



# HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES

## STATE OF MICHIGAN

### Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

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1. The sponsoring representative's first name:  
Timothy
2. The sponsoring representative's last name:  
Beson
3. The cosponsoring representatives' names. All cosponsors must be listed. If none, please type 'n/a.' A signed letter from the sponsor approving the co-sponsorship and a signed letter from the member wishing to co-sponsor are required. Attach letters at question #9 below.  
Rep. Greg Markkanen
4. Name of the entity that the spending item is intended for:  
Playworks
5. Physical address of the entity that the spending item is intended for:  
Durfee Innovation Society, 2740 Collingswood St. Suite 211, Detroit, MI 48206
6. If there is not a specific recipient, the intended location of the project or activity:  
N/A
7. Name of the representative and the district number where the legislatively directed spending item is located:  
Statewide
8. Purpose of the legislatively directed spending item. Please include how it provides a public benefit and why it is an appropriate use of taxpayer funding. Please also demonstrate that the item does not violate Article IV, S 30 of the Michigan Constitution. Playworks leverages the power of play to transform children's physical, social, and emotional health through physical activity and safe, meaningful play. Playworks partners with teachers, principals, and local community leaders to provide a tool for their partnering school districts to enhance their recess programming and ensure the kids are both physically and emotionally ready to return to the classroom and engage in productive learning.

Playworks is positioned to expand its footprint in Michigan, reaching more kids through both in-person and digital services via new communities and partnerships. We are not starting from scratch; we have in-roads into districts through our school relationships and an opportunity to build on that established foundation. We strive to strengthen our existing partnerships and strategically expand to priority geographies through complimentary services with dedicated partners.

Playworks is committed to increasing its impact as a regional organization and further positioning ourselves as a leader in safe and healthy play for kids in Michigan. We've established an ambitious and inspirational 3-year vision for our future. We strive to reach approximately 35,000 children across at least 50 community-based partnerships. By leveraging scaling strategies like digital and certification services, Playworks will be able to reach more children by empowering a network of schools, districts, and community-based organizations to ensure every child has access to the power of play.

9. Attach documents here if needed:

Attachments added to the end of this file.

10. The amount of state funding requested for the legislatively directed spending item.

1000000

11. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received any of the following types of funding? Check all that apply.

["State","Private"]

12. Please select one of the following groups that describes the entity requesting the legislatively directed spending item:

Non-profit organization

13. For a non-profit organization, has the organization been operating within Michigan for the preceding 36 months?

Yes

14. For a non-profit organization, has the entity had a physical office within Michigan for the preceding 12 months?

Yes

15. For a non-profit organization, does the organization have a board of directors?

Yes

16. For a non-profit organization, list all the active members on the organization's board of directors and any other officers. If this question is not applicable, please type 'n/a.'

-Chair, Pooja Shah -Secretary, Ohemaa Nyanin -Treasurer, Pat Morrin -  
Founder/Managing Partner, Brigitte Addimando -Senior VP, Evelyn Barahona -Chief

Commercial Officer, Brandon Belford - VP, External Affairs, Leslie Boissiere -Co-Founder, Kuang Chen -Etienne Fang -Angela Glymph-Austin -Antoniya Marinova - Kanika Pasricha -Mark Seiler -Susan Stone -Joy Weiss -Jill Violet

17. "I certify that neither the sponsoring representative nor the sponsoring representative's staff or immediate family has a direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the legislatively directed spending item."

Yes, this is correct

18. Anticipated start and end dates for the legislatively directed spending item:

FY26

19. "I hereby certify that all information provided in this request is true and accurate."

Yes

## About Playworks

Playworks is the leading nonprofit in Michigan leveraging the power of play to transform children's physical, social, and emotional health. Founded in 1996, we serve elementary schools and youth-serving organizations through direct service programs, professional development, and consultative support.

Today's children face unprecedented challenges to their social, emotional, and physical development - from limited access to safe play spaces to increased screen time that reduces active social interaction. As schools and communities seek solutions to support children's well-being and academic success, organized play programs offer a powerful, practical pathway to transform young lives.

Playworks' mission is to improve the health and well-being of children by increasing opportunities for physical activity and safe, meaningful play. Our vision is that every child in Michigan has the opportunity to play, every day.

## Playworks Recent Impact Across Michigan

As a trusted partner in Michigan's education community since 2010, Playworks Michigan has been transforming school climates through the power of safe, healthy play. Playworks Michigan has been extremely fortunate to have received past Michigan Enhancement Grants which have enabled us to expand our capacity and reach new communities and districts such as Jackson, Farmington Hills, Kalamazoo, and Metro Detroit. This funding allowed us to increase our reach to over 50 schools and 20,000 students between 2022 and the present, representing a significant expansion of Playworks services.

Through our evidence-based approach, we have demonstrated significant local impact:

- 89% of partner school staff reported that students are better equipped to succeed in their learning community.
- 93% of staff reported that more students are physically active at recess.
- 97% of staff reported that more students are participating during recess.
- 88% of staff reported that Playworks improved the overall school climate.

