are evolving, but our process to prepare workers for those jobs has not.
- **Solution:** Training adults seeking an in-demand industry certificate or associate degree.
- **Quote:** "As the workplaces evolve, many people will need to acquire new skills to advance -- or even just to keep the jobs they have now."

MI OPPORTUNITY SCHOLARSHIPS (community college or university)

- **Problem:** Higher education is becoming inaccessible due to cost, which prevents students from pursuing higher education and hampers postsecondary attainment levels.
- **Solution:** A scholarship for debt-free community college or two years at a university.
- **Quote:** "Together these paths will go a long way toward closing the skills gap and creating real opportunity for everyone. If you're willing to put in the work, you will have a path to succeed."

OTHER INITIATIVES

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, and ENERGY (EGLE)

- **Problem:** Toxic chemicals have been found in our lakes, rivers and water systems in more than 70 communities spanning both of our peninsulas.
- **Solution:** The streamlined EGLE will be tasked with ensuring every Michigander has access to safe and clean drinking water -- with new offices of the Clean Water Public Advocate and the Environmental Justice Public Advocate. Also joins the U.S. Climate Alliance.
- **Quote:** "We're going to make state government more efficient and more responsive to our environmental and public health challenges."



2019

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HEALTHY MICHIGAN

- **Problem:** New work requirements put health care in jeopardy for Michiganders.
- **Solution:** Sent a letter to the Trump administration outlining concerns about work requirements and joined 19 other states to defend the Affordable Care Act in court.
- **Quote:** “Hundred of thousands of Michiganders’ health care is on the line, and I want to commend the Attorney General for leading on this vital issue.”

BUDGET

- **Quote:** “Next month, I will propose a budget for our state. My budget will offer a real solution to fixing our roads and rebuilding our infrastructure. It will give our frontline educators the tools they need to address our literacy crisis. And most of all, it will reflect my unwavering commitment to making Michigan the home for opportunity.”