



2026 Policy Priorities

The Kent County Essential Needs Task Force envisions a bright, prosperous future where systems are **people-centered** and ensure **equitable access** to opportunities, tools, networks, and resources to meet **current and emerging needs for all people in Kent County**.

We advance equitable outcomes within the systems of **transportation, food and nutrition, energy efficiency, workforce development, and digital access**. All systems are interconnected and the **impacts of economic instability are interrelated**.

We value **systems change** to address the causes of inequities in our community. We support transformative strategies that help achieve **long-term household stability and financial security**. Policy change is an integral part of that system change; our Policy and Advocacy Action Team will use these priorities to **hold decision makers accountable** to equitably addressing essential needs. ENTF acknowledges that Michigan is facing deep federal cuts and is committed to the **dignity and inclusion of all people** in policy, programs and services.

High Activation Issues

We will lead discussions, build awareness, support solutions, and engage decision-makers to:

- Maximize and maintain Medicaid enrollment
- Implement comprehensive state-level Child Tax Credits for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) populations
- Expand solutions to affordable, high-speed internet access and digital skills learning
- Implement county wide transit recommendations as part of broad complete streets development
- Minimize loss of food supports due to SNAP changes
- Implement the Kent County Food System Plan
- Improve job quality for food and farm workers
- Increase funding for post-secondary credentials and supports for career advancement
- Align energy assistance and efficiency resources; increase use of clean energy

Supporting Issues

We will build awareness and engage decision-makers to:

- Improve early childhood education and care scholarship opportunities
- Expand and strengthen the 211 system
- Increase investment in basic income support programs, like Rx Kids
- Expand statewide funding for water affordability programs
- Support the Michiganders for Money out of Politics initiative
- Increase access to affordable housing and decrease homelessness