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JUNE 2026

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The Price of Freedom: 250 Years of America's Victories, Failures, and Enduring Promise

Celebrating the United States' 250th Anniversary (1776–2026)



On July 4, 2026, the United States marks 250 years of independence. So far, America has written a blockbuster story of revolution, reform, innovation, injustice, unity, and division. Throughout its history, generations of Americans have expanded the meaning of freedom while confronting the skeletons buried deep within this nation's roots. As we celebrate this milestone, we reflect on five eras that shaped the American experience—and the lessons they offer for building a stronger democracy in the years ahead.

1776–1826: The Birth of America

Historical Moments

- **1776:** The Declaration of Independence established the nation's commitment to self-government and individual liberty.
- **1787–1788:** The Constitution created a new framework for democratic governance.
- **1803:** The Louisiana Purchase doubled the nation's territory and opened new expansion opportunities.

Notable Figures

- **George Washington** – Set important precedents as the nation's first president.
- **Thomas Jefferson** – Principal author of the Declaration of Independence.
- **James Madison** – Often called the "Father of the Constitution."

Technology & Innovation

- Improvements in printing helped spread political ideas and news.
- Early steam-powered technology laid foundations for future industrial growth.
- Agricultural innovations increased food production and settlement opportunities.

American Culture

- A distinct American identity emerged separate from British rule.
- Democratic participation and civic engagement became national ideals.
- Frontier life shaped the nation's spirit of exploration and self-reliance.

Challenges & Lessons

- **Slavery and Exclusion**
- While proclaiming liberty, the nation continued to permit slavery and excluded many groups from full citizenship.
- **Lesson:** America's founding ideals required future generations to broaden the definition of freedom and equality. So far, America has told an extraordinary story of revolution, reform, innovation, injustice, unity, and division.

**The Price of Freedom -
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THIS MONTH'S COVER USA 250 ANNIVERSARY

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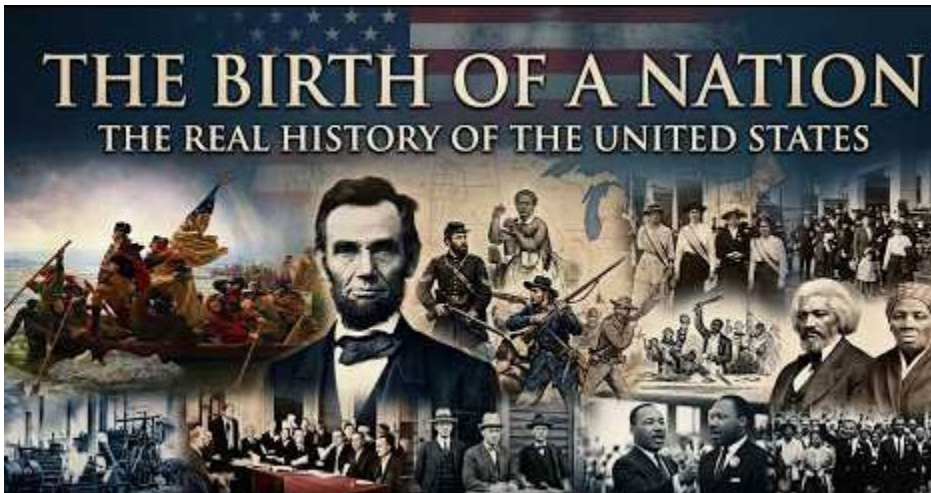
Materials closing date

Materials are due the 20th of each month for the next month's publication. Please contact our office for details.

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1826–1876: Expansion, Conflict, and Reconstruction

Historical Moments

- **1848:** The California Gold Rush attracted settlers seeking opportunity.
- **1861–1865:** The Civil War tested the nation's survival and identity.
- **1863:** The Emancipation Proclamation redefined the war as a fight against slavery.

Notable Figures

- **Abraham Lincoln** – Led the nation through the Civil War.
- **Frederick Douglass** – Powerful advocate for abolition and equal rights.
- **Harriet Tubman** – Helped enslaved people escape through the Underground Railroad.

Technology & Innovation

- The telegraph dramatically accelerated long-distance communication.
- Expanding railroad networks connected regions and fueled economic growth.
- Industrial machinery improved productivity in agriculture and manufacturing.

American Culture

- The pioneer spirit became central to the American identity.
- Immigration diversified communities and strengthened local economies.
- Reform movements pushed for social and political change.

Challenges & Lessons

- **Civil War and National Division**
 - Deep disagreements over slavery led to the deadliest conflict in American history.
 - Lesson: Lasting unity depends on confronting injustice rather than ignoring it.

1876–1926: Industry, Reform, and Modern America

Historical Moments

- Rapid industrialization transformed the United States into an economic powerhouse.
- The Progressive Era introduced reforms aimed at improving government and labor conditions.
- **1920:** The 19th Amendment granted women the right to vote.

Notable Figures

- **Theodore Roosevelt** – Championed reforms and conservation efforts.
- **Susan B. Anthony** – A leading voice in the women's suffrage movement.
- **Henry Ford** – Revolutionized manufacturing through assembly-line production.

Technology & Innovation

- Electricity transformed homes, businesses, and cities.
- The telephone revolutionized communication.
- Automobiles and airplanes changed how Americans traveled.