Michigan schools implementing Playworks programs consistently report that students:

- Return to class ready to learn
- Demonstrate stronger conflict resolution skills
- Show increased physical activity during recess
- Build positive relationships across grade levels
- Develop leadership skills through junior coach programs

## Our Vision

Despite the significant progress Playworks has made over the last three years, hundreds of thousands of children in Michigan still face significant barriers to daily play — from limited access to safe play spaces to reduced opportunities for organized physical activity during the school day. According to a 2022 study by the Michigan Right to Play Coalition, roughly one in five elementary school students receives less than 20 minutes of recess each day, despite the CDC recommending a minimum of 60 minutes of daily activity for elementary aged children.

These challenges are particularly pronounced in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, where schools struggle to staff a supervised outdoor recess. In collaboration with the State of Michigan and our trusted partners, Playworks is filling that gap by providing opportunities for safe, meaningful play, and helping build a healthier Michigan.

Playworks Michigan is in the process of implementing a 3-year strategic plan, with the intention of scaling its impact across the state of Michigan. By 2028, Playworks Michigan envisions a future where our transformative, play-based programming reaches every corner of our region. We aim to establish three district-level partnerships in new geographic areas, impacting approximately 35,000 children across at least 50 community-based partnerships

### **How We Will Achieve This**

Playworks is positioned to expand its footprint in Michigan, reaching more kids through both in-person and digital services via new communities and partnerships. We are not starting from scratch; we have in-roads into districts through our school relationships and an opportunity to build on that established foundation. With this funding, we strive to strengthen our existing partnerships, and strategically expand to priority geographies through complimentary services with dedicated partners.

To accomplish this ultimate objective, the organization is focused on the following primary strategies:

1. *Geographic Expansion.* Through this period, Playworks is prioritizing expanding its services to communities like the Upper Peninsula, Bay City, Grand Rapids, Lansing, and Downriver. Playworks has worked primarily in suburban and urban population centers, but rural and indigenous schools face many of the same challenges as inner city schools - poverty, overcrowding, and limited resources. Focusing on these strategic expansion areas, Playworks seeks to broaden its reach and deepen its partnerships by leveraging innovative programs, such as as our digital and certification services for local community-based organizations (described below).
2. *District Systems Change.* With the support of a Michigan Enhancement grant, Playworks intends to establish long-term, strategic partnerships with existing and new school districts in Wayne and Oakland counties. A sustainable district partnership is characterized by collaborative conversations and planning to build staff capacity, shift mindsets, and align school and district goals. Over time, we seek to establish long-term district commitment to play, help advise on developing district practices that support healthy play systemically, and learn what combinations of services and capacity building work best for that district. Playworks has been in conversations with leaders from the Detroit Public Schools Community District regarding a district-wide evaluation of their state of play, for the purpose of developing a plan to work across the district to leverage play to improve school climates, reduce bullying and conflict, and increase the level of physical activity experienced by young children in Detroit schools. Additionally, thanks in large part to the Michigan Enhancement Grant distributed in 2023, Playworks has entered a three-year contract with the Farmington Hills School District, for the purpose of helping them build the capacity to run their own play program.
3. *Digital Strategies to Encourage Active Play.* Over the next several years, we will strive to expand the use of Playworks' digital service – SparkPlay. Playworks' mission is that every child in Michigan can play every day, and digital services provide a way for school partners to access our model in a more affordable and scalable way. It can provide schools with limited budgets with access to Playworks' services and help them build their

own capacity to perform this work with the children they serve. This is a particularly vital strategy for geographic regions that Playworks cannot serve in a physical capacity, such as the Upper Peninsula.

4. *Certifying Partner Organizations.* Playworks is prioritizing creating new partnerships with youth-serving organizations to deliver Playworks practices in their neighborhood schools through its professional certification program, TagTeam. We seek to expand our reach outside of our traditional partners - schools - and seek to cultivate relationships with other organizations that serve Michigan children and align with Playworks values. We are entering training relationships with organizations like Boys & Girls Clubs, Campfire, and Communities in Schools to help them launch and implement a high-quality recess service, modeled after our flagship program, Playworks Coach. This strategy ensures that more kids in Michigan can access daily play, particularly in areas that are difficult for Playworks to reach physically, while also helping youth-serving organizations generate a new revenue line - in-school service partnerships.

Playworks is committed to increasing its impact as a regional organization and further positioning ourselves as a leader in safe and healthy play for kids in Michigan. We've established an ambitious 3-year vision for our future. We are respectfully requesting \$1 million in the FY26 budget to support this innovative expansion work. We strive to reach approximately 35,000 children across at least 50 community-based partnerships. By leveraging scaling strategies like digital and certification services, Playworks will be able to reach more children by empowering a network of schools, districts, and community based organizations to ensure every child has access to the power of play.

### Proposed Project Budget

Program	Number of Schools/Districts	Total Amount Requested	Components/notes
Innovation and Scaling Services	3 District/ISD Partnerships, 30 School, District, and Community Partners	\$400,000	Digital services, professional development, and training support for adults who work with children. Includes partner subsidies in priority expansion areas.
Capacity Building and Consultative Services	20 Schools	\$500,000	Consultative model which includes part-time onsite support from Playworks + school fee subsidies determined on a case-by-case basis.
Sustainability Supports		\$100,000	Funding to support partnership management staff and consultants to manage partnerships/sustainability of efforts long-term across the State of Michigan at all partner schools.
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,000,000</b>	