



MICHIGAN'S **NEXT** CHAPTER

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MICHIGAN LEAGUE FOR PUBLIC POLICY

From our President & CEO



It's time to be bold.

As we emerge from the health and economic crises of the past two years, and as we recognize the pain and trauma that so many of our fellow Michiganders have experienced, we must seize this moment and recognize that Michigan's next chapter will be a bright one if we make the right choices today.

2021 taught us so much about how to strengthen our state and embrace an equitable future. The federal American Rescue Plan Act targeted investments and support to residents with the greatest need: people with low incomes, people working on the front lines, older adults, children, and marginalized communities. Because of those investments, including a Child Tax Credit expansion, a boost to the federal Earned Income Tax Credit, and additional funding for food and housing access, we saw an almost immediate dip in poverty from 2020 to 2021, and poverty among children in the United States dropped by 39% in that time period.

Here in Michigan, the League was able to celebrate so many budget wins in 2021, including: the largest investments in education and child care in state history; support for programs like Michigan Reconnect and Futures for Frontliners, which will put workers on the road to better jobs; expansion of the Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies initiative; increased funding for lead poisoning prevention and improvements to water systems; and funding to address the drastic racial and economic health disparities which were magnified by the pandemic.

Put simply, these state and federal investments—which the League and our partners have pushed for since long before COVID-19 reared its head—work. And to make sure Michigan's Next Chapter is a good one, we absolutely must make investments like these permanent. Ensuring that families have access to safe homes, healthy food, and high-quality education and child care cannot happen with a “one-time fix.”

As the League celebrates our 110th anniversary in 2022, we urge you to join us in writing Michigan's next chapter.

Together, we can make sure policymakers understand the critical need to invest this historic funding in a way that builds the brightest possible path forward for all. We can listen hard to the voices of Michiganders who have been left out of previous chapters due to their race, place, or income, and make sure they are never left out again. And we can closely examine the flaws and failures of our previous chapters so that we can give every Michigander the chance to have the story they deserve.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Monique Stanton', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Monique Stanton, President & CEO
Michigan League for Public Policy

Data in Action

As we reflect on 2021, we can see that with your support, our action yielded results.

Though the year brought incomparable changes to our state's societal and economic landscape, we see a future where the right policies can help all Michiganders thrive.

From Recommendations to Reality

The League's efforts on a number of priority issues came to fruition in 2021. Here are some of the state budget and policy wins we celebrated last year with partners like you:



Funding for the Great Start Readiness Program to increase the allocation per child from \$7,250 to \$8,700 for a full-day program to align with the K-12 per-pupil payment.



Significant investment in K-12 education, including effectively closing the gap in the per-pupil payment and funding for schools to hire school psychologists, social workers, counselors, and nurses.



Funding for adult students to receive financial aid for community college through the Michigan Reconnect Program as well as wraparound services such as child care, tutoring, and career counseling.



Funding to give a permanent raise to direct care workers in healthcare facilities like nursing homes.



Expansion of the Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies initiative, including an additional 1,000 home visiting slots and an extension of Medicaid coverage for pregnant women from 60 days to 365 days postpartum.



Increased funding for the Lead Poisoning Prevention Fund, which helps reduce risks to lenders providing low-cost loans to landlords and homeowners to remove lead in their properties.



A one-time increase in funding for the Double Up Food Bucks program, which allows families receiving food assistance to double the value of their benefits spent on fresh produce at participating farmers markets and grocery stores.



Progress on some of the League's major policy goals, including a bipartisan push for boosting the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC); broad support for driver's licenses for all; and the introduction of bipartisan bills to reduce the cost of healthcare.



Passage of bills that would allow residents to have first-time operating while intoxicated (OWI) offenses expunged five years after their monitoring by the justice system ends.



Funding for several initiatives to address the drastic racial and economic health disparities which were magnified by the COVID-19 crisis, including an expansion of services for adults with sickle cell disease and increasing use of community-based health navigators to support greater access to healthcare.

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Major Wins for Child Care

As longtime advocates for improving Michigan's child care system, the League and our partners celebrated some major advancements in 2021, including a historic \$1.4 billion investment in the 2022 state budget. Here are just a few of the wins:

- ✓ **Grants for child care providers.** The budget included \$700 million for grants to child care providers to help them keep their doors open.
- ✓ **Help for parents trying to find child care they can afford.** The agreement includes an increase in the income eligibility threshold for the state's child care subsidy from 150% of poverty (\$39,750 for a family of four) to 185% of poverty (\$49,025), as well as the waiver of parent copays. These changes will provide much-needed child care assistance to thousands more Michigan families, making 105,000 more children eligible for child care.
- ✓ **Rate increases for child care providers caring for children receiving state subsidies.** Lawmakers and the governor agreed to provide \$158 million for a permanent 30% rate increase for providers caring for children who receive child care subsidies—ensuring that they can afford to open slots for children from families with lower incomes—and an additional \$222 million for a temporary rate increase.
- ✓ **Strategies to shore up the supply of child care:** The budget included \$100 million for startup grants for providers, including funds for technical assistance and facility improvements, as well as \$36.5 million over three years to address the dire shortage of child care for the state's infants and toddlers.
- ✓ **Bonuses to help ensure that child care businesses can attract and retain child care workers:** The agreement included \$30 million to provide bonuses to one of the state's most underpaid workforces, with median wages of just \$11.13 per hour.

