

# MAKE IT IN MICHIGAN



2026 UPDATE



MICHIGAN ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



# MAKE IT IN MICHIGAN



## **A Comprehensive, Shared Vision of Prosperity**

Announced by Governor Whitmer and bipartisan legislative leaders in May 2023, “Make It in Michigan” is the state’s comprehensive economic development strategy focused on investing in people, revitalizing places and competing for and winning projects. This is part of Team Michigan’s approach to growing prosperity—and the population—across all corners of the state. Since then, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has implemented bipartisan legislative programs to build on the strategy with award-winning talent efforts, transformative housing and placemaking developments, and significant projects in energy, defense, advanced air mobility and manufacturing.



# TRANSPARENCY AND PROJECT OVERSIGHT

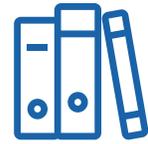
The MEDC takes its stewardship of taxpayer dollars seriously, with an open and transparent process.

The Michigan Strategic Fund Board remains committed to transparency with:

- Appointees by the governor including members nominated by bicameral and bipartisan leadership
- Meetings open to the public, streamed online, and with welcomed public participation
- Funding appropriated by the Michigan Legislature
- Annual legislative reports published on [MichiganBusiness.org](https://www.michiganbusiness.org)
- Ongoing legal and compliance review

All MSF incentive agreements are performance-based which means there must be demonstrated activity in support based on milestones that we negotiate with each project before any dollar goes out the door.

## Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)



The MEDC follows all Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requirements responsively. In **FY25, the MEDC fulfilled 550 FOIA requests.** See the MEDC's Public Records Archive with public record requests received by the MEDC or the MSF at:

[www.michiganbusiness.org/foia](https://www.michiganbusiness.org/foia)

# EXCELLENCE IN ACTION

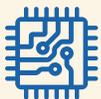
Michigan is delivering excellence and creating impact, confirmed through national awards and recognition.



The MEDC is one of two state agencies recognized as an **Accredited Economic Development Organization** by the International Economic Development Council (IEDC).



Michigan ranked **No. 6 in CNBC's list of America's Top States for Business** – up three spots from 2024 – and **No. 4 for cost of doing business.**



Michigan remained the **No. 1 state for the automotive industry** and moved up to **No. 3 for semiconductor and manufacturing jobs** in Business Facilities' Rankings Report.



Michigan received **Silver Shovel** recognition from Area Development for 12 transformational projects, with Corning named as a **Manufacturing Project of the Year.**



The MEDC received **six Economic Development Awards** – three gold and three silver – from the IEDC.



Business Facilities announced the MEDC **Talent Action Team** as part of its 2025 class of **Economic Development Organization Awards.**



Customer satisfaction with the MEDC is strong. **81% were very or somewhat satisfied with our customer service, 88% found our staff to be communicative and supportive and 90% consider the MEDC trustworthy** in an annual survey.

# MEDC IN YOUR REGION



The MEDC is proud to support partners across the state who engage in a variety of economic development activities, including financing, matchmaking, site selection, and supplying resources for companies and entrepreneurs. Across Michigan’s regions, MEDC staff in the field—including Managing Directors, Business Development Managers, and Community Development Managers—work hand-in-hand with Collaborative Development Council (CDC) partners right where our audiences live, work, and play. Together, we bring resources closer to communities, strengthen local connections, and ensure businesses and entrepreneurs have the support they need to thrive.

