

Michigan League for Public Policy

2019 BUDGET PRIORITIES

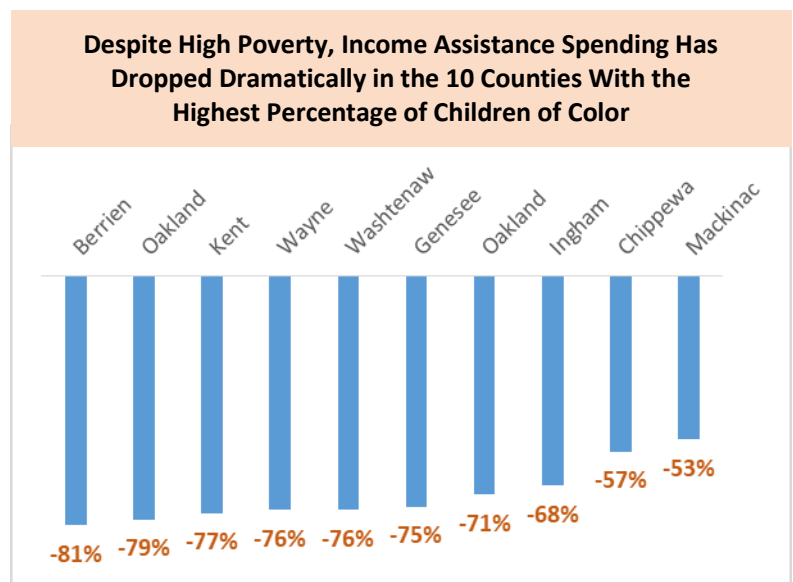
Address the Racial, Ethnic and Social Justice Impact of State Budget Decisions

— LEAGUE RECOMMENDATION —

State lawmakers should incorporate an analysis of the racial, ethnic and social justice impact of budget options and recommendations in their budget deliberations.

BACKGROUND: Through its Kids Count project, the League documents outcomes for children and their families, including inequitable outcomes based on race, ethnicity and place. For every negative outcome there is a backstory—a history of inequality based on systemic barriers that have held families and children of color back from many of the traditional pathways to good health and economic opportunity.

- **State budgets are not “colorblind,” even if their disproportionate impact is unintended.** How lawmakers divide up the state budget has the potential to help or hinder children’s development and ability to learn, create or limit economic opportunities, and protect or threaten public health and safety. Despite gross disparities in outcomes for families and children of color, many state budget decisions maintain or exacerbate current inequities. For example, despite the reality that children of color are two to three times more likely to live in poverty, state funding for programs to ensure that children’s basic needs are met has plummeted (for more, see the [League’s analysis](#) of the racial/ethnic impact of the 2018 Michigan budget).



- **There are many historical policy barriers to economic security.** Differences in economic opportunity are at the core of racial and ethnic inequities. Among the barriers have been housing discrimination, the impact of redlining on home-ownership, segregation in public schools, differences in educational quality and opportunity, racial discrimination in the workplace, and inequities in the ability to accumulate assets and wealth (for more, see the League’s Kids Count [Race for Results fact sheet](#)).

WHY IT MATTERS:

- **Policies that limit economic security for parents based on race, ethnicity and place will have a lasting impact on generations to come.** It is well-documented that exposure to poverty in the earliest years of life can affect children’s long-term development and success (for more, see the League’s Kids Count [Right Start report](#)). Children of color are more likely to be born too early, die in the first year of life, have poor nutrition, have untreated health conditions, and live in homes and neighborhoods where they are exposed to environmental toxins. The economic stresses their parents face are linked to depression and anxiety, which raise the risk of substance use disorders.
- **All Michigan residents must succeed or Michigan’s economy will not prosper.** A high-quality education is a vital path to equity for children in Michigan and is the foundation of economic growth. Three-quarters of African-American students and two-thirds of Latino students in Michigan are economically disadvantaged, and Michigan has not devoted the resources needed to overcome the well-documented impact of poverty on educational achievement.