American Culture

- Urban centers grew rapidly as people moved from rural areas.
- Jazz emerged as a uniquely American musical art form.
- Organized sports became an important part of national life.

Challenges & Lessons

- **Inequality and Discrimination**
 - Many workers faced harsh conditions while racial segregation remained widespread.
 - **Lesson:** Economic and technological progress must be paired with fairness and equal opportunity.

1926–1976: Crisis, Courage, and Change

Historical Moments

- **1929:** The Great Depression challenged the nation's economy and resilience.

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- **1939:** World War II helped establish the United States as a global leader.
- **1940s - 1960s:** The Civil Rights Movement advanced equality and voting rights.
- **1969:** Apollo 11 achieved the first human landing on the Moon.

Notable Figures

- **Franklin D. Roosevelt** – Guided the nation through economic crisis and war.
- **Martin Luther King Jr.** – Led the fight for civil rights through nonviolent activism.
- **Neil Armstrong** – Became the first person to walk on the Moon.

Technology & Innovation

- Television transformed news, entertainment, and culture.
- Jet travel made the world more accessible.
- Early computers paved the way for the digital revolution.

American Culture

- Rock and roll reshaped music and popular culture.
- Television became a shared national experience.
- Social movements encouraged greater civic participation.

Challenges & Lessons

- **Segregation and Civil Rights Struggles**
 - Millions of Americans faced legal and social discrimination despite constitutional protections.
 - **Lesson:** Democracy grows stronger when citizens actively work to secure equal rights for all.

1976–2026: The Digital Age and an Interconnected Nation

Historical Moments

- The end of the Cold War reshaped America's role in the world.
- **September 11, 2001:** Terrorist attacks united the nation while redefining national security.
- **2008:** The election of Barack Obama marked a historic milestone in American politics.
- **2020:** The COVID-19 pandemic tested institutions, communities, and public health systems.

Notable Figures

- **Barack Obama** – First African American elected president.
- **Steve Jobs** – Helped revolutionize personal technology and communication.
- **Ruth Bader Ginsburg** – Influenced generations through her advocacy for equal rights.

Technology & Innovation

- Personal computers and the internet transformed work and communication.
- Smartphones connected people to information instantly.
- Artificial intelligence and renewable energy technologies continue to reshape society.

American Culture

- Social media transformed communication and public discourse.
- American entertainment, sports, and technology gained global influence.
- Increasing diversity broadened the nation's cultural identity.

Challenges & Lessons

- **Polarization and Civic Responsibility**
 - Political division, misinformation, and social tensions have challenged public trust and national unity.
 - **Lesson:** Freedom requires informed citizens, civic engagement, and a willingness to work together despite differences.

Looking Ahead: Sharing the Cost of Freedom

America's first 250 years reveal a nation capable of remarkable achievement and meaningful self-correction. The country's greatest advances have often come after periods of conflict, sacrifice, and reflection. The lesson of American history is not that democracy is perfect—it is that democracy demands participation.

The freedoms Americans enjoy today were secured by soldiers, activists, innovators, workers, educators, and ordinary citizens who accepted the responsibilities that come with self-government. As the nation enters its next chapter, preserving liberty and strengthening democracy will require the same shared commitment. The cost of freedom has never belonged to one generation alone—it is a burden and a privilege carried by all who seek to build a more perfect union.



What you need to know about changes to unemployment law coming in July

New UIA webpage explains the impact on jobless benefits



New changes to Michigan's unemployment insurance law are coming in July that will alter how people on unemployment qualify for benefits, can appeal cases, and apply for relief from returning benefits they improperly collected.

What is new?

- You must report at least three work search activities each week, up from one currently.
- Victims of domestic violence who leave their jobs would not be excluded from receiving benefits, providing them with financial stability.
- Some appeal cases can be combined into one hearing before a judge.
- People who must pay back improperly collected benefits can more frequently apply for a repayment waiver.

The Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) details these changes and more on a new webpage — Michigan.gov/UIALawChanges — that explains what unemployed workers can expect from the changes as they file for and maintain their benefits.

“These are major changes in unemployment law. The biggest change that claimants need to be aware of is an added

work search requirement,” said Jason Palmer, UIA Director. “If you don’t report three work search activities each week while certifying for benefits then you won’t be paid or may have to return benefits you were not supposed to receive.”

Beginning the week of July 19, 2026, people receiving unemployment benefits are responsible for documenting at least three work search activities each week when they certify for benefits. Learn more about work search at Michigan.gov/UIA.

The fastest and easiest way to record your work searches — which is part of the requirement to certify for benefits every two weeks — is through your online MiWAM account. MiWAM is available 24 hours a day and seven days a week to complete the process of receiving benefits.

“Equally important is the support the law provides for survivors of domestic violence,” Palmer said. “If someone must leave their job because they or a family member is a victim of domestic violence, then they will not be excluded from receiving unemployment benefits. This change would provide survivors additional financial stability at a critical time in their lives.”

The domestic violence reason for leaving a job goes into effect July 17, 2026.

