

**WIOA Local Plan
Mid-Cycle Modification
Michigan Works! Southwest**

I. Identification information

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Michigan Works! Southwest and the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board are providing this four-year action plan to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies and to support the state's vision and strategic and operational goals, as required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

The following plan describes the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board's commitment to the development and maintenance of a comprehensive workforce development system for the counties of Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph.

The plan, as presented, will be updated on a regular basis, as appropriate, based on changes in local and state priorities.

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1a. Analysis of Regional Labor Market Data and Economic Conditions – Submitted with the Region 8 Regional WIOA Plan

In planning workforce development strategies in Region 8, it is critical to understand the demographics of the current population, along with current and projected employment data.

The Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 regularly review and analyze regional labor market data and economic conditions to guide workforce development services and focus areas, and both organizations are aware that as a result of the pandemic, significant changes will be experienced and the organizations will actively review and strive to effectively respond to the changes. Currently, and in the continued short term, Berrien Cass Van Buren Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest actively review information to assist in recovery post-pandemic.

In planning workforce development strategies in Region 8, it is critical to understand the demographics of the current population, along with current and projected employment data.

Population/Demographics

Per the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), total population for the seven county area, of Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren was 783,300, representing a growth of 4,900 (+0.6 percent) since 2010.

Per the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), race demographics for Region 8 are as follows:

- All other races – 6.3%
- Black/African American – 9.3%
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Asian – 1.8%
- Hispanic – 6.0%
- Native American – 0.4%
- White – 82.3%

Per the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), the age distribution of work eligible individuals is as follows:

- 14.5% ages 15 to 24
- 36.0% ages 25 to 54
- 31.1% ages 55 and older

It should be noted that the residents of Southwest Michigan display a similar age distribution as the state's population.

In reviewing this information, for planning, it is important to look at industry employment by age, for Region 8. Per the Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Workforce Indicators, industries with a lower share of older workers in Region include:

- Accommodation and Food Services – 13% are over the age of 55
- Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services – 19% are over the age of 55
- Educational Services – 26% over the age of 55 and older
- Finance and Insurance – 22% over the age of 55

On the other hand, industries in Region 8 with a higher share of older workers include:

- Public Administration – 31% over the age of 55
- Construction – 23% over the age of 55
- Wholesale Trade – 29% over the age of 55
- Information – 27% over the age of 55

In planning, the aging of the workforce, preparing for the next generation of workers to avoid gaps, and post-pandemic changes will be integral in the work of the sector strategy consortium groups.

Educational Attainment in Region 8 of the Population Ages 25 and older

The Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 will continue to work with education partners, to develop training opportunities to meet the needs of employers and job seekers in the area. Current educational attainment in Region 8, as reported in the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) , is as follows:

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| • Less than High School Diploma | 9.2% of the population |
| • High School Graduate, GED or Alternative | 29.9% of the population |
| • Some College | 23.7% of the population |
| • Associate Degree | 9.6% of the population |
| • Bachelor’s Degree | 17.1% of the population |
| • Graduate or Professional Degree | 10.5% of the population |

The report also notes that 27.6% of individuals in the Southwest region held a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 30.0% for Michigan. This information is crucial in understanding the barriers of gaining employment for individuals with lower education levels.

Disability

Per the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 14.5% of the total population in Southwest Michigan during the 2016–2020 U.S. Census Bureau survey period reported having a disability.

In addition, per the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate Data Profiles from 2020, the percent of the population 16 years of age or older*** with a disclosed disability, by county, is as follows:

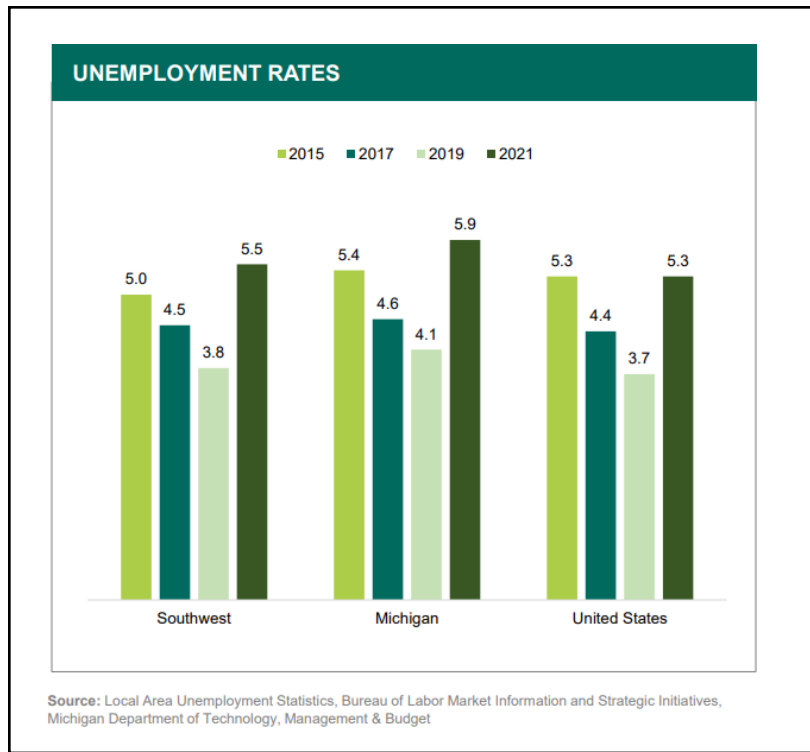
- Berrien: 15.3%
- Branch: 13.9%
- Calhoun: 14.9%
- Cass: 17.8%
- Kalamazoo: 12.9%
- St. Joseph: 16.2%
- Van Buren: 14.2%

It should be noted that this information reflects an increase in these numbers, from the originally submitted WIOA Regional (Region 8) Report. Working with employers and vocational rehabilitation partners, including Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, as discussed throughout this plan, remains a priority of the workforce development work being completed throughout Region 8.

Unemployment

To reflect the workforce during the time period of 2015 to 2019, the unemployment rate by year is outlined below. Post-pandemic, it will be important for the Michigan Works! agencies to work strategically, and together, to meet the needs of both the job seekers and the employers in Region 8.

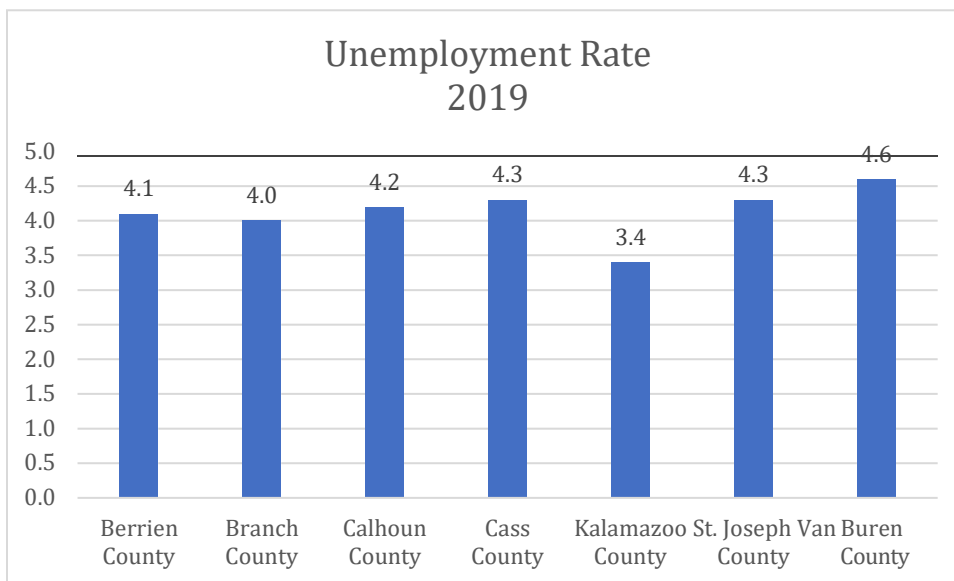
The [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) provides the following unemployment rate information from 2015 to 2021. The report concludes that Southwest Michigan's jobless rate was higher in 2021 than it was in the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, similar to statewide and national trends, and that since 2019, the number of unemployed individuals increased by nearly 5,800, equivalent to an increase of about 40 percent.

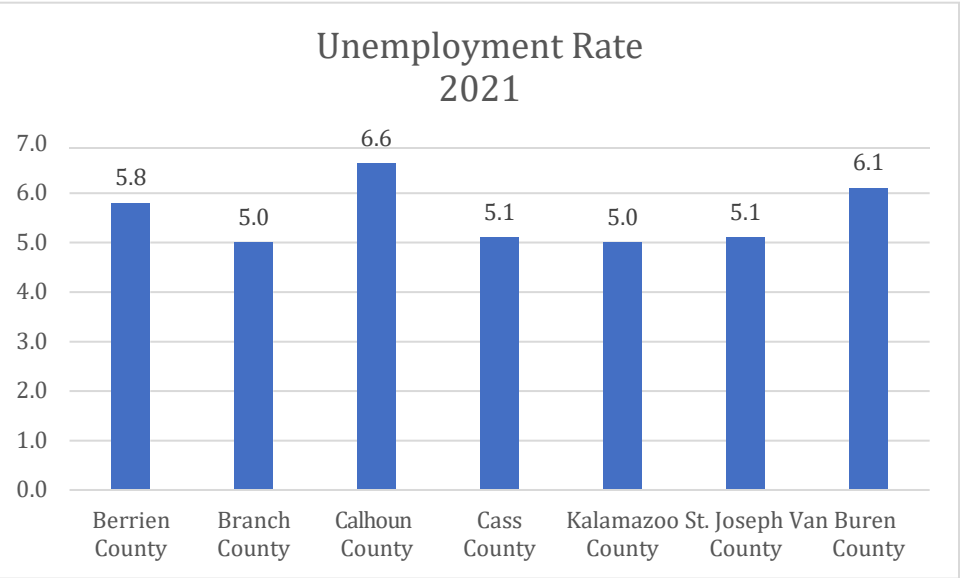
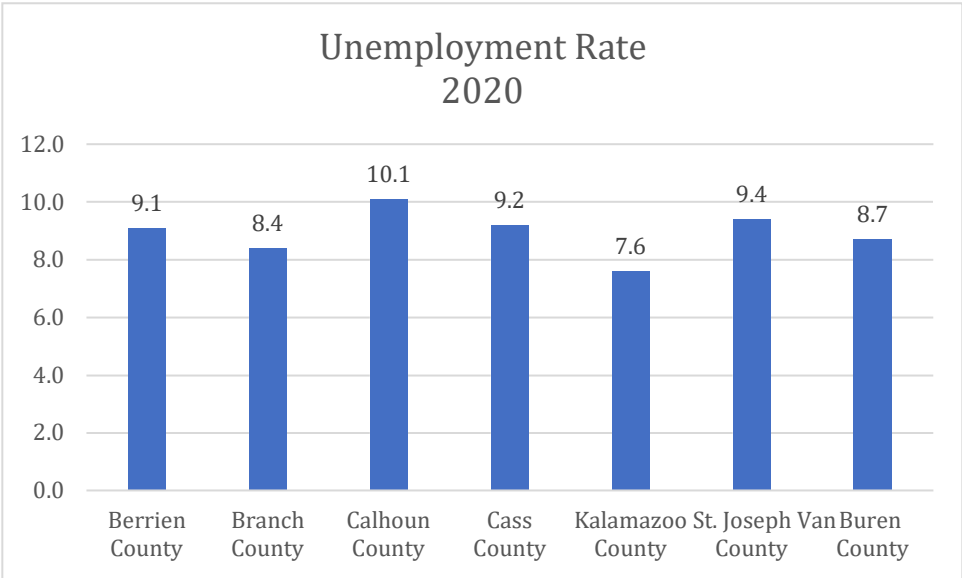


Further, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics reports the following breakout by county, in Region 8, from 2019, 2020, and 2021, highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

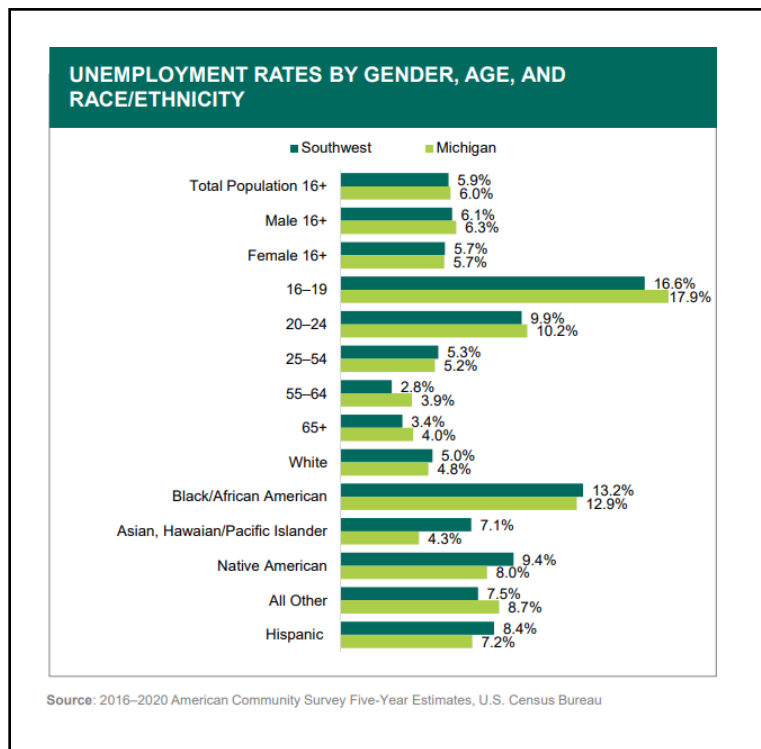
Unemployment

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics





In evaluating the unemployment rate, the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) also reports that like the state, the region’s Black/African American residents had the highest unemployment rate. This information, along with unemployment rates by gender and age in Region 8 is reported below.



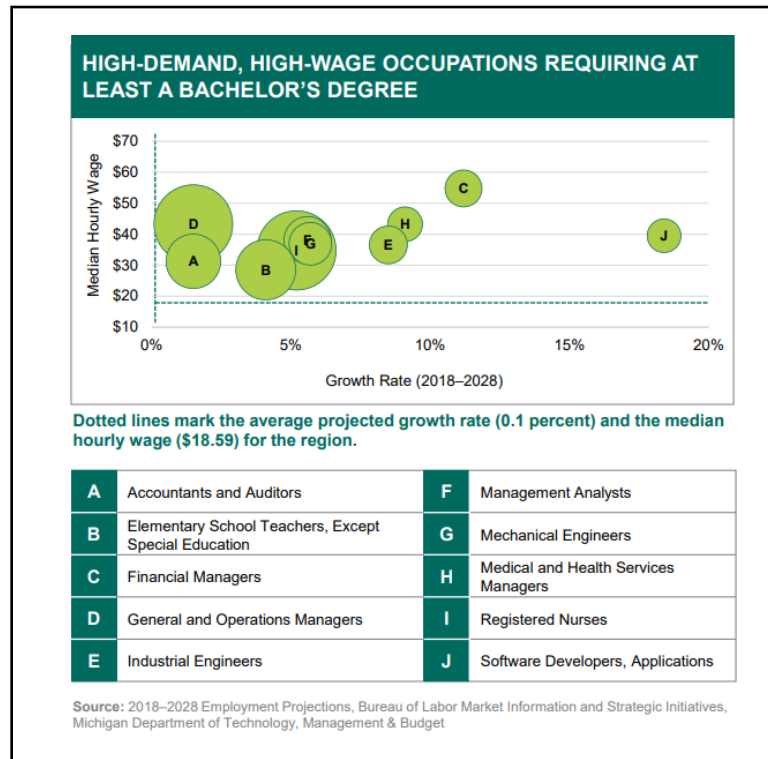
Equity

The Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 are committed to equity in every aspect of our work, including a dedication to working with diverse communities and individuals to best meet the needs of the communities in the region. With a focus on serving the most disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups in our region in an effective manner, Berrien Cass Van Buren (BCVB) Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest strive to incorporate equity principles and practices in our services and programs and hold ourselves accountable for creating a rich culture of diversity and inclusion throughout the region.

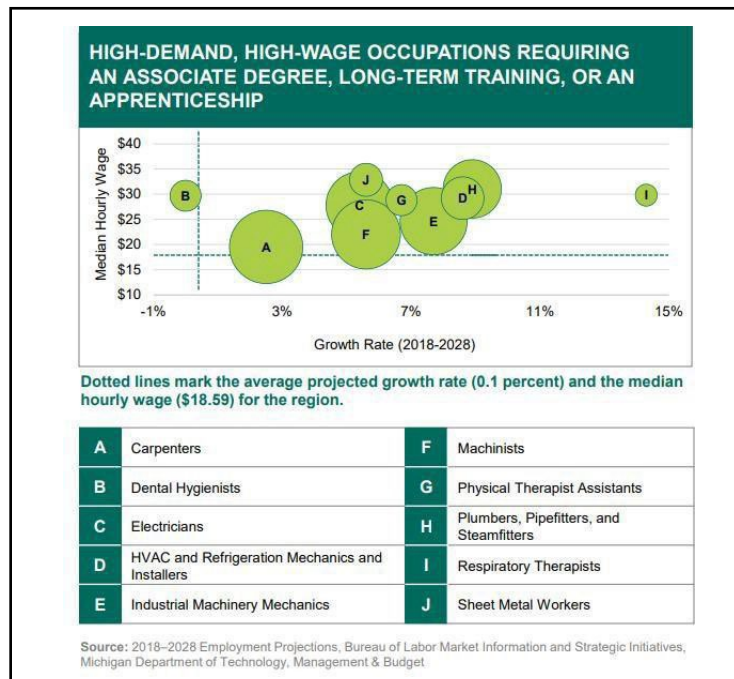
High-Demand, High-Wage Data

The [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) provides the following data regarding high-demand, high wage occupation by education level, for Region 8. This analysis is critical in the work being done in collaboration with educational institutions, training providers, and employers throughout the seven counties, as well as with an increased focus on apprenticeships across the region and will assist as a tool in guiding conversation.

