



Coalition for a Strong and Prosperous Michigan 2023-2024 Policy Priorities

Our coalition has been actively working to advance a bold vision to build Michigan's future and strategically invest in our residents, entrepreneurs, businesses, and communities since July 2021. We believe by working together, Michigan can be a magnet for talent, revive and strengthen the economy now and into the future, and support thriving communities that all can enjoy.

As community, business, and labor leaders, we developed a comprehensive Roadmap to invest, leverage, and amplify American Rescue Plan resources. This framework helped guide many of the investment decisions made by our state legislature and resulted in billions of dollars in investment in the areas we identified as priorities. As our coalition has evolved, our overarching objectives have remained the same.

- Utilize cost effective methods and available resources to invest in infrastructure, build capacity, and improve fiscal stability for people, places, and businesses.
- Create multi-sector partnerships between communities, state leaders, interest groups, businesses, labor, and philanthropy to leverage available resources, accelerating the impact of our investment.
- Initiate long-term change to sustain and amplify investment for us and our future.

To meet these ambitious goals, we suggest focusing investing and creating policy that addresses the following key areas:

- **Investing in Infrastructure Built for the Future:** Build and sustain resilient and reliable systems and structures.
- **Strengthening the Economy Through Thriving Communities:** Create opportunities for housing, workforce, and economic development that foster attractive places for people and businesses.
- **Improving Governance, Safety, and Well-Being in our Communities:** Support systems and structures that provide long-term sustainability for people, places, and businesses.

The decisions made during the current legislative session will define Michigan's future for years to come. The Coalition understands that our future success is inextricably linked, and the strategic investment of the state's available resources and policy implementation needs to support and strengthen these connections. Our bold vision to build Michigan's future capitalizes on the economic value of thriving communities, advances equity, creates community wealth, supports entrepreneurship, prioritizes the need for talent, and spurs business development.

As leaders representing people from every corner of Michigan, we have come together to offer our support for this comprehensive and interconnected set of policy priorities. We welcome an opportunity to work together on building a path forward to support Michigan residents, businesses, and communities with the tools and resources necessary to create future prosperity.

Investing in Infrastructure Built for the Future: Build and sustain resilient and reliable systems and structures.

Infrastructure is the lifeblood between the people we represent and the places they live. Strong, resilient infrastructure sustains local economies, improves quality of life, provides equitable access to jobs, and protects the environment. We support proactive policy and making strategic investment in our infrastructure that will allow us to improve our transportation network, remove lead service lines, build resilient water systems, and expand access to broadband.

- Roads, Bridges, Transit
 - a. Advocate that the state act on creating a sustainable model for funding roads, bridges, transit, and mobility in Michigan.
 - b. Support a Vehicle Miles Travel (VMT) pilot in Michigan to study the potential impacts and benefits of this being a component of the solution to fund the state's transportation network.
 - c. Provide additional funding for local road agencies to fix non-federal aid eligible local roads and neighborhood streets.
 - d. Michigan Bridge Bundling Initiative
 - Support additional investment to replace or rehabilitate structurally deficient bridges across Michigan.
- Water Sewer Stormwater
 - a. Statewide Water Assistance Program (\$100M)
 - Create a program that provides flexibility for municipal water suppliers to partner with the state to provide relief on customers' bill modeled after existing programs, fund improvements and upgrades to home plumbing, and fund installation of check valves, sump pumps, or replacement of sewer leads to mitigate flooding.
 - b. Lead Line Replacement (\$225M)
 - Support ongoing funding from the state to help communities replace lead service lines.
 - c. High Water Infrastructure Grants (\$85M)
 - Provide infrastructure and planning grants to mitigate effects of severe weather events, focusing on local projects that address flooding, coastline erosion, urban heat, and storm water management.
 - d. Incentivize Resiliency Planning and Infrastructure Coordination (\$50M)
 - Provided resources to local agencies to create resiliency plans and direct financial incentives to coordinate local projects with the public and private sector.
- Renewable Energy
 - a. Renewable Ready Communities (\$40M)
 - Provide grants to local communities for the creation of renewable energy facilities at a regional scale.
 - b. Michigan Clean Fleet Initiative (\$45M)

