



OFFICE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Opportunities & Investment for Rural Michigan



MDARD's Office of Rural Development was established by Gov. Whitmer in 2022

Rural markets, natural assets, tourism, and workforce are vital to Michigan's economic success

Many rural challenges are similar to those in urban areas – but solutions might be implemented differently

Figure 2.9: Population Change in Rural Districts, 2009 to 2019

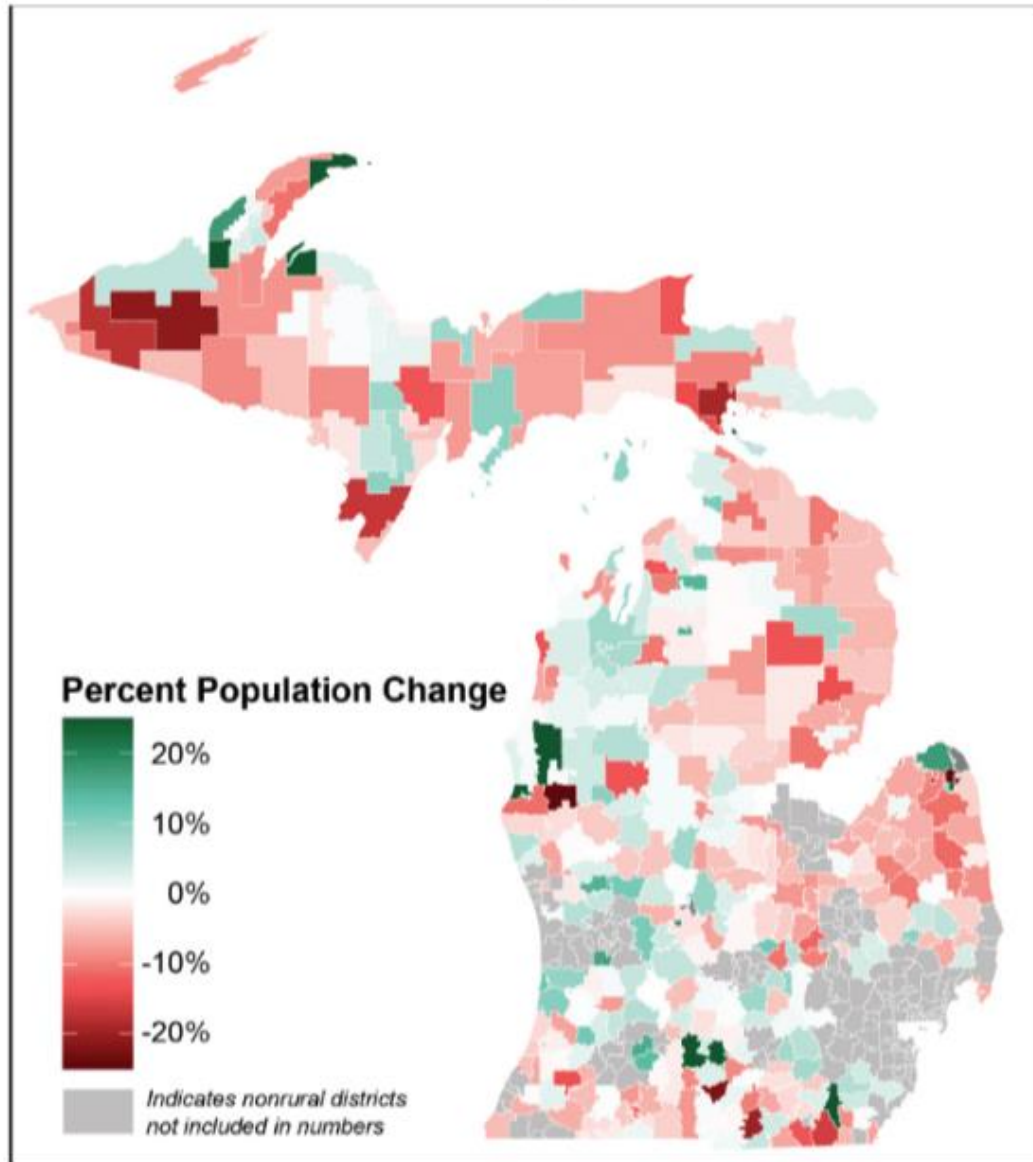
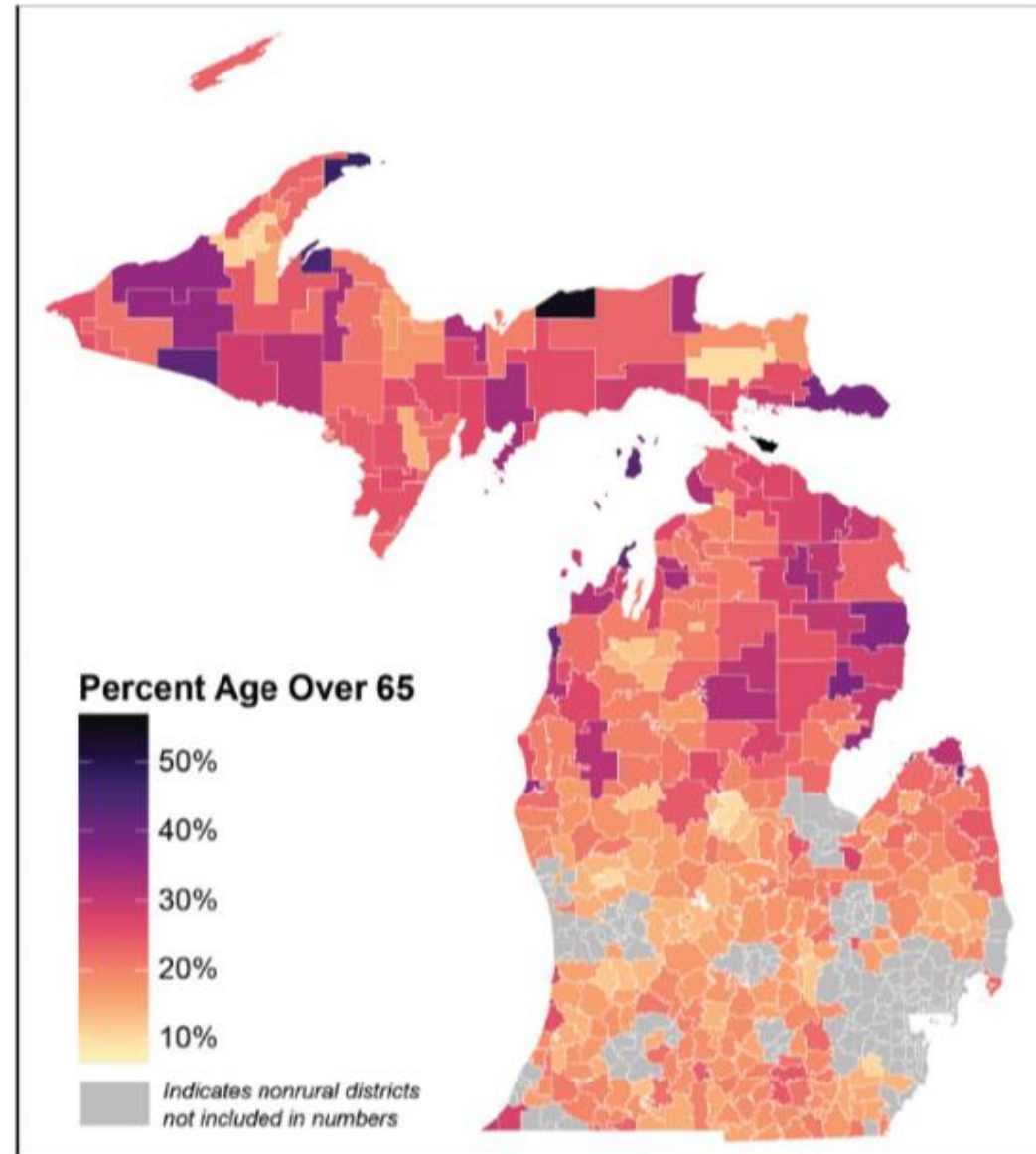


