



MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF  
**LABOR & ECONOMIC  
OPPORTUNITY**

MICHIGAN  
OFFICE OF  
**RURAL  
PROSPERITY**





MICHIGAN OFFICE OF  
**RURAL PROSPERITY**

An intergovernmental and cross-sector liaison and 'front door' for rural communities

Strategize and  
advocate for rural  
needs in policy and  
program decisions

Help rural communities  
navigate to partners  
and resources

Build a strong rural  
network to keep rural  
communities connected  
to each other and  
resources

Founded in 2022 as the Office of Rural Development by Executive Directive in 2022-01, the office was renamed the Office of Rural Prosperity by Executive Order in 2023 (EO 2023-06).



## MICHIGAN OFFICE OF RURAL PROSPERITY

**Rural Readiness Grants** provide up to \$50,000 to tax-exempt rural partners for planning, capacity building, and partnership development to help communities plan for housing, develop childcare and health care solutions, educate local partners on grant writing, and more.

**Rural Readiness Network Support** offers 1:1 direct community assistance to help communities prioritize needs, develop action plans, and organize solutions and partners.

**ORP Partnerships** with other state and federal agencies, universities, philanthropies, and nonprofits ensure that rural needs and experiences are a part of new programs, and that rural communities have access to opportunities like fellowship programs and new funding.

**ORP's Leadership Development** programs help build the expertise and skills needed for rural communities to plan and develop solutions for high-priority issues, develop competitive grant applications, and build the foundations for good governance.

**Grant Readiness Support** offers grant writing assistance to communities and helps them develop projects that will be competitive for grant applications.

### RESOURCES

ORP programs offer funding and direct community support to help communities plan for successful solutions and funding.

### CONNECTIONS

ORP is the 'front door' to a strong network of partners and resources.

**ORP Convenings** bring rural communities together to learn from each other, and to build relationships with partners across the state and country.

# 200

Rural Readiness Network  
Participating Communities



ORP's Roadmap to Rural Prosperity provides detailed cross-sector, interagency strategies.

# Rural Readiness Grant Program

- Develop 'shovel-ready' projects
  - Encourage cross-sector, multi-jurisdictional partnerships and collaboration
  - Engage and support communities with limited capacities, incomes, and budgets
  - Prepare communities for long-term solutions and funding opportunities
  - Support partnerships, infrastructure, processes, capacity that result in more resilient and vibrant rural communities
- 



**\$50K**



**\$2.8M**



## Regional Developer of Affordable Housing

January 6, 2025

Henry Wolf  
Director of Policy and Grant Programs  
Office of Rural Prosperity  
Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity  
701 S. Elmwood Ave. Suite #7  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
RE: 2024 ORP Annual Report

VIA EMAIL

Dear Mr. Wolf,

Reflecting upon the CHDO Capacity Building Through New Employment Project which we received, I am pleased to report the outcomes and impact it has had on our organization and Region for 2024. Homestretch received an \$800,000 Affordable Housing Program Grant reservation from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Indianapolis. This coupled with our LIHTC application of \$6.5M for the “Flats on Bridge” in Elk Rapids will make the project a reality.

Homestretch received a \$694,000 MI Neighborhood Grant to subsidize the development of four single family homes and one duplex unit. They will be sold to households who earn between 60-120% Area Median Income (AMI).

Homestretch received a \$58,000 MI Neighborhood Grant to rehabilitate eight moderate- income housing condominiums which has been used to generate an additional \$65,000 of leveraged funding from various partners. The grants will be used for window replacement, deck repairs and energy efficiency upgrades.

Homestretch received a \$1.2M MI Neighborhood Grant to construct 12 Townhome Apartments for households earning 60-120% AMI. They are in Thompsonville and will benefit local employers and employees of the surrounding communities near the Crystal Mountain Resort.

The projected total investment of \$2,817,000 in grant funding has been made possible by the employment of Jesse Wolff, our new Director of Real Estate Development. All told, we anticipate a minimum of 42 new *affordable* residences to be constructed and eight improved dwellings thereby creating a total economic impact of 50 units. This further translates into additional full-time employment for our construction manager plus an additional 2 full time jobs in property management, maintenance, and ancillary support. Further positive impacts will be a result of shorter commute times

for our tenants, creating property tax revenue where none had existed before, an increase in discretionary income for our residents and business-related growth. It is my hope that your program will be available in 2025 so that we may expand upon the success mentioned above and make meaningful contributions to improve the State of Michigan’s rural communities and its inhabitants.

Sincerely,

HOMESTRETCH NONPROFIT HOUSING CORP.

