

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD AMENDED AGENDA

**Thursday, May 16, 2024 from 9:00-10:30 a.m.**

### In-Person Meeting

Branch County Community Health Building, Conference Room  
570 Marshall Road, Coldwater, MI 49036

Note: Members must attend in-person to participate in voting.

### Public Access is available at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87576501540?pwd=S09QNjVOUDYxTlplamttaVISQUFLQT09>

**Meeting ID:** 875 7650 1540

**Passcode:** 845395

**Or Dial US Toll Free:** • 833-548-0276 • 833-548-0282 • 877-853-5257 • 888-475-4499

#### I. CALL TO ORDER / INTRODUCTIONS

Jackie Murray, Chair

#### II. RECOGNITIONS

- A. MW! Southwest Shining Star Awards
- B. MW! Association's Impact Award

Amy Meyers  
Jakki Bungart-Bibb

#### III. TRANSPARENCY & INTEGRITY OF WDB DECISIONS

Kathy Olsen

#### IV. PUBLIC TIME

#### V. MINUTES (Vote Required)

- A. April 18, 2024 WDB Executive Committee Meeting Minutes ([Exhibit A](#))

#### VI. COMMITTEE REPORTS

No Reports

#### VII. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Request for Proposal (RFP) Announcement
- B. Adult Education RFPs Reviewer Request

Amanda Rosenberg  
Amy Meyers

#### VIII. PRESENTATION - APPRENTICESHIPS

Paige Daniels, Executive Director of Career Development, KRESA  
Ashley Iovieno, Director of Business Solutions, MW! Southwest  
Lisa Smith, CareerNOW Program Coordinator, KRESA

#### IX. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Business Services Update & Dashboard ([Exhibit B](#))  
Lightcast Data Analytics ([Exhibit C](#))
- B. Operations Update & Dashboard ([Exhibit D](#))
- C. Directors Report ([Exhibit E](#))

Ashley Iovieno  
Ashley Iovieno  
Amy Meyers  
Jakki Bungart-Bibb

**X. OLD BUSINESS**

**XI. PUBLIC TIME**

**XII. MEMBERS' TIME**

**XIII. UPCOMING MEETINGS**

- A. Executive Committee – Thursday, June 20, 2024 (9:00-10:30 am)  
At the Michigan Works! Service Center, 200 W. Van Buren Street, Battle Creek, MI 49017
- B. Monitoring & Evaluation Committee –Tuesday, May 21, 2024 (3:30-5 pm)  
At the Michigan Works! Service Center, 200 W. Van Buren Street, Battle Creek, MI 49017
- C. Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) – Tuesday, June 11, 2024 (2:00-4:00 pm)  
At Upjohn Institute, 300 S Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007
- D. Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) – Monday, September 9, 2024 (1:00-3:00 pm)  
At Upjohn Institute, 300 S Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007
- E. Full Workforce Development Board – Thursday, September 19, 2024 (9:00-10:30 am)  
At the Three Rivers Chamber, 1116 N. Main Street, Three Rivers, MI 49093

**XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

Jackie Murray, Chair

**Workforce Development Board  
 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes  
 April 18, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Workforce Development Board Chair, Jackie Murray, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Individuals attending in-person introduced themselves and Shelby Springett introduced individuals attending virtually.

**WDB Executive Members Present:**

|                          |                       |                      |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Randall Hazelbaker (PS)* | Brian O'Donnell (PS)* | * Exec Committee     |
| Kris Jenkins (Educ)*     | Frank Tecumseh (PS)*  | ^ Attended virtually |
| Jackie Murray (PS)*      |                       |                      |

**WDB Executive Members Absent**

|                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Lisa Godfrey (PS)* | David Maurer (PS)* |
|--------------------|--------------------|

**Other WDB Members Present**

|                  |                   |                    |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Jeff Hepler (PS) | Jose Orozco (CBO) | Paul Watson (Educ) |
| Al Ives (PS) ^   |                   |                    |

**Center for Workforce Innovation and Solutions / Michigan Works! Southwest Staff Present:**

|                           |                         |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jakki Bungart-Bibb (MWSW) | Amy Meyers (MWSW)       | Shelby Springett (MWSW) |
| Jamar Herron (MWSW)       | Kathy Olsen (MWSW)      |                         |
| Ashley Iovieno (MWSW)     | Amanda Rosenberg (MWSW) |                         |

**Guests**

|                         |                            |                             |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Paige Daniels (KRESA) ^ | Ben McCloud                | Amanda Sutherland (KRESA) ^ |
| Kristine Stevens (GOCC) | (for Congressman Huizenga) |                             |

**TRANSPARENCY & INTEGRITY OF WDB DECISIONS**

Kathy Olsen asked members present if there were any items on the agenda for which a conflict of interest or a potential conflict of interest exists; and if so, the conflict should be declared at this time. There were none.