**Unemployment Law -
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Other upcoming changes in the law

- **Combining appeals:** People who receive unemployment benefits and employers will be allowed to consolidate approved appeal cases into one hearing before an administrative law judge with the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (MOAHR). Multiple issues on the same claim can be resolved at the same time, avoiding the need to schedule different hearings. This option will be available beginning July 17, 2026. Learn more about protests and appeals at Michigan.gov/UIA.
- **Financial hardship waiver:** If you cannot afford to pay back benefits you should not have received then you will be able to submit up to four financial hardship waiver applications each year, an increase from just one every six months. Also, UIA will not consider unemployment benefits as part of its calculation of your household income when determining whether to approve a waiver. This change is effective July 17, 2026.
- **Work Share Program:** Employers can reduce employee hours between 10 percent and 60 percent (it's currently 15 percent to 45 percent) beginning July 19, 2026. This gives employers a greater opportunity to retain their skilled and trained employees while workers get to keep their jobs and receive partial unemployment benefits to make up for a portion of their lost wages. Learn more about Work Share at Michigan.gov/UIA.

The July changes were signed into law in December 2024 after bipartisan legislation passed the Michigan House and Senate. Companion legislation increased from 20 to 26 the maximum number of weeks to receive benefits and boosted the maximum benefit amount. The 26 weeks limit is already in effect, and benefits will increase again on Jan. 1, 2027.

Solutions for Michigan workers, employers

UIA provides a variety of resources for those looking to file for unemployment or who may already be receiving benefits:

- **UIA Claimant Roadmap.** An easy-to-follow six-step guide to applying for and understanding benefits. Find it at Michigan.gov/UIAClaimantRoadmap.
- **New chatbot at Michigan.gov/UIA.** Powered by artificial intelligence, it provides quick and accurate answers to general unemployment questions. Access the chatbot using either a desktop or mobile device.
- **Online Coaching Sessions.** Led by UIA staff on topics such as filing a first-time claim, understanding

a Monetary Determination letter, and the protest and appeals process. The First-time Filer Coaching Session is also available in Spanish.

- **Guidance for federal employees.** A comprehensive list of resources for federal employees who have been terminated at Michigan.gov/FederalWorkerHelp.
- **The Advocacy Program.** Free legal help for workers and employers who have filed appeals of UIA redeterminations.
- **New, modern user platform.** MiUI will be easy to use, speed claims processing, and build on the agency's aggressive anti-fraud tactics. It will replace the decade-old MiWAM computer system used by workers to apply for benefits and employers to pay unemployment insurance taxes. For information, see Michigan.gov/MiUIUniversity.
- **UIA Public Dashboards.** Interactive displays provide a deep dive into underlying data and trends in unemployment insurance in Michigan as well as core metrics that measure UIA's success.
- **UIA Modernization Workgroup.** A coalition of thought leaders from the labor, business, and jobless advocate communities that provides insight into how the agency can better serve Michigan's workers and employers.
- **Employer Help Center.** This plain language guide answers employers' questions about unemployment tax, claim issues, and UIA programs. The Help Center can be found at Michigan.gov/UIAEmployerHelpCenter.

Need help with a claim or have questions?

Meet with us: Schedule an in-person, phone, or virtual meeting at Michigan.gov/UIA.

Chat with us: Available through MiWAM Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Ask online: UIA's chatbot at Michigan.gov/UIA can answer many questions.

Search online: FAQs, videos, toolkits, and other resources at Michigan.gov/UIA.

Talk with us: Claimant Customer Service — 1-866-500-0017, Monday through Friday. For TTY service, call 1-866-366-0004. Office of Employer Ombudsman — 1-855-484-2636, Option 4, Monday through Friday.

Insurance Never Takes a Day Off: DIFS Shares Insurance Tips to Help Michiganders Enjoy Summer Travel



Summer travel season has arrived, and the Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS) is providing insurance tips to help Michiganders prepare as they hit the road or travel abroad throughout the warm-weather season.

"Summertime is great for getting out on the road and exploring the state and beyond, and it is also a good time to review insurance policies to help you be prepared in the event of an accident or other surprises as you travel," said **DIFS Director Anita Fox**. "Understanding your current coverages, researching additional coverages you may need, and being financially prepared for the unexpected can give you peace of mind to fully enjoy your summer adventures."

To help prepare for a summer full of travel, Michiganders should:

- Check your auto insurance policy to ensure your coverage is current and consider whether you need optional coverages like collision or comprehensive coverage in case of an accident, theft, or weather-related damage.
- If you rent a vehicle during vacation, check to see if your credit card or personal auto policy covers damages to a rental car, as well as liability coverage for any damage you may cause while driving the rental car. It is important to make sure you have coverage no matter the vehicle you are using.
- Keep your proof of insurance in your vehicle or accessible through a mobile app in case you need to report a claim while traveling.
- Ensure you have a plan in place, such as a dedicated emergency fund, in case you need to pay an insurance policy's deductible or copay in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

Consider whether you need travel insurance to ensure you have coverages in place to protect your trip, property, and in case of medical emergencies:

- Travel insurance may cover you in the event of unforeseen financial losses, such as medical emergencies, trip cancellations, emergency evacuation, baggage loss, and delays. However, it is important to read the policy closely.

Also, make sure to finalize your itinerary before buying a policy, as itinerary changes you make may affect coverage.

