



Getting to Work

The *public's* agenda for improving career navigation, college affordability, and upward mobility in Michigan



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JOIN US!

Join The Center for Michigan and a diverse lineup of experts and policy makers as we explore the findings of this report in three public conferences this fall...

Career Navigation Solutions Summit: Monday, October 5
VistaTech Center, Livonia • 9am-1 pm

Challenges to Upward Mobility Solutions Summit: Tuesday, October 20
Eberhard Center, Grand Rapids • 8:45 am-12:30 pm

College Value and Affordability Solutions Summit: Monday, November 2
Radisson Hotel, Lansing • 8:30 am-2 pm

VISIT thecenterformichigan.net TO REGISTER TODAY!

Executive Summary

If you want to prosper in Michigan, prepare early and train often. In the wake of the Great Recession, good jobs are still difficult to find – and almost always require a college degree or other forms of formal training after high school. And Michigan needs to clear big hurdles to make career preparation more available, relevant, and affordable.

Those are the big messages from the more than 5,000 participants in the Center for Michigan’s year-long “Getting to Work” public engagement campaign.

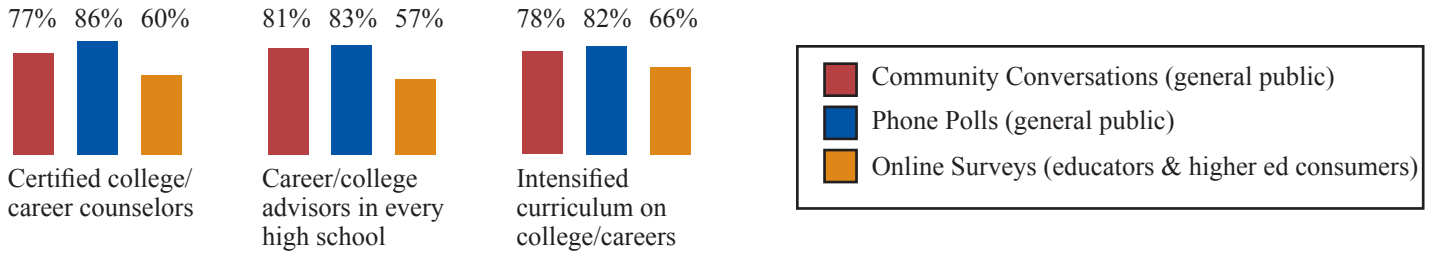
This report outlines Michigan residents’ clear priorities for improving career navigation, college affordability, and upward career mobility. This citizens’ agenda describes those priorities – and possible solutions – in detail. This report is the product of 150 in-person discussions, phone polls, and multiple online surveys. This report also sets the table for three “Solutions Summits” the Center for Michigan will host this fall. (Please see page one for event details and reserve your spot today.) This report, combined with the public feedback provided at our fall summits, can provide a playbook to state leaders to greatly improve Michigan’s talent pool and individuals’ paths to prosperity in our state.

The To-Do List: Five Public Priorities

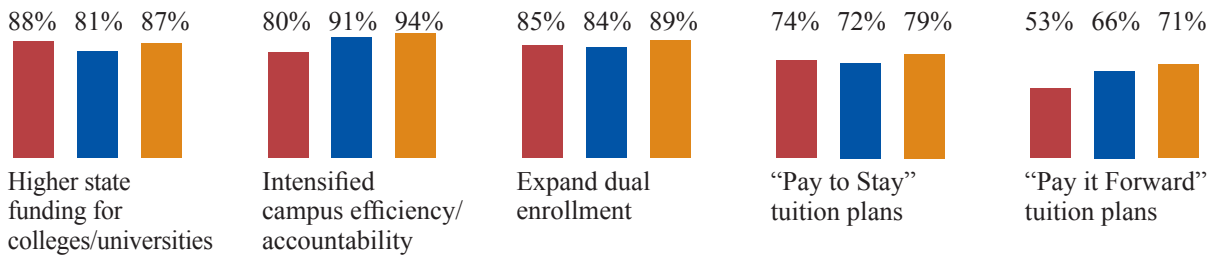
- 1. Greatly improve career counseling and college advising in Michigan high schools.** Michigan residents want school counselors to be certified in college and career advising, dedicated college/career advisers in every high school, and intensified curriculum on college and career choices.
- 2. Make college more affordable.** The public sees college and other forms of advanced training beyond high school as essential. Yet many also question whether the ever-rising costs of college are worth it in the long run. Publicly supported solutions include deeper state budget investment in higher education and greater efficiency and accountability on campus.
- 3. Decrease student debt loads.** To also counter rising college costs, Michigan residents recommend expanding high school students’ access to college credits and pursuing innovative approaches to financial aid.
- 4. Intensify hands-on training and work experience for youth.** Expansion of paid summer internships and intensive job and skills training for youth have strong public support.
- 5. Intensify retraining and continuing education for adults.** Expansion of apprenticeships, skills training programs, and retraining scholarships for disconnected workers have strong public support.

Want More Answers? Go to thecenterformichigan.net/crosstabs for detailed crosstab results of every question we asked in community conversations, polls and online surveys.

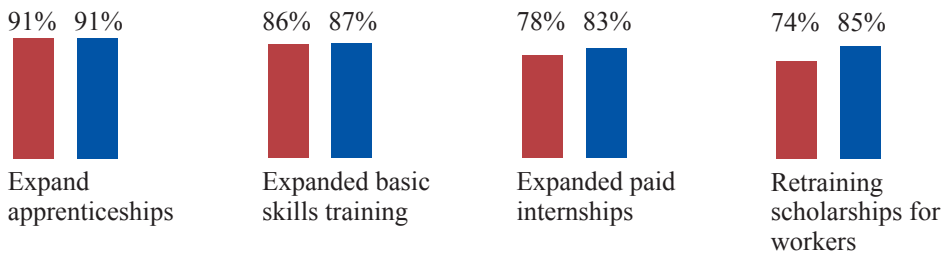
PUBLIC SUPPORT LEVELS: Career Navigation Solutions



PUBLIC SUPPORT LEVELS: College Affordability Solutions



PUBLIC SUPPORT LEVELS: Upward Mobility Solutions



Michigan’s Job Market: Mixed Public Perceptions

Michigan residents are optimistic about the state’s future job market. More than 70 percent told us they believe Michigan’s job market will be “great” or “good” in the coming years. But that hope for the future is shrouded in concerns for the present. Many upper and middle class residents say today’s job market is “good” for themselves and family members – but “lousy” or “terrible” for the state overall. Lower-income Michigan residents are more pessimistic. The majority of those with household income below \$35,000 describe the current job market as “lousy” or “terrible” for themselves and their family members.

A Word of Thanks

This is the sixth statewide public engagement campaign conducted by the Center for Michigan, a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit and nonpartisan organization. Since 2007, some 40,000 diverse Michigan residents have taken part in our public engagement work, which is made possible by the generous financial support of the foundations, corporations, and individuals listed on page 20. Thanks, too, to the 5,000 diverse Michigan residents who specifically took part in this “Getting to Work” campaign.

The Center for Michigan looks forward to working with policy makers to answer the public concerns detailed in these pages.

The Public's Agenda to Improve Career Navigation

Each year, more than 600,000¹ Michigan high school, vocational, and college students face important personal choices about education, training, and career preparation that impact the trajectory of the rest of their lives. But the public believes Michigan's career navigation and counseling systems do not meet the needs of today's students.

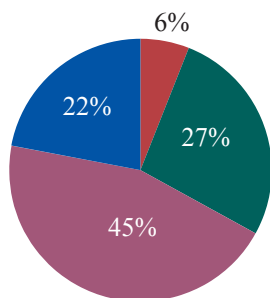
What the public told us:

The majority of Community Conversation and poll respondents said *accurate information about in-demand jobs and the skills required to get them is only "somewhat available."* And more than 70 percent said high school and college *students need more help figuring out how to get the skills they need to eventually prosper.*

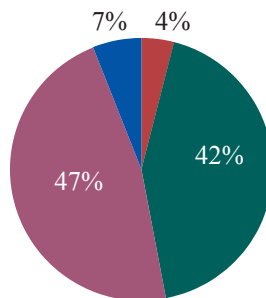
Yet many concluded that *career and college guidance counseling in high schools is "lousy" or "terrible."* Even a majority of educators surveyed felt that way. Participants were somewhat more positive about career guidance available at colleges. One high school student stated, "I had to do my own research because my high school doesn't do a good job with that as far as career navigation. We just have the one counselor for 700 students." Another said, "They call them guidance counselors but they're not. They don't have time. They're scheduling, they're just putting out fires and trying to help students graduate, they manage testing and schedules. Rarely are they able to sit down and talk to students about what they want to do."

