



MICHIGAN SENATE

Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

Date Submitted: 04/20/2026

1. Sponsoring legislator's full name:

Senator Sue Shink

2. Cosponsoring legislators' names (if applicable):

N/A

3. Intended legislatively directed spending item recipient:

Save Our Youth Help Them Prosper

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

211 W. Ganson Street; Unit 220; Jackson Michigan, 49201

5. The recipient's employer identification number:

47-5664864

6. Requested amount of the legislatively directed spending item:

\$200,000.00

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?

Jackson County faces a critical workforce development gap that threatens our economic future and leaves our most vulnerable young people without pathways to prosperity. While the Jackson Area Career Center serves 1,200 high school juniors and seniors annually in career and technical education, students ages 14-16 have no access to structured work experience or career exploration programs. This gap is particularly acute in the city of Jackson, where 18.7% of families live in poverty and the median household income of \$42,848 sits 34% below the county average. Save Our Youth Help Them Prosper's "Youth Career Mentorship Program" addresses this critical need by providing supervised work experiences with local employers, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations, paired with essential wraparound services including life skills, mental health support, and equipment assistance that

removes economic barriers to work experience participation. Our program delivers measurable public benefit by strengthening Jackson County's workforce pipeline and preventing costly long-term interventions. By intervening with at-risk youth ages 14-17 before they reach the critical 16-24 age range when disconnection from school and work (known as "opportunity youth") becomes most costly to both individuals and taxpayers. The White House Council for Community Solutions found that the nation's 6.7 million "opportunity youth" cost taxpayers \$93 billion annually in direct expenses and lost tax revenue, with lifetime costs projected at \$1.6 trillion. More recent research from Measure of America quantifies the federal government's loss at \$55 billion per year in foregone tax revenue alone, or \$11,900 annually per disconnected youth. Big Brothers Big Sisters of America's 30-year longitudinal study demonstrates that early mentorship intervention prevents this costly trajectory: mentored youth earn 15% more by their early twenties and generate at least an additional \$32,154 in lifetime tax revenue per individual. For Jackson County, this prevention-focused program directly addresses the \$170,740 lifetime taxpayer burden each "opportunity youth" represents. Serving 30-40 participants annually, preventing disconnection for even half of these at-risk youth yields estimated taxpayer savings of \$2.5-3.4 million over their lifetimes against a one-time state investment of \$200,000—a return of more than 12 times the initial appropriation. Our Youth Career Mentorship Program creates a direct pipeline to the Jackson Area Career Center, and other workforce development programs, ensuring students enter their junior and senior years with work experience, career clarity, and the foundational skills needed to maximize their Career and Technical Education opportunities. Save Our Youth's comprehensive model addresses multiple barriers simultaneously: providing work safety equipment, technology access, transportation assistance, life skill support and mental health care that enables full participation regardless of family income. The program represents responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars through its strategic alignment with existing state investments and clear sustainability planning. Jackson County has already invested significantly in workforce development infrastructure through the Jackson Area Career Center and the College and Career Access Center, which aims for 60% of county residents to achieve post-secondary credentials by 2030. This program maximizes those investments by ensuring students arrive prepared and motivated. Beyond Year 1, the organization has developed a comprehensive sustainability plan including applications to United Way of Jackson County (\$10,000-\$25,000 anticipated), Community Foundation grants (\$10,000-\$25,000), other private foundation support (\$20,000-\$100,000 one-time gifts), corporate sponsorships from manufacturers and local businesses (\$20,000-\$40,000 combined annually), and developing fee-for-service contracts with school districts seeking to fulfill career exploration requirements. The state's one-time investment creates lasting community infrastructure that continues generating economic value through reduced unemployment costs, increased tax revenue, and enhanced workforce competitiveness.

- 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:**

State

Amount

\$25,000.00

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

10/01/2026 -9/30/2027

- 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:**

Thomas Burke – Founder/Executive Director
Dr. Robert Powell – Chair
Kathleen Conley – Secretary
Harold White, Jr – Director
Jeff Hanson – Treasurer
Tonisha Bradshaw - Director
Chad Surque - Director
Cameron Kohn – Director
Shalanda Hunt – Emeritus
George Lyons – Emeritus

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 Sue Shink