



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

GARLIN GILCHRIST II
LT. GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER

No. 2019-19

Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

Michigan Poverty Task Force

Right now, hundreds of thousands of Michiganders live in poverty. There is no single face to this problem; its causes are many and varied, and so are its consequences. No matter how poverty is viewed or measured, however, one thing is clear: too many Michiganders lack the opportunity they deserve to get ahead, or even get by.

For instance, according to the United Way's ALICE Report, 43 percent of Michigan households struggle to afford necessities like housing, childcare, food, technology, health care and transportation. Single adults now need an annual salary of just over \$21,000, while a family of four needs an annual salary of over \$61,000 just to afford the basics. This means that there are countless families across the state who face tough decisions every day about how they are going to pay for the things they need. They must choose between paying rent or putting food on the table; between paying for utilities or refilling their prescription drugs.

And poverty is not only a financial issue. Michiganders living in communities of poverty are more likely to face other liabilities as well, including educational disadvantage, environmental pollutants, substandard housing, and limited public services.

If we are going to lift Michigan families out of poverty and ensure a path to opportunity for everyone, we must work to ensure everyone has access to the support they need. And we must act now, because too many Michigan seniors, children, and families are struggling to escape the grasp of generational poverty. In fact, a 2018 study shows that 1 in 5 Michigan children live in poverty.

While there are already many efforts underway throughout state government to assist individuals living in poverty, we must find ways to strengthen, broaden, coordinate, and streamline those efforts. The health and well-being of this state and its residents, communities, and businesses would benefit from a task force devoted to ensuring that state government is bringing the full force of its efforts and resources to the fight against poverty and is doing all it can to build a better Michigan for everyone.

Section 51 of article 4 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 declares the public health and general welfare of the people of the State of Michigan as matters of primary public concern.

Section 1 of article 5 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 vests the executive power of the State of Michigan in the governor.

Section 8 of article 5 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 places each principal department of state government under the supervision of the governor unless otherwise provided.

Section 8 of article 5 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 also obligates the governor to take care that the laws be faithfully executed.

Acting under the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and Michigan law, I order the following:

1. Creation of the Michigan Poverty Task Force

- (a) The Michigan Poverty Task Force ("Task Force") is created as an inter-agency advisory body within the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity ("Department").
- (b) The Task Force shall consist of the following members:
 - (1) The director of the Department, or the director's designee from within the Department.
 - (2) The director of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (3) The director of the Department of Civil Rights, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (4) The director of the Department of Corrections, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (5) The superintendent of public instruction, or the superintendent's designee from within the Department of Education.
 - (6) The director of the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (7) The director of the Department of Health and Human Services, or the director's designee from within the Department.
 - (8) The director of the Department of Insurance and Financial Services, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (9) The director of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, or the director's designee from within that department.

- (10) The director of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (11) The director of the Department of Natural Resources, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (12) The director of the Michigan State Police, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (13) The director of Department of Technology, Management, and Budget, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (14) The director of the Department of Transportation, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (15) The director of the Department of Treasury, or the director's designee from within that department.
 - (16) The executive director of the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission, or the executive director's designee from within that agency.
 - (17) The chairperson of the Michigan Public Service Commission, or the chairperson's designee from within that agency.
 - (18) The executive director of the Michigan State Housing Development Authority, or the executive director's designee from within that agency.
 - (19) Any representatives from other departments, agencies, or instrumentalities of the executive branch of state government whom the governor may choose to appoint.
- (c) Members of the Task Force are ex officio members and serve at the pleasure of the governor.
 - (d) The director of the Department, or the director's designee from within the Department, shall serve as the chairperson of the Task Force.
 - (e) Within 45 days of the filing of this executive order, the chairperson of the Task Force shall establish an advisory council to the Task Force under section 3(g), whose membership shall include:
 - (1) Three Michigan state legislators, including two legislators representing urban areas impacted by poverty and one legislator representing a rural area impacted by poverty.
 - (2) Three Michigan residents impacted by poverty or working with communities impacted by poverty.