Figure 2.10: Percent of Population 65 or Older in Rural Districts, 2019



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community 5-year Survey



Housing

- Rising development costs and subsidy needs
- Infrastructure expansion and costs
- Regulatory barriers
- Limited local capacity
- Communications



Infrastructure & Broadband

- Reduced revenue has led to deferred infrastructure maintenance
- Costs are barrier to private and public providers
- Accurate maps needed to show biggest gaps for federal funding



Workforce & Economic Development Barriers

- Childcare costs, availability
- Transportation needs and access
- Skills mismatch and training needs



Opportunities for Rural Michigan

Recent disruptions can reverse – or exacerbate – long-standing population and economic trends that impact health outcomes, educational attainment, and future income of rural residents

Remote work allows for relocation

Climate migration forecasts opportunity for population growth

Outdoor recreation amenities/industry are key quality of life and economic assets

21 universities are located in Michigan's rural areas



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF
**LABOR & ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY**



American Rescue
Plan Act of 2021



Capturing opportunity in rural Michigan requires strategic and coordinated investment in people and place

Resources are available, but rural areas face staff, procedural, and financial challenges in accessing programs and funding

Successful communities invest in planning and collaborate across sectors

Rural communities have unique and valuable assets that can be activated and leveraged

Regional perspectives, solutions, and collaboration can help to overcome geographic and capacity barriers

Investment requires organizational capacity and infrastructure



Interagency coordination

- Identify opportunities for policy and program changes that will positively impact rural outcomes
- Ensure rural input on policy and programs



Increase statewide engagement & action on rural priorities

- Connect communities to share rural best practices and successes
- Improve coordination and collaboration
- Build regional and statewide preparedness and economic competitiveness



Staff & resources to support communities

- Build local capacity – act as information resource and partner for local programs and projects
- Fill in financial and other gaps needed to kickstart local initiatives

ORD staff and programming to build rural readiness

Sarah Lucas

Director

Virtual Rural Roundtables & Regional Leadership Summits

Build connections, share best practices & success stories from around the state, and participate in discussion on priority issues with regional and statewide peers and partners.

Payton Heins

Policy Specialist

Rural Readiness Grants

Grants of up to \$50,000 to support development readiness, cross-sector collaboration, and capacity building activities with broad regional impact and demonstrate innovative, systems-based solutions.

Lisa Miller

Engagement & Outreach
Specialist

Rural Readiness Program

Community support for local and regional solutions with workplans, connections, and resources to support next steps.

Matt Wiitala

Capacity & Grant Program
Specialist

Rural Resource Connections

Connections and information on policy initiatives, partners, funding opportunities, and events to help rural stakeholders raise awareness, communicate, plan, fund, and implement their priorities.



Growing commitment to & understanding of rural needs

New programs and resources

Missing Middle
Housing & Community Development Fund
MI Hope
Regional Child Care Innovation Funds
TriShare
USDA, BEAD, ROBN
Infrastructure & Jobs Investment Act (BIL)
Local and regional appropriations

New procedural considerations

Rural set-asides in new funding programs
Navigators and technical assistance
Outreach and communication
Planning and mapping



January 31 supplemental invests in rural priorities

\$150 million for **Affordable housing tax credit gap financing program**

Additional \$50 million for **Missing Middle Housing Program** with expanded eligibility and removal of subsidy cap; 30% of funding reserved for rural communities

Additional \$100 million for **Revitalization and Placemaking Grants** to turn space into affordable housing, community spaces, and other placemaking-focused activities.

Additional \$75 million for **Blight Elimination Grants** to land banks and local governments for the rehabilitation or demolition of vacant and blighted properties, and the remediation of vacant land for future redevelopment

\$25 million for **Transportation Economic Development Fund Category B** program construction or preservation of streets in cities and villages with populations of 10,000 or less, including, but not limited to, reconstruction, replacement, rehabilitation, and capital preventive maintenance.

\$75 million for **Michigan Strategic Fund** to create and operate programs for small businesses disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

Governor Whitmer's Executive Budget includes important resources for rural communities

New and Added Funds for Housing

Housing & Community Development Fund, Missing Middle expansion, migrant housing, attainable homeownership and apprenticeship training

Talent and Workforce Development Tools

Retraining & Retooling Program, expanded Reconnect program, student support and college success programs, talent expansion and retention in key industries

Regional Empowerment & Economic Development

Support for regional initiatives, new economic development incentives, placemaking, Michigan Main Street, Pure Michigan, small business support, outdoor recreation business development,

Education and Childcare

Pre-K, Tri-share, per pupil funding increase, new teacher training and teacher, student support, mental health and safety

Local Government & Infrastructure

Revenue sharing increase, reseunds for federal infrastructure grants, bridge repair and replacement, EV infrastructure

[Michigan.gov/budget](https://michigan.gov/budget)



Connecting Local & Regional Resources

Increased financial commitment to housing, broadband, infrastructure, childcare

Housing funds and projects, infrastructure match programs, childcare set-asides

Emerging partnerships and growing capacity with employers, universities, and nonprofit partners

Housing and childcare projects, internships and apprenticeships, technical assistance

Local and regional plans for high-priority issues

Broadband surveys, housing action plans and needs assessments, childcare strategies, community awareness



