

**Workforce Development Board  
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes  
March 20, 2025**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Workforce Development Board Vice-Chair, Brian O'Donnell, called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. at the Michigan Works! Service Center, 200 W. Van Buren Street, Battle Creek, Michigan.

**WDB Members Present:**

Randall Hazelbaker (PS)*	Brian O'Donnell (PS)*	∇ Virtual
Kris Jenkins (Educ)*	Frank Tecumseh (PS)*	* Exec Committee
Jackie Murray (PS)* <sup>∇</sup>		

**WDB Executive Members Absent**

Dave Maurer (PS)\*

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

Jakki Bungart-Bibb <sup>∇</sup>	Kathy Olsen	Mark Waurio <sup>∇</sup>
Ashley Iovieno	Debbie Horn	
Amy Meyers	Amanda Rosenberg	

**Guests Present:**

Paige Daniels (KRESA) <sup>∇</sup>	Ryan Quandt <sup>∇</sup>
Amanda Sutherland (KRESA) <sup>∇</sup>	for Rep. Julie Rogers

**INTRODUCTIONS**

All attendees introduced themselves and the entities they represent.

**PUBLIC TIME**

No comments.

**TRANSPARENCY & INTEGRITY OF WDB DECISIONS**

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Exhibit A)**

**Motion made by Randall Hazelbaker and supported by Frank Tecumseh to approve the February 20, 2025, Quarterly Workforce Development Board meeting minutes. Motion carried.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC)**

Kris Jenkins reported that the CEAC met on March 17, 2025. Representatives from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity gave a presentation on the Michigan Apprenticeship Readiness Certificate (MARC). The goal of MARC is to structure, endorse, and add validity to the Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Highlights from CTE member updates included the following:

- CTE students from each of the four counties in the MW! Southwest area attended state

competitions, and many of them achieved top 10 awards in various categories.

- The Kalamazoo RESA Career Connect Campus Grand Opening is scheduled for the public on May 22, 2025, from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. The building will also be used for the Career Now programs beginning in the summer of 2025 and after-hours for healthcare and skilled trades training for employers. KRESA's recent survey of CTE Completers revealed an 83% completion rate, and additional steps are being implemented to increase this score.
- The Calhoun Area Career Center (CACC) experienced some mid-year resignations and currently has open positions in Programming, Construction, Allied Health, and a school counselor. CACC is partnering with KCC and their Higher Ed Strategic Investment Grant, focusing on the Pre-K–12 career exploration component.
- The Branch Area Career Center (BACC) conducted a follow-up survey of CTE Completers, which yielded a 97% completion rate. Due to low math scores, they are working on SAT prep, test taking, and other resources.
- St. Joseph County Intermediate School District (SJCISD) has scheduled a MiCareerQuest™ event at the Doyle Community Center in Sturgis on May 6, 2025. The goal is to have 60 employers register for the event. All 9th-grade students in the county are invited to attend. The SJCISD's new CTE Mobile Lab is progressing and plans to be in all middle schools for the 2025-26 school year, to work with 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students for 40-minute hands-on manufacturing lessons.
- Battle Creek Central High School is working on an MOU with Grand Valley to align its science curriculum so that students will earn a portable credential for Grand Valley.
- Effective July 1, 2025, Jerry Johnson will assume the role of superintendent of Calhoun ISD. Mr. Johnson will continue to report on adult education at the CEAC meetings.
- There has been a recent decrease in English as a Second Language (ESL) enrollments in Branch County.
- The Southwest Michigan Regional STEM fiduciary role has not yet been filled.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Plans (*Exhibit B*)

Amanda Rosenberg requested Board consideration and approval of one workforce development plan that was included as Exhibit B in the agenda packet. The plan was for the **Appropriation Year (AY) 2024 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Statewide Activities (SWA) Funding for the Young Professionals (YP) 2025 Initiative for the period March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026.**

**Motion made by Frank Tecumseh and supported by Kris Jenkins to approve the Appropriation Year (AY) 2024 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Statewide Activities (SWA) Funding for the Young Professionals (YP) 2025 Initiative for the period March 1, 2025, through February 28, 2026. Motion carried.**

### WDB Policies (*Exhibits C1 – C3*)

#### **Policy 13, Revision 08, Individual Training Account (ITA) System**

Kathy Olsen requested Board consideration and approval for one WDB Policy. She reported that the updates to Policy 13, Revision 08, for the Individual Training Account (ITA) System included minor edits throughout the policy and changes to align with State policy and the MiTC manual. This included updating references, the addition of a definition section, and the separation of background and purpose. Additional criteria for initial and continued eligibility of training providers were also added.

**Motion made by Frank Tecumseh and supported by Kris Jenkins to approve the WDB Policy 13, Revision 08, Individual Training Account (ITA) System as presented. Motion carried.**

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## **WDB CEAC – Approval of CEAC Chair and Vice Chair**

Kathy Olsen reported the CEAC voted for Tim Staffen to continue as Chair and Jim Berry as Vice Chair for another year. Per CEAC policy, these appointments must also be approved by the WDB.

**Motion made by Frank Tecumseh and supported by Kris Jenkins to approve the appointments of Tim Staffen as CEAC Chair and Jim Berry as Vice Chair for CY2025. Motion carried.**

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Business Solutions Update and Dashboard (Exhibits D) and Lightcast Data Analytics (Exhibit E)**

Ashley Iovieno delivered a comprehensive Business Solutions update, highlighting key data on the number of employers assisted, the impact of the Going PRO Talent Fund, current unemployment rates, job demand trends, and details on expanded unemployment benefits. Additionally, she shared insights on recent and future events in St. Joseph County.

**Employers served** – The number of employers served, and the services provided through February of 2025 were reported in the upper left-hand corner of the Business Solutions Dashboard (*Exhibit D*).

**Going PRO Talent Fund** – The data displayed on the Dashboard (*Exhibit D*) regarding the Going PRO Talent Fund pertains to the FY2025 Cycle 1 application period. The application period for the Employer-Led Collaborative (ELC) portion of the GPTF will commence on March 24, 2025, and will remain open until the funds are allocated. Independent applications for FY25 Cycle 2 will open on April 14, 2025, and close at 5:00 pm on May 2, 2025. The training is scheduled to run from July 2025 to June 2026. The Business Solutions Team has scheduled several information sessions that are accessible to businesses and partners. Additionally, one-on-one meetings can be arranged. Further details can be found on the Michigan Works! Southwest website and in the latest edition of the Business Solutions Buzz newsletter.

**Unemployment Rates** – The unemployment rates for Michigan counties have not been updated for January 2025. Michigan's rate currently stands at 5.3%, showing a slight increase from the previous month. In comparison, the national rate is at 4.4%, reflecting a slight decrease.

**Job Demand** - The latest Lightcast reports (*Exhibit E*) included in the agenda packet email indicate that the current job market trends are consistent with those of the previous month. In particular, the positions in high demand include registered nurses, medical assistants, and fast food and counter workers. These roles are predominantly within the Healthcare industry and Hospitality clusters. Employer job postings align with this data, reflecting the ongoing need for professionals in these fields. In the MWSW area, there were a total of 406 unique job postings, which is slightly lower compared to previous months. This decline has been observed over the past two to three months, suggesting a trend towards a more competitive job market.

**St. Joseph County Activity** – The Healthcare College and Employment Fair took place on Tuesday, March 18, 2025, at Glen Oaks Community College, attracting a total of nine different colleges with 11 representatives, and 17 employers with 43 representatives in attendance. Approximately 50 individuals attended the event, each engaging with approximately 10 representatives. In addition, several faculty members released their classrooms to participate. Michigan Works! Southwest sponsored the Sturgis Career Opportunities Expo on Wednesday, March 19, 2025. The event was specifically designed for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students from Sturgis High School. The Expo transitioned to a Career Fair for the afternoon, and approximately 30 individuals from the public attended. Some employers left the event with potential new hires. Looking ahead, MiCareerQuest™ is scheduled in St. Joseph County in Sturgis at the Doyle Community Center on May 6, 2025, from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. The goal is to host approximately 60 employers, and all 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students in the county are invited and encouraged to attend. Both volunteers and employers are welcome to sign up to participate in this event.

## **Operations Update and Updated Dashboard**

Amy Meyers announced that the Services Dashboard (Exhibit F) was included in the agenda packet. She reported that the state conducted the annual monitoring for Cycle I in January, which resulted in no findings or administrative recommendations. Amy expressed her gratitude to the staff for their hard work and success. During the first week of March, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Comprehensive Programmatic Review was completed. This review covered all aspects of WIOA programs, including Board Operations. No administrative recommendations or findings were identified, except for three files that needed minor updates in one field during the data validation portion of the review. Ms. Meyers commended the entire team for their dedication. She also highlighted positive practices identified during the review, including the support from Board Members.

Ms. Meyers also reported that effective April 1, 2025, the maximum number of months that a client may receive cash through the Family Independence Program (FIP) (or cash assistance) in Michigan will increase from 48 months to 60 months.

## **Directors Report**

### ***Federal Updates***

Jakki Bungart-Bibb provided an update on the recent actions taken by Congress to prevent a government shutdown by passing another Continuing Resolution (CR). This CR extends funding through September 30, 2025, maintaining the current funding for formula fund grants. The resolution also had an increase in defense funding by \$6 billion and a decrease in non-defense funding by \$13 billion. While specific details are still forthcoming, the impact on various programs remains uncertain.

Regarding Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding, preliminary numbers have been released, however, they have not yet been finalized. Once the allocations are distributed to the State, the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) will allocate funds to Michigan Works! Agencies based on the labor force and unemployment rates. Unfortunately, most Michigan Works! Agencies will receive reduced funding, with some experiencing more significant cuts than others. These planned reductions have resulted in the announcement of the closures of a few MW Service Centers in some areas of the State. MWSW does not currently have plans to close any locations.

Efforts continue to reauthorize the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Congress is considering utilizing the bipartisan bill proposed at the end of last year as the foundation for this year's discussions. Currently, the federal budget is a top priority, with plans to commence work on the WIOA Reauthorization a few months after budget deliberations.

### ***State Updates***

Ms. Bungart-Bibb reported that for Advocacy Week, on Monday, March 17, 2025, she and several other Michigan Works! Directors had the opportunity to meet with Congressman Walberg. Congressman Walberg, who chairs the House Education and Workforce Committee, expressed his support for the reauthorization of WIOA. The meeting was productive, with the team providing statistics, success stories, and feedback on the current proposed WIOA reauthorization. At the conclusion of the meeting, Congressman Walberg requested a draft outlining the likes and dislikes of the proposed WIOA reauthorization, along with a collection of success stories. These items will be submitted to his office. The board members shared impactful stories about their experiences working with Michigan Works! staff and utilized various programs, which were well received. The team also had productive visits with four additional lawmakers and observed a presentation of workforce development testimony in front of the House Committee. During the testimony, Michigan Works! was highlighted multiple times, with specific success stories shared from the MW! Southwest area. The key topics discussed during the legislator visits included the Going PRO Talent Fund, Skills Training Fund, Registered Apprenticeship Expansion, and BRES funding for barrier removal. Brian O'Donnell stressed the importance of

## OLD BUSINESS

## PUBLIC TIME

## MEMBERS' TIME

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Full Workforce Development Board – Thursday, May 15, 2025 (9:00-10:30 am) at the Community Health Building in Coldwater, 274 E. Chicago St., Coldwater, MI 49036
- Executive Committee – Thursday, April 17, 2025 (9:00-10:30 am) at the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007
- Monitoring & Evaluation Committee –Thursday, April 24, 2025 (3:30-5:00 pm) at KRESA South Campus in Kalamazoo, 422 E. South Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49007
- Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) – Tuesday, April 8, 2025 (2:00-4:00 pm) at Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007
- Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) – Monday, May 12, 2025 (1:00-3:00 pm) at Upjohn Institute, 300 S Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

## ADJOURNMENT

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Kathy Olsen
Date

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Brian O'Donnell
Date

**APPROVED**

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