2. Charge to the Task Force

- (a) The Task Force shall provide recommendations to the governor, the director of the Department, and the heads of other departments or agencies, and coordinate activities among departments and agencies.
- (b) The Task Force shall research, identify, recommend, and implement strategies for reducing poverty in Michigan, which may include the following:
 - (1) Identify and evaluate poverty's root causes and contributing factors in Michigan, the needs of those in poverty in Michigan, and the effectiveness of efforts on all levels that have been undertaken or are currently being undertaken to address poverty in Michigan. Develop strategies for supporting or otherwise improving the efficacy of those efforts, including programmatic effectiveness and administrative efficiencies.
 - (2) Identify and evaluate the nature and scope of poverty's impact on various locations and communities throughout the state and what response actions would be most effective in helping each of those impacted areas. Develop strategies for implementing those response actions.
 - (3) Identify and evaluate what financial and other resources are available on all levels to combat poverty in Michigan. Develop strategies for securing, coordinating, augmenting, and deploying those resources.
 - (4) Identify and evaluate key barriers to upward mobility among populations in poverty in Michigan. Develop strategies for overcoming these barriers, focusing on improved economic development and opportunities for upward mobility among families and individuals experiencing poverty in Michigan.
 - (5) Develop strategies for increasing public awareness of poverty in Michigan, its causes and effects, the resources available to those impacted by it, and the actions that can be taken to combat it.
 - (6) Develop routine communication and information-sharing protocols between members of the Task Force and stakeholders on all levels.
 - (7) Identify key stakeholders in impacted areas, and perform outreach to ensure stakeholders are informed, educated, and empowered. Stakeholder outreach will include, but is not limited to, community leaders, partner organizations, tribal governments, local government officials, and other elected officials representing the impacted areas.
 - (8) Perform outreach to the general public regarding poverty in Michigan and the work of the Task Force.
 - (9) Create measurable goals and objectives along an established timeline.

- (10) Recommend changes in Michigan law, and policy-related changes that can be implemented by governmental and non-governmental agencies, relevant to fighting poverty in Michigan.
 - (11) Provide other information and advice and perform other duties as requested by the director of the Department or the governor.
- (c) The Task Force shall report regularly to the governor on its activities.

3. Operations of the Task Force

- (a) The Department shall assist the Task Force in the performance of its duties and provide personnel to staff the Task Force. The budgeting, procurement, and related management functions of the Task Force shall be performed under the direction and supervision of the director of the Department.
- (b) The Task Force shall adopt procedures consistent with Michigan law and this order governing its organization and operations.
- (c) The Task Force shall comply with the Freedom of Information Act, 1976 PA 442, as amended, MCL 15.231 to 15.246.
- (d) The Task Force may select from among its members a vice chairperson.
- (e) The Task Force may select from among its members a secretary. Task Force staff shall assist the secretary with recordkeeping responsibilities.
- (f) The Task Force shall meet at the call of its chairperson and as otherwise provided in the procedures adopted by the Task Force.
- (g) The Task Force may establish advisory workgroups composed of individuals or entities participating in Task Force activities or other members of the public as deemed necessary by the Task Force to assist it in performing its duties and responsibilities. The Task Force may adopt, reject, or modify any recommendations proposed by an advisory workgroup.
- (h) The Task Force may, as appropriate, make inquiries, studies, and investigations, hold hearings, and receive comments from the public. The Task Force also may consult with outside experts in order to perform its duties, including experts in the private sector, organized labor, government agencies, and at institutions of higher education.
- (i) The Task Force may hire or retain contractors, sub-contractors, advisors, consultants, and agents, and may make and enter into contracts necessary or incidental to the exercise of the powers of the Task Force and the performance of its duties as the director of the Department deems advisable and necessary, consistent with this order and applicable law, rules and procedures, and subject to available funding.

- (j) The Task Force may accept donations of labor, services, or other things of value from any public or private agency or person. Any donations shall be received and used in accordance with law.
- (k) Members of the Task Force shall serve without compensation, but may receive reimbursement for necessary travel and expenses consistent with applicable law, rules, and procedures, and subject to available funding.
- (l) Members of the Task Force shall coordinate all legislative and media contacts that directly involve the work of the Task Force.

4. Implementation

- (a) All departments, committees, commissioners, or officers of this state shall give to the Task Force, or to any member or representative of the Task Force, any necessary assistance required by the Task Force, or any member or representative of the Task Force, in the performance of the duties of the Task Force so far as is compatible with their duties and consistent with this order and applicable law. Free access also must be given to any books, records, or documents in their custody relating to matters within the scope of inquiry, study, or review of the Task Force, consistent with applicable law.
- (b) Nothing in this order shall be construed to change the organization of the executive branch of state government or the assignment of functions among its units, in a manner requiring the force of law.
- (c) If any portion of this order is found to be unenforceable, the unenforceable provision should be disregarded and the rest of the order should remain in effect as issued.
- (d) This order is effective upon filing.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Michigan.

Date: December 18, 2019


GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

By the Governor

SECRETARY OF STATE