MICHIGAN LEAGUE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

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# Willing to Work and Ready to Learn:
## More Adult Education Would Strengthen Michigan's Economy

Michigan depends on its skilled workers, and much has been written and said about the need to build up our state's workforce. Yet year after year in the state budget, state policymakers neglect to adequately fund adult education, making it less accessible for low-skilled workers who want to build their skills, become financially self-sufficient and contribute to Michigan's economy. Adult education is the key to preparing these workers for occupational training and skilled employment, and better funding and an expanded role will enable it to meet the demand more effectively.

In the past, high school graduates could enter the middle class by getting jobs in the manufacturing sector immediately after graduation and moving eventually into skilled, higher-paying positions. Today, however, technological advances and offshore production have greatly decreased the need for unskilled, entry-level labor. A high school diploma by itself has far less value in the job market as a result, and employers increasingly prefer to hire skilled workers with a postsecondary credential such as a degree, certificate or license. With 9.6% of working age Michigan adults lacking a high school diploma, almost 250,000 adults not speaking English well, and more than half of community college students needing remediation, it is clear that too many workers have basic skill deficiencies that make it difficult to attain such credentials.

Expanding adult education services to help more low-skilled but highly motivated individuals succeed in post-secondary training will benefit Michigan. Skilled workers help attract and keep businesses in the state, spend more in their local communities, pay more in taxes, and are less likely to become unemployed or need public assistance. On the other hand, continuing to neglect adult education keeps a segment of the population out of the skilled labor pool, which in turns keeps the need for public assistance high, slows the revitalization of struggling communities and wastes an opportunity to increase state revenues.

### THE NEED FOR MORE ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES IS GREAT

Adult education serves the segment of the population that does not have the basic skills necessary to gain secure, family-supporting employment, or to succeed in occupational training that leads to such employment. The term "basic skills" refers to the levels of reading, writing and mathematics that are associated with the attainment of a high school diploma and the ability to speak English proficiently. These skills are the foundation for building career-specific occupational skills that are in demand by the job market. While many adults without a high school diploma have deficiencies in one or more of these skill areas, some high school graduates also lose these skills over time or may not have completely mastered them

*__Skilling Up Michigan__ is a series of policy briefs from the Michigan League for Public Policy that addresses the access and affordability of postsecondary skill building in Michigan and urges the state to prioritize public investment in occupational skill building as a strategy for fighting poverty, reducing unemployment and building communities. This is the fourth paper in the series and is published with the support of the Working Poor Families Project .*

while in high school. Adult education serves both sets of individuals.

Several indicators show that the number of working age adults needing adult education far surpasses those receiving it:

- Over 212,000 Michigan adults age 25-44 lack a high school diploma or GED, yet fewer than 7% have enrolled in adult education in most years since 2004.[1]
- More than 234,000 Michigan adults speak English less than "very well," but fewer than 4% enroll in English as a Second Language adult education programs.[2]
- Between 55-65% of community college students per year need to take developmental (remedial) education classes due to having not mastered one or more skill areas needed for postsecondary education or training.[3]

It is clear that too few students are getting the basic skills education they need to be able to succeed in occupational training and ultimately, to find a pathway out of low-wage, dead-end jobs and into a skilled career that enables them to support their families and prosper. As Michigan's workforce development efforts attempt to move an increasing number of low-skilled workers into postsecondary credential programs, the demand for adult education will become even greater and so will the need for funding. (For more detailed statewide and county indicators of need, please see Appendices 1-2.)

## ADULT EDUCATION IS A CRUCIAL LINK TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION AND GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

Because workers and job seekers without postsecondary occupational skills and credentials will have an increasingly difficult time finding family-supporting employment in coming years, the goal for adult education must not be merely to acquire a GED, but to transition workers into postsecondary training leading to a degree or certificate.

According to a report by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, 70% of jobs in Michigan will require some level of postsecondary education by 2020, including 37% requiring a "middle skills" credential such as an associate degree (which

FIGURE 1

**Too Many Low-Skilled Michigan Adults Are Left Out of Adult Education**

| | | Adults Age 25-44 Without a High School Diploma or GED | | | Adults Age 18-64 Who Speak English "Less Than Very Well" | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Program Year | Total Funding | Total Number | Number in Adult Education | Percent in Adult Education | Total Number | Number in ESL Adult Education | Percent in ESL Adult Education |
| 2005-06 | $37,107,871 | 271,383 | 15,687 | 5.8% | 230,687 | 10,642 | 4.6% |
| 2006-07 | $39,959,444 | 280,860 | 16,345 | 5.8% | 234,875 | 10,985 | 4.7% |
| 2007-08 | $39,976,065 | 263,501 | 15,295 | 5.8% | 241,180 | 9,080 | 3.8% |
| 2008-09 | $39,645,243 | 263,793 | 14,363 | 5.4% | 229,065 | 9,276 | 4.0% |
| 2009-10 | $36,215,280 | 256,316 | 15,299 | 6.0% | 229,435 | 8,929 | 3.9% |
| 2010-11 | $36,380,063 | 237,752 | 12,676 | 5.3% | 209,665 | 8,392 | 4.0% |
| 2011-12 | $36,771,835 | 236,705 | 14,063 | 5.9% | 219,700 | 8,582 | 3.9% |
| 2012-13 | $35,965,116 | 226,918 | 14,100 | 6.2% | 225,035 | 8,282 | 3.7% |
| 2013-14 | $35,188,316 | 228,485 | 14,044 | 6.1% | 219,825 | 8,302 | 3.8% |
| 2014-15 | $34,125,274 | 208,266 | 13,566 | 6.5% | 231,633 | 8,564 | 3.7% |
| 2015-16 | $37,374,263 | 210,368 | 13,796 | 6.6% | 234,253 | 8,543 | 3.6% |
| 2016-17 | $37,206,101 | 212,206 | 15,593 | 7.3% | 247,556 | 9,942 | 4.0% |

*The number of adults enrolled in ESL may include adults over age 64. Approximately 6-8% of adults in ESL programs each year are over 60 years of age.
Sources: U.S. Department of Education and Michigan House Fiscal Agency (Funding); Michigan Workforce Development Agency National Reporting System tables (Adult education participation); American Community Survey 1-year estimates, 2016 (High school and English speaking status)

typically takes two years) or a vocational certificate (which usually takes less than two years).[4] The sector with the highest number of projected middle skills job openings in Michigan is sales and office support, (43,000 openings for workers with an associate degree and 104,000 openings for workers with a credential that takes less than two years). Other sectors with a large number of projected middle skills openings are food and personal services and what the report terms "blue collar" occupations such as agriculture, construction and production.[5]

Helping low-skilled workers acquire postsecondary credentials that are in demand benefits not only those workers and their families, but also employers and the state as a whole. A skilled workforce will encourage businesses to stay, move to or expand in Michigan. Skilled workers earn and spend more money in their communities, which in turn helps other businesses and increases state revenues from income and sales taxes. Skilled workers are less likely to become unemployed or to need public assistance. Preparing more low-skilled workers for postsecondary training, therefore, needs to be a key component of Michigan's workforce development strategy.

As seen in Figure 2, Michigan residents with "some college" or an associate degree have significantly higher earnings ($32,435) than those with only a high school diploma ($27,202) and are less likely to be in poverty. The combined percentage of Michigan residents in the former category (32.9%), however, is barely higher than the percent-age with only a high school diploma (29.9%), and well below the percentage without postsecondary education when those with less than a high school diploma (9.6%) are factored in. It is clear that many Michigan workers and their families would benefit from training leading to a postsecondary credential, and a significant number of those will need adult education to prepare them for such training. (Note: the "some college" category, in addition to including those who attained a certificate or license, includes those who took at least one postsecondary course but did not complete requirements for a credential. The earnings figures would likely be significantly higher if only credentialed workers are included.)

