



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

GARLIN GILCHRIST II  
LT. GOVERNOR

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**

**REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION  
MAJOR DISASTER**

March 26, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Through: Mr. James K. Joseph  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency – Region V  
536 South Clark Street, 6th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Mr. President:

Under procedures set forth in section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder, 44 C.F.R. § 206.36, I request an expedited major disaster declaration for the State of Michigan as a result of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The federal government has recognized the severity and magnitude of this pandemic. On January 31, 2020, pursuant to section 319 of the Public Health Service Act, Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency for the whole of the United States. Although preliminary measures were made to warn the American public of the danger of the disease, COVID-19 continued to spread and on March 13, 2020, pursuant to section 201 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1621, you declared a national emergency to provide additional resources to contain and combat the virus. This pandemic has come at an enormous human, financial, and social cost, one that Michigan alone cannot sustain without further federal assistance.

As Governor of the State of Michigan, I have also utilized the extraordinary power of the executive to respond to this growing pandemic. Before Michigan even saw its first case of COVID-19, on February 28, 2020, I activated the State of Michigan Emergency Operations

Center in order to coordinate state, local, and tribal responses to the increasingly likely spread of the virus to the state. Upon the confirmation of the first COVID–19 cases in the State, I declared a state of emergency on March 10, 2020, so that state resources could be diverted to respond to the outbreak. As the outbreak has progressed, I took the following actions:

- On March 10, 2020, I announced the first presumptive positive cases of COVID–19 and immediately declared a state of emergency to direct state resources to slow the spread and mitigate public health and economic impacts on Michiganders.
- On March 11, 2020, I recommended community mitigation strategies to help slow transmission of COVID–19 in Michigan.
- On March 12, 2020, I announced statewide closure of all K-12 school buildings to help mitigate community spread.
- On March 12, 2020, I took steps to expand telemedicine and urged you to permit an ACA special enrollment period during the COVID-19 pandemic so that Michiganders would not be denied care as a result of a positive test for the virus.
- On March 13, 2020, I ordered a temporary ban on large events and assemblages (250 people or more), and I ordered temporary restrictions on entry into care facilities and juvenile facilities.
- On March 13, 2020, with the help of your administration, the Michigan Department of Education secured a waiver to serve meals to at-risk students during the closure period.
- On March 15, 2020, I imposed enhanced restrictions on price gouging to protect Michigan consumers as essential supplies began to disappear off store shelves.
- On March 16, 2020, I temporarily closed bars, theaters, casinos, and other public spaces, and limited food service to delivery and carry-out orders.
- On March 16, 2020, I expanded unemployment benefits for Michigan workers and employers including expanding eligibility for workers who are placed on temporary leave, are sick or quarantined, or have a family care responsibility; increasing the maximum duration of benefits to 26 weeks; expanding the state’s Work Share subsidized employment program for employers; and mutualizing costs for employers affected by my public health directives.
- On March 17, 2020, I took action to enhance operational capacity and efficiency in hospitals whose capacity is challenged by COVID–19.
- On March 18, 2020, the Small Business Administration approved my request to make Michigan’s small businesses eligible for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance.

- On March 18, 2020, I directed the Michigan Treasury to provide tax assistance to small businesses by delaying scheduled submission of Sales and Use Taxes.
- On March 18, 2020, I ordered an extension on the tax foreclosure deadline.
- On March 19, 2020, I called on the national guard to assist in getting out COVID–19 supplies, and I activated the Pure Michigan Business Connect platform to provide matchmaking services between buyers and suppliers.
- On March 19, 2020, I secured vital grant and loan funding through the Michigan Strategic Fund to support small businesses with near term cash flow challenges.
- On March 20, 2020, I ordered a temporary moratorium on non-essential medical and dental procedures to direct capacity to critical care.
- On March 20, 2020, I ordered a moratorium on evictions.
- On March 20, 2020, I directed the Michigan Treasury to assist unemployed Michiganders currently paying past-due state tax debts.
- On March 21, 2020, I ordered a temporary closure of hair, nail, and tanning salons, as well as other non-essential personal care services.
- On March 23, 2020, I issued a “Stay Home, Stay Safe” shelter-in-place order as a result of the growing number of COVID–19 cases and the limited capacity of our health systems.
- On March 25, 2020, I ordered administrative hearings to continue by video conferencing and phone conferencing.
- On March 25, 2020, I ordered the expansion of unemployment benefits to increase work-sharing for employers, provide an additional six weeks of benefits for those with active unemployment claims, and waive work-search employer certification requirements.
- On March 25, 2020, I eased restrictions on pharmacists so that vulnerable individuals may obtain a medication supply for up to 60 days.

The strength and courage of Michiganders during this time of fear and uncertainty should not be overlooked. It has been heartening to see the response of communities donating food, money, and resources to those that have had their work hours reduced, their jobs cut, or their small businesses shuttered during this time. In order to protect the most physically vulnerable in our communities, I have seen Michiganders make great and difficult sacrifices. However, these sacrifices have left many, especially the most economically vulnerable, in a state of financial precarity. There is still no indication of what the final cost of this pandemic will be, how many lives will be lost, how many jobs lost, how many retirement funds lost, how many classroom hours lost, or how many small businesses lost. Michiganders are what make Michigan great, the teachers, the factory workers, the artists

and musicians, the hospitality workers, the food service workers, the health professionals, the students, the business owners, the government workers, and more add irreplaceable value to their communities. However, neither the kindness and generosity of individuals, nor the limited resources of the state can sustain the enormous need we currently face.

As of March 25, 2020, Michigan has confirmed over 2,294 positive cases of COVID-19—the fifth highest in the United States—with the number growing steadily higher each day. Forty-three precious lives have already been lost to a disease that continues to spread the world over. By my authority to request you, the President, to declare a Major Disaster in the state of Michigan, 44 C.F.R. § 206.36(a), I hereby request the following Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance:

1. I request the following **Individual Assistance** for the State of Michigan, including, but not limited to:
  - Disaster Unemployment;
  - Disaster Crisis Counseling;
  - Disaster Case Management;
  - Individuals and Households Program;
  - Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program;
  - Disaster Survivor Assistance;
  - Disaster Legal Services; and
  - Voluntary Agency Coordination.

These programs are necessary and critical for the economic security of the people of Michigan.

2. Additionally, I request the following **Public Assistance** for the State of Michigan, including:
  - Debris Removal;
  - Emergency Protective Measures;
  - Roads and Bridges;
  - Water Control Facilities;
  - Buildings and Equipment;

- Utilities; and
- Parks, Recreation, and Other Facilities.

These programs are necessary and critical for the health, safety, and well-being of the people of Michigan.

3. Further, as the pandemic continues to evolve, and acknowledging the risk of second and third waves of infections, I request **Hazard Mitigation** assistance to help provide relief during planning for recovery in the long-term. This pandemic has demonstrated this state's vulnerability to future pandemics, and it is imperative to take the lessons learned from this virus and apply them prospectively. This joint effort between the state and federal government is essential to prevent COVID-19 from becoming an annually transmitted virus.

