



MICHIGAN SENATE

Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

Date Submitted: 04/10/2026

1. Sponsoring legislator's full name:

Senator Sue Shink

2. Cosponsoring legislators' names (if applicable):

N/A

3. Intended legislatively directed spending item recipient:

Grow Jackson

4. Physical address of legislatively directed spending item recipient and the intended location of the project or activity:

740 W Michigan Ave Jackson, MI 49201; 137 W North St. Jackson, MI 49202

5. The recipient's employer identification number:

853704505

6. Requested amount of the legislatively directed spending item:

\$1,000,000.00

7. What is the purpose and how does the legislatively directed spending item provide a public benefit that is an appropriate use of taxpayer money?

The proposed \$1 million legislative appropriation will support the construction of a comprehensive kitchen infrastructure package at the River and Rail Food Hub in Jackson, Michigan, including four dedicated commercial kitchens for food entrepreneurs and a larger education and workforce training kitchen. Each of the four entrepreneurship kitchens will be leased to an individual business for a defined term of 12 to 36 months, providing exclusive access to a fully licensed, code-compliant kitchen. This model addresses one of the most persistent barriers to small food businesses in Michigan: the lack of affordable, secure production space that allows entrepreneurs to grow without the risk and capital burden of building out their own facilities. These dedicated kitchens function more like a food court or small production suites than a traditional shared-use kitchen. Businesses operate

independently, maintain consistent schedules, and build operational stability while benefiting from co-location within a broader food hub. Entrepreneurs are able to focus on scaling production, refining products, hiring staff, and building wholesale and direct-to-consumer relationships. By offering below-market lease rates, the project expands access to entrepreneurship while maintaining a clear pathway to graduation into permanent, privately owned facilities, supporting long-term economic growth. In addition to the four entrepreneurship kitchens, the project will include a larger, flexible education kitchen designed for public cooking and nutrition education, culinary arts training, and workforce development. This space will support hands-on classes for families, youth, and adults focused on basic cooking skills, healthy food preparation, food safety, and culturally relevant cuisine. The education kitchen will also serve as a training environment aligned with regional workforce demand in food service, institutional kitchens, and food manufacturing—sectors that continue to experience labor shortages across Michigan. The River and Rail Food Hub already includes a locally sourced farm stop, a revitalized farmers market, and rotating food trucks, and is emerging as a vibrant community destination. The addition of dedicated entrepreneurship kitchens and an education kitchen strengthens this ecosystem by creating a visible pipeline from training to production to sales within a single public space. This project aligns with the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce-led Drive Jackson Strategic Plan initiative to promote healthy living, specifically the strategy to ensure healthy food access in all areas of the county (Goal D 3.4), reinforcing local priorities while delivering tangible economic and health benefits. In 2026 and 2027, Grow Jackson will invest approximately \$1 million from a blend of MDARD, USDA, corporate, foundation, and family philanthropic sources to support River and Rail programming, staffing, and operations. The requested \$1 million state appropriation is a complementary capital investment that will construct five kitchens, four exclusively leased entrepreneurship kitchens and one education and workforce kitchen, creating future opportunities to leveraging significant non-state dollars. Businesses and program participants will receive coordinated technical assistance through Grow Jackson and partners including MDARD, the City of Jackson, and Michigan State University Extension, ensuring taxpayer funds create durable infrastructure, support small business growth, strengthen the workforce, and generate sustained public benefit for the State of Michigan.

- 8. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received or been awarded any of the following types of funding in the past 5 years? If so, how much? Check all that apply:**

Federal, State

Amount

\$109,000.00

9. Estimated time frame for completion of the legislatively directed spending item project:

10/01/2026 – 8/31/2027

10. Is the recipient a nonprofit corporation?

Yes

Additional Information for Nonprofit Corporations (if applicable)

The answer to questions 1 to 3 must be "Yes" for the nonprofit corporation to qualify for a legislatively directed spending item.

1. Has the nonprofit corporation continuously operated in this state for the preceding 36 months?

Yes

2. Has the nonprofit corporation had a physical office in this state for not less than the preceding 12 consecutive months?

Yes

3. Does the organization have a board of directors?

Yes

4. List all of the officers and active members on the board of directors:

Valerie Schuette — Chair Nitin Jain — Vice Chair Connor Maynard — Treasurer Carly Pampuch — Secretary Laura Coston (CPA) — Director David Hammontree (PhD) — Director Nieara Headen — Director Kayla Johnson — Director Karsen McCord — Director Cierra Sylvester (MBA) — Director

Certification By Sponsoring Legislator

"I certify that my immediate family members, legislative staff members, and I have no direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the requested legislatively directed spending item."

"I certify that the intended recipient of this legislatively directed spending item is not a for-profit entity."

"I certify that the information in this form is true to the best of my knowledge."

Senator Sue Shink