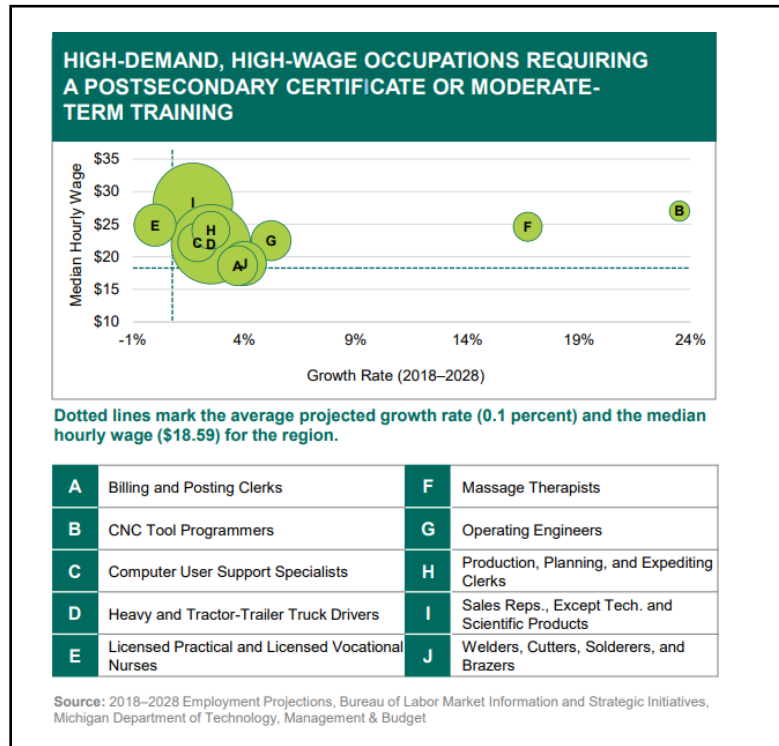
High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring at least a Bachelor's Degree:



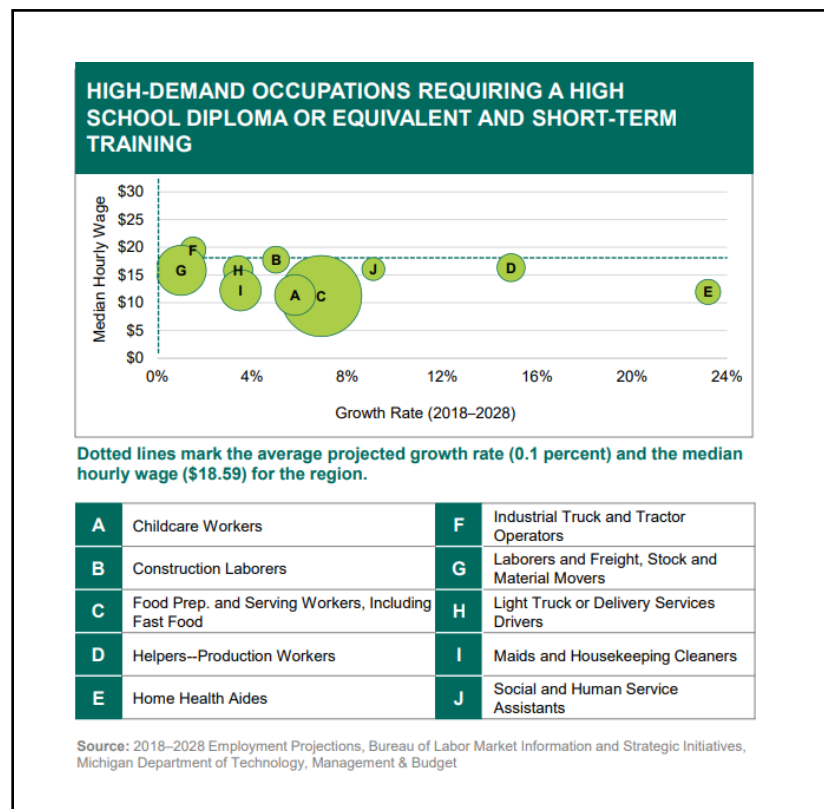
High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring an Associate Degree, long-term training, or an apprenticeship:



High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring a postsecondary certificate or moderate term training:



High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring a postsecondary certificate or moderate term training:



Occupations

Occupation Growth

Occupation growth for Region 8 is reflected in the data, reflected by job change, provided by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, LAUS, Upjohn Institute and outlined below.

Description	2020 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2019 - 2020 Change	2019 - 2020 % Change
Management Occupations	15,889	15,431	458	3%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	11,853	11,515	338	3%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	3,580	3,662	-82	-2%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	5,504	5,762	-258	-4%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	2,972	3,321	-349	-11%
Community and Social Service Occupations	4,395	4,628	-233	-5%
Legal Occupations	1,020	983	38	4%
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	16,474	17,438	-964	-6%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	3,164	3,463	-299	-9%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	17,125	17,776	-651	-4%
Healthcare Support Occupations	13,127	13,829	-702	-5%
Protective Service Occupations	5,580	5,707	-127	-2%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	24,966	31,073	-6,107	-20%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	7,688	9,687	-1,998	-21%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	6,078	8,623	-2,545	-30%
Sales and Related Occupations	26,118	27,917	-1,799	-6%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	34,490	37,039	-2,549	-7%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	3,185	3,533	-348	-10%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	9,276	9,765	-490	-5%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	11,191	12,156	-965	-8%
Production Occupations	35,498	39,714	-4,216	-11%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	21,286	22,242	-956	-4%
	280,459	305,265	-24,805	-8%

Most Competitive Occupations

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, LAUS, provides the following expected change and competitive effect for the region, in which the competitive effect indicates how much of the job change within a given region is the result of some unique competitive advantage of the region because the growth cannot be explained by national trends in that industry or the economy as whole. In addition to the competitive effect, the occupation-mix effect highlighted reflects the number of jobs expected to be added (or lost) within an occupation in the region, based on the occupation's national growth/decline, and the national growth effect explains how much of the regional industry's growth is explained by the overall health of the national economy.

Description	2019 - 2020 Change	Occ. Mix Effect	Expected Change	Nat'l Growth Effect	Competitive Effect
Management Occupations	458	625	-312	-938	771
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	338	827	127	-700	211
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	-82	199	-24	-223	-58
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	-258	109	-241	-350	-17
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	-349	178	-24	-202	-325
Community and Social Service Occupations	-233	208	-73	-281	-160
Legal Occupations	38	55	-5	-60	43
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	-964	3	-1,057	-1,060	93
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	-299	-150	-360	-210	61
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	-651	754	-326	-1,080	-325
Healthcare Support Occupations	-702	571	-270	-841	-433
Protective Service Occupations	-127	44	-303	-347	176
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	-6,107	-3,795	-5,683	-1,889	-424
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	-1,998	-350	-939	-58	-1,060
Personal Care and Service Occupations	-2,545	-1,162	-1,686	524	-859
Sales and Related Occupations	-1,799	-573	-2,270	-1,697	471
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	-2,549	135	-2,116	-2,251	-433
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	-348	81	-134	-215	-214
Construction and Extraction Occupations	-490	67	-527	-594	37
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	965	156	-583	-739	-382
Production Occupations	-4,216	-361	-2,775	-2,414	-1,441
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	-956	684	-668	-1,352	-288
	-24,806	-1,697	-20,250	-18,553	-4,556

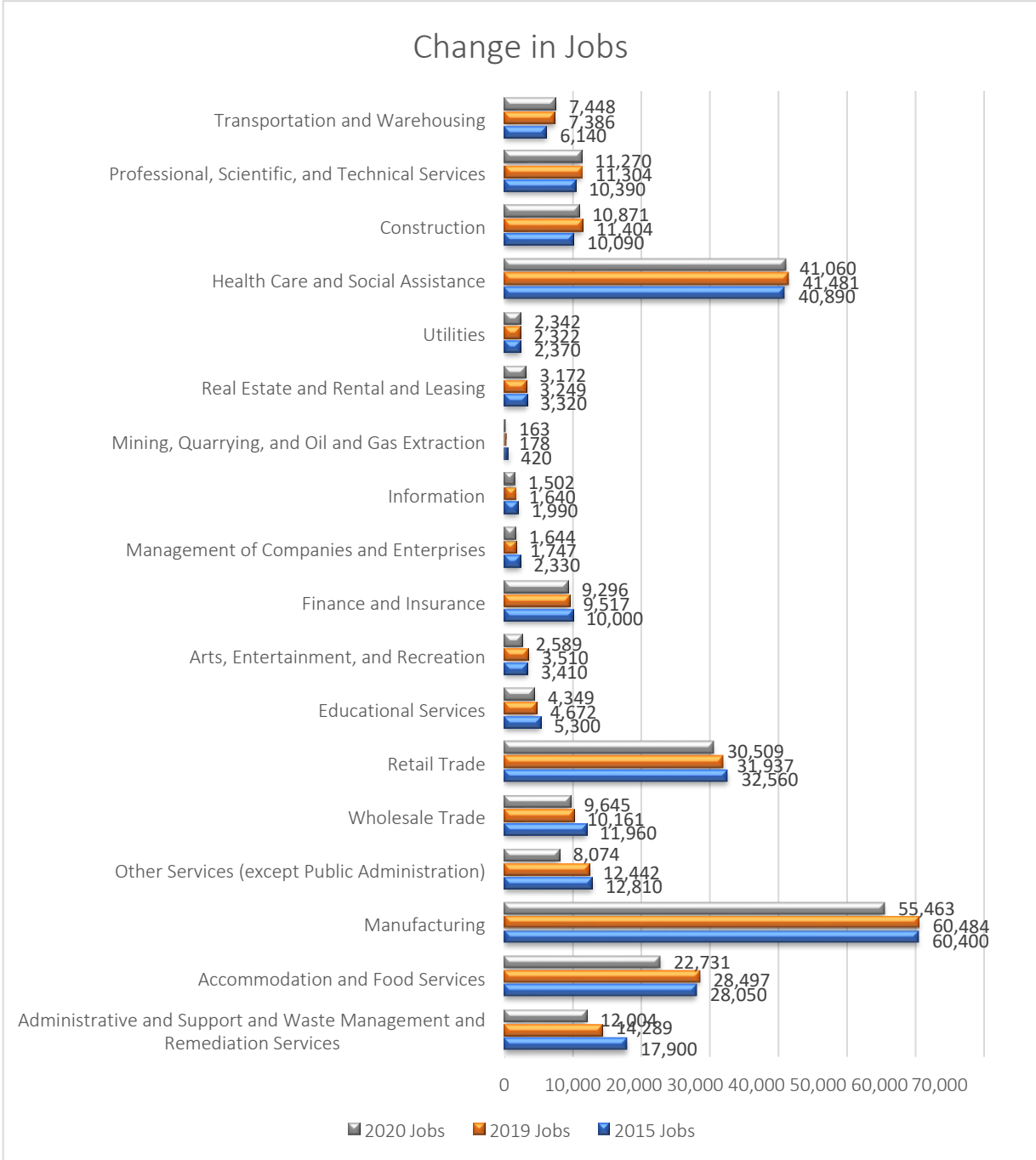
Industries in Region 8

In order to effectively serve employers and job seekers in Region 8, in the updating of this plan and in attempt to understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, an analysis of industry growth and decline was reviewed. Per Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020) the following information was determined, regarding existing in-demand sectors.

	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2019-2020)	% Change	2019 Earnings Per Worker
Accommodation and Food Services	28,497	22,731	-5767	-20.2%	\$19,286
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	14,289	12,004	-2285	-16.0%	\$41,722
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,510	2,589	-921	-26.2%	\$23,027
Construction	11,404	10,871	-533	-4.7%	\$68,791
Educational Services	4,672	4,349	-323	-6.9%	\$53,816
Finance and Insurance	9,517	9,296	-221	-2.3%	\$80,943
Health Care and Social Assistance	41,481	41,060	-420	-1.0%	\$64,930
Information	1,640	1,502	-138	-8.4%	\$63,289
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,747	1,644	-103	-5.9%	\$138,299
Manufacturing	60,484	55,463	-5021	-8.3%	\$87,455
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	178	163	-15	-8.3%	\$95,967
Other Services (except Public Administration)	12,442	8,074	-4368	-35.1%	\$31,600
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	11,304	11,270	-34	-0.3%	\$86,630
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,249	3,172	-78	-2.4%	\$48,465
Retail Trade	31,937	30,509	-1428	-4.5%	\$35,665
Transportation and Warehousing	7,386	7,448	63	0.8%	\$64,518
Utilities	2,322	2,342	20	0.9%	\$173,816
Wholesale Trade	10,161	9,645	-515	-5.1%	\$76,179

Industry Change

In attempt to reflect the high growth industries, as well as declining industries in Region 8, information regarding a change in jobs between 2015, 2019, and 2020, per Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020), are highlighted below. These outcomes vary significantly in comparison to the original Regional (Region 8) WIOA Plan, assumably in response to the pandemic.



This information is also reflected in the table below.

Industry	2015 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	Change in Jobs 2015-2020	% Change	Change in Jobs 2019-2020	% Change	2019 Earnings Per Worker
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	17,900	14,289	12,004	-5896	-32.9%	-2285	-16.0%	\$41,722
Accommodation and Food Services	28,050	28,497	22,731	-5319	-19.0%	-5767	-20.2%	\$19,286
Manufacturing	60,400	60,484	55,463	-4937	-8.2%	-5021	-8.3%	\$87,455
Other Services (except Public Administration)	12,810	12,442	8,074	-4736	-37.0%	-4368	-35.1%	\$31,600
Wholesale Trade	11,960	10,161	9,645	-2315	-19.4%	-515	-5.1%	\$76,179
Retail Trade	32,560	31,937	30,509	-2051	-6.3%	-1428	-4.5%	\$35,665
Educational Services	5,300	4,672	4,349	-951	-17.9%	-323	-6.9%	\$53,816
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,410	3,510	2,589	-821	-24.1%	-921	-26.2%	\$23,027
Finance and Insurance	10,000	9,517	9,296	-704	-7.0%	-221	-2.3%	\$80,943
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,330	1,747	1,644	-686	-29.4%	-103	-5.9%	\$138,299
Information	1,990	1,640	1,502	-488	-24.5%	-138	-8.4%	\$63,289
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	420	178	163	-257	-61.1%	-15	-8.3%	\$95,967
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,320	3,249	3,172	-148	-4.5%	-78	-2.4%	\$48,465
Utilities	2,370	2,322	2,342	-28	-1.2%	20	0.9%	\$173,816
Health Care and Social Assistance	40,890	41,481	41,060	170	0.4%	-420	-1.0%	\$64,930
Construction	10,090	11,404	10,871	781	7.7%	-533	-4.7%	\$68,791
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10,390	11,304	11,270	880	8.5%	-34	-0.3%	\$86,630
Transportation and Warehousing	6,140	7,386	7,448	1308	21.3%	63	0.8%	\$64,518

Industry Specific Data for Region 8 Industry Data:

Manufacturing

Per the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), manufacturing remains the region's largest industry. The report also concludes that during the second quarter of 2021, the region had just under 56,000 jobs (22.7 percent) within Manufacturing, surpassing the statewide average by 7.4 percentage points.

Additional information regarding the manufacturing industry in Region 8 is provided from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020) below.

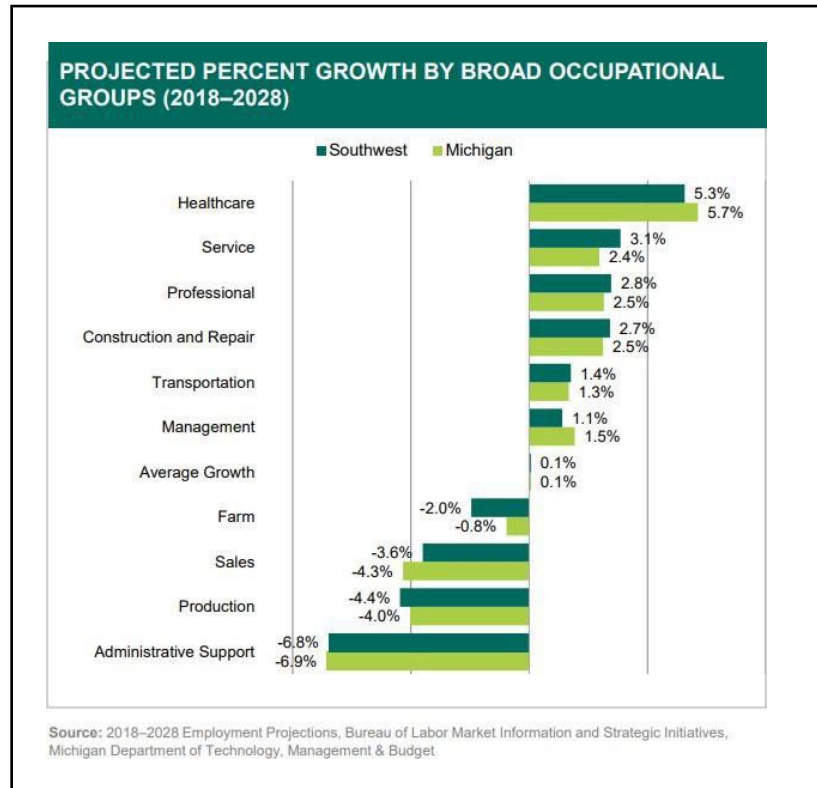
County Name	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2019-2020 Change	2019-2020 % Change
Berrien County, MI	12,982	11,645	-1,337	-10.30%
Branch County, MI	2,934	2,801	-133	-4.50%
Calhoun County, MI	11,135	10,027	-1,108	-10%
Cass County, MI	2,507	2,159	-348	-13.88%
Kalamazoo County, MI	20,015	18,699	-1,316	-6.58%
St. Joseph County, MI	8,121	7,468	-653	-8.04%
Van Buren County, MI	2,790	2,664	-126	-4.52%
Region 8	60,484	55,463	-5,021	-8.26%

Manufacturing Average Hourly Earnings:

County Name	2019 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$76,437
Branch County	\$51,084
Calhoun County	\$60,560
Cass County	\$45,086
Kalamazoo County	\$83,520
St. Joseph County	\$52,801
Van Buren County	\$51,969
Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020)	Average: \$60,208

Industry Data: Healthcare

As reflected in the chart below, per the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), Healthcare is projected to have the most growth for both the Southwest Region and all of Michigan. The Southwest region is projected to grow by 0.1 percent in total jobs by 2028. While some of the region's occupational groups will experience loss, Healthcare is projected to grow by 5.3 percent (1,600 jobs).



Additional information regarding the healthcare industry in Region 8 is provided from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020) below.