One population that Michigan should actively target for adult education is its residents with limited English proficiency. A recent Working Poor Families Project report cites data showing that between 2010 and 2030, immigrant workers will

FIGURE 2

**Educational Attainment, Earnings and Poverty Rates of Michigan Residents Age 25 and Over**

**Educational Attainment**

| | Total | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|---|
| Less than 9th grade | 3.0% | 3.2% | 2.8% |
| 9th to 12th grade, no diploma | 6.6% | 7.1% | 6.1% |
| High school graduate (includes GED) | 29.3% | 30.0% | 28.6% |
| Some college, no degree | 23.6% | 23.8% | 23.5% |
| Associate degree | 9.3% | 7.8% | 10.6% |
| Bachelor's degree | 17.2% | 17.0% | 17.4% |
| Graduate or professional degree | 11.1% | 11.0% | 11.1% |

**Median Earnings by Educational Level**

| | Total | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|---|
| Less than high school graduate | $20,512 | $24,222 | $14,961 |
| High school graduate (includes GED) | $27,202 | $32,342 | $21,444 |
| Some college or associate degree | $32,435 | $41,433 | $26,960 |
| Bachelor's degree | $50,821 | $63,642 | $40,755 |
| Graduate or professional degree | $68,906 | $84,934 | $59,175 |

**Poverty Rate by Educational Level**

| | Total | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|---|
| Less than high school graduate | 28.8% | 25.3% | 32.7% |
| High school graduate (includes GED) | 14.7% | 13.3% | 16.1% |
| Some college or associate degree | 10.4% | 8.3% | 12.2% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 4.3% | 3.9% | 4.6% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

account for more than 90% of the nation's workforce growth and that by 2030, one in five workers will be an immigrant. Despite this, 70% of limited-English adults in the United States do not have education beyond high school and 44% do not have the equivalent of a high school diploma. Of foreign-born workers with a high school diploma but no postsecondary credential, those who are proficient in English earn 39% more than those who are not.[6]

In Michigan, 23% of adults 25 years and over who speak a language other than English at home (and 35% who speak Spanish at home) do not have a high school diploma, compared with 9% who speak only English at home (Fig. 3). The poverty level is much higher for those who speak a language other than English (23%), especially for Spanish speakers (27%), than for those who speak only English (15%). With nearly 250,000 adults in the state with limited English proficiency, Michigan should ensure that this population is targeted for adult education outreach and that there are adequate English as a Second Language programs—with adequate funding—in the areas of the state with the highest need.

FIGURE 3

**Nativity, Poverty and Education of Michigan Residents by Language**

| | Speak English Only At Home | Speak a Language Other Than English at Home | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | TOTAL | SPANISH OR SPANISH CREOLE |
| **NATIVITY STATUS (5 years and over)** | | | |
| Native | 98% | 43% | 63% |
| Foreign-born | 2% | 57% | 37% |
| **POVERTY STATUS (5 years and over)** | | | |
| Below poverty level | 15% | 23% | 27% |
| **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (25 years+)** | | | |
| Less than high school graduate | 9% | 23% | 35% |
| High school graduate (includes equivalency) | 31% | 20% | 24% |
| Some college or associate degree | 34% | 20% | 22% |
| Bachelor's degree or higher | 27% | 37% | 20% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## TO BE MORE EFFECTIVE, ADULT EDUCATION MUST FIT FAMILY AND WORK SCHEDULES

Adult education is primarily taught in school buildings, literacy centers, Michigan Works! one-stop centers, and public libraries. In some counties, it is provided at county jails, Head Start buildings or Community Action Agencies. Because instruction is usually provided at a central location rather than in the context of family, school and/or work, adult learners often must make child care arrangements or even adjust work schedules in order to attend adult education classes.

For some adult learners, this "traditional" way of receiving adult education instruction works. For others, however, the time needed to complete an adult education program conflicts with family or work needs and prolongs the time before entering into postsecondary training—increasing the likelihood that some students will drop out before completion. If the student lives or works a long distance from the school building, transportation can be an additional barrier.

Conversely, integrating adult education instruction into other aspects of students' lives, such as work, occupational training and family, can make their experience more relevant, their coursework easier, and the time to complete a program shorter. All of this will increase the likelihood of student success, and in turn help the adult education system better meet the needs of employers.

There are several ways to contextualize the delivery of adult learning:

1) **Use adult education as a two-generation strategy to improve the lives of both parents and children.** A two-generation approach to fighting poverty devises programs and policies that seek to enhance

FIGURE 4

## Single Parents and Public Assistance Recipients Can Benefit from a Two-Generation Approach to Adult Education

| Program Year | Total Enrolled | AE Students on Public Assistance | | AE Students Who Are Single Parent (Optional) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 2000-01 | 56,001 | 2,953 | 5.3% | 1,327 | 2.4% |
| 2001-02 | 75,988 | 6,163 | 8.1% | 5,452 | 7.2% |
| 2002-03 | 70,893 | 6,027 | 8.5% | 5,197 | 7.3% |
| 2003-04 | 48,273 | 3,794 | 7.9% | 3,495 | 7.2% |
| 2004-05 | 34,768 | 2,310 | 6.6% | 2,024 | 5.8% |
| 2005-06 | 32,024 | 3,778 | 11.8% | 2,611 | 8.2% |
| 2006-07 | 32,856 | 4,833 | 14.7% | 3,229 | 9.8% |
| 2007-08 | 30,571 | 4,769 | 15.6% | 3,258 | 10.7% |
| 2008-09 | 28,243 | 5,706 | 20.2% | 3,570 | 12.6% |
| 2009-10 | 31,106 | 6,945 | 22.3% | 3,635 | 11.7% |
| 2010-11 | 25,745 | 6,931 | 26.9% | 3,059 | 11.9% |
| 2011-12 | 28,614 | 6,173 | 21.6% | 2,465 | 8.6% |
| 2012-13 | 29,533 | 6,434 | 21.8% | 2,611 | 8.8% |
| 2013-14 | 28,625 | 5,167 | 18.1% | 2,004 | 7.0% |
| 2014-15 | 27,443 | 4,856 | 17.7% | 1,740 | 6.3% |
| 2015-16 | 27,483 | 5,094 | 18.5% | 1,857 | 6.8% |
| 2016-17 | 30,196 | 5,447 | 18.0% | 2,558 | 8.5% |

Source: Workforce Development Agency Adult Education National Reporting System tables

children's intellectual development in tandem with increasing their parents' skills and ability to earn higher wages. As seen in Figure 4, roughly 17% to 22% of adult education participants in recent years are public assistance recipients and 6% to 9% report that they are single parents.[7] Yet we see from Figure 5 that public assistance recipients, parents of pre-school and school age children, and rural students have very poor program completion rates. All of these categories have declined since 2013.

Addressing the needs of these at-risk categories should be a top priority for both local program design and state policy. Examples of two-generation strategies on the program level include:

- Providing child care and enrichment activities at adult education sites.
- Offering adult education in programs such as Head Start that serve children (a very small number of counties in Michigan do this).
- Making sure that individuals who enroll in adult education are made aware of public assistance for which they may be eligible.