- Provide grants to counties, municipalities, airports, and regional transportation authorities for the conversion of their fleet operations to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.
 - c. Siting and Permitting for Wind and Solar
 - Incentivize local communities to host renewable facilities in a way that does not erode local control but to create an environment that fosters partnership between developers, utilities, and local government.
- Dam Safety
 - a. Provide grants for the removal of dams not essential to the containment of invasive species or for power generation and community safety. This investment will assist in the restoration of Michigan's aquatic ecosystems and grow the recreational water economy. (\$25M)
- Broadband
 - a. Maximize funding from the Connecting Michigan Communities (CMIC) and the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) grant programs.
 - Ensure efficient deployment of resources by providing funding for the deployment of broadband services in unserved and underserved areas to enhance the economic benefit of residents, communities, and businesses, and provide critical services such as telehealth to support physical and mental health needs.
 - Public and private entities should have an equal seat at the table for requesting and obtaining funds to deploy broadband infrastructure.
 - b. Broadband Deserts and In-Fill Broadband Grants (\$75M)
 - Provide grant funding to providers for the following purposes:
 - Eliminating gaps or inequities in coverage areas to ensure continuity in connectivity.
 - Increase network speeds to address education, work, or economic development needs.
 - c. Digital Literacy, Access to Devices, and Planning
 - Create materials, resources, model curricula, and lesson plans concerning digital literacy and cyber safety. (\$5M)
 - Provide broadband supported devices for individuals or households below the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) threshold. (\$35M)
 - Broadband support devices will be provided through education institutions and other career or tech training programs to address access to devices for education or to advance life-long learning.
 - Provide grant funding for local units of government to conduct community and regional broadband needs analysis. (\$25M)

Strengthening the Economy Through Thriving Communities: Create opportunities for housing, workforce, and economic development that fosters places that are attractive to people and business.

Housing is Michigan’s most significant area of need and at the core of what anchors people to place. Where people go, opportunity will follow. Continuing to invest in services that provide stability to Michigan’s most vulnerable, attract the next generation of our workforce, and cultivate the unique cultural character of our communities will secure prosperity throughout Michigan for generations to come.

- Develop and Preserve Housing Across the State
 - a. Increase Housing Supply
 - Support community specific solutions and resources to keep affordability and attainability of new housing stock achievable.
 - Support legislation amending the Brownfield Redevelopment Act to expand the definition of “eligible activity” to include “housing assistance” and “housing development” allowing a local unit of government to create a housing plan that would identify local housing needs and target tax increment financing (TIF) support for housing focused on households earning up to 120% AMI ([SB 129](#))
 - Support Housing Readiness funding to incentivize municipalities to identify barriers to housing development and to modify their zoning and permitting processes to efficiently facilitate housing infill and development projects (\$10M)
 - b. Stabilize Existing Housing Stock
 - Invest in rehabilitation, historic preservation, energy efficiency, weatherization, blight elimination, and neighborhood revitalization programs.
 - Sustainable funding for the Housing and Community Development fund to alleviate affordable housing needs and revitalize downtown areas.
 - Increase the current \$5M cap on historic tax credits that supports place-based projects and promotes the preservation of Michigan’s historic resources.
 - Provide additional flexibility and encourage partnerships with county or municipal land banks to help stabilize or expand housing.
 - c. Support funding to incentivize employers to contribute to employee housing needs (\$20M)
 - Provide a one-time fund to pilot a 50% CIT credit for employers who make qualified investments in housing for those earning up to 120% AMI.
 - d. Implement the Statewide Housing Plan
 - Fund the 15 Regional Housing Partnerships being established to work collaboratively in developing regional plans working toward implementation of the statewide housing plan.
- Community Development
 - a. Support local economic development and placemaking efforts focused on downtowns and social centers of communities in the form of Community Downtown Economic Development Grants. (\$100M)

- b. Support the growth, development, and diversification of the state’s regional and local economies by directing funding towards Regional Empowerment Grants (\$200M) and the Michigan Main Street Initiative. (\$135M)
- Workforce Pipeline
 - a. Continue to invest in Michigan’s workforce to develop and attract talent and ensure Michigan workers have the skills, training, and opportunities they need for good-paying jobs.
 - Skilled Trades
 - Support for apprenticeships and work-based learning initiatives.
 - Going Pro and Michigan Reconnect
 - Support employer-based training and ongoing efforts to improve access to education and expand workforce talent.
 - Municipal Professionals and Personnel
 - Through collaboration, develop customized solutions to fill identified talent gaps in the municipal workforce to help ensure local government can find the talent they need to provide ongoing and high-quality services to their residents.
 - b. Invest in Michigan's Global Talent Attraction, Retention, and Recovery Plan
 - Support Michigan's Global Talent Attraction, Retention, and Recovery Plan that includes seven strategies for focusing on (1) attracting high-skilled New Americans, international students, and companies to Michigan while leveraging their skills, degrees, and experience; (2) retaining these new residents, as well as those already here, and (3) placing this skilled and credentialed workforce with Michigan companies to fill unmet talent needs, establishing Michigan as a center for global prosperity. (\$5M for second year funding, or \$20M for the final four years of funding)

Improving Governance, Safety, and Well-Being in our Communities: Supporting systems and structures that provide long-term sustainability for people, places, and businesses.