County Name	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2019 - 2020 Change	2019 - 2020 % Change
Berrien County, MI	7,649	7,634	-15	0.20%
Branch County, MI	918	856	-62	-6.80%
Calhoun County, MI	9,212	8,434	-778	-8.40%
Cass County, MI*	760	750	-10	-1.30%
Kalamazoo County, MI	19,296	19,566	270	54%
St. Joseph County, MI	1,758	2,723	965	54.89%
Van Buren County, MI	2,058	1,310	-748	-36.35%
Region 8	41,651*	41,273*	-378*	8.0%*

Healthcare Average Hourly Earnings:

County Name	2019 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$51,225
Branch County	\$33,947
Calhoun County	\$48,559
Cass County	\$44,748**
Kalamazoo County	\$59,002
St. Joseph County	\$42,421
Van Buren County	\$34,441
Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020)	Average: \$44,933**

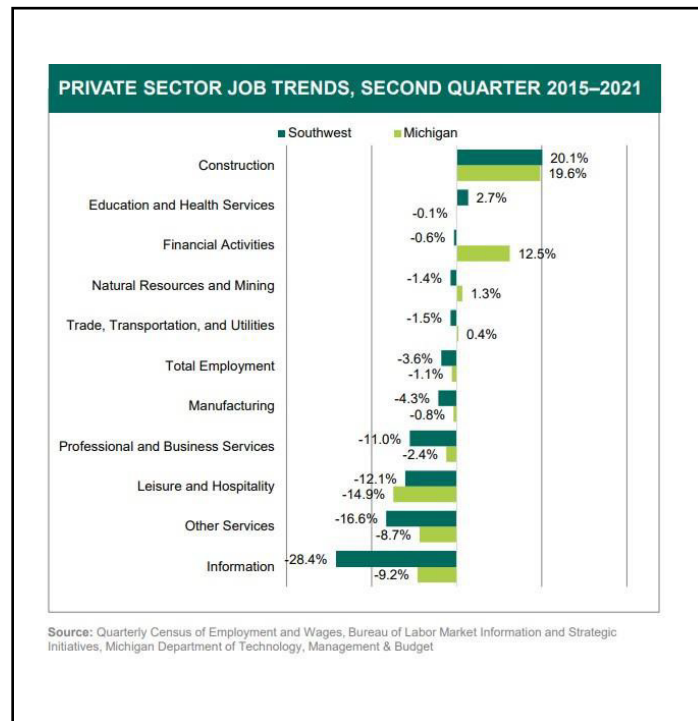
*Updated information not available. Information reflected is that of 2018 Earnings per Worker, as reported by QCEW (2019).

**Average calculated reflects 2018 Earnings per Worker, as reported by QCEW (2019) for Cass County.

Industry Data: Information Technology/Information Security/Telecommunications

The information technology/information security/telecommunications industry cluster in Michigan's Region 8 is a focus area for the Michigan Works! agencies, and a continued analysis of the increase in automation and electric vehicles is also a focus.

However, it should be noted that, as reflected in the chart below, per the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) while nearly all Southwest Michigan industry sectors experienced a loss in jobs since 2015, the information industry sector experienced a loss of 28.4%.



Despite a perception of technology and information-related industries as having workforces that trend younger, 27% of this industry cluster's workforce is age 55 or older, making this a key factor for continued analysis. While this is likely indicative of the advanced levels of education required for those employed within this industry cluster, these indicators spell out current and upcoming worker and talent shortages that will require innovative talent pipeline strategies throughout Region 8.

Additional information regarding information technology in Region 8 is provided from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020) below.

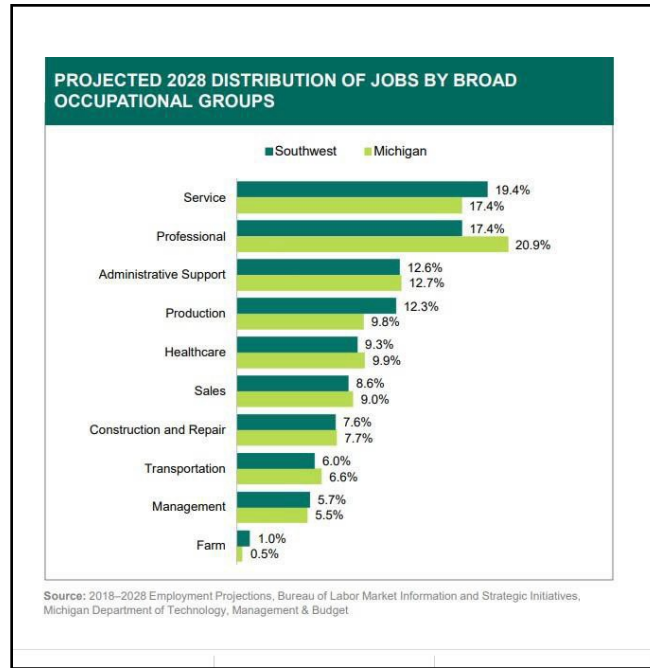
County Name	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2019 - 2020 Change	2019 - 2020 % Change
Berrien County, MI	430	397	-33	-7.67%
Branch County, MI	126	101	-25	-19.80%
Calhoun County, MI	318	324	6	0.70%
Cass County, MI	25	29	4	16%
Kalamazoo County, MI	582	583	1	0.17%
St. Joseph County, MI	63	56	-7	-11.11%
Van Buren County, MI	96	113	17	17.71%
Region 8	1,640	1,603	-37	-4.0%

Information Technology/Information Security/Telecommunications Average Hourly Earnings:

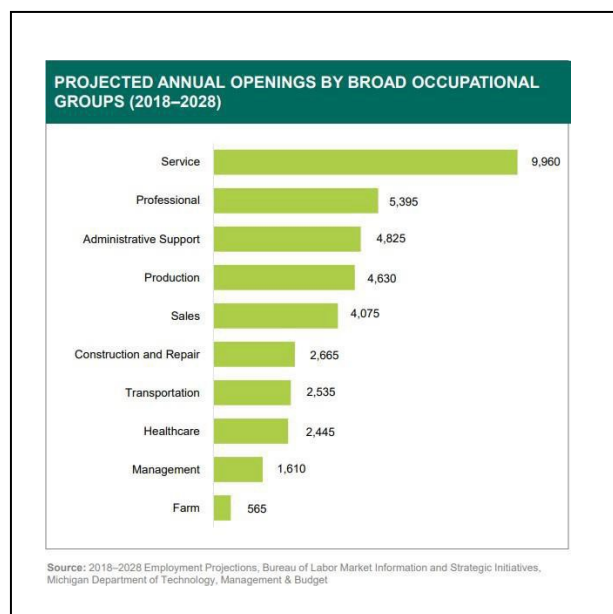
County Name	2019 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$44,409
Branch County	\$42,724
Calhoun County	\$38,728
Cass County	\$43,111
Kalamazoo County	\$70,229
St. Joseph County	\$41,709
Van Buren County	\$36,819
Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020)	Average: \$45,390

Industry Data: Accommodation and Food Service

Per the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), and as reflected on the chart below, service is projected to hold the largest distribution of jobs by 2028 in Southwest Michigan, exactly 2.0 percentage points greater than the statewide average. The share of 19.4 percent will amount to 64,800 jobs out of the 334,700 total for the region in 2028.



As highlighted in the chart below, the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), also notes that Service, Professional, and Administrative support are projected to account for 52 percent of the 38,700 total annual openings in the region for 2018 through 2028.



The Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 are anticipating continued effects of the pandemic may have an effect on this projection, as many small businesses, in food service, have already announced permanent closures throughout the seven counties.

Only 13.0% of workers in this industry are over the age of 55.

Additional information regarding the accommodation and food service industry in Region 8 is provided from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020) below.

County Name	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2019 - 2020 Change	2019 - 2020 % Change
Berrien County, MI	6,756	5,226	-1,530	-22.65%
Branch County, MI	1,593	1,438	-155	-9.70%
Calhoun County, MI	3,565	2,860	-705	-19.80%
Cass County, MI	1,056	829	-227	-21.50%
Kalamazoo County, MI	11,802	9,360	-2,442	-20.69%
St. Joseph County, MI	1,515	1,257	-258	-17.03%
Van Buren County, MI	2,210	1,760	-450	-20.36%
Region 8	28,497	22,730	-5,767	-18.85%

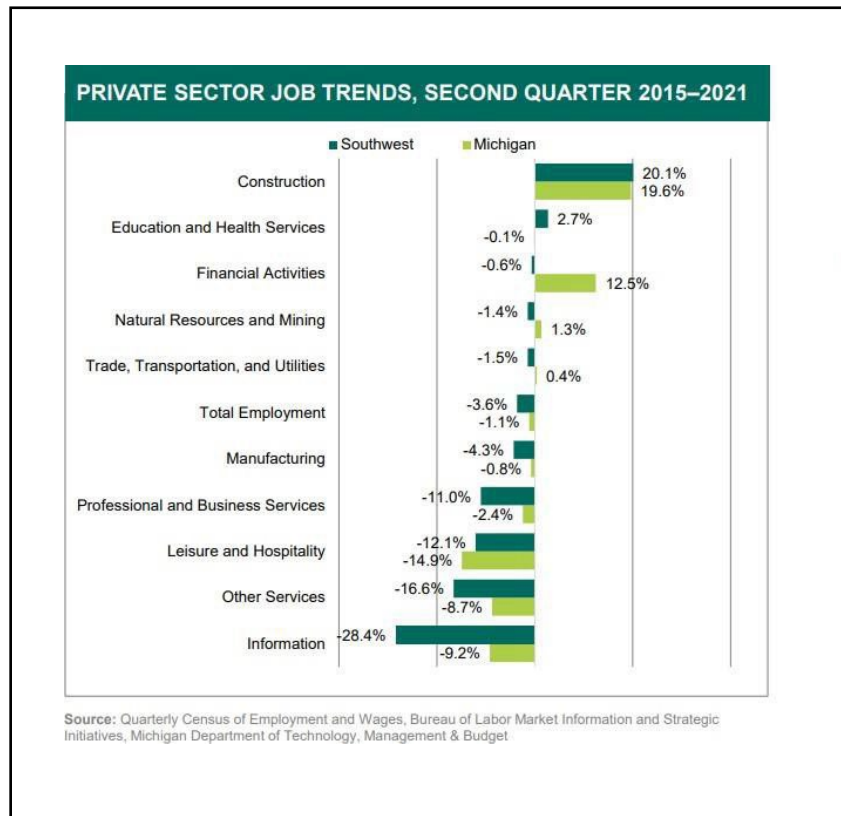
Accommodation and Food Service Average Hourly Earnings:

County Name	2019 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$17,168
Branch County	\$15,574
Calhoun County	\$17,732
Cass County	\$13,885
Kalamazoo County	\$17,088
St. Joseph County	\$14,548
Van Buren County	\$15,872
Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020)	Average: \$15,981

Industry Data: Construction

Per Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020), the construction industry in Michigan's Region 8 employs 10,870 people.

As reflected in the chart below, per the [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), total private employment fell by 3.6 percent (-9,300 jobs) between 2015 and 2021 in Southwest Michigan. Nearly all industry sectors in the region followed this trend, and the only two industry sectors to show growth were Construction (2,000 jobs) and Education and health services (1,200 jobs).



As noted, the construction industry's workforce is also aging rapidly, with 23% of the workforce being 55 years of age or older. This indicator continues to highlight the fact that near future talent shortages will require innovative talent pipeline strategies throughout Region 8.

Additional information regarding the construction industry in Region 8 is provided from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020) below.

County Name	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2019 - 2020 Change	2019 - 2020 % Change
Berrien County, MI	2,285	1,888	-397	-17.37%
Branch County, MI	423	428	5	1.20%
Calhoun County, MI	1,615	1,577	-38	-2.40%
Cass County, MI	311	304	-7	-2.25%
Kalamazoo County, MI	5,612	5,577	-35	0.62%
St. Joseph County, MI	504	494	-10	-1.98%
Van Buren County, MI	655	604	51	-7.79%
Region 8	11,405	10,872	-431	-4.28%

Construction Average Hourly Earnings:

County Name	2018 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$56,174
Branch County	\$43,957
Calhoun County	\$60,912
Cass County	\$44,954
Kalamazoo County	\$59,831
St. Joseph County	\$51,068
Van Buren County	\$44,870
Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020)	Average: \$51,092

Skills

The occupations described above all require a solid foundation in basic skills, such as reading, communication, math, and cognitive abilities that influence the acquisition and application of knowledge in problem solving. Most require active learning and critical thinking skills. In addition, these occupations require workers to possess technical skills and knowledge related to their specific occupational discipline and to master certain tools and technologies to achieve particular certifications.

Soft skills are overwhelmingly the most highly sought after “skill” by employers in Region 8. Employers struggle to find employees with the required technical skills as well as those with soft skills, such as attendance, work ethic, problem solving, time management and teamwork.

Opportunities for the Current and Future Workforce

Age: As highlighted throughout the data presented above, the current workforce continues to register a high number of older employees (jobs held by workers ages 55+) in Region 8. This may make the Region susceptible to potential talent shortfalls, especially if there are not enough skilled workers able to replace existing workers upon retirement or other exits from the labor market.

Individuals with Barriers: Individuals with barriers to employment are a focus for the MWAs in Region 8 as there is continued focus on assisting individuals with barriers to obtaining and retaining meaningful employment, including transportation, both within county lines, as well as across county lines; childcare and access to childcare, specifically on shifts other than first shift; and housing. Affordable housing throughout the region remains an issue for individuals and their families.

To address these issues, Berrien Cass Van Buren Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest have utilized local Workforce Development Boards and community collaborations and partnerships throughout the Region and State to focus on working with partners in developing innovative and practical solutions to address issues related to housing, transportation and childcare which will ultimately result in better opportunities for individuals to obtain meaningful and sustainable employment.

Post Pandemic: As a region and a state, it continues to be critical to adapt to employer and job seeker needs, as the pandemic subsides. To assist in guiding recovery efforts, the Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 have been gathering feedback from employers on their response to and recovery from the pandemic.

Additionally, ongoing monitoring of the unemployment rate and labor participation rate, as well as industry and occupational changes will be crucial to identifying and addressing regional workforce needs related to the pandemic. It is important to note that the unemployment rate does not include marginally attached workers and individuals working part-time but wanting full-time work, presenting

an opportunity to Berrien Cass Van Buren Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest to work with this population.

This will also include the ongoing evaluation of future and current talent shortages. BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest will actively evaluate jobs available and the skills, training, and education necessary to fill them. Engagement and re-engagement of the workforce, to meet the increased talent needs of employers, post-pandemic will be a critical component of this evaluation.

To address the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the partners in Region 8 are working collaboratively with employers, economic development, training providers, and other partners, to explore and employ, as appropriate, several strategies to achieve recovery for employers and job seekers.

Workforce Development Activities in the Region

Workforce Development activities in Region 8 are discussed throughout the remainder of this Plan.

Strengths: Specifically, this Plan highlights a variety of innovative approaches to workforce development activities that the Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 have implemented in conjunction with training institutions, employers and community partners to address the needs of employers and job seekers, including employer consortiums, customized training opportunities and implementation of sector strategies. These activities are implemented to address the needs of individuals with barriers to employment as well as to meet the employment needs of employers in the region.

In addition, as discussed throughout this Plan, the Michigan Works! Business Solutions Teams in Region 8 utilize the Business Solutions Model to deliver a coordinated, systematic, team approach to business outreach and engagement, resulting in quality employer relationships.

Weaknesses: There remains opportunity throughout Region 8 to expand the work of employer consortium groups through the development and implementation of additional employer consortiums.

The pandemic, and recovery, also present an opportunity to enhance a balance of in person and virtual workforce development services, such as career exploration events and opportunities.

1b. Vision and Goals

A local Workforce Development Board is required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). For this purpose, the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board (WDB) was established by the Governor's Workforce Commission. Policy issuances released by the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, or its successor, and applicable federal and state rules and regulations guide the work of the Board. The WDB, in conjunction with the units of local

government in the four-county service area that includes Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties, provides policy guidance and exercises oversight of the activities carried out under WIOA.

As outlined in the Bylaws, the Michigan Works! Southwest WDB will:

- Participate in the development of, and submit recommendations regarding, plans, basic goals, and policies and procedures regarding workforce development for the Michigan Works! Southwest Network.
- Monitor and provide objective evaluation of workforce development programs and services in the Michigan Works! Southwest Area.
- Provide a continuing analysis of the need for employment, training and related services, including efforts to reduce and eliminate artificial barriers to employment.
- Identify specific areas of training based on local labor market needs and occupations in demand.
- Maintain a “one stop” workforce development system which provides customers, both employers and job seekers, with access to a full range of services that are seamless, easily accessible, and tailored to individual needs.

The Michigan Works! Southwest mission is to prepare a qualified workforce to meet the current and emerging needs of business and industry into the 21st century. This is accomplished by providing direction for local workforce development strategies and facilitating the coordination and integration of workforce and economic development resources in Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties.

Objective I: Employer: Identify employer skill needs and workforce expectations; encourage and facilitate active employer involvement in the development of standards for basic skills, job specific skills and employability skills; and maximize opportunities for employer participation in work-based learning opportunities.

A team of certified Business Solutions Professionals (BSPs) lead work with employers on behalf of Michigan Works! Southwest in the four-county service area. The Business Solutions staff members work with employers to address a broad spectrum of employer needs related to business development and talent including working with employers and workforce development service providers to expand work-based learning opportunities including apprenticeships. Business Solutions staff also work hand-in-hand with partner organizations and serve as agents to ensure appropriate resources are available to address employers’ needs, including those that may not be provided directly by the workforce system.

Objective II: Job Seeker: Provide focused attention within Michigan Works! Network initiatives for establishing an enhanced awareness of available workforce development services for job seekers who can benefit from training or re-training services, including youth, individuals with disabilities, unemployed individuals, and underemployed individuals.

Two committees of the WDB, the Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) and the Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) help to guide this work. A short summary of each of these committees is provided below. More in-depth information regarding the work of these advisory committees is embedded throughout this plan.

Career & Educational Advisory Council: The CEAC serves in an advisory capacity to the WDB on matters related to the educational components of talent preparation and development services as well as federal adult education as it is related to ensuring that all students, youth to the adult learner, are provided the necessary academic, technical, and work behavior skills that meet business and industry needs to maintain and enhance the economy of the Michigan Works! Southwest region.

Disability Awareness Resource Team: The DART serves as the WDB's disability resource contact point and advises the WDB on issues regarding accessibility and services, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA); and on eliminating barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities.

Objective III: Leadership: Provide leadership through active participation of members on the Workforce Development Board; Board representation on community and regional workforce and economic development initiatives; and through the promotion of the Michigan Works! Network and Michigan Works! Service Center resources in these initiatives.

In addition to serving on one or more of the committees of the WDB, many of the Board members are active in the communities in which they live and work and invest their time working on workforce and economic development initiatives. This includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: industry sector consortiums; redesign teams for career tech education; and committees formed for the purpose of addressing specific barriers to employment such as transportation and childcare.

1c. Performance

Michigan Works! Southwest will strive to achieve the below levels of performance, for program years 2022 and 2023, for programs under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of the WIOA.

	<u>PY 2022</u>	<u>PY2023</u>
<u>Adult</u>		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	88.60%	88.60%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	83.60%	83.60%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$6,192	\$6,192
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	77.30%	77.30%
Measurable Skills Gain	65.10%	65.10%
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	90.10%	90.10%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	87.60%	87.60%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$7,914	\$7,914
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	76.90%	76.90%
Measurable Skills Gain	67.60%	67.60%
<u>Youth</u>		
Employment or Placement Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	80.60%	80.60%
Employment or Placement Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	72.80%	72.80%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$3,660	\$3,660
Credential Attainment 4 th Quarter After Exit	71.40%	71.40%
Measurable Skills Gain	33.30%	33.30%
<u>Wagner-Peyser</u>		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	65.00%	65.00%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	63.00%	63.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$5,175	\$5,175

1d. Alignment

The Michigan Works! Southwest strategy to align local resources, required partners, and entities that carry out core programs to achieve the strategic vision and goals highlighted above, focuses on the facilitated coordination of, alignment with, and integration of workforce, training and economic development resources to assure preparation of a qualified workforce that will meet the needs of business and aligns with other initiatives throughout the four-county region and all of Region 8.