As the pandemic continues to evolve over the next several months, I reserve the right to amend this request to include additional FEMA programs. This event is of such severity and magnitude that damages assessments are not required. 44 C.F.R. § 206.36(d). However, to the extent that information is available, we have included it for your review and consideration.

As President, you have the discretion to adjust or waive cost-sharing requirements. 44 C.F.R. § 206.47(d). I urgently request that you waive the cost-sharing requirement for Michigan and all political subdivisions herein. As I will demonstrate in the following supporting documents, Michigan is very likely to surpass the need-based public assistance per capita impact indicators. I have designated the Director of the State of Michigan Emergency Operations Center, Major Emmet McGowan as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. I further request that joint preliminary damage assessments be waived, in accordance with 44 CFR section 206.33(d). Since this incident is of a unique nature, severity, and magnitude, it does not require field damage assessments to determine the need for supplemental Federal assistance under the Act.

While the people and businesses of the great State of Michigan have shown incredible resilience and cooperation throughout this difficult time, we cannot weather this storm alone. I request the immense resources and power of the Federal Government to support Michigan's efforts to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am urging the swift approval of this request to lessen or avert the suffering of Michiganders at the hands of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,



Gretchen Whitmer  
Governor

Enclosures and Attachments: Preliminary Needs Assessment; FEMA Form 010-0-13

## PRELIMINARY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### I. Historical Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Michigan

#### A. Recent Disasters

Over the past 12 months, I have declared the following emergencies or supported continuing emergency relief efforts:

*Historic Water Levels:* Michigan has experienced historic shoreline erosion over the last two years. Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, Lake Huron, Lake St. Clair, and Lake Erie are currently 13, 37, 37, and 34 inches above their long-term monthly averages for the month of March. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is predicting that those rates will continue to rise throughout the spring, further adding to shoreline erosion. The result of these historically high-water levels has been catastrophic. Homes have fallen into the Great Lakes—infrastructure including roads, bridges, and state parks—have been closed or destroyed by shoreline erosion, and increasingly strong currents and riptides pose life-threatening risks. Not only have I worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help monitor and mitigate the danger posed by water levels that continue to rise, but I have also removed regulatory barriers so that the Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy can work with Michigan residents and businesses to respond quickly as shoreline conditions continue to change.

*Flooding:* In 2019, Michigan's farms were devastated by one of the wettest planting seasons on record. As a result of heavy rains and flooding, farmers were able to plant only a fraction of their crops. I issued a state of emergency for Wayne and Tuscola Counties in early May 2019 to respond to the heavy rainfall. On June 19, 2019, I wrote the U.S. Department of Agriculture, requesting flexibility for Michigan farmers to qualify under Federal Crop Insurance Rules for relief. I also approved \$15 million in funding to help farms and agriculture-related businesses get access to low-interest loans.

*Winter Storms:* On January 28, 2019, I issued a state of emergency across the state of Michigan that began on January 29, 2019. The storm, commonly known as the "polar vortex of 2019" had a devastating impact on Michigan communities. As a result of extreme weather conditions, I declared a separate state of emergency for the City of Grand Rapids and activated an emergency management plan for the city on February 9, 2019. An emergency management plan was also activated for the City of Ionia on February 13, 2019, as ice jams threatened to overwhelm the city with extreme flooding. Temperatures and wind chills well below negative ten degrees Fahrenheit were registered across the state and resulted in three deaths.

*Opioid Crisis:* Like many states, Michigan has been hit hard by the Opioid epidemic. Drug overdoses have increased, and in 2018 Michigan's death rate from Opioid overdoses was almost 7 percent over the national average. In response to this crisis, I have diverted funds to support treatment and rehabilitation facilities, as well as increased education for local health and safety professionals. In 2019, I also established Michigan's first Opioids Task Force to coordinate the state response to the public health crisis.

*Flint Water Crisis:* In 2014 and 2015, Flint, MI faced a health emergency from lead-levels in local drinking water. I have worked hard during my administration to get Flint back to having safe, clean water. While the problem is still not fixed, money has been committed and resources allocated to get back on track. During my administration, I have continued to support and make appointments to the Flint Water Interagency Coordinating Committee.

**B. Michigan’s Demographics**

Michigan’s two peninsulas are home to an estimated 10.0 million individuals. Michigan’s workforce is made up of over 4.3 million individuals in a variety of sectors. Seventy-one percent of Michigander’s live in owner-occupied homes, homes in which they have been ordered to take shelter in for the foreseeable future. The median hourly wage across all occupations is \$18.08, and the average rent for a Michigander is \$850, while the average cost of owning a home in Michigan is \$1,279 a month.

**II. Individual Assistance**

In order to qualify for individual assistance, a state must demonstrate: a disaster impacted population profile; community trauma; state fiscal capacity and resource availability; impact to community infrastructure; casualties; disaster related unemployment; and uninsured home and personal property loss. 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b). Michigan has a demonstrated need in each one of these categories as a direct result of the COVID–19 pandemic.

*Disaster Impacted Population Profile*

	Percent Below Poverty Level (Poverty status in the Past 12 Months)	Per Capita Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2018 inflation adjusted dollars)	Percent of Population Youth (Under 18 Years)	Percent of Population Elderly (Aged 65 years or older)	Percent of Total Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population with a Disability	Percent Households Receiving Food Stamps/SNAP	Pre-Disaster Unemployment Rate
National Average	14.10%	\$32,621.00	22.8%	15.20%	12.60%	12.20%	3.7%
State Average	15.0%	\$30,336.00	22.1%	16.3%	14.3%	14.1%	4.0%

\*American Communities Survey: 2018 5-year Estimates, available at [data.census.gov](https://data.census.gov).

*State Fiscal Capacity and Resource Availability*

*Michigan’s Fiscal Capacity*

- *Total Taxable Resources of Michigan:* Most recent U.S. Treasury estimates put Michigan’s total taxable resources at \$568.3 billion for the year 2017.
- *Gross Domestic Product:* Michigan’s GDP in 2018 was \$470,529 million (in 2012 chained dollars), representing a 2.5 percent share in the United States’ economy. Michigan’s GDP was already forecasted to slow to 1.6 percent in 2020 before the outbreak of COVID–19 and in light of the crises, this number will likely be much

lower.

