



**FRACTURED**

**TRUST**

**Lost faith in state government, and how to restore it**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In an unprecedented and divisive year in both state and national politics, the Center for Michigan led a statewide dialogue about public trust in state government throughout 2016. In 125 statewide Community Conversations and large-sample polls, more than 5,000 diverse Michigan residents told us, loud and clear: State government is not living up to public expectations. The public does not trust state government to deliver on many of its key missions. Across the board, the public sees urgent need to improve the state government services that taxpayers fund.

Participants in this campaign often struggled to articulate the specific changes to policy and government programs they would like, but expressed a lack of faith that state government has the ability or will to carry out any recommendation they might make. This should raise alarm in the state's halls of power. The risks of thinking and acting only in accordance with party lines and election cycles are too great. Michigan residents want, and deserve, a government that makes decisions that face our state's problems head-on, in a nonpartisan way, with innovation and an eye to a more prosperous future.

Michigan residents routinely cited instances that had challenged their trust in state government, including the Flint water crisis, the dismal performance of Detroit public schools, crumbling infrastructure, and controversial handling of financial emergencies in municipalities and school districts across the state. Frustration and disappointment with state government were consistent themes. As one participant asked, "How can we trust the government when everything seems negative? We don't trust them with our health. Look at how the people of Flint were treated. We don't trust the schools...my son comes home with no books. How are they fostering economic growth when we are going to school to better ourselves, then graduate and can't find jobs?"

This report is a product of 125 in-person Community Conversations and large-sample statewide phone polls from March-December 2016. The Center for Michigan is a nonprofit, nonpartisan "think-and-do" tank. This is the Center's sixth public engagement campaign. These statewide campaigns have engaged more than 40,000 Michigan residents and aim to make Michigan a better place by amplifying the voices and ideas of Michigan residents to their elected leaders.

Pages 4-9 present our detailed findings. Visit [thecenterformichigan.net/crosstabs](http://thecenterformichigan.net/crosstabs) for cross-tabulated results for each question asked in our Community Conversation and statewide phone polls. The Center for Michigan's public engagement work would not be possible without the generous support of the foundation, corporation and individual donors listed on page 12. And thank you to the more than 5,000 Michigan residents who shared their thoughts, ideas, hopes and anxieties throughout this campaign. We look forward to working with policy makers on the public priorities developed in this statewide act of citizenship.



## **WHAT THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC TOLD US - KEY CONCLUSIONS:**

**LOW PUBLIC TRUST:** The majority of participants in both polls and Community Conversations said they had either “low” or “very low trust” of state government’s ability to deliver on all five major areas we explored: 1) Oversight of K-12 and higher education; 2) Protection of public health; 3) Environmental protection; 4) Services for low-income residents; and 5) Fostering economic growth.

**URGENT MANDATE TO IMPROVE:** It is “crucial” or “important” to improve state government’s performance in education, public health, environmental protection and fostering economic growth, according to 90 percent or more of participants in both polls and Community Conversations. And more than 80 percent of participants said it was “crucial” or “important” to improve delivery of services for low-income residents. Improvement of public education is a particular public priority, with the largest percentage of poll and conversation participants choosing it as the policy area most in need of attention.

**FIX THE EMERGENCY MANAGER SYSTEM:** 80 percent of Community Conversation participants and 65 percent of poll respondents said they had “low” or “very low” trust in the state emergency manager system to effectively balance the competing needs to solve local financial crises, deliver basic public services, and provide local and representative government. The most popular solution is to provide more checks and balances in the law so that decision making is balanced between state-appointed emergency managers and locally elected officials.

**PROVIDE TRANSPARENCY IN CAMPAIGN FINANCE:** Eight in ten Community Conversation and poll respondents reported “low” or “very low” trust in the campaign finance system’s ability to balance free speech rights to contribute to candidates with the need to protect elections from undue influence by special interest groups. The most popular solution is to strengthen transparency and toughen reporting requirements to provide better public information about who donates to our state leaders.

**OTHERWISE, A LACK OF PUBLIC CONSENSUS:** We tested a range of other options to improve state government accountability, such as reforming term limits and reforming the once-each-decade process for drawing legislative districts. No reform proposal received consistent majority support across both Community Conversations and polls.

## ALARMINGLY LOW TRUST IN STATE GOVERNMENT

We set out to measure public trust in five major functions of state government: 1) Oversight of K-12 and higher education; 2) Protection of public health; 3) Environmental protection; 4) Services for low-income residents; and 5) Fostering economic growth.

Across the board, Community Conversations and poll participants responded with overwhelmingly low trust of state government. Indeed, the most common answer to the question of which state government function earned the most trust was “none of the above.”