Superior quality of life is a combination of many factors. It takes fiscal stability, efficient public services, a modernized governance structure, and attention to the human experience. These aspects collectively create an environment where those who reside feel confident in their ability to actively engage their community and secure in the systems and resources provided to keep them safe.

We recognize that to address the challenges and changing dynamics throughout our communities, we must re-envision policies so that they empower governments to operate at their full potential and invest innovatively in services that enhance security.

- Support Community Specific Solutions and Resources
 - a. Revenue Sharing Trust Fund
 - Dedicate general sales tax revenue into a restricted fund for the purpose of distributing those resources to cities, villages, townships, and counties.
 - b. Headlee/Proposal A Reform
 - Millage Reduction Fraction

- Remove the “popped up” values from the calculation of the Headlee rollback which currently works to negate that growth.
 - Headlee Roll-Ups
 - Allow millage rates to adjust both up and down depending on the relationship of property value growth or decline to general inflation. It is important to note that a millage rate could never increase above charter limits, maintaining the upper limit on millage rates.
 - c. Diversify Local Revenue Streams
 - Enact policies that would allow local units of government access to more flexible options to generate revenue as a method to diversify their revenue stream and account for the limitations created by property taxes and state shared revenue.
- Improving Local Governance
 - a. Open Meetings Act (OMA)
 - Simplify the OMA to make it easier for citizens to understand. Modernize the OMA to allow for public bodies to have virtual participation with reasonable guidelines for members unable to attend in-person.
 - b. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
 - Address voluminous requestors submitting multiple submissions within a defined period. Provide guidance to address scenarios where information is already publicly available and where the requestor is seeking to profit from requested information.
 - c. Public Notice Requirements
 - Modernize the public notice requirement to allow notices to be published online.
- Sustaining Public Safety Services
 - a. Michigan 2-1-1 Infrastructure Expansion
 - Improving connectivity for community members across the state with resources to address social determinant needs. Funding will support the costs of staffing, community engagement, and 2-1-1 infrastructure development/expansion, provide enhanced integration capabilities for both referring agencies (health systems/health plans), and community-based organizations (CBOs) addressing Social Determinants of Health. (\$20M)
 - b. Retention and Recruitment for Emergency Response
 - Establish a grant program for local units of government to support training retention, recruitment, and licensing for paramedics and EMTs. (\$15M)
 - Develop a mechanism to allow fire departments to recover training and certification costs in the event a sponsored employee transitions to a new department within a certain period. (Fire/EMS option to SB 32 '23)
 - c. Public Health Emergency Fund
 - Establish a protected fund to support local public health departments in securing resources to proactively plan for public health emergency disaster prevention and response. (\$5M)
 - d. Mental and Behavioral Health Resources for Emergency Responders

- Direct funding to services and resources that support first responders and response personnel (*police, fire, EMS, 911 dispatch*) experiencing post-traumatic stress syndrome and other mental health conditions. 911 dispatch is an integral part of public safety response and should also be included in the definition of “first responder”. (\$5M)
- Enhancing Community Well-Being
 - a. Parity Across Telehealth Services
 - In addition to expanding consistent broadband connectivity throughout the state, work to adjust policy to ensure fair and consistent insurance coverage and copay costs for telehealth services for both physical and mental health needs.
 - b. Balance Capacity Statewide for Access to Mental Health and Addiction Services
 - Invest in capacity and operations to balance capacity and direct care needs in the Upper Peninsula and Northern Michigan and other less densely populated regions of the state.
 - Patients in these regions of the state struggle with access to care that meets area needs and provides a diversity of services present in more densely populated areas.
 - Support upgrades and modifications in existing facilities, the expansion of inpatient psychiatric, pediatric beds and site acquisition, design work planning for future facilities, or expansions to improve local response efforts.
 - Address high rates of substance use and co-occurring disorders in rural and underserved communities that are disproportionately affected but lack the necessary resources to address increasing needs fully and efficiently in comparison to more densely populated areas of Michigan.
 - c. Parks and Recreation
 - Invest in Michigan’s Active Transportation Network
 - Michigan’s network of trails, pathways and greenways is a magnet for tourism, economic development, talent attraction, and placemaking while offering a safe and healthy transportation alternative. Direct investment in this system will ensure that we can maintain, grow, and interconnect a statewide active transportation network, invest in placemaking, and activate our community spaces, which will pay dividends for Michigan’s physical, mental, and community health for generations to come.
 - Michigan Spark Grants
 - Additional investment into this extremely popular grant program would help meet the unmet needs from approximately \$300 million in applications from almost 500 applicants.