- Trip cancellation coverage contains a list full of "covered reasons" or "named perils." If you need to cancel a trip and the reason for the cancellation is not on the list, however, your claim will be denied.
- Check your existing homeowners, auto, and medical policies to see if you are covered while traveling. Homeowners insurance often covers personal property theft, but it is important to confirm your deductibles and any coverage limits for high-value items.
- It is especially important to confirm your coverage when you are traveling abroad, including if you are driving your car out of the country. Coverage may differ in those circumstances, and Michiganders should also be aware that Medicare generally does not provide coverage while traveling abroad. Review your policies or contact your insurance company or agent to confirm your coverage while you are out of the country.
- Always keep your proof of travel insurance documents securely on you or accessible through a mobile app in case you need to report a claim while traveling.

Michiganders should reach out to their insurance company or agent for help with their existing insurance policies or with questions about travel policies. Consumers can find a licensed insurance agent or agency by using the DIFS Licensee Locator Tool. Using DIFS' Licensee Locator tool allows consumers to verify that they are dealing with properly licensed individuals and agencies in the insurance industry.

Consumers can also contact DIFS for assistance, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 877-999-6442 or Michigan.gov/DIFS.



Michigan introduces new license plates honoring five historically Black sororities and fraternities through special organization plate program

Plates feature logos of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.; and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.



Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.; and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. can order license plates that display their membership, and the enduring commitment to civic engagement, community and service, and above all, educational advancement.”

Members of the participating Black fraternities and sororities can order a special organization license plate for \$25 by downloading the Application for Special Organization License Plate form, filling it out and returning it by mail or in person at a branch office. Special organization

Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson and Michigan state Senator Sarah Anthony (D-Lansing) announced that Michiganders can now order a license plate with a logo of a participating historically Black fraternity or sorority.

The five new plate designs are available through the Michigan Department of State’s special organization and collector license plate program. The plates honor the legacy and cultural impact of five participating National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) organizations: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.; Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.; Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc.; and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

“Today, I’m proud to announce that Michigan is offering plates for five historically Black Greek-letter organizations,” **said Secretary Benson**. “From their earliest days to today, these organizations have made a powerful impact in Michigan and beyond as champions of civic engagement, community service, equality, and excellence. Now, members of the participating fraternities and sororities can display their membership with pride.”

“The establishment of these organizations was an act of courage, and a commitment to uplifting one another in a time of few opportunities and many barriers. Their missions are more important than ever,” **said Sen. Anthony**, who approached MDOS with the idea. “Now, members of Alpha Phi

plates are used for vehicle registration. Under the Michigan Vehicle Code, drivers must be a member of the special organization to order their plate. Special organization plate numbers are five characters long and cannot be personalized.

Collector plates are available to the general public for display only and cannot be used for vehicle registration. Members and collectors can order these plates by downloading the order form online, filling it out, and returning it by mail with a one-time fee of \$10 per plate. Collector plates cannot be personalized and will be marked SAMPL.

For more information on the MDOS special organization and collectors plate program and for a full list of available license plates, visit mi.gov/sosplates.

To schedule an office visit, conduct an online transaction, locate the nearest self-service station, or learn more about MDOS services, visit mi.gov/sos.



2026 Saginaw Art Fair



Saginaw Art Fair on Ojibway Island Key Facts:

Over 60 artists will be selling their work, including: ceramics, fiber, jewelry, metal, mixed-media, painting, photography, and wood. We have a diverse range of artists with high quality work.

Free scheduled art classes/activities include Friday: 10:00 am-11:30 am Tie Dye Bandanas (for the first 50), 1-2pm Firefly Painting, 3-5 Mushroom Luminar Jars. Saturday: 10a-noon Paper Quilling, 1p-2p Marbled Coasters, 3-5pm Poured Painting Class. Plus, drop-in activities throughout the day.

Music Performances will include Major Chords for Minors, The Outfit, Tina Michaels, and The Crushtones. Check out our Facebook page for the complete schedule. We encourage people to bring lawn chairs to enjoy the talented performances.

Friday 10am-11am - AudraYoga (bring a yoga mat). Register with AudraYoga prior to the class or bring cash. Free dance class on the stage Saturday 10-11 Werk It! Dance Fit with Hannah. All are welcome.

Food Trucks include: Sawadee, Snowball Shaved Ice and more.

Other activities include: Raffles, plein air painting, and

yard games. Why: Our mission is to create an interdisciplinary art fair to celebrate all the fine arts and promote art education. We strive for a holistic art fair that includes a variety of visual, performance, and culinary arts, while building community in the Greater Saginaw Area.

Our vision is to create a sustaining fine arts festival that celebrates the beauty of Saginaw, while promoting collaboration between local artists, businesses, and community organizations with the collective goal of supporting arts, culture, and art education. We provide a family friendly atmosphere that includes free art activities and live demonstrations, that expand art appreciation to inspire the artist in everyone.

