



MICHIGAN SENATE

Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

Date Submitted: 01/22/2026

1. Sponsoring legislator's full name:

Senator Mark Huizenga

2. Cosponsoring legislators' names (if applicable):

N/A

3. Intended legislatively directed spending item recipient:

Blandford Nature Center

4. Physical address of legislatively directed spending item recipient and the intended location of the project or activity:

Admin/Main campus: 1715 Hillburn Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI. Farm Building: 3145 Milo St. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49534

5. The recipient's employer identification number:

200739420

6. Requested amount of the legislatively directed spending item:

\$500,000.00

7. What is the purpose and how does the legislatively directed spending item provide a public benefit that is an appropriate use of taxpayer money?

The redevelopment of the Blandford Farm Classroom Building will provide essential public infrastructure that enables year-round agricultural and STEM education for children, students (kindergarten through college), and adults. This investment directly benefits Michigan residents by supporting high-quality, hands-on learning experiences aligned with state educational standards. Blandford Nature Center serves school districts from 11 Michigan counties, providing curriculum-aligned field trips. Annually, more than 17,000 students participate in these educational experiences. With this redevelopment, we can expand field trips and educational programming to our 2.5 acre working and learning farm, which will strengthen understanding of agriculture, food systems, environmental science, and workforce

pathways critical to Michigan's economy. The new farm classroom building will expand this impact through additional farm-based classes, internships, community workshops, and summer camps for learners of all ages. The current farm classroom structure is unsafe and nonfunctional, significantly limiting educational access. The new building will be a heated and air-conditioned, year-round facility, rather than the current seasonal limitations. It will also provide a shelter during extreme weather events and air-quality action days, improving health and safety for students, educators, and visitors. The project includes modern, accessible restroom facilities with running water and a culinary preparation kitchen that meets food safety regulations. These features are necessary to safely support educational programming, farm operations, and community supporting agricultural food distribution, increasing the farms long-term sustainability and public benefit. This represents an appropriate and responsible use of taxpayer funding by investing in publicly accessible educational infrastructure that serves a broad population across multiple counties, advances agricultural and STEM education, improves public safety, and strengthens local food systems. Blandford will begin a significant capital campaign to raise additional funds later this year - it is important to note the state would only need to cover portions of the necessary funding.

8. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received or been awarded any of the following types of funding in the past 5 years? If so, how much? Check all that apply:

N/A

Amount

N/A

9. Estimated time frame for completion of the legislatively directed spending item project:

Fall of 2029

10. Is the recipient a nonprofit corporation?

Yes

Additional Information for Nonprofit Corporations (if applicable)

The answer to questions 1 to 3 must be "Yes" for the nonprofit corporation to qualify for a legislatively directed spending item.

1. Has the nonprofit corporation continuously operated in this state for the preceding 36 months?

Yes

2. Has the nonprofit corporation had a physical office in this state for not less than the preceding 12 consecutive months?

Yes

3. Does the organization have a board of directors?

Yes

4. List all of the officers and active members on the board of directors:

Chair: Matt Cook. Vice-chair: Andy Beachnau. Treasurer: Bob Tsironis. Secretary: Gustavo Perez. Members: Mark Augustyn, Elizabeth Cranson, Yumiko Jakobcic, Linda LaFontsee, Lisa S. Oliver-King. Jeff Tower, Keith Winn, Lucy Frey, Sonny Hoogendoorn, Paul Karsten.

Certification By Sponsoring Legislator

"I certify that my immediate family members, legislative staff members, and I have no direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the requested legislatively directed spending item."

"I certify that the intended recipient of this legislatively directed spending item is not a for-profit entity."

"I certify that the information in this form is true to the best of my knowledge."

Senator Mark Huizenga