Data will be used to guide decisions to assist in the continued alignment, diversification and increase of local resources. This will be done through a continuous improvement model, centered around collaboration and engagement with all employers, community organizations and education/training institutions. Coordination of services within the workforce development network will remain a priority of the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board. In addition to the work of employer consortiums and multiple community collaboratives, as highlighted in this plan, program directors' meetings and partner meetings are a key approach to the success of this strategy.

2. Local Workforce Development System

2a. Programs Included

The local workforce development network, facilitated by the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board, is inclusive of:

- WIOA Program Services (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth),
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Services,
- Wagner-Peyser Program Services (Employment Services),
- Welfare Reform (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Program Services (Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope., TANF Refugee Program and Food Assistance Employment and Training),
- Other workforce development programs and services including LEAP and Clean Slate,
- As well as of numerous collaborations, outlined below, that are integral to the success of Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph Counties.

2b. Other Workforce Development Programs

i. Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006

Youth are offered basic skills enhancement, remediation, counseling, and assistance in applying for financial aid, tutoring, and training in study skills. The incorporation of vocational education, adult education, post-secondary, and all career and technical services within the Michigan Works! Southwest area will assist with a higher level of output to ensure preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities and alternative secondary school services. The Career Educational Advisory Council and Workforce Development Board have taken steps for the regional alignment of Carl Perkins III Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Carl Perkins Tech Prep (TP).

ii. Vocational Rehabilitation

As part of the WIOA, Vocational Rehabilitation, including Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, will be a core program to assist and guide individuals with disabilities into the workforce services for which they are eligible.

- [Michigan Rehabilitation Services](#) is a statewide agency that works with individuals and employers to achieve quality employment outcomes and independence for individuals with disabilities. The organization provides vocational counseling, including assessment; job training; supportive services; job placement; restoration after injury or loss; employer supports; and accommodations to address barriers to employment.
- [Bureau of Services for Blind Persons](#) (BSBP) is an organization committed to providing opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired to achieve

employability and/or function independently in society. In addition, the BSBP Training Centers (one of which is located in Kalamazoo County) provides training and services to blind and visually impaired residents of the state of Michigan and elsewhere. The Training Center staff believe in the capabilities of individuals who are visually impaired to participate in every activity of daily living.

In addition to educating partners on disability workforce issues related to employment and training for persons with disabilities (PWD), these local collaborations with critical vocational rehabilitation partners have assisted in allowing resources to be strategically utilized and leveraged across the area. Michigan Works! Southwest has prioritized coordinated services and direct referrals to MRS and BSBP services to better meet the needs of PWD within the Michigan Works! Southwest service area. Additionally, Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to collaborate with BSBP and MRS to ensure the accessibility of the One Stop Service Centers in an effort to best service individuals with disabilities.

Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to partner and work with MRS and BSBP to better understand the current skills gaps of Vocational Rehabilitation consumers to positively impact the successful rehabilitation rate by increasing an individual's potential for employment in today's job market. In coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation staff, Michigan Works! Southwest will work locally to provide information to ensure funding is effectively utilized to meet the training needs of customers and Southwest Michigan businesses.

Michigan Works! Southwest will also serve as a connection between BSBP and MRS and local training institutions to assist in coordination and development of training programs as needed to meet the training needs identified.

In an effort to understand and address the current workforce demands, hiring practices and advancement strategies of business for PWD, Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to invite MRS to attend the Michigan Works! Southwest partner meetings. MRS is also represented on the Workforce Development Board to expand and enhance business solutions for employers in Southwest Michigan.

Other Partnerships

Through the positive and cooperative relationships developed with state agencies, at the local levels, Michigan Works! Southwest can better serve employer customers and job seekers through unduplicated, coordinated services. In addition to partnerships formed with Michigan Rehabilitative Services and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Michigan Works! Southwest also developed partnerships with Unemployment Insurance Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, and others. Michigan Works! Southwest also works collaboratively with the following agencies with a goal of inclusion and universal access:

- [Disability Network of Southwest Michigan](#) is an organization dedicated to educating and

connecting people with disabilities to resources while advocating for social change. The vision of the organization is a community that values disability as human diversity, free of attitudinal barriers, where all people benefit with full access and inclusion. They educate and connect people with disabilities to resources while advocating social change. Their goal is to help foster a community where people with disabilities are able to participate fully in everyday life with equal opportunities and self-determination. They also assist organizations, businesses, and government agencies to understand their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They provide workshops and onsite training, technical assistance and support in learning to be welcoming of people with disabilities as customers, clients, patrons, volunteers, or employees. Their goal as a disability rights advocate is to protect the civil and human rights of individuals with disabilities, and make sure that the laws put in place to protect them are vigorously enforced.

- [Job Accommodation Network](#) is an organization that provides free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and the Americans with Disabilities Act legislation to individuals and employers.
- [Michigan Career and Technical Institute](#) (MCTI) offers training for job seekers in the Michigan Works! Southwest area. Training opportunities vary and include CNA, Grounds Maintenance and Landscaping, Construction, Culinary Arts, Cabinetmaking/ Millwork, Machine Technology, Automotive Technology, Office Automation, Custodial, Retail Marketing, Pharmacy Services and Commercial Printing.

iii. Veterans Services

Veterans Career Advisors

[Veterans Career Advisors](#) are State of Michigan employees who provide intensive, individualized services to meet the employment needs of eligible veterans and spouses with significant barriers to employment.

Services are provided by these employment service professionals to assist eligible veterans and spouses reduce and/or eliminate barriers to employment. Services include, but are not limited to:

- Comprehensive assessment interviews
- Career guidance services
- Individual Employment Plans (IEPs)
- Staff-assisted job search activities
- Provision of Labor Market Information (LMI)
- Basic staff-assisted career services

Per the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity ([LEO](#)), the responsibilities of

the veterans career advisor include case management, outreach services to veterans, and group job counseling, which differs from licensed counseling. Career Advisors seek to establish a strong rapport and relationship with the veterans they serve, to provide the best services possible to help them reach their employment goals.

Michigan Works! Southwest complies with the Jobs for Veterans Act by giving veterans and eligible spouses, priority of service status for all programs and services.

Veteran Engagement Team of Southwest Michigan

The Veteran Engagement Team of Southwest Michigan (VETSWM) formerly known as Region 8 Veteran Community Action Team (R8VCAT) includes representatives from federal, state, local and faith-based organizations that support veterans in the communities where they live and work. The Veterans Engagement Team focuses on identifying solutions for gaps in veteran services, reducing duplication of efforts and simplifying connections with local resources. This community-based system of care allows networks of service providers to employ best practices, share information and tools and connect more quickly with veterans. Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to develop this partnership and assist in this collaborative approach to assisting veterans in Southwest Michigan.

iv. Fidelity Bonding

Michigan Works! Southwest offers assistance to job seekers and employers in instances where employment is conditioned on the job applicant maintaining a fidelity bond. Fidelity bonding allows employers to mitigate risk when hiring and reduces barriers to employment often faced by job seekers.

v. Community Partnerships

To best serve job seekers with additional barriers, Michigan Works! Southwest is dedicated to the development and ongoing strengthening of community partnerships with local partners including providers of Adult Education and Literacy programs under Title II of WIOA, Senior Community Services Employment Program, employment and training activities under the Community Services Block Grant, and Housing and Urban Development employment and training activities; specifically, these include local literacy councils, housing providers, Community Action Agencies and AARP.

Through collaboration with these services and programs, as guided by the Workforce Development Board, Michigan Works! Southwest seeks to provide core programs of the highest quality and services that align with local needs. Examples of this dedication to collaboration include co-location of many partners within the Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers, as well as regularly scheduled partner meetings, at all locations, which bring together the identified

partners to develop coordinated strategies to best meet the needs of all customers whether through co-enrollment or other appropriate service referrals.

3. Expanding and Improving Access

Michigan Works! Southwest, under the direction of the Workforce Development Board, will strive to expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment. This will be achieved through the work of Board Committees and established workgroups in the communities in which services are provided.

3a. Community Access

WIOA funding allocations comes with many restrictions that may limit the amount and use of the funding for training and supportive services. To address this shortfall, Michigan Works! Southwest focuses on its partnerships with other community organizations in order to make the best use of available resources to address barriers to employment and training, as well as employment retention. Robust relationships exist between Michigan Works! Southwest subrecipients/service providers and other area partners to identify resources that can be used to address removal of barriers for participants. For example, in St. Joseph County the St. Joseph County Human Services Commission maintains a resource guide which is available online and a 'Google Group' to address immediate and timely requests for assistance. In Calhoun County, The Coordinating Council meets regularly to share resources and in Branch County, the Branch County Community Network serves this purpose. Kalamazoo County has many strong partnerships, such as the Gryphon Place, which is host to 211, the central resource for information and referrals for Kalamazoo County, as well as a few other counties within the State. A few of the more frequent barriers that require additional resources include transportation, childcare, utility assistance, emergency auto repairs, literacy, and additional dollars to support training. Through these multiple agency partnerships within the four-county service area, subrecipients/service providers are able to access resources and make referrals to address barriers that customers are facing that affect their ability to gain and maintain employment.

Subrecipients/service providers emphasize service to the community's most vulnerable through outreach to individuals residing in the areas most impacted by poverty. Currently, Michigan Works! Southwest offers services in local community centers and partners with neighborhood organizations in the four counties located within the Michigan Works! Southwest area. A huge benefit to this model is job seeker access, especially when transportation and childcare are concerns. Evaluation of this model is ongoing as we look for ways to improve the access to information and available resources. Leveraged resources are used to support these efforts. Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to focus on applying for additional grants to leverage support for this workforce development work in order to further serve these areas most in need.

Other tools, such as the State's web-based employability skills workshops, are available virtually to ensure access. With the COVID-19 pandemic, it was important to continue the provision of services in a safe and accessible manner. In response, Michigan Works! Southwest Employment Services created some instructor-led, virtual workshops that are accessible to customers and the general public.

Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to explore additional ways, including the use of technology, to improve and expand offerings that increase accessibility.

3b. Career Pathways and Co-Enrollment

Michigan Works! Southwest strives to have a comprehensive career pathway system that includes multiple entry and exit points in order to meet the need of the learners and job seekers we serve. This includes coordinating the education and training, as well as providing access to supportive services needed for a career advancement that will lead to a skilled workforce that meets local, regional and State of Michigan talent needs. Subrecipients/service providers are dedicated to the career pathway model which allows for cross program referrals and enrollment. Co-enrollments often lead to additional resources to assist the job seeker on their path to success. Michigan Works! Southwest also has a team of Business Solutions staff who are dedicated to assisting with the alignment of career pathways to the needs identified by industry specific consortiums.

In regard to providing services to youth, forming a clear picture of potential career pathways and motivating youth toward a well-defined career goal starts with strong partnerships with secondary education providers. Program staff cultivate strong relationships with counselors, administrators, and other school staff in all Michigan Works! Southwest area school districts and career centers. Collaboration with school counselors allows program staff to understand the potential needs of a participant with disabilities and focus supports and goal setting to increase accessibility. A targeted focus includes alternative education programs where individuals facing economic disparities or barriers to traditional educational opportunities, including disabilities, attend at high rates. This strong focus on forging a career pathway for each young person ultimately sets the stage for the development of the highly skilled and well-trained workforce that will satisfy the needs of the region's current and forecasted economic landscape. Getting young people, including those with disabilities, on a pathway to brighter futures in high school and beyond will help them achieve long-term economic success and, ultimately, positively impact the economic trajectory of the region.

With the guidance and assistance of the Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC), Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to keep career pathways at the forefront with educators for all age groups.

The Career and Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) serves as the regional equivalent of educational advisory groups, required by Public Act 491 of 2006 to serve in an advisory capacity to the local WDB on educational issues. Representation on the CEAC include local WDB members, employers outside of the WDB employer members, labor, local school districts, intermediate school districts, post-secondary institutions, career/technical educators, STEM education, parents of public-school pupils, academic educators; and others (i.e., Adult Education, Job Corps, Native Americans).

The mission of the Michigan Works! Southwest CEAC is “to create and support a talent preparation and development system that will provide all students, youth to the adult learner, with the necessary academic, technical, and work behavior skills that will meet business and industry needs to maintain and enhance the economy of MWSW region.” To accomplish its mission, the CEAC advises the local WDB on

matters related to educational components of talent preparation and development services and federal adult education.

To achieve its primary purpose, the Michigan Works! Southwest CEAC is specifically responsible to:

- Serve in an advisory capacity to the Michigan Works! Southwest WDB on a broad range of youth and adult educational issues, including advisement of strategic workforce development plans.
- Coordinate with other educational entities, in guiding career development programs and career pathways, such as high schools, community colleges, career and technical education, adult education, workforce development programs, Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers, Offender Success programs, corrections education, veterans' programs, and college access networks in support of the WDB's mission and strategic workforce development plans.
- Assist the local Workforce Development Board, consistent with the WIOA of 2014, with the development and implementation of career pathways.
- Maximize existing community-based resources that will avoid duplication of services.
- Provide direction, strategies, and support for implementing, improving, and expanding Adult Learning initiatives to include educational, job training and life skills programs in collaboration with the State Section 107 fiscal agent.
- Collaborate with the region's intermediate school district that is the assigned fiscal agent in the development of the Michigan Department of Education's Regional Strategic Plan. Strategies include but are not limited to: Labor Market Information, career cluster rankings, and working to accurately reflect employers' demand for talent.
- Ensure educational programs and service delivery align to the Department of Education and the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity requirements.

3c. Access to Credentials

The Michigan Works! Southwest WDB, CEAC and Business Solutions Team, along with the one stop partners, will work together to improve access to activities that lead to obtaining credentials that are in demand, industry-recognized, portable, and stackable.

In 2019, using information from the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA), the Michigan Works! Southwest CEAC ranked the seventeen career clusters for the Michigan Works! Southwest area. In 2020, the CEAC began working on identifying industry credentials and other certifications required by employers that could be attained through Career and Technical Education in each of the four counties located in the Michigan Works! Southwest area. This work will continue to be a focus for Michigan Works! Southwest. Additional work will be done to access further opportunities through the industry specific consortiums.

3d. DART – Disability Awareness Resource Team

Staff from partner agencies such as Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, are invited to attend Employment Services staff and One Stop partner meetings to present information about their services and organizations. Materials from these agencies are also available in

the resource areas of the Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers. As requested by customers, referrals are made to local agencies serving individuals with disabilities.

In addition to community accessibility, the WIOA looks to the WDB to have a committee to provide information and assistance with operational and other issues related to serving individuals with disabilities. In Michigan Works! Southwest, the Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) serves this purpose as a standing advisory committee of the Workforce Development Board. DART was originally established in 2000 to assist with inclusion and universal access and members met for the purpose of advising the WDB on issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the elimination of barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities. Since their initial meeting, the DART Committee has continued to meet and expand to ensure representation for multiple organizations that provide employment-related services and assistance to individuals with disabilities. DART membership includes representatives from businesses, service providers, advocates, and allies with expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities with their career, training, and employment needs.

Members of the DART committee inform, promote, and advise the WDB on strategies to support career pathways, training, and employment options for individuals with disabilities, including youth, to gain and retain employment. Significant projects led by DART members over the past twenty years have included planning and presenting training on many relevant topics for Michigan Works! Southwest staff and workforce development partners. Some of the more popular topics include disability awareness, disability etiquette, the ADA, serving and interacting with individuals with disabilities, service vs. comfort animals, mental and cognitive disability awareness, conflict resolution, etc.

In 2016, the DART Committee formerly adopted a work plan to help focus and guide its work. The plan includes an increased focus on developing and implementing a comprehensive 'disability awareness' curriculum and resources for the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board, one stop service center staff, partners, and employers. Accessibility and the ability to have trainings available for refresher courses, as well as for new staff was a concern. To address this concern, the committee began creating 'Desktop Trainings' on popular topics that can be completed at a time and place most convenient to the user. Subrecipients/service providers identify topics of most importance for their staff and customers and the curriculums developed address these priorities. To date, twelve (12) modules have been developed and additional ones are under development. The curriculum modules are accessible to WDB members, subrecipients/service provider staff, partners, and employers for professional development. The work of the DART Committee has been shared at conferences and State level staff have viewed these modules as a best practice.

The DART committee's work plan also includes a focus on developing strategies to foster cross-agency collaboration across the four-county Michigan Works! Southwest area. One tool that is regularly updated and shared widely among the workforce development partners is a Partner Matrix that is used by staff as a quick reference guide for various disability issues they encounter when servicing customers. The Matrix highlights the work and resources of each organization that assists individuals with disabilities in their quest for employment.

The third component of the DART work plan is a focus on providing navigator assistance for job seeking participants at job/career fairs and expos. Members of the DART have engaged their organization's employees by serving as 'navigators' at workforce events such as the Career Life Expo. This event, which was put on hold during COVID-19, is a partnership between Michigan Works! Southwest and the United Way of South Central Michigan, is more than a job fair as it includes a resource room with agency representatives to address barriers as well as a career preparation room to assist job seekers with updating resumes, interview practice and access to computers to apply for open positions during the event.

The fourth and final component of the DART work plan is to identify and provide informational updates for WDB members, employers, and partners in the four-county Michigan Works! Southwest area. DART Committee members keep a watchful eye on proposed and pending legislation and regulations that may have an effect on workforce development and individuals with disabilities. This information is shared at DART and WDB meetings.

Michigan Works! Southwest continues to strengthen the link between the Business Solutions Team (BST) and DART to help improve services to employers. DART members and Business Solutions staff focus on identifying and utilizing resources related to employment of individuals with disabilities to assist employers with their talent needs.