Rural Readiness Grant Program

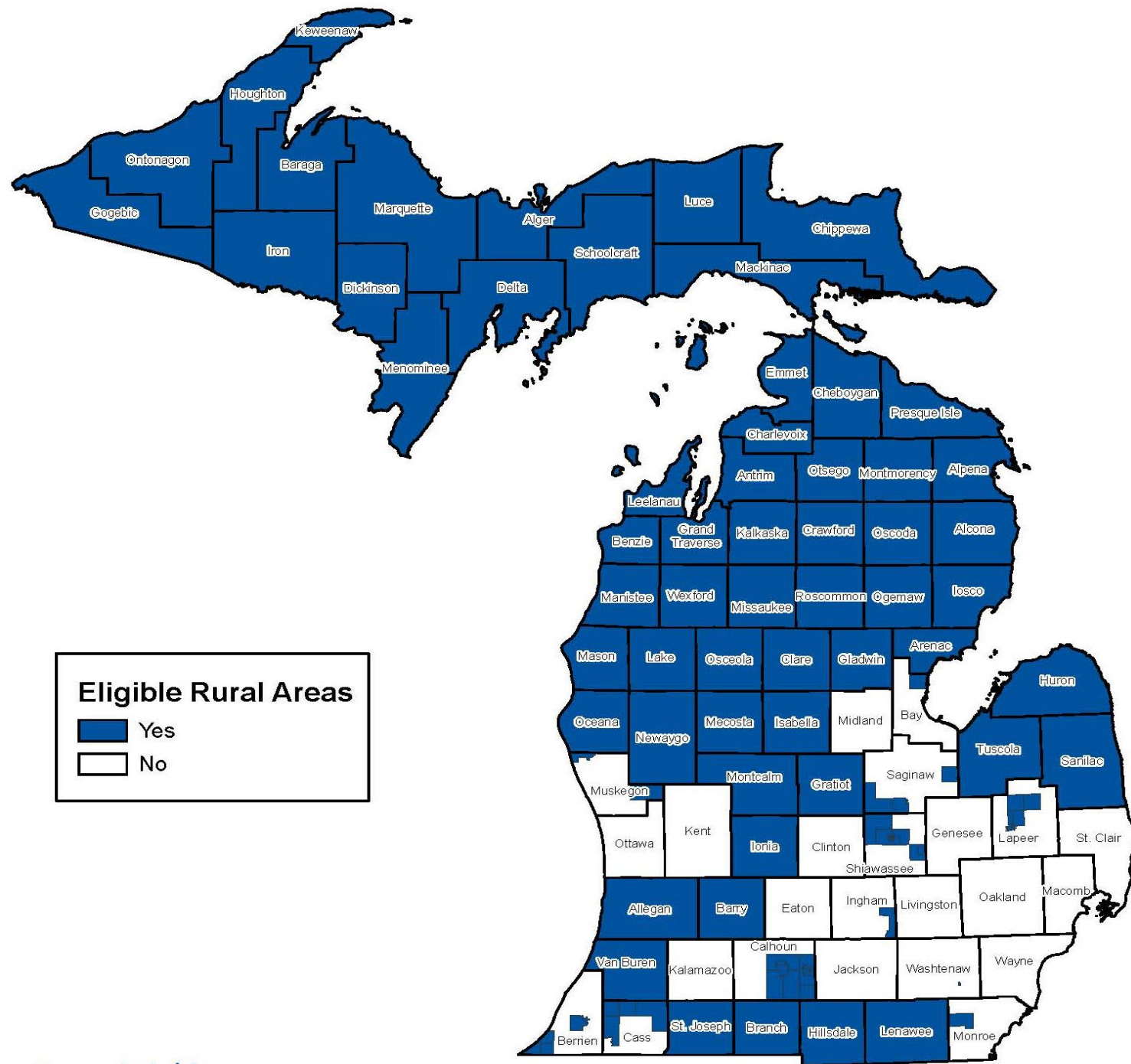
Eligible Activities

- Capacity Building
- Partnerships & Planning
- Cross-Sector Collaboration
- Development Readiness

Awards, Applicants, and Deadlines

- Maximum \$50,000 (20% match, in-kind or cash_
- Local governments and tax-exempt organizations are eligible
- Grant webinar **Friday, April 21**
- Letters of Intent due **May 25**
- Full applications due **August 3**
- Eligible community map online

Michigan.gov/mdard/business-development/grantfund/rural-readiness-grant-program



Rural Readiness Grants

Eligible Rural Areas

- Non-metropolitan counties, including micropolitan statistical areas
- Census tracts with Rural-Urban Community Area (RUCA) codes between 4-10

[Michigan.gov/mdard/business-development/grantfund/rural-readiness-grant-program](https://michigan.gov/mdard/business-development/grantfund/rural-readiness-grant-program)



Thank you!



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