What is your impression of career and college counseling in Michigan high schools today?

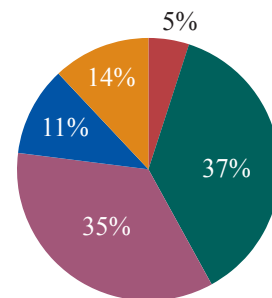
Community Conversations



Online Surveys

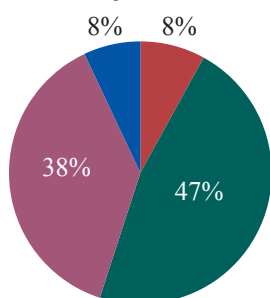


Phone Polls

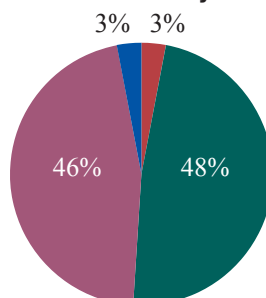


What is your impression of career and college placement guidance in Michigan colleges and vocational training programs today?

Community Conversations



Online Surveys



Numerous trends may contribute to this public concern:

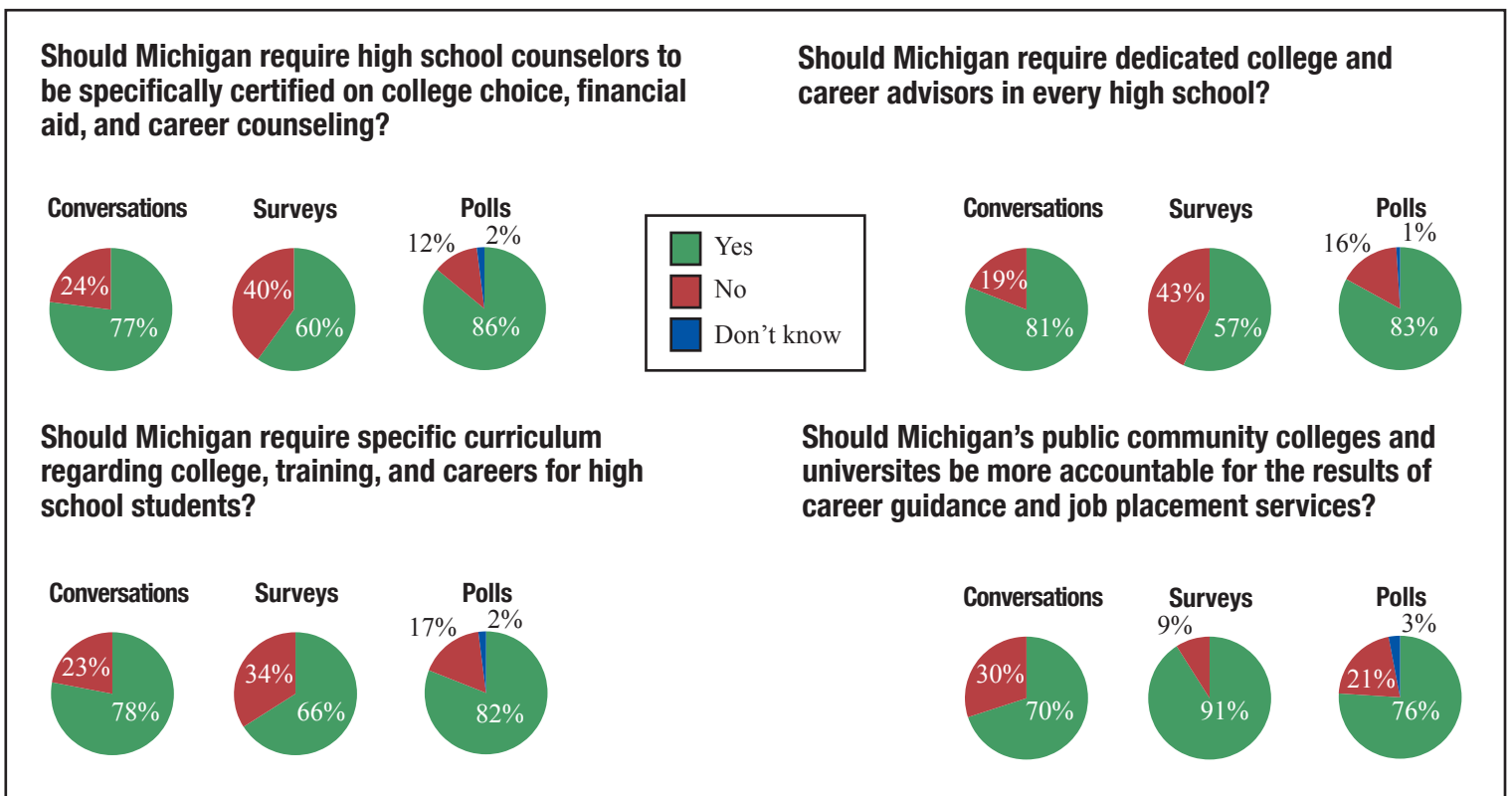
- 1. School counselors are outnumbered.** There are more than 700 students for each school counselor in Michigan. That’s the fifth-highest student-to-counselor ratio in the country.²
- 2. Fewer youths are gaining solid work experience.** In 2000, nearly 50 percent of 16-19 year olds in Southeast Michigan were employed. In 2012, that number dropped to 27 percent – placing metro Detroit among the worst regions in the nation for youth employment.³
- 3. For many students, college is a rocky, start-stop endeavor.** Nearly half of Michigan high school seniors do not complete the complex federal “FAFSA” college financial aid form.⁴ Nearly one in three Michigan college students must take remedial courses for things they did not learn in high school – at a cost of more than \$100 million per year.⁵ And nearly half of public university students fail to complete a bachelor’s degree within six years.⁶

Improving Career Navigation: What the Public Wants

Despite intense criticism of the current system, Michigan residents see clear and achievable ways to improve and intensify college and career navigation. We found wide public support for:

- Requiring high school counselors to be specifically certified on college choice, financial aid, and career counseling. (No such requirement exists today.)
- Requiring dedicated college and career advisers in every high school.
- Adding new high school classes so that students become grounded in the 21st century economy and become better decision makers regarding their college, training, and career choices.
- Holding colleges and universities more accountable for career guidance and job placement.

We surveyed the general public on these ideas through statewide Community Conversations (992 participants) and telephone polls (400 participants) and gathered additional insights from educators through targeted online surveys (198 participants). We found consistent and strong majority support for all four improvement ideas across all three public engagement methods. Support levels remained consistently strong across race, income, and worker demographics. High school and college students themselves were among the most vigilant supporters of these reform approaches.



Career Navigation (continued)

Background on College/Career Navigation Strategies with Wide Public Support

Before offering opinions on these proposed improvements, Community Conversation participants read pro-con issue guides on each one. More background on each approach...

Getting Counselors Certified in Career/College Navigation

*Go online for full crosstabs of each question:
thecenterformichigan.net/crosstabs/*

Some counseling degree programs are voluntarily beefing up college and career guidance training. Others aren't, and there is no statewide requirement to do so. A bill to require new middle and high school counselors to receive 45 hours of specific training in the "college selection process" was introduced to the Michigan Senate in late 2014, but did not pass.⁷ In a national survey of school counselors, more than half indicated they felt inadequately trained to assist students in becoming college and career ready.⁸ One school counselor who attended a Community Conversation said, "It is a counselor's job to help you find a college and what you want to do. I had no classes that addressed college choice, financial aid, and career counseling as part of my education as a counselor. This should be a stand-alone requirement to be a counselor."

Growing the College/Career Counseling Corps

A program called the College Advising Corps has placed 42 recent college graduates in 50 high schools across Michigan. Forty additional advisers will be added through a program called AdviseMI in the 2015-2016 school year. This program could serve as a model for acting upon the public's desire to see dedicated career navigation advisers in each Michigan high school. Yet doing so, and sustaining the effort, could cost close to \$38 million per year. Such added expense would have to be funded through significant philanthropic investment, cuts to or efficiencies in other education programs, or tax increases.