**PUBLIC TIME**

None.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** (*Exhibit A*)

**Motion made by Randall Hazelbaker and supported by Brian O'Donnell to approve the March 21, 2024 Executive Committee meeting minutes. Motion carried.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Committee**

Kathy Olsen reported the Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Committee met on April 16, 2024. The Committee reviewed the history of DART, which began in August of 2000, and the committee's work plan. Members also provided information for local resources that included the following:

- *Metro Link* is an app-driven, on-demand rideshare service that combines the best aspects of public transportation with the flexibility of the private on-demand transportation services. Additional details can be found in the [Media Release](#).
- *Disability Network* is seeking individuals ages 16-29 with a disability to participate in an 8-week [Advocacy Academy](#). Participants will choose an issue related to disabilities and create a campaign. Interested individuals should contact Holly Baker at [bakerh@dnswm.org](mailto:bakerh@dnswm.org) at Disability Network.
- The *annual ADA celebration* is scheduled for July 29, 2024 at the Farmers Market from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and includes lunch.
- *Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)* is working with the Northside Association and the Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) to hold another *ten-week CNA Training*. Individuals should be referred to MRS for enrollment.
- The *MCTI training calendar* now runs year-round and has transitioned to small groups using a hybrid format with a combination of in-person and online instruction. *Tours* are available for the MCTI Training Center, interested individuals should contact their main number to schedule.
- *The Arc Community Advocates* has quite a few upcoming events posted on their [website](#). One being the *Journey of Hope* on July 27, 2024 at Milham Park where cyclists who are traveling cross-county to raise awareness of disabilities will be making a stop in Kalamazoo.
- *Echo Dots and Fire Tablets* donated by Amazon Prime and Arc National are available for individuals with disabilities. They are to assist with day-to-day living and are intended for those with limited income or low income and there is no age limit for the devices. Individuals can apply using the [online form](#) on the Arc Community Advocates website. When applying, indicate who would be using the device, their age, and what disability they have.
- The *KRESA Summer MyCITY* application period ended for youth in Kalamazoo County. Participants will be dual enrolled with WIOA.
- *MSHDA MICH grants* are available for individuals with disabilities for assistance with accessibility and energy efficient home repairs and upgrades. Individuals can apply online [www.arp.michigan.gov](http://www.arp.michigan.gov) or call 844-477-0349. More information is also available by calling 517-335-2524.
- DART members were invited to attend *MWSW partner meetings* to further share information.
- *Resources for small business development* included SCORE; Can-Do Kalamazoo, an incubator kitchen; and Room 35, a new business in Kalamazoo that is focused on assisting small businesses.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Plans

Amanda Rosenberg requested Board consideration and approval of two workforce development plans. They included the following: (1) *AY21 and AY22 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Statewide Activities Funding to Support WIOA Participant Training Plan* as described in *Exhibit B1* that was included in the agenda packet; and (2) *FY2024 Michigan Citizen Reentry Initiative (MiCRI) Stage 2 Activities Plan* as described in *Exhibit B2* that was included in the agenda packet. Amy Meyers reported the MiCRI Stage 2 services will be provided to individuals housed at KPEP, a Residential Reentry Center (RRC), located in Battle Creek and Kalamazoo.

**Motion made by Brian O'Donnell and supported by Kris Jenkins to approve the AY21 and AY22 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Statewide Activities Funding to Support WIOA Participant Training Plan, and the FY2024 Michigan Citizen Reentry Initiative (MiCRI) Stage 2 Activities Plan. Motion carried.**

## STAFF REPORTS

### Business Solutions Update and Dashboard (*Exhibits C & D*)

Ashley Iovieno provided an update on the services to businesses. The Business Solutions Dashboard (*Exhibit C*) included employment rates for the four counties in the MW! Southwest area, job postings data which aligned with the Lightcast Data Analytics (*Exhibit D*) sent to Board members prior to the meeting, the number of employers served, data for the Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) Cycles I and II, and the GPTF Employer Led Collaboratives

(ELCs). She further reported on changes regarding the State’s Labor Market Newsletter and the new website for the Michigan Center for Data and Analytics. Individuals interested in receiving this information directly should update their preferences on the [State’s website](#). Ms. Iovieno reminded members of the upcoming event, MiCareerQuest™ St. Joseph County and noted that anyone interested in a tour of the event should contact her at [iovieno@upjohn.org](mailto:iovieno@upjohn.org). Lastly, she reported on events that occurred on April 17, 2024 which included the Impact Awards in Lansing, a job fair in Albion, and an event at the KCC Binda Center highlighting the partnership with the Double Tree Hotel in Battle Creek.