4. Employer Engagement

Michigan Works! Southwest has a dedicated team of Business Solutions Professionals (BSPs) who lead the efforts in our four-county region to engage employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Using a demand-driven model that focuses on employers as the primary customer, these staff serve as the lead liaisons for connecting both large and small employers to workforce development programs in each of the four counties in the Michigan Works! Southwest area. This work is accomplished through regular collaboration with community stakeholders to leverage partnerships between business, educators, economic developers, and workforce development. Multiple strategies and services are used to ensure business demands for a skilled workforce are met. Some of the strategies used to achieve results include:

- Consortium work and partnerships to share resources and best practices and to identify needs and challenges of specific industries (small and large employers are represented in these groups);
- Large events such as job fairs, Manufacturing Day, MiCareerQuest Southwest, Career.Life.Expo., Sophomore Future Track, etc.;
- Employer of the Day events facilitated by Michigan Works! Southwest;
- Job Fairs at employer sites;
- Employer Resource Networks® (ERN®), a consortium of employers that focus on improved retention and reduced turnover cost;
- Group meetings of local Human Resource Managers organizations;
- Jobs System meetings;
- Reviewing data generated by Burning Glass Analytics and Real Time Data reports and other labor

market information reports to determine in-demand occupations in the Michigan Works! Southwest area;

- Employer education regarding employer usage and employer resources available on Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC), a web-based portal that is the State’s labor exchange system for employers and job seekers;
- Employer education regarding resources available through the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), Michigan Unemployment Agency (UIA) and Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC);
- Information sessions on programs and grants to assist with training such as Apprenticeship 101 the Basics and Beyond, Going Pro Talent Fund Information sessions, On-the-Job Training (OJT), etc.; and
- Engagement with other workforce development partners such as:
 - Local economic development organizations,
 - Chambers of Commerce,
 - Educational entities,
 - Organized labor unions,
 - Veteran services,
 - Vocational rehabilitation,
 - Youth services,
 - Local units of government, and
 - Business Solutions Professionals from Michigan Works! areas outside of the Michigan Works! Southwest area.

4a. Support Business Needs

Michigan Works! Southwest strives to meet the needs of businesses in the local area by following the Business Solutions demand-driven model that focuses on businesses as the primary customer and is anchored on building and enhancing relationships with area employers. The model begins with Fact Finding that leads to identifying resources and solutions to respond to the employer’s needs.

By meeting with employers and conducting Fact Finding sessions, BSPs have the information to determine what the workforce needs of individual employers in the local area are. Once BSPs have an understanding of the needs, they are able to connect the employers to available resources and solutions, or they can work with the employer to develop solutions that respond to the local employers’ needs.

The Business Solutions Team strives to meet the needs of local employers. Some of the specific strategies to address those needs includes, but is not limited to:

- Outreach and recruitment assistance;
- Posting jobs on Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC);
- Screening applications;
- Local and regional hiring events;
- Attraction and retention assistance in partnership with economic development partners;
- Training and funding opportunities for new and incumbent workers in partnership with training

- providers;
- Expanded opportunities for youth, veterans, individuals with disabilities and other targeted populations; and
- Initiatives generated by industry specific consortia work.

Information gathered from local industry consortiums, HR organizations, and education, economic development agencies and other workforce development partners along with local labor market data, is used to provide job seekers with the appropriate training and targeted job placement that meets employer needs.

4b. Improve Coordination

The Michigan Works! Southwest Business Solutions Team understands the value and role in strategic collaborations with regional economic developers and education partners to provide business solutions to attract, retain and expand local businesses. Some of the strategies to achieve results include:

- A focus on business as the primary customer;
- Increasing the number of joint meetings with employers to ensure everyone is on the same page with companies and the services being offered;
- Regular check-ins with representatives from the economic development organizations in the Michigan Works! Southwest area and sharing updates on services provided; and
- Working on projects collaboratively.

4c. Strengthen Linkages

Michigan Works! Southwest strives to strengthen linkages between the One Stop delivery system and the Unemployment Insurance program. This is accomplished through multiple strategies such as:

- Professional development for BSP team members to learn about the types of programs and the details within them, that are available for employers through the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA). One example that occurred during the beginning of this plan period is the Workshare Program in which employer usage grew immensely during the COVID-19 layoffs. The increased knowledge that staff gained regarding this program gave them the tools to answer questions and problem solve with employers.
- Stronger communication between the lead BSP team members and the BSP team members employed by the subrecipients/service providers.

5. Regional Economic Development Activities

5a. Economic Development

Coordination with economic development is critical to the success of the workforce development system throughout the four-county area. Current economic development organizations engaged in local and regional planning, in regard to collaboration and coordination with local workforce activities include:

- Southwest Michigan First,
- Albion Economic Development Alliance,
- Battle Creek Unlimited,
- Branch County Economic Growth Alliance,
- Marshall Area Economic Development Alliance,
- St. Joseph County MI Economic Development EDGE, and
- Southwest Michigan Economic Growth Alliance.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is also a critical partner of Michigan Works! Southwest in offering business assistance services and capital programs for business attraction and acceleration.

All of these partners play a role in the Business Solutions Teams and Consortium Groups to ensure information sharing and coordination between workforce development and economic development.

5b. Entrepreneurship

Michigan Works! Southwest offers workshops and makes referrals to partner agencies to assist individuals with gaining general knowledge on business start-up and entrepreneurial training, business plan writing, access to capital and financial preparation. The ability to provide this information in a virtual format is being explored.

5c. Employer Resource Network

Employer Resource Networks® (ERN®) are private-public consortia with a purpose to improve workforce retention through employee support and training. Through the existing partnership between Michigan Works! Southwest (SWERN®) and Michigan ERN®, member employers and their workers are provided services to help them efficiently utilize business and community resources that support individuals moving towards self-sufficiency. The focus, according to the Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network® website is on “empowering employment by improving employee retention and productivity.”

Member companies leverage and share resources to benefit all members businesses. Member companies meet regularly (monthly or bi-monthly) to learn about new community and business resources and to share information and best practices.

With the ERN® model, Success Coaches have regularly scheduled hours on site each week at ERN® member companies to assist employees with addressing barriers that may be affecting their work. In addition to the scheduled hours, Success Coaches are available every day via text or email. The coaches are able to assist by connecting the employees to resources available through the employer and/or the community. Assistance most often requested is for housing, transportation, childcare, utility assistance, health insurance, and financial wellness. Once immediate needs are addressed, there is opportunity for the coach to work with the employee on setting longer-term goals that will help the individuals and their

families become more stable and move towards self-sufficiency.

High employee turnover is costly and can also negatively impact a company's morale. Prioritizing employee retention not only reduces hiring costs, it maintains workers who are already trained and supports the organization's productivity. Thus, employee retention is critical to a company's success. Prior to the pandemic, when the unemployment rate fell below 5% in Southwest Michigan, new workers were difficult to find. Now, with the current pandemic challenges that workers and companies are facing, addressing barriers to retain an already trained workforce, as well as success coaching, have an increased importance as companies and individuals navigate the road to recovery. The ERN® model is a recipe for success as it provides a wholistic approach to employee retention by combining connections to resources, along with coaching.

The key targeted outcome is improved retention rates for individuals employed by ERN® member companies. (Note: some member companies have achieved and maintained 100% retention rate for three months.). However, the ERN® benefits are much more as they include the following:

- Increased employment retention rates;
- Reduction of hiring costs for businesses (higher retention = lower hiring costs)
- Improved productivity;
- High Return on Investment (ROI) for member businesses (lower hiring costs and improved productivity = higher ROI); and
- Opportunities for businesses to pool resources.

Partners in the Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network® include one local bank and one credit union. The participation of financial institutions provides access to short-term hardship loans for emergency situations such as car repairs. Along with making monthly loan payment, the employee also contributes to a savings account for future needs. The hardship loans are often used to assist in boosting or establishing credit. Thus, when the loan is paid off, the employee is prepared should another emergency present itself. The credit union also provides financial wellness workshops. During the pandemic, these workshops have been offered virtually and have been very successful.

5d. PTAC

The Southwest Michigan Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) provides services in all seven counties in Region 8 and assists businesses who wish to sell products and services to the federal, state, and local governments. PTAC services, include the following and, are offered at no charge:

- **Training Events:** PTAC hosts training seminars and networking events to assist businesses in Region 8 in learning more about government procurement topics.
- **Bid Match:** A customized search is created for each client to identify federal, state, and local government bid opportunities. Over 2,000 websites are explored each day.
- **Custom Market Research:** PTAC researches what, when, how, quantity, and frequency of government buys of the client's products/services. Competitor's government history is also researched. A custom marketing strategy is designed to meet the needs of each client.
- **Government Registrations:** Assistance is offered to complete the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM), the State of Michigan, and other registrations.
- **Subcontracting Assistance:** PTAC helps clients identify subcontracting opportunities with government prime contractors.

6. One-Stop Delivery System

6a. Continuous Improvement of Eligible Providers

Within the context of continuous improvement, the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board and Michigan Works! Southwest Agency has established measures that track progress and report results of services provided by the Michigan Works! Network as a whole and by individual service providers. Some of these measures include:

- **Assessment:** Identification of specific workforce needs of the customers – employers and job seekers.
- **Treatments:** Development of strategies that will address customer need – systemic or programmatic - in such a manner that the identified barriers are minimized or eradicated.
- **Implementation:** Development of Implementation plan based on the strategies identified for addressing the customer need. This occurs through the identification of a range of eligible providers in both the private and public sectors who have the demonstrated ability to address the needs and strategies and translate this into efficient and effective service delivery.
- **Evaluation:** Timely and continuous review of eligible provider results is the key to assessing if and when the identified needs are being addressed as planned. To measure positive progress towards the goal, specific performance indicators are established. Measuring progress on an ongoing basis is essential to achieving the end goals. The Workforce Development Board's Monitoring and Evaluation Committee participates in various program activities throughout the year to observe use of activities and assess the quality and effectiveness of the service delivery. Their experience is shared and discussed at monthly Workforce Development Board meetings.

The program data and information gathered for evaluation comes from a number of sources.

Through a review of this diverse data and information, the Michigan Works! Southwest administrative staff and Workforce Development Board has the ability to review performance and service delivery outcomes on an on-going basis.

i Monitoring and Evaluation Committee

As mentioned, the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board has a standing Monitoring and Evaluation Committee that works to ensure continuous improvement of the services being offered to employers, incumbent workers, and job seekers in the Michigan Works! Southwest area.

The duties of the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee are designed to ensure continuous improvement of the services being offered to employers, incumbent workers, and job seekers across the Michigan Works! Southwest workforce development system. These functions and tasks include:

- a. Evaluating Michigan Works! Area programs, data, activities, and performance from the perspective of the private sector including but not limited to:
 - Labor Market Outcomes - demand occupations, placements, earnings, earnings gained and retentions.
 - Access and Equity - demographic distribution of services as well as special targeting and recruitment, market penetrations and self-services.
 - Return on Investment - comparing and contrasting different methods of service delivery.
- b. Assessing learning gains and skill enhancements as they relate to the local labor market.
- c. Assuring that a customer satisfaction system is in place that, at a minimum, measures the level of customer (i.e., job seekers and employers) satisfaction with service delivery.
- d. Assessing the internal efficiency and effectiveness of the Board's programs and activities.
- e. Conducting on-site reviews of subrecipient activity.
- f. Monitoring contractual compliance, particularly in the area of outcomes, and rendering opinions on subcontractor performance.

6b. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the One-Stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.

While One-Stop Service Centers are strategically located throughout the four-county area, Michigan Works! Southwest staff have developed strategies and partnerships to ensure all individuals, including those in remote areas, are able to access services delivered through the One-Stop delivery system. Through the use of existing relationships with community partners, additional locations for meeting with

customers are available. Additionally, Michigan Works! Southwest operates a PATH office in Albion, as well as provides PATH programming at a neighborhood organization in Kalamazoo, and privately funded workforce development programming at multiple neighborhood organizations in the City of Battle Creek. Other partnerships with community organizations also encourage customer referrals for employment and training services.

Virtual workshops on topics such as Job Search Tips & Tricks, Resume Development, Virtual Interviewing Tips, and Cover Letter Nuts & Bolts are offered and accessible throughout the four-county service area. Another workshop allows customers the opportunity to chat with a career coach.

Michigan Works! Southwest Business Solutions staff have also utilized virtual platforms for holding job fairs, as appropriate.

The Job Seeker, formally known as the Weekly Jobs Bulletin, also continues to be distributed by Michigan Works! Southwest Employment Services staff and is a valuable resource for customers and a strategic tool for outreach. This electronic tool promotes area job openings and employment-related events and is distributed weekly to job seekers, as well as to partners and community organizations to assist in reaching job seekers.

6c. Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policies

As recipients of state and federal funds, the Michigan Works! Southwest WDB and the MWA, including all subrecipients, shall provide equal opportunity for individuals to participate in and benefit from all programs, services and activities without regard to race, gender and gender identity, color, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, age, height, weight, marital status, disability, political affiliation or beliefs, genetic information, citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or other legally protected status or non-merit factors.

Principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination shall apply to hiring, promotion, employment practices, program eligibility, training, placement, procurement decisions and the composition of committees, boards, and advisory groups formed to carry out workforce development initiatives.

The Michigan Works! Southwest Agency also has a designated individual to serve as the MWA Equal Opportunity Officer to coordinate management of the MWA's non-discrimination and EO responsibilities and to serve as a technical resource.

7. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

The Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, services and funding will be aligned with in-demand occupations and with the priority industries identified during the implementation of the Michigan Industry Cluster Approach (MICA). A cluster-based system will train workers to fill actual jobs in the cluster and meet the actual skill needs of these jobs. With this approach, Adult and Dislocated Worker

training will be aligned to match employers' identified industry demand and vacancies. The overarching objective is to adapt the workforce system to produce more job candidates with skills and competencies that align better with industry, and hence increase the likelihood of long-term employment upon completion of training.

Regional planning information provided to and by the Michigan Works! Southwest Agency, such as the Burning Glass Analytics and Real Time Jobs Data and other labor market reports, are also used to identify industry sectors and occupations that may provide quality employment and training opportunities for customers at all levels of education.

7a. Assessments

Assessments are used to establish benchmarks for readiness for specific occupations and/or preparation for specific types of education/training. Assessment instruments are chosen by career managers based on the career and/or training needs of the individual. Assessment instruments must meet specific criteria (e.g., standardized, validated, and normed). Assessment instruments used include:

- The Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to test reading and math levels
- Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)

7b. Individual Service Strategy

Following enrollment, the participant and their Career Coach meet one-on-one to complete an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), commonly known as an Individual Service Strategy (ISS), that details the participant's employment goals and the activities and services that will be used to support these goals. During this initial meeting, results of all assessments and the participant's resume, work history and education and training history, including employability skills and occupational skills are reviewed. Staff will also work with the participant to identify any barriers to employment that will need to be addressed in order to achieve career goals. Barriers can be related to employability skills, occupational skills, basic educational skills, personal matters, and/or family issues.

Goals and barriers are then entered into the One-Stop Management Information System (OSMIS) and updated as changes in strategy or activities occur. The ISS/IEP must be reviewed, and the review must be documented in case notes, at a minimum of every 60 days. Additionally, staff review the progress towards addressing barriers to employment.

In order to develop a comprehensive plan, staff first work with the participant to identify short-term employment and training objectives and long-term career goals and then discuss the steps and services needed to achieve these objectives and goals. This will include any services or activities needed to accomplish the following:

- Eliminate barriers to employment;
- Improve educational skills, employability skills or occupational skills; and
- Obtain and maintain employment.

The Career Manager will also provide the participant with information on the resources and career and training and supportive services that can assist the participant eliminate barriers and achieve short and long-term goals. Supportive services may be provided directly by and through WIOA workforce development services or through a Service Center partner organization.

7c. Counseling, Guidance and Case Management

Each adult and dislocated worker enrolled in WIOA Services is initially enrolled in the Case Management activity and assigned an individual Career Coach. The Career Coach's primary responsibility is to work with the participant to develop the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) and provide the assistance and services needed for each participant to achieve the goals and objectives set out in their ISS. During the course of a participant's involvement in career and training services, the Career Coach will be responsible for providing the employment counseling; pre-vocational services, and job search and job placement assistance that the customer needs to achieve their ISS goals and objectives. The Career Coach is also responsible for identifying career services that participants will need for training services.

In addition to providing WIOA activities, services and employment counseling, Career Coaches are also responsible for making referrals to local human service agencies for any non-employment-related needs/barriers (e.g., family counseling, financial counseling, or substance abuse services), and for identifying additional customer support needs as they arise and acquiring supportive services assistance when and where it is necessary.

Career Services participants that fail to achieve a quality direct placement into employment may need upgraded or new occupational skills for an in-demand job or career. Such participants may be transferred from career services to training services and enrolled in customized or industry-specific training, on-the-job training or ITA occupational skills classroom training. The Career Coach will refer participants for any employer-specific testing or assessment required for customized or On-the-Job Training. Career Coaches are also responsible for providing occupational and career counseling, including assistance and direction, such as information on local labor market demand (e.g., Burning Glass Analytics and Real Time Jobs Data Report) and requirements for specific occupational training programs. The Career Coaches also address non-academic issues related to classroom training enrollment, such as income maintenance, and other variables that can impact the participant's likelihood of completing training and acquiring full time, permanent employment.

7d. Soft Skills Training

During the general applicant orientation, Career Coaches cover basic skills, abilities and behaviors that are required to succeed in obtaining and maintaining employment. In addition, Career Coaches that identify WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker participants with a need for more extensive assistance with employability skills can also assign a participant to complete additional workshops virtually or at the Michigan Works! Southwest Service Center.

7e. Job Placement Assistance

The outreach to, as well as the identification and recruitment of businesses with quality job openings, is the key activity that supports all other workforce services to job seekers. By identifying and meeting the workforce needs of businesses, the adult and dislocated worker participants are provided opportunities for employment.

Regular meetings between Career Coaches and participants are facilitated throughout the job search process to track and support the participants' job search activities; to provide information on hiring activities that have potential opportunities for the participant. Career Coaches will periodically discuss with participants the results of particular employer contacts pertaining to filling out applications or completing job interviews. Career Coaches may also provide direction on how to use career services resources more effectively, including enrollment in career services soft skills training.

The Career Coaches will also perform Pure Michigan Talent Connect searches or reach out to the Michigan Works! Southwest Business Solutions Coordinators for assistance in identifying career opportunities for participants. Career Coaches will also refer some eligible job seekers to Service Center partners, as appropriate, that provide focused services for targeted populations such as veterans or individuals with disabilities, job seekers over 55 years of age, or agricultural workers.

When participants have been directly placed at an employer's worksite, the staff will do initial follow-up, along with the participant and the employer in the quarter in which placement occurs, to confirm employment status, wages and benefits and any other information on issues such as job satisfaction or working conditions. For OJT placements, members of the Business Solutions Team (BST) will monitor the worksite to assure the training plan is being followed and the trainee is learning the necessary skills. The employer will also be contacted during the training period. Once training is completed, the employer and participant will verify training hours, training wages and the completion of training. After placement, the staff will make follow-up contacts with each participant at least once per quarter for the twelve (12) months following placement.

7f. Support Services

In administering adult and dislocated worker supportive services, it is noted that supportive services can only be provided to individuals who are active, registered participants, Supportive services for WIOA adult and dislocated worker participants are generally focused on allowable costs that support training and/or placement in employment.

7g. Training Services

Primary training activities for adult and dislocated worker participants who are unable to secure employment directly through career management facilitated job search services include: On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Individual Training Account (ITA) vouchers for occupational skills classroom training. Customized training will be considered as appropriate.