Teaching Students About the Economy and Career Choices

The idea of adding specific high school classes to better train students on the complexities of college and career choices earned more than two-thirds support across all of our survey methods. As one community conversation participant said, "...If you make [career navigation] part of the curriculum, people leaving high school will at least have an idea of where to go for help." However, recent policy debates around the Common Core State Standards highlight the considerable challenges to changing K-12 curriculum.

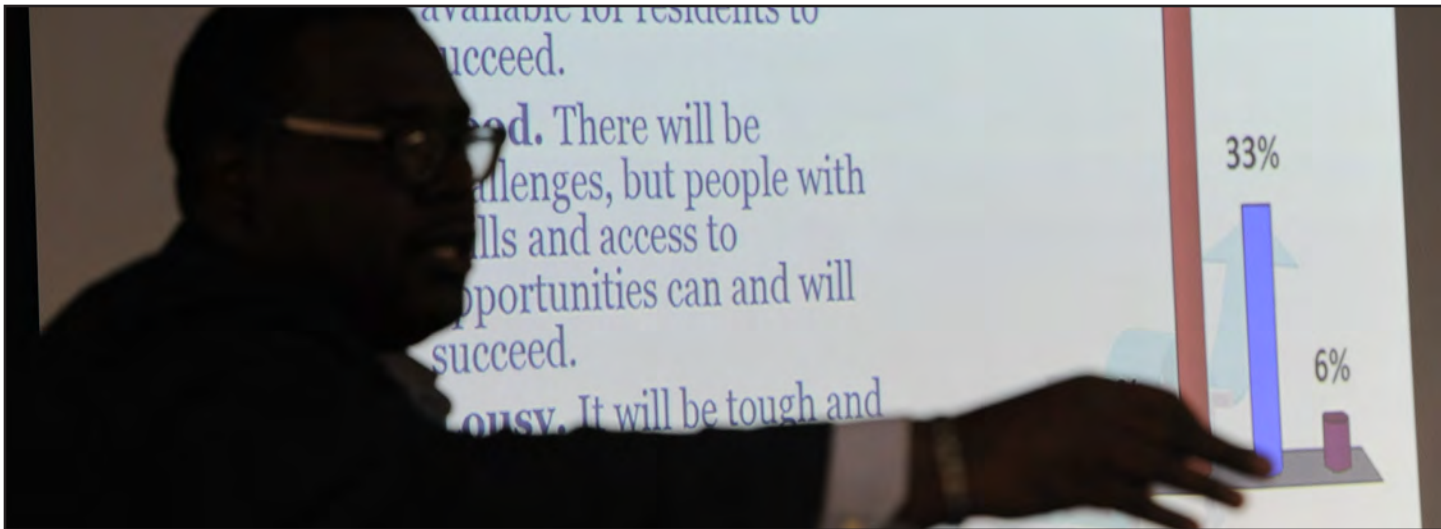
Holding Colleges and Universities More Accountable for Career Guidance and Job Placement

More than 70 percent of participants across all of our survey methods supported holding Michigan's public colleges and universities more accountable for the results of their career guidance and job placement services. College and vocational students themselves were the strongest proponents of this idea. One said, "Colleges need to be more accountable—they remain well-funded via tuition but are unaccountable for their students' lack of preparation for the job market." A small portion of the state funding Michigan's community colleges and universities currently receive is dependent on performance on a number of measures, including graduation rates and undergraduate degree completion in "critical skill areas."⁹ However, this "performance funding" makes up a relatively small portion of overall state funding to these institutions. Adding career guidance or job placement metrics to performance funding is one possible approach.

Citizen Voices: Action-Oriented Comments

The Center for Michigan logged nearly 4,000 citizen comments in 150 community conversations across Michigan. The most commonly identified, action-oriented themes related to career navigation:

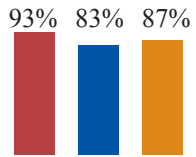
- More career guidance/planning is needed in high schools (275 comments)
- Students and families often rely on resources outside of school settings for career navigation help (215)
- Schools should be responsible for career navigation, including college readiness (71)
- Partnerships are needed between schools, colleges, and business to assist with career navigation (29)
- Colleges should take the lead on career navigation and be accountable for job market preparation (27)



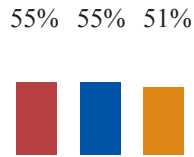
The Public's Agenda for Improving College Affordability

When it comes to college education, Michigan residents say they face a conundrum. They firmly believe that earning a college degree or other advanced training beyond high school is very important to prospering in today's economy. Yet ever-rising tuition now leaves many questioning whether the costs of college actually pay off in the long run.

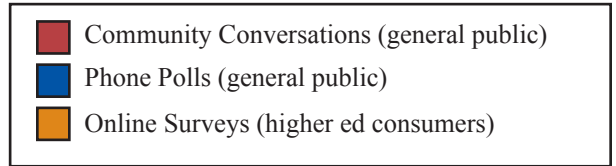
THE COLLEGE CONUNDRUM: It's important, but is it worth the cost?



Obtaining a degree or other training is "important" or "very important"



A college degree is only "somewhat worth" or "not worth" the cost

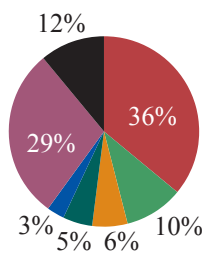


The Public's Sense of the Problem

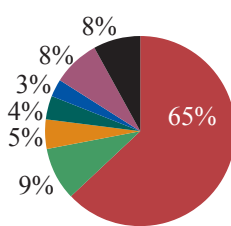
The high costs of college have significant consequences for Michigan families. Indeed, the Michigan public views high tuition costs as the most common challenge to completing college. Likewise, rising tuition costs and rising student loan debt dominate the public's concerns about college affordability.

What's the most common challenge to completing college?

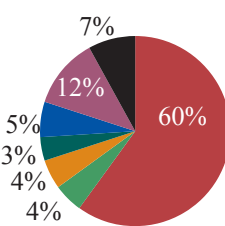
Conversations



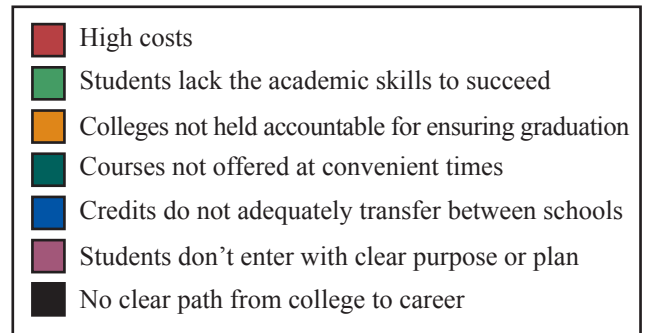
Online Surveys



Phone Polls

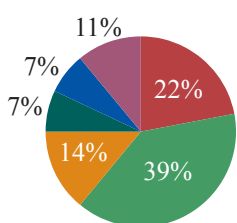


NOTE: 6 percent of poll participants refused to answer

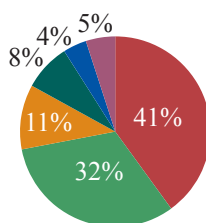


Which of these college affordability issues is most concerning?

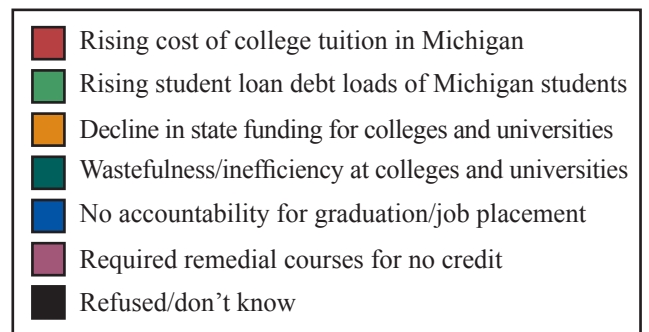
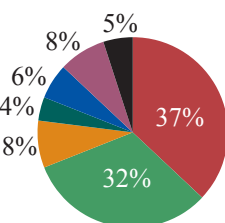
Conversations



Online Surveys



Phone Polls



Numerous trends may contribute to this public angst:

- 1. College costs have risen rapidly.** Average undergraduate tuition at Michigan’s 15 public universities increased 86 percent between 2001 and 2014 – from \$6,153 to \$11,446 (inflation-adjusted in 2014 dollars).¹
- 2. As college costs have risen, Michigan families have less ability to pay.** From 1999 to 2013, inflation-adjusted median household income in Michigan decreased from \$64,434 to \$48,801.² The average net cost of tuition at Michigan’s public universities is 21.6 percent of median family income - fourth highest in the nation.³ That means it would require an average Michigan family to spend \$21 out of every \$100 in pre-tax income to pay cash for a student’s one-year public university costs.
- 3. In response, student loans have more than doubled – and now approach \$2 billion annually at Michigan’s public universities.** Student loans taken out by students at Michigan’s 15 public universities increased from \$852 million in 2001 to more than \$1.9 billion in 2014, according to inflation-adjusted data from the Michigan House Fiscal Agency.⁴ Over that same period, annual loan dollars per student more than doubled – from \$3,127 in 2001 to \$6,469 in 2014.⁵
- 4. College completion rates at the majority of Michigan’s community colleges, public universities, and private universities rank lower than the national average** for their peer institutions, according to the National Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis.⁶

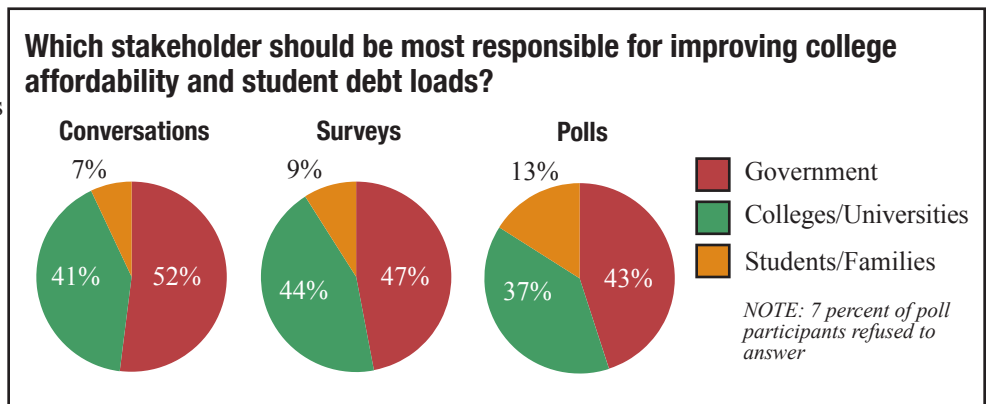
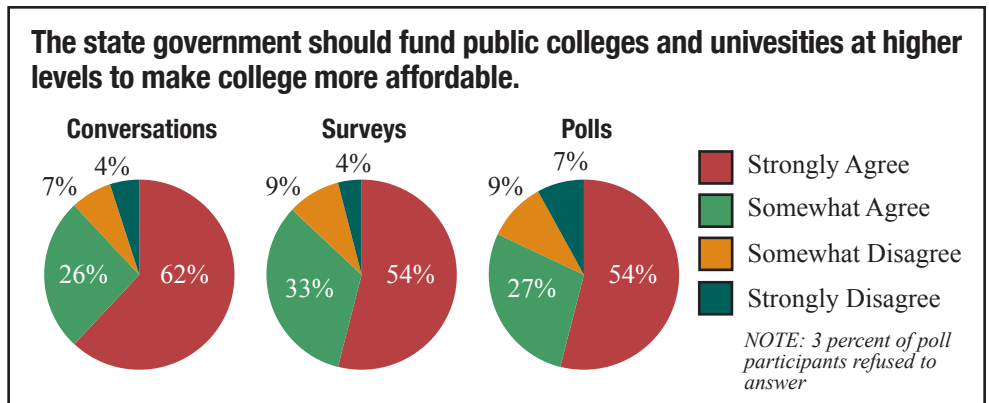
Public Support for Five College Affordability Solutions

We used three separate public engagement techniques to test numerous college affordability policy approaches. More than 700 people deliberated and voted in statewide Community Conversations on college affordability. A 400-person statewide poll posed very similar questions to the Community Conversations’. So did a targeted online survey taken by more than 300 consumers of higher education (students and parents). We found wide and consistent public support for the five college affordability solutions detailed below.

Solution 1: Deeper State Investment

Many Michigan taxpayers have skin in the game of higher education, whether or not they ever attend college. Michigan has, for many years, funded public university operations in part through state budget appropriations. In 2001, the state budget (approved by the governor and legislature) included \$1.6 billion for university operations. That’s the equivalent of \$2.1 billion in 2014 inflation-adjusted dollars. In 2014, the state budget included \$1.46 billion for university operations. So, in 2014, Michigan’s state budget included 30 percent less for universities than in 2001. And a recent Michigan House Fiscal Agency analysis concluded that at least 60 percent of cumulative tuition increases since 2001 could be attributed to decreased state spending on universities.

The majority of participants in our community conversations and online surveys concluded it is time for higher state investment in public universities. Nearly eight in ten of those participants also “strongly agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that students and families must do more to prepare for, save for, and fund their own college educations. Slight majorities in both community conversations and online surveys also said they would be willing to pay more in taxes to make college more affordable. But they placed highest responsibility on state policy makers and colleges and universities to deal with the college affordability problem.



College Affordability (continued)

Solution 2: More Accountability and Efficiency on Campus

A consistent and extremely high majority of participants across three separate survey methods called for greater levels of efficiency on public college and university campuses to deal with the college affordability problem.

Michigan universities argue they have instituted many efficiencies during budget crises of the past generation. Some states have pressed universities to go further. In Texas, for example, a state-mandated higher education reform commission in 2010 called for a wide range of efficiencies - totaling some \$3 billion over four years - in that state's public university system, including a 10-percent cut in general operations costs, higher building use through more efficient class scheduling, streamlined administration, expanded group purchasing and procurement, and outsourcing of some campus costs and services. In response two years later, public colleges and universities reported \$1.9 billion in efficiency savings to date.

In Michigan, the public university system is constitutionally independent, meaning policy makers have little control over university operations.

Yet many Michigan residents cite efficiency concerns among the reasons they question the value of college in the age of rapidly rising tuition. Illustrative examples from Community Conversations:

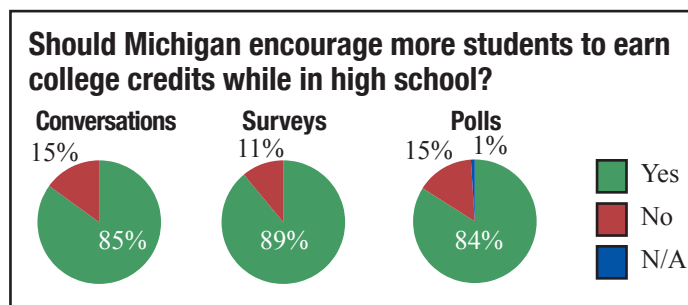
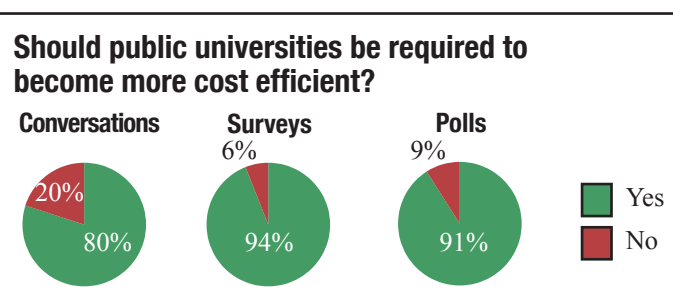
- “There is no real relation to value and the price of college. There is no real guarantee that the education received at college will prepare their student for the job market. There is no real metric for gauging the success of a college education. There is little to no accountability at the college level for universities and administrations to prepare and place recent graduates in the job market.”
- “When we visit college campuses, we always ask ‘What’s the job placement rate and how much do you have to do with that? Are you giving students internships?’ I’ll pay but I don’t want the debt and no job for my kid.”
- “Education hasn’t caught up to the 21st century. It’s so easy to get financing, just get another loan. Colleges need to be leaner and the education model must be more effective.”
- “When our kids were in college we would go to the orientations with them, and the colleges would say they can take 5 or 6 years [to graduate]. The message out there is you don’t have to have a plan. They need some guidance when they’re there, the advisors aren’t always helpful. [Students] want to be successful but it’s easy to get lost.”

Solution 3: Easing the Path to College Credits

In 2013, more than 20,000 Michigan high school students completed more than 54,000 courses for college credit. Additional use of advanced placement courses, dual enrollment in high school and college, and early or middle college programs can all help families cut college costs.