Our Priorities

Incorporate racial equity within all our goals and activities.

Ensure that all Michiganders have access to healthcare.

Reform the criminal justice system to reduce racial and economic disparities.

Make affordable, high-quality child care available to working parents.

Strengthen public education at all levels, from pre-K to adult education.

Make sure all Michiganders can meet basic needs.

Ensure that Michigan has adequate revenues to invest in an economy that works for all.

Make Michigan a welcoming state for immigrants.

“The League is a champion of equity and opportunity for children, families, and all the people of Michigan, but especially those who are facing barriers.”

- Former Representative Paul Hillegonds

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Strength in Numbers

The realities of 2021 meant doing our work in a completely different way. And because of your support, we were able to continue—and in many cases increase—our work in advocacy and analysis.

Organizational Highlights



96 advocates from around the state joined us to learn how to better use data, communication tools and legislative know-how to advocate for policies that matter to them and their communities through the League's Advocacy Boot Camps.

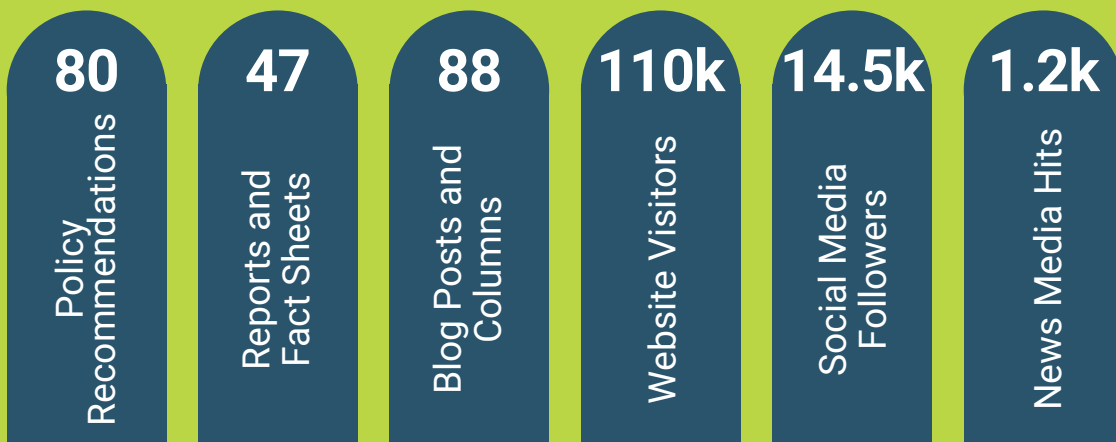


Our annual public policy forum, "Getting Back to the Future" featured Keynote Speaker Janelle Jones, Chief Economist for the United States Department of Labor, and over 1,000 audience members were able to learn more about the impact that historic funding would have on a post-pandemic world from our speakers and panelists. The Sharon Parks Award was presented to Donna Murray-Brown of the Michigan Nonprofit Association for her dedication to the people of Michigan.



League staff were appointed to the Governor's Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities, the Protect Michigan Commission and the Governor's Black Leadership Advisory Council, and the League continued to help steer broad coalitions on racial justice, healthcare, immigration, policies for workers, child care, criminal justice and safety net issues. Our team of experts presented in front of local, statewide and national audiences, lifting up the need for equitable, people-centered policies.

2021 By the Numbers



Voices for Transformation

“ I came away with a clear, broad picture of the advocacy landscape in Michigan and strategies for effective ways to engage to move policy forward.”

- 2021 Advocacy Boot Camp Participant

As the League continues to push for rebuilding systems through policy change, we've turned to community members and advocates to share their vision of what Michigan can become. When we focus on dismantling racist policies and recreating a state built on equity, all Michiganders win.



2021 Public Policy Forum

The 2021 Public Policy Forum featured a panel of experts who explored the needs of Michigan's kids, families and workers in the wake of the pandemic.



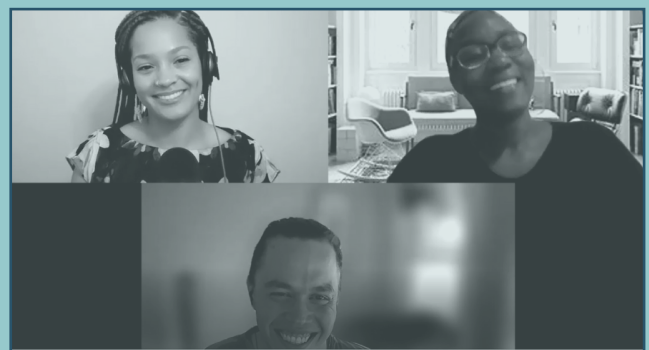
Yeas & Nays

Yeas & Nays is a weekly Facebook Live program featuring League staff and partners, and each installment provides a legislative and policy update for advocates in Michigan.



