



CREATE A ROUTE FOR BUILDING SKILLS

"How can you have a future for children if parents aren't educated enough to get jobs that allow them to take care of their kids?"

-Maria, Grand Rapids

THE ROAD AHEAD

To help adults get the skills they need to get ahead, Michigan should make sure:



More working adults have a postsecondary credential leading to a good-paying job.



Working adults in need of skills have access to education and training.



Postsecondary education is more affordable for working adults.



TIME FOR A TUNE-UP

Educational level strongly influences how much money a worker will earn and the likelihood of the worker being in poverty, but only 37% of Michigan residents age 25 or older have an associate's degree or higher. Many working parents find it difficult to balance work, school and family, and those who go back to school after being in the workforce sometimes need remediation. Yet in Michigan, tuition for higher education is among the highest in the country, there is no financial aid for those who have been out of high school more than 10 years, and there is far too little adult education accessible to prepare adults with basic skills for postsecondary education or occupational training.



ABOUT THE OWNER'S MANUAL FOR MICHIGAN

We all agree Michigan needs a major tune-up. And like the real vehicles we all depend on, it takes a lot of components and tools to make our state go. Without good jobs and training, reliable healthcare, quality education, strong families, and a safe environment, our state can't run properly. That's why we've created a clear and comprehensive plan to help lawmakers on the road ahead—the Owner's Manual for Michigan.

REPAIRING THE PROBLEM:



HOW TO BUILD SKILLS IN MICHIGAN

- 1. Increase funding for adult education by at least \$10 million.** Adult education helps people catch up on skills and provides a high school equivalency credential so they can succeed in postsecondary education or occupational training. However, Michigan has cut funding in the past 20 years from \$80 million to as low as \$20 million, resulting in the closing of many programs and reduction in the number of seats in the remaining programs. Increasing funding by \$10 million would allow Michigan's education providers to serve nearly 8,000 more students.
- 2. Reinstate the Part-Time Independent Student Grant.** In 2010, Michigan eliminated the Part-Time Independent Student Grant and another grant that were the only state financial aid options available for students over age 30 to attend a public university or community college. At the time, the Part-Time Independent Student Grant helped nearly 6,000 Michigan students at a cost of \$2.6 million. Reinstating it would help older students gain skills and a college degree and enable them to attend part time so they can work and take care of their families.
- 3. Make college tuition more affordable.** As a result of steep cuts in state support for Michigan universities over the past 15 years, Michigan college students pay for 69% of university operations expenses—the highest student cost burden in the Midwest and the sixth-highest in the nation. Michigan should restore the university funding that has been cut and couple it with stronger tuition restraint or tuition reduction requirements.

SHARING THE ROAD

Equity is of utmost importance when it comes to building a better Michigan. Michigan has significant racial disparities in educational attainment. Only 71% of Latinx residents have a high school diploma, compared with 85% of African American residents, 89% of Asian American residents and 92% of White residents, yet Michigan continues to underfund adult education despite evidence of its effectiveness. Plus, university education has become less and less accessible to those with low incomes (who are disproportionately people of color) due to neglect of state funding, so Michigan is not closing the racial college gap. Our state must be proactive in removing barriers and ensuring that all residents have the opportunity to build their skills and compete in the job market.