More enrollment in community colleges (which are roughly one-third as expensive as public universities) can also reduce families’ costs. So could improved, student-oriented credit transfer agreements between separate colleges and universities. The Michigan Transfer Network (michigantransfernetnetwork.org) is designed to help students and advisors see how credits transfer between colleges. And a new state task force is charged with easing the transfer of credits between community colleges and universities.

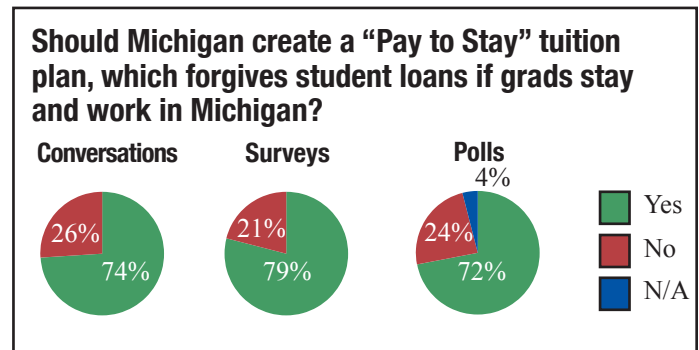
As a high school student said in one of our Community Conversations, “I have been able to attend the University of Michigan Dearborn under a dual enrollment program. That has really helped with affordability because it has allowed me to try out some classes so I understand if these fields are something in which I want to get further training, as well as experience what college is really like.”



Solution 4: Pay to Stay Tuition Plans

We also found consistent public support for the notion of forgiving student loans as a way of retaining talented college graduates in Michigan.

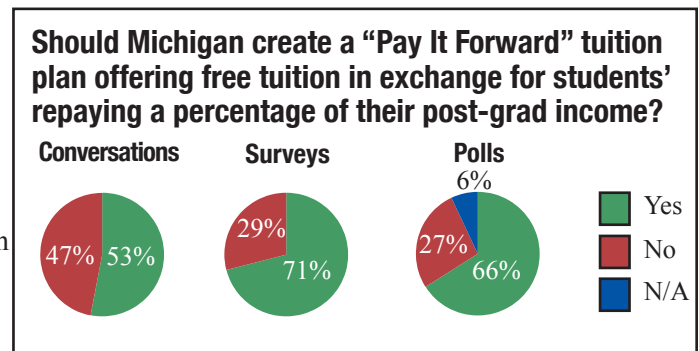
Programs like this currently exist for specific job fields. Some graduates in some health care fields can participate in a program that will forgive up to \$200,000 in student loan debt for meeting specific criteria, such as working in a community in need of health care providers with their specialization. Proposed (but not passed) legislation would allow employed graduates of Michigan colleges to claim a tax credit equal to 50 percent of student loan repayments for five years. Budget analysts estimated first-year costs at \$53.8 million and said those costs would grow as more people became eligible.⁷ One community conversation participant reasoned, “We’re losing a lot of the younger population and students have a lot of debt. Pay to Stay could be a solution to multiple issues.”



Solution 5: Pay It Forward Tuition Plans

We also found consistent public support for the notion of offering free tuition in exchange for students’ binding promises to repay a percentage of their after-college incomes for a set amount of time.

Many states have considered this approach in recent years, according to the National Association of College Admission Counseling. In early 2015, New Jersey passed a law to establish a task force to formally study this approach. In Oregon, where the idea originated several years ago, a task force designed in 2014 a detailed Pay it Forward financial plan. The plan estimated that Pay it Forward would peak at \$20 million in annual state costs and would take 20 years to break even. Some critics argued the plan may actually be a disincentive to contain college operating costs and might decrease college graduation rates since students could attend for free. Oregon policy makers have not passed the proposal into law.



Public Insights on Two Other Ideas

We also found consistent majority support across all three survey methods for re-engineering student financial aid to reward degree completion rather than college attendance (the current convention). But a large amount of financial aid comes through federal programs over which Michigan policy makers have no control. And we have not found serious momentum to overhaul higher education finance in this way.

Go online for full crosstabs of each question: thecenterformichigan.net/crosstabs/

More than half of participants across our three survey methods also supported the idea of providing free, state-funded college tuition to Michigan high school graduates. But, when we explored the issue in Community Conversations, the \$1.8 billion price tag of this endeavor dissuaded many. When asked how to pay that bill, the highest percentage (47 percent), said “don’t do it at all.” Twenty-three percent said to cut other government programs and 30 percent said to do it through tax increases.

College Affordability (continued)



Citizen Voices: Action-Oriented Comments

The Center for Michigan logged nearly 4,000 citizen comments in 150 community conversations across Michigan. The most commonly identified, action-oriented themes related to college value and affordability:

- Government should be more responsible for and place a higher priority on higher education funding (73 comments)
- Colleges should be more efficient and responsible for cost of attending college (69)
- Concerns about return on investment of college tuition (45)
- More focus needed on skilled trades, apprenticeships and certification programs. Must make sure that education matches workforce needs. (31)
- Students and families are responsible for saving for their own educations (31)

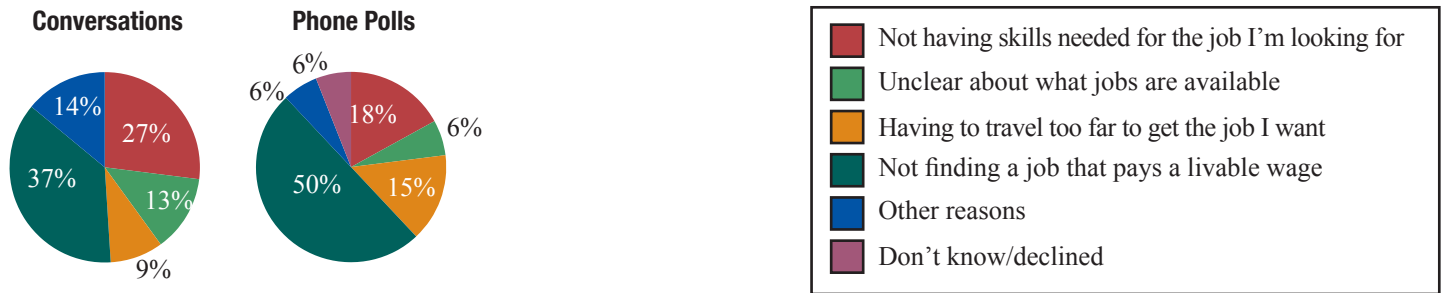
The Public's Agenda to Improve Workers' Upward Mobility

Michigan residents are very concerned about the many challenges facing unemployed and underemployed people. We used three separate public engagement techniques to understand these public concerns and test possible policy solutions. More than 1,100 people deliberated and voted in statewide Community Conversations on upward mobility. A statewide poll involving more than 1,100 people posed very similar questions to the Community Conversations. A targeted online survey taken by more than 300 small-business owners and employers also provided perspectives.

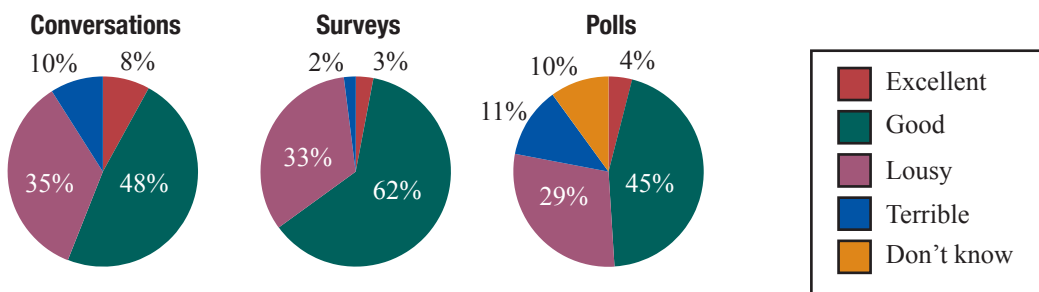
The Public's Sense of the Problem

Some workers question the quality of services available through workforce development agencies – and suggest there are inadequate resources for workers to improve their basic skills. Most agree that employers are responsible for training workers. The vast majority of workers identified either one of two major hurdles to upward mobility – not having the necessary skills and simply not being able to find a job that pays a living wage.

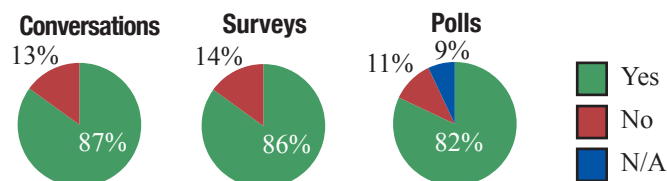
What makes it difficult to find a good job right now?