- *Per Capita Personal Income by Local Area:*

County	Per Capita Personal Income	County	Per Capita Personal Income	County	Per Capita Personal Income	County	Per Capita Personal Income
Alcona	38375	Dickinson	49397	Lake	31813	Oceana	37950
Alger	33767	Eaton	42693	Lapeer	43679	Ogemaw	35396
Allegan	45182	Emmet	57115	Leelanau	67320	Ontonagon	40129
Alpena	40985	Genesee	41068	Lenawee	39600	Osceola	36023
Antrim	47070	Gladwin	36874	Livingston	58326	Oscoda	33896
Arenac	37369	Gogebic	39945	Luce	31827	Otsego	40589
Baraga	33519	Grand Traverse	50639	Mackinac	44457	Ottawa	49418
Barry	44919	Gratiot	37834	Macomb	46530	Presque Isle	39004
Bay	41722	Hillsdale	36598	Manistee	38814	Roscommon	37141
Benzie	43557	Houghton	37674	Marquette	40036	Saginaw	38754
Berrien	47430	Huron	45425	Mason	41667	St. Clair	44316
Branch	37622	Ingham	40761	Mecosta	34252	St. Joseph	38866
Calhoun	40276	Ionia	35273	Menominee	43594	Sanilac	38004
Cass	44994	Iosco	37970	Midland	60467	Schoolcraft	39948
Charlevoix	52885	Iron	44959	Missaukee	34972	Shiawassee	39435
Cheboygan	40080	Isabella	35501	Monroe	47496	Tuscola	37979
Chippewa	34269	Jackson	39832	Montcalm	34972	Van Buren	41123
Clare	34120	Kalamazoo	48723	Montmorency	37363	Washtenaw	59363
Clinton	46518	Kalkaska	34623	Muskegon	39072	Wayne	42942
Crawford	34648	Kent	53935	Newaygo	38037	Wexford	36454
Delta	40551	Keweenaw	47618	Oakland	72741		

\*U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Last Updated Nov. 14, 2019.

*Other Factors:* As is true for many other states, measures enacted to stem the COVID-19 outbreak are creating unprecedented economic challenges for Michigan. Michigan is currently operating under a number Executive Orders, including EO 2020-21 which broadly prohibits in-person work that is not necessary to sustain or protect life. These restrictions, while necessary to stem the pandemic, will lead to an unprecedented slowdown in Michigan’s economy. Manufacturing facilities, stores, bars, restaurants, movie theaters, and other sectors of the economy are either completely or mostly shut down.

These new economic realities have not yet shown up in published economic data or state budget numbers, but there is no doubt that Michigan is seeing massive labor force disruptions and the production of goods and services greatly reduced. We expect state revenues to plummet while the need for state services such as Medicaid accelerates. Revenue reductions will likely total in the billions of dollars, far in excess of state reserves. Fund balances will be quickly depleted, and Michigan will be faced with untenable choices over how to try to best meet the pressing needs of its citizens in the face of declining public resources.

### Community Trauma

From first responders to law enforcement, schoolteachers to chefs, everyone has been affected by the spread of COVID–19. As the number of infected individuals continues to rise, we will reach a point where most people will know someone that has been infected by the virus. This realization has caused anxiety amongst the general public. Steep economic

decline and global panic have not made matters easier. While I know that this state and its residents are strong and resilient, and that we will make it to the end of this crisis, that does not change the indelible mark that it will leave on this state and its residents.

### *Impact to Community Infrastructure*

The strain on community infrastructure has been immense and still has not been measured fully. There has been an increased need for unemployment insurance, emergency food assistance, childcare, household supplies, and mental health support. Local officials and healthcare professionals have been working around-the-clock to respond to the evolving needs of a community-based COVID-19 response. Aid is needed on the state and federal level to support the efforts of those that know their communities best.

### *Local Response*

Local medical systems, regional healthcare coalitions, and emergency management personnel have exhausted resources to respond to the pandemic as well as to obtain the vital resources that are needed, such as PPE, ventilators, and beds. The state is expending every resource to support local agencies and organizations in these efforts. Fully deployed, the Strategic National Stockpile has assisted the local systems in obtaining desperately needed equipment. However, this stockpile was never intended to supply the entire nation all at once. The local agencies and systems are frustrated in their ability to get the needed equipment based on national shortages and slower-than-normal supply chain logistics.

Additional local resources are also being exhausted through response to the safe distancing and stay-at-home orders to keep the economy and social services moving forward as best as possible in this unprecedented situation. Many companies throughout the state have stepped up as much as possible to adjust or change their product manufacturing to supply the needs of the medical community. Thousands of volunteers are also contributing in unique ways to supply hospitals and medical professionals with homemade PPE where the medical professionals are able to use them.

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has also worked diligently with local public health and healthcare partners to share critical information, provide guidance, and coordinate requests for resources, supplies, and other assistance as necessary. The MDHHS in partnership with eight healthcare coalitions across the state has remained available 24/7 to accomplish the mission of public health and safety for all people of Michigan by keeping in close contact with the healthcare providers in Michigan to support hospitals, long-term care facilities, dialysis centers, psychiatric hospitals, tribes, local health departments, and more. Activities have included the receipt and distribution of medical countermeasures, pre-deployment of medical surge and mass fatality resources, planning for alternate care sites, preparing for access and usability of federal resources, developing risk communication materials for the public, healthcare workers, and first responders, implementing orders under the Michigan Public Health Code to best protect individuals in Michigan, enhanced epidemiological surveillance and contact tracing, enhanced laboratory capacity and throughput for collection and testing for COVID-19 specimens, mental and behavioral health outreach, identification and outreach to high-risk individuals and vulnerable populations, ensuring continued medical treatment, equipment,

and therapeutics during self-quarantine and sheltering at home, and maintaining visibility on statewide bed availability in healthcare settings.

Casualties

As of March 25, 2020, Michigan has over 2,294 individuals that have tested positive for COVID-19. Of these individuals, 43 have died. To put that number into perspective, Michigan has one of the steepest rates of infection curves, with the number of cases doubling roughly every two days. Michigan death rate is currently on the same trajectory as New York was early in its recognition of this pandemic. While Michigan is the eighth largest state in the Union in terms of population, it is currently fifth in terms of infections. The speed at which this disease is spreading within the state and the acceleration of deaths is cause for concern.

Disaster Related Unemployment

On March 16, 2020, I issued Executive Order 2020-09 to temporarily close bars, theaters, casinos, dine-in restaurants, and other public spaces. On March 24, I issued Executive Order 2020-21 to broadly prohibit in-person work by anyone who is not a critical infrastructure worker who is essential to sustaining and protecting life. This order is effective for a period of three weeks but may require extension as dictated by public health necessity.

Michigan businesses have been responsive to the calls of public health officials to close businesses and places of public accommodation in order to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this has left many Michiganders out of work.

During the first eight days following Executive Order 2020-09, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) has seen a spike in unemployment insurance claims. In an average week in March, LEO had forecasted 5,100 initial claims. Between March 16 and March 24, LEO received approximately 223,055 initial claims. This represents an increase of over 2,700%. On March 23 and March 24, initial claims reached 41,878 and 42,228, respectively, as workers and businesses took action to comply with the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order and the guidance of state and local public health officials.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Initial claims – March avg.</b>	<b>Initial claims – actual</b>
3/16/2020	1,400	4,690
3/17/2020	1,400	16,782
3/18/2020	800	31,453
3/19/2020	500	24,947
3/20/2020	700	28,490
3/21/2020	150	15,459
3/22/2020	150	17,128
3/23/2020	1,400	41,878
3/24/2020	1,400	42,228
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,900</b>	<b>223,055</b>

By state estimates, after accounting for “essential workers” and workers who can work from home, we estimate that a potential 1.9 million residents could be out of work if conditions used to mitigate the spread of the virus continue.