For any WIOA adult or dislocated worker services participant who is considered for Training Services, the Career Coach will assure that specific requirements are met. The participant must express an interest in training and have demonstrated that they are unlikely to obtain living wage employment through job search activities alone. The Career Coach must also determine whether the participant demonstrates the ability and commitment needed to complete training. Finally, the Career Coach and participant must concur on the type of training needed, and on the likelihood that training will lead to achievement of ISS employment goals, including documentation that the training occupation is in-demand.

7h. On the Job Training

On the Job Training (OJT) is individualized training that occurs on the job and is provided by an employer, while the participant is employed and is receiving full time pay for the job they are being trained. Training reimbursement to the employer is based on up to 75% of the trainee's straight time wages during the training period. This type of training supports employment or re-employment by reimbursing the employer for a portion of the expenses incurred during the training period. For each participant enrolled in this activity, a training agreement is developed with the employer that specifies the skills to be learned and the anticipated number of hours to achieve proficiency in the position. Each OJT contract training plan is individualized and emphasizes the development of the skills needed to fill the gap between the employer's requirements and the participant's skills.

7i. Customized Training

Customized recruitment and training may be used to provide high quality training and placement opportunities for participants as well as recruitment, screening, and training assistance to employers with job openings. Customized training programs will be designed collaboratively by employers, program staff and the Business Solutions Team to assure that the employer(s) and all parties involved agree on the program design, the sequence of training activities, and the service delivery schedule. The process for

managing each customized training program varies depending upon the specific mix of components for each individual program.

7j. ITA

Classroom training is provided through the use of “Individual Training Account” (ITA) vouchers. ITA occupational skills classroom training will lead to the attainment of certificates or degrees recognized and valued by employers in the labor market and will lead to employment in high-demand occupations and in emerging and high-demand industry sectors, in the local or regional labor market.

Individuals expressing an interest in classroom training are asked to complete a training information packet. To complete the packet, the individual must research employment opportunities available in their area of training interest and gather information about the training and the institutions where training is offered. Individuals are also asked to describe why they chose the specific area of training, their career goals that are linked to training completion, and the support systems they have available while they are in training. The completed packet is reviewed by staff to determine if the individual’s plan is suitable and realistic and that employment opportunities are available in the area of study being pursued. Following staff approval for training, the training enrollment and training preparation processes begin. Training services may be made available to both employed and unemployed eligible applicants who are registered and meet requirements. The case file must contain a determination of the need for training services as determined through the interview, evaluation, or assessment process.

7k. Follow-up Services

The Career Coaches maintain ongoing, regular contact with adult and dislocated worker participants to review progress on achievement of ISS plans, goals and activities; and for formal review of the ISS to determine if any modification is needed.

In addition, upon successful exit from the program, program staff are required to conduct four (4) quarters of follow-up to ensure participants are not in need of additional services related to their employment. Career Coaches will collect employment information from exited participants through OSMIS or if necessary, telephone contacts, e-mail and/or social media, in the second and fourth quarters after exit. Career Coaches will continue this enhanced follow-up with participants through the end of each participant’s 4th quarter after exit.

8. Youth Services

WIOA Services to Youth program participants are dependent on individual needs. Program services are available to in school youth 14 through 21 years old, and out of school youth are 16 through 24 years of age with individualized service strategies that consider the differing needs of in-school and out-of-school youth.

In-School Youth (ages 14-21), attending school (as defined by State Law) and low income and in one or more of the following:

- Basic skills deficient
- English language learner
- Offender
- Homeless, runaway, or foster child
- Pregnant or parenting
- Individual with a disability
- In need of additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and retain employment

Out-of-School Youth must be ages 16-24, not attending school (as defined by State Law) and in one or more of the following:

- School dropout
- Not attended for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter
- Subject to the juvenile or adult justice system
- Homeless, runaway, or foster child
- Pregnant or parenting
- Individual with a disability
- Low-income, in one of the following categories:
 - Is low income and requires additional assistance to complete an educational program to enter or complete, or to secure and retain, employment.
 - Recipient of secondary school diploma who is low-income and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner.
 - Requires additional assistance and meets program eligibility requirements.

8a. Outreach and Recruitment

Michigan Works! Southwest has implemented a comprehensive outreach and recruitment process designed to engage eligible and suitable youth for WIOA Youth Services from all communities across the region. In order to ensure that potential clients will be aware of the breadth of services available to them, a multi-faceted, flexible, and customized outreach and recruitment process has been designed to support both in-school and out-of-school activities; and those individuals will have every opportunity to connect with services.

Outreach and recruitment is facilitated through:

- maintaining a youth-friendly intake environment,
- maintaining welcoming and easy to access facilities,
- providing potential participants with flexible times and locations for intakes,
- utilizing an easy to navigate and streamlined enrollment procedure, and
- personalizing and customizing the recruitment process.

8b. Orientation, Intake and Eligibility Determination and Verification

Group or individual orientations are conducted on a weekly basis or as often as necessary to enroll potential applicants. These sessions are conducted on-site or at alternate sites including the area schools, community agencies and various public locations.

The orientation format will include information regarding the following:

- the intent of the WIOA Youth Services program elements,
- the benefits and services of the program,
- structure and process,
- eligibility screening,
- suitability screening,
- credentialing opportunities, and
- program requirements for participants.

Additionally, participants will be introduced to follow-up and retention strategies during orientation. Eligibility will be determined on the basis of WIOA requirements.

8c. Case Management

Case management is individualized and goal oriented with a focus on the needs of the individual as related to completion of secondary education and occupational training programs, as well as placement in employment. The Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is completed at the time of enrollment and identifies the employment goals, barriers to employment, educational objectives, and prescribed appropriate services for the participant.

8d. Assessment

Assessment begins during the pre-registration phase and spans the individual's participation in the program ending only after the completion of the final phase of retention. The assessment process explores a multitude of topics including the participant's service needs, academic levels, goals, interests, skills levels, abilities, aptitudes, and supportive service needs as well as barriers and strengths. It also includes a review of basic and occupational skills, prior work experience, employability potential and developmental needs.

Assessment tools will specifically identify each participant's aptitudes, abilities, interests, and career goals. These tools may include, but are not limited to the following:

- WorkKeys/KeyTrain
- O*NET Online Computerized Interest Profiler(CIP)
- Pure Michigan Talent Connect online skill and interest assessments including CareerOneStop Profiler, Pathfinder, Career Matchmaker, Career Explorer, and Virtual Job Shadow
- Michigan Appraisal Test (MAT) for Basic Reading Comprehension and Basic Math Computation
- Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)
- Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Locator for basic reading and math skills
- Assessments completed within 12 months prior to enrollment may also be used when appropriate

8e. Individual Service Strategy (ISS)

The Individual Service Strategy (ISS) will be completed at the time of enrollment and will identify the participant's employment goals, barriers to employment, and educational objectives, as well as prescribed appropriate services for the participant. In partnership with the youth, the ISS is developed and will reflect the needs indicated by the objective assessment as well as the expressed interests and desires of the youth.

Through the creation and development of the ISS, staff will assist youth in:

- Identifying employment/educational goals and plot a course of action that the participant will take, including appropriate non-traditional employment, appropriate achievement objectives and/or appropriate supportive services
- Preparing for post-secondary educational opportunities
- Identifying academic and occupational learning needs
- Preparing for unsubsidized employment opportunities
- Establishing effective connections to the job market, local businesses and in demand industry clusters
- Establishing connections with other community youth programs (i.e., recreational activities, community service, cultural, career/job fairs and other activities)

8f. Required Elements

The goals established from the ISS will be the reference point utilized for determining appropriate program elements for each youth based on assessment, academics, and employment and career goals. Determination regarding which participants will benefit from the elements listed below will be identified during the case management process. Elements are provided through the selected service provider or through an MOU relationship with a local organization to provide those services.

1. Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies.
2. Alternative secondary school offerings.
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing.

In the Michigan Works! Southwest area this may include summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning, pre-apprenticeship program and internships, on the job training, and job shadowing.

Work Experience

The purpose of work experience is to support the basic educational and/or occupational goals of the participant, as identified through objective assessment, ISS, and ongoing case management. In-school youth may have the opportunity to earn school credit for work experience participation, based on the individual's school policies.

Summer Employment Opportunities

Summer employment opportunities are offered to youth through subsidized work experience placements. Work experience placements are structured occupational learning activities that take place in a work setting for a pre-defined period of time, typically held between the months of June-August. This work is currently being supported with Young Professionals Program funding.

Talent Tours

Another of the primary learning objective is developing youth's understanding of different occupations to help them make informed career choices in the future. Through Talent Tours, youth explore potential careers by visiting local employers, onsite or virtually, to meet with company personnel and observe their work environment firsthand. Employers discuss their talent needs and hiring criteria with youth and elaborate on the realities and benefits of their industry. Following each Talent Tour, staff meet with the youth to reinforce the educational and training-related demands of each industry field with the hope of connecting their academic pursuits to their occupational goals.

4. Occupational Skills Training

Staff will work with participants to investigate high demand industries that fall within the individual's interests, skills, and abilities. Individual WorkKeys scores will be cross referenced with industry standards and serve as an initial indicator of an applicant's potential success within a given field. This may include options ranging from short-term credential-based trainings, such as ServSafe, to referrals to existing partnerships with secondary education, CTE programs, Early Middle College and community colleges.

5. Education offered concurrently with, and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training, for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

WIOA Youth in secondary education programs may be enrolled in CTE programs, Early Middle College or in short-term training programs at local colleges based on career assessment outcomes and career goals. In addition, youth will have the opportunity to participate in paid and unpaid work experience, job shadowing and internships in industries related to their career goals. A focus will be on in-demand industries.

6. Leadership development opportunities

Activity options under this program element include:

- exposure to post-secondary educational opportunities
- community and service-learning projects
- peer-centered activities
- teamwork activities
- decision making
- citizenship

Jobs for Michigan Graduates is also offered as a leadership development opportunity. Under the leadership of Youth Solutions, Inc., Michigan Works! Southwest actively participates in Jobs for Michigan Graduates programming working to raise the Michigan Works! Southwest area's, as well as the state of Michigan's, high school graduation rate by expanding mentoring, job readiness, leadership development, and other academic support for students either at risk of dropping out or those who have already dropped out.

7. Supportive services

Necessary supportive services are provided as allowed and available, for participants with identified barriers to employment and education. In addition, participants are referred to community agencies who provide no cost or low-cost assistance as appropriate.

8. Adult mentoring

Referrals for adult mentoring may be made to community partner agencies as available in each county. In addition to connecting participants with a mentor through agency referrals, staff help participants identify appropriate adult family members, adult family friends, or teachers who could serve as a mentor. Participants often place staff in the role of mentor. These relationships will extend throughout the retention phase of the program and may extend well past the retention period.

9. Follow-up services

Consistent, scheduled, and ongoing post exit follow-up services will be provided by the staff for a twelve (12)-month period following exit.

10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling

Counseling needs will be identified during ISS development, ISS updates, and/or case management meetings. Comprehensive guidance and counseling services will be made available through referral to community agencies or school counselors.

11. Financial literacy counseling

Youth will be trained through individual counseling and group workshops regarding financial literacy topics including but not limited to:

- reading and understanding paycheck stubs
- financial consequences of missing a day of work
- meaning of a 25-cent raise
- getting out of debt
- interest calculations
- consumerism and making spending decisions
- understanding credit cards
- setting financial goals
- credit reports
- making and keeping to a budget
- savings strategies
- setting up and maintaining bank and savings and checking accounts

Guest speakers from area businesses and community agencies will be scheduled to assist with trainings.

12. Entrepreneurial skills training:

Staff will utilize the Business Entrepreneurship course on NovaNET/ GradPoint and portions of the Generation E coursework to teach youth the steps needed to research, develop, and implement business plans. Staff will schedule local business owners to speak to the youth about their personal experience regarding business development and daily operation. Staff will also promote information and workshops of local Chamber of Commerce and local community partners.

13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about the in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local areas including talent tours.

As discussed above, youth will participate in Talent Tours to area businesses to gain a better understanding of in-demand occupations, employer's expectations and the skills required for each in-demand occupation. Youth will then participate in career exploration related to the in-demand occupation of their choice via WorkKeys and O*NET OnLine. Youth may also receive additional exposure to in-demand occupations through work experience placements and job shadowing opportunities.

14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Using career exploration assessments as a guide, staff will develop a career pathway plan with each participant. For youth requiring postsecondary training to attain career goals, staff will assist youth with the completion of college applications, entrance exams, FAFSA and scholarship applications. College tours and Talent Tours will be offered throughout the year to provide participants with information regarding training requirements for multiple career fields. Staff will also provide training regarding the transition from high school to college and the increased rigor of daily operations in post-secondary education and training programs.

9. Basic Skills Deficiency

Basic Skills Deficiency includes individuals who meet the following criteria:

Youth who have English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test.

OR

A youth or adult who is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, or in the individual's family or in society. Locally defined this definition will include those who score below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test, individuals who have lost employment due to their inability to read, write, compute or speak English at a level required by the employer, or those who have been unable to pass pre-employment assessments due to their inability to read, write, compute or speak English at a level that met the employer's requirements.

10. Youth Activities

Section 8 above outlines the available youth workforce investment activities in the four-county Michigan Works! Southwest area. This availability of activities includes services for youth who are individuals with disabilities. The activities described above, in alignment with the collaborations and partnerships discussed throughout this plan with MRS, BSBP, MCTI, and the DART and CEAC Committees ensure that individuals have access to appropriate services.

Requires additional assistance is defined in the Michigan Works! Southwest area, as:

- An individual who requires additional assistance (“needs special assistance”) to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment is defined locally as a youth who faces one or more of the following barriers: referred to or being treated for a substance abuse problem, has frequent suspensions from school (5 or more times) or has been expelled from school, poor academic performance (GPA < 1.5), repeated at least one secondary grade or is one year over age for their grade, behind in school credits, an emancipated youth, have court/agency referrals mandating school attendance, have experienced recent traumatic events, is a victim of abuse or lives in an abusive environment as documented by school official or other qualified professional or lacks a significant work history (not held any one job more than 3 months and/or less than 1 year total work history). Intake staff will document the barrier(s) that identify the youth as “needs special assistance” based on information gathered during the intake process.

11. Waivers

For PY2022 and PY2023, the [following waivers](#) are currently in place and the notification specifically states:

Requested Waiver: Waiver associated with the requirement at WIOA Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 that the State and local areas expend 75 percent of Governor’s reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).

Response: ETA approves for Program Year (PYs) 2022 and 2023, which includes the entire time period for which states are authorized to spend those funds, the State’s request to waive the requirement that the State expend 75 percent of Governor’s reserve youth funds on OSY. ETA reviewed Michigan’s waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of the State to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. Michigan may lower the expenditure requirement of Governor’s reserve funds to 50 percent for OSY. In addition, ETA approves for PYs 2022 and 2023, which includes the entire time period for which states are authorized to spend those funds, the State’s request to waive the requirement that local areas expend 75 percent of local youth formula funds on OSY. Michigan may lower the local youth funds expenditure requirement to 50 percent for OSY. As a result of this waiver, ETA expects that the number of in-school youth (ISY) served will increase, and performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Youth (including both ISY and OSY) will remain steady or increase for the majority of the WIOA Youth performance indicators.

Requested Waiver: : Waiver of the state workforce development board (SWDB) membership requirements at WIOA Section 101(b)(1) and (c) and the corresponding regulations at 20 CFR 679.110(b)-(c).

Response: ETA approves, with conditions, the State’s request to substitute the WIOA SWDB membership requirements with alternate requirements, through June 30, 2024. ETA reviewed the State’s waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Michigan to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. In implementing this waiver, the Governor must appoint a unique representative for both the Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation programs and extend these representatives voting privileges¹. Under this waiver, ETA accepts all other alterations to SWDB membership and voting privileges as outlined in the State’s waiver request.

In the Michigan Works! Southwest area, the current locally identified target is a minimum of 60 percent for OSY expenditures. This is evaluated on an ongoing basis.

12. Coordination with Education

The work of the Business Solutions Team and employer consortium groups discussed throughout this plan, along with the work of the CEAC discussed below, will allow for the coordination of strategies, enhancement of services and avoidance of duplication. These three mechanisms create an outlet for workforce development, education, and in some cases economic development, to come together to share information and make decisions regarding implementation of services and customer service for job seekers and employers in the Michigan Works! Southwest area. This work includes MiCareerQuest™ events in the four-county region; career fairs with a specific focus on upcoming and recent graduates; and assistance with the redesign of Career Tech Education in Kalamazoo County to expand opportunities and accessibility to more students.

In addition, the Integrated Education and Training Program (IET) collaboration opportunity that was offered through the State of Michigan, allowed the opportunity for Michigan Works! Southwest to further enhance the relationship with Adult Education and coordinate education and literacy and workforce training and preparation to best serve local customers.

12a. CEAC

The Career and Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) serves as the regional equivalent of educational advisory groups, required by Public Act 491 of 2006 to serve in an advisory capacity to the local WDB on educational issues. Representation on the CEAC include local WDB members, employers outside of the WDB employer members, labor, local school districts, intermediate school districts, post-secondary institutions, career/technical educators, STEM education, parents of public-school pupils, academic educators; and others (i.e., Adult Education, Job Corps, Native Americans).

The mission of the MWSW CEAC is “to create and support a talent preparation and development system that will provide all students, youth to the adult learner, with the necessary academic, technical, and work behavior skills that will meet business and industry needs to maintain and enhance the economy of MWSW region.” To accomplish its mission, the CEAC advises the local WDB on matters related to educational components of talent preparation and development services and federal adult education.

To achieve its primary purpose, the CEAC is specifically responsible:

1. To serve in an advisory capacity to the MWSW WDB on a broad range of youth and adult educational issues, including advisement of strategic workforce development plans.

- 2 To coordinate with other educational entities, in guiding career development programs and career pathways, such as high schools, community colleges, career and technical education, adult education, workforce development programs, Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers, Offender Success programs, corrections education, veterans' programs, and college access networks in support of the WDB's mission and strategic workforce development plans.
- 3 To assist the local Workforce Development Board, consistent with the WIOA of 2014, with the development and implementation of career pathways.
- 4 To maximize existing community-based resources that will avoid duplication of services.
- 5 To provide direction, strategies, and support for implementing, improving, and expanding Adult Learning initiatives to include educational, job training and life skills programs in collaboration with the State Section 107 fiscal agent.
- 6 Collaborate with the region's intermediate school district that is the assigned fiscal agent in the development of the Michigan Department of Education's Regional Strategic Plan. Strategies include but are not limited to: Labor Market Information, career cluster rankings, and working to accurately reflect employers' demand for talent.
- 7 To ensure educational programs and service delivery align to the Department of Education and the LEO requirements.
- 8 To report on the WDB's performance metrics which include but are not limited to Registered Apprenticeship and promoting career pathway and exploration events.

13. Supportive Services and Needs Related Payments

Michigan Works! Southwest has elected to provide supportive services and needs related payments, as applicable and appropriate. Total funds available for support services are established within the requirements of the fund source and negotiated with each subrecipient/service provider.

Support services are provided to individuals who are determined eligible, registered, and actively participating in WIOA career and/or training services or actively participating in one or more of the fourteen elements of activity established under the WIOA youth program or actively participating in activities allowable in the AEP/PATH program or actively participating in a National Emergency Grant (NEG) funded activity; and the individual is compliant with program requirements, and unable to obtain support services through other programs, agencies, or community sources.

Support services are also available through other Michigan Works! Initiatives and fund sources such as FAE&T, LEAP and BRES.

Local support service limitations and restrictions have been established by Michigan Works! Southwest and fall within federal and state policy guidelines and funding source requirements.

13a. Support Services Documentation

Support service documentation will be maintained in all participant files, as well as recorded on the OSMIS.

14. Transportation and Other Supportive Services

To meet the needs of employers and job seekers throughout the Michigan Works! Southwest areas and all of Region 8, transportation and support service coordination has ample opportunity to be enhanced through the potential breaking down of county line restrictions and barriers of service area alignment by county and will be prioritized throughout the life of this plan.

14a. Transportation

Throughout the area, public transportation entities, through the guidance and assistance of Michigan Works! Southwest, has already started work to break down the geographic barriers of county lines and have completed trial projects of transporting job seekers and incumbent workers across county lines to job search and ultimately maintain employment.

Existing community transportation partners, who Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to work with to explore options of cross regional transportation, include:

- Battle Creek Area Transit
- Branch Area Transit Authority, Inc.
- Kalamazoo Metro Transit
- Marshall Albion Transit Authority
- Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
- Saint Joseph County Transit Authority

14b. Other Supportive Services

Supportive services, often restricted by federal and state policy guidelines, are also analyzed for coordination across the geographic area to best serve job seekers and workers. Potential partners could include, but are not limited to:

- 211
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Area Agency on Aging and Commission on Aging
- Burma Center

- Branch County Community Network
- Centro De Ayuda
- Centro Vida
- Childcare Resources
- Churches
- Community Action
- The Coordinating Council of Calhoun County
- County Land Banks
- Disability Network of Southwestern Michigan
- Employer Resource Networks®
- Food Pantries
- Free Stores
- Goodwill Industries of Central Michigan's Heartland
- Habitat for Humanity
- Healthcare and Dental Agencies that provide services for the uninsured
- Housing Resources, Inc. and other agencies that assist with housing needs
- Legal Aid
- Literacy Agencies
- Meals on Wheels
- Mental health & counseling agencies
- Neighborhood programs
- Salvation Army
- Senior Services
- Southwest Michigan Community Development Corporation
- Southwestern Michigan Urban League
- St. Joseph County Human Services Commission
- Telamon
- United Way organizations within the area
- Urban Alliance
- Urban League of Battle Creek
- Veterans Services and other organizations that serve veterans
- Voces of Battle Creek
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited

Staff from Michigan Works! Southwest are active with support service providers and transportation entities to assist in guiding and leading current and future coordination of transportation and supportive service delivery across the region.

15. Local Per Funding Cap

Michigan Works! Southwest tracks this for management purposes, but there is no established cap, unless guidance has been provided by the State.

16. Maximizing Coordination

At the start of every year, upon allocation, analysis of performance requirements and historical data regarding participants served, funding caps may be implemented.

Through the strategies and systems discussed in this plan, maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication is priority. Strategies to achieve this include:

- Co-location of many partners within the Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers,
- One-Stop Operator facilitation of partner meetings, at all locations,
- Directors Meetings, consisting of the leadership staff in the Michigan Works! Southwest area, focusing on information sharing and continuous improvement,
- Customer co-enrollment in programs and services, and
- Other appropriate service referrals for customers.

17. Wagner-Peyser

17a. Local Contact Information

Amy Meyers, Deputy Director
222 South Westnedge Avenue
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Cell: 231.557.8593
E-Mail: meyers@upjohn.org

17b. Service Provider

Effective July 1, 2023, at the direction of the Workforce Development Board for Michigan Works! Southwest, Wagner-Peyser services will be directly provided. At the time of this modification to the WIOA local plan, a transition plan is in place for service provisions.

1	2	3	4	5
MWA PROVIDED	CONTRACTED SERVICE PROVIDER	NAME OF ENTITY	TYPE OF ENTITY	Merit Based Entity
X				

17c. Cost

Labor exchange services are available, without cost, to all job seekers and employers. A range of services are available at different levels of intensity provided through staffing arrangements comprised of several partner agencies.

17d. Provision of Labor Exchange Services

All Employment Services are provided through the individual One-Stop Service Centers identified in this section.

17e. Self-Service

At the Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers, there is universal access to services involving self-help or other unassisted basic career services not tailored to specific needs or basic information, including:

- Self-service, including virtual services
- Facilitated self-help
- Job listings
- Labor Market Information (LMI)
- Labor exchange services
- Information about other services

One-Stop Navigators are positioned at each Michigan Works! Southwest service center to respond as the initial point of contact and to provide both verbal and written assistance. Information provided to job seekers on workforce development services is updated on an ongoing basis as new information is received.

In addition, computers with internet access and current word processing software are available for use at the Michigan Works Southwest Service Centers. Open access wireless internet connectivity allows the general public flexibility in accessing the internet. Designated Employment Service staff are trained and available during all regular hours of operation to provide hands-on assistance to customers.

Job seekers and employers visiting or calling Employment Services for assistance are informed of the most direct means of accessing information and posting information on the Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC). The PMTTC (mitalent.org) is available to individuals and employers to enter resumes or job orders, search the available job openings and resumes, and access other job search resources.

17f. Facilitated Services

Facilitated labor exchange services are designed to assist job seekers in finding employment by providing

access and direction on how to use Michigan's Internet-based Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC) labor exchange system. The range of facilitated labor exchange employment services available to job seekers include:

- Computer access to Internet
- Instruction on use of Pure Michigan Talent Connect
- Assistance with use of computer,
- Assistance in development of a profile and/or resume on the PMTC,
- Assistance with data entry,
- Personalized resume review,
- Accommodations for persons with disabilities,
- Referral of eligible veterans and migrant/seasonal farm workers in need of staff assisted services to a designated LEO staff.
- Information on all workforce development services available through the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development System, and
- Mock interviews.

Michigan Works! Southwest service centers are equipped with a range of hard copy and electronic resources in their Resource Centers, all of which are available at the convenience of the job seeker and employers. Employment Services Representatives monitor the use of the Resource Centers to ensure adequate resources are available; equipment is in working order and that information is relevant, current, and accessible for individuals with disabilities. Resource Centers are maintained to ensure that information and technology is current. While there are variations between sites, the typical Resource Center will have a number of resources, including but not limited to, job search videos, access to copy machine and fax, resume writing software, typing or keyboard software, Internet access, resume and job search strategy resources, Dictionary of Occupational Titles, O*NET (Occupational Information Network), Occupational Outlook Handbook, Michigan Manufacturers Directory, financial aid information, and other resources related to developing career readiness skills.

Upon entry into the One-Stop Service Center, job seekers requesting services will be asked to complete an electronic intake, which includes employment status, career interest, family size and income. The information will be used to determine if the job seeker is a potential candidate for services under WIOA.

Potential WIOA eligible job seekers who are actively seeking employment, and who are identified as needing services above and beyond the identified facilitated services, will be considered for referral to WIOA partner agencies for individualized career and/or training services. Staff will discuss WIOA training with potential candidates, informing them about basic service eligibility, participation requirements, compatibility, and benefits. This may include discussing career goals, training options and the required support systems for a participant to be successful in services (i.e., transportation, childcare, etc.). If both the job seeker and staff agree that referral to a WIOA partner is appropriate, a referral form will be completed and forwarded to the WIOA partner agency.

17g. Staff Assisted Services

Job seekers requiring assessment/testing, employment counseling, federal bonding assistance, referral to training, etc. are assisted with general information on the availability of services and, as necessary,

referred to appropriate program staff. In addition, Job Search Workshops are available for customers desiring to improve their job search skills. While actual schedules for job search workshops may vary depending on customer interest (this service is optional for customers), numerous opportunities for classroom training/workshops are offered weekly and include training that addresses a number of critical areas, a few of which include:

<u>Job Search Strategies</u>	<u>Resume and Employment Letter Writing</u>	<u>Applications and Interviewing</u>
Recognizing skills and abilities	The structure of a resume	Being prepared for an interview
Determining suitability of a job/career	Preparing a resume	Positive Attitude
Use of Networking and Technology	Cover, follow-up and/thank you letters	Dressing for success
Making the initial contact		

Information regarding the availability of group, small group or individual meetings, to be held in person or virtually, is available at the service centers, on the Michigan Works! Southwest website and social media sites and information is distributed broadly throughout the community, as appropriate.

17h. Career Service Delivery

Three levels of Employment Services funded through the Wagner-Peyser allocation are provided at the One Stop Centers in the Michigan Works! Southwest area. These services are available to the general public, employers and job seekers, at no cost. The three levels of services are: (1) Self Services (employers) / Basic Career – Self Service (job seeker); (2) Staff Assisted Services (employer) / Basic Career – Staff Assisted Service (job seeker) and; (3) Individualized – Staff Assisted Services (employers and job seekers).

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Basic Career Services will be provided concurrently with the three levels of Employment Services. The following should be noted: (1) WIOA Basic Career Services which will be funded using WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker program funds as well as Wagner Peyser employment services funds; (2) A portion of the available WIOA program funds will be designated for Basic Career Services; and (3) Individuals who are unable to validate their authorization to work in the United States may only access basic labor exchange services and workforce information through Basic Career services.

Basic career services are services that are universally accessible and must be made available to all individuals seeking employment and training services through the One Stop System. Services that fall within this category may include, but is not limited to:

- Determining whether or not a customer is eligible to receive assistance from the youth, adult or

dislocated worker programs;

- Outreach, intake and orientation to information about services available through the One Stop. Individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance needing reemployment services are included in this population;
- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive services needs;
- Labor exchange services;
- Referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, within the One Stop, as well as other workforce development programs;
- Labor market statistics;
- Information pertaining to training provider courses and costs;
- Information regarding the availability of supportive services or assistance, including referrals to those services;
- Assistance regarding financial aid for training and education not provided under WIOA; and
- Information and assistance regarding filing UI claims.

If an individual is in need of further services to obtain or retain employment, in particular those individuals with barriers to employment, individualized career services must be made available to the customer. It should be noted that previous assessments by partner programs may be used to make this determination. Services that fall within this category may include, but is not limited to:

- Comprehensive and special assessments of skill levels and service needs;
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan;
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning;
- Short-term pre-vocational services;
- Internships and work experiences linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities and development of soft skills to help individuals become job ready;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out of area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

WIOA Individualized Career Services will be available for customers who are interested in, and where applicable, eligible for this level of services. WIOA Individualized Career Services will be funded and available through the applicable WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs.

WIOA Career Services include three types: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. There is no required sequence of services, that is, they can be provided in any order, thus enabling job seekers to access training immediately.

WIOA Training Services will be available for customers who are interested in this service, meet applicable eligibility requirements, and following an interview, assessment, or evaluation, are determined to need training services to find or retain employment in a locally in-demand occupation. It

should be noted that WIOA Training Services will be funded and available through the WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs as well as the Out-of-School component of the WIOA Youth program. A minimum of 25% of available WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program funds will be designated for these services for Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

WIOA follow-up services including case management, must be provided to WIOA participants for a minimum of twelve (12) months following exit.

17i. Staff Resource Allocation

Employment Services personnel provide functional coordination through the co-location of LEO representatives in the Service Centers. Services and allocations of MWA Service Center staff FTEs (full time equivalencies) are based on current activity and funding for the year beginning July 1, 2023 and thereafter. Modifications may be necessary if actual funding levels vary or are altered. MWA Service Center staff are cross trained to accommodate increased volume of customer demand and periodic absence of staff assigned these functions as a primary task.

Employment Service Staff - Location by FTE*				
Employment Service Function	Kalamazoo	St. Joseph	Branch	Calhoun
MWA Staff*				
Facilitated/Staff Assisted Services	3.325	0.95	0.85	2.975
LEO Staff				
Veterans Representative(s)	1	By appointment	By appointment	1
Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA)	2	1.25	1.25	1.25
Total State FTE	3	1.25	1.25	2.25
Total MWA and State FTE	6.325	2.2	2.1	5.225

**Allocations of MWA staff FTE (full time equivalencies) are based on current activity and funding for the year beginning July 1, 2023. Actual deployment of staff FTEs between activities fluctuates based on customer demand and available funding.*

17j. Unemployment Insurance (UI) Work Test

Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants are provided written instruction forms by the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) upon filing a claim for Unemployment Insurance. These instructions require the claimant to register for employment through PMTC. While this stage may be accomplished from any computer with access to the Internet, claimants are required to “verify” this registration at a Michigan

Works! Service Center. The MWA Employment Service staff will view the claimants' on-line registration before providing verification.

The UIA referral card, provided by the UIA, is stamped, and certified by designated Employment Services staff at the Service Center.

Following validation, Employment Service personnel provide certified registration and referral card(s) to the designated UIA office contact in accordance with schedules and procedures established by the UIA. The verification of work-test is electronically logged, providing the date of verification and the claimant's identification number.

Also, UIA claimants who visit Employment Service sites to update their resumes may have this activity confirmed with the UIA to ensure their eligibility for unemployment insurance is maintained.

A component of the UIA work-test activity is the monitoring of job seeker activity to ensure compliance with the "available and seeking work" requirement. While the PMTC system is currently limited in the manner in which job seeker job search activity may be monitored, a number of ancillary procedures are available to conduct a minimum level of oversight, including letters from employers indicating a job seeker's refusal of employment. Upon identification of a situation of non-compliance, Employment Services staff completes the required LEO Claimant Advice Slip and transmits the information to the designated UIA contact.

A UIA Problem Resolution Office is located within the Kalamazoo Service Center, with two UIA staff on site, when services are available in person.

17k. RESEA

As RESEA has permanently replaced the mandatory Profiling Program, only individuals referred from the UIA may receive services through the RESEA program. The goal of this program, as offered through Employment Services, is to provide customized services to claimants deemed most likely to exhaust their UI benefits. Early intervention with a proactive approach should result in returning the unemployed back to work sooner.

Initial contact: Upon the claimant making contact with Michigan Works! Southwest, staff will hold the RESEA appointment with the claimant within 21 days after the "Letter Sent Date" as indicated in OSMIS.

RESEA appointments will consist of a one-on-one meeting with an Employment Specialist where the seven RESEA components will be completed, including: UIA Eligibility Assessment, verification of an active PMTC account, a review of MWA services offered, development of an Individual Service Strategy (ISS), review of Monthly Record of Work Search, discussion of specific LMI and referrals to appropriate reemployment services or training.

The Career Coach will then determine the next steps for services and referrals to be provided for the

claimant. Mandated subsequent RESEA appointments are also scheduled for half of the individuals who attend an initial RESEA appointment and are still receiving unemployment benefits five weeks after their initial RESEA appointment.

A locally designed RESEA Form will be used by the Career Coach upon completion of the RESEA appointment(s) with the claimant and will indicate the outcome of RESEA appointment (complete/failed to complete/no show). The RESEA Form will also include all additional referrals. RESEA Form as well as the completed ISS will be used to update fields in OSMIS.

Additional reemployment services to be offered may include additional one-on-one appointments to review the RESEA components discussed above, including: verification of an active PMTC account, further review of MWA services offered, further development of an Individual Service Strategy (ISS), review of Monthly Record of Work Search, discussion of specific LMI and additional referrals to appropriate reemployment services or training. Services may also include assistance in job seeking and employability skill building.

17l. Participating in a System for Clearing Labor between the States

Interstate and Intrastate Clearance Orders are processed by MWA Employment Services staff. Designated MWA Employment Services staff is assigned responsibility for this function to ensure prompt and accurate processing. This procedure would include:

- Contacting the Talent IT Systems staff in the respective region/state that the job order is being generated to verify employer legitimacy.
- Encourage the employer to use the PMTC.
- Notify the Labor Exchange Services Division to arrange special recruitment, if appropriate.

17m. Services to Veterans

Veterans are provided access to all of the One-Stop services and resources. Additionally, one (1) LEO Veterans Career Advisor is co-located at the Calhoun County Service Center as well as the Kalamazoo County Service Center. General procedures include the following:

- Information is posted in conspicuous places within the Service Center of the additional services available to veterans, including priority in vocational guidance, training, and job placement services in accordance with the order of priority established by law and the availability of a Veterans Employment Representative.
- Each individual entering the Service Center for employment services is asked of their veteran

status in the context that additional services and priorities are available for veterans and they are asked to complete the Application Form.

- Each individual indicating a veteran status are provided with written information about the services available to veterans (in addition to those available to the general public) and the name of the Employment Services Veteran's Representative at the Service Center site.
- If desired by the veteran, and if they are eligible based upon the application form, a direct referral is made to the Employment Services Veterans Representative in accordance with the procedures provided by the Employment Services Veterans Representative.
- The Employment Services representatives, in consultation with the Veteran's Representative, would coordinate the provision of additional facilitated and staff assisted services.

17n. Veterans' Priority

In accordance with the priority established by the Jobs for Veterans Act, Public Law 107-288, all individuals registering for employment services are asked to indicate their veteran status. Registrants that have indicated a veteran status are immediately "flagged." Veterans are assisted with initial registration service and advised orally and in written form of additional services available to them, including preference in referral to training and employment opportunities.

Veterans and eligible spouses are provided preference in the access to services offered through the One-Stop Service Center. That is, when all other variables are constant, the veterans and eligible spouses will have priority over all non-veterans.

The One-Stop Centers display signage that clearly describes and promotes priority of service. In addition, this information is available on our website, at our access points, and on informational brochures available at our service centers.

17o. Services to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs)

Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers have access to all of the Employment Services offered. As requested, or as needed, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers who request staff assisted services beyond the basic employment services offered are referred to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker staff. ES staff will consult with the Agriculture Employment Specialist to help migrant and seasonal farm workers get connected to additional available resources.

17p. A description of any other planned services or activities for which Wagner-Peyser funds will be utilized.

i Business Solutions Team

Michigan Works! Southwest has implemented a service delivery strategy for addressing the needs of

employers, as discussed above.

ii. Employability Skills Training

Employability skills are transferable skills often referred to as “soft skills” which represent essential functional, attitudinal, and knowledge-based skills such as communicating effectively, teamwork, computer literacy, and critical thinking skills.

In response to employer requests to further prepare Michigan job seekers for employment, work readiness skills curriculum is made available to customers through multiple avenues including:

- Trainings available to the public
- One-on-one case management sessions between customers and job seekers
- Special events at the request of employers and partners

The MWA will deliver these standards in a variety of ways including group workshops, computer-based learning, group discussion activities, role-playing, guest speakers, virtual learning, etc. Employability skills training will be offered every other month and will be provided by the trained Employment Services staff or a qualified professional in the area of instruction:

- Critical Thinking/Problem Solving
- Oral Communications
- Written Communications
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Manage Conflict/Negotiation Skills
- Information Technology Applications
- Professionalism/Work Ethic
- Diversity
- Creativity/Innovation
- Lifelong Learning/Self Direction
- Ethics/Social Responsibility
- Customer Service

iii. Fidelity Bonding

Fidelity bonding assistance is provided where employers have identified this as a requisite for employment. The bond can be issued to the employer as soon as the job seeker has a job offer.

Fidelity bonding is free for the first six months of coverage. The employer is responsible for bonding after this period. Designated MWA Employment Services staff is assigned to manage this process to ensure prompt service and full compliance with Employment Services procedures.

18. Navigators

18a. Healthy Michigan Plan Navigators

Michigan Works! Southwest staff serve as Healthy Michigan Plan (HMP) Navigators, assisting HMP participants, through the Wagner Peyser Employment Services system. When Michigan Works! Southwest services are available in person, the HMPN will work to guide HMP participants to employment and training related services and supports to assist participants secure and maintain training and employment. The navigator is available to educate impacted participants on requirements and available services, make referrals, and assess and manage other caseload related impacts resulting from the implementation of the Medicaid work requirements. The navigators are incumbent staff who have extensive community relationships and utilize these relationships to enhance the guidance provided to HMP participants. Healthy Michigan Plan funding concluded at the time of the update of this plan. This section is no longer applicable to our area.

18b. Refugee Navigators

Refugee Navigators are committed to providing support to refugee families as they transition into the American workforce. The goal of the navigator is to support refugee individuals who may face significant language and cultural barriers, as well as common employment barriers, such as and difficulties finding adequate housing and transportation. Refugee Navigators are available at the Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers to provide support and resources to immigrants and other persons granted legal authorization to work in the United States from distressed locations outside of North America.

19. Adult Education and Literacy

In addition to work through the CEAC, discussed above, Adult Education and Literacy Activities are available through the education partnerships outlined, as well as with county level literacy councils.

Adult education, high school completion and GED prep services are available through the following partners:

- Miller-Stone Building – Battle Creek Public Schools
- Calhoun County Jail – Battle Creek Public Schools
- St. Joseph County Jail
- Centreville Community Education
- Coldwater High School
- Comstock Adult Education

- Sturgis Public Schools
- Barrows Adult Education
- Kalamazoo Public Schools

Some partner programs also offer GED assistance through online learning opportunities using self-paced online courseware.

Consistent with the WIOA Sections 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Section 232, MWSW has the opportunity to carry out the review of local applications submitted under Title II. A group of MWSW Workforce Development Board members form an RFP review committee and conduct a review of the submitted applications to determine alignment with the Michigan Works! System, making recommendations, as needed.

20. MOUs

Copies of MOUs are submitted to LEO-WD upon receipt of signatures. A template is attached. The MOUs outline how education, workforce, economic development, and other required One-Stop partners will carry out the requirements for integration of customer focused services. These partnerships reduce administrative burden and increase access to the entire set of services available in the local One-Stop delivery system.

21. Grant Recipient

The County of Kalamazoo (Board of Commissioners) has been designated as the Grant Recipient by the State of Michigan to provide for the planning, implementation, delivery, and overall management of workforce development services in Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph Counties, under its authority as the Grant Recipient.

The Board of Commissioners is the legislative policy making branch of Kalamazoo County Government. The Board is responsible to the citizens for development and administration of policies and the annual budget. The Board has nine members who are elected to office for a term of two years from districts selected according to population. They are assisted by a number of citizen advisory boards and commissions.

22. Competitive Process

Procurement of goods and services, including training services that are made as exceptions to the ITA process is a function of the Michigan Works! Southwest Area Procurement and Property Management System. All procurements conducted with funds provided to the Michigan Works! Southwest System are conducted in such a manner to ensure free and open competition.

In addition to public notice of procurements given the availability of funds and solicitation for proposals

are announced publicly in meetings and on the Michigan Works! Southwest website. Written and/or email notices are sent to organizations on the Vendor Inventory list and extended mailing list (i.e., community-based organizations, educational institutions, etc.) as determined by the MWA.

All subrecipients awarded subaward agreements or contracts from the Michigan Works! Southwest Agency are required to comply with state and federal procurement regulations and local WDB guidance. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The establishment of written procurement standards that comply with state and/or federal requirements applicable to the programs covered under the respective grants and contracts.
- Establishment of property control and record management procedures that comply with state and/or federal requirements.
- Establishment of procedures that address “Standards of Conduct,” “Conflict of Interest” and discrimination as they apply to all procurement decisions.

A competitive Request For Proposal (RFP) process is used in the selection of subrecipients when awarding sub-grants and contracts for the WIOA Title I activities. The Workforce Development Board members are offered the opportunity to serve on the Workforce Development Board’s RFP Review Committee where members will participate in the evaluation of proposals based on the criteria outlined in the RFP instructions and offer a recommendation. The RFP Review Committee considers the following:

- Management Capabilities which examine the management performance of each applicant organization based on a review of the organization’s qualifications and experiences described in response to the RFP Instructions and any of the documentation provided.
- Programmatic Capabilities including ensuring the program design demonstrates an understanding of required and optional services including administrative responsibilities, resource coordination and integration, community partnering, customer service, data collection responsibilities, staffing and management planning.
- Performance Objectives (outcome expectations, expenditure and service level plan, etc.)
- Budget Plan
- Overall Assessment of the proposal including consideration the proposal’s Executive Summary, quality of responses in the aggregate relative to completeness, consistency, reasonableness for the services proposed, cost and performance outcomes.

23. Local Performance

As noted in section one, Michigan Works! Southwest will strive to achieve the below levels of performance, for program years 2022 and 2023, for programs under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner- Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of the WIOA.

	<u>PY 2022</u>	<u>PY 2023</u>
<u>Adult</u>		
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	88.60%	88.60%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	83.60%	83.60%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$6,192	\$6,192
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	77.30%	77.30%
Measurable Skills Gain	65.10%	65.10%
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>		
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	90.10%	90.10%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	87.60%	87.60%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$7,914	\$7,914
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	76.90%	76.90%
Measurable Skills Gain	67.60%	67.60%
<u>Youth</u>		
Employment or Placement Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	80.60%	80.60%
Employment or Placement Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	72.80%	72.80%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$3,660	\$3,660
Credential Attainment 4 th Quarter After Exit	71.40%	71.40%
Measurable Skills Gain	33.30%	33.30%
<u>Wagner-Peyser</u>		
Employment Rate 2 nd Quarter after Exit	65.00%	65.00%
Employment Rate 4 th Quarter after Exit	63.00%	63.00%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$5,175	\$5,175

24. High Performing Board

Michigan Works! Southwest has implemented criteria to support the development and review of strategies for continuous improvement of the workforce investment system in the Michigan Works! Southwest area. This is an ongoing process of continuous improvement of the local board, one-stop operator, one-stop partners, and service providers that support effective service delivery to workers, job seekers, youth, and employers through the engagement of state and local leaders.

The board membership has been built and is maintained, as directed by the WIOA and state policy, creating an environment of engagement and integrity making it possible:

- to provide the highest quality of service to job seekers, incumbent workers, and employers,
- implement a system of accountability, and
- build capacity in the four-county area.

Strategic planning at the workforce development level, facilitated by Michigan Works! Southwest, and inclusive of all key stakeholders, has been completed and will be continually reviewed and analyzed for continuous improvement and appropriate updates due to the ever-changing economy and workforce dynamics of the Michigan Works! Southwest area.

The Michigan Works! Southwest WDB strives to provide the highest quality of service, by a well-trained and dedicated staff, that is customer focused, inclusive, and diverse. In addition, the Board is striving to build capacity in the four-county area through:

- Outreach to customers by providing community-based services;
- Outreach to community partners;
- Outreach to employers;
- Leveraging local funding;
- Activities to target special populations;
- Staff and Board member participation in community committees/action groups;
- Research projects with W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research;
- Pilot projects with the State of Michigan, including the Families Forward Demonstration, the Learn, Earn, and Provide Pilot, and Goal4It! Career Coaching Model with PATH; and
- Partnering with large regional events, including Career.Life.Expo., MiCareerQuest™ Southwest, and Manufacturing Day events.

24a. Effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria the local board will implement to assess their One-Stop centers.

Multiple strategies, as noted throughout this plan, are used to evaluate effectiveness of one-stop centers and services, as well as determine continuous improvement opportunities. These include, but are not limited to:

- The WDB Monitoring and Evaluation Committee;
- Program Monitoring;
- The development and availability of disability awareness desktop training;
- Local professional development and resources to provide technical assistance for subrecipients/service providers;
- Professional development opportunities available through the Michigan Works! Association; and
- Customer satisfaction surveys.

24b. Allocation of One-Stop center infrastructure funds

In the Michigan Works! Southwest area, a local funding mechanism is used and includes costs of the facility, technology, and other shared expenses.

Shared Infrastructure Costs

Facilities Costs including:

- Lease
- Facilities Maintenance
- Property and Casualty Insurance
- Security Services
- Cleaning Services

Technology Costs Including:

- Telecommunications and Internet
- Equipment and Technology Costs

Other Shared Costs

Costs Related to Board Functions

- Costs Associated with Outreach

Costs to Promote Service Integration

- One-Stop Service Center Reception

24c. Roles and contributions of One-Stop partners, including cost allocation

The roles and responsibilities of partners are outlined in the attached MOU. A required partner's share of these costs is based on its proportionate use or relative benefit for each county and determined using a full-time equivalency (FTE) methodology.

25. Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

Training services will be provided through the use of individual training accounts in the Michigan Works! Southwest area, in the manner outlined below.

25a. Funding for ITA Vouchers

As part of the program design described in Request for Proposal (RFP) responses and the budget development process, each service provider sets aside a portion of their allocation to fund training activities using ITA Vouchers. This level of funding is negotiated annually with the Michigan Works! Southwest Administrative staff as part of the contract renewal process. The level of funding set aside for ITA Vouchers considers both the demand for ITAs and the total amount of the annual program allocation. All ITA vouchers issued through Michigan Works! Southwest are processed through the MW Administrative/Finance Office, including payment for training and the related expenses.

25b. Use of ITA Vouchers

ITA Vouchers are to be issued only for skill enrichment or skill training in an area that directly leads to the attainment of an occupationally recognized credential in an in-demand and/or emerging industry or occupation in the Michigan Work! Southwest labor market area and whose completion time is within the allowable length of the ITA voucher.

25c. Informed Customer Choice

The Michigan Works! Southwest Agency assures consistent application of federal, state, and local policies for training research, planning, decision making and fund obligations for ITAs.

- Unless otherwise allowable by funding source or policy, service providers only approve funding for those program or courses of study for which vendors have successfully completed the process to be listed on the Michigan Training Connect (MiTC) including maintenance of annual updates.
- Being listed on the MiTC as available in the Michigan Works! Southwest Area does not necessarily constitute approval of a training program for use by local service providers.

26. Review Period

As required, the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board presents this *WIOA Local Plan Modification for the Michigan Works! Southwest Area* for review and comment. In accordance with Section III of State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Policy Issuance: 20-07, change 1, the plan will be available for review and comment for a period of thirty calendar days.

A summary of the document will be released at one Workforce Development Board Meeting in March 2023 and one Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners meeting in May 2023. The summary will indicate the scope of the plan. In addition, the announcement of the availability to review the plan, will be made at the April 2023 WDB Meeting and the April 2023 CEAC Meeting.

In addition, email notification of the opportunity to review the plan, will be sent to:

- Each member of the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board,
- Each member of the Career Educational and Advisory Council (CEAC),
- Each member of the Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART),
- Each of the Michigan Works! Southwest System Partners,
- Other representatives of business and labor organizations not adequately represented on the Workforce Board or CEAC.

A complete copy of the plan is provided at:

- Michigan Works! Southwest website: www.michiganworkssouthwest.org.
- Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers, upon request.
- Michigan Works! Southwest Administrative Offices, upon request.

Comments on the *WIOA Local Plan Modification for the Michigan Works! Southwest Area* may be submitted in writing to:

Amy Meyers, Deputy Director
Michigan Works! Southwest Area
222 S. Westnedge Avenue
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007-4628

Or comments may be sent by e-mail to: meyers@upjohn.org with the subject line reading: “WIOA Local Plan Comment”

In accordance with the American with Disabilities Act, this *WIOA Local Plan Modification for the Michigan Works! Southwest Area* will be made available in alternative format (large type, audiotape, etc.) upon request.

Note added after the 2022 review period: No comments were received during the comment period.

27. Technology

Michigan Works! Southwest fully utilizes the systems in place, including PMTC, MiTC, MiLogin, MI Bridges, Salesforce, OSMIS and APEX, by the state to best serve customers, and will continue to investigate alternate and additional options to implement systems and tools locally to provide superior customer service and case management through technology.

Pure Michigan Talent Connect

Pure Michigan Talent Connect will also be used by all program staff and the Business Solutions Team to assist employers and job seekers by providing strategic tools through the web-based portal connecting

the two. Talent Connect provides tools for employers to identify and develop their talent base while also giving job seekers the opportunity to create a personalized plan to help them more effectively navigate career decisions.

Michigan Training Connect

In addition, Michigan Training Connect, housed within the Pure Michigan Talent Connect system, will be used throughout the Michigan Works! Southwest area to provide job seekers with the tools they need to choose a training program to become employed in a high demand job industry.

MiLogin

The State of Michigan's Identity, Credential and Access Management solution. The MiLogin solution provides enhanced single sign-on (SSO) capabilities in addition to meeting many other business requirements and security and compliance needs.

MI Bridges

Michigan's Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) recognized system for residents to apply for benefits, manage cases, and explore resources.

Salesforce

A customer relationship management software used in the Michigan Works! Southwest area, to collect employer and employer relationship data.

OSMIS

The One Stop Management Information System is used universally in the Michigan Works! Southwest area for data entry and tracking, allowing for seamless delivery of service and information sharing regarding individual job seekers.

In addition to these services, Michigan Works! Southwest has taken an active stance on incorporating virtual services into the service delivery model.

Virtual Services

To assist in availability of services to all individuals, workshops, mock interviewing, and one-on-one career coaching are available via virtual meeting services.

Virtual Job Fairs

During the life of this plan, Michigan Works! Southwest has partnered with the State of Michigan for use of their virtual job fair opportunity. Business Solutions Staff have also worked with, and will continue to work with, local employers who are establishing their own job fair opportunities virtually.

Electronic Paperwork

Incorporating digital signatures and the ability to submit all required forms electronically has been a gradual process and will continue to be implemented.

28. Priority of Service

In the Michigan Works! Southwest area, the priority groups to receive individualized career and training services using WIOA Adult funds will be recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and/or individuals who are basic skills deficient.

In addition, the priority youth groups to receive services using WIOA funds will be out-of-school youth who lack a high school credential or equivalency, low income out-of-school youth with a high school credential or equivalency, and low income in-school youth. Each youth regardless of school or income status at the time of registration must be facing a documentable barrier to success in the labor market.

Within the WIOA priority groups, priority of service to veterans and eligible spouses will be applied.

Individuals served may be unemployed or employed individuals who are not self-sufficient and in need of individualized career and/or training services to help them obtain or retain employment leading to self-sufficiency.

29. Coordination of Rapid Response

The Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board, through the Michigan Works! Southwest Administrative Office, will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities. The WIOA Dislocated Worker and Employment Services (ES) programs designate a staff position to serve as contacts for local Rapid Response service delivery.

The local Rapid Response Team consists of representatives from:

- LEO, State of Michigan
- MWA WIOA Dislocated Worker Program designee
- The Michigan Works! Agency, as appropriate
- Michigan Works! Network, Employment Services

- Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency Rapid Response representative, as available during the process
- Community College, as appropriate
- Business Solutions Team Representative

Lay-off Aversion Strategies and Activities

Layoff aversion consists of strategies and activities to prevent or minimize the duration of unemployment resulting from layoffs. Local layoff aversion activities may include:

- Ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship development activities with businesses in the Michigan Works! Southwest area.
- Identify and connect businesses to training resources for incumbent worker up skilling, new employee development, On-the-Job Training (OJT), customized training, and apprenticeships.
- Establish linkages with economic development organizations at the federal, state, regional, and local levels including retention and expansion activities.
- Participate in activities to support identified at-risk business to regain viability.
- Provide assistance to businesses to identify workforce needs, deliver services to address the needs, and when necessary, assist with the needs related to workforce reductions.

30. Rapid Response Activities

Rapid Response activities encompass activities necessary to plan and deliver services to dislocated workers to facilitate a relatively quick and unencumbered transition to employment or training, following either a permanent closure or mass layoff, or a natural (or other) disaster resulting in a mass job dislocation.

30a. Rapid Response Service Delivery Process

- As partners in the Rapid Response process, LEO-WD and MWA each notify the other partner when a WARN or other notification of a mass layoff or business closing is received.
- The parties exchange information gathered as part of the notification and then mutually agree who serve as the lead contact with the business, the MWA or LEO-WD. The identified lead will be responsible for the timely dissemination of information to other partners and key stakeholders to ensure accurate and up-to-date information is available.

- The lead organization will contact the business to gather additional information about the dislocation and arrange a meeting between key business personnel, local union officials, as applicable, and representatives from Michigan Works!, LEO-WD, UIA (Unemployment Insurance Agency) and other relevant local partners.
 - At the meeting, each entity attending will provide information about the services and resources available to support both the business and the dislocated workers. Agreement will also be requested from the employer to schedule on-site worker orientation meetings.
- Worker orientation meetings will be scheduled to encourage participation from as many affected workers as possible, including those on off shifts and at satellite locations.
 - Topics covered at the orientation sessions will include UIA claim filing information, local reemployment resources available, information about training options, and area resources applicable to unemployed individuals.
 - MWA Rapid Response staff will administer the state required Dislocated Worker Surveys during the worker orientations and process the surveys according to LEO policy.
 - If the business does not agree to on-site worker orientation meetings or timing does not allow the meetings to be scheduled prior to dislocation, efforts will be made to provide printed materials to the affected works or arrangements made for off-site worker orientations.

30b. Joint Adjustment Committee (JAC)

- During the initial meeting with the company and where applicable, a member of the MWA Rapid Response team will discuss the role of a Joint Adjustment Committee and offer the option of forming a JAC to aid in the planning of transition services for impacted workers.
 - The option of forming a JAC will continue to be available throughout the Rapid Response process.
- The MWA will utilize LEO policies and resources to provide any guidance needed for the JAC to devise and oversee an implementation strategy that responds to the reemployment needs of the workers.
- The MWA will administer the JAC funds according to the terms and conditions established by LEO.