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# **Alleviating Racial Disparities in Urban Communities: A Two-generation Approach**

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## Alleviating Racial Disparities in Urban Communities: A Two-generation Approach

### Introduction

The most recent U.S. American Community Survey revealed that despite a second year of growth for median income in Michigan, poverty rates for residents in the state's poorest cities-- Detroit and Flint-- have stagnated. Survey results also uncover an alarming 48% and 58% child poverty rate in Detroit and Flint, respectively.<sup>1</sup> Compared to other states, Michigan currently ranks 36th in U.S. child poverty. Children who grow up poor are more likely to earn less in the future, more likely to engage in crime, and more likely to experience poor health, generating large social costs for the state.<sup>2</sup> The racial disparities that persist among children growing up in poverty should be considered a crisis for the state of Michigan. Local and state officials can look to two-generation programs to alleviate racial disparities in child poverty rates, deliver on the America's promise of opportunity for its most vulnerable populations, and improve long-term economic outcomes for the state.

### Background

In Michigan's "lost decade" leading up to the Great Recession, the state suffered from a 17% decrease in employment and lost thousands of residents. Child poverty jumped from 20% in 2008, to 22.5% in 2009. In the years following, the state experienced a 1 percentage-point increase in child poverty each year until its peak of 24.9% in 2012.<sup>3</sup> Rates have slowly declined to just below 21% as of 2016, however, disaggregated by race, African American and Latino children disproportionately live in poor families. Today, 47% of African American children, and 31% of Latino children in Michigan live in poor families.<sup>4</sup>

In 2017, The Annie E. Casey Foundation's opportunity index ranked outcomes for African American children in Michigan worse than children of other races in all other states, and found that no

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<sup>1</sup> MacDonald, C. & Chambers, J. (September 13, 2018) Detroiters' income rises for second year but poverty rate doesn't improve. *The Detroit News*. Cite Flint child poverty rate

<sup>2</sup> Holzer H., Schanzenbach, D., Duncan, G., & Ludwig, J. (2007). The economic costs of poverty: Subsequent effects of children growing up poor. *Center for American Progress*

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.freep.com/story/opinion/contributors/raw-data/2014/09/21/raw-data-child-poverty/15912159/>

<sup>4</sup> Michigan Demographics of Poor Children. National Center for Children in Poverty. Retrieved from [http://www.nccp.org/profiles/MI\\_profile\\_7.html](http://www.nccp.org/profiles/MI_profile_7.html)

state does particularly well in outcomes for Latino children.<sup>5</sup> Further, African American and Latino children in the state are more likely to live in high-poverty neighborhoods where the poverty rate is 30% or higher. In the top quarter of Michigan counties with the highest proportion of non-white identifying residents, about 75% are the most populous counties in the state and have child poverty rates above the state average.<sup>6</sup> Social welfare programs that build strong families, and provide early and frequent health and educational intervention for children in poor families can position children for long term success. Disinvestment in welfare programs in Michigan since the decade leading up to the great recession have stacked the odds for children of color in poor families.

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 reformed cash assistance from a federally administered program to a state controlled program gave Michigan the freedom to set its own eligibility and work requirements. Additionally, it gave the state latitude to use federally allocated TANF funds on other programs besides cash assistance that fit within the programs generally four purposes.<sup>7</sup> After the 1996 reform, states have been found to spend less than 50% of TANF funds on cash assistance and the number of families receiving cash assistance in Michigan have hit record lows since the reform. In 2016, the state received \$775 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds from the federal government, yet the number of families receiving cash assistance declined to 22,573-- down from 184,000 in 1996.<sup>8</sup> Further, families receiving benefits from Michigan's Family Independence Program (FIP) remained flat, despite hikes in unemployment and poverty rates since the beginning of the Lost Decade.<sup>9</sup>

In its recovery from the recession, the state continues limit the expansion of programs that support families with children. Before the 2018 midterm election, the Michigan legislature adopted a ballot proposal to increase the minimum wage in Michigan and enforce paid sick leave, though amendments to the bill are expected to slow the implementation of the wage increase, cap the increase for

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<sup>5</sup> Race for results: Building a path to opportunity for all children. (2017). Annie E. Casey Foundation

<sup>6</sup> University of Michigan Poverty Solutions. Michigan County Level Data.

