



2024 Policy and Advocacy Priorities

Since 2022, ENTf has been building awareness and engagement in local, regional, state, and national issues through specific policy and funding priorities. As a network of organizations and community advocates living and working in Kent County, one of our foundational roles is "We work toward equitable systems by advocating for policy and process change." ENTf's mission, vision, and values guide the establishment of annual priorities and are utilized as a frame of reference when determining alignment with other initiatives.

We advance equitable outcomes for all people in Kent County within systems of transportation, food and nutrition, efficient energy, economic and workforce development, and digital inclusion.

We envision a bright, prosperous future where systems are people-centered and ensure equitable access to opportunities, tools, networks, and resources to meet their current and emerging needs.

Our Values: Collaboration, Accountability, Equity, and Transformation

2024 Priorities:

Household Financial Stability:

- Michigan Family Leave Optimal Coverage
- Caring for MI Family Tax Credit
- Support Medicaid Redetermination Outreach
- Place state-wide cap of 36% on Payday Lending rates
- Increase income threshold and reimbursement rates for child care subsidies and increase funding for child care business support models
- Expand basic income pilot programs that provide non-restricted financial supports for families

Inclusive and Comprehensive Mobility/Transportation Options:

- Sustainable funding for county-wide transit services for people with disabilities, seniors, veterans, and people with low/no income
- Promote Michigan Drive SAFE legislation

Local Good Food System that is Accessible, Equitable, Fair, Healthy, and Diverse:

- Promote local schools, businesses and institutions sourcing a minimum of 30% of their food from Michigan growers and processors

- Encourage the launch of a county-wide composting program and other organic material diversion
- Restore SNAP funding to expanded (Public Health Emergency) levels and protect the Thrifty Food Plan
- Preserve local agricultural lands and incentivize urban and community climate-friendly farming initiatives

Energy-Efficient, Safe, and Affordable Housing:

- Increase funds for health and safety-related home repairs prior to weatherization
- Expand Michigan Energy Assistance Program and Water Assistance Program eligibility and funds
- Increase training and supports for local workers to receive weatherization certifications
- Expand Source of Income Protections for housing
- Encourage positive rent reporting practices

Digital Equity in Connectivity, Skills, and Device Access

- Expand paid training for local broadband deployment and support
- Encourage schools and other organizations to regularly upskill teachers and other staff for technologies needed to support learners at all levels
- Streamline permitting processes and prioritize low-income, historically under-represented, and rural areas for installation of affordable connectivity with high-speed download and upload capability

We are committed to providing decision-makers with local data and stories, empowering communities and partner organizations with advocacy tools and support, and leading efforts to advance local conditions for equitable outcomes. ENTF will hold a minimum of four events in 2024 to advance awareness and engagement in these priority areas.

Ways to engage in ENTF priorities:

- Utilize strengths-based framing in messaging; support narrative change efforts away from scarcity mindset
- Support ENTF through connections with elected officials and their teams; share data and stories aligned to specific policy and budget opportunities and decisions
- Actively participate in advocacy efforts (emails, phone calls, written testimony, etc.) and share advocacy opportunities with professional and personal networks