### **Operations Update and Dashboard (*Exhibit E*)**

Amy Meyers reported on highlights from the MWSW Services Dashboard (*Exhibit E*) data. She answered questions and provided further clarification pertaining to the PATH program requirements. Ms. Meyers reminded members that the LEAP (Learn, Earn and Provide) Program has changed to GEMS (Gain Employment, Maintain Success), however the scope and purpose of the program has not changed. The final Q3 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) performance numbers should be available at the May WDB meeting. Staff professional development was provided by the One-Stop Operator and it included the history of workforce development, acronyms, performance, and local programs and services. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Center for Workforce Innovation and Solutions (CWIS) will be celebrated in 2024. Ms. Meyers reported the Institute began involvement with workforce development programs in the 1970s and CWIS was formerly referred to as the Employment Management Services Division (EMSD) of the Upjohn Institute. In 2021, EMSD rebranded to CWIS and expanded its scope to include Pulse and the Employer Resource Network® (ERN®). A sample of CWIS outreach materials created by LKF Marketing was distributed to members at the meeting. Ms. Meyers added that the employee and business from MW! Southwest who were recognized at the MW! Association’s Annual Impact Awards event in Lansing yesterday will also be recognized at the May WDB meeting. The impactful video will be shown at the meeting and if members would like a sneak peak, a link to the video can be found on MW! Southwest social media sites. Members were reminded of the WDB portal on the website where additional local information such as programs, an acronym directory, and WDB materials can be found. A brief discussion of the benefits of the Employer Resource Network® and potential expansion in Branch County also took place.

### **Director’s Report (*Exhibit F*)**

Jakki Bungart-Bibb distributed a written Director’s Report (*Exhibit F*) which was also posted on the MWSW website. Topics covered in the report included the Governor’s workforce plan and Director Corbin’s plans to present at the MW! Southwest WDB meeting in May. A link to the State plan, as well as a link to the current local plan, will be sent to Board members. An update regarding MW! priorities that included the Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) and the Barrier Removal Employment Services (BRES) funding for the Governor’s budget was also provided. Ms. Bibb reported there has been legislative movement regarding reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). The new legislation is called *A Stronger Workforce for America Act*. A link to the Director’s Report and the information within it was sent to members following the meeting.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

None.

### **PUBLIC TIME**

Kristine Stevens from Glen Oaks Community College reported that Jakki Bungart-Bibb recently spoke at an event at Glen Oaks Community College for the American Association of Women at Community Colleges, and she did a fantastic job telling her very impactful story. Ms. Stevens noted that Jakki gave credit to her mentor, Nancy Percival, a former board member at the college.

### **MEMBERS’ TIME**

None

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## MEETING FOLLOW-UP

Links to further information regarding items reported on during Committee Reports, as well as the Business Solutions, Operations, and the Director's Reports, were emailed to WDB members following the meeting.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

Jackie Murray referred members to the list of upcoming WDB meetings that were listed on the agenda.

- The next Full Workforce Development Board meeting is Thursday, May 16, 2024 from 9:00-10:30 a.m. at the Branch County Health Department Building, 570 Marshall Road, Coldwater, Michigan.
- The next Executive Committee meeting is Thursday, June 20, 2024 from 9:00-10:30 a.m.
- The next Monitoring and Evaluation Committee is Tuesday, May 21, 2024 from 8:00-9:30 a.m.
- The next Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) meeting is Tuesday, June 11, 2024 from 2:00-4:00 p.m.
- The next Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) meeting is Monday, May 13, 2024 from 1:00-3:00 p.m.

## ADJOURNMENT

There being no other reports or business for the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:06 a.m.

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Kathy Olsen

Date

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Jackie Murray

Date

## APPROVED

These minutes were approved on \_\_\_\_\_



April 30, 2024  
Business Solutions Summary

# Michigan Works! Southwest Dashboard





# MiCareerQuest™

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## St. Joseph County

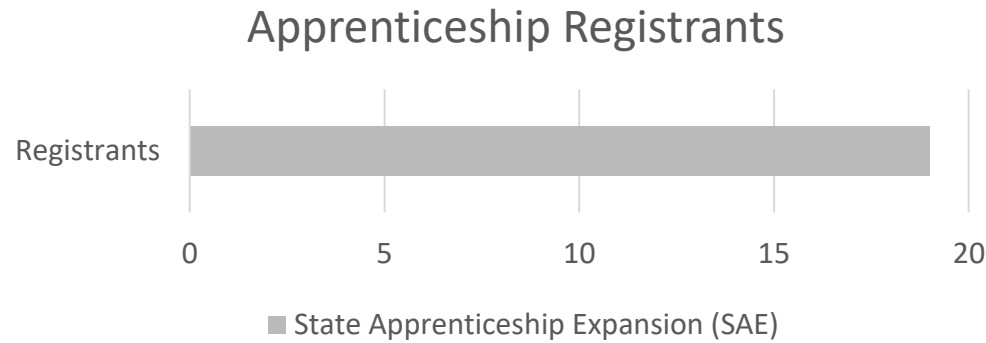




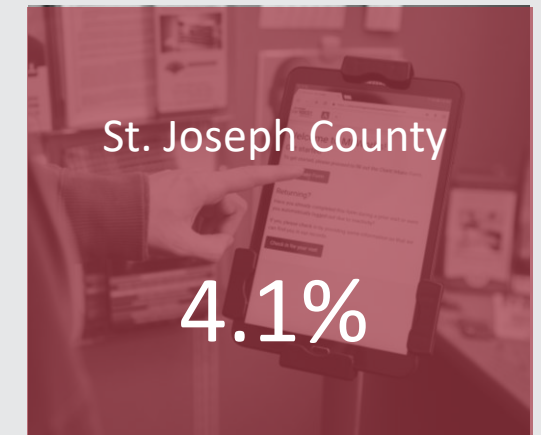
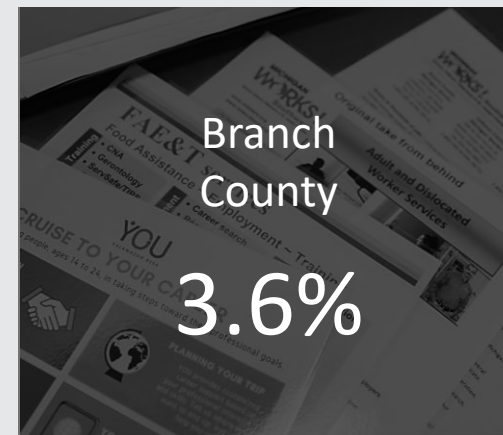
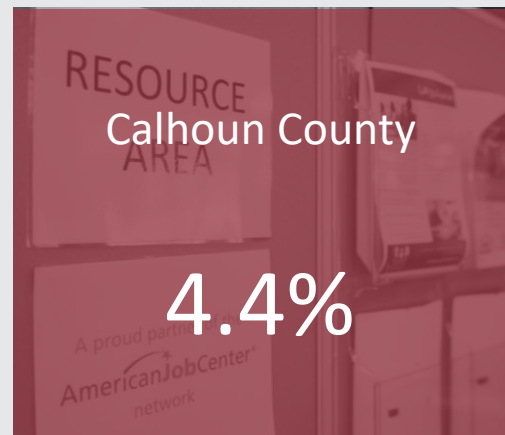
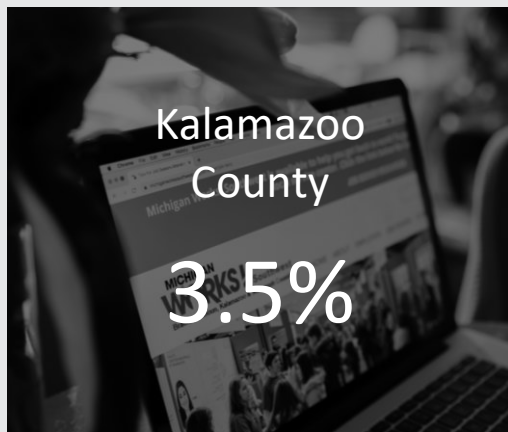
# Apprenticeship Summary

Total Registrants  
(April 30, 2024)

