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Michigan's Growth Office Announces Call for Applications for First of Its Kind Regional Pilot Program to Retain and Attract Talent

\$500,000 in grant funding available to statewide partners to develop regional programs specific to their area that encourage talent to make Michigan their home

Today, Michigan's Growth Office announced the call for applications for [Make MI Home](#), a regional talent retention and attraction pilot program. The program is available to nonprofits, local governments, economic development organizations, philanthropic foundations and talent attraction organizations in Michigan. These entities will work together to create a program specific to retaining or attracting talent in their region. Once a region is selected to receive grant funding, they are responsible for launching their program and making it available to current and future residents.



"Make MI Home is a new talent program that will cast a wide net to help us retain current residents and welcome new Michiganders to our great state," said **Governor Whitmer**. "My administration is focused on building on our reputation as a beacon of opportunity where anyone can 'make it'. Thanks to a coordinated growth strategy and efforts from local leaders, we are headed in the right direction. Detroit's population grew for the first time in 67 years and more companies are choosing to invest and expand here too. We will keep doing our part at the state level by building more affordable housing, lowering the cost of pre-K and higher education, and creating good-paying, high-skill jobs in cutting-edge industries. We will keep supporting the incredible work of the new Growth Office as they hit the road and listen directly to local needs. We can grow Michigan together as long as we keep working together. Let's get it done."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the most mobile people are those between the ages of 20 and 34. Earlier this year, the Growth Office conducted a [national poll](#) that surveyed over 6,000 people from cities across the U.S. that are popular among young talent. Over 60% of respondents indicated they planned to move in the near future or were not sure of their relocation plans. That same group of respondents also indicated that, if offered, down payment and student loan repayment assistance were among the most motivating programs and policies that may cause them to consider a new location.

"Michigan has so much to offer. From our natural beauty and innovative industries to our welcoming communities and a commitment to ensure everyone can Make It in Michigan. Record statewide housing investments and bold commitments to tuition-free community college for all Michiganders speak directly to the priorities of young talent," said **Michigan's Chief Growth Officer Hilary Doe**. "As we've met with Michiganders in communities across the state, we learned very quickly that population growth looks different for every region. The best strategy for Detroit isn't necessarily the same for Marquette. This innovative pilot program is an opportunity to put regions in the driver's seat to develop their own



unique programs, tailored to highlight local assets and tackle local challenges, and to test strategies to retain and attract new residents to our great state. I am incredibly proud of this first-of-its kind, localized, initiative and excited to see the results of our regions' best ideas.”

The newly established Growth Office housed within the Michigan Economic Development Corporation is tasked with implementing the state's [blueprint for growth](#), a comprehensive strategy put forth by the Growing Michigan Together Council to retain and attract talent. The Office will build on the council's recommendations by engaging Michiganders in the effort, launching pilots and programs to spark growth as well as lead storytelling, research and policy initiatives, all functioning together to grow the state's population.

The Office allocated \$500,000 for this pilot. Interested applicants are required to organize consortiums within their [prosperity region](#) and have 12 months from the time funds are dispersed to award funding to accepted individuals, who must remain in Michigan for at least 12 months. The Growth Office plans to announce grant recipients in mid-September.

With the goal of talent retention and attraction in mind, the review committee will be composed entirely of Michiganders between the ages of 20-34 - the most mobile age bracket - each with experience relevant to Michigan's talent retention and population growth effort.

Applications close Friday, August 9 at 11:59 p.m.

For more information and to apply, visit: growingmichigan.org/opportunities/

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Actions Taken to Grow Michigan's Population

- In the past year, over 11,000 Michiganders provided feedback regarding challenges in their communities but also what they love most about calling Michigan home. This feedback was shared with the Growing Michigan Together Council.
- In December 2023, the Growing Michigan Together Council voted 19-1 in support of recommendations to grow the state's population.
- Items from Gov. Whitmer's 2025 executive budget correlates to many of the Council's blueprint for growth recommendations, examples include the Michigan Innovation Fund, Community College Guarantee as well as investments that support transit and affordable housing.
- Legislative action on the blueprint for growth, including legislative hearings with the Senate's Economic and Community Development Committee on the Council's findings and report has continued momentum around the population growth work.
- Since January 2024, engaged in over 80 public education sessions and briefings across the state on the blueprint for growth, engaging local communities and stakeholders in implementation.
- Hosted public events such as the MI HOMEcoming Tailgate for visitors and residents in town for the NFL draft to experience what makes Michigan a great place to call home.
- Earned national media coverage on Michigan's innovative population growth effort, including on "why to move to Michigan" and the nation's most ambitious talent retention and attraction effort (Cheddar TV), among others.



- The You Can in Michigan campaign, sister campaign to the growth office's focus on talent attraction and retention, recently won 11 Telly awards for excellence in marketing.
- Released new national poll findings that surveyed over 6K people from 15 cities across the country that are popular destinations for young talent. Findings reveal their top considerations when choosing to relocate.
- Launched climate action survey to learn specific details regarding the role climate plays in choosing where to live and work.
- A summer 2024 roadshow to highlight and amplify Michigan communities that have implemented innovative projects that align with the Council's blueprint for growth. To date, we've made stops at Intern Connect in Grand Rapids, entrepreneurship hubs working on 'blue tech' in Traverse City and visited innovative workforce in the classroom programs in Marquette, among others.