### MEASURING PUBLIC TRUST IN STATE GOVERNMENT

**% Who have low or very low trust in the following state government functions:**

How do you rate your level of trust in state government’s...	COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS	POLLS
Oversight of Michigan’s K12 and public higher education?	80%	65%
Ability to protect public health?	80%	54%
Ability to protect the environment?	75%	55%
Services for low-income residents?	76%	56%
Ability to foster economic growth?	68%	59%

During open dialogue in Community Conversations, participants shared feelings of disappointment and frustration, as well as a desire for more truthfulness and transparency. Sample comments:

*“I think one of the key factors inhibiting trust is that the system is so convoluted. People don’t know who to turn to for help or who to blame. We hear a lot about what isn’t getting done and the negative actions of government. It’s hard to know who to be frustrated with and who to go to for help.”*

*“Elected representatives should be representing the people. They are public servants. We do not see that in the State. They are too concerned about the next election and funding their next campaign.”*

*“It’s very difficult to have trust in a government that has, over a long period of time, declined to respond to its citizens. You know, there was no trust prior to this, but the Flint situation has literally destroyed our faith...I find it mind boggling to try to answer these questions in a calm way. It’s not possible because there’s too much sorrow and pain and expense in how we’re operating the state.”*

### URGENT MANDATE TO IMPROVE

**% Who say it’s “crucial” or “important” to improve the following state government functions...**

How important is it to improve state government’s...	COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS	POLLS
Oversight of Michigan’s K12 and public higher education?	90%	90%
Ability to protect public health?	96%	92%
Ability to protect the environment?	92%	90%
Services for low-income residents?	88%	56%
Ability to foster economic growth?	93%	91%

In short, state leaders must reconnect with the citizens who elected them. State residents lack confidence in state government’s ability to carry out any of its major services, indicating low levels of trust in the institution as a whole. Across the board, Michigan residents expect much better performance from state government.

In considering improvements, public education dominated the open dialogues of Community Conversations, with urgency highest among African Americans - 71 percent of whom deemed it “crucial” while 22 percent deemed it “important.” Across all state government services measured, more than a third of all participants said public education improvement was the highest priority – far more than any other category. As one conversation participant said, “As far as schools go – I don’t trust the quality of the education. I hire kids out of school, and they don’t have the skills graduates did in the past.” Another said, “A lot of trust is based on perceived execution – and right now there is a good economy, so my trust factor on [state government’s] economic development is strong. But K-12 education is not going well – it’s not tolerable.”

When asked to share ideas for improving the state’s oversight of public education, one of the most frequently stated ideas was increasing state funding for both K-12 schools and public higher education, with participants often citing continual cuts to programs and services at the K-12 level and rising student debt loads for college students. Another popular idea was limiting the amount of time children spend preparing for and taking standardized tests. A Community Conversation participant suggested, “Reduce the amount of standardized testing. Testing has been prioritized too much and we should spend the time teaching them what they need to learn...Make sure the kids leave a school year knowing more than what they went in with.” Still others would like to see less state intervention in classroom curriculum and more opportunities for hands-on, career-focused education. As one participant said, “Kids are not graduating prepared for the future. They are graduating but are not ready for college or to go into any trade. Something has to change.”

**Improvement in Economic Issues Most Urgently Called for by Lower-Income Residents**

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Michigan residents at the lower ends of the economic scale are most likely to consider improvement in state government’s services for low-income residents (such as food assistance, Medicaid, and the Earned Income Tax Credit) and fostering of economic development to be crucially important. There is a strong consensus that both of these areas require attention, with the majority of conversation participants from all income levels deeming improvement in both of these areas to be either crucial or important. But Community Conversation participants with household incomes of less than \$25,000 and poll participants with household incomes of \$50,000 or less were more likely than the general population to think improvement of services for low-income residents crucial. Conversation participants with household incomes of \$50,000 or less were more likely to believe improved fostering of economic development by state government was crucial.

How important is it to improve state government’s services for low-income residents?	% of total from conversations	% of total from poll	Conversation % income \$0-25K	Poll % income <\$50K
Crucial	43%	32%	51%	39%

How important is it to improve state government’s fostering of economic growth?	% of total from conversations	% of total from poll	Conversation % income \$0-25K	Poll % income <\$50K
Crucial	47%	41%	56%	39%

