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## Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART)

A standing committee of the MW! Southwest Workforce Development Board

**Tuesday, April 16, 2024, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.**

At the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

If you are unable to attend in person, you may connect virtually at

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85389319738?pwd=clVvY0RMcURvVjhsWEpaT2E2eUZWQT09>

Meeting ID: 853 8931 9738 Passcode: 969720

or dial US Toll Free using your phone:

• 877-853-5257 • 888-475-4499 • 833-548-0276 • 833-548-0282

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## AGENDA

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>I. Welcome and Call to Order</b> [2 min]  | Co-Chairs   |
| A. Approval of Agenda  |             |
| B. Approval of Minutes from February 27, 2024 ( <i>attached</i> )  |             |
| <b>II. Introductions</b> [3 min]   |             |
| <b>III. DART History, Purpose, and Work Plan</b> [20 min]  |             |
| A. DART History  | Kathy Olsen |
| B. DART Purpose and Work Plan  | Discussion  |
| <b>IV. Agency Updates</b> [30 min]   | Members     |
| <b>V. Emerging Issues Related to Employment &amp; Advocacy</b> [10 min]  | Discussion  |
| <b>VI. Collaboration – Partner Matrix – any additional updates?</b> ( <i>attached</i> ) [2 min]  | Kathy Olsen |
| <b>VII. Unique Customer Needs – Request for Input &amp; Resources</b> [10 min]   | Discussion  |
| <b>VIII. Professional Development Opportunities</b> [3 min]  |             |
| A. Disability Network Southwest Michigan <a href="http://www.dnswm.org/">http://www.dnswm.org/</a>   |             |
| B. KPL ONEplace <a href="https://www.kpl.gov/oneplace/">https://www.kpl.gov/oneplace/</a>  |             |
| C. The Synergy Health Center <a href="https://synergykzoo.org/">https://synergykzoo.org/</a>   |             |
| D. Incompass Michigan – <a href="https://incompassmi.org/">https://incompassmi.org/</a> - see the Education & Training tab   |             |
| E. DART Desktop Training Modules <a href="https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/resources/at-your-desktop-training">https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/resources/at-your-desktop-training</a> |             |
| <b>IX. Other Announcements</b> (not covered above)   |             |
| <b>X. Next Meeting – Tuesday, June 11, 2024 from 2-4 p.m.</b>  |             |
| <b>XI. Adjournment</b>   | Co-Chairs   |

The Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) is a standing committee of the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board.

DART members represent businesses, service providers, advocates, and allies with expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities with their career, training, and employment needs.

DART members will 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.

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## **Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Minutes February 27, 2024**

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**CALL TO ORDER** – DART Co-Chair, Hank Bostic called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007.

### **MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Hank Bostic (DNSM)

Jenifer Garver (ISK) <sup>∨</sup>

Carrie Headworth (VES) <sup>∨</sup>

Ben Hoger (Upjohn/MWSW)

Sarah Hutchison-Chee (Goodwill SWM)

Ramona Lumpkin (Recovery Institute) <sup>∨</sup>

Katie McCuen (KRESA) <sup>∨</sup>

Shannon McVoy (BSBP) <sup>∨</sup>

Karrie Messenger (KRESA)

Kathy Olsen (MWSW)

Nicho Sanchez (HRI)

Rhasheda Shepherd (Comm Advocates)

Shelby Springett (MWSW)

Clare Tanner (Arc Calhoun)

<sup>∨</sup> Attended virtually

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The DART meeting agenda for February 27, 2024 was approved by consensus of members present.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The DART meeting minutes of November 14, 2023 were approved by consensus of members present.

### **PROGRAM – Goodwill Industries of Southwest Michigan**

Sarah Hutchison-Chee, Vice President for Mission Services at Goodwill Industries Southwest Michigan gave a PowerPoint presentation that included information about Goodwill's vision, mission, values, history, community impact, and a variety of programs offered through its mission services department. She highlighted the Mission Services Team that is dedicated to improving the community by providing employment, education, training, and support services tailored to individual needs. Programs provided under the umbrella of Mission Services include adult education, financial coaching, life guides, navigation services, the opportunity accelerator, Family Stabilization for Education Success (aka Siemer Program), and vocational rehabilitation.

### **AGENCY UPDATES**

*Recovery Institute* – Ramona Lumpkin reported the Recovery Institute continues their work by holding support meetings and conducting outreach to the courts.

*Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP)* – Shannon McVoy reported she is temporarily filling a vacancy in the BSBP West Region and she also she works with the BSBP statewide transition office. Approximately ten years ago, she participated on the DART committee and is familiar with the work of the committee. In responding to a question about touring the BSBP Training Center on Oakland Drive, she provided a few contacts and reported the Center also hosts Community Partner Days a couple times a year where members of the community can

learn more about the BSBP Center and the services available. A [virtual tour](#) is also available on their website.

*Veterans Employment Services* – Carrie Headworth reported a Veterans Resource Fair will be held on March 12, 2024 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the VFW Post 7956 located at 13540 M-96, Augusta, Michigan.

*Housing Resources, Inc.* – Nicho Sanchez reported HRI's Annual Walk for the Homeless will be held in Kalamazoo on April 13, 2024. He also shared that the HRI Access Team is available to assist with intakes, voucher applications, general information, and to answer questions. He distributed flyers with more information about the Annual Walk and the HRI Access Team. Services can be accessed via the Access Team through the HRI website at <https://www.housingresourcesinc.org/> or by calling 269-382-0287, the team can also be reached at other community locations during the week. The schedule is as follows: at Ministry with Community on Tuesdays from 1-2 pm; at the YWCA on Wednesdays from 10:30-11:30 am every other week; at Kalamazoo Gospel Ministries on Thursdays from 9-10 am; and at the Kalamazoo Defenders on Thursdays from 10:30-11:30 am

*Michigan Works! Southwest* - Ben Hoger reported he conducts outreach for Michigan Works! Southwest at community access points which include on Mondays at the Kalamazoo Defender office and on Thursdays at Voces in Battle Creek. Kathy Olsen reported that Michigan Works! Southwest networks with many community partners to assist individuals with finding and keeping employment.

*Community Advocates* - Rhasheda Shepherd reported registrations for the annual Inclusion Conference are filling up fast. There will be a discussion at the conference regarding assistive devices and Arc National and Amazon Prime are offering free devices (Echo Dots and Tablets) to individuals with disabilities. These items will be distributed throughout a six county area that includes Barry, Berrien, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Grant funding is also available through the Cekola Memorial Fund to assist families caring for permanently disabled children in their homes. Information about the grant and how to apply is available on the Arc Community Advocates website <https://communityadvocates.org/cekola-memorial-fund>

*The Arc of Calhoun County* – Clare Tanner reported the Arc of Calhoun County offers many services which include skill building, supported employment, advocacy, and self- advocacy. Other highlights included expanding the number of funders, access to a national technical assistance program, and they offer cross-training for staff.

*Disability Network Southwest Michigan* – Hank Bostic reported Disability Network has offices in the cities of Battle Creek, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph. Services include information and referral regarding disability related issues as well as a variety of services to support independent living skills. He also reported that 80% of staff and volunteers have a disability and thus they can walk alongside as peers when assisting customers.

*Kalamazoo RESA* – Karrie Messenger reported YOU/KRESA has a paid internship program for youth ages 14-24. Classes to prepare for the internships begin in March and there will also be a class to prepare for summer internships. The preparation class is four weeks in length, and it is followed by seven weeks of placement in an internship. She encouraged

partners to refer youth to YOU/KRESA for these opportunities. She also reported that YOU/KRESA can assist youth throughout the entire year, not just during the summer months.

### **ISSUES RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT & ADVOCACY**

It was noted that Arc at the national, state, and local levels conduct ongoing advocacy to ensure people with disabilities have a voice.

Clare Tanner reported she has been attending Michigan's Disability caucus meetings.

**COLLABORATION – Partner Matrix** – Kathy Olsen requested that members review the partner matrix and to please send any updates they may have regarding their agency's listing to her. She will make any necessary updates to the document and then send the updated version to members.

### **UNIQUE CUSTOMER NEEDS**

Nicho Sanchez reported that Housing Resources, Inc. receives 10-15 phone calls per week from individuals in other states who want to move to the Kalamazoo area and bring with them their section 8 voucher; however, they have no employment and no housing. It has also been discovered that many individuals from other cities are being dropped off at the Kalamazoo bus station.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- Arc Community Advocates 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Inclusion Conference – Fri, Mar 15, 2024 from 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. at WMU Fetzer Center – [Conference website](#)
- Disability Network Southwest Michigan <http://www.dnswm.org/>
- KPL ONEplace <https://www.kpl.gov/oneplace/>
- The Synergy Health Center <https://synergykzoo.org/>
- Incompass Michigan – <https://incompassmi.org/> - see the Education & Training tab
- DART Desktop Training Modules  
<https://www.michiganworkssouthwest.org/resources/at-your-desktop-training>

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No additional announcements.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The next DART meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 16, 2024, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Kathy Olsen, Quality Assurance/Project Coordinator and WDB Liaison  
Michigan Works! Southwest

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## History of the Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART)

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Established as a standing advisory committee of the former Kalamazoo-St. Joseph Michigan Works! Workforce Development Board (WDB), the Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) met for the first time on July 13, 2000 for the purpose of advising the Board on issues related to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the elimination of barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities. Since that first meeting, DART met regularly and members included representatives of area agencies and organizations that provided employment related services and assistance to individuals with disabilities. The DART model was recognized throughout the State as a best practice.

Since its inception, significant projects for DART have included planning and presenting capacity building training sessions for workforce development partners on topics that included accessibility, disability etiquette, rights of individuals with disabilities, serving and interacting with individuals with disabilities, mental and cognitive disability awareness, WIA Section 188, and communication and conflict resolution. The committee has also partnered with area entities in the development of grant proposals and collaborated on projects of benefit to individuals with disabilities. From the beginning, information sharing has been an important aspect of DART. Meeting agenda items may include a presentation by a member or subject matter expert on issues related to employment for individuals with disabilities. At the meetings, members also provide updates on their organization or agency's activities.

In October 2014, the Michigan Works! Agency expanded to incorporate Branch and Calhoun Counties and formed the entity now known as Michigan Works! Southwest. At about this same time, nationally and locally the workforce development system began the shift to governance under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). One of the changes included in WIOA was the addition of a standing WDB committee to provide information and assistance with operational and other issues related to serving individuals with disabilities. In the Michigan Works! Southwest area the decision was made to have DART serve in this role.

As part of the transition, the DART membership reviewed its purpose statement and drafted a revision that was presented for WDB approval. Based on information gathered from the WDB and workforce development partners, goals and activities were also established. Using the goals and activities as a starting point, a strategic membership review was completed to assure that there was representation on the committee from agencies across the four-county area and to identify underrepresented areas of disability-related employment needs. As a standing committee of the WDB, DART activities would be reported at WDB Board meetings that immediately follow a DART meeting.

In 2016, the DART Committee formerly adopted a work plan to help focus and guide its work. The plan included an increased focus on developing and implementing a comprehensive **'disability awareness' curriculum and resources** for the Michigan Works! Southwest WDB, one stop service center staff, partners, and employers. Accessibility and the ability to have training modules available for refresher courses, as well as for new staff was a concern. To address this concern, the committee created 'Desktop Trainings' on popular topics that can be completed at a time and place most convenient to the user. Subrecipients/service providers identified topics of most importance for their staff and customers and the curriculums were developed address those priorities. Twelve (12) curriculum modules were developed and are accessible to WDB members, subrecipients/service

provider staff, partners, and employers for professional development. The modules can be accessed on the Michigan Works! Southwest website under the ‘Resources’ tab. State level staff have viewed the training modules as a best practice. The work of the DART Committee has also been shared at conferences as well as via virtual webinars.

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.

Another 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 large workforce events such as the Career Life Expo. This particular event, which was held annually prior to COVID-19, was a partnership between Michigan Works! Southwest and the United Way of South Central Michigan. It was much more than a job fair as it included 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 DART work plan also includes identifying and providing ***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.

Additionally, Michigan Works! Southwest continues to strive to ***strengthen and improve the link between DART and the Business Solutions Team (BST)***. This is accomplished through awareness of employer talent needs, identifying and utilizing resources related to employment for individuals with disabilities, as well as minimizing duplication of contacts.

For more information on the DART please contact WDB liaison, Kathy Olsen at [olsen@upjohn.org](mailto:olsen@upjohn.org) or 269-385-0454

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## Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART)

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### Purpose Statement

The Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) is a standing committee of the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board.

DART members represent businesses, service providers, advocates, and allies with expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities with their career, training, and employment needs.

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### Work Plan 2016

**CURRICULUM** - Develop and implement a comprehensive ‘disability awareness’ curriculum and resources for Workforce Development Board Members, Michigan Works! Southwest One Stop Service Center Staff and Employers.

- Topics will include employee accommodations, disability disclosure, disability language and etiquette, ADA compliance assistance, accessibility and ADA information, disability as a diversity issue, resources to inform and support disability-related business practices.

**CROSS AGENCY COLLABORATION** - Develop strategies to foster cross agency collaboration across Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph Counties. The focus of the strategies will be to promote a viable resource network for employers and employees.

**NAVIGATOR ASSISTANCE** - Develop and implement a navigator assistance program for job seeking participants at job/career fairs and expos.

**EMERGING ISSUES** - Identify and provide informational updates for Workforce Development Board Members and employers in our four county service area. The information updates would target “Emerging Issues” such as: Employment First, 14c waiver certificates, high school certificate of completion, pre-employment transition supports for youth and WIOA Legislative Rules.

# The Ultimate Cheatsheet for Critical Thinking

Want to exercise critical thinking skills? Ask these questions whenever you discover or discuss new information. These are broad and versatile questions that have limitless applications!



## Who

... benefits from this?  
... is this harmful to?  
... makes decisions about this?  
... is most directly affected?

... have you also heard discuss this?  
... would be the best person to consult?  
... will be the key people in this?  
... deserves recognition for this?

## What

... are the strengths/weaknesses?  
... is another perspective?  
... is another alternative?  
... would be a counter-argument?

... is the best/worst case scenario?  
... is most/least important?  
... can we do to make a positive change?  
... is getting in the way of our action?

## Where

... would we see this in the real world?  
... are there similar concepts/situations?  
... is there the most need for this?  
... in the world would this be a problem?

... can we get more information?  
... do we go for help with this?  
... will this idea take us?  
... are the areas for improvement?

## When

... is this acceptable/unacceptable?  
... would this benefit our society?  
... would this cause a problem?  
... is the best time to take action?

... will we know we've succeeded?  
... has this played a part in our history?  
... can we expect this to change?  
... should we ask for help with this?

## Why

... is this a problem/challenge?  
... is it relevant to me/others?  
... is this the best/worst scenario?  
... are people influenced by this?

... should people know about this?  
... has it been this way for so long?  
... have we allowed this to happen?  
... is there a need for this today?

## How

... is this similar to \_\_\_\_\_?  
... does this disrupt things?  
... do we know the truth about this?  
... will we approach this safely?

... does this benefit us/others?  
... does this harm us/others?  
... do we see this in the future?  
... can we change this for our good?