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## Cash crisis in the corridor

**M**ichigan's dreams of carving out a niche for itself in biotechnology have suffered a temporary set-back. Financed with settlement money obtained from a multi-state lawsuit against the tobacco industry, Michigan's Life Sciences Corridor had been building itself an attractive reputation (see *Naturejobs* 4-5; 21 November 2002). But after three years of investing \$50 million a year, Michigan is having to make cutbacks in the face of mounting economic problems.

What once looked like a relatively stable long-term source of funding has tightened. Because the state budget was in trouble, Michigan's governor, Jennifer Granholm, felt the need to cut costs. She reduced the corridor's funding to \$32 million for 2003, and has proposed reducing it to \$20 million in 2004 (see *Nature* 422, 102; 2003).

Two facets of the programme will emerge relatively unscathed, however. Michigan will continue with its five-year plan to invest in core technologies, such as a nuclear-magnetic-resonance facility, and will also continue to spend \$5 million a year on seed money for start-ups. But the biggest component, grants to investigators, is being gutted, although the programme's director hopes that the annual funding of \$50 million will be restored when the state's economy recovers.

The situation in Michigan is worth bringing to the attention of scientists in other parts of the world, even those who have never considered moving to Michigan. Over the past few years, more and more US states and European countries have started to invest in their regions, promoting them as viable places to do science, in the hope of attracting talent and investment from abroad. Michigan's reversal of fortune, unfortunately, may give them food for thought.

**Paul Smaglik**  
*Naturejobs* editor



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