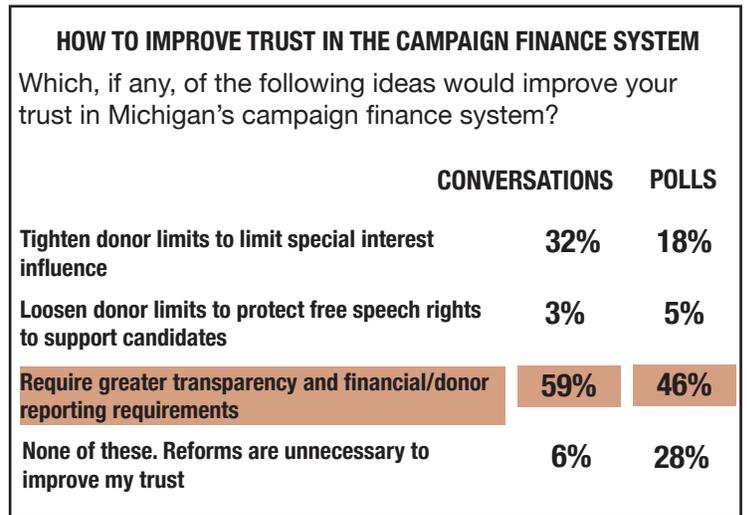
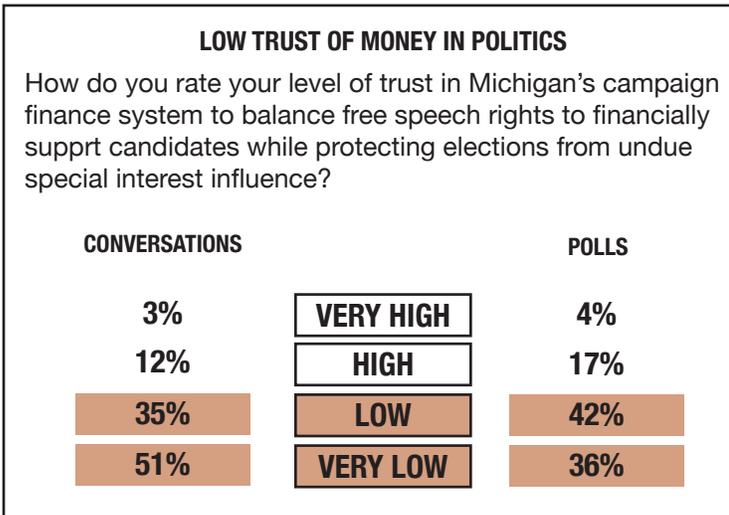
# CLEAR PUBLIC PRIORITIES: TWO WAYS TO REBUILD TRUST & IMPROVE STATE GOVERNMENT

We tested with the public more than a dozen specific reform ideas to rebuild public trust and improve state government. Two reforms received strongest public support in our Community Conversations and polls.

## Campaign Finance & Transparency Reform

With a grade of “F” for political finance transparency from the Center for Public Integrity, Michigan is not a national example of accountability in campaign finance. This criticism is shared by the residents of Michigan, who express a deep distrust in the current campaign finance system’s ability to effectively balance the free speech right to financially support candidates with protection of elections from undue influence of special interest groups. As one participant shared:

*“In our state everything is so opaque. We have no idea where our candidates are getting their money. We have no idea where their connections are.”*

