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Tell us about something interesting you are working on right now at the Michigan League for Public Policy.

The Michigan League for Public Policy (MLPP), in partnership with [Michigan United](#), is currently developing a proactive policy agenda specifically aimed at aiding individuals with very-low-to-no income and integrating them into local community discussions, especially concerning place-making strategies. This initiative focuses on both urban and rural areas, recognizing the often-overlooked population experiencing deep levels of poverty.

“GoFundMe should not be functioning as our national safety net.”

by Kyle Huisman

Interviews with members of our *Policies for Place* Advisory Network

The League is also actively collaborating with a coalition led by [Mothering Justice](#) to advocate for paid family leave. Having access to paid family leave during one of the most vulnerable times in an individual's life is crucial, particularly for hourly workers with low incomes and for women of color, who often serve as primary caretakers and lack access to such benefits.

Additionally, MLPP is exploring ways to improve the social safety net. GoFundMe should not be functioning as our national safety net. The League is considering recommendations to reform TANF and the cash assistance program, with the aim of helping people in crisis transition to more sustainable resources and opportunities, such as education and career pathways. Some of our other recent areas of focus include advocating for the expansion of the Child Tax Credit and exploring Guaranteed Basic Income Pilots, like the Rx Kids program in Flint and the GBI project in Ann Arbor.

How did you become interested in place-based issues?

We can't do policy work without being interconnected to community. Thinking about place is essential. A big part of what we do at the League revolves around tax and budget, and we understand that the impact of policy decisions in these areas made at the state and federal level eventually flows down to local communities. It's also important to understand that

many important decisions that affect community life, such as decisions made about libraries, downtowns, and local parks, are made at the local level. We want to make sure that we can help interconnect people and that people have a voice in those decisions.

How should states and localities be spending their money to promote place-based prosperity?

States and localities should prioritize equity, both economic and racial, in their spending to promote place-based prosperity. For example, an equitable school-funding formula is key to investing in communities. MLPP has been an advocate for policies reflected in some of the recent reforms to Michigan's school-funding formula, which increased state funding for high-poverty districts, districts with many English Learners, and districts having students with disabilities.

At the League, we have said for a long time that our state budget is a moral document, and what we choose to spend is a description of what our values are. So, are we valuing things like high-quality education? Are we using our resources to address equity? Are we making sure that children are truly getting the care that they need? These are the questions state and local policymakers need to consider in deciding how to allocate their resources.