

Prosperity Region 8 Regional WIOA Plan

Mid-Cycle Modification

Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass, Van Buren/BCVB MICHIGAN WORKS!

Michigan Works! Southwest

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1. Planning

All seven counties in Prosperity Region 8 are represented in the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan through the programs and services provided by BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest. Economic, community, and workforce development services inclusive of Michigan Works! programming in the counties of Berrien, Cass and Van Buren are provided by BCVB Michigan Works! Workforce development services and Michigan Works! programming in Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties are provided by Michigan Works! Southwest.

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest use labor market data and established best practices as the basis for the provision of customer services that align with the needs of both employers and job seekers. The combined efforts of the two Michigan Works! agencies provide aligned customer centric services in a timely manner to both employers and job seekers throughout the region.

Overview of the Region 8 Planning Process:

Communication

Key leadership in Region 8, along with planning and program staff across all workforce development programs, communicate regularly regarding the services available to job seekers and employers in the communities throughout Region 8. Continuous improvement and adapting to change, such as the ongoing challenges presented by COVID-19, are a priority.

Local Planning

Due to two Michigan Works! areas being located within Region 8, separate local WIOA plans were written, and updated as part of the mid-cycle modification process, for each area to address their unique needs. The local WIOA plan for the Michigan Works! area that covers Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties was developed by BCVB Michigan Works!. The WIOA local plan that covers Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties was developed by Michigan Works! Southwest.

Policy requirements were used as a guide for this process. Strategies within the local plans include:

- Investments in economic, education and workforce training to meet the current and future needs of industry sectors within Region 8;
- Employment driven strategies among all partners within the One-Stop system; and
- Innovation and alignment of employment, training, and education programs to support building a skilled workforce that meets the needs of economic, education and workforce partners.

Required elements of the proposed local plans include:

- An analysis of regional and local labor market data and economic conditions. This includes a description of the strategic vision and goals of the Workforce Development Board in each local area, to prepare an educated and skilled workforce as well as an analysis of expected WIOA performance levels for Titles I, II, III and IV. Baseline measure to be reviewed include:
 - WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services

- Measurable Skills Gains
 - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
 - WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy
 - Employment – Second Quarter After Exit
 - Employment – Fourth Quarter After Exit
 - Median Earnings
 - Credential Attainment Rate
 - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
 - WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser
 - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
 - WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation
 - Measurable Skill Gains
 - Employment Rate in the Second Quarter after Exit
 - Median Earnings in the Second Quarter after Exit
- Strategies of the Workforce Development Board that will be used to align local resources, required partners, and other entities to provide the services of the core programs that will support achieving the strategic vision and goals.
 - Business services strategies that support the facilitation of employer engagement in workforce development programs and continuous improvement of the coordination between the workforce development programs and our economic development partners.
 - A description of the one-stop delivery system.
 - A description as to how the local area will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce development activities with transportation and other supportive services that support employment and employment retention in the local Michigan Works! areas.
 - A description as to how each Workforce Development Board will coordinate workforce development activities, strategies, and services with relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities and avoid duplication of services.
 - A description as to how the workforce development activities of WIOA Title I are coordinated with the adult education and literacy activities of WIOA Title II.
 - A description of the types of training services available in Region 8.
 - A description of the actions of the Workforce Development Board that support becoming or remaining high-performing boards. This includes evaluating the effectiveness of services, accessibility and continuous improvement of their one-stop centers; a description of the roles, responsibilities and contributions of each of the one-stop partners; cost allocation; and the allocation of one-stop infrastructure funding.

Regional Planning

The Regional Plan was developed and updated as part of the mid-cycle modification process, collaboratively by staff in each Michigan Works! area (BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest). These staff were responsible for coordinating the writing and updating of the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan as well as communicating with key stakeholders to verify information included within the plan. Open and ongoing communication and partnerships with education and economic development entities throughout the region was an integral part of this process. Upon completion of the proposed Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan, as well as the mid-cycle modification, stakeholders were asked to review and provide additional input.

Both Michigan Works! Areas will use the regional plan, as well as their local plan, to guide workforce development services throughout Region 8 over the remaining two year lifecycle of this plan. The following provided input for the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan:

- Planning, Monitoring, and Policy staff from BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest
- Business Services staff from BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest
- Executive Leadership staff from BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest
- Workforce development program staff, throughout the seven counties within Region 8 that included:
 - WIOA Adult staff
 - WIOA Dislocated Worker staff
 - WIOA Youth staff
 - PATH (TANF) staff
 - Employment Services (Wagner-Peysner) staff

Each group of staff throughout Region 8 provided information pertaining to their area of expertise that is reflective of the needs, goals and assets of Region 8. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Available education and training opportunities for the current workforce and those seeking employment throughout Region 8;
- The strengths and challenges of employers/businesses throughout Region 8;
- Models for job seeking and placement to assist individuals who are unemployed and underemployed throughout the region;
- Community organizations with missions and resources that support workforce development, as well as supportive services to support gaining and retaining employment;
- Other supportive services throughout the region that support job seekers in their quest for employment opportunities;
- Current and future growth and development throughout the region; and
- Other resources and tools available to all stakeholders within the region.

The strength and knowledge of key staff, as well as their collaborative efforts to identify the extensive resources available throughout Region 8, were key in the development and updating of the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan.

As the remaining two years of this plan progress, the leadership, planning and program staff from the BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest areas will continue to have regular communication, as appropriate, and will focus on how to best provide and continuously improve workforce development services throughout the region. This includes ongoing communication with the education and economic development entities throughout Region 8.

2. Analysis of regional labor market data and economic conditions

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%

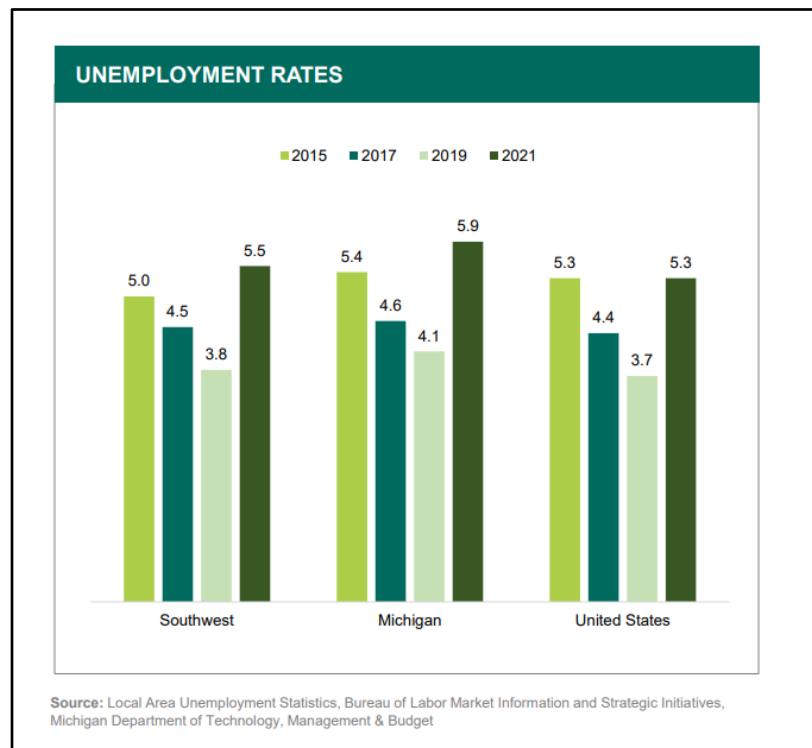
- Cass: 17.8%
- Kalamazoo:12.9%
- St. Joseph: 16.2%
- Van Buren: 14.2%

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.