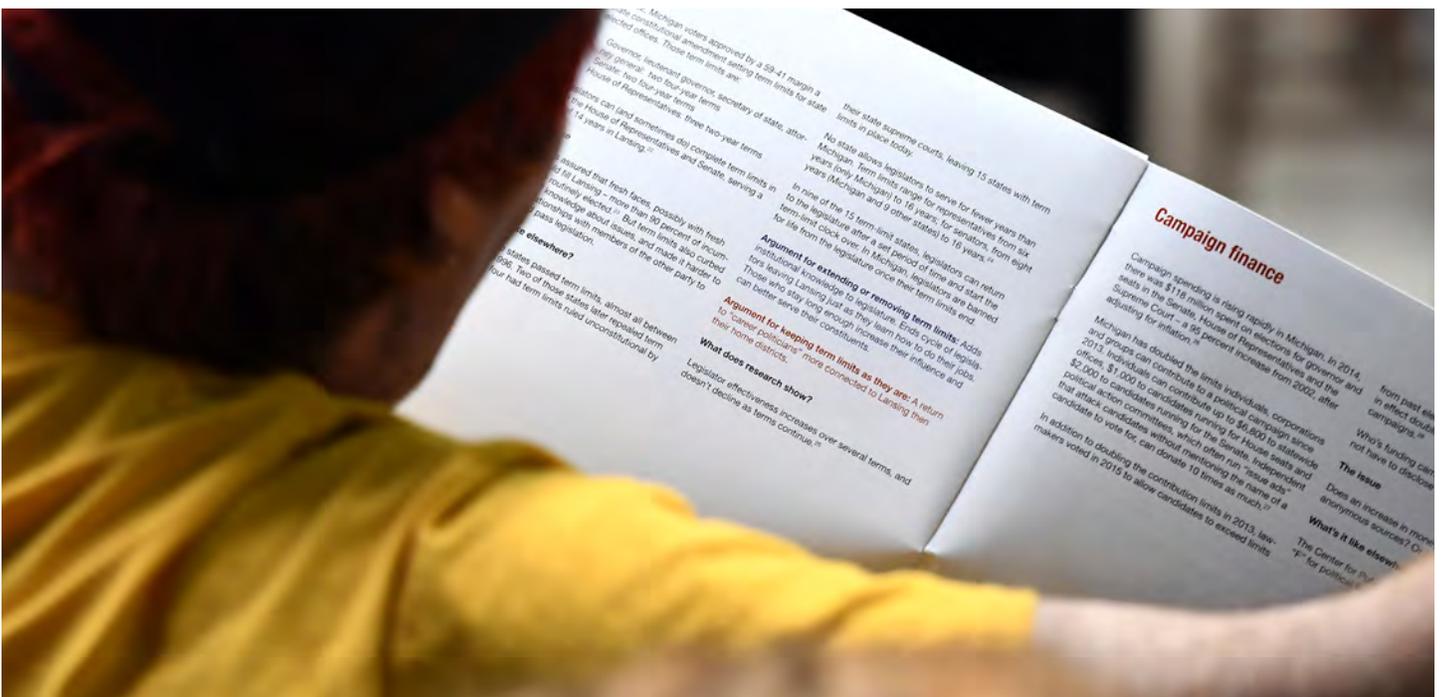
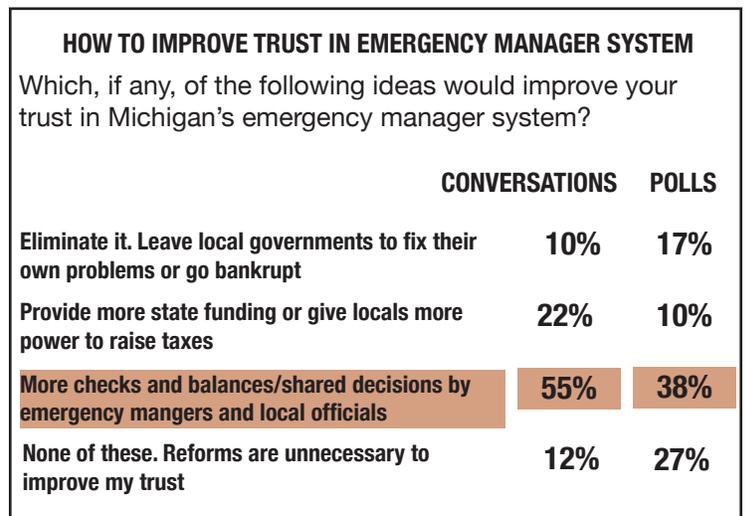
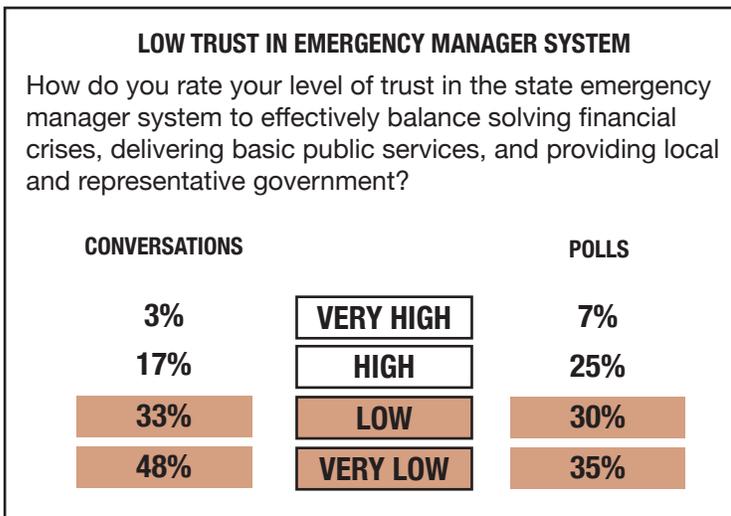


## Reform of Michigan's Emergency Manager Law

A wide range of Michigan cities and school districts have struggled to stay financially afloat – even nearly a decade beyond the Great Recession. Michigan's much-debated approach – bringing state-appointed emergency managers with broad powers to fix local finances – has helped some places recover financially while resulting in some of the deepest controversy imaginable in others. In Flint, for example, two state-appointed emergency managers have been criminally charged for their alleged decisions and roles in the Flint drinking water crisis. In its after-action report on the Flint crisis, the Flint Water Advisory Task Force was deeply critical the state emergency manager law, its role in the crisis, and a lack of checks and balances in city decision-making once emergency managers were in place.