On the state level, Michigan can implement two-generation polices that make it easier for parents to access child care or be involved with their children's education while receiving basic skills instruction, examples of which include:

- Making low-income adult education students categorically eligible for subsidized child care or raising the income eligibility level. Currently, a single parent with two children can get a subsidy only if her or his annual income is at or below 121% of the federal poverty guidelines ($21,144 in 2018).
- Raising the child care subsidy level to a higher percentage of the market rate in order to cover

FIGURE 5

## Parents, Public Assistance Recipients and Rural Students in Adult Education

| Demographic | PY 2012-13 Total | PY 2012-13 Completed Program | | PY 2013-14 Total | PY 2013-14 Completed Program | | PY 2014-15 Total | PY 2014-15 Completed Program | | PY 2015-16 Total | PY 2015-16 Completed Program | | PY 2016-17 Total | PY 2016-17 Completed Program | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Receives Public Assistance | 7,224 | 2,635 | 36% | 5,782 | 2,073 | 36% | 5,537 | 2,007 | 36% | 5,856 | 1,829 | 31% | 5,447 | 1,700 | 31% |
| Has Pre-School Age Child | 6,402 | 2,364 | 37% | 6,130 | 2,148 | 35% | 5,912 | 2,036 | 34% | 6,047 | 1,800 | 30% | 6,751 | 1,944 | 29% |
| Has School Age Child | 10,322 | 4,070 | 39% | 9,972 | 3,636 | 36% | 9,487 | 3,682 | 39% | 9,607 | 3,236 | 34% | 10,155 | 3,375 | 33% |
| Is a Single Parent | 3,071 | 961 | 31% | 2,339 | 720 | 31% | 2,106 | 536 | 25% | 2,215 | 509 | 23% | 2,558 | 530 | 21% |
| Lives in Rural Area | 2,882 | 1,183 | 41% | 2,290 | 752 | 33% | 2,236 | 683 | 31% | 2,348 | 659 | 28% | 2,765 | 707 | 26% |

Source: Workforce Development Agency Adult Education Participant Characteristics tables

more of the actual child care costs, and removing the paperwork barriers that discourage or prevent this population from making use of the subsidy even when eligible.[8]

- Making adult education services an integral part of all Pathways to Potential school programs.[9]

There are also steps Michigan can take to make it easier for parents on cash assistance to complete their GED. Unfortunately, federal rules do not let GED completion count toward recipient work requirements unless the recipient is also working 20 hours per week in another work activity such as paid employment or community service. Because success in GED completion may be hampered by the need to juggle classes, homework, family needs and 20 hours of work, Michigan should consider waiving the 20-hour work requirement. This would enable cash assistance recipients to take adult education classes full-time and attain their GEDs more quickly, or to tend to their children's needs and intellectual development while completing their GED. Even though Michigan would not be able to count such recipients toward its work participation rate, the state has a high percentage of recipients meeting the requirements 65% in 2016 and can afford to be flexible in this area.[10]

In addition, the Working Poor Families Project recommends two curriculum-based steps for states to consider as part of a two-generation strategy: 1) Expand and contextualize state-approved adult education curriculum to cover family financial literacy and asset-building instruction, and 2) Incentivize local providers of Adult Basic Education Literacy and English as a Second Language services to include opportunities for child-parent learning, such as family literacy and numeracy activities.[11] Both of these strategies can be undertaken in Michigan, provided there is additional funding.

2) **Provide adult education in the community colleges as an alternative to costly developmental education.** Many community college students must take developmental education classes due to having not mastered one or more basic skill areas. Each year, well over half of community college students in Michigan are required to take at least one developmental education course (Fig. 6). Such classes cost the same as for-credit classes leading to a degree or credential, costing the student money and/or using up some of the student's financial aid resources. Providing developmental education to large numbers of students also can create difficulty for community colleges due to staff costs.

One way to solve this problem is for Michigan to allow (and provide funding for) community colleges and school districts to enter into cooperative agreements whereby students needing remediation can take adult education courses on the college campus that fulfill developmental education requirements. Because adult education is free, this will save the student money and underscore adult education's important role as a transition program to postsecondary education.

3) **Provide adult education in the workplace as a part of on-the-job training.** Until 2004, when adult education received a large funding cut, programs were sometimes offered in automobile and other manufacturing worksites. This enabled employees

FIGURE 6

**Developmental Education and Student Success in Michigan Community Colleges**

| School Year | Students Who Required Developmental Courses | Retention Rate | Completion/ Graduation/Transfer Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2007-08** | 58% | 71% | 44% |
| **2008-09** | 57% | 72% | 48% |
| **2009-10** | 62% | 74% | 48% |
| **2010-11** | 63% | 73% | 50% |
| **2011-12** | 62% | 72% | 52% |
| **2012-13** | 60% | 71% | 52% |
| **2013-14** | 61% | 72% | 53% |
| **2014-15** | 59% | 70% | 54% |
| **2015-16** | 56% | 71% | 55% |

Source: State of Michigan Dashboard using data from the Michigan Community College Association (https://midashboard.michigan.gov/education, accessed on October 5, 2017)

who were held back from advancing in their jobs by reading, language or mathematics deficiencies to receive basic skills training at the workplace. Following the cuts, many counties and school districts discontinued the practice and until 2016-17, there were fewer than 50 adults who participate in workplace literacy programs in most years (Fig. 7). Providing funding for on-site adult education serving low-skilled workers in their workplace (before or after work) can help workers avoid transportation barriers and save driving time, thus incentivizing them to participate.

4) **Develop career pathway systems**. Career pathways are ideally the best vehicle to deliver adult education. A career pathway is defined as "a well-articulated sequence of quality education and training offerings and supportive services that enable educationally underprepared youth and adults to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in a given industry sector or occupation."[12] By linking basic skills training, career-specific occupational training, wraparound services (such as child care, transportation and/or financial services) and employment, they combine the three contextualized learning strategies discussed above.

FIGURE 7

**Adult Education Students in Workplace Literacy Programs**

| Program Year | Total Enrolled | In Workplace Literacy | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number | Percent |
| **2000-01** | 56,001 | 453 | 0.8% |
| **2001-02** | 75,988 | 734 | 1.0% |
| **2002-03** | 70,893 | 473 | 0.7% |
| **2003-04** | 48,273 | 234 | 0.5% |
| **2004-05** | 34,768 | 51 | 0.1% |
| **2005-06** | 32,024 | 26 | 0.1% |
| **2006-07** | 32,856 | 33 | 0.1% |
| **2007-08** | 30,571 | 36 | 0.1% |
| **2008-09** | 28,243 | 62 | 0.2% |
| **2009-10** | 31,106 | 17 | 0.1% |
| **2010-11** | 25,745 | 9 | 0.0% |
| **2011-12** | 28,614 | 2 | 0.0% |
| **2012-13** | 29,533 | 48 | 0.2% |
| **2013-14** | 28,625 | 33 | 0.1% |
| **2014-15** | 27,443 | 45 | 0.2% |
| **2015-16** | 27,483 | 44 | 0.2% |
| **2016-17** | 30,196 | 165 | 0.5% |

Source: Workforce Development Agency Adult Education National Reporting System tables

Presently, if a low-skilled adult wants to acquire a credential and a skilled job, the required educational steps are usually sequential and mutually exclusive: first, the individual must participate in adult education to acquire a GED, then he or she must enroll in postsecondary education to acquire an occupational credential, and finally, he or she uses the newly gained credential to look for a job. Services are often provided in isolation, i.e. adult education is not used at community colleges in place of developmental education or integrated into on-the-job training.

By integrating the steps in the training sequence, career pathways enable low-skilled adults to learn basic skills in the context of occupational training leading to a credential; for example, English as a Second Language or high school mathematics is taught in a robotics or electrician training program leading to a certificate or license. Such programs shorten the time needed to obtain a postsecondary credential, because basic skills remediation is taught alongside of (or integrated into) occupational training rather than as a prerequisite. This is very important for adult learners with jobs and families, because the longer the time needed, the greater the likelihood of individuals dropping out prior to completion. Some career pathways programs provide supportive services such as child care, and some are directly connected to employment, with a guarantee of job placement upon successful completion.

Each of these expansions of adult education delivery will help adult learners persist in and complete their programs and will enable a larger number of individuals to participate. However, serving more people and serving them differently will require additional funding.

## MICHIGAN'S SHORTSIGHTED NEGLECT OF ADULT EDUCATION

Although the need for adult education is obvious, Michigan has undercut its accessibility in several ways, most notably in its drastic reduction of funding in 2004. This reduction was included in the then-governor's budget and passed by the Legislature not due to a perceived decrease in need, but to reduce state spending during an especially tight budget period. Neither the current administration nor the Legislature has made an effort to restore the lost funding, even though the state has been in a generally stronger fiscal position for several years.