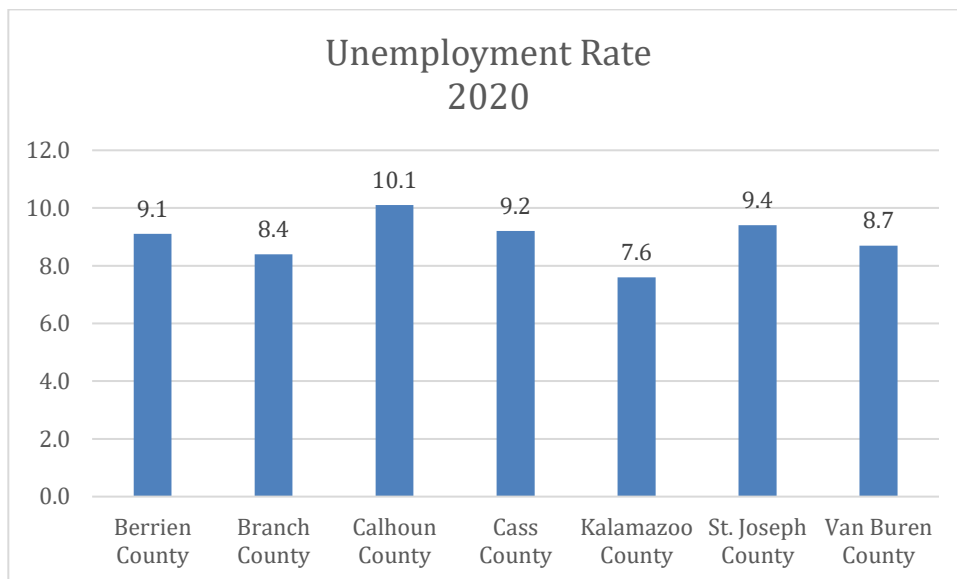
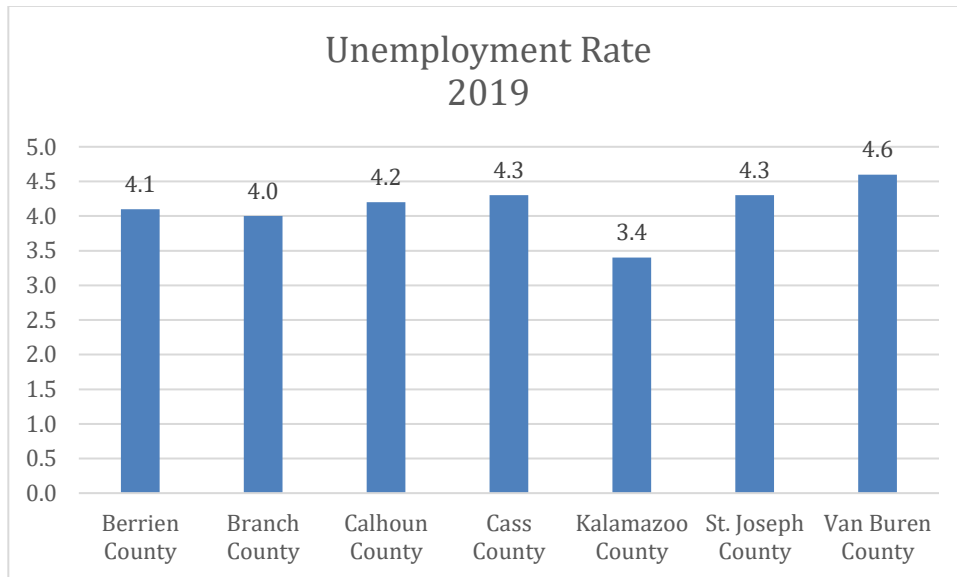
The [2022 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) provides the following unemployment rate information from 2015 to 2021. The report concludes that Southwest Michigan’s jobless rate was higher in 2021 than it was in the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, similar to statewide 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.

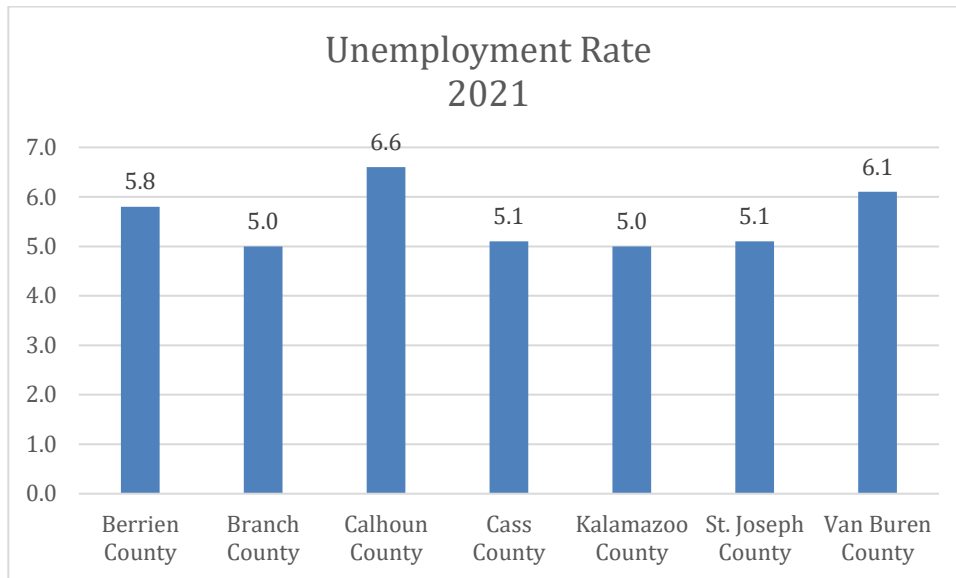


Further, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics reports the following breakout by county, in Region 8, from 2019, 2020, and 2021, highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

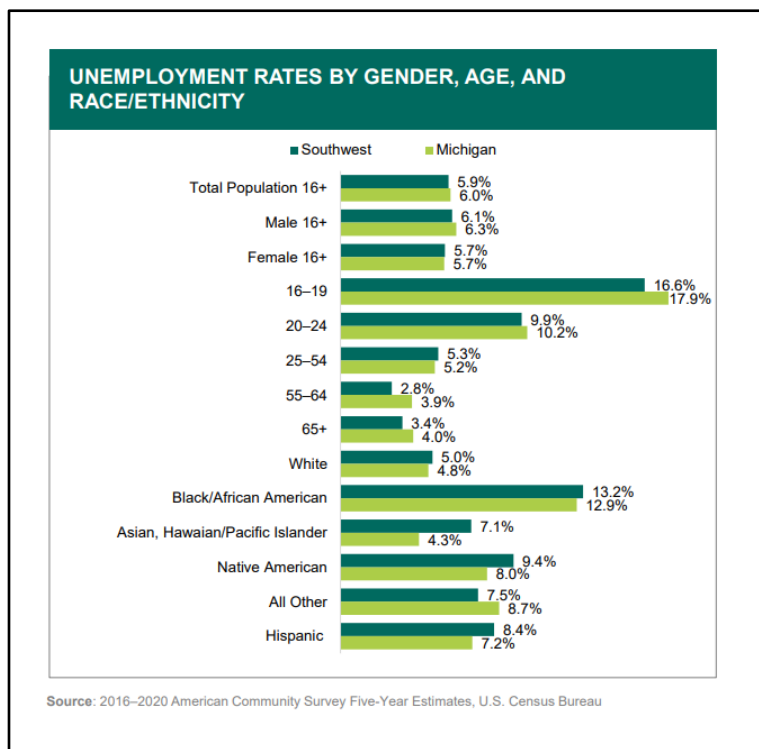
Unemployment

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.