<sup>7</sup> Michigan, 20 years after "welfare reform"

<sup>8</sup> Michigan, 20 years after "welfare reform"

<sup>9</sup> Michigan, 20 years after "welfare reform"

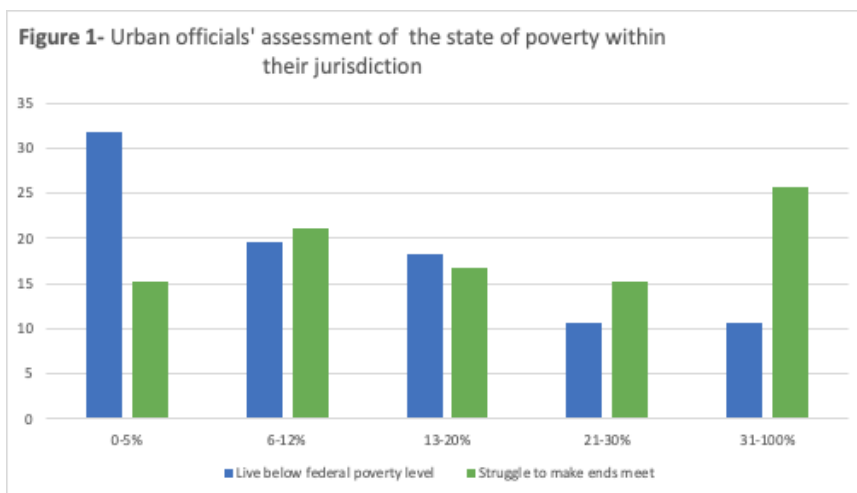
tipped workers, and exempt some employees from receiving paid sick leave.<sup>10</sup> The legislatures also passed a bill to increase work requirements for food assistance that could result in immediate loss of benefits for some recipients unable to secure unemployment. To address racial disparities in child poverty rates in Michigan’s cities, the state must avoid increasing financial hardship on families already in need and reform its policies to support families in need.

**Public Officials’ Perceptions**

The Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS), administered by the Center for Local, State and Urban Policy collected data on elected and appointed local officials’ assessment of poverty in their jurisdiction in the 2018 spring survey. The survey results reveal a disconnect between urban officials’ perception of the proportion of residents in their jurisdiction who live below the federal poverty line compared to the proportion of residents perceived to struggle to make ends meet. While twenty-five percent of officials believe at least 30% percent of residents struggle to make ends meet, only ten percent of officials believe that the same proportion of residents lives below the federal poverty line.

While 72% of city officials believe their jurisdiction is doing “about the right amount” to address local poverty or economic hardship, their underestimation of concentrated poverty may suggest that local

officials can do more to leverage resources and implement programs for residents who live below the federal poverty line and quality for services.<sup>11</sup>



<sup>10</sup><https://www.metrotimes.com/news-hits/archives/2018/11/28/michigan-gop-starts-gutting-12-per-hour-minimum-wage-paid-sick-time-laws>

<sup>11</sup>Michigan Public Policy Survey. Spring 2018. Question Q26c. Retrieved from <http://closup.umich.edu/michigan-public-policy-survey/spring-2018-data/q26c.php>

## **Michigan's Political Context**

### State

Governor-elect Gretchen Whitmer brings enthusiasm for programs to support low-income families to the Michigan legislature. Whitmer is clear on her stance on fighting urban policy, and plans to pursue policies that eliminate racial disparities. During her campaign, Whitmer released a comprehensive plan to address urban poverty that includes appointing a Poverty Secretary, restoring the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), targeting TANF funds to low-income families, and improving educational outcomes.<sup>12</sup> Whitmer's aggressive plan does not detail a strategy for coordinating the plan's objectives across state departments responsible for delivering the plan's services. Whitmer will face a republican legislature during her first term that has made clear moves during the lame duck session to reduce the governor's executive power.