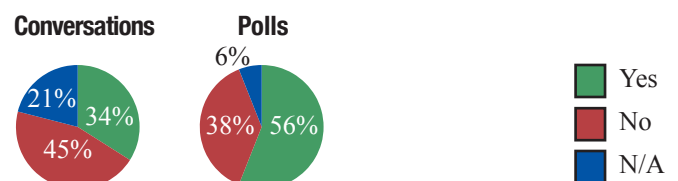
Your impression of career/job placement guidance in workforce development agencies?



Are employers responsible for training employees?



Are there adequate resources for workers to improve basic skills?



Upward Mobility (continued)

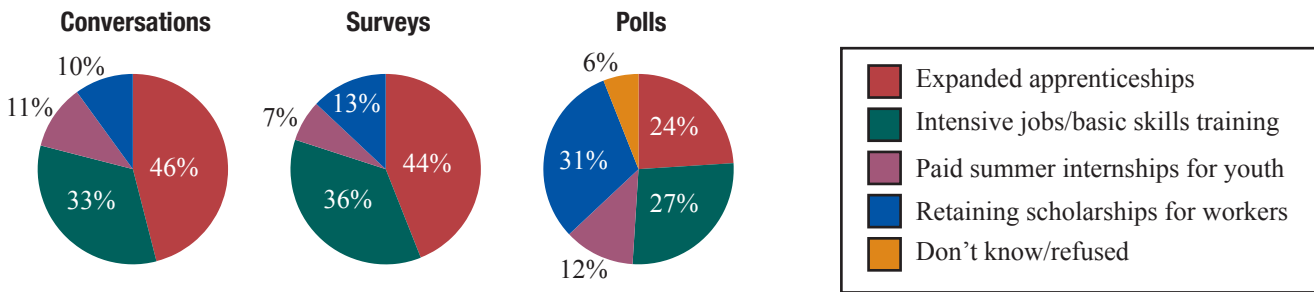
Improving Upward Mobility: What the Public Wants

We asked Community Conversation and poll participants for their input on four specific, research-based ideas for improving opportunity for upward mobility in Michigan:

- Expanding apprenticeship partnerships.
- Intensive job and basic skills training for youth and adults disconnected from the job market.
- Paid summer youth internships.
- Retraining scholarships for displaced workers.

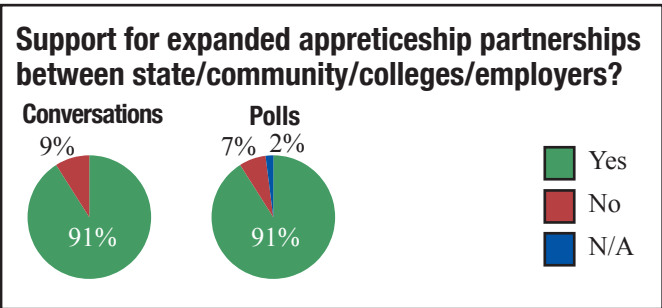
All four approaches received wide support in Community Conversations and phone polls. But respondents were split on which had most potential.

Which upward mobility strategy has the most potential?



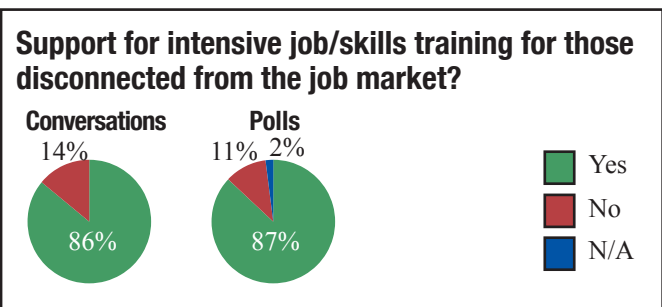
Expanding Apprenticeship Programs

Currently, an initiative called the Michigan Advanced Technical Training (MAT2) program offers applicants an opportunity to earn an associate’s degree, receive 3 years of courses, on-the-job training with pay, and a guaranteed job as a mechatronics technician, Computer Numerical Control manufacturing technician, IT technician, or technical product designer.¹ The program is about to begin its third year, and additional employers and community college partners have joined the initiative in each new year of the program, widening its scope beyond its initial geographic concentration in Southeast Michigan. We found high levels of public support for expanding this kind of apprenticeship approach to other fields.



Basic Skills Training for Youth and Adults Seeking Jobs

Partnerships between nonprofit agencies, state workforce development programs, foundations, educational partners, and employers have been forged to create several of these initiatives, including the Earn and Learn program in Detroit and the Pathways to Success program in Grand Rapids.² These models could provide a blueprint for scaling initiatives to serve more statewide youths and workers. And there is strong public support for doing so.



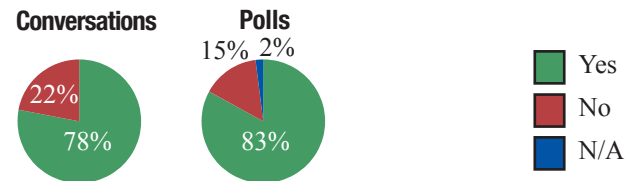
However, the costs of launching and sustaining such programs over time would require significant investment from some combination of employers, education providers, government, and philanthropy.

Expanding Paid Summer Internships for Youth

Community Conversation participants express concern about the lack of work experience available for young people in Michigan, as well as a perceived decline in “soft skills” among these youth, such as communication, self-responsibility, and work ethic. One popular idea for improvement could ease both of these concerns: more than three-quarters of all Community Conversation and poll respondents supported expansion of paid summer internship opportunities for youth.

Like the idea of intensifying training for youth and adults, models for paid youth internships do exist, both in Michigan and nationally. Expanding and sustaining internship programs also would require significant investment. For example, the Grow Detroit’s Young Talent program required \$2.7 million in private dollars to operate at its summer 2014 levels.³

Support for paid summer internships for youth...

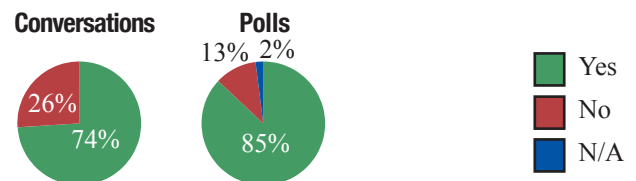


Providing Retraining Scholarships for Adults

Retraining scholarships are a potential way to address public concern about unemployment and under-employment for adults who have lost jobs in industries that have contracted or closed and cut jobs.

A previous state-funded program, called No Worker Left Behind, offered scholarships to 165,000 Michigan residents for retraining from 2007-2010. Two-thirds of No Worker Left Behind participants reported finding employment.⁴ But the program’s cost - \$500 million – drew criticism and it is unclear if or when state policy makers will pursue such a strategy again.

Support for retraining scholarships for displaced workers or others seeking training in a new field...



Citizen Voices: Action-Oriented Comments

The Center for Michigan logged nearly 4,000 citizen comments in 150 community conversations across Michigan. The most commonly identified, action-oriented themes related to improving upward mobility:

- Stakeholders (employees, employers, education system, government, philanthropy) need to work together to match residents’ skills with employer needs (49 comments)
- For many, there are barriers in the path of upward mobility (48)
- Michigan’s education system is responsible for improving opportunity to upward mobility (41)
- Michigan residents need to take responsibility for themselves (35)
- There is a need for training in how to become employable, e.g., how to apply for jobs, life skills, financial responsibility and literacy (24)

Methodology: Who Participated, Where, and How We Tallied Results

The goal of this “Getting to Work” public engagement campaign was to gather input from diverse Michigan residents on their specific experiences in preparing for, entering, and working in Michigan’s job market. We sought to identify hurdles on the path from classroom to work, identify potential ways to clear those hurdles, and gauge the public’s opinion on numerous potential solutions.

Demographics

More than 5,000 people participated statewide in this public engagement campaign from December 2014 through May 2015. They did so through three separate interactive public engagement and survey techniques:

- Community Conversations: Two-hour, interactive, in-person meetings.
- Telephone Polls: Public Sector Consultants conducted two separate phone polls – one poll on career navigation and college affordability issues and one on upward mobility issues.
- Targeted Online Surveys: Public Sector Consultants conducted three targeted online surveys to further probe specific audiences. Educators were specifically recruited to take an online survey on career navigation issues in schools. High school and college students and parents were specifically recruited to take an online survey on college affordability issues. And small business owners and employers were specifically recruited to take an online survey on upward mobility issues.

