



Issue

The vast majority of today's jobs require some form of postsecondary education, whether it's a college degree or a skills certification. However, as of 2016, only 44 percent of Michigan's workforce held such credentials. The Governor has established a goal of increasing this number to 60 percent by 2030.

Proposal

The Governor is recommending a two-year, tuition-free plan to ensure every Michigander has a real path to get the skills or education they need to land a good paying job. Under this plan, Michiganders will have the opportunity to improve their skills at any point in their life with two years of tuition-free postsecondary education or skills training. The program consists of 3 components:

- 1) **Michigan Reconnect Grant Program** – tuition-free training for non-traditional students who are at least 25 years old to receive a credential, certificate, or an associate degree. (Summer 2019)
- 2) **Michigan Opportunity Initiative** - 2 years tuition-free at a community college. (Fall 2020)
- 3) **Michigan Opportunity Initiative** – 2 years of tuition assistance at a 4-year public or not-for-profit college. (Fall 2020)

Michigan Reconnect Grant Program

The Michigan Reconnect Program will provide credential and degree opportunities for non-traditional students. This program targets students over the age of 25 who have a high school diploma but no further education. This program is modeled after the Tennessee Reconnect program. Eligibility criteria include:

- Age 25 or older
- High school graduate or equivalent, without associate or bachelor's degree
- Michigan resident for at least 1 year
- Eligible programs would be offered at community colleges, technical programs, and community-based organizations (as determined by the Department of Talent and Economic Development)
- Eligible for funding for up to 2 years
- Considered last dollar, covering remaining tuition after all other financial aid, such as federal Pell Grants.

Michigan Reconnect Cost Estimates

The Michigan Reconnect grant program is expected to cost \$50 million annually and will serve an estimated 51,100 students. A total of \$110 million is being recommend for this program in an FY 2019 supplemental request. Of this amount, \$60 million in unspent funds designated for the Marshall Plan will be repurposed for this program, and \$50 million in general fund will be deposited into the Talent Investment Fund in FY 2019 to cover the remaining amount. This is projected to cover the costs of the program through FY 2021.

Michigan Opportunity Initiative

The Michigan Opportunity Initiative will provide graduating high school students with two years of tuition-free postsecondary education at a community college or tuition assistance for the first two years at a public or private not-for-profit four-year institution. This program will be available to students beginning Fall 2020.