We launched this public engagement campaign as the Flint crisis was unfolding. We found an overwhelming lack of trust in the state emergency manager law in our Community Conversations and polls.

Throughout 2016, Flint and the challenges of other cities were top of mind for Community Conversation participants. Indeed, those participants and poll respondents generally shared the view of the Flint Water Advisory Task Force. The most popular solution is to add more checks and balances in the emergency manager law so that local elected officials and local residents have more shared decision making in solving financial crises.



## OTHER REFORM APPROACHES: NO CLEAR CONSENSUS

The governor, legislators and other state government officials and employees face daunting challenges in rebuilding low public trust. The public is clearly restive, untrusting, and questioning state government's return on investment for their tax dollars. Yet there is fleeting public momentum or concrete guidance on what to do about it.

We tested a dozen other prominent state government reform ideas – from term limits reform, to redistricting reform, to state elections reform – in our Community Conversations and polls. In all cases, Michigan residents express low levels of trust in the system but do not offer shared consensus on what to do about it.

Consider, for example, term limits for statewide elected officials instituted a generation ago. Term limits have long been criticized by a wide swath of business, education, labor, nonprofit and other interest groups which regularly interact with state legislators. Three quarters of our Community Conversations participants and 54 percent of poll respondents also expressed “low” or “very low” trust in the ability of term limits to result in effective elected leaders. But our respondents were completely split on what to do about it. Two-thirds of Community Conversation participants favored either lengthening or eliminating term limits. But 69 percent of poll respondents either favored leaving term limits alone or tightening term limits to force elected officials out of office sooner.

We found similar split opinion on the often-debated question of reforming how Michigan re-draws legislative districts every ten years. In the face of fairly widespread public gerrymandering complaints, 84 percent of Community Conversation participants and 68 percent of poll respondents said they had “low” or “very low” trust of fair representation in the state legislature. In response, 57 percent of Community Conversation participants favored reforming how legislative districts are drawn, but only 30 percent of poll respondents agreed.



## AN ADDITIONAL 2016 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT INITIATIVE: POLICING IN MICHIGAN

Public safety was not included in our original “Trust in State Government” campaign design because, with the exception of prisons, state police and some court functions, street-level public safety is a responsibility of local governments. However, it became clear in 2016 that police-community relations were influencing the larger discussion of public trust in government. In order to better understand public sentiment on this issue, the Center for Michigan conducted an additional statewide phone poll in November 2016.

We polled 800 demographically representative Michigan residents about their trust in local law enforcement, whether police methods need to improve, and whether public safety reforms would improve police-community relations or reduce crime.

Statewide, more than three quarters of Michigan residents rated their trust in local law enforcement as “high” or “very high.” Trust levels were highest among non-urban and white participants, with more than 40 percent of each group identifying their trust level as “very high.” Trust levels were lowest among African Americans, with 50 percent labelling their trust “high” and 23 percent “low,” and among urban participants, with 47 percent saying their trust was “high” and 21 percent saying “low.”

Still, all groups believe there is room for improvement – 55 percent overall said improvement in local law enforcement was “important.” This sentiment was similar across all demographic groups. When the scope of our questions widened to include policing statewide, the intensity of opinion grew. The largest percentage of participants, 49 percent, strongly agreed that police methods need to improve in communities across Michigan. Several demographic groups emphatically desire improvement: 77 percent of African-Americans, 65 percent of urban participants, and 60 percent of women.

We also asked participants to weigh three commonly cited means for improving police-community relations: 1) more diversity training for police; 2) equipping all officers with body cameras; and 3) training in community policing (an approach that encourages non-violent techniques). Across the board, poll participants deemed each method to be either extremely or moderately effective for improving police/community relations. When asked to identify which of these three methods would be most effective in improving relations, we found no consensus. The largest percentage of nonurban, white, and male participants chose body cameras, while the largest percentage of African American and female participants chose training officers in community policing. In short, we found significant support among each demographic group for all three methods.

Participants were also asked if they thought each of these methods would reduce crime. They deemed all three methods to be either extremely or moderately effective in reducing crime in Michigan. More than two thirds of participants in each demographic group we surveyed felt each method would be at least moderately effective in reducing crime. However, Michigan residents did not come to consensus on which of these three methods would be most effective for reducing crime. The largest percentage of white participants and male participants chose body cameras, while the largest percentage of urban, nonurban, African American, and female participants chose training officers in community policing. Here again, there was significant support among each demographic group for all three methods, particularly body cameras and community policing.

In short, the Center for Michigan found that Michigan residents statewide have similar viewpoints on their trust in policing and their ideas for improving policing in our state. African-American, urban and female perspectives varied the most compared to the statewide average, with a tendency toward a slightly lower degree of trust in policing and a higher sense of the need for and the effectiveness of methods for improving policing. Yet, the feelings expressed about trust and need for improvement in policing were similar across groups. These results suggest there may be opportunity for effective community and statewide dialogue about these issues.



## METHODOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHICS

In a time when trust in institutions, including state government, is very low and our state faces many challenges, the Center for Michigan sought to gather public input on ways that trust in state government could be improved. This nine-month, solutions-oriented endeavor allowed us to hear ideas, opinions, and experiences from Michigan residents across our state. Where we found common ground in the perspectives and solutions shared, we have compiled those ideas in this report.

### Demographics

More than 5,000 Michigan residents participated in this campaign, which began on March 28, 2016 and concluded December 15, 2016. They did so through three separate, interactive avenues:

- Community Conversations: 2,674 residents participated in 90-minute interactive, in-person meetings
- Public Trust in State Government Telephone Poll: 2,000 residents participated in a telephone poll conducted by Public Sector Consultants from June 1-19, 2016
- Public Trust in Policing in Michigan Telephone Poll: 800 residents participated in a telephone poll conducted by Public Sector Consultants from November 12-15, 2016

Having completed our sixth public engagement campaign, the Center has learned that this blended approach to gathering public input provides us with the clearest and most representative data that we can glean. Community Conversations provide robust dialogue, as well as quantitative data. Phone polls provide statistical validity and ensure that our data is not influenced by self-selection bias, as we emphasize findings that are consistent across conversation and poll participants.

### Geographic region



Region	Participants	State
(1) UP	5%	3%
(2) Northern lower peninsula	8%	7%
(3) West Michigan	7%	12%
(4) Bay region	7%	10%
(5) Southwest Michigan	14%	9%
(6) Mid-Michigan	11%	10%
(7) Southeast Michigan	40%	46%
(8) Thumb	8%	4%

Race/ethnicity	Convo	Poll	State
African American	15%	12%	14%
American Indian	1%	1%	1%
Arab American	2%	1%	n/a
Asian American	1%	3%	3%
Caucasian	75%	78%	76%
Hispanic/Latino	3%	4%	5%
Multiracial/other	4%	1%	2%

Income	Convo	Poll	State
Less than \$10,000	7%	9%	8%
\$10,000-\$14,999	4%	6%	6%
\$15,000-\$24,999	5%	11%	12%
\$25,000-\$34,999	7%	7%	11%
\$35,000-\$49,999	11%	14%	15%
\$50,000-\$74,999	18%	19%	19%
\$75,000-\$99,999	13%	13%	12%
\$100,000-\$149,999	21%	11%	12%
\$150,000-\$199,999	8%	3%	4%
\$200,000+	6%	4%	3%

### What We Asked

In both the community conversations and accompanying phone poll, participants were asked 23 quantitative questions about public trust in state government. The significant conclusions are presented in this report. To view all of the question responses, as well as cross-tabulated results by race and income, visit [thecenterformichigan.net/crosstabs](http://thecenterformichigan.net/crosstabs).

### Community Conversations

A total of 2,674 Michigan residents participated in 125 town hall-style meetings we call “Community Conversations” in 70 municipalities over the course of nine months. Each meeting was organized by a local host organization. This organization chooses the date, time, and location of the meeting and invites people to participate.

The Center for Michigan maintains a database of more than 5,000 potential host organizations across the state. These include community organizations, businesses and business associations, trade associations, municipalities, civic organizations, and many more. The Center invites each member of this database to participate, and provides the facilitation free of cost. The Center also provides recruitment materials, such as a sample invitation letter, flyer, and social media posts to hosts to help them invite members of their community to participate in the discussion.

These 90-minute Community Conversations are designed to gather public input on levels of trust in state government, and what, if anything, can be done to improve trust. Each participant received our “Restoring Public Trust in State Government” issue guide, a booklet which provided nonpartisan, professionally researched background information, statistics, pro-con information about potential solutions, and sources for additional information about the topics presented in each conversation. The issue guide was developed by Bridge Magazine, the Center for Michigan’s nonprofit, nonpartisan news magazine, and reviewed by Public Sector Consultants, an independent and nonpartisan policy research and program management firm. The issue guide can be viewed at <http://thecenterformichigan.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Public-Trust-Issue-Guide.pdf>

Each conversation contained two discussion topics: state government services and fostering representative government. In each discussion, participants were asked to vote via electronic clicker device on multiple choice questions. Results were displayed instantly on a large screen. Participants were also led through a discussion of the topic by the Center for Michigan’s trained facilitators. A note-taker, or scribe, was present at each conversation to record the comments during the discussion. Both the quantitative data collected from the multiple choice responses and the qualitative data from the open discussion was collected and analyzed by Public Sector Consultants. The major findings of both are presented in this report.