### *Community Impact and Volunteer Participation*

The COVID–19 pandemic has made a typical community response impossible. Ordinarily, the people of Michigan would respond by helping their neighbors and pitching in wherever there is need. This pandemic disaster has caused the total disruption of communities. Schools are closed along with every other community meeting place, including churches, synagogues, temples and every kind of civic organization. The supply of volunteers is devastated, not only by the distancing requirements, but by the fact that a significant percentage of community volunteers are elderly, making them especially vulnerable to the virus.

The impact has been just as significant with outside voluntary organizations. FEMA has indicated that regionally and countrywide, the supply of volunteers from the Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster is almost crippled due to the age of many of the volunteers and the distancing requirements imposed on all. Some VOAD members around the country are having to close until the pandemic passes. In Michigan, our Food Banks are at a critical point of being able to distribute food to the growing number of homebound individuals who need their assistance. We are mustering our volunteers as much as possible, but groups such as Team Rubicon, normally a vital source of young volunteers, are having difficulty deploying teams to help distribute food.

During this critical challenge, it is essential for us to work together to provide people with the help they currently need, as well as the resources they will require in the weeks to come.

### *Uninsured Home and Personal Property Loss*

The COVID–19 pandemic has demonstrated how emergency response preparedness is uniquely tailored to natural disasters of the physical nature. While the COVID–19 pandemic has not torn roofs off homes or swept away cars in rising waters, the impact may yet be just as devastating. Personal property loss and foreclosure as a result of extreme financial strain in the aftermath of this pandemic has the potential to be catastrophic. Additionally, the outbreak of the COVID–19 pandemic comes just as Michigan enters into the Flood and Tornado season. Uninsured losses could occur while the virus continues to spread. Uninsured homeowners could be left with significant losses and even homelessness due to the unavailability of workers to help mitigate and repair damage.

#### **A. Disaster Unemployment Assistance**

I request Disaster Unemployment Assistance for the state of Michigan understanding that federal efforts to provide relief are also underway. In implementing DUA relief, we will take care not to duplicate any forthcoming federal efforts once they are finalized. However, as long as there continues to be an unmet need for unemployment assistance in Michigan, I will continue to work to find ways to meet those needs.

## 1. Michigan Unemployment Insurance Expansion

Under unprecedented circumstances, I have sought to expand eligibility for and access to unemployment insurance benefits to meet the needs of working Michiganders. On March 16, 2020, I issued Executive Order No. 2020-10 to temporarily expand unemployment eligibility and cost-sharing for businesses experiencing revenue loss because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- *Shared-Work Eligibility:* Under Executive Order 2020-10, I expanded Michigan's Work Share to reduce the number of businesses forced to lay off workers as operations due to public health restrictions curtailing operations. Work Share is a subsidized employment program, in which workers are paid partial benefits (state-paid) and partial wages (employer-paid) to keep as many employees on payroll as possible during the crisis. This program is especially useful for employers forced to cut back hours for employees. Under Executive Order 2020-10, a shared-work plan can now be approved regardless of the reserve balance an employer has in their UIA experience account.
- *Expanded Qualification Period:* Due to the evolving nature of the state-wide response to the COVID-19 crisis, I extended the application period from 14 days after the last day worked to 28 days after the last day worked. This gives workers more time to seek benefits as their economic circumstances evolve.
- *Extended Benefit Duration:* The standard eligibility period for an individual filing a claim for UIA is 20 weeks in Michigan. That means that the longest period that an individual could receive UIA benefits in a 52-week period, was for 20 weeks. Under Executive Order 2020-10, individuals filing between March 16, 2020 and April 14, 2020 are eligible for an extended 26 weeks of benefits.
- *Suspension of normal in-person work search and registration requirements:* Due to the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, the requirement of in-person registration for UIA benefits is suspended during the crisis. Additionally, the requirement that a beneficiary provide proof of actively searching for work has also been suspended, on the grounds that there is no suitable work opportunity or work search activity under current circumstances.
- *Expanded Coverage:* In Executive Order 2020-10, I expanded the class of individuals eligible for UIA to include the following:
  - **Sick workers:** I ordered that workers who are ill, quarantined, or immunocompromised and at high risk of contracting COVID-19 be eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits. UIA anticipates that this action could create a potential liability of \$600 million or more, paid from the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, even after accounting for provisions contained in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.
  - **Workers with an unanticipated family care responsibility:** I ordered that workers caring for loved ones with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis or responsible for family care as a result of a government directive, that do not have

access to family and medical leave, are now eligible for UIA. UIA anticipates that this action could cost \$30 million or more, paid from the state's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, even after accounting for provisions contained in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act.

- **Workers placed on unpaid leave:** I clarified that workers placed on an unpaid temporarily leave, who remain job-attached, will be regarded as eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits.
- *Employer Cost-Sharing:* In order to alleviate financial stress on businesses who are forced to lay off workers during this period of uncertainty, under Executive Order 2020-10, employers will not be charged for unemployment benefits for those individuals that become unemployed because of an executive order requiring the business to close or limit their operations.

My administration has exhausted available avenues to provide additional government response at this time. In addition, we anticipate that our resources will be increasingly strained by the COVID-19 pandemic and the action we have taken to combat it.

As of March 1, 2020, Michigan's Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund contained \$4.6 billion—among the best in the country—and a tribute to the state's stewardship of resources that are critical during unanticipated economic shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. At present, much is still uncertain. However, it is likely that a severe and extended economic disruption would exhaust these resources.

## 2. Requested DUA Gap-Filling Coverage

While Michigan has built up its UIA trust over the last 10 years to accommodate times of economic unrest, assistance is still needed to meet the needs of those that Michigan's Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity are not currently able to serve.

I request that the federal government provide disaster unemployment assistance (DUA) to the State of Michigan in order to meet the ever-increasing demand to provide relief for Michiganders.

Populations with unmet needs include:

- *Self-Employed Workers:* For those workers that are self-employed, freelancers, subcontractors, creatives, and agriculture workers, Michigan's UIA benefits do not provide coverage. I ask that DUA meet the needs of those individuals that file IRS Form 1099 to report their income, or through whatever other mechanism FEMA determines is appropriate for defining this class of individuals. I request that coverage be adequate to cover housing and rental payments, food and household supplies, childcare, and any other essential expenses for the next two months.
- *Individuals that Have Exhausted their Annual Benefit Eligibility:* In Michigan, normally, an individual is eligible for UIA for a maximum period of 20 weeks within a 52-week period. For individuals that have already exhausted these benefits but are once again unemployed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Michigan cannot provide UIA

benefits. I request DUA for individuals that exhausted their UIA benefits before March 16, 2020. I also request that this DUA provide a full 26 weeks of benefits to those individuals.