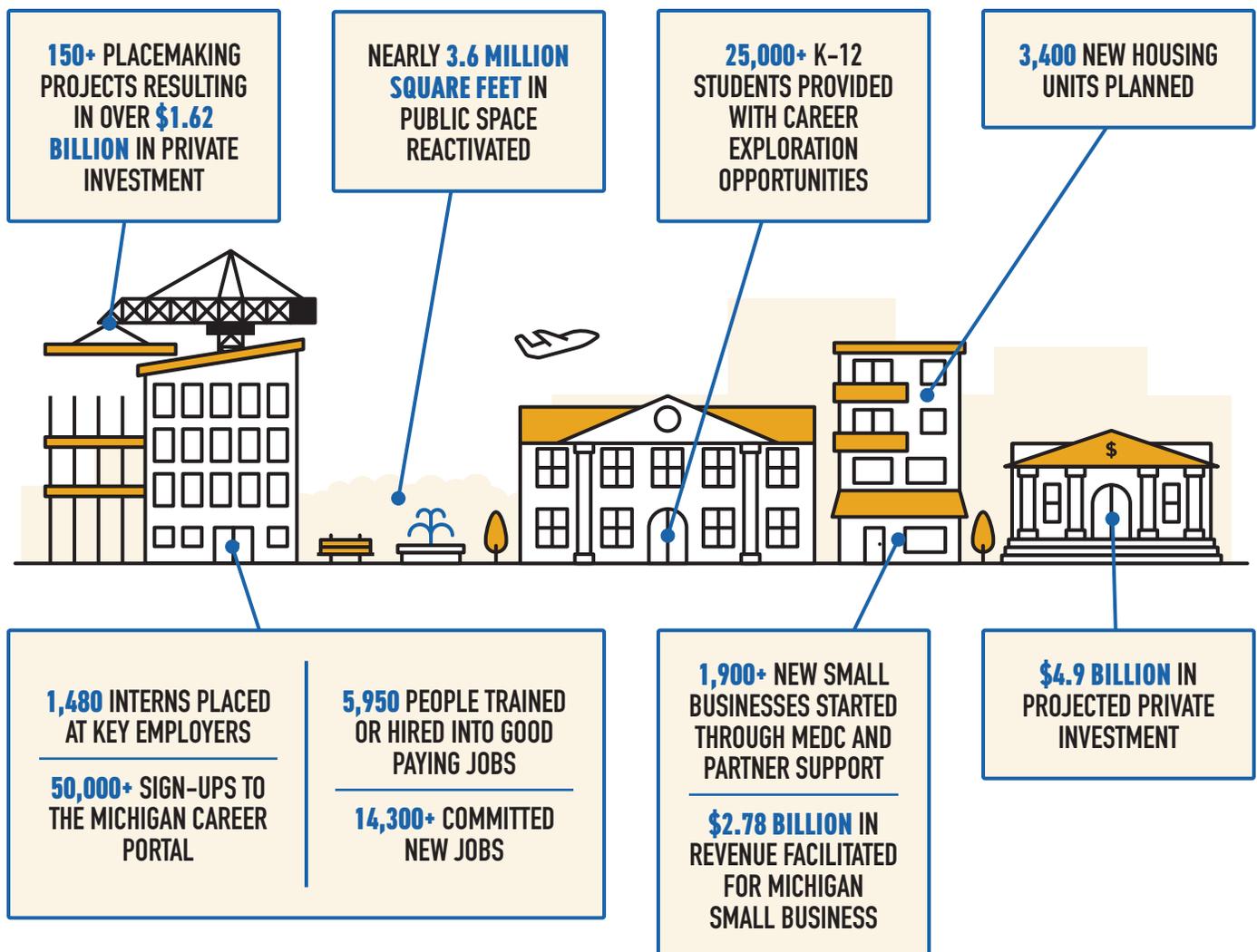
## COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The CDC works with the MEDC to streamline services from statewide agencies, improve customer service, and coordinate information sharing and resources to encourage new regional initiatives. The MEDC is proud to support the CDC through outreach grants each year to drive a greater regional impact in communities across every corner of the state.



# OUR STRATEGY IS WORKING

## Impacts from the 'Make It in Michigan' Strategy in Fiscal Year 2025:





## INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

MEDC works to give talented workers opportunities in our state and help more people see a future here by offering a range of resources designed to empower and grow a diverse, evolving workforce.

### GOALS:

- Become a top 10 state for real median household income growth



## REVITALIZING OUR PLACES

MEDC works to create and support attractive spaces where talented people want to live and work, businesses want to locate, and travelers want to visit and explore.

### GOALS:

- Achieve largest net gain of talent in the Midwest
- Grow Michigan Main Streets



## COMPETING FOR AND WINNING PROJECTS

MEDC connects Michigan businesses with resources to secure investments that help them launch and grow, while also nurturing the communities around them.

