



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 and [fully funded](#) the [Office of Rural Development](#) to address the unique challenges that face rural communities.
- Proposed [investments in economic development](#) and programs like the Michigan Regional Empowerment Program to uplift regional economies across Michigan.
- [Proposed funding](#) for local economic development projects centered around the food and agriculture industries and a 'Buy Michigan' marketing campaign to highlight Michigan growers and agricultural products.
- Signed a [budget](#) that invested millions into farm innovation projects and community revitalization and placemaking grants to support economic development in rural communities.
- 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.
- [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 wettest years in state history.

Investing in high-speed internet

- Set a [state goal](#) to provide 100% access to high-speed internet and 95% adoption by households during the next five years, while continually investing in higher quality access.
- 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](#), codifying the Connecting Michigan Communities Grant Program, 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.

Rebuilding our infrastructure

- Since Governor Whitmer took office, Michigan has repaired, rebuilt, or replaced 13,198 lane miles of road and 903 bridges, supporting nearly 82,000 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.
- Launched [MI Clean Water](#), a \$1 billion plan to upgrade [water infrastructure](#). Taken together, these investments would support 15,000 jobs.
- Invested the [largest amount in history](#) to reduce agricultural pollution in the Great Lakes, and increased funding to [local conservation districts](#) and [farmers](#) for implementation of conservation practices.

- Proposed an [FY 2023 budget](#) that invests \$6.3 billion into state and local roads, bridges, airports, transit, and rail programs—the largest transportation budget in Michigan history and \$1 billion dollars more than FY 2022 because of resources from the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- Signed the [Building Michigan Together Plan](#), which invests:
 - Over \$2 billion, supporting 27,000 jobs to remove lead service lines, reduce toxic contaminants like PFAS, rebuild wastewater and sewer infrastructure, provide clean water for schools and childcare centers, and so much more.
 - \$450 million in state and community parks, trails, and recreation facilities.
 - \$316 million into roads and bridges and \$66 million into pump station generators to keep highways clear during severe storms.
 - \$249 million to expand access to reliable high-speed internet
 - \$100 million to expand access to [affordable, attainable housing](#), help close equity gaps, and create vibrant communities in urban areas.
- 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 an FY 23 [budget proposal](#) that makes schools safer, helps every student get back on track, supports our teachers, and ensures every kid can be a kid—all without raising taxes.
- Made the [largest investment](#) in PreK-12 schools in state history:
 - Closed the funding gap between schools, ensuring every school district has the same baseline funding. Proposed an [increase to \\$9,135](#) per students in FY 2023.
 - Increased funding for small, rural, and isolated school districts by \$1.4 million, bringing total added funding to \$8.4 million. Proposed [further increases](#) in FY 2023.
 - Expanded access to mental health professionals, including school counselors and psychologists, to support students' wellness.
 - Prioritized equity in state funding by dedicating more state resources to students with the highest needs, including more funding for at-risk, English language learners, and special education in the FY [20](#), [21](#), and [22](#) budgets. Proposed [further increase](#) in FY 2023.
 - Expanded access to free preschool for [22,000 more four-year-olds](#) through the high-quality, homegrown Great Start Readiness Program.
 - [Tripled the number of literacy coaches](#) in schools to help every child read by third grade.
- Kept childcare businesses open and care affordable for families by [signing](#) a record \$1.4 billion investment in federal childcare funding:
 - Expanded access to low or no-cost childcare for 112,000 more working families earning less than \$49,025 for a family of four.
 - Expanded access to childcare statewide by keeping childcare open and helping programs expand to communities without enough childcare.
- 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.

Expanding access to health services

- Extended [Healthy Michigan](#) to [nearly 900,000 people](#).
- Expanded access to [telemedicine](#) and signed bipartisan legislation requiring all insurers to [cover telehealth](#).
- Proposed the [MI Healthy Communities Plan](#) to invest \$20 million in telemedicine infrastructure support to build, equip, and operate secure rooms to access telehealth services and \$335 million to increase capacity for community-based behavioral health and substance use disorder treatments.
- Established [Prescription Drugs Task Force](#) and received their recommendations to drive down costs, promote transparency, and improve health outcomes.
- Signed bipartisan legislation to protect Michiganders against [surprise medical billing](#).
- Established the [Michigan Opioids Task Force](#) and secured [\\$80 million in federal funding](#) to support prevention, treatment, and harm-reduction services to combat the ongoing opioid crisis.
- 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.