### **B. Disaster Crisis Counseling**

In order to meet present and continuing needs of Michiganders throughout this crisis, I request both Immediate Services and Regular Services provided by FEMA's Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program.

For youth, we know that the need in Michigan is particularly high and that depression and other mental health issues are already widespread. In 2017, 31 percent of high school students nationwide experienced depression symptoms. In Michigan, this rate was five percentage points higher than the national average. Suicidal thoughts amongst Michigan high schoolers was also higher than the national average, with 21 percent responding that they seriously considered attempting suicide compared to 17 percent nationally. The extended period of isolation and absence of school-related activities associated with the response to COVID-19 could potentially exacerbate these mental health experiences amongst youths.

Amongst adults, crisis-related stress, anxiety, and depression may be compounded by financial strain and uncertainty. Additionally, social distancing efforts have led many to cancel counseling sessions and group therapy. While remote services can be a good replacement for some, disaster crisis counseling is needed to provide a response tailored to COVID-19-related stress and anxieties. Crises counseling can be used to "help enhance social and emotional connections to others in the community, and promote effective coping strategies and resilience." These goals are particularly applicable to the measures taken to slow the progress of this pandemic.

Every demographic in the state has been impacted by the unprecedented enormity and far-reaching brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic and will result in significant long-term mental and behavioral health concerns. The need will only grow as senior centers, faith-based organizations, and other voluntary organizations either become overextended by increasing demand or close and cancel services. Many existing services provided by state, local, and tribal government agencies have been forced to close because of public health and safety concerns. Sites offering congregate-based meals and behavioral health and related services to individuals and families in communities across the state, including those provided for low-income and homeless individuals and families, have either closed or reduced their services. The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely impacted our most at-risk populations and resulted in reduced hours or closures of libraries, adult day care centers, skilled nursing programs, client transition services, counseling and support groups, senior foot care centers, and numerous other government and non-government programs that are vital to supporting the health, well-being, and independence of individuals and families in our communities. The immense magnitude and extensive impact of this pandemic will require substantial long-term supportive crisis counseling, education, development of coping skills, and a robust support system that the State of Michigan is unable to adequately provide without federal assistance.

### **C. Disaster Case Management**

I request Immediate Disaster Case Management (IDCM) and Disaster Case Management (DCM) in order to get assistance providing those affected by the COVID-19 a single point of access for the various resources supplied by public and private entities. The disaster-caused unmet needs of Michiganders require a response now, while they wait for financial aid to arrive. Individuals with limited English proficiency, older adults, people with disabilities, individuals with student-loan debt, and more will require assistance navigating existing state and federal benefits in the midst of COVID-19. It is essential for the coordinated efforts of federal, state, tribal, and local governments to get utilized efficiently by those that need them the most. Both IDCM and DCM would help make sure that individuals are aware of the array of programming available to them and that they have the tools they need to apply for and receive benefits.

Due to the severe and uncertain nature of COVID's impacts, Michigan's Disaster Case Management program will be very important to recovery. The program will involve partnerships between case managers and survivors to develop and carry out a long-term recovery plan. Long-term unmet needs may include financial, physical, emotional or spiritual well-being, as well as referrals for materials and manpower to provide support to survivors in their recovery. The case manager helps households return to a state of independence. Individuals who suffer losses not covered by government programs can benefit from case management services. The services provided through this important FEMA program are essential to anyone directly impacted by COVID-19, either through surviving the virus itself, or suffering from the economic and social impacts of the emergency measures put in place to stop the spread.

This partnership will give survivors a single point of contact to help verify disaster-caused unmet needs, develop a plan that outlines the steps necessary to achieve recovery, and Identify all available resources. Our case managers will monitor survivors' progress toward goals and provide client advocacy.

### **D. Individuals and Households Program**

Michigan struggles with housing instability. In Detroit, where the COVID-19 pandemic has hit Michigan the hardest, homeowners make up a minority of the city's residents. In 2016, the estimated national average for eviction was 2.4 percent. In Michigan, by contrast, the eviction rate was a staggering 13.13 percent. That is equal to 138,169 evictions in a *single year*. That was in a year of relative economic stability. Warren, Detroit, and Lansing, Michigan rank amongst the top 100 cities in the nation in eviction rates, evicting 8.08, 5.3, and 3.15 percent of their renters in 2016, respectively. There are also high rates of individuals in Michigan that utilize land contracts to finance their housing, which are particularly vulnerable to foreclosure for a missed payment. Many of Michigan's homeowners (23 percent) are cost burdened—paying more than 30 percent of their income toward housing—thus already paying a great share of the family's income towards housing. Loss of income, even for a few months, puts these families headed towards foreclosure.

- In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2019 on a total of 1,044,039 serviced loans in Michigan:
  - Total Past Due - 10.39 %
  - 30 days delinquent - 6.30 %
  - 60 days delinquent - 2.25 %
  - 90 days delinquent - 1.84 %
  - Seriously delinquent 90+ days - 2.76 %

Those on the brink of foreclosure may be pushed over the edge in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Housing is essential to maintaining public health and safety, and relief in the form of all possible assistance is requested.

Working through the mortgage crisis with federally funded mortgage assistance, financial institutions creative work out programs and foreclosure prevention homeowner counseling Michigan was able to significantly decrease overall delinquencies and drastically decrease state foreclosures.

Without future federal assistance though the COVID-19 crisis, Michigan will again see drastically increased delinquencies and again a substantial increase in foreclosures. Foreclosures hurt families and neighborhoods across the state.

Michigan's renter population, with a median income of approximately \$30,000, is significantly rent over-burdened. About 45% of renters are paying more than 30% of their income towards housing, thus creating instability in their family's finances. For lower income renters—those below 50% Area Median Income—over 50% pay more than half of the income toward rent. These renters are perilously close to eviction during normal circumstances and job loss will almost certainly result in eventual eviction due to inability to pay rent.

Michigan's Unemployment claims have risen dramatically—over 2700% since March 16. During an average week in March about 5,100 claims would be expected and from March 16 to March 24 over 223,000 claims were received. This shows the significant number of Michigan citizens losing the jobs and potentially headed towards eviction or foreclosure if not assisted with other federal aid.

I took the extraordinary measure of staying all evictions by executive order on March 20, 2020. This order will remain in effect until April 17, 2020. What this order does *not* do is it does not keep bills from piling up for renters. It does not prevent those who have lost work from having to pay their monthly rent. When this order expires, in all likelihood there will be a wave of evictions for those that have been unable to earn enough money during the pandemic to pay their rent. Federal relief will not come in time for these individuals. I have expanded unemployment insurance, but this also may not meet the current need.

I am requesting housing assistance in the form of:

- Lodging expense reimbursements for short term stays in hotels/motels;
- Rental assistance; and
- Direct temporary housing.

Michigan households are likely to need Lodging expense reimbursement and Rental Assistance while they regain their financial footing after an eviction or

foreclosure. COVID-19 effects on the general economy are difficult to predict, but it is likely that many may not have their former employment to go back to and will need to seek jobs in new sectors, thus prolonging the timeframe where housing assistance will be needed.

Michigan also needs crisis counseling funds to assist renters and homeowners getting back on their feet and into new housing. Michigan funds about \$650,000 on housing counseling currently and would need an estimate \$1.5 million in funds to assist COVID-19 displaced households. After the national Housing Crisis, Michigan spent \$4 million in housing counseling.

Michigan has a significant homeless population, about 65,000 annually, and those resources are already over-taxed with current demand. These COVID-19 displaced households will need additional resources beyond what is currently available.

### **E. Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP)**

Michigan has endeavored, to the best of its ability, to continue to provide meals or meal-value to students and families that qualify for free or reduced lunch. I have seen incredible solidarity amongst Michiganders in attempting to keep the most vulnerable amongst us fed. However, more resources are needed. In recognition of food access as essential to the health and wellbeing of Michiganders, I exempted K-12 school food service from the Order to “stay-at-home.” Access to food is critical infrastructure, and I commend the school employers that continue to serve on the frontline of this pandemic to keep our most vulnerable fed and healthy.

The COVID-19 emergency is endangering the economic security of large numbers of Michigan families. Unemployment claims in Michigan have skyrocketed at an unprecedented rate as a significant number of individuals across a large spectrum of industries find themselves out of work completely or without reliable income. Between March 16 and March 24, Michigan received approximately 223,055 initial claims for UIA. This represents an increase of over 2,700 percent from the same time last year.

Low-income families with children are particularly impacted. More than 1.5 million students in Michigan’s public schools are at home without school based food benefits. Fully 70 percent of these students get free or reduced-price lunch, which is linked to improved health and educational outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created immediate need for food assistance. Last week the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) received 19,536 food assistance program (FAP) applications. A year ago, 11,179 applications were received during this same time period. Based on internet traffic and increased phone inquiries the number of applications will rise significantly from this already elevated level, as families in need quickly turn to food assistance benefits as it fulfills an essential basic need. The latest data shows that food insecurity in Michigan is still higher than it was before the recession with 5 percent of households reporting a lack resources for food. With thousands of layoffs occurring as a direct result of COVID-19, food insecurity is likely to increase as household incomes and employment decline.

Unlike traditional economic downturns where income reduction and employment disruptions occur over a period of time; the COVID-19 pandemic has created immediate economic devastation. With little warning, thousands of families across the state went from enjoying a comfortable economic position to being without income. As this need quickly arose; human service safety net programs have become overwhelmed by need and unable to respond as expeditiously as needed. In addition to this new workload, MDHHS continues to manage an existing significant food assistance caseload which services 1,175,901 individuals.

Michigan is responding to the COVID-19 crisis by ensuring that families whose children received free and reduced-cost lunches at schools that are now closed will qualify for monthly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) benefits. Michigan families with students, ages 5-18, eligible for free or reduced-price meals, will be eligible. This will provide relief to families who temporarily lost access to school meals due to pandemic-related school closures for 2 months.

Another challenge resulting from COVID-19 is the stress placed on local food banks. The Michigan 2-1-1 (community information hotline) system has noted immediate food needs as one of the largest requests they are fielding. The Food Bank Council of MI (FCBM) reported that they received 370 calls asking for assistance based on COVID-19, indicating a ten-fold increase over the prior week. The food banks are ramping up their mobile distributions as need for their services have doubled. All food banks are operating as normal at this time but those who rely on volunteers may start seeing an impact due to the shelter in place Executive Order. Most food banks have begun to provide prepackaged boxes so clients can pick them up with little in-person contact. State agencies met with migrant services of MDHHS, the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD), and the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) along with Michigan's local health departments. There is strong concern about food availability for migrant populations, who are arriving in Michigan however do not have work scheduled to begin until mid-April. Employer agreements for feeding do not typically start until their work begins. In addition, the Michigan Department of Education reports an anticipate increased need as some student meal locations will close in upcoming weeks as a result of spring break.

Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance, (D-SNAP) would provide additional coverage to those Michiganders currently out of work due to COVID-19 or an Executive Order issued in response to the outbreak. D-SNAP provides one month of benefits for those: residing in a disaster area; planning to purchase food during the benefit period; and experiencing hardship due to the disaster. As I declared on March 10, 2020, the entire state of Michigan is currently in a state of emergency and would be the disaster area for the purpose of D-SNAP eligibility. Proof of residence would be provided with any state-issued identification or other appropriate paperwork, such as a utility bill. For the hardship, or "adverse effects" requirement, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service identifies three categories:

1. *Loss of Income*: Includes reduction and termination of income or the delayed receipt of income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. *Inaccessible Liquid Resources*: This may be an increased problem due to the closure of businesses, social distancing, and Michigan’s “stay at home” order.

3. *Disaster Expenses*: Expenses related to COVID–19 may include increased childcare expenses, increased utility bills from staying home, increased food and household supplies costs as a result of staying home, amongst other unforeseen expenses.

Only one of these categories needs to be satisfied in order to demonstrate hardship or “adverse effects.” For most individuals it is likely to be loss of income. For those individuals with regular self-employed incomes, a month of benefits would likely provide the supplemental assistance needed to whether the initial brunt of this rapidly spreading pandemic. While COVID–19 does not look like the type of natural disasters this nation is accustomed to, for many, the effects are the same; risk of housing loss, food insecurity, and heightened risk of disease.

While I understand that, as with DUA, D-SNAP assistance is also being considered at the federal level. Michigan will work collaboratively with federal agencies to make sure that federal efforts are not duplicated at the state level. However, until these efforts are finalized, I will continue to work to meet the nutritional needs of Michiganders.

#### **F. Disaster Survivor Assistance**

In spite of every effort that the state has taken to prevent the spread of COVID–19 and mitigate the loss of life, Michigan’s death rate from the disease is amongst the highest in the nation, currently almost doubling daily. At this rate, funeral homes, the probate system, religious institutions, and individuals will be unable to meet the needs of handling the fatalities. States and other nations have encountered the unique problems that surround mourning those lost to COVID–19. Particularly, navigating end-of-life arrangements and adhering to social distancing and stay-at-home orders. While the state and the federal government take on the immense task of treating the sick, providing for the impacted, and preventing further infection, it is essential that aid is provided to those that have lost loved ones.

#### **G. Disaster Legal Services**

The State Bar of Michigan, in its most recent analysis, estimates that there is one attorney for every 540 Michigan residents. However, when this figure is adjusted to account for the number of lawyers serving Michigan’s poor, the figure becomes increasingly more dire. The Michigan State Bar Foundation estimates that the ratio of legal-aid attorneys to individuals living at or below 125 percent of the poverty level (1,961,687 individuals in 2015) is 1 to 6,883. This figure represents the strain on the legal aid system *without* accounting for services related to the COVID–19 pandemic. Additionally, with most legal services operating remotely or at a reduced capacity, the 21 percent of Michiganders without internet connectivity at home will experience difficulties reaching the services they

need. Federal aid in the form of funding, personnel, and legal resource consultants are needed urgently to help meet the demand for legal services during this disaster.

