



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

GARLIN GILCHRIST II  
LT. GOVERNOR

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTIVE**

No. 2026-3

To: State Department Directors and Autonomous Agency Heads  
From: Governor Gretchen Whitmer  
Date: May 13, 2026  
Re: Expanding State Employment Opportunities for Michiganders

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State employees bring value to their jobs through a combination of experience, skills, and academic qualifications. But skills have not always received the attention they deserve in hiring. Experiences obtained in prior employment, military service, on-the-job training, registered apprenticeships, internships, and national service programs, for example, equip applicants to succeed. When the most skilled individuals work for state government, Michigan wins.

In recent years, many employers have come to appreciate the value in skills-based hiring: the practice of evaluating and selecting job candidates based, in part, on the competencies they can demonstrate. Studies have shown that skills-based hiring better predicts successful job performance and creates a more resilient and versatile workforce. Moreover, skills-based hiring can increase access to quality jobs for non-traditional candidates and reduce structural barriers that result in inequities in pay and access to employment. By recognizing competencies gained through both formal education and alternative pathways, skills-based hiring affirms the value of higher education while ensuring that Michiganders who have gained skills through other means can have a meaningful path to employment, as well.

As Michigan's largest employer, the State of Michigan must continue to modernize its hiring practices and policies and enhance its recruitment and retention efforts for state employees. Our state workforce should be as talented, representative, capable, and resilient as the people it serves. Skills-based hiring is one tool to reach this end.

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 under the supervision of the governor.

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

1. All executive department offices and agencies are directed to use skills-based employment practices in their efforts to attract, recruit, hire, retain, and develop the careers of talented employees. In making hiring decisions, hiring managers must consider the full set of competencies that candidates bring to the job. Hiring managers are directed to align job requirements and position prerequisites with the skills needed to accomplish a position's job duties.
2. Job postings issued or updated after the date of this Executive Directive may include education attainment preferences that exceed minimum entrance requirements only with approval of the agency's cabinet Director.
3. As soon as reasonably practical, Departments and autonomous agencies must:
  - a. advertise job opportunities in a manner consistent with the best practices of skills-based hiring;
  - b. review position descriptions to modernize and streamline language, working titles, and requirements;
  - c. remove supplemental questions and documentation prompts that do not directly assess the skills and competencies required for the position; and
  - d. regularly review and update hiring practices to align with this skills-based approach, ensuring a more diverse and qualified workforce.
4. Contingent on adequate funding and operational capacity, departments and autonomous agencies should enhance the state's recruitment processes to include user-friendly features that enable applicants to easily highlight their relevant skills, competencies, and experiences and encourage job seekers to describe their skills in their application materials.
5. Contingent on adequate funding and operational capacity, departments and autonomous agencies should promote and support opportunities, such as Michigan Reconnect, for employees to obtain postsecondary degrees, industry-recognized certifications, or other credentials, to advance career mobility and strengthen the state workforce.
6. Contingent on adequate funding, the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity must, in consultation with the Michigan Civil Service Commission, develop and implement a training course and resources on skills-based hiring, where applicable, which executive department hiring managers will be required to complete at appropriate intervals.
7. The Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity must assist Michigan employers in adopting skills-based hiring practices as a strategy for addressing workforce challenges and attracting and retaining talented employees.

This directive is effective immediately.

Thank you for your cooperation in its implementation.



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GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR