2. Workforce Development System in the Local Area

2a. Programs Included

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

- WIOA Program Services (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth);
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Services;
- Wagner-Peyser Program Services (Employment Services);
- Welfare Reform (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Program Services (Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope., TANF Refugee Program and Food Assistance Employment and Training);
- Other workforce development programs and services including NFJP (National Farmworker Jobs Program), GEMS (Gain Employment Maintain Support), the Talent and Growth Barrier Removal initiative, including successor programs that address employment and retention barriers; and,
- Numerous collaborations, outlined below, that are integral to the success of Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph Counties.

2b. Other Workforce Development Programs

Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century (Perkins V) Act

In support of access to equitable, high-quality secondary and postsecondary education, the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century (Perkins V) Act aligns CTE programming to rigorous academic and technical standards and career ready practices. The incorporation of adult and career and technical education within the Michigan Works! Southwest area will emphasis a program of study that aligns with high-skill, high-wage, and in-demand occupations and industries, increasing employment opportunities for students, including those with disabilities, individuals from economically disadvantaged families, and individuals who are out of the workforce. In alignment with state policy, the Career and Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) and Workforce Development Board (WDB) will take steps to collaborate with eligible recipients of Carl D. Perkins funds, to conduct a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessments (CLNAs), which shall include a description of career and technical education programs offered and how their size, scope, and quality meet the needs of all students served and align with industry's demand for talent.

Vocational Rehabilitation

As part of the WIOA Combined State Plan, Vocational Rehabilitation is provided in collaboration with Core program partners, that assist and guide individuals with disabilities (IWD) into the workforce services for which they are eligible. These core partners include State of Michigan programming, Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, with the support of local and national resources, described below in alignment with each partner's website:

- Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is a statewide network of vocational rehabilitation (VR) professionals developing creative, customized solutions that meet the needs of individuals and businesses. The organization provides vocational rehabilitation services for eligible individuals with disabilities, consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, to prepare for and engage in employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

- Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP) is an organization committed to providing vocational skills training to aid in finding a job and training in daily living skills for State of Michigan residents living without vision. 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 or visually impaired, to achieve employment and independence.

In addition to educating MWSW partners on workforce issues related to employment and training for IWD, local collaboration with critical vocational rehabilitation partners will allow resources to be strategically utilized and leveraged across the four-county area. Michigan Works! Southwest prioritizes the coordination of services and direct referrals to MRS and BSBP, to better meet the needs of IWD, and will continue to prioritize this collaboration, ensuring the accessibility of the One Stop Service Centers, and to strategize to best serve individuals with disabilities.

Michigan Works! Southwest Business Solutions team will continue to engage Southwest Michigan businesses, along with the partnerships of MRS and BSBP, to better understand the current skills gaps of Vocational Rehabilitation consumers and in-demand occupations, to positively impact the successful rehabilitation rate by increasing an individual's potential for employment in today's job market. In coordination with Vocational Rehabilitation staff, Michigan Works! Southwest will work locally to provide information to ensure funding is effectively utilized to meet the training needs of job seeker customers and employers, including the exploration of training programs, such as those of the Michigan Career & Technical Institute (MCTI).

To understand and address the current workforce demands, hiring practices and advancement strategies of business for IWD, Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to invite MRS to attend Michigan Works! Southwest partner meetings where resources are shared and attendees have opportunities for collaboration. MRS is also represented on the Workforce Development Board, to expand and enhance business solutions for employers in Southwest Michigan.

Other Partnerships

In addition to the core partner connection described in the previous subsection, Michigan Works! Southwest also developed partnerships with Unemployment Insurance Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Corrections, and the below agencies, as described on each organization's website:

- Disability Network Southwest Michigan is an organization dedicated to fostering a community where people with disabilities are able to participate fully in everyday life with equal opportunities and self-determination. The vision of the organization is a fully accessible community where disability is valued as human diversity and everyone belongs. Disability Network Southwest Michigan represent people with disabilities advancing justice, access, and inclusion for the Disability Community, who assist organizations, businesses, and government agencies to understand their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act. Disability Network provides workshops and onsite training, technical assistance and support in learning to be welcoming of people with disabilities as customers, clients, patrons, volunteers, or employees.

- Job Accommodation Network is an organization that provides free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and the Americans with Disabilities Act legislation to individuals and employers.

- Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) offers vocational and technical training programs to improve access to postsecondary credentials, opening new opportunities for students to gain employment. As a division within MRS, MCTI is a postsecondary residential facility that provides specialized vocational

training and comprehensive rehabilitation services to help individuals with disabilities acquire skills required for competitive integrated employment and self-sufficiency. As an intermediary, MCTI is an integral stakeholder in the effort to expand the number of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) opportunities into new industries for individuals with disabilities to meet workforce needs.

- AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) is an organization empowering people to choose how they live as they age, offering guidance through information, advocacy and service. AARP operates the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), providing older Americans 55+ with opportunities to fill entry and mid-level positions with local employers.

- VET Employment/Education Committee of the Veteran Engagement Team (VET) of Southwest Michigan, highlighted in the section below titled Veterans Services, also provides resources throughout the region.

- Pulse, at the Upjohn Institute, is strategically aligned with job quality efforts and employment retention and uses a child-centered and process-driven approach to improving early childhood development in Michigan, for children, employees, and child-care entrepreneurs.

Veterans Services

Veterans Career Advisors are State of Michigan employees who work directly with veterans and eligible individuals who have qualifying barriers to employment. Located in two of the four MWSW service centers, Career Advisors provide case management services to help eligible veterans reach employment goals. Case management 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.

Michigan Works! Southwest complies with the Jobs for Veterans Act, giving veterans, and eligible spouses, priority of service status for all Department of Labor (DOL) funded job training programs.

Regionally, 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.

Fidelity Bonding

The Fidelity Bonding Program (FBP) provides an incentive for employers to hire job seekers who are qualified, but who are considered high-risk because of a factor in their personal background, allowing employers to mitigate risk when hiring and reducing barriers to employment faced by job seekers. Michigan Works! Southwest offers assistance to job seekers and employers in instances where employment is conditioned on the job applicant maintaining a fidelity bond.

Community Partnerships

Michigan Works! Southwest is dedicated to the development and ongoing strengthening of community partnerships, including providers of employment and training activities under the Community Services Block Grant, the Community Action of South Central Michigan; providers of Adult Education and Literacy programming under Title II of WIOA, including Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) and the Kalamazoo Literacy Council (KLC); and the Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP), including AARP. Through collaboration with these services and programs, as guided by the Workforce Development Board, Michigan Works! Southwest seeks to provide co-enrollment in programs of the highest quality and services that align with local job seeker and business needs. Engagement in regularly scheduled partner meetings, in all four counties, local referrals, and the potential for co-location are some examples of this dedication to collaboration.

3. Expanding and Improving Access

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

3a. Community Access

Michigan Works! Southwest focuses on providing seamless delivery to job seekers, integrating barrier removal services of community-based organizations to supplement WIOA funded programming. Integrated service delivery exists between Michigan Works! Southwest service providers (including WIOA subrecipients), and area partners, allowing workforce development program staff to identify resources that can be used to remove education and employment related barriers, for participants. For example, in St. Joseph County the St. Joseph County Human Services Commission maintains a community help card and detailed resource guide, available online. Further, St. Joseph County maintains a diverse group of professionals that serve the county by sharing information and resources through a 'Google Group'.

In Calhoun County, the Coordinating Council serves as a community collaborative body, dedicated to fostering collaboration to minimize service duplication, optimize resources, and implement plans to create positive impacts to residents. The Community Collaborative provides networking and collaboration, for Branch County.

Kalamazoo County has many strong partnerships, including with the Gryphon Place, a host for 211, the designated community information and referral services for residents to find resources to assist with health and human services, available regardless of county of residence. Common barriers that require additional resources include transportation, childcare, housing, utilities, emergency auto repairs, and a need for additional dollars to support training. Through multiple agency partnerships within the four-county service area, service providers are able to access resources and provide uninterrupted service, while addressing barriers that customers are facing that affect their ability to gain and retain employment.

In Branch County, Michigan Works! Southwest participates in the Branch County Community Collaborative to strengthen cross agency partnerships and improve coordination of services for residents in the community. Through this collaborative effort, local organizations share information, identify service gaps, and work collectively to address barriers faced by individuals seeking employment and training opportunities. As a result of ongoing engagement, MWSW secured grant funding to enhance accessibility to workforce services. The grant supports efforts to reduce barriers for clients and improve access to Michigan Works! programs, including supportive services.

WIOA service providers emphasize service to the community's underserved populations through outreach to individuals

residing in areas most impacted by poverty. Currently, Michigan Works! Southwest offers services in local community centers and partners with neighborhood organizations in all four counties located within the Michigan Works! Southwest area. A huge benefit to this model is job seeker access, especially where transportation and childcare are concerned.

Michigan Works! Southwest continues to seek ways to improve access, including virtual access, to information and available resources, supported by leveraged funding. While exploring additional ways to improve and expand workforce development programming, including through the use of technology, Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to focus grant applications that support ease of access for residents in rural and underserved communities.

3b. Career Pathways and Co-Enrollment

Michigan Works! Southwest strives to have a comprehensive career pathway system that includes multiple entry and exit points in order to meet the needs of the individuals we serve. This includes coordinating education and training, as well as providing access to supportive services needed for career advancement that will lead to a skilled workforce that meets local, regional and State of Michigan talent needs. WIOA service providers are dedicated to the career pathway model which allows for cross program referrals and enrollments. Co-enrollments lead to additional resources to assist the job seeker on their path to success. Michigan Works! Southwest Business Solutions team members are dedicated to assisting with the alignment of career pathways to the needs identified through employer-led collaboratives.

Michigan Works! Southwest is committed to supporting the Governor's Sixty by 30 initiative and is focused on activities that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials, including a credential that is a portable, industry-recognized certificate or certification. Coordinating workforce development with State initiatives and special funding with a focus on pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships and post-secondary education including, but not limited to, MI Reconnect, Innovative Program Grants through the Michigan College Access Network, Young Professionals, and Young Professionals Plus, will support reaching the goals of the Sixty by 30 initiative.

For WIOA eligible Youth, forming a clear picture of potential career pathways and the motivation to move toward a well-defined career goal starts with strong partnerships with secondary education providers. MWSW WIOA youth staff cultivate strong relationships with counselors, administrators, and other education and training staff throughout Michigan Works! Southwest area school districts, career centers, and career and technical education centers.

Collaboration with school counselors allows WIOA youth staff to understand the potential needs of a participant with disabilities and to focus support and goal setting to increase accessibility. A targeted focus includes alternative education programs where individuals facing economic disparities or barriers to traditional educational opportunities, including disabilities, attend at high rates. This strong focus on forging a career pathway for each young person sets the stage for the development of the highly skilled and well-trained workforce that will satisfy the needs of the region's economic landscape. Getting young people, including those with disabilities, on a pathway to brighter futures in high school and beyond will help them achieve long-term economic success and positively impacts the economic trajectory of the region.

Students have the opportunity to explore many hands-on and interactive activities at annual career exploration and experience events. Additionally, Michigan Works! Southwest is in the beginning stages of exploring strategies as to how to integrate virtual reality into career exploration. Annual happenings include MiCareerQuest™ events, or similar career exploration and experience events, talent tours, and career events that focus on summer employment and post-graduation employment. At these events, students throughout the four-county service area are provided with information regarding the educational requirements to help them understand the career opportunities and a plethora of

career pathways available to them.

Local in-demand businesses and industries are also targeted, highlighting in-demand industries and quality jobs. This programming aligns with Section 202 of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), to:

- Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills for employment and economic self-sufficiency;
- Support the education and skill achievement of parents and family members to participate in the educational development of their children and improve economic opportunities for families;
- Assist immigrants and English learners in improving their English and math proficiency and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and
- Assist incarcerated individuals in strengthening their knowledge and skills to promote successful re-entry into society.

Michigan Works! Southwest coordinates with adult education, and other education and training providers, business and industry, social service agencies, and other community-based organizations in planning for the development of career pathways that lead to in-demand occupations. As described in the Adult Education and Literacy section of this plan, as well as the Region 8 WIOA plan, activities that assist adult learners with the transition to post-secondary education, including on-the-job training opportunities and apprenticeships, are a high priority for Michigan Works! Southwest.

Many members of the WDB and its committees, as well as workforce staff also serve on local boards and committees where they provide meaningful insight into business and industry trends and needs, champion other programs within the community, and participate in special initiatives/engagement opportunities. Examples include, but are not limited to, economic development organizations; Career Technical Education advisory groups; the Battle Creek Career Academies Board; and Access for All, a pre-apprenticeship training for careers in construction.

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

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

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

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

- Serve in an advisory capacity to the Michigan Works! Southwest WDB on a broad range of youth and adult educational issues, including advisement of strategic workforce development plans.
- Coordinate with other educational entities, in guiding career development programs and career pathways,

such as high schools, community colleges, career and technical education, adult education, workforce development programs, Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers, Offender Success programs, corrections education, veterans' programs, and college access networks in support of the WDB's mission and strategic workforce development plans.

- Assist the local Workforce Development Board, consistent with the WIOA of 2014, as well as any reauthorization and/or successive legislation, with the development and implementation of career pathways.
- Maximize existing community-based resources that will avoid duplication of services.
- Provide direction, strategies, and support for implementing, improving, and expanding Adult Learning initiatives to include educational, job training and life skills programs in collaboration with the State Section 107 fiscal agent.
- Collaborate with the region's intermediate school district that is the assigned fiscal agent in the development of the Michigan Department of Education's Regional Strategic Plan. Strategies include but are not limited to: Labor Market Information, career cluster rankings, and working to accurately reflect employers' demand for talent.
- Ensure educational programs and service delivery align to the Department of Education and the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity requirements.

3d. Access to Credentials

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

In the fall of 2023, the CEAC reviewed and updated the Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) as well as the CTE Early Middle College Strategic Plan that included the following:

- Updating the national career cluster rankings based on regional employer needs;
- Identifying educational entities in the service delivery area that provide eligible CTE early middle college and CTE dual enrollment programs including districts, intermediate districts, postsecondary institutions, and noncredit occupational training programs leading to an industry-recognized credential; and
- Listing strategies that will be used to inform parents and students of CTE early middle college and CTE dual enrollment programs in the workforce development board service delivery area.

This work will continue to be a focus for Michigan Works! Southwest.

Additionally, the Michigan Works! Southwest Business Solutions Team continues to address further opportunities for the accessibility of credentials through industry specific partnerships and the development and engagement in several robust consortium groups, in the industries of advanced manufacturing and supply chain, healthcare, and Electric Vehicle/Information Technology. These employer led collaboratives allow Michigan Works! Southwest to collectively identify the training needs and skill challenges of industries, while developing and enhancing the connection between business and job seeker.

3e. DART – Disability Awareness Resource Team

Staff from partner agencies with targeted services for individuals with disabilities such as Michigan Rehabilitation Services the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, and Disability Network Southwest Michigan are invited to attend Michigan Works! Southwest Committee meetings to present information about their organizations and the services they provide. Materials from these agencies are also available in the resource areas of the Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers.

As noted in Section 2 and as requested by customers, referrals are made to local agencies serving individuals with disabilities.

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

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

In 2016, the DART Committee formally 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 Workforce Development Board, 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 which led to curriculum development to address these priorities. Twelve (12) modules were developed, and are accessible to WDB members, subrecipients/service provider staff, partners, and employers for professional development. Staff and community members also have access to additional disability focused training that is provided by local DART member organizations, as well as state and national organizations. The work of the DART Committee has been shared at conferences as well as via virtual webinars. State level staff have viewed these Desktop modules and the DART Committee as a best practice.

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

The DART work plan also includes identifying and providing ***informational updates on emerging issues*** 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, and minimizing duplication of contacts.

4. Employer Engagement Strategies

Michigan Works! Southwest has a dedicated team of Business Solutions Professionals who lead the efforts in our four-county region to engage employers of in-demand industry sectors and occupations. Using a demand-driven model that focuses on employers as the primary customer, the Business Solutions staff serve as the lead liaisons for connecting both large and small employers to workforce development programs in each of the four counties of the Michigan Works! Southwest area.

Through regular collaboration to leverage partnerships between business, educators, economic developers, and workforce development, the Business Solutions staff work together with community stakeholders. Multiple strategies and services are used to meet the demand for a skilled workforce, by assisting businesses with their attraction and retention strategies. Some strategies used to achieve positive results include:

- Consortium work and partnerships, including Employer Led Collaboratives to share resources and best practices and to identify needs and challenges of specific industries (small and large employers are represented in these groups);
- Large events such as job fairs, job readiness events, MiCareerQuest™;
- Manufacturing Week, highlighting occupations in manufacturing aimed at giving youth a better understanding of what careers are available to them;
- National Apprenticeship Week, to show progress made in apprenticeships across the nation;
- Race to Talent™ Apprenticeship events, aimed at showcasing employers' apprenticeship programs, sharing best practices and awarding leaders in training;
- Employer of the Day events facilitated by Michigan Works! Southwest;
- Job Fairs at employer sites;
- Employer Resource Networks® (ERN®), a consortium of employers that focus on improved retention and reduced turnover cost;
- Group meetings of local Human Resource Managers organizations;
- Educating employers about the HireReach Academy, to assist HR departments of participating organizations with the tools and knowledge needed to create a skills-based hiring process that will lead to a better fit, less turnover, and a broader, more diverse workforce;
- Reviewing data reports generated by Lightcast, a labor market analytics company, and other labor market information to determine in-demand occupations in the Michigan Works! Southwest area;
- Employer education regarding resources available on Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTC), the State's labor exchange system for employers and job seekers;
- Employer education regarding resources available through the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), Michigan Unemployment Agency (UIA) and Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC);
- Monthly Employer Newsletter, including: the latest data, such as the unemployment rates for our four-county service area, links to additional data sources, a featured article, an employer spotlight, and a list of upcoming events;
- Information sessions on programs and grants to assist with training such as Apprenticeship 1.0 the Basics and Beyond, Going Pro Talent Fund (GPTF) Information sessions, On-the-Job Training (OJT), etc.; and

- Engagement with other workforce development partners such as:
    - Local economic development organizations,
    - Chambers of Commerce,
    - Educational entities,
    - Organized labor unions,
    - Veteran services,
    - Vocational rehabilitation,
    - Youth services,
    - State of Michigan,
    - United States Department of Labor,
    - Local units of government, and
    - Business Solutions Professionals from Michigan Works! areas outside of the MW! Southwest area.

4a. Support Business Needs

Michigan Works! Southwest strives to meet the needs of businesses in the local area by following the Business Solutions demand-driven model that focuses on businesses as the primary customer and is anchored on building and enhancing relationships with area employers. The model begins with Fact Finding that leads to identifying resources and solutions to respond to each employer's needs. By meeting with employers and conducting Fact Finding sessions, BSPs have the information to determine the workforce needs of individual employers in the local area.

Once BSPs have an understanding of the needs, they are able to connect the employers to available resources and solutions, or they can collaborate with the employer to develop solutions that respond to the local employers' needs. When appropriate, the Business Solutions Team will assist employers in an online application process for the Going PRO Talent Fund, a program of LEO-WD that makes awards to employers to assist in training, developing, and retaining current and newly hired employees. Business Solutions Coordinators work to assist employers in building a training plan suited to meet the needs of business, as well as provide reimbursement for the training of employees, expanding the skills of the workforce and ensuring growth and economic advancement for both the employer and the job seeker.

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

- Outreach and recruitment assistance;
- Posting jobs on Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTC);
- Screening applications;
- Facilitation and support of local and regional hiring events/job fairs;
- 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, in partnership with training providers;
- Facilitating connections between employers and educational institutions to expand opportunities for hard-to-serve populations, including youth, veterans, and individuals with disabilities;
- Connecting employers to Employer Led Collaboratives (ELCs) to leverage the power of multiple employers within an industry to collaboratively address talent shortages through training, recruitment, and retention plans and strategies;
- Utilizing a multi-generational approach to address the talent gap between generations and the cross-generational changes of the workforce;

- Support of the development and implementation of industry specific consortia;
- Using data to inform decision making;
- Providing career exploration events for students and job seekers;
- Assisting employers with retention strategies;
- Serving the needs of the ALICE population; and
- Assisting employers with the development and growth of registered apprenticeship programming.

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

Michigan Works! Southwest also serves as an intermediary for US Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Programs, serving employers in the region. Currently, MWSW holds the standards for 10 apprenticeship occupations, across six (6) employers. As a sponsor, MWSW employs the Apprenticeship Success Coordinator (ASC); a position working with employers to develop and maintain Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

4b. Improve Coordination

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

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

4c. Strengthen Linkages

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

- Professional development for BSP team members to learn about the types of programs that are available for employers through the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA). One example that occurred leading up to this plan period is when an employer was doing a large temporary layoff, the BST could provide information to the employer about waivers to work search ensuring they would retain their workers after the temporary layoff was lifted.
- Professional development for BSP team members to learn the accessibility of labor market information, as well as the tools that populate data available which assists BSPs in making data driven decisions. Examples include the labor market information training for generating Real Time Jobs Data Reports produced by Lightcast, a labor market analytics company, as well as training offered by the Michigan Center for Data and Analytics.
- Focus on enhanced communication strategies within the BSP structure, BSP lead and team members. Strengthen avenues of timely and efficient sharing of pertinent BSP information and data. Create BSP team check points for

project tracking updates and outcomes embedding brainstorming and continuous improvement efforts on current and completed projects.

- Stronger communication between the lead BSP team members and the BSP team members employed by service providers, including WIOA subrecipients.

5. Regional Economic Development Activities

5a. Economic Development

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

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

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

The partners listed above play a role in the Business Solutions Teams, Consortium Groups, and Employer Led Collaboratives to ensure information sharing and coordination between workforce development and economic development.

5b. Entrepreneurship

Michigan Works! Southwest offers workshops and makes referrals to partner agencies to assist individuals with gaining general knowledge on business start-up and entrepreneurial training, business plan writing, access to capital and financial preparation. The Business Solutions Team has a strong relationship with a local business, Room 35, that works with small businesses and entrepreneurs, assisting with the complexities of scaling and operating a business, for entrepreneurs. A quarterly meeting with Room 35 is held to ensure awareness of services are available to the community.

5c. Employer Resource Network

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

With the ERN® model, Success Coaches have regularly scheduled hours on site each week at ERN® member companies to assist employees with addressing barriers affecting their work, on a predictable, ongoing basis. In addition to the scheduled hours, Success Coaches are available every day via text or email. Accommodation for all shifts and off-site location assistance or alternate meeting times are available upon request.

ERN® success coaches are able to assist by connecting the employees to resources available through the employer and/or the community. Training and advanced education for work-based skills or life skills can be focused on goals along with barrier reduction. Barrier removal assistance most often requested is for housing, transportation, childcare, utility assistance, health insurance, and financial wellness. Once immediate needs are addressed, there is opportunity for the ERN® Success Coach to work with the employees on setting longer-term goals that will help the individuals and their families become more stable and move towards self-sufficiency.

High employee turnover is costly, often having a negative impact on company morale. Prioritizing employee retention not only reduces hiring costs, it also maintains workers who are already trained and supports the organization's productivity. Thus, employee retention is critical to a company's success. The ERN® model is a recipe for success as it provides a wholistic approach to employee retention by combining connections to resources, along with coaching.

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

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

Partners in the Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network® include one local bank and one credit union, providing access to short-term hardship loans for emergency situations. Known as the Bridge Loan, these short-term loans provide a financial resource for the ERN® success coach and clients, allowing the coach to connect clients to fair and reputable lending. These loans help clients overcome financial burdens that may be negatively impacting their life including auto repairs, credit repair, payday lending traps, appliance purchases, debt, and family emergencies. The Bridge Loan is offered as a last resort for employees facing a financial emergency. Along with making a monthly loan payment, the employee contributes to a savings account for future needs. The loans are often used to assist in boosting or establishing credit. Thus, when the loan is paid off, the employee is prepared should another emergency present itself. The credit union also provides financial wellness workshops.

Further, through the Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network®, an example of a collaboration between multiple area employers and local public transportation was the creation of a pilot bus route. This pilot was implemented to cater to the needs of employers in a specific corridor, producing numerous benefits, such as reducing traffic congestion, providing affordable transportation options for employees, and promoting sustainability by encouraging the use of public transportation. By collaborating with multiple employers, Southwest Michigan ERN® not only addressed employee transportation needs but also fostered a sense of community and shared responsibility.

Additional activities in support of employment retention include the onboarding of ERN® companies as Tri-Share participants. Through Tri-Share, a State of Michigan program, the cost of an employee's childcare is shared equally among the employer, the employee, and the State of Michigan. According to PULSE, partner and advocate of early childhood systems, lack of childcare costs employers through lost revenues, extra costs to rehire quits and cover absenteeism, and the loss of future revenues, from lower output, as a result of parents struggling with the lack of care and opportunities for

their children. Through Tri-Share, employers are introduced to the provision of childcare benefits available to employees, resulting in lasting rewards for recruitment, retention, and productivity.

Investor ERN® companies leverage and share resources to benefit all members businesses. Known as "member's", these companies meet regularly (monthly or bi-monthly) to learn about new community and business resources and to share information and best practices.

6. One-Stop Delivery System

6a. Continuous Improvement of Eligible Providers

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

Assessment: Identification of specific workforce needs of the customers – employers and job seekers.

Treatments: Development of strategies that will address customer needs – systemic or programmatic in such a manner that the identified barriers are minimized or eradicated.

Implementation: Development of an Implementation Plan based on the strategies identified for addressing the customer need. This occurs through the identification of a range of eligible providers in both the private and public sectors that have the demonstrated ability to address the needs and strategies to translate this into efficient and effective service delivery.

Evaluation: Timely and continuous review of eligible provider results is key to assessing if and when the identified needs are addressed as planned. To measure positive progress towards the goal, specific performance indicators are established. Measuring progress on an ongoing basis is essential to achieving the end goals. The Workforce Development Board assesses the quality and effectiveness of the service delivery, periodically throughout the program year. Staff experience is shared and discussed at the WDB's Executive meetings.

The program data and information gathered for evaluation comes from several sources. Through a review of this diverse data and information, the Michigan Works! Southwest administrative staff and Workforce Development Board have the ability to review performance and service delivery outcomes on an on-going basis.

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

While One-Stop Service Centers are strategically located throughout the four-county area, Michigan Works! Southwest staff have developed strategies and partnerships to ensure all individuals, including those in remote areas, are able to access services delivered through the One-Stop delivery system.

Using existing relationships with community partners, additional locations for meeting customers in the areas where they reside, are available. Michigan Works! Southwest operates a PATH office in Albion, as well as providing PATH programming at a neighborhood organization in Kalamazoo, and privately funded workforce development programming at multiple neighborhood organizations in the City of Battle Creek, known as Employment HUBs.

MWSW primarily provides services in-person through the Michigan Works! Service Centers (aka American Job Centers) and offers in-person services at all locations throughout the business week. Access to virtual services is available through the

MWSW website, as well as by phone or virtual meeting platforms, including Zoom. Services include UIA navigation, registration for work, RESEA appointments, resume assistance, referrals to workforce development services, one on one career coaching (by appointment), and employment readiness workshops.

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

Michigan Works! Southwest Employment Services staff continue to distribute the Job Seeker Newsletter, a strategic tool for outreach that has proven to be a valuable resource for customers. This electronic tool promotes area job openings and employment-related events and is distributed monthly to job seekers, as well as to partners and community organizations to assist in reaching job seekers.

6c. Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policies

As recipients of state and federal funds, the Michigan Works! Southwest WDB and the MWA, including all subrecipients and service providers, provide equal opportunity for individuals to participate in and benefit from all programs, services and activities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or political affiliation or beliefs.

Principles of equal opportunity and non-discrimination apply to hiring, promotion, employment practices, program eligibility, training, placement, procurement decisions and the composition of committees, boards, and advisory groups formed to conduct workforce development initiatives. Michigan Works! Southwest also has a designated individual to serve as the MWA Equal Opportunity Officer to coordinate management of the MWA's non-discrimination and EO responsibilities, and to serve as a technical resource.

7. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

Adult and Dislocated Worker programming, services and funding will be aligned with in-demand occupations and with the priority industries identified in the Regional Plan. With this approach, Adult and Dislocated Worker services and training are aligned to match employers' identified industry demands, placing job seekers with appropriate vacancies, to ensure job candidates receive the skills and competencies that align best with industry, and hence increase the likelihood of long-term employment upon completion of training. Regional planning information provided to and by the Michigan Works! Southwest Agency, such as Real Time Jobs Data Reports produced by Lightcast, a labor market analytics company, as well as other labor market reports, are also used to identify industry sectors and occupations that may provide quality employment and training opportunities for customers at all levels of education.

7a. Assessments

Assessments are used to establish benchmarks for readiness for specific occupations and/or preparation for specific types of education/training. Career Coaches select assessment instruments based on the individual's career and training needs, ensuring that these instruments meet specific criteria such as being standardized, validated, and normed. The assessment tools employed include the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) which is used to evaluate basic skills and competencies.

7b. Individual Service Strategy

An Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is a tailored approach to delivering services that meet the specific needs of each participant. The process begins with a comprehensive assessment to understand the individual's needs, preferences, strengths, and challenges, using tools like standardized assessments, interviews, and observations. Based on this assessment, specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals are set collaboratively with the participant.

Service planning involves identifying the necessary services and resources to achieve these goals, detailing the type, frequency, and duration of each service. Effective coordination facilitated by a Career Coach is crucial, ensuring that all service partners communicate and work together seamlessly. This coordination is vital for keeping everyone updated on the individual's progress and any changes to their plan.

Implementation follows, where the planned services are delivered in a manner that aligns with the individual's preferences, ensuring accessibility and quality. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are necessary to track progress and assess the effectiveness of the services, adjusting as needed. Thorough documentation of the assessment, plan, implementation, and outcomes is maintained, ensuring that all relevant parties have access to up-to-date information. Regular reviews and adjustments are made to keep the strategy relevant and effective, considering the individual's changing needs and feedback. This structured approach results in personalized care, improved coordination among service providers, enhanced satisfaction for the individual, and more efficient resource allocation.

An ISS is a dynamic process that requires collaboration, flexibility, and a focus on the individual's unique needs and goals. By following this structured approach, service providers can deliver high-quality, personalized services that lead to better outcomes and greater satisfaction for the individuals they serve.

7c. Counseling, Guidance and Case Management

Each adult and dislocated worker enrolled in WIOA Services is initially enrolled in the Case Management activity and assigned an individual Career Coach. The Career Coach's primary responsibility is to work with the participant to develop the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) and provide the necessary assistance and services needed to achieve the goals and objectives outlined in the ISS. Throughout the participant's engagement in career and training services, the Career Coach offers employment counseling, pre-vocational services, and job search / placement assistance, all of which are aimed at helping the participant to achieve their ISS goals. Additionally, the Career Coach identifies the career services required for training.

Beyond WIOA activities, services and employment counseling, Career Coaches are also responsible for referring participants to local human service agencies for non-employment related needs, such as family counseling, financial counseling, or substance abuse services. They also identify and secure supportive services assistance for any emerging customer support needs.

Participants in Career Services who do not achieve quality direct placement into employment may need upgraded or new occupational skills for an in-demand job or career. These participants can be transferred to training services, where they can enroll in customized or industry-specific training, on-the-job training, or ITA occupational skills classroom training. The Career Coach will refer participants for any employer-specific testing or assessment required for customized or on-the-job training.

Additionally, Career Coaches provide occupational and career counseling, including guidance on local labor market demand using tools like data reports produced by Lightcast, a labor market analytics company, and information on specific occupational training programs. Career Coaches also address non-academic issues related to classroom training enrollment, such as income maintenance and other factors that could impact the participant's likelihood of completing training and securing full-time, permanent employment.

7d. Soft Skills Training

During the general applicant orientation, Career Coaches cover basic skills, abilities and behaviors that are required to succeed in obtaining and maintaining employment. If a Career Coach identifies a WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker participant who requires more comprehensive support with employability skills, they can assign the participant to

additional workshops, which can be completed either virtually or at a Michigan Works! Southwest Service Center.

7e. Job Placement Assistance

The outreach, identification, and recruitment of businesses with quality job openings, is the key activity that supports all other workforce services to job seekers. By understanding and addressing the workforce needs of businesses, WIOA Adult and Dislocated worker participants are provided opportunities for meaningful employment.

Throughout the job search process, regular meetings between Career Coaches and participants are held to monitor and support job search activities. During these meetings, Career Coaches provide information on hiring activities with potential opportunities, discuss the outcomes of employer contacts, and offer guidance on filling out applications or participating in job interviews. Career Coaches may also provide advice on effectively using career services resources, including enrollment in soft skills training.

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

When participants secure direct placement at an employer's worksite, the staff conduct initial follow-up with the participant and the employer in the quarter in which placement occurs to verify employment status, wages, benefits, job satisfaction, and working conditions. For OJT placements, members of the Business Solutions Team (BST) will monitor the worksite to assure the training plan is being followed and the trainee is acquiring the necessary skills. The employer will also be contacted during the training period. Once training is completed, the employer and participant will verify training hours, wages, and the completion of training. After placement, the staff maintain follow-up contact with each participant at least once per quarter for the twelve (12) months following placement, to ensure ongoing support and success.

7f. Support Services

WIOA supportive services play a crucial role in helping participants overcome barriers to employment and successfully complete their training and job search activities. These services include a wide range of assistance, such as transportation, childcare, housing, and financial counseling, tailored to meet the individual needs of each participant. Career Coaches assess participants to identify their specific supportive service needs and incorporate these needs into their Individual Service Strategy (ISS). By addressing these needs, WIOA ensures that participants can fully engage in their training programs and job search efforts without the distraction of unmet personal needs.

Transportation assistance is provided through subsidized or free transit passes, ride-sharing options, community shuttle programs, and mileage reimbursements, ensuring participants can attend training, interviews, and employment opportunities. Childcare services are coordinated with local providers to ensure that participants have reliable and affordable care for their children, enabling them to focus on their career development. Housing assistance helps participants secure stable living conditions, reducing the stress and instability that can hinder their job search and training participation. Financial counseling offers guidance on budgeting, debt management, and financial planning, helping participants achieve financial stability.

Career Coaches also refer participants to local human service agencies for additional non-employment-related needs, such as family counseling or substance abuse services. By creating a network of support, WIOA ensures that participants receive comprehensive assistance, addressing all aspects of their well-being. The local board collaborates with various community organizations and service providers to expand the range and quality of supportive services available. Regular monitoring

and follow-up by Career Coaches ensure that participants continue to receive the necessary support throughout their involvement in WIOA programs.

Overall, WIOA supportive services are integral to the success of participants, providing them with the resources and assistance needed to overcome barriers, complete their training, and secure sustainable employment. Through continuous assessment, coordination, and support, these services enhance the effectiveness of WIOA programs and contribute to the long-term success of participants in the workforce.

7g. Training Services

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

For any WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker services participant who is considered for Training Services, the Career Coach ensures that specific requirements are met. The participant must express an interest in training, conduct research to ensure employer demand, and have demonstrated that they are unlikely to obtain living wage employment through job search activities alone. The Career Coach must also determine whether the participant demonstrates the ability and commitment needed to complete training. Finally, the Career Coach and the participant must concur on the type of training needed, the likelihood that training will lead to achievement of ISS employment goals, and that it addresses a recognized demand in the job market.

7h. On the Job Training

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

7i. Customized Training

Customized recruitment and training strategies aim to offer participants high quality training and placement opportunities, alongside providing employers with tailored recruitment, screening, and training assistance to employers with job openings. Customized training programs are developed collaboratively by employers, program staff and the Business Solutions Team to ensure consensus on program design, the sequence of training activities, and the service delivery schedule. The management of each customized training program is adapted based on the unique components and requirements of the program.

7j. Individual Training Account (ITA)

Classroom training is facilitated using "Individual Training Account" (ITA) vouchers, focusing on occupational skills classroom training that leads to the attainment of certificates or degrees highly valued by employers in the labor market. This training aims to prepare participants for employment in high-demand occupations within emerging and established industry sectors, in the local or regional labor market.

Individuals interested in classroom training are required to complete a comprehensive training information packet. This

packet includes researching employment opportunities relevant to their chosen field of training and gathering information about training programs and institutions offering such training. Additionally, individuals must articulate their reasons for selecting a specific training area, outline career goals associated with completing the training, and detail the support systems available to them during their training period.

Upon submission, program staff review the completed packet to assess the suitability and realism of the individual's plan. They also verify the availability of employment opportunities in the chosen field of study. Once staff verify and approve the training plan, the enrollment and preparation processes commence. Training services are accessible to both employed and unemployed eligible applicants who are registered and meet the necessary requirements. Each participant's case file must include a documented determination of their need for training services, established through interviews, evaluations, or assessments conducted as part of the application process. Training services will be provided using individual training accounts in the Michigan Works! Southwest area, in the manner outlined below:

A. Funding for ITA Vouchers

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

B. Use of ITA Vouchers

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

C. Informed Customer Choice

The Michigan Works! Southwest Agency assures consistent application of federal, state, and local policies for training research, planning, decision making and fund obligations for ITAs. Unless otherwise allowable by funding source or policy, service providers only approve funding for programs or courses of study for which vendors have successfully completed the process to be listed on the Michigan Training Connect (MiTC), including maintenance of annual updates. Being listed on the MiTC as available in the Michigan Works! Southwest area does not necessarily constitute approval of a training program for use by local service providers.

7k. Follow-up Services

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

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

8. Youth Services

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

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

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

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

- School dropout
- Not attended for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter
- Subject to the juvenile or adult justice system
- Homeless, runaway, or foster child
- Pregnant or parenting
- Individual with a disability
- Low-income, in one of the following categories*:*

  - Is low income and requires additional assistance to complete an educational program to enter or complete, or to secure and retain, employment.

  - Recipient of secondary school diploma who is low-income and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner.

  - Requires additional assistance and meets program eligibility requirements.

Mentorship plays a pivotal role in shaping career pathways, especially for at-risk youth. WIOA youth programming facilitates strong and stable relationships with participants through regular interaction, accountability, assistance in overcoming barriers, and by providing a safe environment. However, addressing the workforce development needs of young adults extends beyond positive relationships alone; it necessitates a holistic approach that considers each participant's unique circumstances and aspirations. In addition to positive relationships, the following are workforce development needs of the young adult population that MWSW will support:

• Basic skills: Participants will be assessed using the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). Those scoring below the appropriate functioning level will receive support in the identified deficient area during program participation. WIOA youth staff will monitor the academic progress of in-school youth and coordinate with school counselors to provide support as needed. Tutoring and study skills training will be offered to out-of-school youth at

local educational institutions and/or at One Stop Centers, to assist in improving functioning levels.

• Career exploration: To empower participants in achieving their long-term goals, WIOA youth dedicated staff will ensure that each individual gains a comprehensive understanding of their options and opportunities. Guided by the newly developed Career Roadmap, a world-class career pathway planning tool, participants will embark on a transformative journey to achieve their long-term goals. WIOA youth staff will offer a diverse range of learning avenues to help participants achieve their career aspirations and to learn about the day in the life of a professional that may include but are not limited to talent tours, career videos, college tours, training opportunities, internships, apprenticeships, and virtual reality career exploration - all aligned with local labor market trend analyses.

• Work-based training: Participants with limited or no prior work history, previous underperformance on the job, or significant employment gaps may be enrolled in the work experience component of Youth Services. Those with advanced career readiness will receive direct placement assistance and may take advantage of on-the-job training opportunities if suitable. Additionally, youth will be introduced to and evaluated for inclusion in other work-based training options, including pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

• Work readiness skill development: In addition to the individualized service provided to each youth, participants will be offered numerous employability skills training opportunities through a structured workshop curriculum. This curriculum will focus on strengthening important 21st century skills as identified by local business and industry partners. Training and certification programs will be made available to program participants. Internship and apprenticeship opportunities will continue to be utilized as a valuable tool for youth participants to be introduced to career opportunities.

• Job Placement: WIOA youth staff will actively support work-ready participants in their pursuit of unsubsidized employment, collaborating to place youth in positions aligned with their desired career pathways.

• Support resources: WIOA youth staff will ensure participants have access to a range of support resources, including but not limited to counseling referrals, transportation assistance, interview and work clothing, and testing fees.

Throughout the career management process all youth program participants will undergo regular assessments to identify their workforce development needs. Additionally, WIOA youth staff will collaborate directly with community partners to serve individuals from specific targeted populations, including those with disabilities, out-of-school youth, first-generation post-secondary students, persons living in poverty, and juvenile offenders.

8a. Outreach and Recruitment

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

Collaboration with Michigan Works! partner programs and community agencies are crucial to achieving youth participation in programming throughout the MWSW four-county area. Strong referral linkages will be maintained with area schools and community agencies to reach youth populations. Relationships with local nonprofit organizations; youth-centered organizations; One-Stop partners and staff; community members; youth; parents and guardians, and businesses will be strengthened and maintained by frequent participation in community events and meetings, site visits and periodic presentations to aligned community partners and potential participants.

Outreach and promotional materials will be developed and distributed to support youth recruitment. Information will be shared via print materials (brochures, flyers, posters, and handouts), on agency websites and social media. Strategic advertisements may be placed in newsletters and school announcements. Radio and television appearances, public service announcements and online networking may be utilized as well.

WIOA Youth staff will facilitate outreach and recruitment through:

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

8b. Orientation, Intake and Eligibility Determination and Verification

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

The orientation format will include information regarding the following:

- an overview of the intent of WIOA Youth Services,
- information about program elements,
- details on training programs,
- an understanding of eligibility requirements, and
- guidance on the enrollment process.

This comprehensive introduction ensures that youth and their families are well-informed and prepared to proceed with their educational and career pathways. Furthermore, before each event concludes, each youth (and their guardian, if applicable) can connect directly with a Career Coach. During this meeting, youth may ask questions and schedule their intake session which will occur within five business days. This personalized interaction ensures that participants will receive individualized support and guidance. Additionally, participants will be introduced to follow-up and retention strategies during orientation. Eligibility will be determined based on WIOA requirements.

8c. Case Management

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

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

An individual who requires additional assistance (“needs special assistance”) to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment is defined locally as a youth who faces one or more of the following barriers:

- referred to or being treated for a substance abuse problem
- has frequent suspensions from school (5 or more times)

- has been expelled from school
- poor academic performance (GPA < 1.5)
- repeated at least one secondary grade or is one year over age for their grade
- behind in school credits
- an emancipated youth
- have court/agency referrals mandating school attendance
- have experienced recent traumatic events
- is a victim of abuse or lives in an abusive environment as documented by a school official or other qualified professional
- lacks a significant work history (not held any one job more than 3 months and/or less than 1 year total work history).

Intake staff will document the barrier(s) that identify the youth as "needs special assistance" based on information gathered during the intake process.

8d. Assessment

Assessment begins during the pre-registration phase and spans the individual's participation in the program ending only after the completion of the final phase of retention. The assessment process explores a multitude of topics including the participant's service needs, academic levels, goals, interests, skills levels, abilities, aptitudes, and supportive service needs as well as barriers and strengths. It also includes a review of basic and occupational skills, prior work experience, employability potential and developmental needs. Assessment results will be discussed with individual participants upon completion. Comprehensive assessment is utilized to determine the job readiness of program participants, and to identify barriers to self-sufficiency and the services necessary to overcome identified barriers.

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

- WorkKeys/KeyTrain
- O*NET Online Computerized Interest Profiler(CIP)
- Pure Michigan Talent Connect online skill and interest assessments including CareerOneStop Profiler, Pathfinder, and mySkills myFuture.
- Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS)
- Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Locator for basic reading and math skills
- Assessments completed within 12 months prior to enrollment may also be used, when appropriate

8e. Individual Service Strategy (ISS)

The individualized goals established through the ISS are utilized to determine appropriate program activities and elements for each participant based on assessment, academics, and employment and career goals. These activities are provided directly and/or in collaboration with community partners. These activities include tutoring and dropout prevention, alternate secondary school offerings, paid and unpaid work experience, occupational skills training, concurrent occupational education (to align with secondary offerings), leadership development, supportive services, mentoring, follow-up services, comprehensive guidance and counseling, financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills trainings, labor market information for in-demand industries, and career pathway planning to support the transition from secondary education to relevant next steps. The availability of activities includes services for youth who are individuals with disabilities. Strong partnerships across the region with MRS, MCTI, Disability Network Southwest Michigan, and the Workforce Development Board's DART and CEAC Committees ensure that individuals have access to appropriate activities and services.

8f. Required Elements

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

1. *Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies* - These strategies are proposed to encourage and assist participants with completion of secondary education/equivalent; enhance basic literacy skills for youth who have diploma/equivalent but are deficient in basic skills; or at risk of dropping out of school. Secondary school dropout prevention strategies will include services and activities that help keep a youth in school and engaged in a formal learning and/or training setting. These services include tutoring, literacy development, experiential learning, after-school opportunities, and individualized instruction.

2. *Alternative secondary school offerings* - Alternative secondary school offerings are available for youth based on age, the number of credits toward graduation and their interest in earning a high school diploma. WIOA youth staff will work with early middle college, certified training programs and community partners to help youth enroll, engage, and complete a school/training program.

3. *Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing* - This element is designed to enable youth to gain exposure to the world of work and its requirements and may include paid work experience opportunities, pre-apprenticeships, internships, on-the-job training, and job shadowing. WIOA program staff will develop work experience opportunities in high-demand industries. This will help youth acquire the personal attributes, knowledge, and skills needed to obtain a job and advance in employment.

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

   Work Experience - The purpose of work experience is to support the basic educational and/or occupational goals of the participant, as identified through objective assessment, ISS, and ongoing case management. In-school youth may have the opportunity to earn school credit for work experience participation, based on the individual's school policies. The assessment process and development of the employment plan will help to identify appropriate work sites for each participant, with paid work experience opportunities available three times per year.

   Pre-apprenticeship programs - WIOA youth programming provides an effective work-based learning approach that builds youth participant skills and establishes pathways to higher levels of employment and wages while meeting employer needs. This activity will prepare youth to succeed in registered apprenticeship training and may also be paired with on-the- job training to learn specific job-related skills. WIOA staff will meet with participants and assess that they are ready for an apprenticeship based on educational status, mindset, and soft skills preparedness. The focus on placements will be with local in-demand industries.

   Internships and job shadowing - In partnership with area employers, internships and job shadowing opportunities will expose participants to the world of work within specific occupations. Participants will complete employability skills components designed to enhance their skills to be prepared for work. Internship and job shadowing prospects will be focused on high demand occupations and industry clusters, designed to provide hands-on opportunities for

youth to develop personal attributes, knowledge and skills needed to obtain a job within the public and private sectors.

On-the-Job training opportunities - OJT is a program of occupational training provided by a private, nonprofit, or public-sector employer. During an OJT, the participant is acquiring the knowledge and skills essential for successful performance in specific careers while being paid. WIOA youth staff will monitor weekly progress to ensure adherence to the OJT agreement and training plan specifications.

4. *Occupational Skills Training with a focus on recognized, postsecondary credentials and in-demand occupations* - Occupational skill training is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills leading to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Priority referrals will be given to training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area. Placement in training opportunities will be based on the ongoing assessment process conducted by WIOA youth staff.

5. *Education offered concurrently with, and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training, for a specific occupation or occupational cluster* - WIOA Youth in secondary education programs may be enrolled in CTE programs, Early Middle College or in short-term training programs at local colleges based on career assessment outcomes and career goals. In addition, youth will have the opportunity to participate in paid and unpaid work experience, job shadowing and internships in industries related to their career goals. The focus will be on in-demand industries.

6. *Leadership development opportunities* - Leadership development activities are opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors. Youth will participate in leadership activities to remove barriers to educational and employment-related success. WIOA youth staff will work with youth monthly to incorporate the following activities: exposure to post-secondary educational opportunities; community and service-learning projects; peer-centered activities; organizational and teamwork training; training in decision-making including determining priorities and problem solving, life skills development and work behavior training and steering youth to engage in civic activities.

   Activity options under this program element include:

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

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

7. *Supportive services* - During a youth's involvement in any service element, supportive services may be accessible to facilitate the removal of barriers, enabling a successful transition to work, post-secondary education, or advanced

training. As noted above, WIOA youth staff refer participants to community agencies that offer no cost or low-cost assistance, as deemed appropriate.

8. *Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months* - Adult Mentoring involves establishing a one-to-one supportive relationship between an adult and a youth. Within this framework, structured activities take place, during which the mentor provides guidance, support, and encouragement to the mentee. To enhance positive connections between youth and adults, WIOA youth program staff will refer and connect participants to various individuals who can serve as mentors such as teachers, high school equivalency and occupational skills instructors, counselors, probation officers and community partner agencies. These mentors play a crucial role in helping participants build self-esteem, stay motivated and achieve their goals. Additionally, mentoring opportunities will extend to productive and informative relationships with area professionals where a participant is matched with an employer or employee of a local company that aligns with their career interests.

9. *Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation* - Follow-up services ensure continuation of services and progress towards achievement of a participant's goals and performance outcomes by monitoring success during the transition to employment and further education. WIOA youth staff will maintain quarterly contact with participants over a 12-month period after exit. Staff will contact supervisors, and/or training/education providers to monitor the youths' status while identifying and providing necessary support. Staff will also help with securing employment or re-engaging in education and provide work-readiness skills training.

10. *Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling* - Guidance and counseling services will be provided in both group and individualized settings for a range of topics such as crisis intervention, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, and mental health counseling. For WIOA youth participants, their specific counseling needs are identified throughout their program involvement. Any barriers a participant faces will be carefully noted as part of their ISS development. WIOA youth staff play a crucial role in connecting WIOA youth to qualified professionals and crisis intervention programs whenever necessary.

11. *Financial literacy counseling* - Financial literacy education involves the knowledge, understanding and skills to make effective and informed money management decisions. WIOA Youth participants will have the chance to engage in Reality Fair events where they can practice these skills through a real-life scenario. MWSW will utilize its partnership with FinLit Fanatics (an advisory committee created by Kalamazoo RESA, composed of financial professionals) and the West Michigan Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) Association (group of banking professionals dedicated to providing services to low- and moderate-income neighborhoods), to provide guest speakers from area businesses and community agencies to assist with trainings and workshops. Literacy topics include:

    - reading and understanding paycheck stubs
    - financial consequences of missing a day of work
    - meaning of a 25-cent raise
    - getting out of debt
    - interest calculations
    - consumerism and making spending decisions
    - understanding credit cards
    - setting financial goals
    - credit reports

- making and keeping to a budget
- savings strategies
- setting up and maintaining bank savings and checking accounts

12. *Entrepreneurial skills training* - Entrepreneurial skills training will equip participants to be self-employed, employ others and be marketable. WIOA youth staff will utilize the Entrepreneurial Skills course on the Xello platform, along with resources provided by local economic development institutions to research, develop and implement business plans. Local business owners will speak to youth about their personal experience regarding business development and daily operation. WIOA youth staff will promote information and workshops offered by local Chambers of Commerce, area colleges and universities and other local community partners. Locally held entrepreneurial competitions, such as the Bronco Pitch event hosted by Western Michigan University and smaller Idea Slam events, will be optional opportunities for youth to grow and implement their visions. Placements will also occur in apprentice or internship position placements with adult entrepreneurs in the community.

13. *Services that provide labor market and employment information about the in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local areas such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services* - WIOA youth staff employ a comprehensive approach to identify high-growth and high-demand industries, occupations, and jobs within the four-county region. Resources include the Michigan Department of Technology, Michigan Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, Management and Budget's Labor Market Reports as well as the data reports produced by Lightcast, a labor market analytics company. Youth will participate in talent tours to area businesses to gain a better understanding of in-demand occupations, employers' expectations and the skills required for each occupation. Industry/Talent Tours will occur at least once per quarter in the region. Youth will also participate in career exploration related to the in-demand occupation of their choice via Pathfinder, Xello, Pure Michigan Talent Connect, O*NET OnLine, and numerous other tools. WIOA youth will receive information regarding job market expectations and associated education and skill requirements, potential earnings and job growth and decline.

14. *Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training* - WIOA youth staff utilize career exploration assessments as guiding tools to create personalized career pathway plans for each participant. For youth requiring post-secondary training to attain career goals, staff will assist youth with the completion of college applications, entrance exams, FAFSA and scholarship applications. WIOA youth staff will also emphasize the opportunities available using the Michigan Reconnect program. College tours and post-secondary education tours will be offered throughout the year to provide participants with information regarding training requirements for multiple career fields. WIOA youth staff provide training regarding the transition from high school to college and the increased rigor of daily operations in post-secondary education and training programs. Workshops designed to increase knowledge of post-secondary education and training will include, but will not be limited to, financial aid workshops; FAFSA, loans, scholarships; in-demand industries; career ladders; college tours; requesting accommodations for youth with disabilities; apprenticeship tours; job shadowing opportunities and internships.

9. Basic Skills Deficiency

Basic Skills Deficiency includes individuals who meet the following criteria:

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

standardized test.

OR

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

10. Youth Activities

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

As described under Section 8c (Case Management), requires additional assistance is defined in the Michigan Works! Southwest area, as:

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

11. Waivers

For PY2026, the following waivers are currently in place:

On June 3, 2026, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) approved a waiver of statutory and regulatory requirements related to WIOA Out-of-School Youth. OSY waiver rates are 50% OSY minimum for formula funding and 0% OSY minimum for Governor's reserve funded activities, as requested by the State. This waiver only applies to Appropriation Year 2026 and 2027 funding and is valid for the life of these funds. The State's requests to modify WIOA Incumbent Worker Training requirements and the WIOA State Workforce Development Board membership requirements were approved through June 30, 2028.

On May 29, 2024, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) approved a waiver of statutory and regulatory requirements related to WIOA Out-of-School Youth. Although language found in the letter may be interpreted multiple ways, on June 10, 2024, USDOL confirmed via email that the OSY waiver rates are to be a 50% OSY minimum for formula funding and 0% OSY minimum for Governor's reserve funded activities, as requested by the State. This waiver only applies to Appropriation Year 2024 and 2025 funding and is valid for the life of these funds. The State's requests to modify WIOA Incumbent Worker Training requirements and the WIOA State Workforce Development Board membership requirements

were approved through June 30, 2028

12. Coordination with Education

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

12a. CEAC

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

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

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

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

13. Supportive Services and Needs Related Payments

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

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

Support services are also available through other Michigan Works! initiatives and fund sources, such as FAE&T, the Gain Employment. Maintain Support program, National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP), Michigan Citizen Reentry Program and Expansion, and the Talent and Growth Initiative. Occasionally, support services to address barrier removal may be available through community grants awarded to MWSW for the purpose of providing support services.

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

13a. Support Services Documentation

To meet the needs of employers and job seekers throughout the Michigan Works! Southwest service area and all of Region 8, transportation and support service coordination have ample opportunity to be enhanced through the potential breaking down of county line restrictions and barriers of service area alignment by county and will be prioritized throughout the life of this plan. Support service documentation will be maintained in all participant files, and may be recorded on the OSMIS, when applicable.

14. Transportation and Other Supportive Services

The WDB will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with transportation and other appropriate supportive services through a comprehensive, integrated approach. Each participant will undergo a thorough assessment to identify barriers to employment, including transportation and other supportive service needs. As described per WIOA programs above, an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) will be developed to outline specific goals and the necessary supportive services. The WDB and MWSW will establish partnerships with local providers, human service agencies, non-profits, and community-based organizations, formalizing these collaborations with Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to ensure seamless referral processes and integrated service delivery.

To address transportation needs, MWSW will collaborate with public transit authorities to provide subsidized or free transit passes and partner with ride-sharing services and community shuttle programs to offer flexible transportation solutions, especially in areas with limited public transit options. Supportive services coordination will involve working with local human service agencies to provide a range of services, including childcare, housing assistance, financial counseling, and healthcare. Career Coaches will assist participants in accessing these services, ensuring comprehensive support for their personal and professional lives.

Funding and resource allocation will include earmarking WIOA Title I funds for supportive services and seeking additional funding through grants and partnerships to enhance barrier removal services. Career Coaches will provide ongoing case management, monitoring participant progress and addressing emerging needs, with regular check-ins to ensure effective utilization of supportive services and adjustments to the ISS, as necessary. The States Management Information System will

monitor the provision and impact of supportive services, using labor market analytics to identify trends and areas for improvement.

Community engagement will involve outreach initiatives to inform the public about available supportive services, using local media, social media, and community events to raise awareness. Regular meetings with stakeholders, including businesses, educational institutions, and service providers, will discuss participant needs and collaborative solutions, providing opportunities for staff and participants to provide feedback on service effectiveness.

Outcome measurement will involve establishing performance metrics to evaluate the success of supportive service coordination, such as employment retention rates and participant satisfaction, with regular reporting to stakeholders for transparency and accountability. Continuous improvement will be driven by participant and partner feedback, implementing best practices and innovative solutions to address emerging needs and enhance service effectiveness. Through these coordinated efforts, the local board aims to ensure that WIOA Title I workforce investment activities are seamlessly integrated with transportation and other supportive services, helping participants overcome barriers and achieve successful employment outcomes.

14a. Transportation

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

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

Branch County:

- Branch Area Transit Authority (BATA): Van/bus transportation throughout Branch County, with prices being lower for routes closer to Coldwater, MI. BATA has multiple routes in the Coldwater area that have buses running regularly. Transportation outside of these routes can be made by reservation. Discounts are available to youth ages 12-18 and individuals with disabilities.

Calhoun County:

- Battle Creek Transit: Multiple bus routes in and around the city of Battle Creek. MWSW customers can receive bus tokens. Monthly bus passes with discounts afforded to individuals with disabilities.
- B Wright There Transportation: offers door-to-door transportation and passes, provided to eligible clients at a discounted rate, for Battle Creek residents.
- Marshall-Albion Connector: Bus transportation is available between the cities of Marshall and Albion, with reservations available. Discounts are available to individuals with disabilities.
- Marshall Dial-a-Ride Transportation (DART): Van/passenger vehicle service in the Marshall area is available by reservation. Discounts are available to individuals with disabilities.

Kalamazoo County:

- Metro Transit: Multiple bus routes in and around Kalamazoo. MWSW customers can receive bus tokens. Monthly bus passes with discounts afforded to individuals with disabilities, individuals receiving cash assistance, and Western Michigan University Students.
- Metro Connect: Origin-to-destination program that will transport riders to a specified location. Available to all Kalamazoo County residents with discounts afforded to individuals with disabilities.

- Metro Link: New rideshare program available to riders using the Metro Link app. Passenger vehicles will transport riders to locations in three zones surrounding Kalamazoo that do not have direct bus service. Discounts are afforded to individuals with disabilities.

St. Joseph County:

- St. Joseph County Transportation Authority (SJCTA): Van/bus transportation throughout St. Joseph County, with prices being lower for routes in the Three Rivers and Sturgis, MI areas. SJCTA has scheduled bus lines in Three Rivers and Sturgis running regularly. Transportation outside of these routes can be made by reservation. Discounts are available to students with valid school IDs and individuals with disabilities.

14b. Other Supportive Services

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

- 211
- Advocacy Groups
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Area Agency on Aging and Commission on Aging
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Burma Center Business Resource Networks
- Branch County Community Network
- Centro De Ayuda
- Centro Vida
- Childcare Resources
- Churches
- Community Action
- The Coordinating Council of Calhoun County
- County Land Banks
- Disability Network Southwest Michigan
- Employer Resource Networks®
- Food Pantries
- Free Stores
- Global Detroit – Oneshot Translation Services
- 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
- HR Organizations
- Job Accommodation Network (JAN)
- Kalamazoo Probation and Parole Enhancement (KPEP)
- KRESA Career Development
- Legal Aid

- Literacy Agencies
- Meals on Wheels
- Mental health & counseling agencies
- Neighborhood programs
- Peer Support Groups
- Region 8 Literacy Hub
- Salvation Army
- Senior Services
- Southwest Michigan Community Development Corporation
- Southwestern Michigan Urban League
- St. Joseph County Human Services Commission
- Telamon
- United Way organizations within the area
- Urban Alliance
- Urban League of Battle Creek
- Veterans Services and other organizations that serve veterans
- Voces of Battle Creek
- Youth Solutions

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

15. Local Per Funding Cap

Michigan Works! Southwest tracks the local per funding cap for management purposes; however, there is no established cap, unless guidance has been provided by the State.

16. Maximizing Coordination

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

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

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

17. Wagner-Peyser Services

17a. Local Contact Information

Amanda Rosenberg

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Michigan Works! Southwest
1601 South Burdick St
Kalamazoo, MI 49001
P: 269.385.0445

17b. Service Provider

Under the guidance of the Workforce Development Board for Michigan Works! Southwest, Wagner-Peyser services will be directly provided by MWSW. Effective January 21, 2027, this service must be provided by local merit-based entity.

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

17c. Cost

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

17d. Provision of Labor Exchange Services

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

17e. Self-Service

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

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

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

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

Job seekers and employers visiting or calling Employment Services for assistance are informed of the most direct means of accessing information and posting information on the Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTC). The PMTC (mitalent.org) is

available to individuals and employers to enter resumes or job orders, search the available job openings and resumes, and access other job search resources.

17f. Facilitated Career Services

Facilitated Career Services are designed to assist job seekers in obtaining or maintaining employment by providing access and direction on how to use Michigan's internet-based PMTC labor exchange system. The range of career services available to job seekers include:

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

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

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

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

17g. Staff Assisted Services

Job seekers requiring assessment/testing, employment counseling, federal bonding assistance, referral to training, etc. are assisted with general information on the availability of services and, as necessary, referred to appropriate program staff. In addition, workshops are available for customers desiring to improve their job search and interviewing skills. While actual schedules for job search workshops may vary depending on customer interest (this service is optional for customers),

numerous opportunities for classroom training/workshops are offered weekly at each of the MWSW Service Centers and include training that addresses several critical areas. Employment Services staff facilitate the following workshops:

- Ace the Interview
- Application Basics
- Cover Letters
- Customer Service
- Digital Footprint
- First Days on the Job
- MWSW Orientation
- Navigating the Workforce with a Previous Conviction
- Networking
- Planning for a Successful Interview
- Professional Advocacy
- Professionalism
- Resume LIVE!!!
- Resumes Made Easy
- Which Resume is Best

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

17h. Career Service Delivery

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

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

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

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

- Determining whether a customer is eligible to receive assistance from the youth, adult or dislocated worker programs;
- Outreach, intake, and orientation to information about services available through the One Stop. Individuals

receiving Unemployment Insurance needing reemployment services are included in this population;

- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services;
- Referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, within the One Stop, as well as other workforce development programs;
- Labor market statistics;
- Information pertaining to training provider courses and costs;
- Information regarding the availability of supportive services or assistance, including referrals to those services;
- Assistance regarding financial aid for training and education not provided under WIOA; and
- Information and assistance regarding filing UI claims.

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

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

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

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

Training services outlined in WIOA Section 134 for Adult and Dislocated Workers will be provided using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) also described earlier in this plan, by following a structured, participant-centered approach. First, participants are determined eligible for WIOA services based on criteria such as employment status, income level, and barriers to employment. Eligible participants then undergo a comprehensive assessment to identify their skills, interests, career goals, and training needs. This assessment includes evaluations of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, and employability. Based on the assessment, an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is developed collaboratively

with the participant, outlining their career goals and the necessary training to achieve these goals, ensuring alignment with local labor market demands.

Eligible participants are then issued ITAs, providing them with funding to enroll in approved training programs listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). Participants select training programs that are relevant and beneficial for their career goals, guided by their ISS. The local board coordinates with training providers to ensure a diverse and comprehensive range of training programs is available, establishing partnerships with community colleges, vocational schools, and other educational institutions.

Throughout their training, participants receive continuous support and counseling from Career Coaches, who conduct regular check-ins and progress reviews. WIOA staff monitor the performance and outcomes of training programs, ensuring they meet quality standards and result in positive employment outcomes. Feedback from participants and training providers is used to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and make necessary adjustments.

WIOA funds are allocated specifically for ITAs to ensure sufficient resources are available to support participants' training needs. Additional funding sources, such as grants and partnerships, are pursued to supplement ITA funds and expand training opportunities. In addition to training, participants may receive supportive services such as transportation, childcare, and financial counseling to address non-academic barriers to completing their training, with Career Coaches assisting in accessing these services.

Upon completion of training, participants receive job placement assistance to help them secure employment in their field of training, including resume writing, interview preparation, and job search support. Follow-up services are provided to ensure participants retain employment and continue to progress in their careers, with continuous support offered to address any challenges they may face in their new employment. The local board continuously reviews and improves the ITA process based on participant outcomes, feedback, and changing labor market needs, implementing best practices and innovative solutions to enhance the effectiveness of training services. Through this comprehensive approach, the local board ensures that training services provided through ITAs are effective, participant-centered, and aligned with the needs of the local labor market, helping adult and dislocated workers acquire the skills and credentials necessary for sustainable employment in in-demand occupations.

WIOA follow-up services including case management, must be provided to WIOA participants for a minimum of twelve (12) months following exit. This is further described in detail under section 7k Adult and Dislocated Worker Follow-up Services and Section 8f. Youth required element no. 9 Follow-up Services.

17i. Staff Resource Allocation

Employment Services personnel provide functional coordination through the co-location of LEO representatives in the Service Centers. Services and allocations of MWA Service Center staff FTEs (full time equivalencies) are based on projected activity and funding for the year beginning July 1, 2025 and thereafter. Modifications may be necessary if actual funding levels vary or are altered. MWA Service Center staff are cross trained to accommodate increased volume of customer demand and periodic absence of staff assigned these functions as a primary task.

Employment Service Staff – Location by FTE*

Employment Service Function	Kalamazoo	St. Joseph	Branch	Calhoun
MWSW Staff: Facilitated/Staff Assisted Services	**4.25**	**0.75**	**0.5**	**4.25**
LEO Staff:				
Veterans Employment Services (VES)	.5	By Appointment	By Appointment	.5
Migrant & Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW)	1	By Appointment	By Appointment	By Appointment
Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA)	2	1.25	1.25	1.25
Total State FTE	**3.5**	**1.25**	**1.25**	**1.75**
Total MWA and State FTE	**7.75**	**2.00**	**1.75**	**6.00**

*Allocations of MWA staff FTE are based on projected activity and funding for the year beginning July 1, 2025. Actual deployment of staff FTEs between activities fluctuates based on customer demand and available funding.

17j. Unemployment Insurance (UI) Work Test

Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants are provided written instruction forms by the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) upon filing a claim for Unemployment Insurance. These instructions require the claimant to register for employment through PMTC and completing the Confidential Information (CI) page. While this stage may be accomplished from any computer with access to the internet, claimants are required to "verify" this registration at a Michigan Works! Service Center. The MWSW Employment Service staff will view the claimants' on-line registration before providing verification. Following validation, Employment Services personnel provide certified registration through OSMIS. The verification is electronically logged, providing the date of verification and the claimant's identification number.

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

A component of the UIA work-test activity is the monitoring of job seeker activity to ensure compliance with the "available and seeking work" requirement. This is supported by MWSW ES staff when customers utilize services to complete their required work search activity.

A UIA Problem Resolution Office is located within the Kalamazoo Service Center, with two UIA staff on site, with an opportunity for problem resolution by appointment to the UI claimants residing in the counties of Branch, Calhoun, and St. Joseph. Further, a UIA priority phone line is also available in all counties for claimants to connect with UIA staff for problem resolution.

17k. RESEA

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

Upon the claimant contacting Michigan Works! Southwest, ES staff will schedule the RESEA appointment in alignment with state policy requirements. RESEA appointments will consist of a one-on-one meeting with an Employment Specialist where the seven RESEA components will be completed, including: UIA Eligibility Assessment, verification of an active PMTC account, a review of MWA services offered, development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP),

review of Monthly Record of Work Search, discussion of specific LMI and referrals to appropriate reemployment services or training. Services may also include assistance in job seeking and employability skill building.

The Career Coach will then determine the next steps for services and referrals to be provided for the claimant. Mandated subsequent RESEA appointments are also scheduled for half of the individuals who attend an initial RESEA appointment and are still receiving unemployment benefits five weeks after their initial RESEA appointment. Second appointments are also available on a voluntary basis to any claimant who has completed a first RESEA appointment and who have not been selected for a mandatory second appointment.

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

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

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

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

17m. Services to Veterans

Veterans are provided access to all the One-Stop services and resources. Additionally, one (1) LEO Veterans Employment Services (VES) Career Advisor is co-located at the Calhoun County Service Center. This Veterans staff currently provides services to Veterans in all four counties of the MWSW service area. General procedures include the following:

- Information is posted in conspicuous places within the Service Center of the additional services available to veterans, including priority in vocational guidance, training, and job placement services in accordance with the order of priority established by law and the availability of a Veterans Employment Services Representative.
- Each individual entering the Service Center for employment services is asked their veteran status in the context that additional services and priorities are available for veterans, and they are asked to complete the Application Form.
- Each individual indicating a veteran status is provided with written information about the services available to veterans (in addition to those available to the public) and the name of the Veterans Employment Services Career Advisor at the Service Center site.
- If desired by the veteran, and if they are eligible based upon the Military Service Questionnaire, a direct referral is made to the Employment Services Veterans Representative in accordance with the procedures provided by the Veterans Employment Services Career Advisor.
- The Employment Services representatives, in consultation with the Veteran's Employment Services Career

Advisor, would coordinate the provision of additional facilitated and staff assisted services.

17n. Veterans' Priority

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

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

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

17o. Services to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs)

To ensure that the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) access to all Employment Services offered are equal to those provided to non-MSFWs, MWSW Employment Services staff will collaborate with Agriculture Employment Specialists to help migrant and seasonal farmworkers get connected to additional available resources. As requested, or as needed, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers who request staff assisted services beyond the basic employment services offered are referred to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker staff, or LEO-WD National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) Outreach and Enrollment Coordinators, to complete to assessed for eligibility and enrollment.

17p. National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP)

In partnership with the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, Workforce Development, MWSW provides resources for Career, Employment, Training, Housing, and Related Assistance Services aimed to help temporary and seasonal agricultural workers also known by the U.S. Department of Labor definition as migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs), and their dependents to acquire skills that stabilize or advance agricultural job positions or obtain employment in new industries. Eligible participants work one-on-one with MWSW career coaches to identify barriers to employment and connect to resources to address those challenges. Benefits of this partnership include linking employers, community, and faith-based organizations, as well as education and training systems, taking a human-centered design approach to support better economic outcomes for MSFWs and their dependents. Additionally, MWSW Business Solutions team supports employers with strategies designed to strengthen and improve the public workforce system, equipping MSFWs and their dependents to enter high-quality jobs and careers, and help employers hire and retain skilled workers.

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

i. **Business Solutions Team**

Michigan Works! Southwest has implemented a service delivery strategy for addressing the needs of employers, as discussed above.

ii. **Employability Skills Training**

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

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

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

The MWA will deliver these standards in a variety of ways including group workshops, computer-based learning, group discussion activities, role-playing, guest speakers, virtual learning, etc.

Employability skills training will be offered every other month and will be provided by the trained Employment Services staff, or a qualified professional well versed in the area of instruction:

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

18. Navigators

18a. Career Navigators

Michigan Works! Southwest staff serve as Career Navigators through the Wagner Peyser Employment Services system. Michigan Works! Southwest services are available in person and virtually, to guide participants to employment and training related services. Career Navigators are trained to support and assist participants to obtain and maintain training and employment. Additionally, to support refugee individuals who may face significant language and cultural barriers, Career Navigators provide support to refugee families, as they transition into the American workforce, allowing them to achieve their highest potential. The navigator is available to educate participants on requirements, available services, make referrals, assess, and manage other employment related impacts.

19. Adult Education and Literacy

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

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

- Albion District Library GED Tutoring Program,
- Miller-Stone Building – Battle Creek Public Schools,
- Coburn School – Battle Creek Public Schools,
- Battle Creek Community Action,
- Battle Creek Family YMCA,
- Calhoun County Correctional Facility – Battle Creek Public Schools,

- Women's Co-op,
- Michigan Youth ChalleNGe Academy,
- Sylvan - Battle Creek,
- St. Joseph County Jail,
- Centreville Community Education,
- Coldwater High School Library,
- Branch Intermediate Adult Education Program,
- Branch County Jail GED Program,
- Comstock Adult Education,
- Sturgis Central Commons – Sturgis Adult Education,
- Barrows Adult Education,
- KRESA Career Connect,
- Kalamazoo Literacy Council,
- Kalamazoo Public Schools, and
- Portage Community High School.

Some partner programs also offer GED assistance through online learning opportunities using self-paced online courseware. Further, the Michigan Works! Southwest Calhoun County Service Center serves as a GED testing center.

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

20. Memorandums of Understanding (MOU)s

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

21. Grant Recipient

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

The counties of Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph have an inter-governmental agreement as allowed under Public Act 8 of 1967 that transfers the authority for the administration of the Michigan Works! system and activities of the workforce development programs for each of the other counties (Branch, Calhoun and St. Joseph) in the MWSW service area to Kalamazoo County. This agreement is reviewed and renewed every two years.

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

22. Competitive Process

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

In addition to public notice of procurements given, the availability of funds and solicitation for proposals are announced publicly in meetings and on the Michigan Works! Southwest website. Written and/or email notices are sent to organizations on the Vendor Inventory list and extended mailing list (i.e., community-based organizations, educational institutions, etc.), as determined by MWSW.

All subrecipients and service providers awarded agreements through Michigan Works! Southwest are required to comply with state and federal procurement regulations and local WDB guidance. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The establishment of written procurement standards that comply with state and/or federal requirements applicable to the programs covered under the respective grants and contracts.
- Establishment of property control and record management procedures that comply with state and/or federal requirements.
- Establishment of procedures that address "Standards of Conduct," "Conflict of Interest" and discrimination as they apply to all procurement decisions.
- Assurances, Certifications, and Stipulations in alignment with the Michigan Works! System Plan.

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

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

23. Local Performance

Michigan Works! Southwest will strive to achieve the negotiated levels of performance for program years 2026 and 2027 for programs under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of the WIOA.

Adult	**PY2026**	**PY2027**
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	88.60%	88.60%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	84.00%	84.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	$9,136	$9,136
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	84.40%	84.40%
Measurable Skills Gain	71.50%	71.50%
Dislocated Worker	**PY2026**	**PY2027**
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	91.40%	91.40%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	88.10%	88.10%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	$10,746	$10,746
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	83.00%	83.00%
Measurable Skills Gain	75.90%	75.90%
Youth	**PY2026**	**PY2027**
Employment or Placement Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	72.00%	72.00%
Employment or Placement Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	72.00%	72.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	$4,950	$4,950
Credential Attainment 4th Quarter After Exit	60.00%	60.00%
Measurable Skills Gain	52.20%	52.20%
Wagner-Peyser	**PY2026**	**PY2027**
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	70.00%	70.00%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	67.00%	67.00%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	$8,679	$8,679

24. High Performing Board

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

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

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

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

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

- Outreach to customers by providing community-based services;
- Outreach to community partners;
- Outreach to employers;
- Leveraging local funding;
- Securing private funding, with flexibility to assist in the supportive service needs of underserved communities, such as the Neighborhood Employment HUB initiative, funded through the W.K. Kellogg Foundation;
- Activities to target special populations;
- Activities that address the childcare crisis, and its impact on retention in the workplace, supported through the work of PULSE;
- Promotion of equitable entrepreneurship opportunities;
- Staff and Board member participation in community committees/action groups;
- Research projects with W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research;
- Pilot projects with the State of Michigan;
- Established Projects, such as the Michigan Citizen Reentry Initiative expansion;
- Partnering with large regional events, including, but not limited to, MiCareerQuest™, Manufacturing Day/Week, and Race to Talent events;
- Expanding and supporting US DOL Registered Apprenticeship training programs; and
- Activities that support consortium priorities.

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

Multiple strategies, as noted throughout this plan, are used to evaluate effectiveness of one-stop centers and services, as

well as determine continuous improvement opportunities that support the demand-driven Workforce Development System. These include, but are not limited to:

- Program Monitoring;
- Local professional development and resources to provide technical assistance for subrecipients/service providers;
- Professional development opportunities which are available through the Michigan Works! Association and local partners;
- Shining Star staff recognitions; and
- Customer satisfaction surveys.

24b. Allocation of One-Stop center infrastructure funds

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

Shared Infrastructure Costs

Facilities Costs including:

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

Annual Technology Costs including:

- Telecommunications and Internet
- Equipment and Technology

Other Shared Costs

Annual Costs to Promote Service Integration

- Joint Staff Training/Orchestration of Professional Development for One-Stop services
- Customer Satisfaction Measurement for One-Stop services
- Business Services
- Resource Room Materials and Staffing
- Customer/Community Access to, and awareness of, One-Stop services

Costs Related to Board Functions

- Costs related with Outreach Services

Annual Shared Services Costs

- Business Cards
- Website Updates

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

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

25. Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

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

25a. Funding for ITA Vouchers

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

25b. Use of ITA Vouchers

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

25c. Informed Customer Choice

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

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

26. Review Period

As required, the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board presents this *WIOA Local Plan for the Michigan Works! Southwest Area* for review and comment. In accordance with Section III of State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Policy Issuance: 24-13, the plan will be available for review and comment for a period of thirty calendar days.

A summary of the document will be released at one Workforce Development Board Meeting in August 2026 and one Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners meeting in August 2026. The summary will indicate the scope of the plan. In addition, the announcement of the availability to review the plan will be made at the August 2026 WDB Meeting.

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

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

A complete copy of the plan is provided at:

- Michigan Works! Southwest website: www.michiganworkssouthwest.org.

- Michigan Works! Southwest Service Centers, upon request.
- Michigan Works! Southwest Administrative Offices, upon request.

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

Amanda Rosenberg, Policy and Planning Administrator
Michigan Works! Southwest
1601 S. Burdick St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49001-2711

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

Note added after the 2024 30 day review period: No comments were received during the comment period.

This WIOA Local Plan was modified on the following dates:

- September 19, 2024, to reflect the updated WIOA performance for PY2024 and PY2025
- June 5, 2025, to reflect updated Wagner-Peyser provider information, NFJP service implementation, and updates to Infrastructure Agreement cost categories
- July 1, 2026, mid cycle modification, to reflect the following updates:
    - Expansion to sections 17p NFJP program, 2b Other Workforce Development Programs, Community access and Support business needs sections.
    - Removal of sections regarding Job quality, in response to the cancelation of TEGL 7-22, the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee, to align with updated local WDB monitoring policy, and Child Support Navigator section, as programming ended in 2025.
    - Updates to 17i Staff Resource Allocation – Employment Service Staff – Location by FTE
    - Updated waivers in Section 11
- October 15, 2026 – Section 23 updated to reflect updated local performance metrics for PY26 and PY27

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

27. Technology

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

Additionally, Administrative and Business Solutions Staff of Michigan Works! Southwest regularly attends professional development through the Michigan Center for Data and Analytics, learning how to stay abreast of the labor market information available and how to access this information.

Pure Michigan Talent Connect

Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTC) will also be used by all program staff and the Business Solutions Team to assist employers and job seekers by providing strategic tools through the web-based portal connecting the two. PMTC provides tools for employers to identify and develop their talent base while also giving job seekers the opportunity to create a personalized plan to help them more effectively navigate career decisions.

Michigan Training Connect

In addition, Michigan Training Connect, housed within the Pure Michigan Talent Connect system, will be used throughout the

Michigan Works! Southwest area to provide job seekers with the tools they need to choose a training program to become employed in a high demand job industry.

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

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

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

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

Virtual Services
In addition to the above services, Michigan Works! Southwest has taken an active stance on incorporating virtual services into the service delivery model. To assist in availability of services to all individuals, workshops, mock interviewing, and one-on-one career coaching are available via virtual meeting services, as appropriate. Further, the Business Solutions team utilizes digital platforms for ease of service to employers, as appropriate.

Electronic Paperwork
Incorporating digital signatures and the ability to submit all required forms electronically has proven effective and will continue to be enhanced as updated opportunities become available, for employers and job seekers.

Virtual access to Meetings
To support increased attendance, virtual access is made available through the use of digital platforms for WDB meetings, WDB committee and industry consortium meetings.

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

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

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

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

29. Coordination of Rapid Response

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

The local Rapid Response Team consists of representatives from:

- LEO, State of Michigan;
- MWA WIOA Dislocated Worker Program designee;
- The Michigan Works! Agency, as appropriate;
- Michigan Works! Network, Employment Services;
- Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency Rapid Response representative, as available during the process;
- Community College, as appropriate; and
- Business Solutions Team Representative.

Lay-off Aversion Strategies and Activities

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

- Ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship development activities with businesses in the Michigan Works! Southwest area.

- Identify and connect businesses to training resources for incumbent worker up-skilling, new employee development, On-the-Job Training (OJT), customized training, and apprenticeships.

- Establish linkages with economic development organizations at the federal, state, regional, and local levels including retention and expansion activities.

- Participate in activities to support identified at-risk businesses to regain viability.

- Provide assistance to businesses to identify workforce needs, deliver services to address the needs, and when necessary, assist with the needs related to workforce reductions.

30. Rapid Response Activities

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

30a. Rapid Response Service Delivery Process

As partners in the Rapid Response process, LEO-WD and MWA each notify the other partner when a WARN or other notification of a mass layoff or business closing is received.

- The parties exchange information gathered as part of the notification and then mutually agree who will serve as the lead contact with the business, from either the MWA or LEO-WD. The identified lead will be responsible for the timely dissemination of information to other partners and key stakeholders to ensure accurate and up-to-date information is available.
- The lead organization will contact the business to gather additional information about the dislocation and arrange a meeting between key business personnel, local union officials, as applicable, and representatives from Michigan Works!, LEO-WD, UIA (Unemployment Insurance Agency) and other relevant local partners.
    - At the meeting, each entity attending will provide information about the services and resources available to support both the business and the dislocated workers.
    - Agreement will also be requested from the employer to schedule on-site worker orientation meetings.
    - Depending on the size of the layoff, as well as the company's willingness to participate, specialized job fairs with the company may occur, as appropriate.
- Worker orientation meetings will be scheduled to encourage participation from as many affected workers as possible, including those working on off shifts and at satellite locations.
    - Topics covered at the orientation sessions will include UIA claim filing information, local reemployment resources available, information about training options, and area resources applicable to unemployed individuals.
    - If the business does not agree to on-site worker orientation meetings or timing does not allow the meetings to be scheduled prior to dislocation, efforts will be made to provide printed materials to the affected workers or arrangements will be made for off-site worker orientations.

30b. Joint Adjustment Committee (JAC)

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