### Local

Local support for low-income families has emerged in recent years in local government initiatives, public-private partnerships, and civic engagement. The Detroit at Work program provides free job training and placement support to all city residents. A new public-private partnership funded by the Kresge Foundation will serve 1,000 Detroit school children in a landmark "cradle-to-career" campus.<sup>13</sup> In the 2018 election, Kent County voters approved a property tax millage that will raise \$5.7 million per year to fund early childhood programs and services for all children in the county under age five.<sup>14</sup>

## **Two-Generation Approach to Poverty Alleviation**

Two-generation programs aim to support low-income parents and children from the same family through simultaneous interventions.<sup>15</sup> The framework was first coined as a concept in the early 1990s and has seen two distinct waves of implementation since the 1980s. The first iteration of two-generation

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<sup>12</sup> Get it done: Fighting urban poverty. (2018). Retrieved from [https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/gps-public-static/Gretchen-Whitmer/Whitmer\\_UrbanPolicyDocument\\_07262018.pdf](https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/gps-public-static/Gretchen-Whitmer/Whitmer_UrbanPolicyDocument_07262018.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Kresge Foundation. (2018). Retrieved from <https://kresge.org/news/new-cradle-career-educational-partnership-serve-more-1000-detroit-children-marygrove-campus>

<sup>14</sup> 13 on your Side. November, 7. 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.wzzm13.com/article/news/education/kent-county-first-in-michigan-to-dedicate-source-of-funding-to-early-childhood/69-612268366>

<sup>15</sup> Chase-Lansdale, P. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2014, Spring). Two-generation programs in the twenty-first century. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two Generation Mechanisms*, 24(1), 13–39. Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children.

programs of the 80s and 90s emphasized two frameworks. The first focused on services for parents including parenting literacy, mental health, and access to public benefits. Although the initial goal of the first set of programs was to link early childhood programs with self-sufficiency services for parents such as GED attainment, and support to obtain entry-level jobs, and eliminate welfare dependency, the programs were not implemented widely, not intensive, and not studied extensively.<sup>16</sup> The second set of programs focused on supports for adolescent mothers on welfare through interventions to promote life skills, high school graduation and degree attainment, employment, and reduced long-term welfare dependency (p. 15).<sup>17</sup> The emphasis on mothers in the second framework resulted in insufficient support for children targeted through the approach, and included child care of varying and unknown quality.<sup>18</sup> By the late 1990s, the first wave of two-generation programs eventually gave way to a focus on “work-first” policies that limited education and training options, sweeping welfare reform, and a disappointing report on initial outcomes of the two-generation programs.<sup>19</sup>

A new wave of two-generation programs emerged in the 2000s and continues through the present. While the first wave of programs was characterized by discrete interventions focused primarily on supports for parents with expected residual effects on children, the second wave of programs emphasize combining human capital programs for adults and children into a single effort. The explicit focus on combining programs has expanded reach to non-welfare recipient low-income families, considers targeted intervention for subgroups, and emphasized high-quality early childhood education services.<sup>20</sup> The philanthropic sector plays an influential role in the development and implementation of second wave programs. The Jeremiah Program, the Atlanta Partnership, and the Aspen Institute’s Two Generations,

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<sup>16</sup> Chase-Lansdale, P. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2014, Spring). Two-generation programs in the twenty-first century. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two Generation Mechanisms*, 24(1), 13–39. Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children.

<sup>17</sup> Zaslow, M.J et al., (2002). Experimental Studies of Welfare Reform for Families in Poverty. *The Future of Children*, 12(1), 79-95.

<sup>18</sup> Chase-Lansdale, P. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2014, Spring). Two-generation programs in the twenty-first century. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two Generation Mechanisms*, 24(1), 13–39. Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children.

<sup>19</sup> Chase-Lansdale, P. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2014, Spring). Two-generation programs in the twenty-first century. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two Generation Mechanisms*, 24(1), 13–39. Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children.

<sup>20</sup> Chase-Lansdale, P. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2014, Spring). Two-generation programs in the twenty-first century. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two Generation Mechanisms*, 24(1), 13–39. Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children.

One Future center all serve as examples of programs targeting low-income children and families of the same household through a single program.

This section will detail two-generation program structures in three locations- Atlanta, Minneapolis- St. Paul, and Colorado. While the political and demographic context in these locations do not always mirror those in Michigan, each region has experienced similar challenges around concentrated child poverty. A look at the program structures and their outcomes offer a variety of frameworks for Michigan policymakers to consider.