**Public Trust Telephone Poll**

Public Sector Consultants administered a telephone poll to gather Michigan residents’ input on public trust in state government. All 23 multiple choice questions that were asked in the Community Conversations were asked of poll participants.

This poll was administered from June 1 – 19, 2016 to 2,000 Michigan adults and included 40 percent cell phone and 60 percent landline phones. The sample was adjusted by gender, race/ethnicity, age, and income using post-stratification weighting to match population estimates for Michigan from the 2010 U.S. Census and three-year estimates from the American Community Survey. The poll has an overall margin of error at +/- 2.2 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

This poll provided representative data for the following subgroups (Table A).

**Additional Detailed Data Online**

Crosstabulated responses to all questions asked in polls and Community Conversations for all demographic groups are available for public view at [thecenterformichigan.net/crosstabs](http://thecenterformichigan.net/crosstabs).

**Policing Phone Poll**

Public Sector Consultants also administered a phone poll to create our special section of this report, Policing in Michigan. This poll was administered to 800 Michigan adults from November 12 – 15, 2016 and included 50 percent cell phone and 50 percent landline phones. The sampling frame was designed to provide 400 respondents from Michigan’s urban areas and 400 respondents from non-urban areas, along with a representative sample of African American respondents. The sample was weighted to account for the disproportionate sampling frame, and has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.5 percent, +/- 4.9 percent for urban and non-urban respondents, and +/- 5.6 percent for African American respondents (all at a 95 percent confidence level).

This poll provided representative data for the following subgroups (Table B)

**Table A**

Sub-Group	Participants	Margin of error
Age 18-24	269	+/-6.0%
Age 25-34	302	+/-5.6%
Age 35-44	339	+/-5.3%
Age 45-54	406	+/-4.9%
Age 55-64	325	+/-5.4%
Age 65+	358	+/-5.2%
Income <\$50K	870	+/-3.3%
Income >\$50K	1130	+/-2.9%
African American	248	+/-6.2%
Caucasian	1563	+/-2.5%
Male	1010	+/-3.1%
Female	989	+/-3.1%

**Table B**

Sub-Group	Participants	Margin of error
Urban	400	+/-2.9%
Non-urban	400	+/-2.9%
African American	311	+/-5.6%
Caucasian	376	+/-5.1%
Male	379	+/-5.0%
Female	416	+/-4.8%

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Contact your leaders

Make your voice heard! Call or write your legislators and urge them to act on the priorities outlined in this report, as well as your additional ideas for improving our state. To find the name and contact information for your state representative, visit [www.house.mi.gov](http://www.house.mi.gov). To find the name and contact information for your state senator, visit [www.senate.michigan.gov](http://www.senate.michigan.gov). Your voice matters!

### Sign up to receive Bridge Magazine

You can subscribe for free to Bridge Magazine, an online publication of the Center for Michigan. Bridge is the 2016 and 2017 Michigan Press Association “Newspaper of the Year,” and is your source of nonpartisan, fact-based journalism about issues important to the future of Michigan. Bridge subscribers receive this in-depth coverage four times per week in their email inbox. Subscribe today at [bridgemi.com](http://bridgemi.com).

### Get involved in your community

You attended a Community Conversation because you care about your state. Use that civic engagement momentum to make your community a better place. Thousands of nonprofit organizations statewide could use your time and talent to help fulfill their missions. The

Center for Michigan has partnered with the Michigan Community Service Commission to present Community Conversation participants information about [allforgood.org](http://allforgood.org)'s volunteer match tool, which allows you to search for volunteer opportunities by zip code or key term. Visit [www.thecenterformichigan.net](http://www.thecenterformichigan.net) and click the button that says “Click here for volunteer opportunities” to begin searching today.

### Follow the Center for Michigan and Bridge Magazine on social media

We constantly update our social media accounts with the latest information about our public engagement activities and ways you can stay involved in your state. “Like” us on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/thecenterformichigan](http://www.facebook.com/thecenterformichigan) and [www.facebook.com/bridgemicigan](http://www.facebook.com/bridgemicigan), follow us on Twitter @CenterforMI and @BridgeMichigan, as well as Instagram, @CenterforMI.

### Share your story

In 2017, the Center’s public engagement team and Bridge reporters are teaming up to help you tell your story of Michigan. We will be seeking volunteers to record interviews about your life, your hopes, your fears, and your aspirations for your family and our state. Stay tuned!

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## ABOUT THE CENTER FOR MICHIGAN

The Center for Michigan is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and non-partisan think-and-do tank, founded in 2006. Our work is defined by three verbs: Engage, Inform, and Achieve.