Following are the three ways Michigan has disinvested in this important workforce development tool:

**State Appropriations:** Michigan appropriated $80 million per year for adult education in budget years 1997 to 2001, decreased funding slightly in the following years, and then slashed funding to $20 million in budget year 2004. Adult education appropriations remained flat at $22 million for several years before being increased to $23.75 million beginning in 2016—a 70% reduction from 2001. Federal funding has not increased significantly to make up for the loss in state funding, so total funding for adult education in Michigan has dropped 61% since 2001, not accounting for inflation (Fig. 8).

FIGURE 8

**History of Funding for Michigan's Adult Education Programs**

| Program Year | Federal Funding | | | State Funding* | Total Funding | State Portion of Funding |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Base Grant | English Literacy & Civics Grant | Total | | | |
| 1995-96 | NA | NA | NA | $185,000,000 | NA | NA |
| 1996-97 | $8,287,819 | $0 | $8,287,819 | $80,000,000 | $88,287,819 | 90.6% |
| 1997-98 | $11,482,416 | $0 | $11,482,416 | $80,000,000 | $91,482,416 | 87.4% |
| 1998-99 | $11,654,356 | $0 | $11,654,356 | $80,000,000 | $91,654,356 | 87.3% |
| 1999-00 | $11,973,584 | $0 | $11,973,584 | $80,000,000 | $91,973,584 | 87.0% |
| 2000-01 | $13,691,487 | $437,129 | $14,128,616 | $80,000,000 | $94,128,616 | 85.0% |
| 2001-02 | $15,159,503 | $1,160,594 | $16,320,097 | $75,000,000 | $91,320,097 | 82.1% |
| 2002-03 | $16,310,508 | $1,251,632 | $17,562,140 | $74,569,800 | $92,131,940 | 80.9% |
| 2003-04 | $14,679,457 | $1,332,464 | $16,011,921 | $20,000,000 | $36,011,921 | 55.5% |
| 2004-05 | $14,871,841 | $1,355,222 | $16,227,063 | $20,000,000 | $36,227,063 | 55.2% |
| 2005-06 | $14,755,635 | $1,352,236 | $16,107,871 | $21,000,000 | $37,107,871 | 56.6% |
| 2006-07 | $14,606,756 | $1,352,688 | $15,959,444 | $24,000,000 | $39,959,444 | 60.1% |
| 2007-08 | $14,606,750 | $1,369,315 | $15,976,065 | $24,000,000 | $39,976,065 | 60.0% |
| 2008-09 | $14,349,799 | $1,295,444 | $15,645,243 | $24,000,000 | $39,645,243 | 60.5% |
| 2009-10 | $12,914,820 | $1,300,460 | $14,215,280 | $22,000,000 | $36,215,280 | 60.7% |
| 2010-11 | $13,003,714 | $1,376,349 | $14,380,063 | $22,000,000 | $36,380,063 | 60.5% |
| 2011-12 | $13,419,141 | $1,352,694 | $14,771,835 | $22,000,000 | $36,771,835 | 59.8% |
| 2012-13 | $12,623,242 | $1,341,874 | $13,965,116 | $22,000,000 | $35,965,116 | 61.2% |
| 2013-14 | $11,935,152 | $1,253,164 | $13,188,316 | $22,000,000 | $35,188,316 | 62.5% |
| 2014-15 | $11,972,115 | $1,253,159 | $13,225,274 | $20,900,000 | $34,125,274 | 61.2% |
| 2015-16 | $12,373,128 | $1,251,135 | $13,624,263 | $23,750,000 | $37,374,263 | 63.5% |
| 2016-17 | $12,235,393 | $1,220,708 | $13,456,101 | $23,750,000 | $37,206,101 | 63.8% |
| 2017-18 | $12,099,957 | $1,204,250 | $13,304,207 | $23,750,000 | $37,054,207 | 64.1% |
| **Change FY 2001>2018** | **-12%** | **175%** | **-6%** | **-70%** | **-61%** | **—** |

*The four most recent figures for state funding take into account a new 5% administrative set-aside deducted from the total appropriations.
Source: U.S. Department of Education and Michigan House Fiscal Agency

**Administrative Set-Aside:** Although the Legislature increased the adult education appropriation from $22 million to $25 million beginning in budget year 2016, it continued the practice begun in budget year 2015 of cutting funds to providers by 5%, bringing the amount to $23.75 million. This is because adult education is now allocated through regional fiduciaries rather than directly to providers, and 5% of the existing base funding for adult education is now set aside for regional administration of the grant dollars. While it may make sense to provide administrative funding to fiduciaries, the state should appropriate additional funds for this purpose rather than take it from adult education providers.

**Erosion:** When adjusted for inflation, the $23.75 million appropriated for 2017-18 was equal to only $16.5 million in 2001 dollars.[13] In inflation-adjusted dollars, Michigan reduced its state funding by 78% between 2001 and 2018, causing total funding for adult education to drop by 73% (Fig. 9).

## CONSEQUENCES OF ADULT EDUCATION CUTS

The funding cuts over the years have caused a drop in the number of students enrolling in, completing and advancing in adult education programs. Following the large funding reduction in the 2004 budget, student enrollment fell from more than 70,000 to less than

FIGURE 9

**Reduction of Adult Education Funding 2001 to 2018, in Inflation-Adjusted Dollars**

| Program Year | State Funding | Total Funding | State Funding (2001 dollars) | Total Funding (2001 dollars) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2000-01 | $80,000,000 | $94,128,616 | $80,000,000 | $94,128,616 |
| 2017-18 | $23,750,000 | $37,054,207 | $16,508,880 | $25,756,780 |
| Decrease | -70% | -61% | -79% | -73% |

Source: Calculated using the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index Inflation Calculator

FIGURE 10

**As Adult Education Funding Has Dropped, so Have Enrollments and Completions**

| Program Year | Total Funding | Amount Spent per Student | Students Enrolled | Students Completed Level | | Students Completed Level and Advanced One or More levels | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Number | Percent | Number | Percent |
| 2000-01 | $94,128,616 | $1,681 | 56,001 | 15,471 | 28% | 7,760 | 14% |
| 2001-02 | $91,320,097 | $1,202 | 75,988 | 23,922 | 31% | 936 | 1% |
| 2002-03 | $92,131,940 | $1,300 | 70,893 | 17,496 | 25% | 7,038 | 10% |
| 2003-04 | $36,011,921 | $746 | 48,273 | 15,280 | 32% | 6,588 | 14% |
| 2004-05 | $36,227,063 | $1,042 | 34,768 | 11,210 | 32% | 3,536 | 10% |
| 2005-06 | $37,107,871 | $1,159 | 32,024 | 10,229 | 32% | 3,139 | 10% |
| 2006-07 | $39,959,444 | $1,216 | 32,856 | 12,293 | 37% | 4,256 | 13% |
| 2007-08 | $39,976,065 | $1,308 | 30,571 | 11,866 | 39% | 3,587 | 12% |
| 2008-09 | $39,645,243 | $1,404 | 28,243 | 11,265 | 40% | 3,470 | 12% |
| 2009-10 | $36,215,280 | $1,164 | 31,106 | 11,076 | 36% | 3,320 | 11% |
| 2010-11 | $36,380,063 | $1,413 | 25,745 | 10,289 | 40% | 3,115 | 12% |
| 2011-12 | $36,771,835 | $1,285 | 28,614 | 9,823 | 34% | 2,754 | 10% |
| 2012-13 | $35,965,116 | $1,218 | 29,533 | 10,779 | 37% | 3,071 | 10% |
| 2013-14 | $35,188,316 | $1,229 | 28,625 | 9,393 | 33% | 2,762 | 10% |
| 2014-15 | $34,125,274 | $1,243 | 27,443 | 9,951 | 36% | 2,771 | 10% |
| 2015-16 | $37,374,263 | $1,360 | 27,483 | 10,455 | 38% | 2,980 | 11% |
| 2016-17 | $37,206,101 | $1,232 | 30,196 | 9,327 | 31% | N/A | N/A |
| Change 2000-01 > 2016-17 | -60% | -27% | -46% | -40% | — | -62% | — |

Sources: U.S. Department of Education and Michigan House Fiscal Agency (Funding); Michigan Workforce Development Agency National Reporting System tables (Adult education participation)

50,000, and has been below 30,000 during most of the past several years. The number completing an academic level dropped from more than 15,000 (and nearly 24,000 in one year) to between 9,000 and 12,000 most years.[14] The percentage of enrollees completing a level has been between 30% and 40% most years, so there appears to be a direct correlation between the amount of funding and the number of students enrolling and completing (Fig. 10).