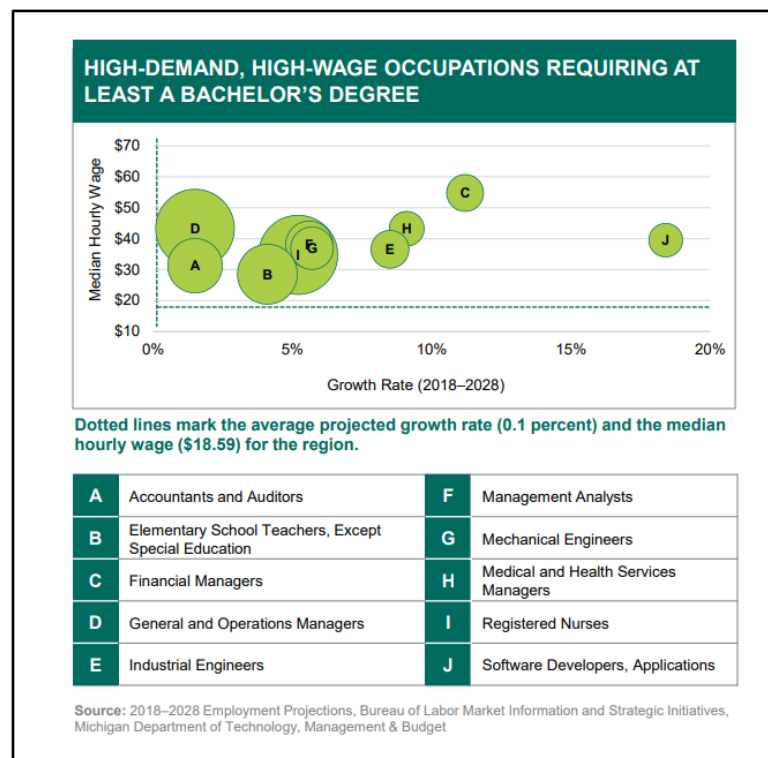
Equity

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.

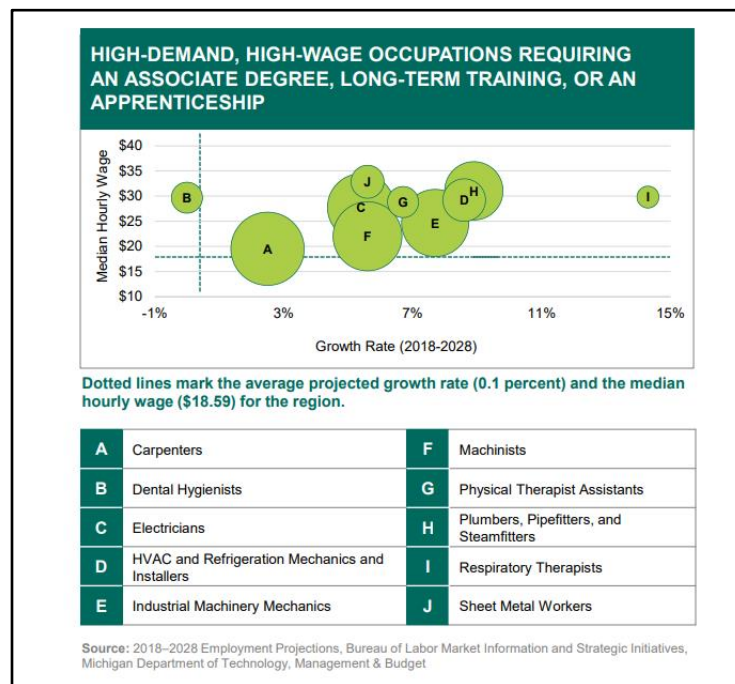
High-Demand, High-Wage Data

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.

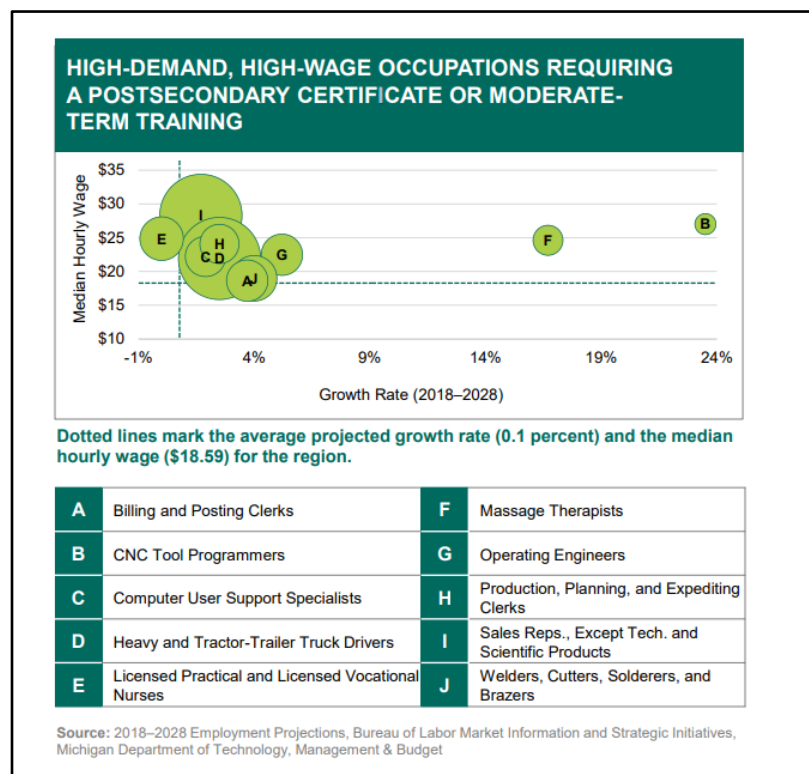
High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring at least a Bachelor’s Degree:



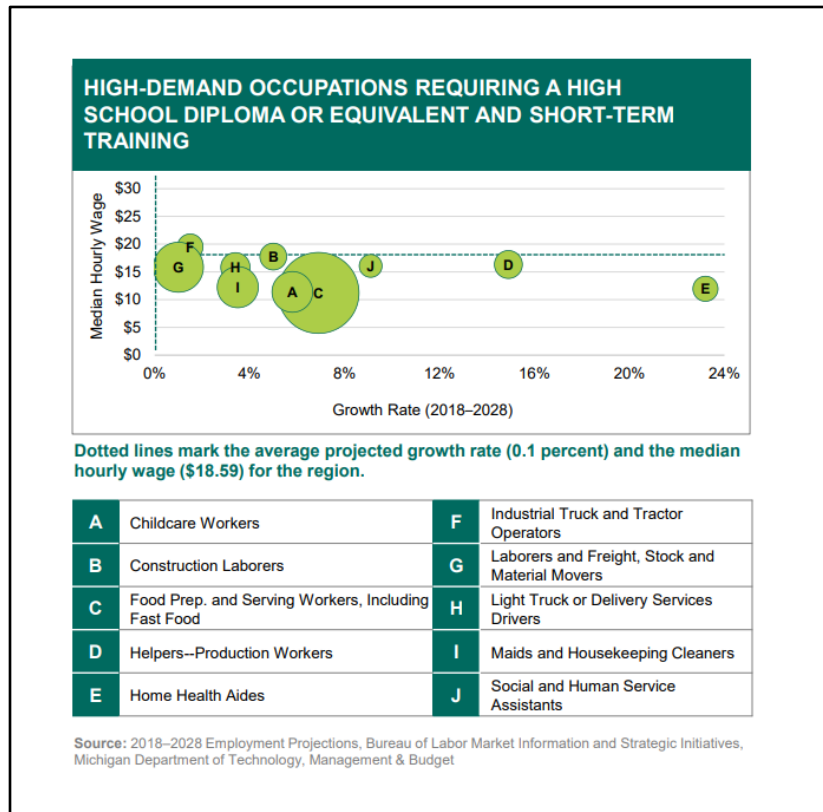
High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring an Associate Degree, long-term training, or an apprenticeship:



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

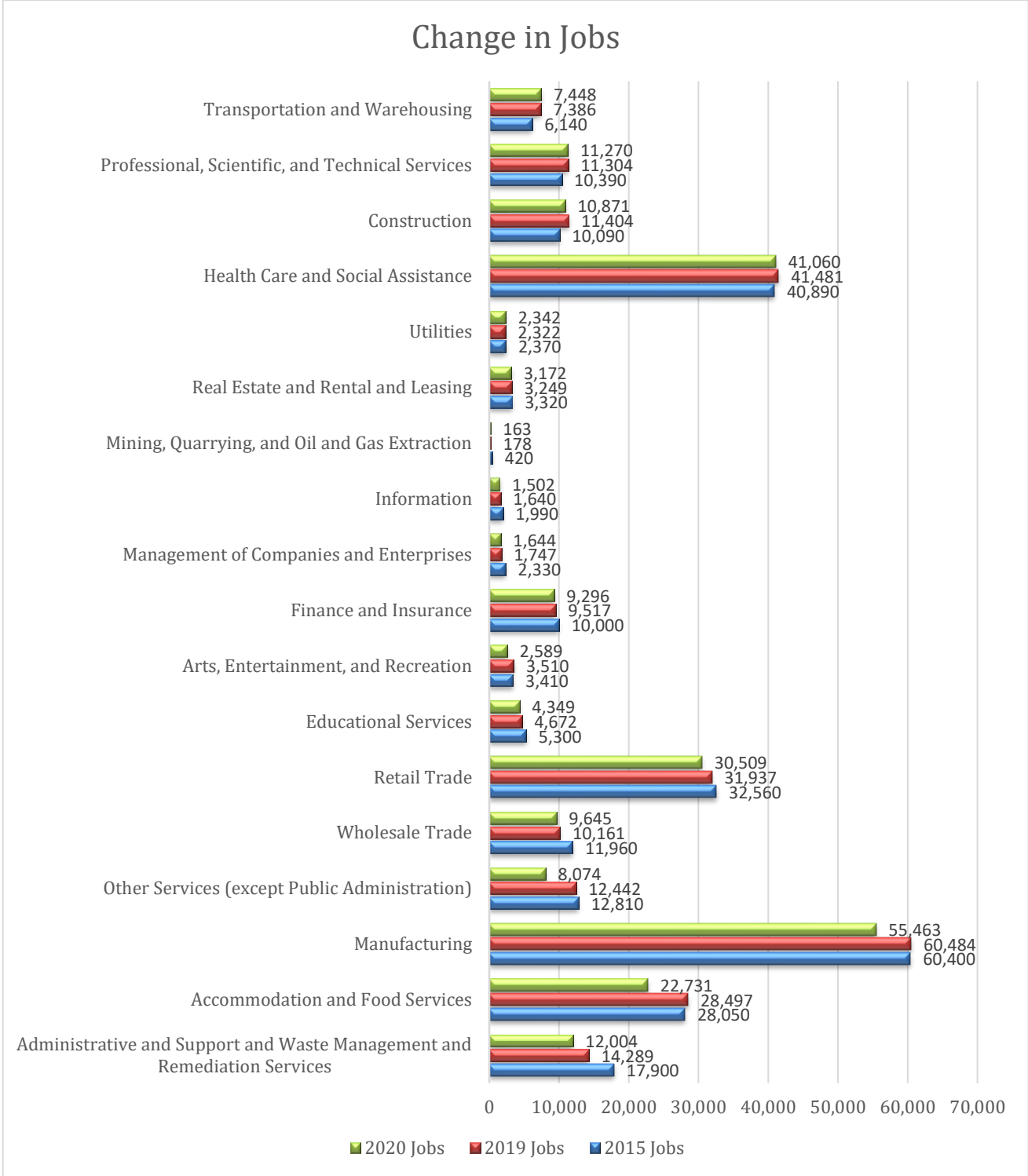
Industries in Region 8

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.

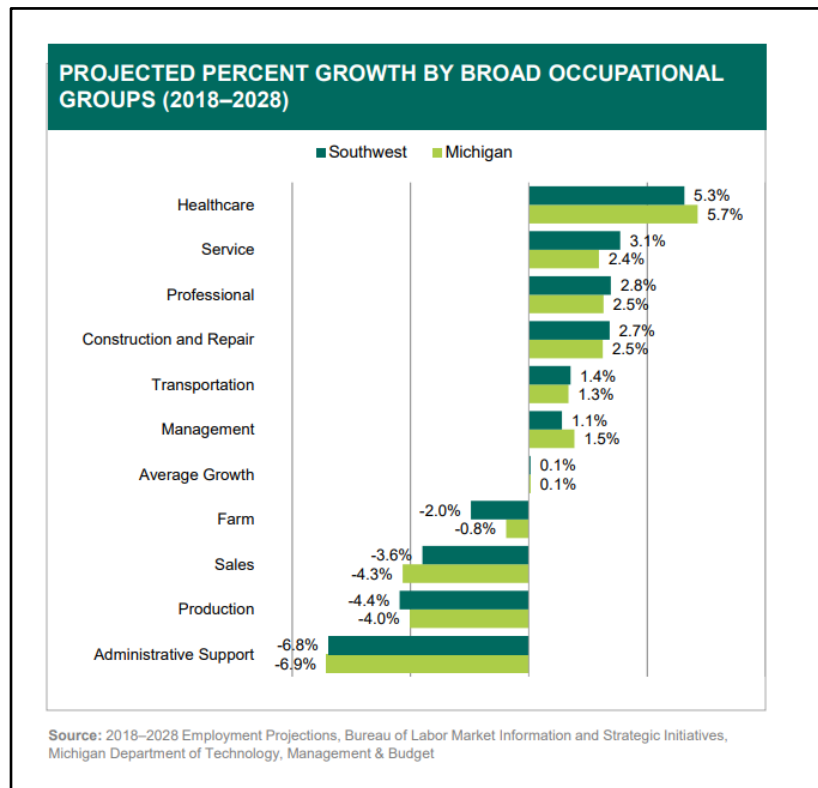
County Name	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2019-2020 Change	2019-2020 % Change
Berrien County, MI	12,982	11,645	-1,337	-10.30%
Branch County, MI	2,934	2,801	-133	-4.50%
Calhoun County, MI	11,135	10,027	-1,108	-10%
Cass County, MI	2,507	2,159	-348	-13.88%
Kalamazoo County, MI	20,015	18,699	-1,316	-6.58%
St. Joseph 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**