Advocacy Boot Camp

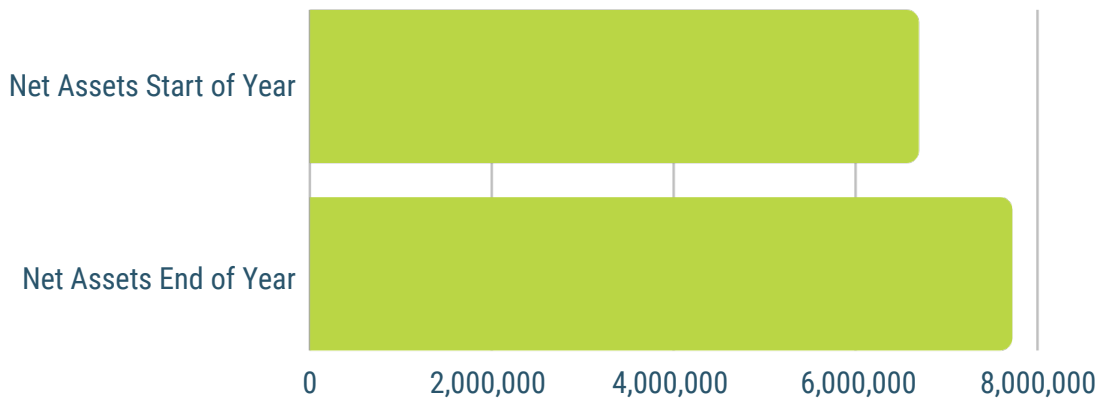
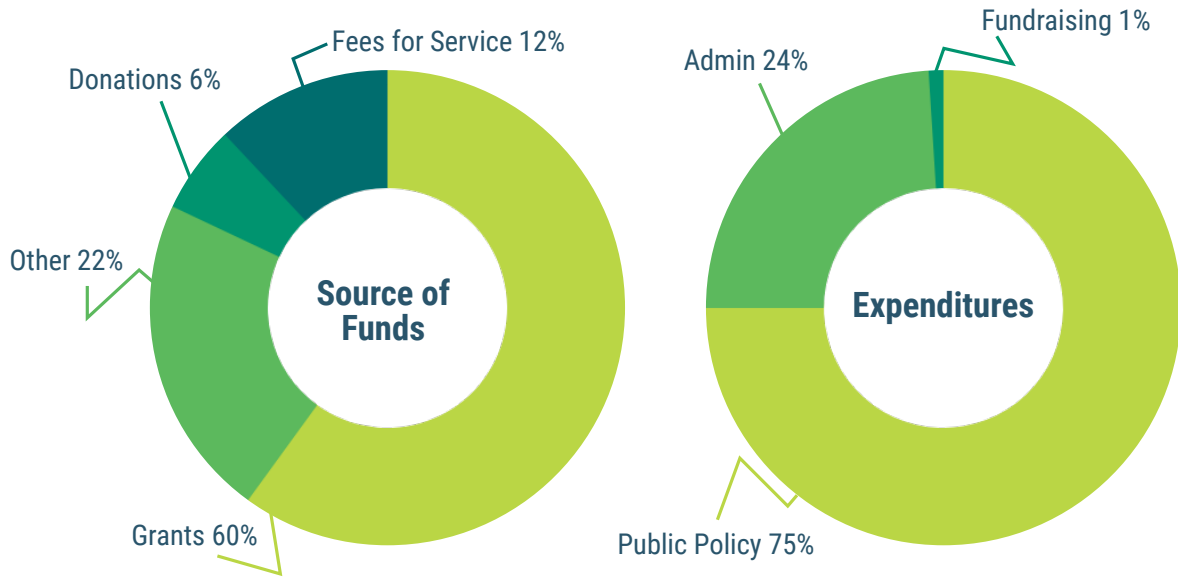
The League's Advocacy Boot Camp continues to build knowledge and partnerships with advocates around the state in order to advance policies that improve outcomes for Michigan's kids, families and workers.



Wonk-Life Balance

In 2021, the League launched its new podcast, Wonk-Life Balance. The program provides a comfortable space where families, community members, advocates and policy wonks can coexist and find solutions together.

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Thank you, Gilda!

The League congratulates Gilda Jacobs, who retired in December of 2021, on an extraordinary career. Gilda served as President & CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy from 2011-2021, following 30 years of work in public service at the local, county and state levels.



Gilda has won numerous awards for her efforts, including being inducted into the Michigan Women's Hall of Fame in 2019. She was named as one of the 100 Most Influential Women in Michigan by Crain's Detroit Business in 2016 and received the Michigan Food Bank Council's Hunger-Free Award in 2015.

She served in the state Senate for eight years after serving two terms in the Michigan House of Representatives, where she made history as the first woman to serve as floor leader in either chamber of the Legislature.

Her contributions to the state of Michigan will have an impact for generations to come, and we wish her all the best in retirement.

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- Gilda Z. Jacobs, Former President & CEO



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“Amazing and impactful. I am still thinking about the statements the panelists provided and their unique experiential knowledge.”

- Public Policy Forum Attendee, 2021

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