In addition to serving fewer students than in the past, Michigan does not compare well with other Midwest states on student participation or success measures. It ranks close to the bottom of states nationwide in the percent of students enrolled in adult education relative to those without a high school diploma or GED. It also ranks in the bottom half of states in the percent of students who improve in beginning literacy skills and who have a goal of postsecondary training, though of the students with that goal, the percentage who successfully transition to postsecondary is somewhat higher relative to other states.

Michigan needs to expand the number of programs available to adults who have not completed high school, and facilitate student success by providing adult education in contextualized contexts as discussed previously. Likewise, because beginning literacy students are among the least skilled and most economically vulnerable of adult education students, providing literacy instruction in the context of the workplace or as a two-generation strategy can help those participants succeed at higher rates.

## HOW MUCH ADULT EDUCATION FUNDING IS NEEDED?

Dividing the total funding appropriated each fiscal year from FY 2012-13 through 2016–17 by the number of students served each of those years shows that the state pays approximately $1,255 per individual adult education student. Unfortunately, because funding levels to districts are based on the previous year's enrollments, districts that have more registrations than the prior year have to work with much less than $1,255 per student. This puts them in the position of having to either turn students away or to be constrained in the type of instruction they can offer or the materials they can use.

From Program Years 2012-13 to 2016-17, when adult education received state and federal funds totaling between $35 million and $38 million per year, the state served an average of 28,656 adult education students per year. Assuming a cost of $1,255 per student, if total funding were to be increased by $5 million, then the state could serve almost 4,000 more students—a 14% increase to 36,639 students. If the 4,000 additional students were between the ages of 25 and 44, then the percentage of individuals that age without a high school diploma or GED who are enrolled in adult education would go from 6% to 10%.

Figure 11 shows approximately how many more students the adult education system could serve if funding is increased. (The table does not account for inflation.) While the Michigan League for Public Policy does not

FIGURE 11

**How Many More Low-Skilled Adults Could Be Served by Increasing Adult Education Funding?**

| | Annual Funding Level | Number of Students Served | Increase in Students Served | If Entire Increase Serves Adults Age 25-44 Without HS diploma | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | # Served | % Served |
| **Five-Year Average*** | **$35,971,814** | **28,656** | **—** | **13,914** | **6%** |
| If Increased by $5 M | $40,971,814 | 32,639 | 3,983 | 17,897 | 8% |
| If Increased by $10 M | $45,971,814 | 36,622 | 7,966 | 21,880 | 10% |
| If Increased by $15 M | $50,971,814 | 40,605 | 11,949 | 25,863 | 12% |
| If Increased by $20 M | $55,971,814 | 44,588 | 15,932 | 29,846 | 13% |
| If Increased by $25 M | $60,971,814 | 48,572 | 19,916 | 33,830 | 15% |

*Five-year average is for Program Years 2012-13 through 2016-17.

necessarily recommend that only adults age 25-44 without a high school diploma be targeted for additional money, the percent of this population that would be served with increased funding serves as a useful benchmark for measuring the degree that adult education meets the need in Michigan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Increase Adult Education Funding

To ensure an adequate adult education funding base that will enable Michigan to meet the needs of its low-skilled workers and help them transition into postsecondary training, Michigan needs to:

1) Increase adult education annual appropriations by $5 million to $25 million.
2) Develop a formula for increasing adult education funding each year to keep up with inflation, rather than maintaining it at a flat level that will erode in value over time.
3) Monitor developments in federal adult education funding and be prepared for any federal funding cuts in the future.

### Provide Adult Education in Contextualized Environments

Low-skilled adults often have barriers that prevent them from participating or successfully completing adult education programs, and Michigan needs to try new ways to facilitate success for these learners. To connect adult education instruction with other aspects of students' lives, Michigan should:

1) Encourage and fund local adult education programs to offer classes in nontraditional settings such as community colleges, workplaces and sites in which parents can bring their children.
2) Provide incentives for community colleges and school districts to enter into cooperative agreements in which adult education classes fulfill students' developmental (remedial) education requirements, and remove any institutional barriers that prevent such cooperative agreements.
3) Encourage employers to provide match funding for the provision of adult education instruction in the workplace.
4) Encourage local adult education programs to become part of occupation-specific career pathway systems and provide funding for additional instructors.

### Ensure that Adult Education is Part of the Pathway to Economic Security for Public Assistance Recipients

Public assistance recipients are among those with the greatest need for skill-building, which provides economic benefit to their families and positively affects their children's skill development. To eliminate barriers that prevent members of this population from participating and successfully completing adult education programs, Michigan should:

1) Allow adult education to satisfy Family Independence Program work requirements without imposing the federal requirement of 20 hours per week of other work activities. Michigan's high work participation rate allows for some level of flexibility in this area.
2) Build on the approach, begun under Governor Granholm with the Jobs, Education and Training (JET) program and expanded under Governor Snyder with the Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope (PATH) program, of facilitating skill building for cash assistance recipients, while continuing to reject the "work first" philosophy that prioritizes short-term employment goals over long-term skill building and economic self-sufficiency.

## ENDNOTES


1. American Community Survey 1-year estimate, 2015.
2. Ibid.
3. State of Michigan Dashboard using data from the Michigan Community College Association. (https://midashboard.michigan.gov/education, accessed on October 5, 2017.)
4. Carnevale, Anthony P., Nicole Smith and Jeff Strohl, *Recovery: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020*, Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, June 2013.
5. Ibid.
6. Shaffer, Barry, *Strengthening State Adult Education Policies for English as a Second Language Populations*, Working Poor Families Project, Fall 2014.
7. A student is counted as receiving public assistance if he or she is receiving financial assistance from federal, state or local government agencies. (Note: Social Security benefits, unemployment insurance, and employment-funded disability are not included under this definition.)
8. For more information on the subsidy level and on the barriers preventing low-income parents from accessing Michigan's child care subsidy, see Sorenson, Pat, *Failure to Invest in High-Quality Child Care Hurts Children and State's Economy*, Michigan League for Public Policy, September 2014. (http://www.mlpp.org/failure-to-invest-in-high-quality-child-care-hurts-children-and-states-economy)
9. Pathways to Potential, a Michigan Department of Health and Human Services program, uses the school environment to assist parents and children in attendance, education, health, safety and self-sufficiency. For more information on this program, go to http://www.michigan.gov/dhs.
10. For more information on the federal work requirements in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, see Michigan League for Public Policy, *From Safety Net to Springboard: Using the Family Independence Program to Help More Parents Build Their Skills*, December 2015. (http://www.mlpp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/from-safety-net-to-springboard.pdf)
11. Bassett, Meegan Dugan, *Considering Two-Generation Strategies in the States*, Working Poor Families Project, Summer 2014.
12. Center for Law and Social Policy, *The Alliance for Quality Career Pathways Approach: Developing Criteria and Metrics for Quality Career Pathways*, February 2013.
13. Figures are calculated using the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index inflation calculator (http://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl).
14. An academic level comprises two school grade levels.