Jonathan Stimson  
Executive Director

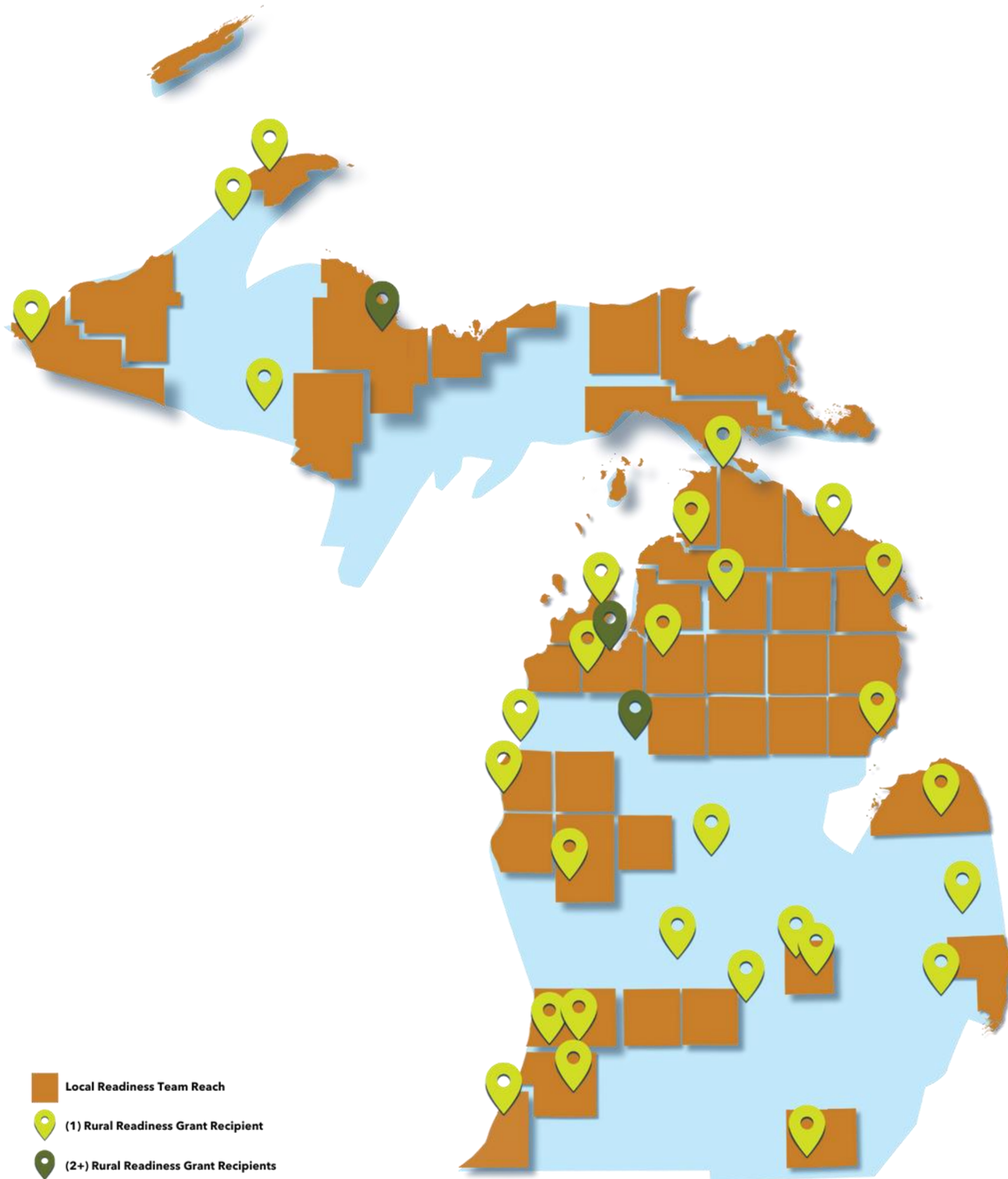
Rural Readiness grants are building a pipeline of projects and plans that will add housing, health access, infrastructure, grant writing capacity, non-motorized infrastructure, childcare, and more.



# \$1.8M

2024 Total Rural Readiness Grant Awards

Workforce		\$50,000
Health & Well-Being		\$200,000
Capacity		\$237,500
Housing		\$507,800
Infrastructure		\$140,357
Economic Development		\$273,300
Natural Assets		\$50,000



These Rural Readiness Grants have helped enable communities to apply for a total of \$40.85 million in additional funding, **with \$11.6 million awarded to date.**

For every dollar awarded through the Rural Readiness Grant Program, \$6.45 has been reinvested into Michigan's rural communities.

# \$1.8M

2024 Total Rural Readiness Grant Awards



# Rural Readiness Readiness Network

- Solution-focused network to advance local and regional projects
- Relationships with rural communities, state and federal agencies, universities, philanthropies, and non-profit organizations
- 1:1 direct community assistance and capacity building support



Workforce



Health &  
Well-Being



Capacity



Housing



Infrastructure

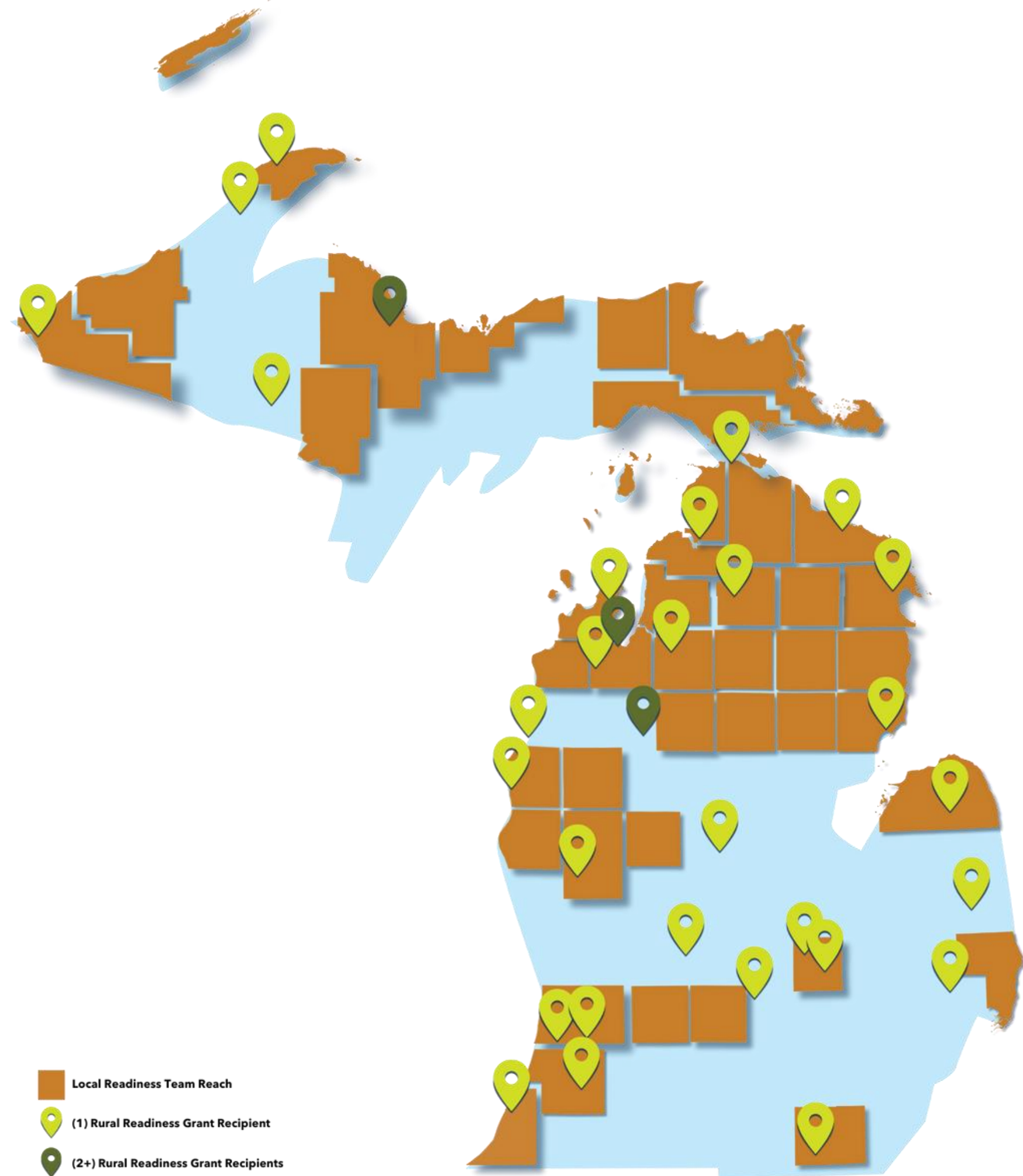


Economic  
Development



Natural  
Assets





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Thank you!



Many thanks to our friends at Kirtland Community College for their hospitality and the use of their incredible facilities!



On The Road

We appreciate you making the trip! For future road trips, be sure to bookmark the Reimagine Rural Podcast.



Sharing & Socials

To all our friends who shared this event with their LinkedIn network - THANK YOU! We appreciate you spreading the word and growing the Rural Readiness Network!



Pictured (Left to Right): Seth Carlson, Community Network Coordinator; Henry Wolf, Director of Policy and Grants; Charly Lopez, Community Support Specialist; Amanda Scott, Rural Readiness Coordinator; Lisa Miller, Director of Partnerships and Engagement; Sarah Lucas, Director of Michigan's Office of Rural Prosperity.

So often, the solution to rural needs is assumed to be primarily financial- that funding can solve the complex challenges that rural communities face around issues like housing, childcare, health, transportation, and more. But funding is only part of the story. Rural communities need strong leadership and governance, diverse partners, plans, and 'pipelines' of viable projects if they're going to be able to secure and use funding effectively. In short, they need to be ready, with an organizational foundation that allows them to capitalize on opportunity. The Rural Readiness Network recognizes that spectrum of need, and creates pathways for rural communities to build that readiness and the foundation for success - through direct community support, partnerships, education, and funding.

Sarah Lucas, Director of Michigan's Office of Rural Prosperity



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Sarah Lucas, Director of Michigan's Office of Rural Prosperity

Event Program and Presentations





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[www.michigan.gov/orp](http://www.michigan.gov/orp)