19



## Unemployment Rate by County March 2024



Source: <https://milmi.org/DataSearch/Unemployment-by-County>

# Going Pro Talent Fund (GPTF) FY2023 ELC



**\$1,150,650**

Awarded to  
companies



**Branch**

\$28,340

**Calhoun**

\$257,660

**St. Joseph**

\$15,600

**Kalamazoo**

\$1,800



**33**

Companies  
Awarded GPTF



**Branch**

1

**Calhoun**

18

**St. Joseph**

1

**Kalamazoo**

1



**777**

Individuals  
to be trained



**Branch**

19

**Calhoun**

206

**St. Joseph**

9

**Kalamazoo**

2



**0**

Planned  
Apprentices



**Branch**

0

**Calhoun**

0

**St. Joseph**

0

**Kalamazoo**

0



**1**

Anticipated New  
Hires



**Branch**

0

**Calhoun**

1

**St. Joseph**

0

**Kalamazoo**

0

\*12 additional employers outside of Michigan Works! Southwest's four-county area were awarded GPTF money.

# Going Pro Talent Fund (GPTF) FY2024 Cycle I



**\$2,121,381.03**

Awarded to  
companies



**Branch**

\$0

**Calhoun**

\$584,072

**St. Joseph**

\$256,780

**Kalamazoo**

\$1,188,899.03



**31**

Companies  
Awarded GPTF



**Branch**

0

**Calhoun**

7

**St. Joseph**

3

**Kalamazoo**

19



**1077**

Individuals  
to be trained



**Branch**

0

**Calhoun**

293

**St. Joseph**

148

**Kalamazoo**

590



**223**

Planned  
Apprentices



**Branch**

0

**Calhoun**

47

**St. Joseph**

22

**Kalamazoo**

154



**351**

Anticipated New  
Hires



**Branch**

0

**Calhoun**

93

**St. Joseph**

53

**Kalamazoo**

174

\*Two (2) additional employers outside of Michigan Works! Southwest's four-county area were awarded GPTF money.



# Employers Served

Number of Employers Served

(7/1/2023 – 4/30/2024)

384

Number of Services Provided

(7/1/2023 – 4/30/2024)

2482



Exhibit D

April 30, 2024  
Services Summary

# Michigan Works! Southwest Dashboard



A proud partner of the  
**AmericanJobCenter**  
network

*Michigan Works! is an equal opportunity employer/program supported by the State of Michigan. 1-800-285-WORK (9675).  
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request. Dial 711 for Relay Center and TTY.  
Supported in part with state and/or federal funds.*

# PATH

Partnership. Accountability.  
Training. Hope.

Number of Participants  
(Served 10/01/2023 – 4/30/2024)

642

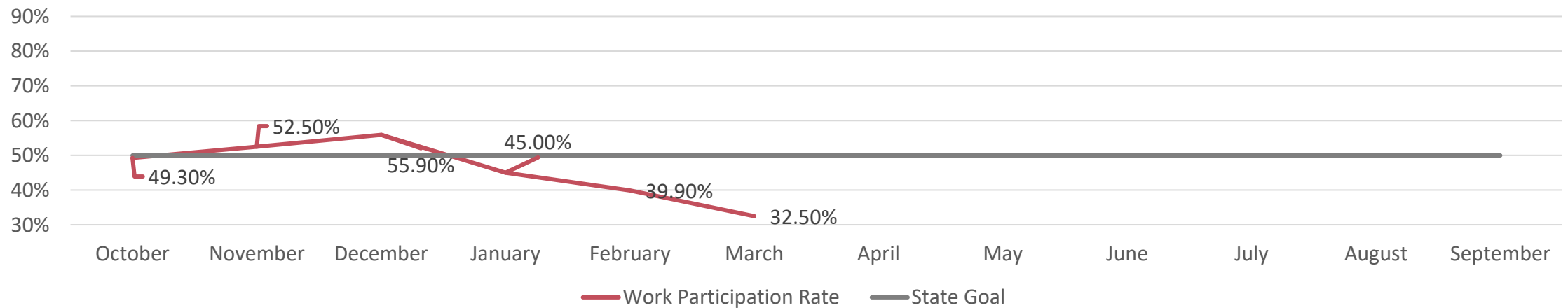
Employment Rate  
(10/01/2023 – 4/30/2024)

33.4%

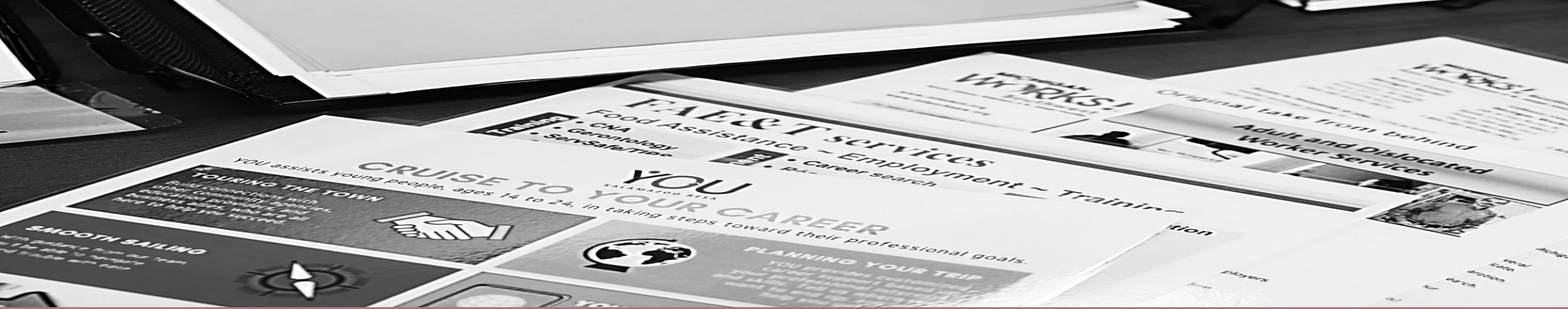
Wage  
(10/01/2023 – 4/30/2024)

\$15.54

## PATH Work Participation Rate (FY24): 45.8%







# GEMS

Gain Employment Maintain Support

193

Number of Participants  
(Served 10/01/2023 – 4/30/2024)

58.5%

Employment Rate  
(10/01/2023 – 4/30/2024)

\$15.98

Average Wage  
(10/01/2023 – 4/30/2024)

# BRES

Barrier Removal Employment Success

145

Number of Individuals Who Received BRES  
Services  
(10/01/2023 – 4/30/2024)

## Most Common BRES Support Services Provided:

- Housing and Rental Assistance
- Transportation Related

# WIOA and Wagner-Peyser Performance

(Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act)

|  | WIOA Adult |         | WIOA Dislocated Worker |          | WIOA Youth |         | Wagner-Peyser |         |
|--|------------|---------|------------------------|----------|------------|---------|---------------|---------|
|  | Target     | Actual  | Target                 | Actual   | Target     | Actual  | Target        | Actual  |
| Employment 2nd Quarter After Exit      | 88.6%      | 86.8%   | 90.1%                  | 90.9%    | 80.6%      | 66.4%   | 65%           | 76.3%   |
| Employment 4th Quarter After Exit      | 83.6%      | 89.6%   | 87.6%                  | 85.3%    | 72.8%      | 79.5%   | 63%           | 75.7%   |
| Median Earnings 2nd Quarter After Exit | \$6,192    | \$9,719 | \$7,914                | \$10,955 | \$3,660    | \$4,939 | \$5,175       | \$8,636 |
| Credential Attainment Rate             | 77.3%      | 90.0%   | 76.9%                  | 75.0%    | 71.4%      | 28.6%   | N/A           | N/A     |
| Measurable Skill Gains                 | 65.1%      | 55.7%   | 67.6%                  | 40.4%    | 33.3%      | 15.0%   | N/A           | N/A     |

PY23-Q3 outcomes 1/01/2024-3/31/2024; data pull 5/09/2024  
See Slide 6 & 7 for Performance Measures Definitions

# Employer Resource Network® (ERN®)


Key Performance Indicators (10/01/2023 to 3/31/2024)

## 767% ROI

Increased Productivity and Retention Saves Money

Based on retention; turnover costs = \$4,129 per employee.

## Highlight



26

Number of  
Active Employers



1145

Total Services

(A request can have multiple needs/services)



604

Distinct Employees Served  
and their Families

An Employee (EE) contacted their ERN® Success Coach (SC) because they were struggling financially. EE was behind on medical bills, as well as past due with mortgage payments. Additionally, EE had a past due tax bill, owed to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). On top of these financial stressors, EE fell behind on their utility payments, bringing the balance above the amount that they could afford to fully pay. At this point, making payment to make portions of their bills was the most they could do. ERN® Success Coach assisted EE with applications for barrier removal through grants available through the Marshall Employer Led Collaborative (MELC), collecting the necessary documentation to receive assistance. As a result, EE was awarded \$1,000.00 towards the balance of the past due electric bill. EE was ecstatic and thanked ERN® SC, stating that the assistance of the ERN® was tremendously helpful in bringing this relief. ERN® referrals for financial literacy courses allowed EE to focus on how to budget appropriately, allowing them to stay ahead, financially.



# WIOA Performance Measures Overview

## Source: State of Michigan WIOA Manual

**Employment Rate – 2nd Quarter after Exit:** The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program. For WIOA Title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit.

**Employment Rate – 4th Quarter after Exit:** The percentage of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program. For WIOA Title I Youth, the indicator is the percentage of participants in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit.

**Median Earnings – 2nd Quarter after Exit:** The median earnings of participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.

**Credential Attainment:** The percentage of those participants enrolled in an education or training program (excluding those in On-the-Job Training [OJT] and customized training) who attain a recognized post-secondary credential or a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, during participation in or within four quarters after exit from the program. A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent only if the participant also is employed within four quarters after exit or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized post-secondary credential within 365 days of exit from the program.

# WIOA Performance Measures Overview

## Source: State of Michigan WIOA Manual

**Measurable Skill Gains:** The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Depending on the type of education or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

- Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the post-secondary education level.
- Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
- Secondary or post-secondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the state's unit academic standards.
- Satisfactory or better progress report towards established milestones, such as completion of OJT or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training.
- Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams.

## Directors Report

May 16, 2024

### State Workforce Plan

On March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Governor Whitmer announced the [Michigan Statewide Workforce Plan](#) which lays out a vision to create jobs, support workers and employers.

The plan includes three core pillars with corresponding goals and strategies that will help the state address workforce challenges.

- Help more Michigan residents earn a skills certificate or degree.
- Increase access to opportunities that grow the middle class.
- Support business and entrepreneurial growth and talent solutions.

Susan Corbin, Director of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) will attend the September Workforce Development Board meeting to discuss the plan and how it ties into our local efforts.

Updates to the Southwest [local](#) and [regional](#) workforce plans are in progress with a submission deadline of August 2024.

### Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Reports 2024

The Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Reports provide economic and demographic data and analysis for the 16 Michigan Works! areas. This information is provided to assist with regional and local plans for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). – [LINK to the MW! Southwest Report](#).

### Aligning US Economic Development and Workforce Development Policies and Practices to Center Low-Wage Workers –

This summary of recent WorkRise research and a new community of practice led by WorkRise and the New Growth Innovation Network lays out what research tells us, what practitioners and leaders experience on the ground related to economic development and workforce development policies and practices.

[LINK](#) to the summary.

[LINK](#) to the Full Report.

### State Budget

As the budget discussions proceed, MW! Directors and the Association continue to reach out to our elected officials to reiterate our state legislative priorities.

- Increase for the Going Pro Talent Fund.
- Sustainable, long-term funding to maintain the Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES) program.
- Funding to enhance and expand youth career exploration and awareness activities.

**WIOA Reauthorization**

On April 9, 2024, the House passed H.R. 6655, A Stronger Workforce for America Act. The bill now goes to the Senate for consideration. If enacted, the WIOA reauthorization would fund the workforce development system through 2030. The reauthorization aims to make improvements to WIOA to help close the national skills gap, provide more accountability in the system, and help U.S. workers obtain high-quality, well-paying jobs.

Click [here](#) for a fact sheet.

Click [here](#) for a bill summary.

Click [here](#) for a section-by-section summary.





# BRES Program Overview

The Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES) program, funded by the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development (LEO-WD), aims to support at-risk individuals' employment by removing barriers to workforce entry. It targets various populations, including Healthy Michigan Plan enrollees, participants in the Clean Slate Pilot (CSP) program, Business Resource Network (BRN) Program beneficiaries, Michigan Reconnect scholarship recipients, and members of the Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) population.

Initially allocated \$4,680,500 by LEO-WD, the BRES program received additional funding totaling nearly \$21.5 million from FY 21 to FY 23.

## Local Michigan Works! Agencies utilized these funds to implement various initiatives, including:

- **Clean Slate Program**  
Assists Returning Citizens in expunging eligible convictions to facilitate employment. BRES funding supported legal fees, background checks, fingerprinting, and the expungement process.
- **Business Resource Network (BRN) Program**  
Provides wrap-around services for employee retention. BRES funding supported salaries and benefits of success coaches, as well as supportive services for employees of local businesses who were part of a BRN.
- **Michigan Reconnect**  
Covers tuition for in-district community college attendance. BRES funding helped cover expenses such as books, supplies, laptops, car repairs, and transportation to keep Reconnect students in school and on track to complete their education.
- **ALICE Population Support**  
Addresses employment barriers faced by financially strained individuals. BRES funding helped support the ALICE population through supportive services not otherwise covered by existing programming at the federal or the state level.

The program fills critical gaps in service delivery, supporting activities ineligible under other funding sources. Over multiple Program Instructions (PIs), BRES funding facilitated over 20,000 services, achieving an aggregate job placement rate of approximately 65%. It addressed diverse barriers, including transportation, child care, housing, and employment tools.

## Service Gaps

Recent changes in the design of the BRES program has created deserts in the availability of funding to support complex barriers to employment. A total of seven Michigan Works! Agencies did *not* receive funding under the latest competitive round of BRES, including both rural and urban local workforce development boards. This new approach of allocating BRES funds based on a competitive grant process does not allow for the local Michigan Works! Agencies to appropriately leverage other federal and state workforce development dollars to maximize available resources. The latest round of BRES awards to local Michigan Works! Agencies amounted to \$6,716,963, a 30.8% decrease compared to the most recent BRES allocation under PI 22-18 of \$9,700,000.

Without a sustainable funding strategy for BRES through the local Michigan Works! Agencies, our workforce development system will lose the ability to provide crucial support services that are not covered by other funding sources such as PATH and WIOA. This would leave individuals facing barriers to employment without the necessary resources to secure and retain jobs, prolonging their unemployment or underemployment.

The impact of misaligning BRES funding with the Michigan Works! system will extend beyond individual job seekers to affect broader economic and social indicators. Michigan could experience an increase in unemployment rates, a decline in household wages, and a decrease in labor force participation, as individuals struggle to overcome barriers to employment. Moreover, the loss of BRES-funded programs such as the Clean Slate Program, Business Resource Networks and supportive services not otherwise covered by Michigan Reconnect would limit opportunities for individuals to obtain education and training, further hindering their prospects for sustainable employment.

Communities across Michigan would feel the ripple effects of BRES funding cuts, with a potential decrease in population due to outmigration of young talent seeking better support systems elsewhere. Employers would face challenges in recruiting and retaining skilled workers, leading to productivity losses and increased turnover rates. Additionally, the strain on public assistance programs and community resources would intensify, as more families turn to these services to meet their basic needs in the absence of BRES-funded support.

In summary, the discontinuation of BRES funding would create widespread service gaps, exacerbating unemployment, economic instability, and dependency on public assistance programs. The loss of rapid and flexible support services would hinder individuals' ability to overcome barriers to employment, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality in communities across Michigan.

# Program Enhancements & Recommendations

The Michigan Works! system has recommended several program enhancements to improve and sustain the Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES) funds' effectiveness. These suggestions focus on maintaining low barriers for service access, increasing funding to serve more participants, and leveraging the program's flexibility to address unique regional needs effectively.

## Key recommendations include:

### 1. Unified Funding Approach

A standardized distribution system for BRES funds across all Michigan Works! agencies is advocated. This approach would ensure that any Michigan resident could access supportive services for barrier removal, regardless of their location, enhancing equity and access across the state.

### 2. Avoiding Dual Enrollment Restrictions

It's suggested that participants should not be required to enroll simultaneously in other federal programs. This could help BRES funds impact more people by ensuring that resources are directed towards individuals who may not qualify for other assistance but still face significant barriers to employment.

### 3. Maintaining Flexible Funding

The program's success largely hinges on its flexibility, allowing MWAs to quickly respond to participants' immediate needs. This agility is essential for resolving employment barriers efficiently, supporting a prepared local workforce, and driving economic stability in Michigan communities.

### 4. Addressing Systemic Challenges

There is concern over the state funding non-MWA entities for workforce development, leading to disparities and inefficiencies within the workforce system. A more collaborative approach between the state and MWAs, including transparent communication and accountability, is recommended to ensure resources are optimized across Michigan's workforce development ecosystem.

### 5. Expanding Eligible Services

Suggestions include broadening the scope of eligible services to cover tuition balances, emergency expenses (such as medical, housing, or vehicle repairs), and out-of-county tuition fees. This expansion would make BRES funds a more comprehensive tool for removing barriers to employment and education.

### 6. Serving Special Populations

BRES funding should continue to support specialized populations, such as those impacted by the justice system, refugees, and the ALICE youth. These groups often face unique challenges that BRES funds are well-positioned to address.

### 7. Improving Support Service Limits

Raising the limits for supportive services and overall funding caps per participant would enable MWAs to offer more substantial assistance, addressing the depth and breadth of barriers faced by job seekers and employees.