Appendix 1

| Educational Level of Michigan Residents Age 25 and Over, by County | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| County | Population 25+ | Less Than 9th Grade | 9th to 12th Grade No Diploma | HS Graduate (Includes GED) | Some College No Degree | Associate Degree | Bachelor's Degree | Graduate Degree |
| Alcona | 8,552 | 3.0% | 8.5% | 40.2% | 25.3% | 8.6% | 9.2% | 5.2% |
| Alger | 7,245 | 3.2% | 7.4% | 44.3% | 19.1% | 7.9% | 12.8% | 5.3% |
| Allegan | 76,426 | 3.3% | 6.6% | 37.9% | 22.0% | 8.8% | 14.4% | 7.0% |
| Alpena | 21,150 | 3.0% | 6.6% | 33.6% | 27.3% | 12.7% | 10.2% | 6.6% |
| Antrim | 17,290 | 2.7% | 6.7% | 33.1% | 22.4% | 8.5% | 16.5% | 10.2% |
| Arenac | 11,426 | 4.0% | 9.7% | 43.0% | 22.1% | 9.9% | 6.9% | 4.5% |
| Baraga | 6,422 | 4.2% | 12.5% | 42.3% | 19.0% | 6.3% | 9.9% | 5.7% |
| Barry | 41,144 | 2.3% | 6.0% | 37.4% | 24.6% | 10.7% | 12.3% | 6.6% |
| Bay | 74,904 | 2.9% | 7.6% | 35.8% | 24.3% | 11.2% | 12.4% | 5.8% |
| Benzie | 13,009 | 2.3% | 6.2% | 33.5% | 22.2% | 10.1% | 14.8% | 10.8% |
| Berrien | 106,865 | 3.4% | 7.5% | 29.6% | 22.7% | 10.0% | 15.8% | 10.9% |
| Branch | 29,903 | 4.5% | 7.4% | 40.5% | 24.8% | 9.1% | 9.3% | 4.4% |
| Calhoun | 90,994 | 2.9% | 6.5% | 35.7% | 24.9% | 9.2% | 13.9% | 6.8% |
| Cass | 36,542 | 3.0% | 9.2% | 34.7% | 26.0% | 9.7% | 11.6% | 5.8% |
| Charlevoix | 19,033 | 1.4% | 5.9% | 31.9% | 22.6% | 9.7% | 16.8% | 11.7% |
| Cheboygan | 19,223 | 2.4% | 8.8% | 38.3% | 24.1% | 8.1% | 11.6% | 6.7% |
| Chippewa | 26,407 | 3.0% | 7.5% | 37.8% | 24.2% | 7.8% | 12.8% | 6.9% |
| Clare | 22,225 | 5.3% | 10.6% | 39.2% | 25.6% | 7.9% | 7.4% | 4.0% |
| Clinton | 52,058 | 1.6% | 4.7% | 28.0% | 24.4% | 10.6% | 19.8% | 10.9% |
| Crawford | 10,325 | 2.7% | 9.3% | 35.9% | 25.2% | 10.2% | 10.8% | 5.8% |
| Delta | 26,485 | 2.4% | 5.0% | 33.8% | 25.6% | 12.6% | 14.4% | 6.1% |
| Dickinson | 18,806 | 1.2% | 5.2% | 39.0% | 21.8% | 9.4% | 16.3% | 7.1% |
| Eaton | 75,109 | 1.7% | 4.6% | 29.4% | 28.1% | 10.9% | 16.7% | 8.5% |
| Emmet | 23,718 | 1.2% | 4.8% | 25.8% | 24.5% | 10.8% | 20.6% | 12.3% |
| Genesee | 278,481 | 2.5% | 7.9% | 32.3% | 27.0% | 10.5% | 12.4% | 7.5% |
| Gladwin | 18,727 | 4.9% | 10.0% | 40.6% | 22.2% | 8.9% | 7.9% | 5.5% |
| Gogebic | 11,901 | 1.5% | 5.7% | 38.9% | 26.0% | 10.4% | 11.7% | 5.8% |
| Gr. Traverse | 64,721 | 1.5% | 4.0% | 26.2% | 25.8% | 10.8% | 19.1% | 12.6% |
| Gratiot | 28,260 | 3.7% | 6.8% | 41.3% | 25.8% | 8.2% | 8.8% | 5.4% |
| Hillsdale | 31,222 | 3.9% | 9.0% | 38.9% | 23.3% | 8.2% | 10.6% | 6.0% |
| Houghton | 21,430 | 2.4% | 5.6% | 34.4% | 18.9% | 7.8% | 18.7% | 12.2% |
| Huron | 23,515 | 4.0% | 7.3% | 43.2% | 21.3% | 9.3% | 10.1% | 4.8% |
| Ingham | 170,159 | 2.5% | 5.1% | 21.6% | 23.9% | 9.1% | 20.6% | 17.2% |
| Ionia | 43,274 | 3.0% | 7.6% | 39.1% | 25.5% | 9.2% | 11.2% | 4.4% |
| Iosco | 19,508 | 2.4% | 9.2% | 39.6% | 24.2% | 8.3% | 10.0% | 6.3% |
| Iron | 8,914 | 1.8% | 6.5% | 44.7% | 20.2% | 8.7% | 12.5% | 5.6% |
| Isabella | 37,410 | 2.4% | 6.1% | 31.2% | 23.7% | 8.4% | 16.1% | 12.1% |
| Jackson | 109,502 | 2.4% | 7.9% | 33.6% | 25.9% | 9.7% | 14.1% | 6.4% |
| Kalamazoo | 160,127 | 1.7% | 4.6% | 22.9% | 24.9% | 9.7% | 21.3% | 14.8% |
| Kalkaska | 12,366 | 2.8% | 10.6% | 40.3% | 24.0% | 8.7% | 8.5% | 5.1% |
| Kent | 408,603 | 4.2% | 6.2% | 25.0% | 22.0% | 8.9% | 22.2% | 11.5% |
| Keweenaw | 1,710 | 1.9% | 3.7% | 34.3% | 22.0% | 13.2% | 14.4% | 10.4% |

Appendix 1 (continued)