Through years of experience, we have found that this blended approach provides the clearest, most consistent, and statistically accurate view of public opinion and priorities. Community Conversations provide the best dialogue and anecdote. Polls provide statistical validity and overcome any self-selection bias Community Conversation participants may exhibit. And targeted online surveys provide additional insights from specific audiences of concern to specific topics.

Total Participants - Income Demography

Household Income	Actual Statewide Population	Community Conversation Participants (N=2,593*)	Career Navigation/College Affordability Poll (N=400*)	Upward Mobility Poll (N=1,109*)	Career Navigation Educator Online Survey (N=198)	College Affordability Student/Parent Online Survey (N=359)	Upward Mobility Employer Online Survey (N=317)
\$0-10K	9%	13%	9%	11%	0%	14%	0%
\$10-15K	6%	4%	4%	7%	0%	5%	1%
\$15-25K	12%	6%	7%	10%	0%	7%	1%
\$25-35K	11%	8%	7%	9%	1%	12%	3%
\$35-50K	15%	11%	15%	12%	2%	16%	8%
\$50-75K	19%	15%	17%	15%	11%	17%	17%
\$75-100K	12%	13%	10%	8%	20%	10%	14%
\$100-150K	11%	17%	13%	8%	34%	15%	25%
\$150-200K	4%	8%	4%	4%	20%	4%	13%
> \$200K	3%	5%	3%	3%	12%	1%	17%

20 % of Community Conversation participants did not respond to this question.

12 % of Career Navigation/College Affordability phone poll participants did not respond to this question

14 % of Upward Mobility phone poll participants did not respond to this question.

Population data from 2013 American Community Survey

Total Participants - Race Demography

Race/Ethnicity	Actual Statewide Population	Community Conversation Participants (N=2,593*)	Career Navigation/College Affordability Poll (N=400*)	Upward Mobility Poll (N=1,109*)	Career Navigation Educator Online Survey (N=198)	College Affordability Student/Parent Online Survey (N=359)	Upward Mobility Employer Online Survey (N=317)
White	76%	63%	78%	54%	95%	79%	92%
African American	14%	22%	13%	38%	2%	10%	4%
American Indian	1%	2%	1%	2%	0%	0%	1%
Arab American	N/A	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Asian American	3%	2%	2%	1%	0%	4%	0%
Hispanic/Latino	5%	4%	4%	3%	1%	2%	1%
Multi/Other	3%	5%	1%	2%	1%	5%	2%

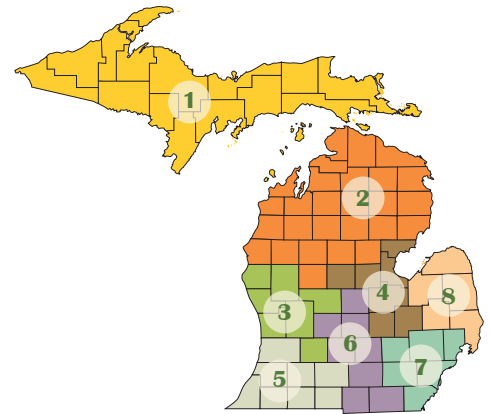
14 % of Community Conversation participants did not respond to this question.

Population data from 2013 American Community Survey

Regional Participation

Community Conversations only

Region of Michigan	Actual Statewide Population	Community Conversation Participants (N=2,593*)
1. Upper Peninsula	3%	4%
2. Northern Lower Peninsula	7%	11%
3. Western	12%	7%
4. Bay Region	10%	7%
5. Southwestern	9%	13%
6. Mid-Michigan	10%	11%
7. Southeast	46%	40%
8. Thumb	4%	7%



*14% of Community Conversation participants did not respond to this question
Population data from 2013 American Community Survey*

Participation by Position in the Workforce

Career navigation & college affordability conversations only

Place in Workforce	Community Conversation Participants (N=1,700*)
High school student	29%
College/vocational student	18%
Member of workforce	43%
Retired or unemployed	11%

16% of Community Conversation participants did not respond to this question

What We Asked – and the Answers We Received

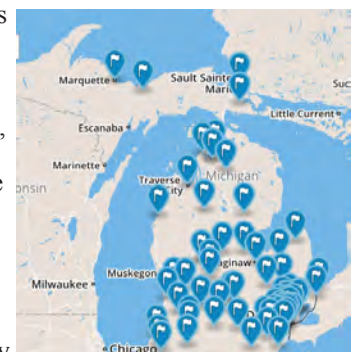
Altogether, across all of our survey methods, we asked 55 issue-oriented questions. The major conclusions are illustrated throughout this report. All of the questions we posed – and all of the answers – are available for public review at thecenterformichigan.net/crosstabs/.

Community Conversations

A total of 2,593 Michigan residents participated in 150 Community Conversations in 63 municipalities across the state. The accompanying pin map illustrates the geographical diversity of these in-person meetings.

The Center for Michigan maintains a database of more than 5,000 statewide community organizations, professional and trade associations, business groups, civic organizations, and more. To recruit convening partners and participants for Community Conversations, we sent invitations to our database network. Once identified, Community Conversation conveners received promotional materials to recruit participants.

Community Conversations generally last approximately two hours each. We offered three separate types of Community Conversations in this year ... 825 participated in conversations devoted to career navigation, 595 participated in college affordability conversations, 959 participated in upward mobility conversations, 66 participated in combined career navigation and college affordability conversations, 101 participated in both career navigation and upward mobility conversations, and 47 participated in both college affordability and upward mobility conversations. Each module had its own educational booklet called an “Issue Guide,” which provided participants with background information, state and national context, and statistics and pro-con considerations related to the questions asked of participants. The issue guides were developed with oversight from independent, nonpartisan researchers at Public Sector Consultants Inc. The Issue Guides remain available online at thecenterformichigan.net.



Participants used electronic clickers to vote on multiple choice questions, with results displayed instantly on large screens. The Center’s trained facilitators then led participants through a series of open discussions. All clicker responses and conversation comments were recorded by trained scribes. All results were tallied and summarized by Public Sector Consultants Inc. The votes and discussion themes most frequently described are presented in this report.

Telephone Polls

Public Sector Consultants Inc. used a multi-mode approach to obtain broader public opinion on career navigation, college affordability, and upward mobility issues.

PSC conducted two polls, including 40 percent cell and 60 percent landline phones. Both poll samples were adjusted by gender, race/ethnicity, age, and income using post-stratification weighting, so that they matched population estimates for Michigan from the 2010 U.S. Census and three-year estimates from the American Community Survey.

An upward mobility poll including 1,109 respondents aged 18-64 was conducted from February 26, 2015 to March 2, 2015. This poll had an overall margin of error of +/- 3 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. This poll provided representative data for subgroups, including:

- African American (N=332, +/- 5 % margin of error)
- Age 18-34 (N=335, +/- 5 % margin of error)
- Age 35-54 (N=406, +/- 5 % margin of error)
- Income under \$50,000 (N=504, +/- 4 % margin of error)
- Income above \$50,000 (N=440, +/- 5 % margin of error)
- Male (N=535, +/- 4 % margin of error)
- Female (N=574, +/- 4 % margin of error)

A career navigation and college affordability poll was conducted with respondents aged 18-64 in two phases. The first poll was conducted from February 26, 2015 to March 2, 2015, and the second poll from August 28, 2015 to August 31, 2015. Both of these included 400 respondents for an overall margin of error of +/- 5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. The Center for Michigan has published subgroup crosstab information for the career navigation and college affordability poll online for anecdotal purposes only. Due to the sample size of the poll, we do not have statistically reliable margins of error for subgroups.

Targeted Online Surveys

Public Sector Consultants supplemented the telephone polls with electronic surveys targeted by email to specific groups and an online panel. The electronic surveys are convenience samples used to represent the targeted groups, while the online panel is a non-random, anecdotal sample. These electronic surveys were conducted to supplement the telephone polls and community conversations, and are not intended to provide generalizable data on these groups.

To probe in-school perspectives on career navigation, PSC surveyed members of the Michigan Education Association, Michigan Association of School Administrators, and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators. 198 educators participated.

To probe customer-specific perspectives on college affordability, PSC surveyed higher education consumers in Michigan. 156 parents, 125 college students, and 78 high school students participated.

And, to probe employer perspectives on workers' upward mobility, PSC surveyed members of the Small Business Association of Michigan. 317 small business owners participated.