### GOALS:

- Become a top 10 state for small business growth, revenue growth, and venture capital funding
- Develop a resilient and equitable economy by becoming a top ten state in job growth in focus industries
- Lead the Midwest in new business starts



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## LOREN TOWNES, JR., ANN ARBOR SPARK

As director of entrepreneurial services at Ann Arbor SPARK, a **SmartZone and Small Business Support Hub**, Loren Townes Jr. is contributing to Michigan's business community and inspiring resilience with his life story.

- A year after his release from prison, Townes enrolled at Washtenaw Community College.
- He dove into business studies, earning scholarships, graduating with honors and delivering the commencement speech.
- His subsequent career in higher education led to his current role, where he accelerates tech startups and early-stage companies.

“

I spend a lot of time in conversation with early-stage founders – listening to what they're wrestling with, asking tough questions and helping them shape challenges into clear, actionable steps. Those client meetings are the lifeblood of my work, because that's where I can help founders move forward. – Loren Townes Jr.

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# HOLLY REILLY, ROBERTS SINTO CORP.

**Holly Reilly** found an opportunity to support her family – and the metalcasting and foundry industry – with help from the MEDC’s **Talent Action Team** and the EV Jobs Academy (EVJA).

- Reilly earned eight SACA industry-recognized certificates and her OSHA 30 card, which led to a position as an electronic controls technician at Roberts Sinto Corporation earning nearly 25% more than she did in food delivery.
- Reilly is now part of a technical workforce that makes Michigan one of the few places on the planet that can do what we do.



“ I really appreciate the help you’ve given me [through the EVJA grant]. It made a huge difference in my success in the class. Without financial assistance I wouldn’t have had the time I needed to study to do well and pass all those certifications. - Holly Reilly

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## TECH TALENT PIPELINE

In May 2025, more than 140 middle school students visited the Washtenaw Community College (WCC) campus for “**code:Possible – The Ultimate Middle School Hackathon.**” Teams of 10 students used micro:bit STEM kits to tackle a real-world invention challenge.

- In a weeklong semiconductor training the previous summer, teachers received kits for all their students to support programming and emphasize hands-on STEM skills. Nearly 1,900 kits were distributed thanks in part to funding from the MEDC.
- The MEDC has made investments in the tech talent pipeline that enabled the launch of new academic pathways at WCC and Kettering University in advanced manufacturing areas.



“ We’re putting a lot of focus on middle schoolers, because middle school is where they find the love for math, science, discovery and curiosity. The kit starts them off with block coding, which is very simple. From there, we show them the more difficult Python, so it’s a natural progression into an actual coding language.

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- Bia Hamed, program manager at SEMI Foundation

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## KEWEENAW MOUNTAIN LODGE, U.P.

You'll find one of Michigan's most unexpected gourmet meals at the table of Chef Wi Mueller at the **Keweenaw Mountain Lodge** perched on the remote northern tip of the U.P.

- Keweenaw County was awarded \$20,000 in **Community Development Block Grant** funds by the MEDC to study a change in ownership for the Lodge, established in 1934 and owned at the time by the county.
- Today, Mueller is putting her passion into practice as chef at the Lodge, drawing from international roots in Lebanon, Italy and beyond to bring a remarkable fine dining experience to the quietest corner of the Upper Peninsula.

“

When Keweenaw County put the Lodge for sale in an auction, my husband purchased it and the first season for us was in 2019. We geared the Lodge in a particular direction to sync with nature itself and bring people closer to nature as well. I've gotta brag: Lebanese people are hospitable and like to share their food, and it all shows at my private dinner table. - Wi Mueller



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# WALTER FRENCH, LANSING

With support from the **Revitalization and Placemaking (RAP)** grant program, the former **Walter French** school in Lansing became a haven of affordable housing and wraparound services, to give everyone a place to call home.

- It received nearly \$40 million in public and private investment, including a \$5 million RAP grant through the MEDC.
- Capital Area Housing Partnership (CAHP) has transformed more than 200,000 square feet into 76 affordable apartments and essential community-serving space.