## **H. Voluntary Agency Coordination**

While Michigan's public outpouring of support, particularly from volunteer and non-profit agencies has been helpful over the course of the outbreak of COVID-19, coordination amongst these entities would be helpful so that efforts are not duplicated, and private resources can be focused where needs are the greatest. I request that the Voluntary Agency Coordination Program provide Voluntary Agency Liaisons to support the efforts of Michigan's volunteers and provide technical assistance, coordination, and subject-matter expertise.

## **III. Public Assistance**

The spread of COVID-19 has put a massive strain on the resources of state, local, and tribal services to keep Michiganders safe and healthy. In assessing a request for public assistance, FEMA takes into consideration six factors: estimated cost of the assistance; localized impacts; insurance coverage in force; hazard mitigation; recent multiple disasters; and programs of other federal assistance. 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(a). Other factors can also be considered if they are relevant to the requested assistance.

In order to mitigate further spread of the disease, I request assistance in the following categories:

### **A. Debris Removal**

In response to the disruption to waste infrastructure posed by COVID-19, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security designated waste collection and removal as an essential service to keep trash from piling up. The UN Environment Programme also provided recommendations on waste management during COVID-19 on March 24, 2020. Specifically, it recommended that, "effective management of biomedical and health-care waste requires appropriate identification, collection, separation, storage, transportation, treatment and disposal, as well as important associated aspects including disinfection, personnel protection and training." While Michigan's infrastructure has been able to keep up with normal waste management activities, COVID-19-related waste requires additional efforts. A tailored and coordinated response will be critical to keeping public thoroughfares from becoming a public hazard. Soiled personal protective equipment is accumulating at extremely fast rates, and additional resources are needed to keep up. Additionally, a public service response is needed to educate individuals using personal protective equipment in private life how to dispose of it properly. As this is an evolving pandemic, should the infection rate in Michigan reach a level that waste removal personnel cannot perform their regular duties due to infection, additional debris removal response will be needed.

### **B. Emergency Protective Measures**

#### **1. Personal Protective Equipment**

Michigan is in dire need of more personal protective equipment, ventilators, and supplies to treat this pandemic. On March 24, 2020, I even took the extreme measure to ask the public to donate personal protective equipment and supplies. Public-private partnerships can help meet some of this need, but a strong, system-wide, response is required. We don't know everything we want to know about this disease, but we do know that it is spread in part from the transmission of respiratory droplets. When a health professional attaches a patient to a ventilator, or intubates them, there is an *extremely* high risk of airborne transmission without proper personal protective equipment. Studies recommend using N95 masks, protective goggles, disposable long sleeve gowns, disposable double socks, and gloves when performing an intubation.<sup>1</sup> While I am proud of the courageous health professionals that stand on the front lines of this crisis with home-made masks and DIY protective equipment, this is unacceptable. We owe them more. We owe their families and loved ones more. We owe the great scientific advances this country has made in the last century more. States should not be competing with one another for resources that keep everyone safe. I request both financial assistance and in-kind assistance of personal protective equipment. To the extent that FEMA can help scale up production through public-private partnerships or help convert manufacturing capacity, assistance is also needed.

## **2. Temporary Remote Testing Facilities**

The public health impact of increased COVID-19 testing capacity is playing out globally in real time. Countries that were late to test have seen nearly exponential increases in confirmed cases, with a higher attack-rates, and higher death tolls. It is difficult to fight a disease when public health officials don't know exactly where infected individuals are, who needs treatment, or how best to implement a public health policy tailored to the needs of a specific community. With increased testing, drastic measures become less necessary, and health providers can be more agile in their response. More tests, faster turnaround times, and temporary testing facilities are needed to respond to this need. Financial or in-kind assistance is needed urgently.

## **3. Mobile Health Infrastructure**

Michigan's rural hospitals were already under serious financial strain before the COVID-19 virus, with nearly 1 in 4 rural hospitals at risk to shut down because of financial difficulties. In response to this demonstrated need for resources, on March 12, 2020, I expanded Michigan's capacity to serve rural patients through virtual care and telemedicine. Hospitals in metropolitan areas are also likely to struggle with a surge in patients as the number of COVID-19-positive critically ill patients continue to rise in the short-term. Both rural and metropolitan health providers will need assistance in the weeks and months to come.

### **C. Roads and Bridges**

Roads and bridges are essential in providing the continuing transportation infrastructure needed to supply Michiganders with food and essential needs during this pandemic. I lifted the weight limit on Michigan roads to accommodate for this logistics need. Between March

---

<sup>1</sup> Cascella, Rajnik & Cuomo *et al.*, *Features, Evaluation, and Treatment of Coronavirus (COVID-19)*, (Mar. 20, 2020) available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK554776/>.

16, 2020 and April 13, 2020, I suspended weight limits and other delivery-related restrictions for vehicles carrying essential supplies to mitigate the spread of COVID–19. Essential supplies include equipment necessary for community safety, sanitation, gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, soap, disinfectants, food for the emergency restocking of stores, household supplies to manage quarantine and isolation, and more. Michigan’s roads and bridges were already under extreme strain before the COVID–19 pandemic. Only 21 percent of federal-aid roads in Michigan are in good condition. Local roads—roads that are essential to reach rural Michiganders and roads that are even less equipped to handle increased weight load—fare only slightly better, with a 27 percent “good” rating.

Not only are Michigan roads going to have to undergo increased strain due to a COVID–19 logistical response, but current projects to repair existing roads will likely have to be postponed. Whether the projects themselves are delayed due to social distancing measures, reduced construction and engineering personnel due to infection, or economic downturn, there will be more roadwork due to COVID–19 and less time in which to accomplish it. Financial assistance is requested at this time to mitigate this increased financial strain.

#### **D. Water Control Facilities**

The COVID–19 pandemic comes at a unique time for Michigan because of the ongoing state of emergency due to record-high water levels in the Great Lakes. On February 10, 2020, state, federal, tribal, and local officials held the first Michigan High Water Coordinating Summit to address the public health and safety challenges posed by water levels and shore erosion. Michigan’s water levels are projected to potentially break 120-year historic records this spring. Water levels have already caused millions of dollars in damage to public infrastructure and private property. Not only have I worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help monitor and mitigate the danger posed by water levels that continue to rise, but I have also removed regulatory barriers so that the Department of Environment, Great Lakes & Energy can work with Michigan residents and businesses to respond quickly as shoreline conditions continue to change. However, state plans did to handle rising water levels did not account for a crisis in the magnitude of a pandemic to coincide with high-water and rainy seasons.

This damage will increase at higher rates than already projected if resources are being diverted for COVID–19 response measures. Assistance in providing water and erosion control during this period would help state, tribal, and local officials best direct their efforts towards containing the spread of the virus.