NOTES: Career Navigation

¹ https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MDE_Fast_Fact_379573_7.pdf;
<https://www.mischooldata.org/CareerAndCollegeReadiness/lheEnrollmentByThe.aspx>

² <http://www.nacacnet.org/issues-action/LegislativeNews/Documents/StudentCounselorRatios.pdf>

³ <http://mtah3o81qj112x7g26t9ppmz.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/WIN-The-Career-Readiness-Gap-Policy-Documents-Final-6.9.2014-v-2.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.edcentral.org/filling-fafsas/>

⁵ <https://www.mischooldata.org/DistrictSchoolProfiles/PostsecondaryOutcomes/lheRemedialCoursesByHighSchool2.aspx>

⁶ <https://midashboard.michigan.gov/en/stat/goals/3x9v-zx8r/h3ui-q65g/6b2h-z5k4>

⁷ <http://bridgemi.com/2014/12/whats-cooking-in-lame-duck-training-school-counselors-to-give-college-advice/>

⁸ <http://media.collegeboard.com/digitalServices/pdf/nosca/true-north.pdf>

⁹ http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/PDF/HigherEducation/University_Performance_Funding_Formula_Memo_July2014.pdf

NOTES: College Costs

¹ Center for Michigan calculations, confirmed by Public Sector Consultants researchers, using data published by the Michigan House Fiscal Agency.

² Center for Michigan calculations, confirmed by Public Sector Consultants researchers, using data published by the U.S. Census Bureau.

³ <http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=75&year=2009&level=nation&mode=map&state=0>

⁴ http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa/pdf/highereducation/heidi_summary_data_fy16.pdf

⁵ Center for Michigan calculations, confirmed by Public Sector Consultants researchers, using data published by the Michigan House Fiscal Agency.

⁶ <http://www.higheredinfo.org/dbrowser/index.php?submeasure=27&year=2009&level=nation&mode=data&state=0>

<http://bridgemi.com/2014/07/the-five-year-four-year-degree/>

⁷ <http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2015-2016/billanalysis/Senate/pdf/2015-SFA-0057-G.pdf>

NOTES: Upward Mobility

¹ <http://www.mitalent.org/mat2/>

² <http://www.earnandlearn.org/>; <http://www.grcc.edu/node/12129>

³ <http://gdyt.org/learn-more/>

⁴ <http://bridgemi.com/2013/08/survey-says-old-michigan-jobs-training-program-worked/>

About the Center for Michigan

The Center for Michigan is the state's nonprofit and nonpartisan citizenship company. As a 501(c)(3) organization, the Center seeks to make Michigan a better place by encouraging greater understanding and involvement in policy issues among the state's residents and making sure their voices are regularly heard by state leaders. We define our work with three verbs: Engage. Inform. Achieve.

Engage

Since 2007 the Center for Michigan has engaged more than 40,000 Michigan residents through our interactive, small group Community Conversations, large town-hall conferences, telephone polling, and online engagement tools. Our public engagement work gives opportunities for Michigan residents to better understand Michigan's public policy issues, discuss them with fellow residents, and develop common ground positions to impact the decisions of Michigan's public leaders.

Inform

Bridge Magazine, the Center for Michigan's online publication, is Michigan's source for in-depth, nonpartisan reporting. The journalists at Bridge seek to answer the "how" and "why" of Michigan's current events. In its first three years, Bridge has earned nearly two dozen state and national journalism awards. Special features of Bridge include the Michigan Truth Squad, an award-winning watchdog service of political speech by candidates and special interest groups in election years; Brunch with Bridge, a collection of guest columns published on Sunday morning from unique authors around the state; and Business Bridge, a collaboration between the Center for Michigan and Crain's Detroit Business. Bridge also leads the Detroit Journalism Cooperative, a collaboration of five nonprofit media outlets to "report about and create community engagement opportunities relevant to the city of Detroit's bankruptcy, recovery and restructuring." Subscribe to Bridge at bridgemi.com.

Achieve

The Center takes the findings of our public engagement campaigns and research and reporting of Bridge's journalists and seeks publicly supported, data-driven policy solutions for Michigan's future.

Governance & Staff

The Center for Michigan was founded in 2006 by retired newspaper publisher Philip Power and is governed by a 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. Read more about Bridge Magazine at 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

Founded in 2006, 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; Paula Cunningham, Director; James S. Hilboldt, Esq., Director; Paul Hillegonds, Director; Michael Jandernoa, Director; Dr. Glenda D. Price, Director; Douglas Rothwell, Director; Dr. Marilyn Schlack, Director.

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- **Dr. John A. ("Joe") Schwarz**, former member of Congress and former Michigan State Senator
- **S. Martin Taylor**, Regent Emeritus, University of Michigan
- **Jan Urban-Lurain**, President, Spectra Data and Research, Inc. and Senior Advisor, Corporation for a Skilled Workforce
- **Cynthia Wilbanks**, Vice President for State Relations, University of Michigan

Thank You to Our Investors

The Center for Michigan's public engagement campaigns and public interest journalism are made possible by the generous support of charitable foundations, corporate investors, and individual donors. The Center for Michigan is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and contributions to the Center are tax-deductible. We express our deepest gratitude to the following foundations, corporations, and individuals for supporting the Center for Michigan during our 2011-2015 public service program period:

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Please consider investing in the future of our state with a contribution to the Center for Michigan.

The largest share of the credit for this citizens' agenda belongs to the more than 5,000 statewide residents who shared their opinions, ideas, and priorities for Michigan. The 2,593 Community Conversation participants, 2,383 poll participants, and 27 online conversation participants collectively volunteered more than 6,500 total hours of their time to share their agenda for our state's future. Thank you.

Credits

Data Collection and Management

Jeff Guilfoyle, Peter Pratt, Michelle Richard, Pam Sanders, Craig Wiles at Public Sector Consultants Inc.

Staff Facilitators

Dwayne Barnes, Amber DeLind, Hailey Zureich.

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Publications

This report was written by Amber DeLind. Edited by John Bebow and Peter Pratt. Graphic design by AJ Jones. Printing by Standard Printing in Ypsilanti, MI.

Photos

All photos by Lon Horwedel.

What You Can Do

Participate in a Regional Solutions Summit

In October, the Center for Michigan will be holding three regional “Solutions Summits” based upon the findings of this report. We’ve recruited experts in labor markets and workforce development to speak with Summit participants about ideas for acting upon the priorities Michigan residents identified. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions of these panelists and vote on the solutions they deem most promising. The results of these summits, combined with the conclusions in this report, will form the “Getting to Work” report that will be shared with state leaders in January 2016. The Career Navigation Summit will be held in Livonia on October 5, the Challenges to Upward Mobility Summit will be held in Grand Rapids on October 20, and the College Value and Affordability Summit will be held in Lansing on November 2. For more information and to register, visit thecenterformichigan.net.

Contact your legislators

Your voice matters! Share your ideas and priorities for improving the issues identified in this report with your elected leaders. To find the name and contact information for the legislators representing you, visit house.mi.gov for the state House of Representatives and senate.michigan.gov for the state Senate.

Sign up to receive Bridge Magazine

You can subscribe to Bridge Magazine, an online publication of the Center for Michigan. Bridge is your source for fact-based, nonpartisan journalism about issues important to Michigan’s future, including those highlighted in this report. This important, free coverage will arrive directly in the inboxes of Bridge subscribers four times weekly. Subscribe today at bridgemi.com.

Become a Community Conversation host

The Center for Michigan will begin a new round of Community Conversations in 2016, and we want to come to your community! Hosting is easy and free of charge. If you have a group of 20-50 people who would be interested in discussing issues important to our state, contact engage@thecenterformichigan.net or 734-926-4285 to learn more about how to host a Conversation.

Get involved in your community

You attended a Community Conversation because you care about your state. Use that civic engagement momentum you’ve built up 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 Volunteer Michigan’s volunteer match tool, which allows you to search for volunteer opportunities by zip code or key term. Visit www.thecenterformichigan.net and click the button that says “Sign up to volunteer here!” to begin searching today.

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Our social media accounts are constantly updated with information about ways for you to stay engaged on the issues most important to you and our state. “Like” us on Facebook: facebook.com/thecenterformichigan and facebook.com/bridgemicigan, and follow us on Twitter and Instagram, [@CenterforMI](https://twitter.com/CenterforMI) and [@BridgeMichigan](https://twitter.com/BridgeMichigan).

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