| Educational Level of Michigan Residents Age 25 and Over, by County | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| County | Population 25+ | Less Than 9th Grade | 9th to 12th Grade No Diploma | HS Graduate (Includes GED) | Some College No Degree | Associate Degree | Bachelor's Degree | Graduate Degree |
| Lake | 8,741 | 4.9% | 13.0% | 42.6% | 22.9% | 7.6% | 5.8% | 3.2% |
| Lapeer | 61,478 | 3.0% | 6.8% | 36.9% | 25.6% | 10.0% | 11.2% | 6.6% |
| Leelanau | 16,628 | 1.6% | 3.6% | 22.2% | 21.4% | 10.0% | 23.5% | 17.7% |
| Lenawee | 67,537 | 3.1% | 6.4% | 36.9% | 25.1% | 8.6% | 13.1% | 6.9% |
| Livingston | 127,944 | 1.0% | 3.8% | 25.8% | 25.6% | 9.8% | 22.4% | 11.7% |
| Luce | 4,916 | 3.2% | 8.0% | 44.1% | 23.9% | 7.0% | 9.8% | 4.0% |
| Mackinac | 8,394 | 2.7% | 8.2% | 35.3% | 26.3% | 8.4% | 11.9% | 7.3% |
| Macomb | 597,899 | 3.8% | 7.1% | 30.4% | 24.4% | 10.6% | 15.5% | 8.3% |
| Manistee | 18,130 | 2.3% | 7.3% | 36.9% | 23.3% | 10.2% | 12.3% | 7.6% |
| Marquette | 44,635 | 1.8% | 3.6% | 31.7% | 23.7% | 9.0% | 20.1% | 10.0% |
| Mason | 20,576 | 2.7% | 5.8% | 34.1% | 25.6% | 11.1% | 13.3% | 7.5% |
| Mecosta | 26,482 | 3.0% | 7.7% | 35.2% | 23.1% | 9.8% | 13.1% | 8.1% |
| Menominee | 17,312 | 2.4% | 6.1% | 43.1% | 22.2% | 10.3% | 11.5% | 4.4% |
| Midland | 57,485 | 1.7% | 4.2% | 29.6% | 21.3% | 10.3% | 19.6% | 13.3% |
| Missaukee | 10,411 | 2.9% | 9.4% | 41.5% | 22.8% | 10.1% | 9.0% | 4.4% |
| Monroe | 103,660 | 2.4% | 7.2% | 36.1% | 24.7% | 10.8% | 12.8% | 6.0% |
| Montcalm | 43,290 | 3.6% | 8.8% | 38.8% | 26.0% | 10.2% | 8.7% | 3.8% |
| Montmorency | 7,434 | 3.9% | 8.9% | 42.2% | 24.3% | 8.8% | 7.5% | 4.3% |
| Muskegon | 115,950 | 2.8% | 8.0% | 34.8% | 25.6% | 10.8% | 12.4% | 5.6% |
| Newaygo | 33,063 | 4.4% | 9.8% | 40.7% | 22.6% | 8.2% | 9.7% | 4.6% |
| Oakland | 860,757 | 2.1% | 4.4% | 19.5% | 21.2% | 7.7% | 25.7% | 19.3% |
| Oceana | 17,816 | 5.1% | 9.3% | 35.6% | 23.7% | 9.3% | 11.1% | 6.0% |
| Ogemaw | 15,655 | 3.4% | 11.5% | 39.5% | 25.3% | 8.9% | 7.4% | 4.0% |
| Ontonagon | 5,053 | 2.4% | 5.9% | 41.6% | 22.7% | 10.1% | 12.0% | 5.4% |
| Osceola | 15,991 | 4.2% | 8.4% | 44.9% | 21.3% | 8.3% | 8.5% | 4.6% |
| Oscoda | 6,228 | 5.8% | 11.1% | 39.0% | 27.3% | 6.6% | 7.3% | 3.0% |
| Otsego | 16,963 | 2.0% | 6.5% | 37.6% | 24.3% | 9.1% | 13.1% | 7.3% |
| Ottawa | 169,697 | 3.2% | 5.1% | 29.2% | 21.8% | 9.1% | 21.3% | 10.3% |
| Presque Isle | 10,079 | 3.6% | 8.0% | 40.4% | 23.1% | 8.3% | 10.5% | 6.2% |
| Roscommon | 18,885 | 2.6% | 9.1% | 40.0% | 25.8% | 8.6% | 8.4% | 5.5% |
| Saginaw | 131,885 | 3.3% | 8.2% | 34.0% | 24.4% | 9.4% | 13.6% | 7.1% |
| Saint Clair | 111,685 | 2.6% | 7.9% | 35.0% | 26.1% | 10.8% | 11.3% | 6.3% |
| Saint Joseph | 40,651 | 5.6% | 8.4% | 38.9% | 23.7% | 8.1% | 9.5% | 5.9% |
| Sanilac | 29,278 | 3.3% | 8.8% | 43.3% | 22.2% | 9.3% | 8.1% | 5.0% |
| Schoolcraft | 6,109 | 4.1% | 6.7% | 45.8% | 20.3% | 7.4% | 11.0% | 4.7% |
| Shiawassee | 47,519 | 1.9% | 6.5% | 36.7% | 27.7% | 11.4% | 10.4% | 5.3% |
| Tuscola | 38,124 | 3.2% | 7.6% | 42.3% | 23.6% | 9.5% | 9.1% | 4.8% |
| Van Buren | 50,901 | 5.2% | 8.3% | 33.4% | 23.9% | 8.8% | 13.2% | 7.1% |
| Washtenaw | 221,550 | 1.7% | 3.6% | 15.6% | 18.8% | 7.1% | 25.3% | 28.0% |
| Wayne | 1,168,342 | 4.6% | 10.3% | 30.2% | 24.6% | 8.0% | 13.5% | 8.8% |
| Wexford | 22,657 | 2.8% | 8.6% | 38.2% | 24.1% | 9.6% | 11.2% | 5.5% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Earnings and Poverty by Educational Level of Michigan Residents Age 25 and Over, by County

| | Median Earnings | | | | Poverty Rate | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| County | Less Than HS | HS Graduate (Includes GED) | Some College or Associate Degree | Bachelor's Degree | Less Than HS | HS Graduate (Includes GED) | Some College or Associate Degree | Bachelor's Degree or Higher |
| Alcona | $20,208 | $22,218 | $23,705 | $35,313 | 27.1% | 15.0% | 11.2% | 3.7% |
| Alger | $18,203 | $19,432 | $27,218 | $49,931 | 25.5% | 16.4% | 9.5% | 5.8% |
| Allegan | $25,823 | $30,944 | $35,219 | $46,926 | 26.8% | 11.1% | 8.4% | 3.2% |
| Alpena | $12,179 | $22,054 | $29,438 | $39,194 | 29.1% | 14.4% | 12.9% | 3.9% |
| Antrim | $19,167 | $24,524 | $28,170 | $39,133 | 26.8% | 11.9% | 10.5% | 4.5% |
| Arenac | $16,289 | $23,597 | $27,222 | $43,795 | 30.2% | 18.3% | 10.8% | 5.4% |
| Baraga | $20,179 | $26,630 | $23,527 | $37,366 | 23.4% | 11.9% | 13.1% | 4.8% |
| Barry | $24,149 | $30,994 | $36,302 | $48,544 | 19.4% | 8.8% | 6.4% | 1.6% |
| Bay | $14,735 | $26,834 | $30,316 | $45,837 | 25.6% | 14.9% | 11.9% | 4.5% |
| Benzie | $18,224 | $22,945 | $29,643 | $41,404 | 23.2% | 11.1% | 8.4% | 4.6% |
| Berrien | $16,822 | $26,210 | $31,006 | $45,233 | 35.5% | 15.7% | 11.7% | 4.5% |
| Branch | $21,060 | $27,629 | $30,706 | $41,705 | 32.6% | 14.6% | 9.1% | 4.9% |
| Calhoun | $17,247 | $26,607 | $31,054 | $46,288 | 29.7% | 16.3% | 12.5% | 3.1% |
| Cass | $23,962 | $27,871 | $32,444 | $45,000 | 24.2% | 13.2% | 9.2% | 2.4% |
| Charlevoix | $18,462 | $24,863 | $29,120 | $37,485 | 27.2% | 14.6% | 8.7% | 3.0% |
| Cheboygan | $16,844 | $21,584 | $25,431 | $35,943 | 26.4% | 15.6% | 13.5% | 7.1% |
| Chippewa | $16,175 | $20,083 | $25,990 | $39,405 | 24.3% | 14.7% | 11.9% | 3.8% |
| Clare | $22,219 | $21,787 | $24,204 | $44,091 | 28.4% | 20.5% | 19.3% | 6.6% |
| Clinton | $19,708 | $31,111 | $36,786 | $54,407 | 25.4% | 8.3% | 7.7% | 2.5% |
| Crawford | $17,135 | $21,924 | $28,590 | $33,550 | 24.7% | 18.2% | 9.8% | 4.4% |
| Delta | $20,202 | $25,712 | $26,804 | $42,542 | 21.7% | 16.5% | 14.1% | 6.7% |
| Dickinson | $18,900 | $26,116 | $30,746 | $39,363 | 29.6% | 15.2% | 12.2% | 7.6% |
| Eaton | $18,417 | $28,808 | $36,574 | $52,694 | 22.5% | 12.2% | 7.0% | 2.8% |
| Emmet | $16,750 | $22,448 | $28,212 | $38,627 | 27.9% | 12.3% | 8.0% | 4.0% |
| Genesee | $15,586 | $24,755 | $29,599 | $45,732 | 33.0% | 18.1% | 15.1% | 5.5% |
| Gladwin | $17,068 | $23,262 | $29,836 | $41,667 | 31.5% | 16.7% | 11.5% | 5.9% |
| Gogebic | $17,625 | $19,935 | $22,053 | $43,938 | 36.2% | 18.0% | 16.8% | 6.3% |
| Gr. Traverse | $16,645 | $25,179 | $30,564 | $41,430 | 22.4% | 12.4% | 8.7% | 3.5% |
| Gratiot | $19,873 | $25,946 | $30,987 | $43,806 | 33.0% | 16.7% | 14.0% | 5.6% |
| Hillsdale | $16,618 | $28,331 | $30,354 | $43,553 | 32.3% | 14.5% | 10.3% | 3.9% |
| Houghton | $17,500 | $24,708 | $26,762 | $38,150 | 37.7% | 16.5% | 13.1% | 9.6% |
| Huron | $21,915 | $26,781 | $30,209 | $41,032 | 24.4% | 10.4% | 10.6% | 4.4% |
| Ingham | $18,690 | $25,011 | $30,546 | $42,261 | 31.2% | 18.0% | 13.9% | 7.0% |
| Ionia | $20,302 | $26,372 | $33,149 | $46,741 | 29.0% | 13.9% | 8.4% | 3.6% |
| Iosco | $20,208 | $20,872 | $24,919 | $37,010 | 24.3% | 16.2% | 11.4% | 4.9% |
| Iron | $19,458 | $20,726 | $27,721 | $36,845 | 22.7% | 18.5% | 10.6% | 4.6% |
| Isabella | $14,590 | $24,299 | $26,722 | $38,060 | 31.2% | 15.8% | 13.7% | 8.3% |
| Jackson | $15,506 | $27,285 | $32,600 | $50,479 | 29.4% | 14.6% | 10.4% | 4.0% |
| Kalamazoo | $16,359 | $26,576 | $31,082 | $44,731 | 32.6% | 15.9% | 12.0% | 4.7% |
| Kalkaska | $21,635 | $27,475 | $25,241 | $33,393 | 23.5% | 15.6% | 14.4% | 7.7% |
| Kent | $18,880 | $26,847 | $31,420 | $45,304 | 30.8% | 14.0% | 10.0% | 4.0% |
| Keweenaw | $6,250 | $27,083 | $25,694 | $10,114 | 43.6% | 13.1% | 15.5% | 5.9% |