### The Atlanta Partnership

In Atlanta's Neighborhood Planning Unit V (NPU-V), residents live below half of the city's median income, and half of children in the neighborhood are living in poverty.<sup>21</sup> With support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, child- and adult- specific programs in Atlanta merged to create the Atlanta Partnership- a single approached to eliminate poverty for two generations in NPU-V.

The Atlanta Partnership is comprised of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Atlanta Civic Site, Sheltering Arms Early Learning and Resource Center, Paul Lawrence Dunbar Elementary School, and the Center for Working Families.<sup>22</sup> The partnership targets families with children in the Sheltering Arms program, which serves children starting at birth.<sup>23</sup> The adjacent elementary school ensures children receive aligned, high-quality curriculum from infancy through age ten.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, the on-site Center for Working Families provides parents of Sheltering Arms children with education and workforce development services, and coaching and leadership training.

The Sheltering Arms Early Learning and Resource Center is based on Educare's nationally-recognized, researched model, and the Center for Working Families model has been adopted by more than 100 locations throughout the country. A 2017 program evaluation of Educare Centers found a 35%

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<sup>21</sup> Annie E. Casey Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.aecf.org/work/community-change/civic-sites/atlanta-civic-site/>

<sup>22</sup> Chase-Lansdale, P. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2014, Spring). Two-generation programs in the twenty-first century. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two Generation Mechanisms*, 24(1), 13–39. Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children.

<sup>23</sup> Educare Atlanta website. Retrieved from <https://www.educareschools.org/schools/atlanta/>

<sup>24</sup> Chase-Lansdale, P. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2014, Spring). Two-generation programs in the twenty-first century. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two Generation Mechanisms*, 24(1), 13–39. Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children.

increase in parent employment and a nearly 40% increase in child participants either meeting or exceeding literacy expectations. Additional impacts of the program include increased parental engagement in education, narrowed achievement gaps, and improved elementary school outcomes. The Center for Working Families, Inc. in Atlanta placed nearly 1,800 participants in jobs in 2013, and connected participants with over \$2.3 million in tax refunds, credits and public benefits including child-care subsidies.

#### Jeremiah Program: Minneapolis-St. Paul

\_\_\_\_\_The Minneapolis-St. Paul poverty rate declined for the first time in 2014, after significant increases during the Great Recession, and plateaued for several years after.<sup>25</sup> Although poverty rates have improved for the region, concentrated poverty persists for communities of color.<sup>26</sup> In fact, over one-third of Black residents lived in an area of concentrated poverty between 2011-2015, compared with only six percent of white residents.<sup>27</sup> The Jeremiah Program addresses poverty for disadvantaged residents in the Twin Cities using a two-generation residential program from children and their mothers.

The Jeremiah Program began servicing families in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1997. In 2007, the program began servicing families in Saint Paul, and has since expanded to Austin, TX, Boston, MA, Fargo, ND, Brooklyn, NY, and Rochester, MN. The program is available to single mothers and aims to eliminate poverty for program participants through safe and affordable housing near community colleges, with on-site high-quality early childhood education for child beginning at six weeks.<sup>28</sup> Other program services include career-track and college attainment individualized support, empowerment and life-skills

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<sup>25</sup> The Twin Cities region's areas of concentrated poverty. (2017). Metropolitan Council. Retrieved from [https://metro council.org/Data-and-Maps/Publications-And-Resources/MetroStats/Census-and-Population/Areas-of-Concentrated-Poverty-in-the-Twin-Citi-\(1\).aspx](https://metro council.org/Data-and-Maps/Publications-And-Resources/MetroStats/Census-and-Population/Areas-of-Concentrated-Poverty-in-the-Twin-Citi-(1).aspx)

<sup>26</sup> [https://metro council.org/Data-and-Maps/Publications-And-Resources/MetroStats/Census-and-Population/Areas-of-Concentrated-Poverty-in-the-Twin-Citi-\(1\).aspx](https://metro council.org/Data-and-Maps/Publications-And-Resources/MetroStats/Census-and-Population/Areas-of-Concentrated-Poverty-in-the-Twin-Citi-(1).aspx)

<sup>27</sup> [https://metro council.org/Data-and-Maps/Publications-And-Resources/MetroStats/Census-and-Population/Areas-of-Concentrated-Poverty-in-the-Twin-Citi-\(1\).aspx](https://metro council.org/Data-and-Maps/Publications-And-Resources/MetroStats/Census-and-Population/Areas-of-Concentrated-Poverty-in-the-Twin-Citi-(1).aspx), concentrated poverty measured by 185% of federal poverty threshold

<sup>28</sup> Chase-Lansdale, P. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2014, Spring). Two-generation programs in the twenty-first century. In *Helping Parents, Helping Children: Two Generation Mechanisms*, 24(1), 13–39. Princeton, NJ: The Future of Children.



training, supportive community cohorts, and employment readiness.<sup>29</sup> Results from the Jeremiah Program's robust services have been promising thus far.

In its 2013 report on the Minneapolis and Saint Paul programs, Wilder Research found that every \$1 invested in a Jeremiah family can return up to \$4 to society through first-generation benefits of decreased dependence on public assistance and increased taxable earning, plus second-generation benefits of increased lifetime earnings/taxes paid, and savings from costs associated with crime and special education.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, 88% of children in Jeremiah's Child Development Centers are performing above age-appropriate developmental benchmarks, and graduates over the past five years earn, on average, \$47,609 per year.<sup>31</sup>

### Aspen Ascend

Like Michigan, Colorado has grappled with concentrated poverty in its urban areas for the past two decades.<sup>32</sup> Compared to a sixty-four percent increase nationally, Colorado's urban concentrated poverty rates have quadrupled since 2000.<sup>33</sup> In Colorado, stakeholders identified human service system as a lever to implement a statewide two-generation approach to poverty alleviation.

In 2009, the Boulder County Department of Housing and Department of Social Services merged into the Boulder County Department of Housing and Human Services (BCDHHS) advancing more recent efforts in state-level two-generation efforts. Following the merger, BCDHHS began offering integrated family support services including improved access to housing and social services for low-income residents. Governor John Hickenlooper capitalized on Boulder's two-generation program efforts upon his election into office in 2010. Hickenlooper has employed strategic use of his executive power to appoint strong leadership committed to the initiative. Further, Colorado's executive leadership has played a

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<sup>29</sup> Jeremiah Program website. Retrieved from <https://jeremiahprogram.org/our-program/>  
Diaz, J., & Pina, G. (2013). Return on investment in the Jeremiah Program. *Wilder Research* Retrieved from [https://www.wilder.org/sites/default/files/imports/Jeremiah\\_ROI\\_REPORT\\_4-13.pdf](https://www.wilder.org/sites/default/files/imports/Jeremiah_ROI_REPORT_4-13.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> Jeremiah Program website. Retrieved from <https://jeremiahprogram.org/our-impact/>

<sup>31</sup> Jeremiah Program website. Retrieved from <https://jeremiahprogram.org/our-impact/>

<sup>32</sup> State human services model: Colorado as a Case Study for Policymakers. (2016). *The Aspen Institute*. Retrieved from [https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Human\\_services\\_colorado\\_case\\_study\\_final.pdf](https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Human_services_colorado_case_study_final.pdf), concentrated poverty calculated by 200% of federal poverty threshold

<sup>33</sup> State human services model: Colorado as a Case Study for Policymakers. (2016). *The Aspen Institute*. Retrieved from [https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Human\\_services\\_colorado\\_case\\_study\\_final.pdf](https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Human_services_colorado_case_study_final.pdf)

critical role in building the capacity of the state by establishing offices such as the Office of Early Childhood, which also houses the Family Resource Center established in 2013.

The state's executive leadership also commissioned public and private partners, and the philanthropic sector to the Colorado Economic Opportunity Poverty Reduction Task Force to draft and advance legislation that supports two-generation programs and policies, and establish funding for the operation of two-generation programs. New legislation that resulted from the task force included a bill to broaden access to the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program, a state child care credit for parents earning less than \$25,000, a Cliff Effect Pilot Program to support parents who receive a minor income increase and lose eligibility for childcare assistance, and a bill to direct 100% of child support payments to custodial parents in the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) is uniquely positioned to support local and state offices to streamline services for families in need. The CDHS provides general guidance and funding to county departments of human services who deliver programming and services to families. Hickenlooper and the CDHS director capitalized on the department's unique positioning by training its leaders through the Ascend Fellowship and designing a "21st-century approach". The approach included a multi-year tiered strategy for transforming the department's culture toward a wholistic family service approach. Reforms worked to reduce duplication of efforts, breakdown silos that prevent wholistic family intervention, streamline budgets, and identify strategies to provide services more efficiently.

### **Michigan's Social Welfare Context**

Generally, two-generation approaches to poverty alleviation provide early childhood education, childcare, postsecondary education and workforce, economic assets, social capital, and health and well-being programs and services to children in their families.<sup>34</sup> In Michigan, these services are delivered through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the Talent and Economic Development Department of Michigan (TED), county departments of health and human services, and

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<sup>34</sup> White, R., Mosie, A., & Sims, M. (2018). States leading the way: Practical solutions that lift up children and their families. *The Aspen Institute*. Retrieved from [https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Ascend\\_Practical-State-Solutions-report.pdf](https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Ascend_Practical-State-Solutions-report.pdf)

local government agencies and initiatives. The state's social welfare system currently operates in siloed agencies. Little to no emphasis across the agencies- with the exception of the MDHHS- is placed on low-income children and adults, and there is not an intentionally effort across, or within agencies, to target services to children and adults from the same household.

### Early Childhood Education

Until 2013, the state of Michigan lacked both a comprehensive early childhood education program and initiative. In response to declining student outcomes across the state, and projections ranking the state the worst in the nation for public education by 2020, the Michigan Department of Education convened stakeholders across the state to launch the Office of Great Start and the "Great Start, Great Investment, Great Future" initiative. The initiative includes a comprehensive plan with six recommendations and priority action items for the state. Under the state's Great Start to Quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), providers volunteer to receive a quality ranking and resources for quality improvement. Although the state has been more aggressive in its early childhood efforts in recent years, IFF's study of the Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne Tri-County area, Grand Rapids, and Detroit found that few providers participate in the Great Start to Quality program.<sup>35</sup>

### Postsecondary & Workforce Development

In 2014, Governor Rick Snyder established the Department of Talent and Economic Development and Michigan Talent and Investment Agency to build talent and spur economic development during the state's recovery from the recession.<sup>36</sup> Four years later, Governor Snyder signed legislation to allocate \$100 million toward skilled-trades education and career exploration. The \$100 Marshall Plan for Talent aims to train Michigan's high school students for in-demand skilled-trades jobs

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<sup>35</sup> Building a better system: The need for early childhood education in Macomb, Oakland, and Out Wayne Counties. (2017). *IFF*. Retrieved from [https://www.iff.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/IFF\\_Tri-county\\_report\\_final.pdf](https://www.iff.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/IFF_Tri-county_report_final.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Office of Governor Rick Snyder. 2014. Retrieved from <https://www.michigan.gov/snyder/0,4668,7-277-57577-343756--,00.html>

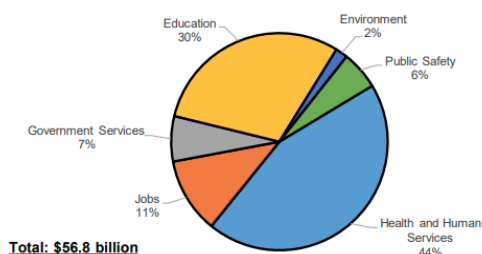
over the next five years.<sup>37</sup> The state’s efforts emphasize the development of a strong emerging workforce with little to no emphasis on postsecondary education, or workforce development programs for adults. The state’s intentions to support low-income adults through workforce development initiatives are unclear.

Family Health & Well-being<sup>38</sup>

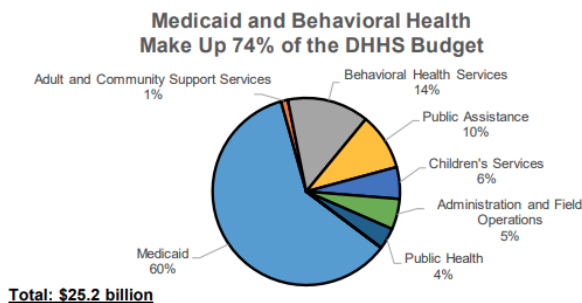
The state is projected to spend 44% of its budget on health and human services during the 2019 fiscal year, totalling \$25.2 billion. An additionally 30% is allocated toward education, and 11% toward jobs. Altogether, the state has allocated 85% of its \$56 billion dollar budget toward services that support overall health and well-being for children and families. In 2017, the Department of Health and Human Service spent 60% of its budget on medicaid, and an additional 17% on public assistance, children’s services, and adult and community support services.

**Figure 2: Michigan 2019 Financial Projections**

2017



**Figure 3: MDHHS Budget-**



**Recommendations: Two-Generation Approach in Michigan- Feasibility Analysis**

Local and state level social welfare programs currently support children and low-income adults in isolated efforts. Michigan policymakers should develop infrastructure and funding mechanisms that

<sup>37</sup> Snyder signs \$100 million ‘Marshall Plan for Talent’ to revitalize state workforce. 2018, June 28. *Crain’s Detroit Business*. Retrieved from <https://www.crainsdetroit.com/article/20180627/news01/664721/snyder-signs-100-million-marshall-plan-for-talent-to-revitalize-state>

<sup>38</sup> Department of Technology Management and Budget. Retrieve from [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/budget/FY19\\_Exec\\_Budget\\_613184\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/budget/FY19_Exec_Budget_613184_7.pdf); State Budget Office. Retrieved from [https://www.michigan.gov/documents/budget/CAFR\\_FY\\_2017\\_611511\\_7.pdf](https://www.michigan.gov/documents/budget/CAFR_FY_2017_611511_7.pdf)

coordinate and align programs to foster family economic stability and well-being for low-income child in the urban context. This can be achieved through strategic partnerships, and strong executive leadership. Although there are many competing policy priorities facing efforts to alleviate concentrated urban poverty, now is a better time than ever to capitalize on momentum in state government.

#### Commission Two-Generation Task Force

Whitmer should enter the Governor's Office with a strong message on her stance to eliminate concentrated poverty in urban areas. She should sign an executive order to establish a Two-generation Task Force. The Task Force should be responsible for advancing legislation for a state poverty alleviation office, recommending a cross-system infrastructure integrating human services, economic development and educational programs and initiatives, and lead outreach to local agencies to better integrate wholistic family services for low-income families.

#### Commission State's Strong Philanthropic Sector and Existing Partnerships

Michigan is home to a philanthropic sector with a robust child and family well-being grantmaking portfolio. Many of the state's philanthropic organizations are already engaged in innovative two-generation initiatives across the country. In fact, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation is a key funder of Colorado's 2Gen initiative, and the Kresge Foundation will fund the construction of Detroit cradle-to-career early childhood education center and renovation of the campus' elementary school. Furthermore, Whitmer should leverage the momentum of the Launch Michigan partnership, and bipartisan support for improved educational opportunities for all children, to introduce the two-generation initiative.

#### Feasibility Analysis

As the state looks to build on new signs of economic progress nearly a decade after the end of the recession, any new political initiative will face competing priorities in the Michigan Legislature. While opponents may argue that Whitmer should delay launching the two-generation initiative amidst the crowded political landscape, the current climate may create the perfect storm for Whitmer to make an aggressive move. Whitmer's track record of moving bipartisan legislation, and the bipartisan support for the Launch Michigan initiative present and opportunity to push for high-quality, early childhood

education services with a wholistic family service mission. This push would fare well in state government as the first stage of a larger two-generation initiative.

The establishment of a two-generation task force creates a body to draft and manage a framework to support families of children targeted through the early childhood education initiative. The task force will facilitate the expansion of the initiative and identify opportunities to restructure and integrate state agencies, and support local delivery of services. The task force's charge to integrate services will allow the state to streamline budgets and deliver services more efficiently.

### **Conclusion**

A strong message, and a slow ease into a state-wide two-generation initiative through the establishment of a two-generation task force will set a foundation for the elimination of concentrated poverty in Michigan's urban region and eliminate racial disparities. Models across the nation such as Colorado's state two-generation initiative, the Atlanta Partnership and the Jeremiah Program provide examples for Michigan to model legislation after and leverage resources through philanthropic and private partnerships.