**Engage:** We are the state’s leading practitioner of non-partisan public engagement. We make citizenship interesting, convenient, and meaningful through interactive, small-group Community Conversations, large town hall conferences, phone polling, and online engagement tools. This bottom-up public engagement can, and does, lead to actual policy change.

**Inform:** Bridge, our free online news magazine, focuses on the “how” and “why” of Michigan current events. Our differentiated, in-depth, data-driven reporting accentuates—and partners with—traditional publishers increasingly focused on the “who,” “what,” “where,” and “when” of the 24-hour news cycle. In its first five years, Bridge has earned more than 75 state and national journalism awards, including the 2016 and 2017 Michigan Press Association’s “Newspaper of the Year” awards. Special features of Bridge include the Michigan Truth Squad, an award-winning watchdog service of political claims by candidates and special interest groups in election years and Business Bridge, a collaboration between the Center for Michigan and Crain’s Detroit Business. Subscribe to Bridge at [bridgemi.com](http://bridgemi.com).

**Achieve:** We take the findings of our public engagement campaigns and Bridge journalism to get things done for Michigan. Some examples of positive change: 1) The nation’s largest expansion of public preschool; 2) Some \$250 million in savings from prison system reforms; 3) Stopping the erosion of the traditional 180-day K-12 school year; 4) Approval of tougher certification tests for new teachers; 5) Deeper investment in the Pure Michigan marketing campaign; 6) Approval of a more rigorous teacher evaluation system; and 7) Reform of state business taxes.

### Governance & Staff

The Center for Michigan was founded in 2006 by retired newspaper publisher Philip Power and is governed by an 11-member board of directors. The Center is counselled by a venerable bipartisan steering committee of nearly two dozen Michigan leaders. A similarly experienced and respected statewide board of advisors provides key journalistic guidance to Bridge Magazine. Read more about the Center for Michigan on our website: [thecenterformichigan.net/about](http://thecenterformichigan.net/about). Read more about Bridge Magazine at [bridgemi.com/about-bridge](http://bridgemi.com/about-bridge).

The Center for Michigan employs twelve professionals with backgrounds in journalism, public engagement, and public policy. Staff bios are available on our web sites. The Center also benefits greatly from technical, data, and policy expertise from Public Sector Consultants Inc., a leading Lansing-based policy, research, and consulting firm.

### Board of Directors

The Center is incorporated in Michigan as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Its officers and directors are: Philip H. Power, Chairman; Kathleen K. Power, Vice President; John Bebow, President and CEO; Loyal A. Eldridge III, Esq., Secretary; Karla Campbell, Treasurer; Paula Cunningham, Director; Paul Hillegonds, Director; Michael Jandernoa, Director; Dr. Glenda D. Price, Director; Douglas Rothwell, Director; Dr. Marilyn Schlack, Director.

### Steering Committee members

The Center has been fortunate to attract a group of distinguished Michigan residents to serve on its Steering Committee. They include:

- Richard T. Cole, Chairman Emeritus, Department of Advertising, Public Relations and Retailing, Michigan State University and former Chief of Staff to former Michigan Governor James Blanchard
- Paul Courant, Acting Provost, University of Michigan Librarian Emeritus
- Paul Dimond, Of Counsel, Miller Canfield
- Elisabeth Gerber, Professor, Ford School of Public Policy, University of Michigan
- Larry Good, Chairman, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
- Steve Hamp, Chairman, Michigan Education Excellence Foundation and the New Economy Initiative
- Paul Hillegonds, CEO, Michigan Health Endowment Fund; retired Senior Vice President, DTE Energy; former President, Detroit Renaissance; and former Speaker, Michigan House of Representatives
- Michael Jandernoa, Managing Partner, Bridge Street Capital
- Jack Lessenberry, Professor of Journalism, Wayne State University and Senior Political Analyst, radio station WUOM
- Tom Lewand, Partner, Bodman LLP. and Economic Development Advisor to Detroit Mayor Michael Duggan
- Anne Mervenne, President, Mervenne & Co. and Co-Chair, Michigan Political Leadership Program
- William G. Milliken, former Governor of Michigan
- William Parfet, Chairman and CEO of MPI Research
- Milt Rohwer, President Emeritus, The Frey Foundation
- Doug Ross, former State Senator and former Director, Michigan Department of Commerce
- Douglas Rothwell, President and CEO, Business Leaders for Michigan
- Craig Ruff, retired Senior Policy Fellow, Public Sector Consultants, Inc. and Education Advisor to Michigan Governor Rick Snyder
- Dr. John A. (“Joe”) Schwarz, former member of Congress and former Michigan State Senator
- Jan Urban-Lurain, President, Spectra Data and Research, Inc. and Senior Advisor, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
- Cynthia Wilbanks, Vice President for Government Relations, University of Michigan



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