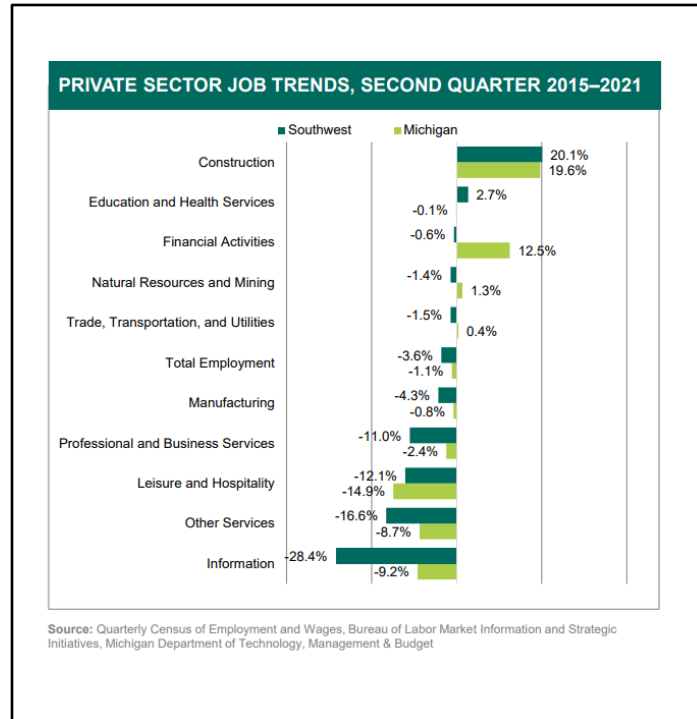
*Updated information not available. Information reflected is that of 2018 Earnings per Worker, as reported by QCEW (2019).

**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.

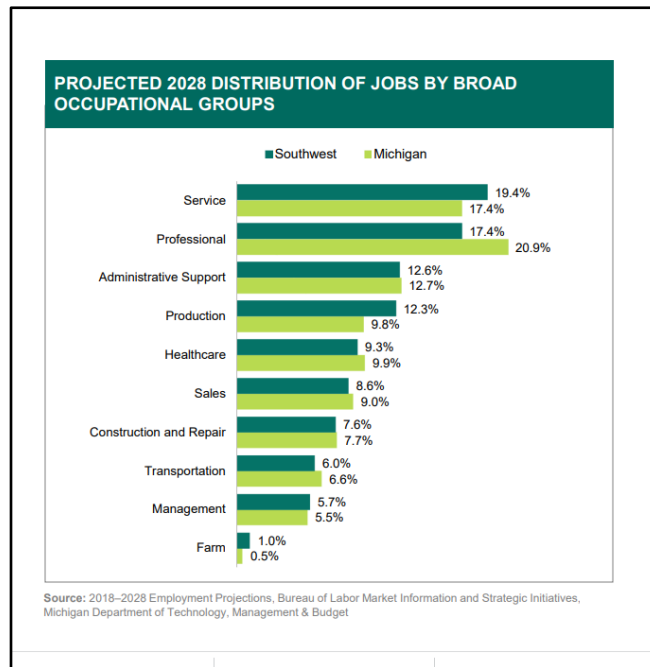
County Name	2019 Jobs	2020 Jobs	2019 - 2020 Change	2019 - 2020 % Change
Berrien County, MI	430	397	-33	-7.67%
Branch County, MI	126	101	-25	-19.80%
Calhoun County, MI	318	324	6	0.70%
Cass County, MI	25	29	4	16%
Kalamazoo County, MI	582	583	1	0.17%
St. Joseph County, MI	63	56	-7	-11.11%
Van Buren County,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

Information Technology/Information Security/Telecommunications Average Hourly Earnings:

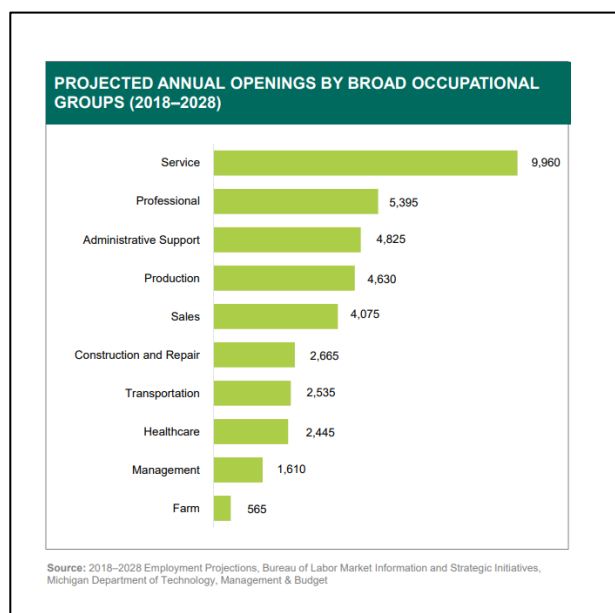
County Name	2019 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$44,409
Branch County	\$42,724
Calhoun County	\$38,728
Cass County	\$43,111
Kalamazoo County	\$70,229
St. Joseph County	\$41,709
Van Buren County	\$36,819
Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019 and 2020)	Average: \$45,390

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%

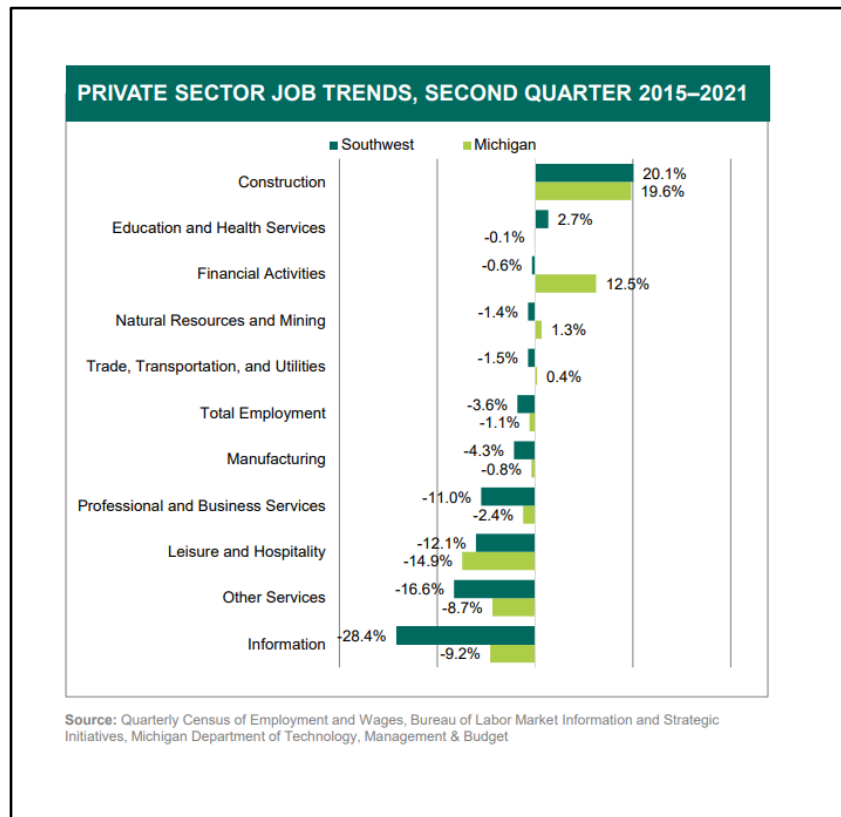
Accommodation and Food Service Average Hourly Earnings:

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 Services 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.

3. Regional Service Strategies

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest have continued to refine systems and define best practices through effective communication across all levels of the organizations, information gathering, and data sharing in order to effectively meet the needs of job seekers and employers in Region 8, and, together, will continue to explore new opportunities, as appropriate.

Geography

Region 8 is located in the southwest corner of Michigan. The geographic advantages of the region include the sharing of a border with Indiana, as well as a major interstate highway that connects Detroit and Chicago. The region includes a mixture of urban and rural areas that are attractive to a variety of industry sectors, another geographic advantage. Business Services Teams partner with economic developers to enhance the opportunities for employers and job seekers throughout Region 8.

Business Services Teams

The Business Services model is used across Region 8 to engage employers in the region. Through regular collaboration, the business services lead staff for the region work hand-in-hand with community stakeholders to meet the needs of both employers and job seekers. By leveraging these and other partnerships developed to support and build connections between business, workforce development, educators and economic developers in Region 8, Certified Business Solutions Professionals (CBSPs) across the area help businesses in Region 8 be successful and meet their demands for a skilled workforce by assisting in developing and implementing attraction and retention strategies that expand local business.

To ensure a unified approach to enhancing workforce development across the area's Michigan Works! Agencies, a demand-driven approach is utilized which places business as the primary customer.

This focus on employers as a primary customer does not minimize the Region 8 Business Services Teams' commitment to excellent customer service for job seekers, but instead allows BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest to assist both the supply and demand side of workforce development by addressing increasing numbers of jobs for Region 8 job seekers while assuring that the needs of local business are being met. Additionally, by utilizing industry consortiums and local labor market data, the Business Services Teams are able to provide job seekers with the appropriate training and targeted job placement strategies to help families maintain financial self-sufficiency.

The establishing of a robust Business Services Team (BST) has been a key strategy in implementing the demand-driven model across Region 8. The BST concept has three key features:

- A focus on business as the driver and primary customer,
- A team of workforce development professionals specifically trained for and committed to developing relationships with businesses, and
- An understanding of the value of strategic collaborations with regional economic development and education partners to provide business solutions and the role of BST in these partnerships.

The BST concept also calls for a coordinated, systematic, team approach to business outreach and engagement.

Regionally the work of the Business Services Teams includes, but is not limited to:

- Outreach and recruitment assistance;
- Application screening;
- Job postings on Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC);
- Facilitation and support of local and regional hiring events and job fairs for all job seekers;
- Attraction and retention assistance in partnership with economic development Partners;
- Training and funding opportunities for new and incumbent workers, including

connecting the unemployed with work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities throughout Region 8;

- Work with educators and employers to understand and improve opportunities for hard-to-serve populations, including individuals with disabilities, veterans, youth;
- Facilitating connections between employers and education institutions;
- Utilizing a multi-generational approach to address the ever-changing Workforce; and
- Support of industry specific consortia work throughout Region 8.

To support the work of the Business Services Teams throughout Region 8, business services staff engage with a variety of key partners including the following:

- Education and training providers,
- Vocational rehabilitation partners,
- Veteran Services partners,
- Economic development organizations,
- Area Chambers of Commerce,
- Local units of government,
- Organized labor unions,
- Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, State of Michigan,
- Other state agencies, including Department of Agriculture, Department of Corrections, and
- BSPs from other Michigan Works! areas outside of Region 8.

Additionally, Pure Michigan Talent Connect is utilized by all program staff as well as the Business Services Team to assist employers and job seekers. Talent Connect provides strategic tools via a web-based portal, allowing employers to identify and develop their talent base while also giving job seekers the opportunity to create a personalized plan to assist them more effectively in navigating their career decisions.

Jobs for Michigan Graduates

Under the leadership of Youth Solutions, in partnership with BCVB Michigan Works!, Michigan Works! Southwest actively participates in Jobs for Michigan Graduates (JMG) programming, as an affiliate to assist in raising the high school graduation rate across the region, as well as the state, 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. Michigan Works! Southwest actively partners with Youth Solutions in their mission to equip young people with the skills to overcome barriers and succeed in education, employment, and life.

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). and
- Basic staff-assisted career services.

Per LEO, the responsibilities of the Veterans Career Advisors include case management, outreach services to veterans, and group job counseling, which differs from licensed counseling. Veterans 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.

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest comply 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. BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to develop this partnership and assist in this collaborative approach to assisting veterans in Southwest Michigan.

Offender Success

The mission of Offender Success, funded through the Michigan Department of Corrections, is to enhance public safety by reducing offender recidivism through a seamless plan of services and supervision, delivered through state and local collaboration. The plan developed with each returning citizen begins at the time of his or her entry into the prison system through parole and reintegration into the community. Positive reentry of individuals in Region 8 will rely on cross-county collaboration and leveraging of resources to guarantee employment placement and successful transition back into the communities throughout the region.

Offender Success is operated by BCVB Michigan Works! in Region 8. In partnership, Michigan Works! Southwest staff attend the Transition Team meetings in Kalamazoo and Calhoun counties to provide

job leads, workshop schedules, and information on other workforce development resources provided in the Michigan Works! Southwest area.

Other Regional Partnerships

By developing positive and cooperative relationships with state agencies, at the local level, such as the Unemployment Insurance Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan Rehabilitative Services, the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, the Department of Education, and others, BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest strive to serve business customers and job seekers through unduplicated, coordinated services. BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest work collaboratively with the following agencies throughout Region 8 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.
- **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 blind to participate in every activity of daily living.
- **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.
- **AARP** is an organization that operates the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). As the nation's oldest program to help low-income, unemployed individuals aged 55+ find work, AARP matches eligible older job seekers with local nonprofits and public agencies so they can increase skills and build self-confidence, while earning a modest income. Based on their employment interests and goals, participants may also receive supportive

services and skills training through an educational institution.

- **VET Employment/Education Committee** of the Veteran Engagement Team of Southwest Michigan, highlighted above, also provides resources throughout the region.

4. Sector Initiatives

Regional Priorities and Collaboration

In Region 8, an industry cluster approach is utilized to guide collaborations and priorities. Per the State of Michigan, “a cluster is a geographic concentration of related employers, industry suppliers, and support institutions in a product or service field. For the purposes of workforce development, Michigan's clusters are broad industry sectors. There is growing evidence that industry clusters are an effective organizing framework for positively impacting economic and workforce development activities.” In alignment with this definition, the State of Michigan has implemented the Michigan Industry Cluster Approach (MICA) throughout the workforce system and has identified Agriculture, Energy, Health Care, Information Technology & Media, and Manufacturing as five priority clusters.

Current Sector Based Partnerships and Business Involvement

Currently, robust consortium groups in Manufacturing and Healthcare exist in Region 8. Throughout the region, these existing consortium groups are active in the following ways:

- Engagement in employer group and individual employer Going PRO Talent Fund applications;
- Participation in joint career fairs and other events to assist job seekers and employers;
- Collective identification of needs and challenges of their specific industry;
- Developing and enhancing connections between job seekers with employers; and
- General information and resource sharing.

Members of the consortium group are reflective of Region 8, and include partners in:

- Education and training,
- Economic development,
- Community resources,
- Workforce development and
- Employers.

Maintaining strong employer involvement in the consortiums is critical to the groups continuing to serve as change agents throughout the region and, as such, has been the foundation on which the groups were built. The diverse and strategic membership of each consortium provides expertise and understanding of the specific industries, guiding each consortia’s collective efforts.

Southwest Michigan Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium

The Southwest Michigan Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium uses a locally developed, innovative and integrated model to attract, screen, and train qualified candidates for current and future advanced manufacturing career opportunities. Local manufacturers and service providers have

been meeting since 2011. The group of over 180 manufacturing companies and community organizations convenes quarterly to discuss and develop innovative and integrated strategies to address this crucial issue, including on-the-job training, apprenticeships, career advancement, and payment of education.

The consortium meets to engage in dynamic conversations to identify issues they, as employers, collectively face, share best practices, pool resources, create unified messaging to promote manufacturing and the skilled trades, and develop a stronger combined voice, representative of the manufacturing sector as a whole.

Listed below are some of the innovative approaches in conjunction with training institutions that have been implemented to address the needs:

- Glen Oaks Community College (GOCC) Business and Industry Training;
- Kellogg Community College (KCC) Regional Manufacturing Technology Center (RMTC);
- Kellogg iACT programs;
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) CNC Operator Academy; and
- KVCC Mechatronic Technician Academy.

Southwest Michigan Healthcare Consortium

The Southwest Michigan Healthcare Consortium, an employer-led collaborative, which began meeting in 2012, is a partnership and collaboration between healthcare providers, workforce development, education, and economic development throughout the counties of Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, Calhoun, and Branch. The Consortium is inclusive of representatives from a variety of healthcare providers, including hospitals and acute care facilities, long-term care facilities, short-term care facilities, assisted living, and in-home care providers.

The focus of the Southwest Michigan Healthcare Consortium is to develop healthcare industry-based partnerships that promote the economic health and welfare of the areas' businesses and workers. While developing strategies to support the local healthcare ecosystem, the consortium also works to identify and help resolve issues that are important to the strength of area healthcare businesses and support the long-term health and growth of existing and future companies. This four-county group promotes regional activities to address healthcare worker shortages, skill shortages, training mismatches, and employee recruitment, retention, and organizational design issues that are common across this geographic area.

Today, the Consortium is made up of staff with a high degree of decision-making power or influence within their healthcare-based company, and the employer partners are critical to the success of the Consortium and the targeted outcomes. The employers set the agenda for quarterly meetings, during which employers participate in industry specific conversations and share their ideas, challenges, and solutions to assist each other in addressing the current challenges facing the healthcare industry while creating an extensive network for the identified employers and partners.

Members of the Southwest Michigan Healthcare Consortium support one another and the local economy through:

- Sharing best practices in a forum that includes healthcare employers and partners representing workforce development, education, and economic development;
- Planning and holding career fairs to assist with meeting current employer needs;
- Developing and maintaining a database of current healthcare providers within the Michigan Works! Southwest area; and
- Conducting periodic needs surveys and sharing the results.

The group continues to grow throughout the region while streamlining their work and enhancing the industry throughout Region 8.

Regional Career Fairs

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest will strive to work with employers throughout Region 8 on the planning, implementation and facilitation of virtual and in person career fairs across the region, as appropriate, as has been done in the past.

A nontraditional career fair model, which includes pre-event preparation sessions for job seekers, has been utilized in the past in order to assist in preparing the best possible job seekers for the employers. These preparation events include, but not limited to:

- Resume review by Michigan Works! staff or employer representatives for job seeker planning to attend the career fair,
- Mock interviews facilitated by Michigan Works! staff or employers prior to the event,
- Employability skill building workshop opportunities, and
- Employer panel information sharing/question and answer opportunities.

Reintroducing this nontraditional career fair model will be explored in the upcoming years..

Employer Surveys

An additional regional strategy to focus on gathering information from employers and sharing the gathered information with employers will be a focus throughout the implementation of this plan. This was recently piloted by gathering COVID-19 response information from employers, and as a result of the success, future survey tools are being explored.

5. Administrative Cost Requirements

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works Southwest leadership teams analyze performance and administrative requirements of regional funds to ensure that all distributions comply with state policy on an annual basis and upon receiving regionally allocated funds from the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. Upon completion of this analysis, administrative cost arrangements for the region are determined by the leadership teams of both organizations for the specific year or funding stream. As appropriate, a MOU or agreement, will be completed, agreed upon and signed by the directors of both Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8, clearly stating the cost sharing requirements for that year for the associated funding stream.

6. Transportation and Supportive Service Coordination

As with all continuous improvement processes, there is opportunity to improve and enhance transportation and supportive services throughout Region 8. Michigan Works! Southwest and BCVB Michigan Works! are committed to working on the potential of breaking down county line restrictions and barriers of service area alignment by county. These efforts will continue to be prioritized throughout the life of this plan in order to meet the needs of employers and job seekers.

Transportation

With the guidance and assistance of Michigan Works! Southwest and BCVB Michigan Works!, public transportation throughout the area has begun to work on ways to break down the geographic barriers of county lines. Trial projects for transporting job seekers and incumbent workers across county lines through meeting points at county lines to job search and maintain employment, have been completed and continue to be used.

Michigan Works! Southwest and BCVB Michigan Works! will continue to work with existing community and private transportation partners to explore additional options of cross regional transportation. The current list of partners and strategies includes:

- Transportation Partners:
 - Battle Creek Area Transit
 - Berrien County Public Transportation
 - Branch Area Transit Authority, Inc.
 - Cass County Transit
 - Kalamazoo Metro Transit
 - Marshall Albion Transit Authority
 - Private for-profit and non-profit transportation providers
 - Saint Joseph County Transit Authority
 - Van Buren Public Transit
- Strategic Partners:
 - Michigan Great Southwest
 - Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
 - Strategic Leadership Council
- Strategy:
 - Exploration of Ride Share Apps

Supportive Services

Federal and state policy guidelines often restrict the use of supportive services; thus, in order to improve and promote the coordination of supportive service delivery in Region 8, it is imperative that administrative and subrecipient/service provider staff continuously analyze supportive services to enhance and improve the coordination across the geographic area in order to best serve individuals

seeking employment and/or employment retention. Staff have strong relationships with many of the service providers and will strive to enhance not only the existing relationships, but will work to build new ones, through active communication and participation in county-wide networks to assist in guiding, as well as leading, future coordination of transportation and supportive service delivery across the region.

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
- Community Action Agency
- Community Foundations
- 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
- Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan
- Habitat for Humanity
- Healthcare and Dental Agencies that provide services for the uninsured
- Housing Resources, Inc. and other agencies that assist with housing needs
- Keystone Place
- Legal Aid
- Literacy organizations
- Meals on Wheels
- Mental health & counseling agencies
- Michigan United
- Neighborhood programs
- Salvation Army
- Senior Services
- Southwest Michigan Community Development Corporation
- St. Joseph County Human Services Commission
- Telamon
- United Way organizations within the area
- Veterans Services and other organizations that serve veterans
- Voces of Battle Creek
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited

Staff from both BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest are active within their respective counties, as well as across the region, with support service providers and transportation entities to assist in guiding, as well as leading, future coordination of transportation and supportive service delivery across the region.

7. Collaboration

Due to the demand-driven model, as discussed, requiring the workforce development system to place business as the primary customer, BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest strive to be one stop shops within their given counties, as well as in the region as a whole, to assist prospective employer, clients and existing customers with business development services through an integrated business retention and attraction program. In order to be successful, it is critical that a coordinated partnership with economic development services and providers within the region remain a priority.

Partnerships

Both Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 have established relationships with local area community colleges, economic development organizations, planning commissions as well as the MEDC and LEO, and strive to enhance service delivery.

In order to ensure regional collaboration and success of employers and industry in Region 8, partner meetings to discuss best practices, current projects and review available resources are held regularly in the form of project specific meetings or through the work of the industry specific consortiums active in Region 8.

Economic Development

Current economic development organizations engaged in regional planning, include:

- Southwest Michigan First
 - Southwest Michigan First covers Region 8 in its' entirety. The organization and their team are passionate about creating jobs and cultivating a strong economy in Southwest Michigan. Per their website, Southwest Michigan First was created for one singular purpose: To assist companies in growing jobs. Southwest Michigan First focuses their activities on services and collaborations that promote business growth, including but not limited to, business-to-business marketing, supply chain recruitment, workforce development, capital acquisition, site selection, consulting services, brand development, and efficient government.
 - Michigan Works! Agencies throughout Region 8 are actively involved in the regional planning meetings, spearheaded by Southwest Michigan First, and plan to continue to do so as the region prioritizes economic development in all counties.

In addition to collaborating with Southwest Michigan First, partnerships have also been developed with the following economic development organizations:

- Albion Economic Development Corporation
- Battle Creek Unlimited
- Branch County Economic Growth Alliance
- Cornerstone Alliance
- Marshall Area Economic Development Alliance
- Southwest Michigan Economic Growth Alliance
- Market Van Buren

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) is also a critical partner in Region 8 in offering business assistance services and capital programs for business attraction and acceleration.

Training and Education

Education and training providers currently involved with economic development that assist with regional planning include, but are not limited to:

- Berrien Regional Educational Services Agency
- Branch County Intermediate School District
- Calhoun County Intermediate School District
- Cornerstone University
- Davenport University
- Glen Oaks Community College
- Heritage Southwest Intermediate School District
- Kalamazoo Regional Educational Services Agency
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College
- Kellogg Community College
- Lake Michigan College
- Michigan Career Technical Institute
- Procurement Technical Assistance Center
- Saint Joseph County Intermediate School District
- Southwestern Michigan College
- The Center/MMTC
- Van Buren Intermediate School District
- Western Michigan University
- Other:
 - CTE Programs throughout the region
 - Early Middle College programs throughout the region

In addition, Michigan Training Connect, housed within the Pure Michigan Talent Connect system, will be used throughout Region 8 to provide job seekers with the tools they need to select a

training program to become employed in a high demand job industry.

Information gained from employers, in partnership with the identified economic developers, industry consortiums, and training institutions will remain a critical tool in creating and implementing needed trainings based on the demands of the industries in Region 8.

Employers

There are hundreds of businesses currently involved with BCVB Michigan Works!, Michigan Works! Southwest, the identified economic development organizations and the identified training organizations, including numerous businesses from emerging sectors/industries.

One primary focus in working across the region with employers and training institutions continues to be the use of apprenticeships. Apprenticeship programs combine classroom experience with hands-on training, providing the opportunity for individuals to earn a paycheck and receive debt free education while learning the skills they need to be successful in a career. An Apprenticeship combines classroom studies with extensive on-the-job training under the supervision of a professional. The region's Business Services staff and the Apprenticeship Success Coordinators will collaborate, as appropriate and connect businesses to a pathway of 'growing their own' talent through a USDOL Registered Apprenticeship. Region 8 staff will also focus on nontraditional apprenticeships to meet employer needs, as appropriate.

Going PRO Talent Fund

The State sees collaboration between Michigan Works! Agencies, economic development and education as essential in achieving demand-driven training that addresses talent shortages. BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest share this vision and work together to coordinate and maximize Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) benefits for Region 8 by working together to meet the needs of our employers. The GPTF focuses on assisting companies in meeting their talent challenges through the provision of competitive awards for employer responsive training that enhances talent, productivity, and employment retention while increasing the quality and competitiveness of Michigan's businesses.

As both of these Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 spearhead the GPTF every year, collaboration amongst the two organizations, training institutions across the region and regional economic development partners is critical to the success of this opportunity for employers in Southwest Michigan.

Per the GPTF Dashboard, employers in Region 8 were awarded:

- 15 awards for fiscal year 2016 totaling \$678,263,
- 41 awards for fiscal year 2017 totaling \$886,091,
- 80 awards for fiscal year 2018 totaling \$3,057,311,
- 102 awards for fiscal year 2019 totaling \$4,319,879, and
- 104 awards for fiscal year 2021 totaling \$4,897,603.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated budget shortfalls, no Going PRO Talent Fund awards are available for fiscal year 2020.

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest plan to continue to work collaboratively to assist Southwest Michigan employers in achieving this opportunity.

Other

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 are offered at no charge and include the following:

- **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) and other registrations.
- **Subcontracting Assistance:** PTAC helps clients identify subcontracting opportunities with government prime contractors.

8. Regional Performance Goals

Per the WIOA Unified State Plan, "the WIOA performance measures serve as indicators to track progress toward meeting the state's goals and vision for the workforce investment system. The state uses the performance accountability system to assess the effectiveness of local areas in achieving continuous improvement of workforce investment activities in order to optimize the return on investment of WIOA funds."

Both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser performance data is tracked in the One Stop Management Information System (OSMIS). The State Plan also describes that reports detailing performance on all performance measures are published quarterly for all local areas. These reports allow the state and local areas to monitor performance outcomes in order to establish trends and identify measures requiring corrective action, as well as track WIOA performance measures which serve as indicators to track progress toward meeting the state's goal and vision for the workforce investment system. Both BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest monitor local performance for the individual area, as outlined in the individual local plans.

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest strive to meet all local area negotiated performance measures and are currently navigating performance outcomes in response to the pandemic. BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest are anticipating the opportunity to negotiate performance measures for PY2022, with the State of Michigan. If

necessary, leadership staff across the two Michigan Works! agencies will analyze performance requirements and collectively negotiate to reach agreement on local levels of performance for the performance accountability measures outlined in the WIOA Section 116, including meeting the measures identified in the State of Michigan Unified Plan.

****Civilian noninstitutional population*: Persons 16 years of age and older residing in the 50 states and the District of Columbia, who are not inmates of institutions (e.g., penal and mental facilities, homes for the aged), and who are not on active duty in the Armed Forces.