

PREFACE

The *Michigan in Brief: 1998–99*, prepared and published by Public Sector Consultants, Inc., provides useful information about the state and an objective look at 65 public policy topics of current concern to Michigan residents and their elected representatives. The issues are treated in sufficient depth to be useful to the well-informed, yet written plainly enough to be understood by nonexperts. Each has three parts: background information; discussion of proposed policy options, including a balanced, nonpartisan presentation of various viewpoints; and sources of additional information, including FAX numbers and Web sites where available. (E-mail contact information seldom is included because personnel and addresses change too frequently.) Cross-references will lead the reader to related issues.

Other chapters of *Michigan in Brief* provide general, historical, and economic information about the state.

- “An Economic and Political History of Michigan” recounts events from 1600 to the present.
- “About State Government” profiles the executive branch (including brief descriptions of the 18 state departments), legislative branch (with a sketch of the lawmaking process), and judicial branch (with an explanation of the various courts’ jurisdictions) and also summarizes state government’s checks and balances.
- “About Local Government” describes the basis, evolution, and organization of local government in Michigan and briefly summarizes certain issues of concern to local units.
- “The State Budget” outlines the process by which Michigan’s annual financial plan is determined.

The appendices provide key economic, health, and demographic data and forecasts; information on the state’s philanthropic, nonprofit, and volunteer sectors; and miscellanea.

This is the sixth edition of *Michigan in Brief*. An index at the end contains page numbers and cross-references for all material presented in this book. The issues from earlier editions also are listed, to assist readers interested in topics from those publications. To include in the current edition every issue of interest would make the book unmanageably long; therefore, we confine the content to those on which public attention currently is focused.

Sponsorship of this edition of *Michigan in Brief* is the first step in an informational process of the Michigan Public Policy Initiative (MPPI). The MPPI is a joint effort of the Michigan Nonprofit Association and the Council of Michigan Foundations, with the support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. It serves as a neutral, objective central resource for information on issues of interest to nonprofit and philanthropic leaders. Throughout 1999 reference material about key issues of concern to Michigan’s nonprofit leaders will be developed and presented through forums to legislators and policymakers. The MPPI formed in response both to the new decision-making climate arising from term limits and to the governance changes that are moving responsibility to state and local government for authority, development, and management of public policy (this commonly is referred to as “devolution”). Members of the advisory committee guiding the development of the MPPI are listed in “Acknowledgments.”

To order this handbook in hard copy, please use the order form at the end of the document; a CD-ROM is available as well. At this writing, consideration is being given to periodically updating the Web version. For further information, please contact Public Sector Consultants, Inc., 600 West St. Joseph, Lansing, Michigan 48933-2265. Telephone (517) 484-4954; FAX (517) 484-6549; www.pscinc.com on the Web.