When: Friday, August 7 10:00 am - 5:00 pm Saturday, August 8 10:00 am - 5:00 pm

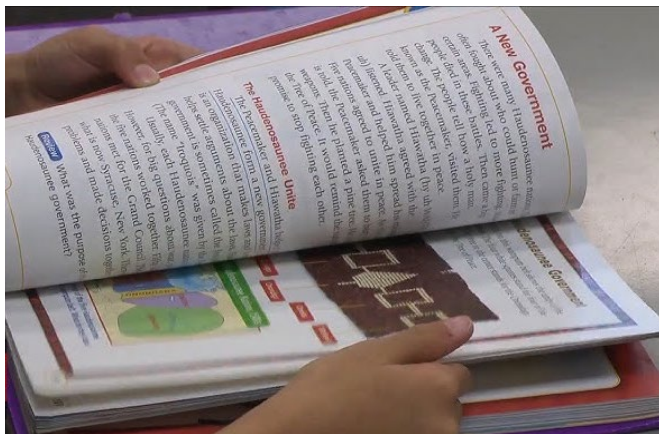
Where: Ojibway Island Saginaw, MI 48601

Who: Hosted by the Saginaw Art Initiative, non-profit organization. Funded by several local sponsors. Major funding by Local 85 Union.

Additional Info: For updates on events and schedules, we are on Facebook and Instagram.

Summer Reading Road Trip, Partners with Public Libraries to Keep Students Reading All Summer

Building on the governor's proposed record \$625 million investment in literacy through Every Child Reads, the Summer Reading Road Trip will provide resources for fun, literacy-focused activities



The Summer Reading Road Trip, an accessible summer-long reading challenge created in partnership with public libraries to keep students reading this summer. Beginning June 24th, Michigan students PreK through 12th grade are invited to join a range of challenges that support reading, writing, and connection with your local library for a chance to win prizes.

"I'm excited for students across Michigan to join me on our Summer Reading Road Trip," said **Governor Whitmer**. "Literacy is an ordinary superpower that every student deserves. That's why we've created PreK for All, tripled literacy coaches, put phonics in the classroom, and proposed the largest literacy investment in Michigan history to help Every Child Read. Now, we're partnering with local libraries and providing resources to parents and students to keep our kids reading all summer long. Let's keep working together to help Every Child Read."

The Summer Reading Road Trip features four themed stops, beginning with Start Your Engines, where students are invited to engage in activities like starting a new book, writing a short story, or listening to a podcast. Throughout eight weeks, participants will be guided through four stops total with two-week blocks to complete challenges. Future themed stops include Explore Michigan, Visit Your Local Library, and Destination: Imagination.

Prize bags will be available to select participants, stocked with a book and other custom materials. Those interested in participating should look for updates on the Summer Reading Road Trip at **Michigan.gov/SummerReadingRoadTrip**. For contest rules and regulations, visit **Michigan.gov/SummerReadingRules**.

Governor Whitmer's 2027 budget recommendation

includes the largest literacy investment in state history—including increasing investment in early starts, proven methods, and extra help. These investments build on progress Michigan is making to enroll a record number of 4-year-olds in free PreK, train, over 6,000 educators in the intensive science of reading professional learning program, LETRS, and connect more kids with affordable before, after, and summer programs **Every Child Reads**.

Michigan's vision to help Every Child Read is a three-part plan that builds on years of record, bipartisan education investments in students and schools.

- 1. Early Starts:** build on work parents already to do talk to, sing with, and read their babies stories with free, high-quality PreK education. Continue delivering PreK for All to set every kid with a solid academic foundation, ensuring they arrive at kindergarten better prepared to learn.
- 2. Proven Methods:** get evidence-based, proven literacy teaching practices into all Michigan classrooms. Fund additional professional learning for teachers, including LETRS training and coaching, so all educators use the most effective strategies to improve student outcomes, and expand the use of effective curriculum.
- 3. Extra Help:** provide every student more tutoring and small group support in class, over the summer, and in before- and after-school programs.

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MDHHS kicks off Summer EBT program to fight hunger gap many children face during summer break

An estimated 1 million Michigan children will receive \$120 in food assistance benefits this summer



The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) announce the continuation of the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program, also known as SUN Bucks, to help ensure children have access to healthy food this summer.

Food insecurity rises during the summer when children and teens who participate in school lunch and breakfast programs lose access to these nutritious meals. Maintaining proper nutrition during the summer months supports cognitive development, helping bridge the achievement gap that can widen during extended breaks from school. SUN Bucks help bridge that gap by providing \$120 in grocery benefits per eligible school-age child when school is out for summer.

"Michigan children need consistent access to nutritious food to grow, learn and thrive," said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. "The Summer EBT program, in addition to our other nutrition assistance programs like WIC and SNAP, helps us close the summer hunger gap by providing every eligible child with funding for nutritious food, addressing one of the key social determinants of health – food insecurity."

Most families eligible for these benefits receive them automatically thanks to state agencies collaborating to identify kids who qualify based on participation in other benefit programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or the free or reduced-price meal programs at their school.

Children may be eligible for SUN Bucks if they meet any of the following criteria:

- Children ages 6 to 18 who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Medicaid benefits between July 1, 2025, and August 31, 2026, will be automatically enrolled. Medicaid recipients' income must be at or below 185% of the federal poverty level.

- Students who fill out a Nutrition and Education Benefits Application and are approved to get free or reduced-price meals through the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program.
- Those who are approved through the summer EBT application process.

Children who are not automatically enrolled may still be eligible for SUN Bucks. To qualify, a child's household must meet certain income limits and other requirements. More information on the SUN Bucks program, including detailed eligibility criteria and application instructions, can be found on the MDHHS Summer EBT webpage.

