

**City of Ypsilanti**  
**Downtown Development Authority**  
**Board of Directors Meeting Agenda**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020- 8:30 a.m.**

The **Mission** of the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (YDDA) is to undertake district-wide improvements that have the greatest impact in strengthening the downtown areas and attracting new business. The primary goal of the YDDA is to implement positive economic, physical, aesthetic, and community changes in each of our four districts.

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call**

Beth Bashert	P	A	Ylondia Portis	P	A
Kayia Robinson	P	A	Athena Johnson	P	A
Andy French	P	A	Danielle Milner ( C )	P	A
Dieter Otto	P	A	Ben Harrington	P	A
Paul Ajlouny	P	A	Jen Eastridge	P	A
Patton Doyle	P	A	Brian Jones Chance	P	A

- **Introductions**
- **Approval of Agenda (X\*)**
- **Approval of February 20th, 2020 Minutes (X\*)**
- **Public Comment (3 minutes each)**
- **Staff Report/Financial Report (X)**
- **Standing Committee Reports**
  - **Operations and Finance Committee**
- **New Business**
- **COVID-19 Discussion**
- **Old Business**
- **Staff Updates**
- **Public Comment (3 minutes each)**
- **Announcements/Comments**

**Next Meeting: May 21st, 8:30 a.m., SPARK EAST**

I. Key: (\*) = items requiring Board action (X) = documents attached in board packet

**City of Ypsilanti  
Downtown Development Authority  
Board of Directors Meeting Agenda  
Ypsi Auto Museum 100 E. Cross  
Thursday, February 20 , 2020 8:30 a.m.**

The **Mission** of the Ypsilanti Downtown Development Authority (YDDA) is to undertake district wide improvements that have the greatest impact in strengthening the downtown areas and attracting new business. The primary goal of the YDDA is to implement positive economic, physical, aesthetic, and community changes in each of our four districts.

**I. Call to Order**

**II. Roll Call**

Beth Bashert	P	Kayia Hinton	A
Ben Harrington	P	Dieter Otto	P
Ylondia Portis	P	Athena Johnson	P
Danielle Milner (C)	P	Andy French	P
Jen Eastridge	P	Paul Ajlouny	P
Brian Jones Chance	P		

**Introductions**

**Staff Present:**

Christopher Jacobs: DDA Director  
Elize Jekabson: DDA Coordinator  
Joe Meyers: City of Ypsilanti Economic Development  
Bonnie Wessler: City of Ypsilanti Parking and Projects  
Ron Akers: DPS Director

**Approval of Agenda (X\*)**

*Andy French motioned to approve the agenda. Jen Eastridge supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous.*

**Approval of January 16th, 2020 Minutes (X\*)**

*Andy French motioned to approve the January 16, 2020 Minutes. Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous*

**Public Comment (3 minutes each)**

Brian Geringer - Vice Chair of City of Ypsilantis' Board of Ethics. Brian spoke about concerns with putting a camera on the N. Adams dumpster corral. He believes that citizens should not be monitored by the city. He urged the DDA board to consider other options before installing a camera.

Richard Prolicus- Karen and Paul Group. Introduced himself to the DDA Board.

**Staff Report/Financial Report (X)**

Staff updated the board about grant projects and the incentive program. Update: The city approved the DDA staffing contract.

## Standing Committee Reports

### Operations and Finance Committee

Operations and Finance did not have a quorum, so no meeting was held.

Andy French stated that the group is struggling to get committee members to come to meetings.

Danielle Milner reiterated that committee work is important to the efficiency of the board. She thanked Andy for his commitment.

## New Business

### 101 W. Michigan Redevelopment Liquor License (X\*)

Applicant is not present. The space is slated to be a high end restaurant/lounge.

Dieter Otto suggested that in general for one of these applications, the amount spent should be documented.

Joe Meyers responded that everything is documented, the former DDA board had asked staff to narrow down applications and staff review before it comes to the board.

Beth Bashert commented that it will be a nice addition to Downtown.

Brian Jones-Chance questioned the price point of this restaurant.

Ylondia Portis was looking forward to the addition.

*Dieter Otto motioned to approve the Redevelopment Liquor License for 101 W. Michigan Ave.*

*Brian Jones-Chance supported the motion. Motion passed – unanimous.*

### 133 W. Michigan Ave Grant Extension (X\*)

The grant recipient at 133 W. Michigan informed staff that they would not have their project complete by the end of February when staff did their routine check-in with the project at the beginning of the month.

Beth Bashert said that the lack of communication is disappointing.

Staff explained the process of the contract and the reimbursement.

The board agreed that the ownership of communication of construction delays should be on the grant recipient, not the staff.

*Beth Bashert motioned for a 60 day grant extension (finish date April 29, 2020) for 133 W.*

*Michigan. Andy French supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous.*

### Snow Removal Discussion (X)

This is on the agenda today because DAY is concerned about plowing in the lots.

Ron Akers described changes to the snow removal policy.

A concern is how to deal with overnight parking. A good solution is to figure out a better way to shift cars to different lots before a snow emergency.

Ylondia Portis asked about warning policies in place.

Ron Akers said that none are in place, but it is possible to create them.

Jen Eastridge brought attention to the alleys that businesses and residents rely on to access their buildings.

Ron Akers responded that there may be a way for DPS to prioritize alleyways.

Beth Bashert asked about the historical mechanism of dealing with a snow event.

Ron Akers confirmed that signs and towing policies have been in place.

In the future, the city could utilize social media, and permit holders can get emails about planned car shifts.

Beth Bashert commended Mr. Akers for all his work.

Beth Bashert doesn't know another solution from towing cars that do not move.

Andy French asked about a third party contract.

Ron Akers replied that the parking manager is in DPS. There may be communication and union challenges. It makes sense for the city to continue plowing those lots.

Best way to give feedback to DPS is to Email Ron or Bonnie.

Christopher Jacobs stressed that he doesn't want to kick this down the road. Someone in Ann Arbor died slipping on a plowed in curb cut.

Ylondia Portis asked for an estimate from WHCanon for clearing curb cuts.

Paul Ajlouny suggested we communicate to other cities so we don't reinvent the wheel.

Dieter Otto wants to offer services and knowledge from EMU parking. He is more than happy to talk with DPS.

#### **N. Adams Dumpster Enclosure**

Staff reported that there has been recent vandalism on the enclosure door that will cost up to \$1,500 to fix.

This adds up to at least \$8,000 in extra expenses on this enclosure alone in the last 18 months. This includes door repairs, dumping clean up, and cardboard recycling contamination fees from loads of cardboard having to be diverted to the landfill.

This does not include staff time of cleaning the enclosures.

Beth Bashert commented that messy dumpsters bring vermin and disease to communities.

Andy French agreed with Beth, but wants to be sensitive to comments about unnecessary surveillance.

Jen Eastridge stated that a solution to this problem is not just for business but for community safety and health.

Joe Meyers spoke about how restaurants are required to have a dumpster plan per health code, and this particular dumpster has been a headache since 2006. If the DDA gets rid of the dumpsters, restaurants might have to leave.

Staff was asked what businesses and residents who pay into the system want. Staff reported that everyone they've spoken to that pays into the system has been supportive and desperate for a solution, might that even be a camera.

DDA can pass a privacy policy to ensure concerns of surveillance are heard.

Ben Harrington stated that he is the second longest serving other than Dieter. There have been issues with surveillance before. Before the dumpsters, business took trash to the street. The fact that there is no enforcement mechanism is the issue. Loose ends need to be tied up.

Wouldn't support surveillance unless enforcement is tied into it.

Ylondia Portis commented that when she lived in Indianapolis, there were rodents. She's never seen vermin in Ypsi, and wants to keep it that way.

Danielle Milner requested that staff come to the next meeting with a privacy policy and an enforcement plan.

#### **YDDA Summer Movie Series (X)**

Richard Prolicus from the Karen and Paul group that installed the movie projection at October's movie in the park. He handed out material explaining services. Businesses can advertise before the movies. He also provides other entertainment for kids including a Lego man and a bubble guy.

#### **Holiday Decorations (X)**

All of the DDA's holiday decorations are aging and degrading.

It would cost 30-40k to replace all these decorations from Bronners.

Ron Akers noted efficiency and safety issues this year, wreaths have caught on fire because they're so degraded.

Danielle would like samples of proposed new decorations.

The executive committee favored snowflakes vs. wreaths.

Brian Jones-Chance asked if decorations are necessary.

In response, Ylondia Portis spoke about how consumers expect to feel exuberance during the holiday season. It adds appeal to downtown and realistically, we are competing with communities like Detroit and Ann Arbor for holiday shoppers.

Jen Eastridge said as a business owner, she depends on the holiday season to survive and Ypsilanti for being welcoming. She likes the snowflakes as they are inclusive, festive, and LED efficient.

### **Old Business**

#### **Zonder Tours App Pilot (X\*)**

The board is being asked to approve a pilot of the program for six months.

Staff is apprehensive about paying for the app month to month unless there are clear and positive measurables attached. After six months there is no obligation to \$200 a month.

*Beth Bashert motioned to approve a six month pilot for the Zonder App. Ben Harrington supported the motion. Motion passed, unanimous.*

#### **Riverside Arts Center Agreement (X\*)**

Brian Jones-Chance stated that this is a steal of a deal. Why was the decision to do a land contract vs. another way?

Christopher Jacobs stated that this deal closely resembles what RAC offered. The attitude of our negotiation team was that our priority was to come to a price that would allow RAC to thrive.

Ben Harrington stated that the DDA should consider what program will this money be allocated.

*Ben Harrington motioned to approve the lease agreement with the Riverside Arts Center. Dieter Otto supported the motion. Motion passed, unanimous.*

**Staff Updates:** n/a

**Public Comment (3 minutes each)**

Todd Girtis- Spark East thanked the board for approving Zonder. This is exciting news for entrepreneurs, and one step closer for a new office opening in the City. Updated events: Ypsi 9th Hour and the women's empowerment event. Encouraged businesses to apply for the summer works program.

**Announcements/Comments:**

Beth Bashert encouraged staff not to give up on the EMU passport after one try.  
Hope to jump the amount of teens that get placed in the city with Michigan Works.

**Next Meeting: February 20th, 8:30 a.m., SPARK**

Key: (\*) = items requiring Board action

(X) = documents attached in board packet

**City of Ypsilanti  
Downtown Development Authority  
Operations & Finance Committee Meeting  
Wednesday March 11, 2020 – 8:30AM  
SPARK East 215 W Michigan Ave**

**I. Call to Order:****II. Roll Call**

Andrew French	P	Ruth Ann Jamnick	A
Ylondia Portis	P	Julia Collins	P
Brian Jones-Chance	P	Patton Doyle	P
Paul Ajlouny	P		

**III. Approval of Agenda (X\*)**

*Patton Doyle motioned to approve the agenda and Ylondia Portis supported the motion. The committee approved the agenda. Motion Carried.*

**IV. Approval of Minutes (X\*)**

*Patton Doyle motioned to approve the December 11th, 2019 meeting minutes and Paul Ajlouny supported the motion. Motion carried.*

**V. Audience Participation:**

Brother Noah introduced himself to the group- Community organizer involved with the Parkridge Community Garden, Frog Island Community Garden, Community Activities for literature and talent. Donald Harrison of 7 Cylinders Studio at Landline introduced himself.

**VI. Old Business:****N. Adams Dumpster Enclosure (X\*)**

Staff updated the committee about the issues with the dumpster in the N. Adams lot Staff has come up with creative solutions, but they are not the best solutions. Staff is looking to hold the people paid into the program accountable for misuse of the enclosure.

Staff recommended the company EOS for the single dumpster camera.

Staff found a privacy policy drafted by the DDA when they were looking to put a camera up almost ten years ago and based a new policy off this work. This policy was drafted with guidelines pulled from the ACLU and the Dept. of Homeland security.

Andy French recommended EOS. He uses it for his stores.

Brian Jones-Chance asked about recouping costs of vandalism through dumpster agreements.

Ylondia asked about local camera companies.

Brian Jones-Chance asked about the use of dummy cameras.

Dummy cameras would work better if we did not have open meeting minutes discussing dummy cameras.

Staff will put up proper signage about the camera.

*Patton Doyle motioned to recommend the camera bid from EOS. Ylondia Portis supported the motion. Motion passed, unanimous.*

The committee discussed the privacy policy. There were questions about the board viewing the videos. Staff missed that when editing. The board would not be reviewing tapes. Staff was asked to strike that line.

Staff was asked if ledger records would be kept when the tape is shown to the business that has been caught misusing the dumpster. Staff replied yes.

*Motion to recommend the surveillance privacy policy by Brian Jones-Chance, and supported by Julia Collins. Motion passed- unanimous.*

Brian Jones-Chance stated that the current dumpster agreement should be amended.

*Patton Doyle motioned to recommend the surveillance privacy policy resolution, and Brian Jones-Chance supported the motion. Motion passed, unanimous.*

### **Maple Street Lot Agreement (X\*)**

Bonnie Wessler spoke the committee. The City has been providing snow removal, lighting, and mowing for the maple street lot. She recommended that the DDA save \$15,000 for Maple Street lot improvements.

The lot enforcement will roll out with the overall Depot Town enforcement.

Walkability, lingering, and diversity were discussed.

Ylondia Portis asked if parking validation could be a possibility.

Bonnie Wessler is looking into validation and an additional program that would waive fees.

Employee parking was discussed. There are 80 employees in Depot Town on any given Friday night.

Patton Doyle asked that monthly permits be available for employee parking.

*Patton Doyle motioned to recommend the approval of the Maple Street Lot Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Ypsilanti. Julia Collins supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous.*

### **YDDA Summer Movie Series (X\*)**

Staff is seeking approval for all four movie dates. Each date would be \$750 plus the cost of the movie rights.

Staff recommended that these events be held on Thursdays and be paid from the line item TIF Projects.

Discussion about a sponsorship package ensued.

*Patton Doyle motioned to recommend the YDDA Summer Movie Series with a sponsorship package. Julia Collins supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous.*

### **Holiday Decorations (X\*)**

The committee discussed the importance of holiday lighting, what funds could be tapped, sustainability, and a cost-share program.



Patton Doyle suggested cafe lights as a cheaper option for side streets.  
 The committee believes that garland should not be purchased.  
 The committee does not believe that the DDA can feasibly pay for new decorations.  
 Tree lighting was discussed as an alternative.  
 More ideas need to be presented. The committee took no action.

**VII. New Business:**

**IFFY (Independent Film Festival Ypsilanti) Sponsorship (\*)**

Donald Harrison presented IFFY.

Patton Doyle expressed COVID-19 concerns and asked if the event will be postponed or if it can be livestreamed.

Ylondia Portis said that this project was worth supporting regardless of whether or not it needs to be postponed.

*Ylondia Portis motioned to recommend the \$1000 sponsorship to IFFY. Julia Collins supported the motion. Motion passed- unanimous*

**Booker T. Washington Day Sponsorship (\*)**

Brother Noah presented his event which includes black empowerment awards, art and talent show, community garden development, book signing, and discussion.

Sponsorship would help with marketing and transportation.

*Ylondia Portis motioned to recommend a \$500 sponsorship to Booker T. Washington Day. Patton Doyle supported the motion. Motion passed unanimous.*

**IX. Proposed Business: n/a**

**X. Audience Participation: n/a**

**XI. Adjourn**

**Key:** \* = items requiring Committee action (X) = documents attached in packet

**W. Cross St. Revenue Expenses Report**

<b>03/11/2020</b>						
<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Budget Remaining</u>	<u>% Collected</u>		
Operating Millage (1.8282)	7,560	13,587	-6,027	180%		
TIFA	104,197	0	104,197	0%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>111,757</b>	<b>13,587</b>	<b>98,170</b>	<b>12%</b>		
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Budget Remaining</u>	<u>% Incurred</u>		
Operating Costs	9,265	1,009	8,256	11%		
TIFA Expenses	97,654	14,666	82,988	15%		
<b>Total</b>	<b>106,919</b>	<b>15,675</b>	<b>91,244</b>	<b>15%</b>		
<b>Revenues Over (Under) Expenses</b>	<b>4,838</b>	<b>-2,088</b>				
Fund Balance as of FYE June 2019	120,163					
Projected Appropriation for FYE June 2020	4,838					
Projected Fund Balance June 2020	125,001					
*both TIF and Operating Reserves						

3/5/2020

**Depot Town Revenue Expenses Report**

<b>03/11/2020</b>					
<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Budget Remaining</u>	<u>% Collected</u>	
Operating Millage (1.8282)	8,342	11,471	-3,129	138%	
TIFA	110,454	0	110,454	0%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>118,796</b>	<b>11,471</b>	<b>107,325</b>	<b>90%</b>	
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Budget Remaining</u>	<u>% Incurred</u>	
Operating Costs	7,136	921	6,215	13%	
TIFA Expenses	100,024	27,190	72,834	27%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>107,160</b>	<b>28,111</b>	<b>79,049</b>	<b>26%</b>	
<b>Revenues Over (Under) Expenses</b>	<b>11,636</b>	<b>-16,640</b>			
Fund Balance as of FYE June 2019	137,798				
Projected Appropriation for FYE June 2020	11,636				
Projected Fund Balance June 2020	149,434				
*both TIF and Operating Reserves					

3/5/2020

## Downtown Revenue Expenses Report

<b>03/11/2020</b>							
<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Budget Remaining</u>	<u>% Collected</u>			
Operating Millage (1.8282)	35,074	47,010	-11,936	134%			
TIFA	266,994	18,950	248,044	7%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>302,068</b>	<b>65,960</b>	<b>236,108</b>	<b>22%</b>			
<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Budget Remaining</u>	<u>% Incurred</u>			
Operating Costs	23,755	3,575	20,180	15%			
TIFA Expenses	278,298	52,040	226,258	19%			
<b>Total</b>	<b>302,053</b>	<b>55,615</b>	<b>246,438</b>	<b>18%</b>			
<b>Revenues Over (Under) Expenses</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10,345</b>					
Fund Balance as of FYE June 2019	95,601						
Projected Appropriation for FYE June 2020	15						
Projected Fund Balance June 2020	95,616						
*both TIF and Operating Reserves							

3/5/2020

**City of Ypsilanti DDA Staff Report Mar/Apr 2020**

Website: Staff continues to update business directory and available properties. Staff is continuing to update website as needed, and created a COVID-19 resource page.

Community Outreach and Partnerships:

Downtown Dumpster Management: Staff has suspended the April-July 2020 payment cycle. Staff is still conducting weekly maintenance on the enclosures.

Press/Communications: We have been working to promote businesses and events on the DDA's Facebook Page on a regular basis. We have created a weekly graphic that informs the public about essential food businesses still operating in the DDA.

YDDA Bookkeeping and Budget: Staff continues to monitor the budget and make recommendations to the Operations and Finance Committee as necessary.

Streetscape Maintenance:

Grants: No new grant applications have been received. The 2020 deadline was on April 8<sup>th</sup>.

New Businesses:

Businesses Closing: The Eyrie closed permanently. All non-essential businesses are closed in the DDA.

**Staff Hours for Mar/Apr 2020**

Christopher– Budget preparation, DDA outreach, dumpster maintenance

Elize – Invoice processing, promote DDA news and businesses via social media, graphic design

Scott –Historic research

Joe – DDA guidance

**Notable Projects**

Shops local program has been suspended until further notice.

Dear Friends,

I hope you are all safe, healthy and doing your best to shelter in place and practice proper social distancing when you are out performing essential work or tasks. As you know, this virus is unlike any enemy we've faced before. Its reach has had no boundaries and it has affected people of all ages and backgrounds. As schools, workplaces and public services shut down in the age of coronavirus, online connections are keeping Americans in touch with vital institutions and each other. But that's not much of an option for those without access to computers or broadband connections. That is why I have put together this letter, to provide answers to some of your questions and share access to available resources.

My office has been open throughout this unprecedented crisis and my staff and I will continue to be available to assist you. I have done my best to provide the latest information, but please understand that there are new developments every day and my printing and mailing resources are severely limited. Those of you with access to the internet can check my website [housedems.com/Peterson](https://housedems.com/Peterson) for updates or email me at [ronniepeterson@house.mi.gov](mailto:ronniepeterson@house.mi.gov) with your questions. And, of course, feel free to reach out by phone at 517-373-1771.

**Schools** -- The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has released a series of memoranda related to COVID-19 and school closures, including memos on Special education, Nutrition, State funding, Federal funding, Student assessments, Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), Feeding children during closures, and Head Start. You may access these memos here [https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0%2c4615%2c7-140-37818\\_53456---%2c00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0%2c4615%2c7-140-37818_53456---%2c00.html) *For more information, or to receive printed copies of any of these documents, please contact my office.*

**Food Resources (including school meals)** -- The MDE has released guidance on feeding children during school closures. Many school districts are providing breakfast and lunch to children for free. In addition, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (HR 6201) creates a Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (P-EBT) that provides families emergency food assistance in the event of a prolonged school closure. It also grants the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), states, and schools greater flexibility to enact emergency measures to provide students with nutritious food. Specific information for all Washtenaw county schools is available from the **Washtenaw Intermediate School District**.

**Information for the Ypsilanti Community Schools Free breakfast & lunch program.** Families are welcome to pick up food for kids. Food is served on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11am-1pm and 4-6pm in six selected locations. Two days-worth of meals are distributed on Tuesdays and five day-worth are distributed on Thursdays and are free of charge to all children. Children do not need to be enrolled at a YCS school. *Established food distribution sites are changing – Please visit [www.ycschools.us](http://www.ycschools.us) or call my office for up to date information.*

**Information for the Lincoln Consolidated Schools Free food program.** The Lincoln Schools food distribution schedule will continue on MWF from 10:00 am - 1:00 pm behind Lincoln High School in the bus loop. Families in need of meals who do not have transportation, can call the Lincoln emergency food hotline at 734-484-7072 before 10 am.

**Food Gatherers.** During the coronavirus – as with other emergencies – Food Gatherers will continue its operations and distribute food to people in the communities they serve. Services may be expanded and/or modified to best address the community's needs as the public health situation develops, but

Food Gatherers will continue providing food. Please visit [www.foodgatherers.org/needfood](http://www.foodgatherers.org/needfood) to access an up to date list of food distribution and meal program sites or call Food Gatherers at 734-761-2796.

**Hope Clinic 518 Harriet St, Ypsilanti.** Hope Clinic will be distributing hot meals to go in the evenings, Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays. They will have emergency groceries available during operating hours. For more information, visit [thehopeclinic.org](http://thehopeclinic.org) or call (734) 484-2989.

**Employment.** As we all know, many Michigan residents are finding themselves furloughed or laid off during the COVID-19 pandemic. Through Pure Michigan Talent Connect, residents can find immediate openings for jobs across the state. *These listings can be found at [mitalent.org](http://mitalent.org) or by calling Michigan Works! Southeast at 734-714-9814.*

**Unemployment.** Due to high volumes of online applications for unemployment compensation, many people are having trouble filing for benefits. If you are experiencing trouble online, or if you do not have access to a computer, you may call Michigan Works! Southeast for assistance. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, locations are open for virtual appointments only. If you would like to schedule an appointment, call your local office at 734-714-9814. See below for more detail on unemployment compensation.

**Housing (Evictions).** Due to the protection that a residential home provides from the COVID-19 pandemic, and the need to contain self-quarantined and self-isolated individuals within a residential home, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed Executive Order 2020-19, which allows tenants and mobile home owners to remain in their homes during the COVID-19 pandemic even if they are unable to stay current on their rent. The order also relieves courts from certain statutory restrictions to enable them to stay eviction-related proceedings until after the COVID-19 emergency has passed. The executive order takes effect immediately and will remain in effect until April 17 at 11:59 p.m. For more information, check out <https://michiganlegalhelp.org/self-help-tools/housing/covid-19-coronavirus-and-eviction-and-foreclosure-cases#> or call my office.

**Housing (Water Shut offs).** Governor Whitmer has ordered that homes where the water has been shut off for non-payment must have water service restarted unless there's a cross-contamination risk.

**Housing (Utilities).** DTE Energy has announced it is suspending shutoffs for non-payment for those customers who are low income eligible. As I write this, the grace period cut off date is April 5, 2020, though this may be extended. Customers impacted by COVID-19 — those with a sudden loss of income or medical condition — as well as our vulnerable senior citizens, are encouraged to contact DTE at 800-477-4747 to determine eligibility for the payment assistance program.

**Housing (taxes).** The Governor signed [Executive Order 2020-14](#), extending the deadline for Michigan residents to pay back taxes and avoid foreclosure on their property during the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The Executive Order moves the tax foreclosure deadline from March 31, 2020, to May 29, 2020, or 30 days after the state of emergency declared in Executive Order 2020-4 is terminated, whichever comes first.

**Price Gouging.** Complaints regarding price gouging related to COVID-19 should be directed to the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Hotline. Here is the contact information for the Michigan Attorney General's consumer complaint hotline: (877) 765-8388 or online at [www.michigan.gov/agcomplaints](http://www.michigan.gov/agcomplaints)

**Child Care Centers.** Members of the essential workforce, such as healthcare providers, law enforcement, and those delivering supplies, need to have continued access to child care. Executive Order 2020-16 expands the capacity for child care services for members of the essential workforce providing critical infrastructure to Michiganders during the coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. It also allows employers, like hospitals, to operate a disaster relief child care center for their employees. Finally, it allows both public and nonpublic school facilities to be utilized for the purposes of maintaining a disaster relief child care center focused on providing services for members of the essential workforce.

If you are a member of the essential workforce, go to [www.helpmegrow-mi.org/essential](http://www.helpmegrow-mi.org/essential) and your information will be routed to someone in your community who can help you find care, or call my office for assistance.

**Can I still do my laundry?** Yes, laundromat employees constitute critical infrastructure workers in the sector of public works and they are allowed to leave their home for work as needed. Like all critical infrastructure workers, their in-person work must be carried out consistently with the mitigation measures for social distancing.

**Will my trash still be picked up?** Yes, refuse collection is part of the critical infrastructure. Some trash collection services that are deemed non-essential such as bulk trash removal, recycling pickup and yard waste removal may be temporarily suspended if staffing shortages occur. Check with your local refuse company or municipality if you have questions, or call my office for assistance.

**What about gathering at my church or place of worship?** Executive Order 2020-11 does apply to places of worship, meaning they cannot hold gatherings of over 50 people. That said, the Governor has clarified that the penalties for breaking this order will NOT apply to churches and other places of worship. Check with your local place of worship for their guidance.

**Census.** April 1 was National Census Day. Michigan is currently ranked #5 in the Nation in the census count with a 40.2% response rate, and we are 1% away from the number #3 spot. If you haven't already, please take 10 minutes to complete the 2020 census. Visit the [Michigan Census home page](#) for information and for the official census form or call my office to have the census form mailed to you.

**The Open Meetings Act.** Governor Whitmer signed an executive order allowing public bodies to meet electronically as long as they facilitate public participation. Under [EO 2020-15](#), public bodies subject to the Open Meetings Act can use telephone or video conferencing technology to meet and conduct business. There must be a way for members of the body and the public to have two-way communication as well as a public comment period.

**Fixing the Doggone Roads.** The Michigan Dept. of Transportation will continue planning and construction of road projects. Work on the I-94/Huron St. Pedestrian Walkway, The Grove Rd. Overpass/Border2Border Trail, the US-12 Improvement, and other key local projects are not expected to be impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. A special thanks to Ypsilanti Twp. Supervisor, Brenda Stumbo, County Commissioner, Ricky Jefferson, Washtenaw County Parks and Recreation Director Coy Vaughn and Project Director, Roy Townsend, Washtenaw County Road Commission Managing Director, Sheryl Siddall, and Ypsilanti City Manager, Frances McMullan for their dedication to the projects in their local jurisdictions.



**Tax relief for businesses that have had operations disrupted due to COVID-19.** The Michigan Department of Treasury announced that small businesses that have experienced disrupted operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic now have additional time to make their sales, use and withholding tax monthly payment. Small businesses that were scheduled to make their monthly sales, use and withholding tax payments on March 20 can postpone filing and payment requirements until April 20. The state Treasury Department will waive all penalties and interest for 30 days. Specific information about Treasury providing tax assistance to small businesses due to COVID-19 can be found in [SUW Penalty and Interest Waiver Notice](#).

**Small Business Administration Loans.** The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved Governor Whitmer's request for a statewide Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) declaration, opening the opportunity to small businesses to access low-interest loans from the SBA.

The EIDL designation means that Michigan small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, and nonprofits that have suffered substantial economic losses as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak will now have the ability to apply for low-interest loans as part of \$1 billion in funding made available to the SBA by Congress earlier this month.

The application for disaster loan assistance is available at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>. For businesses looking for more information on how to apply for an SBA EIDL loan or whether it is something they should consider, visit [michiganbusiness.org/covid19](http://michiganbusiness.org/covid19).

**MEDC Small Business Relief Grants and Loans.** The MEDC voted to approve \$10M in grants and \$10M in loans to small businesses that have been impacted by COVID-19. Funds should be available no later than April 1, 2020. Details on how to apply are forthcoming. For more information see <https://www.michiganbusiness.org/covid19/>.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) call center stands ready to support businesses looking for assistance through other available state programs. For more information, visit MEDC's website: [www.michiganbusiness.org](http://www.michiganbusiness.org) or call 888.522.0103.

**Will businesses be on the hook to pay unemployment if they are forced to close or scale back operations due to an Executive Order?** No, businesses directly impacted by an EO will not be on the hook to pay into unemployment. However, at this time I believe that businesses who are choosing to close (either to adhere to voluntary CDC guidance or otherwise) will still need to pay unemployment.

**The Workshare Program for business owners trying to avoid potential layoffs.** If employers are financially distressed but hope to continue operations by cutting back hours, they are encouraged to use the Unemployment Insurance Agency's [Work Share program](#) that allows employers to maintain employment levels and business operations during declines in regular business activity rather than laying off workers. More information about the program can be found at [www.michigan.gov/workshare](http://www.michigan.gov/workshare).

**Temporary Leave vs. Termination.** Due to the uncertainty regarding potential congressional action regarding whether and how furloughed workers will be able to access federal paid sick, family and medical leave resources, **employers are strongly urged to place employees on temporary leave and advise the worker that they expect to have work available within 120-days as opposed to termination.** There is no additional cost to employers, employees remain eligible for UI benefits through the state, and employees may remain eligible for potential federal assistance.

Steps for employers placing employees on temporary unpaid leave:

- Do not terminate the employee – specify a temporary/indefinite leave with return to work expected that is within 120 days.
- Do not create a contractual obligation to bring the employee back to work – Let the employee know that the situation is fluid and subject to change.
- Provide the employee with a formal Unemployment Compensation Notice. Employers will need to provide their Employer Account Number and Federal Identification Number.
- Communicate to the employee about their rights. Under Governor Whitmer’s recent Executive Order, workers are placed on leave, or are unable to work because they are sick, quarantined, immunocompromised, or have an unanticipated family care responsibility, are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits.
- Ensure employees are provided information on how to obtain unemployment insurance benefits.
- Get each employee’s up-to-date contact information.
- Let employees know if you will be putting updated information on the entity’s website or intranet, if applicable.
- Appoint a single, or limited number of individuals who will field questions, and communicate that information to employees.
- Keep a tally of all questions and answers. Periodically share with employees.

The state is monitoring issues related to continued medical insurance coverage and I will update accordingly.

**Additional unemployment benefits available.** Executive Order 2020-10 temporarily expands eligibility for unemployment benefits. This executive order is effective until Tuesday, April 14 at 11:59pm.

Under the governor’s order, unemployment benefits would be extended to:

- Workers who have an unanticipated family care responsibility, including those who have childcare responsibilities due to school closures, or those who are forced to care for loved ones who become ill.
- Workers who are sick, quarantined, or immunocompromised and who do not have access to paid family and medical leave or are laid off.
- First responders in the public health community who become ill or are quarantined due to exposure to COVID-19.

Access to benefits for unemployed workers will also be extended:

- The application eligibility period will be increased from 14 to 28 days
- The normal in-person registration and work search requirements will be suspended.

Eligible employees should apply for unemployment benefits online at [Michigan.gov/UIA](https://www.michigan.gov/UIA) or 1-866-500-0017.

A helpful factsheet on claiming unemployment during COVID-19 crisis is available at <https://www.michigan.gov/documents/uia/160 - Claiming UI Benefit In Michigan - Jan2014 444213 7.pdf>

**Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Compensation (Federal CARES Act).** The governor, under the federal CARES Act, signed an agreement between Michigan and the U.S. Dept. of Labor to implement Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Compensation programs that grant benefits to workers who do not already qualify for state unemployment benefits.

- Workers include self-employed, 1099-independent contractors, gig, and low-wage workers who can no longer work because of the pandemic.
- The agreement also increases weekly benefits for all unemployed workers by \$600 a week for up to four months and extends benefit payments from 26 to 39 weeks.

*Benefits Extended to Self-Employed, Low-Wage, and Other Workers Affected by COVID-19*

Under the CARES Act, individuals who are not already eligible for Michigan's unemployment programs will now be provided a set amount of \$600 a week for up to four months on top of the state benefit. Benefits are available for up to 39 weeks. These newly eligible individuals include self-employed workers, independent contractors, low-wage workers and those with a limited work history.

*Benefits Increased for All Unemployed Workers*

Under the CARES Act, weekly benefits for all unemployed workers will be increased by a set amount of \$600 a week for up to four months. This applies to workers already in the unemployment system and eligible employees about to apply. These workers do not need to reapply and those about to apply do not need to take additional steps and should file as usual. If a worker's application has previously been denied by the UIA in the past three weeks there is no need for them to reapply at this time. They will be notified by the agency with any additional action that may need to be taken.

The day or time of day in which a claim is filed will not impact whether a worker receives benefits or their benefit amount. Additionally, claims will be back-dated to reflect the date in which a claimant was laid-off or let go from their job due to COVID-19.

**New Filing Schedule:**

Online Filing Schedule - Michigan.gov/UIA.

Workers are encouraged to go online during off-peak times between 8PM-8AM

- Last names beginning with letters A-L are asked to file claims on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays.
- Last names beginning with letters M-Z are asked to file claims on Sundays, Tuesdays, or Thursdays.
- Saturdays will be available for anyone to accommodate those who could not file during their allotted window.

Call Center Filing Schedule - 866-500-0017:

- Last names beginning with letters A-L are asked to call on Mondays and Wednesdays between 8:00am – 5:00pm.
- Last names beginning with letters M-Z are asked to call on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8:00am – 5:00pm.
- Fridays (8:00am – 5:00pm) will be available for anyone to accommodate those who could not file during their allotted window.

**Online and Phone Access and Troubleshooting:**

- As of March 23, the MiLogin and MiWAM online unemployment system is experiencing slowness. The UIA IT team is constantly making adjustments to restore the system to full

capacity. I apologize for any inconvenience and appreciate your patience while the department works to resolve these issues.

- Applying online in off-peak hours (8:00pm- 8:00am) will expedite the claims process. The 24-hour website operates faster when there are fewer people on the site at any given time. The UIA also urges Michiganders using the website to expect longer load times. It may take several minutes for a page to load at this time. Users are asked to be patient and not click more than once to reload a page. Filing online remains the fastest way for Michiganders to apply for unemployment benefits. [www.michigan.gov/uia](http://www.michigan.gov/uia)
- **Workers should file a claim to determine if they qualify or not—UIA cannot offer predeterminations about an individual’s situation.**
- **Individuals may protest denied claims if they disagree with the monetary determination through their online MiWAM portal.**

**Additional paid sick time or paid family leave time during this pandemic.** The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide employees with paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. The Department of Labor’s (Department) Wage and Hour Division (WHD) administers and enforces the new law’s paid leave requirements. These provisions will apply from the effective date through December 31, 2020.

Generally, the Act provides that employees of covered employers are eligible for:

- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at the employee’s regular rate of pay where the employee is unable to work because the employee is quarantined (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a healthcare provider), and/or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis; or
- Two weeks (up to 80 hours) of paid sick leave at two-thirds the employee’s regular rate of pay because the employee is unable to work because of a bona fide need to care for an individual subject to quarantine (pursuant to Federal, State, or local government order or advice of a healthcare provider), or to care for a child (under 18 years of age) whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19, and/or the employee is experiencing a substantially similar condition as specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services, in consultation with the Secretaries of the Treasury and Labor; and
- Up to an additional 10 weeks of paid expanded family and medical leave at two-thirds the employee’s regular rate of pay where an employee, who has been employed for at least 30 calendar days, is unable to work due to a bona fide need for leave to care for a child whose school or child care provider is closed or unavailable for reasons related to COVID-19.

For more information, please contact my office for a handy fact sheet.

**Federal and State tax filing deadlines delayed because of the pandemic.** The IRS federal tax filing deadline has been moved from April 15 to July 15. This deadline applies to both filing and payment. Previously, the administration had deferred payment but not the filing deadline. Now, both deadlines are moved regardless of the amount owed (it had previously applied only to those owing less than \$1M). Those who expect a refund are encouraged to file earlier so as to receive their checks on time.

Per EO 2020-26, State of Michigan and city of Detroit income tax returns and payments due on April 15 are now due before midnight on July 15. Other state of Michigan cities with income taxes due on April 15 will now be due on July 15, while cities with income taxes due on April 30 will now be due on July 31.

**Consumer Insurance Hotline.** The Department of Insurance and Financial Services (DIFS) announced that its call center continues regular operations and remains prepared to assist Michigan consumers with their insurance and financial services concerns, especially those individuals impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

The call center consists of representatives that can assist with insurance, banking, credit union, mortgage and other consumer financial concerns. The Office of Consumer Services also has analysts available to review complaints against insurance or financial service entities. DIFS encourages consumers to first attempt to resolve disputes directly with their insurance and/or financial service provider. If a resolution cannot be reached, DIFS Office of Consumer Services can help try to resolve your dispute. The live call center can be reached by calling toll-free at 877-999-6442, and is available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

DIFS stands ready to assist with:

- Questions about health insurance coverage for COVID-19 treatment or testing.
- Concerns about access to telemedicine.
- Questions about the servicing of loans or mortgages.
- Questions about banks or credit unions and the availability of financial services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Insurance agent or consumer finance licensing questions.
- Questions about insurance policies, grace periods, and premium payment extensions in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Appealing an adverse decision regarding a health care claim under the Patient's Right to Independent Review Act (PRIRA).

For more information visit: [www.michigan.gov/difs](http://www.michigan.gov/difs), call toll free at 877-999-6442 or email [DIFSComplaints@michigan.gov](mailto:DIFSComplaints@michigan.gov).

Thank you to all of the public and private partners – especially our doctors, nurses and first responders -- who are working so hard to get us through this emergency as quickly and safely as possible. Special thanks to Congresswoman Debbie Dingell for her tireless work both in Washington D.C. and here at home. Thanks to Governor Gretchen Whitmer for her decisive leadership. Finally, Thank you to all of the special people who call greater Ypsilanti home. Together, we will endure this crisis, we will defeat this threat and we will take back our future.

Stay safe and stay strong,

Sincerely,

Ronnie Peterson

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](http://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](http://CDC.gov/Coronavirus)