#### **E. Buildings and Equipment**

While public assistance for buildings and equipment is typically reserved for physical rebuilding efforts, the COVID–19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated a need for creative responses to a difficult problem. A private residence is one of the safest places for Michiganders to be right now. There is a demonstrated need across the state for increased homeless shelter capacity (both congregate and non-congregate).

## **1. Existing State Efforts**

Michigan has approximately 65,000 citizens that experience literal homelessness each year and need emergency shelter. Of these 65,000, 6,200 are chronically homeless and 16,400 are children. Our homeless population is highly vulnerable and 44% are disabled. Of the homeless and disabled, 67 percent is due to mental health issues, 43 percent is due to physical health issues, and 28 percent is due to substance use disorder—many with co-occurring conditions.

Michigan funds shelters with approximately \$19 million in state and federal program dollars. There are over 110 publicly funded homeless shelters and those supported 825,400 bed nights for FY19. Shelters are typically at 95%+ capacity and in many cases, families have to wait for shelter space. Michigan also funded 36,389 hotel nights when shelters were full or not appropriate for someone with a health condition.

Expanding Michigan's homeless shelter capacity is critical in adhering to CDC's guidance to prevent the spread of the virus. Many shelters that serve single individuals are set up in a barracks-type environment with bunk beds lined up in close proximity. Michigan needs to stand up new homeless shelters in schools or community centers to facilitate proper social distancing, isolation of sick guests, and other measures to prevent outbreaks. Michigan will also need more shelter capacity in the eventual temporary closure of shelters due to an outbreak. Without additional capacity these vulnerable citizens will have nowhere to go and will likely further spread the virus.

Michigan also needs the ability to pay for non-congregate settings (hotels) for families and singles where new congregate shelters cannot be stood up. These can be quickly deployed with minimal staffing to provide a safe housing arrangement when congregate settings aren't available or appropriate. Michigan's local emergency operations centers are already facilitating hotel use due to shelter overflow. Non-congregate settings will enable greater adherence to CDC guidelines and less potential for virus spread.

## **2. Estimated Cost of the Assistance**

We estimate the need for \$5 million in congregate shelter assistance and \$3 million in non-congregate funds. This will allow for a 25 percent increase in shelter capacity in congregate settings and approximately 50,000 hotel-nights (enough for 30 day stay for 1,600 families). Additional funds for congregate shelters will be used for staffing, food, cleaning supplies and other related expenses.

## **3. Localized Impacts**

Impact will be greatest in Wayne County where about 20 percent of Michigan's homeless population resides and the greatest number of COVID-19 infections are located, but shelters across the state will need access to increased capacity.

Data collected in 2019 through our Homeless Management Information System shows that approximately 9,000 adult singles will experience homelessness from March 1<sup>st</sup> to May 29<sup>th</sup>. Based on a conservative 30 percent exposure rate to COVID-19, Michigan is looking

at significant number of homeless that will need to be hospitalized and admitted to critical care.

Age Groups	Adult Singles	30% Exposure Rate	Hospitalized	Critical Care	Fatality
05. 25-29	1007	302	12	3	2
06. 30-34	967	290	20	3	1
07. 35-39	958	287	26	6	2
08. 40-44	917	275	33	8	3
09. 45-49	1142	343	55	14	7
10. 50-54	1241	372	67	19	9
11. 55-59	1336	401	84	32	16
12. 60-64	931	279	67	34	17
13. 65-69	351	105	28	18	8
14. 70-74	112	34	10	7	3
15. 75-79	30	9	3	2	1
16. 80 and Over	11	3	1	1	0
<b>Sum</b>	<b>9003</b>	<b>2701</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>70</b>

\* Hospitalization and other rates are based on homelessness research from the University of Pennsylvania, UCLA and University of Boston.

Additional funding will enable homeless service providers to adhere to the CDC’s guidelines and hopefully result in lower rates of virus transmission, hospitalization, and deaths. Without it, transmission rates could significantly exceed 30 percent and there will be greater deaths in our homeless population.

### **F. Utilities**

With Michiganders heeding the request to stay home and avoid contact with others in order to prevent the spread of COVID–19, utilities usage will increase for families and households, creating unforeseen costs not previously budgeted for. Utilities providers throughout the state have pledged not to shut off services during the duration of the COVID–19 crisis. Michigan Propane Gas Association has asked propane providers to show understanding with low-income propane customers during the duration of the pandemic. Telecommunications and broadband service providers have also largely committed to keeping their customers connected for a federally recommended period of 60 days starting after March 13, 2020. Michigan has also implemented the “Water Restart” plan in Detroit, to assist with vital handwashing and sanitation efforts recommended by public health officials. Last week alone, 434 households had water services restored. The ability of Michiganders to remain in the safety and shelter of their homes is imperative to preventing the spread of COVID–19. Creating uniform utilities relief policy in Michigan is complicated by the fact that the energy supply is increasingly diverse. However, a utilities subsidy would relieve the strain on private enterprise, a strain that is compounded by current economic instability. Additionally, funds are needed to urgently replace crushed, corroded, and capped pipes for homes so that water service can be restored. To fix service lines to

homes without water would currently cost \$8 million. Access to water is vital to the personal hygiene efforts required to combat this pandemic.

It is currently unknown whether utilities will struggle with load management as peak usage hours shift as a result of residents staying in their homes rather than heading off to work. However, this may shift as the COVID–19 pandemic crisis evolves.

### **G. Parks, Recreational, and Other Facilities**

Presently, and for the foreseeable future, parks, recreation centers, and other places of public accommodation will need facilities and equipment to be disinfected before personnel and patrons can use them again regularly. Additionally, rest-stops, state-park ticket stations, and recreational facilities have not been staffed by personnel during the duration of Michigan’s “stay-home” order. Additionally, many of the community services staffed by the Michigan Department of Corrections have been halted. This is going to result in significant clean up and sanitation efforts in order to return all of Michigan’s parks and recreational facilities back to working order.

## **IV. Hazard Mitigation**

At this time, there is limited information about how long the COVID–19 pandemic will last and what the long-term effects will be. As the foregoing requests have demonstrated, the needs of Michiganders and of the state as a whole are highly interconnected. Currently, it is unknown whether the COVID–19 pandemic will recede or whether it will be a recurring disease. In response to these long-term concerns as well as to prepare for the risk of future pandemics, I request hazard mitigation assistance. While the following requests address two pressing concerns, they are in no way meant to be exhaustive.

### **A. Pandemic Preparedness**

In the long-term, I request future joint preparation and full-system tests of Michigan’s pandemic response infrastructure. The COVID–19 pandemic has demonstrated issues with medical supply chains, coordination of nationwide public health policy, and public education on hygiene and preventative health measures. Building out this infrastructure will require a joint effort between federal, state, tribal, and local stakeholders.

### **B. Mental Health Services**

Globally, the measures taken to prevent the spread of COVID–19 have also demonstrated the impacts of isolation and unemployment on mental health and domestic violence incidents. Disaster crises counseling will provide for the present need for mental health services, but ongoing support will be needed to keep Michigan moving towards a new and healthy normal.