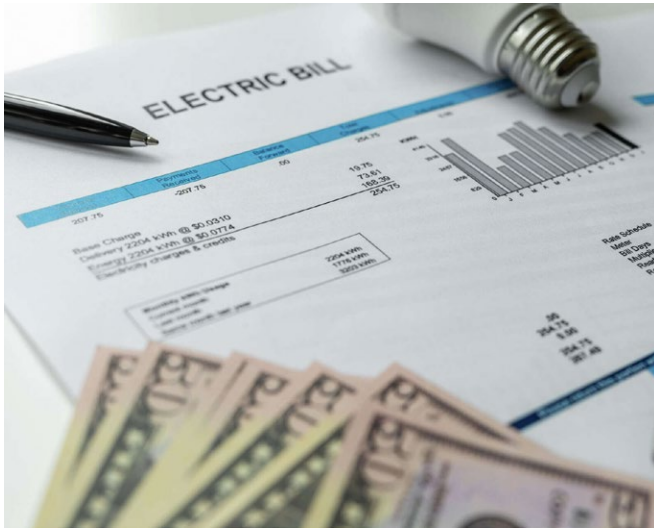
Summer EBT program overview:

- **Benefit amount:** Eligible families receive \$120 per child equating to \$40 per month for June, July and August 2026.
- **Usage:** Benefits can be used to purchase a variety of nutritious foods, including fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy products and more at participating retailers.

How will families receive the benefits?

- Summer EBT benefits are issued on an EBT/Bridge Card. Families do not need a separate card for Summer EBT.
- Families who received Summer EBT in 2025 will have benefits loaded to the card used for those benefits.
- If a child is on an active SNAP or TANF case, benefits will be added to the family's existing Bridge Card.
- If a child qualifies through Medicaid income and is not on an active SNAP or TANF case, all eligible children in that household will be loaded onto one Bridge Card in the head of household's name.
- Families who have a SNAP or TANF Bridge Card, but are **not** currently receiving SNAP or TANF, will not have Summer EBT benefits loaded to that card. They will receive a new Bridge Card in the mail.
- Other eligible students who do not already have a Bridge Card available for Summer EBT will receive a new Bridge Card in the mail.
- Families who no longer have the card used for Summer EBT or who need a replacement card for any reason should call 833-905-0028 and select option 2. Please note there is a \$1 replacement fee required by state law.
- Families should keep their Bridge Card in a secure location after benefits are used. Cards issued for Summer EBT can continue to be used for future summer benefit issuances.

AG Nessel Seeks to Slash SEMCO's Natural Gas Rate Hike by 66%



Continuing her efforts to protect Michigan ratepayers, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel has filed testimony before the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) to slash SEMCO Energy Gas Company's natural gas rate hike case by 66%. Attorney General Nessel intervenes in every major utility rate case before the MPSC and has helped save Michigan consumers more than \$4.6 billion in proposed rate hikes. Other rate hike cases currently open before the MPSC include Consumers Energy's natural gas rate hike request (U-21981) and electric rate hike request (U-22070), DTE's natural gas rate hike request (U-21973) and electric rate hike request (U-22046), and Upper Peninsula Power Company's electric rate hike request (U-22032).

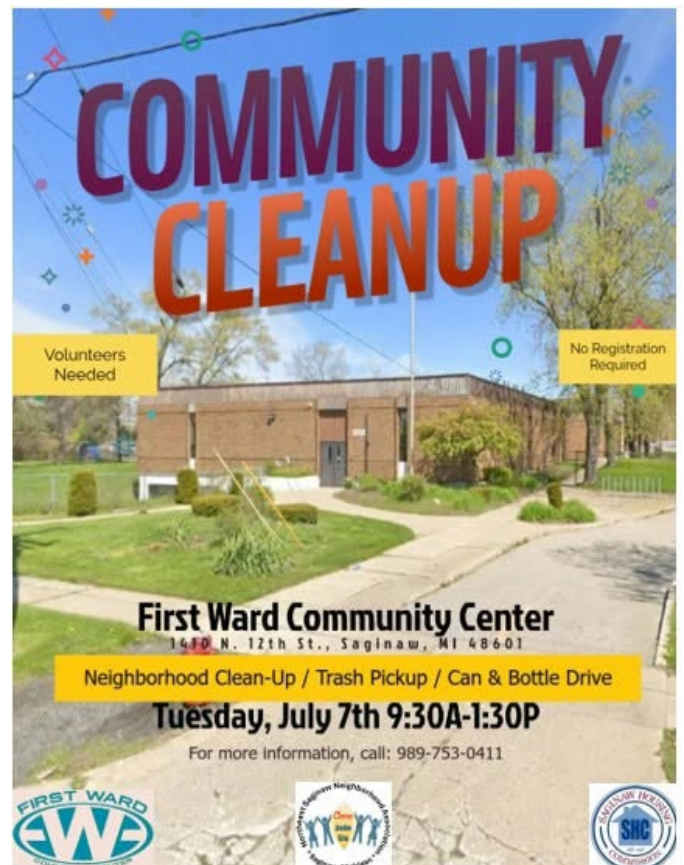


"Whether a utility sells to millions of customers or a few hundred thousand, Michiganders should not be forced to foot the bill for unjustified corporate expenses and inflated bonuses for executives," said Attorney General Nessel. "My office intervenes in every single one of these cases because residents deserve to have an advocate in their corner who fights for them. The MPSC must protect ratepayers and ensure any approved rate is in the best interest of the people of this state."

SEMCO is currently seeking a \$61.3 million rate hike, which would result in a 15% overall increase to gas rates. If the MPSC adopts all of the Attorney General's recommendations, the hike would be reduced to approximately 5%, saving ratepayers more than \$40.4 million in additional costs.

Attorney General Nessel identifies unreasonable capital expenditures and operations and maintenance expenses. The testimony further recommends removing millions in incentive compensation that only benefit corporate objectives with no direct benefit to customers and a reduction in the requested return on equity from 10.75% to 9.8%.

SEMCO sells natural gas to approximately 300,000 customers throughout Michigan.



A blend of history and adventure during Cass River Colonial Encampment at Frankenmuth River Place Shops



Over the years, thousands of visitors have traveled from out of state to experience the Cass River Colonial Encampment and take part in family-friendly activities like flag-raising ceremonies and period musical concerts. This year's musical entertainment features Drum and Fife Concerts.

Other activities include weapons demonstrations, daily period fashion shows, colonial-inspired vendors, and tours of authentic campsites set up by reenactors on the east side of River Place Shops and the area near the Covered Bridge.

Each day kicks off with a flag-raising ceremony and march from the Pedestrian Bridge between River Place Shops and the Covered Bridge

Witness a battle on Frankenmuth's historic Covered Bridge, learn about military dress in the 18th century, or have a conversation with Ben Franklin during the Cass River Colonial Encampment the weekend of July 18 and 19.

The two-day free event is from 9:50 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday at Frankenmuth River Place Shops, 925 S. Main St. in Frankenmuth. It includes more than 300 reenactors portraying British, French, and American soldiers taking part in tactical battle reenactments from the Revolutionary and French and Indian wars.

Other actors will depict voyagers who explored the 18th-century American wilderness and one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, Benjamin Franklin.

"The Cass River Colonial Encampment is a unique experience in the Great Lakes Bay Region," said Michael Keller Zehnder, President of Bavarian Inn, Inc., who owns and operates River Place Shops. "For the past 19 years, families have enjoyed this free and unique learning experience. It is great to see parents and their children diving into history together."

Shop and features a tactical battle reenactment at either the River Place Shops or the historic Covered Bridge located between the Bavarian Inn Restaurant and the Lodge.



Frankenmuth River Place Shops: An authentic re-creation of a German-themed village, located just minutes from the Bavarian Inn Restaurant and Lodge. The outdoor mall features more than 40 unique shops and attractions at one location. Visitors enjoy architecture, floral gardens, streams and waterfalls, and, of course, great shopping opportunities. River Place Shops host a full year of festivals and events. learn more at <http://frankenmuthriverplace.com>.



Join us for the Funtown Chowdown Food Truck Festival – July 9



The Frankenmuth Funtown Chowdown Food Truck Festival is back in action on July 9 with a delicious combination of family-friendly entertainment and a diverse lineup of food trucks across Michigan.

The food truck festival is from 2 to 9 PM on Thursday, July 9, at Frankenmuth River Place Shops, 925 S. Main St. in Michigan's Little Bavaria. Festival admission and parking are free. The remaining 2026 dates are August 13 and September 10.

Each food truck festival will showcase special activities and entertainment. This month, Frankenmuth River Place Shops will be celebrating with a Luau theme. Each festival will also feature a variety of food and beverages, including 16-20 food trucks from across Michigan and a beer tent with a hand-crafted cocktail special. There will be plenty of shaded seating and activities for families, such as face painting, inflatables, mini-games, free cake (while supplies last), and vendors. The event is pet-friendly; animals must be on a max. 6-foot leash at all times.



The food truck festivals take place on the east side of Frankenmuth River Place Shops, Frankenmuth's German-themed outdoor shopping village with more than 40 shops and attractions. Each event features a variety of provisions available for purchase. Food trucks accept both cash and credit or debit cards; an ATM is also available onsite.

"We are excited to continue to offer a family-friendly environment and a community dinner like no other," said Michael Keller Zehnder, owner of Frankenmuth Bavarian Inn Inc. and owner and operator of Frankenmuth River Place Shops.

The July 9 food truck lineup includes:

- The Cheese Trap
- SugarHigh Bakery
- Dairy Firm
- Kona Ice of Saginaw
- Smoke Rattle & Roll
- Northern Smoke BBQ
- Hangry's Revenge
- Clyde's Pit
- Wonder Burger
- Frank N Bonez
- T&T Glizzy's
- Bavarian Inn Cluck Truck
- Far Out Food Truck
- The Cheese Pull
- Vamos Vargas
- Cousins Maine Lobster
- Mexii-Rican Cuisine
- Plenti Pastas Plus More
- Outlaw Roasted Corn
- Mr.Italy
- Key Lime Time



Saginaw Community Foundation awards \$2,925,900 in scholarships



At its 39th annual Excellence in Education event, the Saginaw Community Foundation presented 962 scholarship awards to 648 students on June 3, 2026 totaling \$2,925,900. All of these numbers represent record-high numbers.

This year's event featured open house style format with donor/student meet-and-greet, community and college resource tables and complementary professional headshot photographs for students.

"The purpose of the annual Excellence in Education event is to recognize, award and inspire students who have earned scholarships from the Saginaw Community Foundation," said Chamika Ford, program officer at the foundation. "We also honor the donors who have established scholarship funds at SCF."

Since 1987, the foundation has awarded more than \$13.7 million to students to help them achieve their educational goals.

"Education is a cornerstone for thriving communities," said Reneé Johnston, president and CEO, Saginaw Community Foundation. "Through scholarships, we help individuals take meaningful steps toward their goals – whether that means a degree, a certification, or vital job training. Our scholarship program removes barriers and creates opportunities – opening doors that might otherwise remain closed."

The foundation currently administers 260 scholarship funds that have been established by its donors.

Saginaw Community Foundation will begin accepting applications for 2027 scholarships on November 1, 2026. More information is available at saginawfoundation.org.

About the Saginaw Community Foundation

Since 1984, the Saginaw Community Foundation (SCF) has helped Saginaw County residents build a better community by linking donor interests with the community's most pressing needs and promising opportunities. As a nonprofit corporation, SCF serves three important constituencies: its donors who want to make a difference; the nonprofit organizations that provide services and programs essential in the community; and individual communities within Saginaw County through effective grantmaking and leadership. Learn more at saginawfoundation.org.

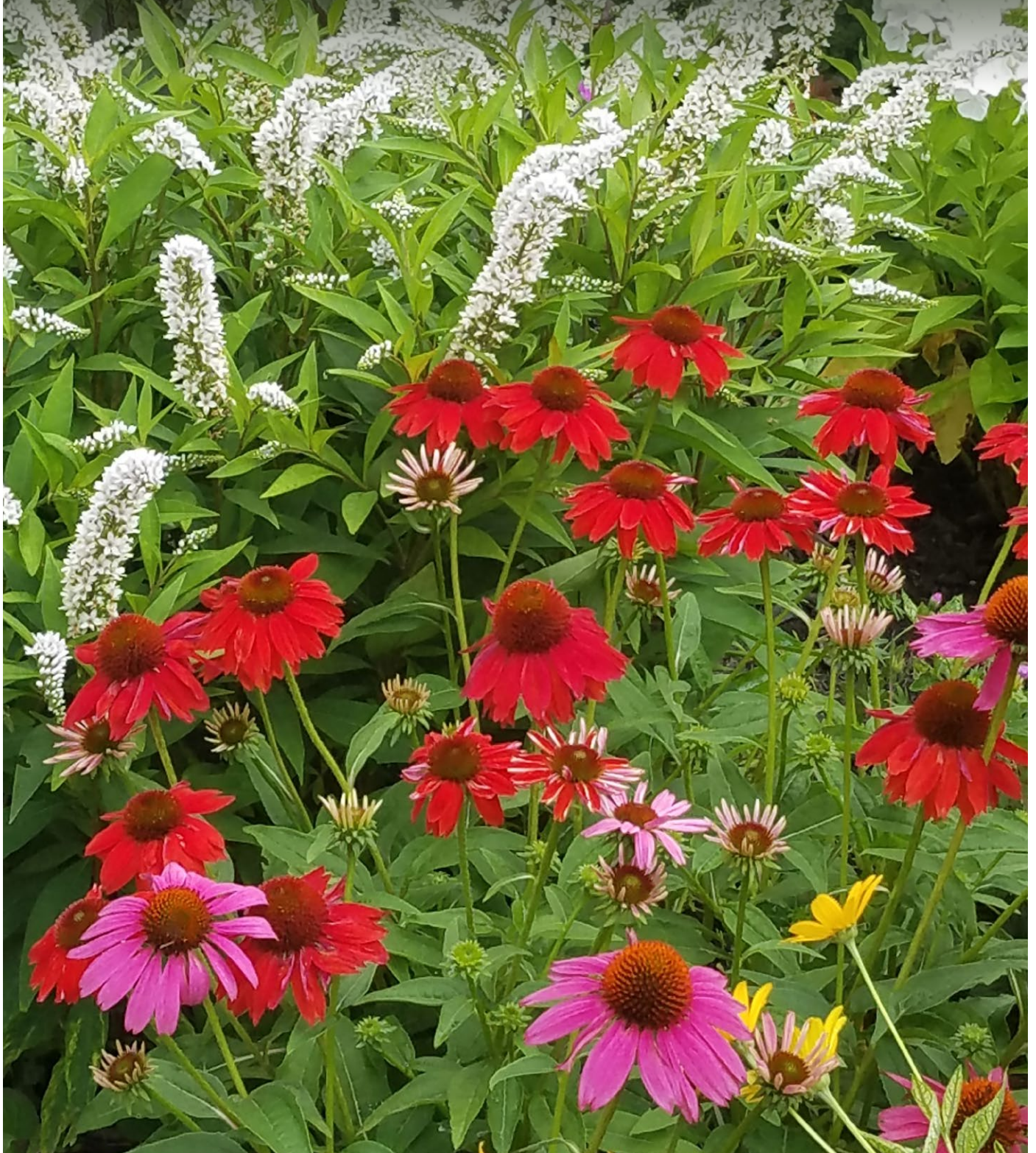


Saginaw

community foundation

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