## Earnings and Poverty by Educational Level of Michigan Residents Age 25 and Over, by County

| County | Median Earnings: Less Than HS | Median Earnings: HS Graduate (Includes GED) | Median Earnings: Some College or Associate Degree | Median Earnings: Bachelor's Degree | Poverty Rate: Less Than HS | Poverty Rate: HS Graduate (Includes GED) | Poverty Rate: Some College or Associate Degree | Poverty Rate: Bachelor's Degree or Higher |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lake | $12,429 | $23,095 | $21,860 | $24,844 | 35.8% | 17.9% | 22.1% | 11.1% |
| Lapeer | $19,819 | $27,650 | $34,613 | $50,052 | 15.2% | 9.7% | 8.5% | 3.6% |
| Leelanau | $17,788 | $26,273 | $30,942 | $33,015 | 19.4% | 11.2% | 5.1% | 4.1% |
| Lenawee | $17,336 | $26,081 | $31,316 | $44,048 | 25.0% | 12.3% | 9.2% | 5.3% |
| Livingston | $20,929 | $32,880 | $39,005 | $63,038 | 14.9% | 7.2% | 4.8% | 2.5% |
| Luce | $15,625 | $17,633 | $26,827 | $46,818 | 19.8% | 20.8% | 15.0% | 1.8% |
| Mackinac | $17,245 | $22,731 | $27,120 | $36,793 | 19.2% | 14.7% | 9.6% | 5.9% |
| Macomb | $21,855 | $29,767 | $36,358 | $52,102 | 22.9% | 11.6% | 7.9% | 4.4% |
| Manistee | $15,561 | $21,934 | $28,567 | $38,906 | 22.1% | 15.3% | 11.3% | 5.7% |
| Marquette | $12,404 | $24,220 | $28,971 | $40,932 | 27.9% | 16.2% | 11.3% | 5.1% |
| Mason | $22,438 | $22,052 | $25,872 | $44,830 | 21.5% | 12.3% | 11.9% | 5.3% |
| Mecosta | $18,929 | $26,164 | $26,485 | $39,920 | 26.6% | 13.8% | 12.8% | 8.1% |
| Menominee | $16,200 | $27,650 | $29,647 | $36,747 | 22.8% | 11.3% | 12.6% | 6.3% |
| Midland | $16,303 | $23,886 | $31,852 | $55,461 | 27.7% | 15.3% | 9.4% | 3.3% |
| Missaukee | $20,980 | $26,585 | $26,806 | $41,513 | 25.4% | 14.1% | 10.4% | 4.4% |
| Monroe | $19,735 | $31,984 | $36,954 | $54,463 | 25.4% | 11.1% | 6.7% | 2.7% |
| Montcalm | $23,037 | $25,877 | $30,253 | $41,451 | 24.6% | 16.0% | 11.3% | 4.5% |
| Montmorency | $25,278 | $20,284 | $23,446 | $30,350 | 22.6% | 13.8% | 13.6% | 5.1% |
| Muskegon | $19,427 | $25,273 | $30,458 | $45,051 | 31.5% | 17.3% | 14.0% | 4.2% |
| Newaygo | $19,173 | $26,865 | $30,855 | $41,834 | 29.0% | 15.7% | 14.4% | 4.2% |
| Oakland | $19,882 | $28,228 | $35,348 | $60,226 | 23.0% | 12.1% | 8.5% | 3.4% |
| Oceana | $16,424 | $26,222 | $29,224 | $36,199 | 31.7% | 15.9% | 10.9% | 3.9% |
| Ogemaw | $19,306 | $23,086 | $25,453 | $48,750 | 29.0% | 15.0% | 15.0% | 6.2% |
| Ontonagon | $16,786 | $21,516 | $26,295 | $32,321 | 26.0% | 16.4% | 10.9% | 5.4% |
| Osceola | $25,160 | $25,407 | $27,229 | $35,486 | 29.8% | 18.3% | 16.8% | 8.3% |
| Oscoda | $22,917 | $21,149 | $24,840 | $19,635 | 32.0% | 16.4% | 14.3% | 8.5% |
| Otsego | $20,077 | $27,194 | $29,178 | $50,131 | 27.7% | 15.1% | 10.0% | 1.5% |
| Ottawa | $24,510 | $30,509 | $35,200 | $47,274 | 16.7% | 7.8% | 6.1% | 2.3% |
| Presque Isle | $21,477 | $21,435 | $27,026 | $42,891 | 17.8% | 13.2% | 11.1% | 3.7% |
| Roscommon | $12,422 | $21,490 | $24,162 | $43,125 | 31.6% | 15.9% | 13.2% | 9.5% |
| Saginaw | $15,956 | $25,057 | $28,285 | $46,274 | 28.3% | 16.1% | 12.8% | 4.0% |
| Saint Clair | $19,688 | $28,365 | $32,002 | $46,190 | 24.1% | 11.2% | 10.6% | 4.7% |
| Saint Joseph | $23,132 | $28,940 | $30,335 | $40,982 | 26.3% | 12.1% | 9.9% | 2.9% |
| Sanilac | $21,053 | $26,771 | $30,055 | $40,208 | 24.1% | 12.8% | 12.0% | 5.1% |
| Schoolcraft | $14,583 | $21,613 | $26,250 | $48,611 | 32.6% | 23.1% | 10.8% | 3.6% |
| Shiawassee | $22,619 | $29,669 | $31,899 | $41,555 | 22.8% | 11.5% | 10.4% | 4.7% |
| Tuscola | $18,313 | $25,517 | $30,223 | $41,489 | 24.6% | 13.1% | 10.7% | 4.3% |
| Van Buren | $19,248 | $26,306 | $32,264 | $47,800 | 29.2% | 15.6% | 12.3% | 4.1% |
| Washtenaw | $19,450 | $26,178 | $31,538 | $48,783 | 24.7% | 12.4% | 10.7% | 5.2% |
| Wayne | $18,491 | $26,067 | $31,174 | $49,005 | 38.2% | 22.1% | 17.0% | 6.4% |
| Wexford | $21,746 | $25,604 | $24,659 | $35,743 | 28.1% | 15.3% | 13.8% | 5.4% |

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates