



# LOCAL GOVERNMENT CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

2024

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***[miaflcio.org](http://miaflcio.org)***

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Lansing, MI 48933







## DEAR CANDIDATE,

Congratulations on your decision to run for local office! We appreciate your efforts to engage in the political process and seek solutions to Michigan's most pressing problems.

The Michigan AFL-CIO is a diverse, compassionate, and powerful labor federation that improves the lives of working people by fighting to bring economic justice to the workplace and social justice to our state. We represent one million active and retired union members from nearly fifty affiliated unions and constituency groups.

The Municipal Solidarity Index is a tool utilized by the Michigan AFL-CIO that grades local governments on their leadership and policymaking in support of working families. Our policies promote access to fair working conditions, fair pay, fair representation, and prudent stewardship of taxpayer dollars. This index represents the first effort in the nation by a state labor federation to strengthen local labor laws through the coordination of policymaking, support of policymakers, and the sophisticated evaluation of communities.

The following questionnaire evaluates your community's support for our platform as expressed in our Municipal Solidarity Index, and can be used as a guide for the endorsement process of our local labor bodies who holistically evaluate Democrats, Republicans, and non-partisan candidates. It is our local labor bodies who ultimately make local endorsement decisions within their geographic areas.

The Michigan AFL-CIO relies on local elected leaders to advocate for workers' rights in their communities. You are key in the fight to change communities across Michigan. Pro-labor local elected officials are often the candidates we recruit for higher office. Whether or not you have extensive experience with organized labor, we encourage you to engage with us and explore how we can work together to improve the lives of working people in your community. Consider joining the fight to support Michigan's working families at **[advocates.miaflcio.org](https://advocates.miaflcio.org)**.

We appreciate you taking the time to complete this questionnaire, and thank you in advance for standing with working families.

In solidarity,



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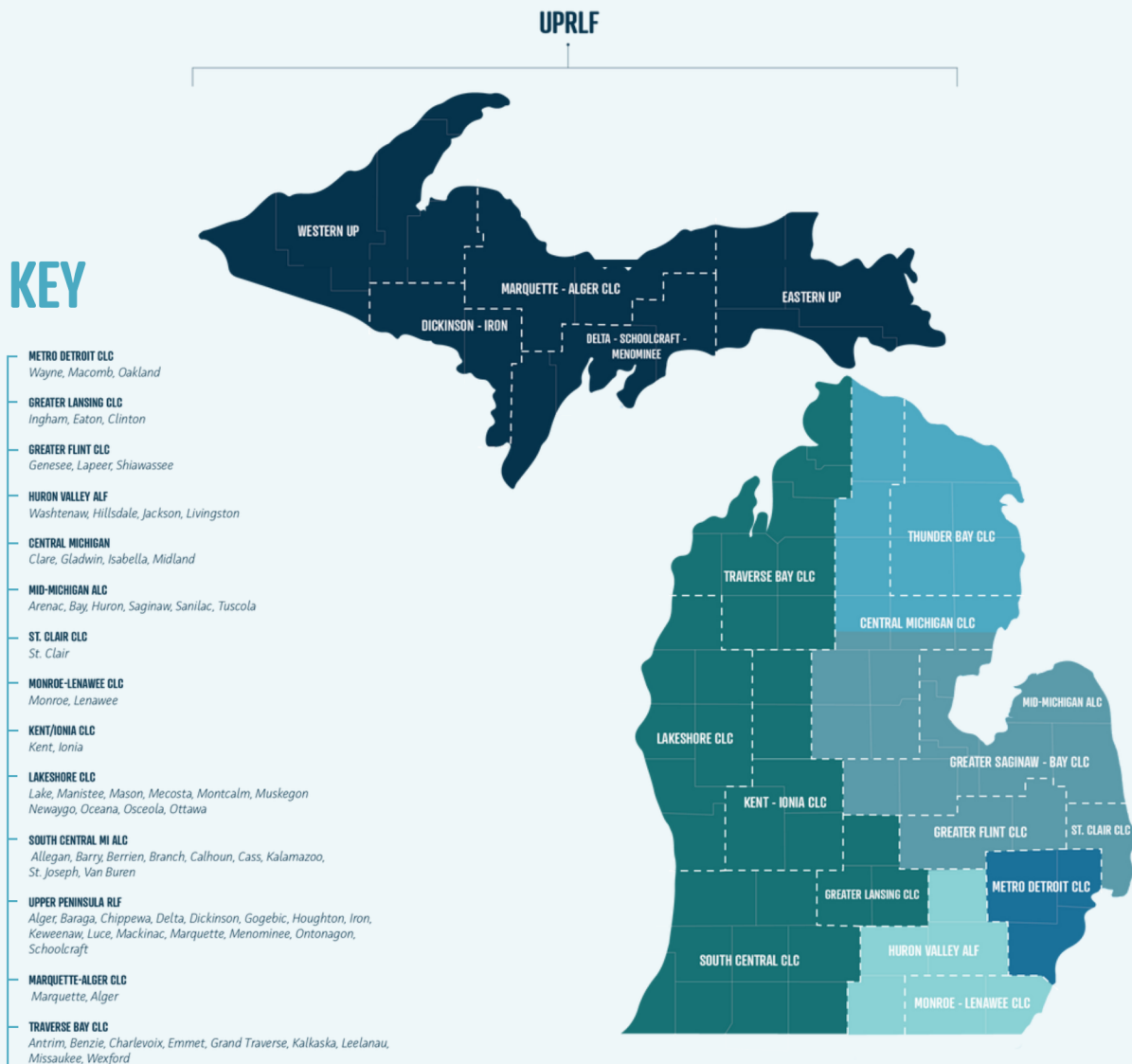
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This Michigan AFL-CIO questionnaire is designed to guide local labor bodies in evaluating candidates for local office including, but not limited to, school board; village, township, and city council; and county commission. Not every question may apply to every office. If a candidate believes that a question does not apply to the office to which they seek, they should select “NA” and/or write “Not Applicable.”

Candidates for local office should contact their local central labor councils for more information on the endorsement process at <https://miaflcio.org/locals>.

**Please contact your central labor council to fill out their questionnaire and receive their endorsement.**



## POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

*All work has dignity and all working people have rights. But right now, billionaires and wealthy corporations are rigging the rules of our economy and taking away our freedom to negotiate together in union for things our families need, like good-paying jobs, great schools, clean and safe environments, and affordable health care.*

*Since 2011, lawmakers in Lansing have passed countless laws including the elimination of local control of labor standards, the Emergency Manager Act, “Right-to-Work” (for less), and the elimination of prevailing wage. These disastrous laws took away the power and autonomy of local governments to protect workers. This resulted in far too many people in Michigan living paycheck to paycheck, working unreliable hours, with few or no benefits, and without a secure retirement.*

*Last year, we saw incredible progress in the state legislature to right many of those wrongs. We had historic legislation passed to raise the bar for Michigan’s working people, and we are hopeful that our state-level leaders will continue that work in the weeks, months, and years to come.*

*In Michigan, families should always come first. Whether it’s a newborn baby, an elderly parent, or a spouse who’s sick, everyone knows being there and providing for your family isn’t optional. All working people should have a fair shot at the American dream, with the freedom to negotiate together in union for better jobs with strong paychecks, good benefits, a secure retirement, and more time to be with family.*

1. If elected, would you support resolutions supporting the state government’s restoration of local control of labor standards such as setting a local minimum wage, fair scheduling practices, or requiring paid sick days from local businesses?

**YES / NO / NA**

2. If elected, would you support resolutions calling on the state government to do the following:
  - Restore the ability of local governments and their employees’ unions to negotiate over healthcare costs completely, such as the repeal of the 80/20 law?
  - Repeal the Emergency Financial Manager Law?

**YES / NO / NA**

3. If elected, would you continue to oppose “right-to-work” laws and any efforts to reinstate them at the state and local level?

**YES / NO / NA**



4. If you are elected and local control is restored, do you commit to establishing a \$15 local minimum wage floor for all working people so they can provide for their families?

**YES / NO / NA**

5. If elected, would you publicly affirm the importance of unions to your communities, support organizing efforts, use your leadership position and public platform to urge employers not to interfere when workers are deciding whether to form or join a union?

**YES / NO / NA**

6. If elected, would you support recognizing Workers' Memorial Day in remembrance of workers who were injured, disabled, or killed on the job, especially the brave frontline workers during the COVID-19 pandemic?

**YES / NO / NA**

7. If elected, would you support the creation, naming, or commission of public symbols honoring frontline workers?

**YES / NO / NA**

8. If elected, would you support the creation of a Skilled Trades Task Force where community members, nonprofits, worker representatives, and local government officials can come together to hear the concerns of working people and address them through various policies, projects and programs?

**YES / NO / NA**

9. If elected, would you call on the state legislature to pass legislation that bans partisan gerrymandering at the County Commission level to ensure partisan fairness in both state and local elections?

**YES / NO / NA**

10. Will you ensure that voting precincts in your jurisdiction have secure and up-to-date voting technology, and ensure enough voting machines, drop-boxes, adequate access to early voting, accessible mail-in voting, accommodations for voters with disabilities, and undertake every effort to reduce waiting time at the polls so that Michigan's working families have their voices heard and their votes counted accurately in elections?

**YES / NO / NA**

11. Will you pledge to support other candidates endorsed by the Michigan AFL-CIO?

**YES / NO / NA**

12. How do you plan on working with union members and working people in your jurisdiction to hear their concerns and work collaboratively on policy solutions?

13. Why do you believe that employees should have the right to collectively bargain and organize?



## RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

*Local governments have the fiduciary responsibility to spend taxpayer dollars wisely. They also have the obligation, as institutions of the people, to act equitably and responsibly with their own employees. The dollars that local governments spend should not just create quality infrastructure and necessary services to taxpayers -- taxpayer dollars should also support area businesses, especially those who pay their workers competitively and provide healthcare. When local governments sell out projects to the lowest bidder, not only do they decrease the quality of government services, but they also erode the living standards in the very communities they were elected to protect and improve.*

1. If elected, would you sponsor and support a Responsible Contractor Ordinance through your government body, reforming its contracting policy to ensure that factors such as work product quality, worker treatment, worker experience, worker wages and healthcare, and non-discrimination are also weighed and taken into account before deciding who receives building and construction contracts?

**YES / NO / NA**

2. Will you ensure, upon your election, that your employees receive the proper health and safety training in compliance with federal and state law?

**YES / NO / NA**

3. If elected, will you combat sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace by passing an ordinance that requires employers to provide training to prevent sexual harassment, and ensures survivors can access the counseling, advocacy, and medical support they need without unnecessary obstacles?

**YES / NO / NA**

4. If elected, would you support a resolution through your government body calling for the Michigan Legislature to reinstate local control over prevailing wage for construction work, and subsequently require prevailing wage for your municipality's construction work?

**YES / NO / NA**

5. If elected, would you support a resolution through your government body calling for the Michigan Legislature to reinstate local control over entering into Project Labor Agreements, and subsequently require Project Labor Agreements for municipal contracting work?

**YES / NO / NA**

6. If elected, would you support enacting a living wage floor for local government employees and the employees of local government contractors of \$15 an hour?

**YES / NO / NA**

7. If elected, would you publicly support and vote to honor pensions and promised pay increases to your employees?

**YES / NO / NA**

8. If elected, would you oppose the privatization of public services in any circumstance?

**YES / NO / NA**

9. How would you balance the budget in your governmental body if faced with a deficit, revenue shortfall, or other financial challenge?



## FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY

*Every local government must make a conscious and determined commitment to upholding the human rights and equality of their workers. Michigan workers deserve to work in an environment free of discrimination, whether it be based on sexual orientation, gender identity, race, disability status, and more. Local policies that display values of justice and fairness are essential for workers from all backgrounds to thrive and succeed.*

1. If elected, will you support evaluating pay and job disparities for women, people of color, people with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ workers, as well as disparities in who receives services from your local government body?

**YES / NO / NA**

2. If elected, would you ensure that your employees have unlimited paid sick leave and ample paid family leave, especially in the context of the risk to public health and safety brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic?

**YES / NO / NA**

3. If elected, would you support an internal hiring policy in your government body that assesses the qualification of candidates and only asks about criminal history when absolutely necessary, to ensure that returning citizens who have learned from their mistakes have a shot at fair employment?

**YES / NO / NA**

4. If elected, would you support developing curricula that educate students on the history and achievements of the labor movement in Michigan and the United States?

**YES / NO / NA**

5. If elected, would you oppose and vote against inequitable tax policy or revenue structures and work to ensure equitable resources are invested in underserved communities?

**YES / NO / NA**

6. If elected, would you support developing curriculums that accurately prepare our K-12 and college students for the realities of the world including education about anti-racism, anti-oppression, and implicit bias training for both students and staff?

**YES / NO / NA**

## ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

*Stagnant paychecks and rising inflation mean working Michiganders are struggling to sustain their families. According to the Michigan Association of United Way's 2023 ALICE Report, more than 39% of Michigan households struggle to afford basic necessities like housing, child care, food, health care, and transportation.*

*Municipalities have a duty to support Michigan workers and promote economic opportunity. As many workers are still recovering from financial hardship due to skyrocketing inflation and the COVID-19 pandemic, our state's numerous outdated laws are not making it easier for workers to get back on their feet. By implementing policies that support workers, municipalities will be able to strengthen their workforce and their local economies.*

*Throughout the 20th century, cities all over Michigan were magnets for young workers who were looking for vibrant communities where they could put down roots and start a family. But since 2011, the legislature has cut billions of dollars from our public schools, universities, and public safety. Legislative leaders have also targeted deep cuts to retirement savings and health care benefits for Michigan teachers, nurses, police officers, and firefighters.*

*To get our economy moving, Michigan must build healthy, vibrant, and livable communities that will attract a diverse and highly skilled workforce.*

1. If elected, would you work with local unions, building trades, nonprofits, and pre-apprenticeship groups to enact pre-apprenticeship programs and ensure that marginalized communities receive access to job training?

**YES / NO / NA**

2. If elected, would you support a Community Benefits Ordinance to ensure that developers who receive tax breaks are providing sufficient benefit to the community and to allow residents to have an active say in the process?

**YES / NO / NA**

3. If elected, would you vote in favor of new developments and construction projects in your community, especially affordable housing and projects which promote dense urban development?

**YES / NO / NA**

4. If elected, would you actively oppose all private school voucher proposals and other schemes intended to divert taxpayer dollars from public schools to private schools?

**YES / NO / NA**



5. If elected, would you support an ordinance or resolution in your local government body to do the following:
- Help school districts reduce their class size, particularly for schools serving disadvantaged students.
  - Petition the state to increase state public school funding by the several billion dollars recommended by the School Finance Research Collaborative and to create a funding formula based on need, so that the schools facing the most challenges and serving the most disadvantaged students have adequate resources to increase funding for social workers, trauma counselors, school psychologists, special education, English Language Learner programs, and teacher salaries.

**YES / NO / NA**

6. If elected, would you support a participatory budgeting process that reflects the values and needs of local communities, in which community members, nonprofit organizations, teachers, and parents will have the opportunity to speak about the resources and programs they feel schools need?

**YES / NO / NA**

7. Please explain why you believe buy-local, buy-union policies are important in Michigan, and what policies you would sponsor or co-sponsor.

## EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Local governments should be concerned about the quality of their economic development for the sake of the well-being, livelihood, and living standards of their citizens. According to the Michigan Association of United Way's 2023 ALICE Report, 70% of the most common jobs in Michigan pay less than \$20 an hour. Jobs that do not provide adequate compensation for the cost of living in their area only benefit corporations, harm working families, and erode the quality of our communities. If a local government is going to subsidize or financially incentivize job creation, those jobs should benefit the people taking them as well as the area as a whole by providing full-time work, a livable wage, and healthcare benefits.*

1. If elected, would you support an ordinance requiring that corporations and businesses receiving tax breaks, tax abatements, or are participating in PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) programs report the number of full-time positions, part-time positions, employees with healthcare, and any other negotiated parts of their tax relief program to the local government body and the public?

**YES / NO / NA**

2. If elected, would you support negotiating job creation quality standards for corporations and businesses who receive tax breaks, tax abatements, or are participating in PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) programs?

**YES / NO / NA**

3. If elected, would you oppose tax breaks for corporations and businesses unless they include strong measures that require hiring Michigan workers and strong clawback provisions if they fail to create the jobs they promise?

**YES / NO / NA**

4. If elected, would you support a policy that requires local housing developments substantially backed by government subsidies to provide a percentage of their units to low- and moderate-income families to ensure that public servants, teachers, and other workers can find affordable places to live?

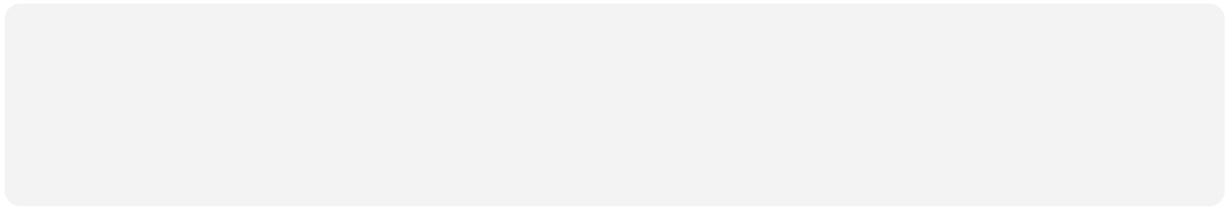
**YES / NO / NA**

5. If elected, would you support the creation of a renters commission to give power to working-class people to advocate for ordinances that would improve their living conditions to their local government and housing agencies?

**YES / NO / NA**



6. How do you envision the future of Michigan's labor movement?



7. Is there anything else that you would like to share with us?