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**Without RAP support, the project may have stalled or been forced to compromise on the very elements that made it transformational. This investment not only saved a landmark but ensured it would serve as a place of opportunity for decades to come.**

- Emma Henry, Executive Director of CAHP

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# THE RECTORY, DETROIT

As co-owner and managing partner of The Congregation in Detroit, Betsy Murdoch continued her mission of gathering community with **The Rectory**, supported by a **Build MI Community Grant** from the MEDC.

- Thanks to overwhelming support from the community and the desire for additional food options in the neighborhood, Murdoch and her team expanded The Congregation in 2025 with a pizzeria called The Rectory, located in an adjacent, converted historic home that had been vacant for 30 years.
- The two sites are joined by greenspace, accommodating the foot traffic and complementing both businesses as a community space for seating and events.



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**The green space outside of The Congregation is unheard of in Michigan. Having such an expansive outdoor space, we utilize every day that the sun is shining. There's always something fun and exciting, and all the events that we host outside are free for people to enjoy. There's lots of music, lots of markets.** - Betsy Murdoch

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# PROJECTS

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## COBRA AERO/COBRA MOTO, HILLSDALE

As president of **Cobra AERO** and its sister company Cobra MOTO, Sean Hilbert is contributing to the state's mobility and aerospace industries and championing Michigan's leadership in defense.

- Based in Hillsdale, Cobra AERO is a precision manufacturer that makes advanced engine parts and propulsion systems for commercial and military drone vehicles.
- Its strong reputation in the U.S. and worldwide is built on excellence in engineering, innovative design, and cutting-edge techniques like additive manufacturing and CNC machining.
- Its international success has been driven by active engagement with the MEDC **International Trade** program.

“

Michigan is an awesome place to make things, especially when you consider the built-in level of expertise that's here, and the fact that we have more engineers per capita than any place on the planet. It's just a great place to do business, and we're happy to be here. - Sean Hilbert



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## ABLE MEDICAL DEVICES, MARQUETTE

Headquartered in Marquette, Michigan, **Able Medical Devices** is a global company that designs and manufactures high-quality surgical implants and instruments for the orthopedic and medical device industry.

- The company received support from the MEDC through the **System for Integrated Growth** and the **Michigan Business Development Program**.
- It expanded its footprint in Marquette with the construction of a new, 30,000-square-foot manufacturing facility, and celebrated the ribbon cutting in October 2025.
- Looking to create a stronger sales and marketing strategy, they used the System for Integrated Growth via the Edward Lowe Foundation, connecting with business experts to identify areas for growth.



“We’re deeply grateful for the MEDC’s support of our expansion in Marquette. Their partnership reflects a shared commitment to creating meaningful opportunities and strengthening the region’s manufacturing future. - Martin Deloria,

VP and managing director at Able Medical Devices

## PAYLOAD CMS, GRAND RAPIDS

**Payload CMS** started from an idea to fix the gap between web design and code, as a content management system to rival the leading WordPress platform. Through MEDC-backed incubator Start Garden in Grand Rapids, it grew to maturity in only seven years.

- In 2018, Payload won **The 100**, an MEDC-funded pitch competition, which seeded the business with \$20,000. By Oct. 2023, with 10 full-time employees, they decided to expand in Grand Rapids supported by a **Michigan Business Development Program** grant.
- In June 2025, Payload was acquired by Figma, a leading website design platform. The successful exit puts them in rare company as one of roughly 1-3% of startups acquired each year.



“Without Start Garden and our partnership with the MEDC, Payload CMS wouldn’t be where we are today. Over the next few years, we’re going to build things that only we can do. We’re going to fix problems that no one else has even thought about before, and we refuse to make any compromises as we do it. There’s a lot of opportunity to fix things in the digital design industry. For us, that opportunity is right here in Michigan.

- James Mikrut, CEO of Payload CMS

# ABOUT THE MEDC



## WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

The MEDC provides a full suite of services and support to make sure everyone can make it in Michigan, including:

- Guiding and investing in placemaking
- Helping small businesses grow
- Providing buyer and supplier matchmaking
- Expanding business into international markets
- Accelerating startup opportunities
- Preparing sites for future development
- Assisting business with creating and retaining good paying jobs
- Promoting Michigan as a best-in-class destination for business, talent and travel
- Protecting and rehabilitating Michigan's historic places

## TO LEARN MORE, LET'S CONNECT

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