
**Workforce Development Board
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2026**

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

WDB Members Present:

Darrin Adair (Educ)*	Brian O'Donnell (PS)*	
Randall Hazelbaker (PS)*	Jose Orozco (CBO)	∨ Virtual
Dave Maurer (PS)*	David Prellwitz (Labor)	*Exec Committee
Karen Marcath (PAA)∨	Frank Tecumseh (PS)*	

WDB Executive Members Absent

None

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

Jakki Bungart-Bibb	Amy Meyers	Jennifer Teske
Debbie Horn	Sarah Pohl	Mark Waurio∨
Ashley Iovieno	Amanda Rosenberg	

Guests Present:

Jim Benton (KRESA)∨	Representative Julie Rogers	
Blaine Farr (WDI)∨	Peter Kalogiros∨	Amanda Sutherland (KRESA)∨
	For Senator Elissa Slotkin	

INTRODUCTIONS

All attendees introduced themselves and the entities they represent.

RECOGNITION

Jakki Bungart-Bibb presented the following award in recognition of the outstanding support and commitment to enhance the local communities exhibited over the course of the past year:

- **Legislator of the Year Award** – *Representative Julie Rogers*

Representative Julie Rogers expressed gratitude for the recognition, emphasizing that her work centers on building relationships. In 2011, before becoming an elected official, she was significantly impacted when MWSW reached out to her. Representative Rogers stated that MWSW is her go-to resource for anything in Workforce Development. Representative Rogers remains committed to advocating for future funding of the MWSW programs, and she encourages others to continue to advocate with lawmakers as well.

TRANSPARENCY & INTEGRITY OF WDB DECISIONS

Debbie Horn asked members present if there were any items on the agenda for which a conflict of interest exists, and if so, the conflict should be declared at this time.

There were none.

PUBLIC TIME

Representative Julie Rogers emphasized the importance of collaborating with fellow legislators on matters

related to appropriations and policy development. Constituents are encouraged to report any difficulties encountered with the unemployment system. Both Representative Steve Frisbee and Representative Julie Rogers have actively contributed to the introduction of bills aimed at refining and reforming the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) system. Additionally, constituents are invited to participate in monthly coffee hours, which provide an informal setting for discussion and require no RSVP.

Following a question concerning the \$645 million state budget that was initially allocated and later rescinded, Representative Julie Rogers responded that the Attorney General issued an opinion deeming the vote unconstitutional. The opinion emphasized that one legislative chamber cannot overturn a decision that has already been enacted and signed into law by the governor. This opinion falls under the jurisdiction of the state departments, prompting the reinstatement of the funds. Subsequently, House Republicans filed a lawsuit against the Attorney General, seeking injunctive relief. A judicial decision on this matter is anticipated by January 16, 2026.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (*Exhibit A*)

Motion made by Randall Hazelbaker and supported by Frank Tecumseh to approve the November 20, 2025, WDB Quarterly board meeting minutes. Motion carried

DIALOG WITH SERVICE PROVIDER STAFF

Amy Meyers reported that as a result of the approval to changes in the WDB bylaws and local monitoring policy revisions, approved during the August 2025 WDB meeting, service providers are now required to present annually at the WDB Executive Committee meeting, replacing separate monitoring and evaluation meetings. Today marks the first session of these annual presentations, beginning with Business Solutions, for which Upjohn provides services.

Ashley Iovieno delivered a presentation on behalf of the MWSW Business Solutions team, providing an overview of the services offered to employers within the four-county MWSW service area. Ms. Iovieno also reported on metrics for the period from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, including outreach, impact, collaboration, and innovation efforts, as well as the priorities for the upcoming year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CEAC December 8, 2025. Darrin Adair reported updates as follows:

- St. Joseph County highlighted expanded middle school engagement through its mobile career lab, a new cosmetology industry partnership, successful placement of high school students into public safety careers, and continued growth in aviation and skilled trades programming.
- Branch County reported strong participation in MiCareerQuest and hands-on exploration days at the Branch Area Career Center (BACC). Ongoing instructor recruitment remains a need in Health Sciences, Construction, Autobody, and Paraprofessional pathways.
- Kalamazoo RESA (KRESA) shared that the new Career Connect Center (CCC) is nearing capacity, driven by high student engagement in aerospace, manufacturing, and applied marine experiences.
- Calhoun County ISD highlighted pre-apprenticeship pipelines with employer partners, with increasing alignment towards registered apprenticeship models.

From the postsecondary perspective:

- Kellogg Community College (KCC) reported enrollment growth in skilled trades, hospitality, and electric vehicle (EV)-related training. KCC continues its partnership with the Ford Blue Oval initiative and supports K-12 career exploration efforts.
- Glen Oaks highlighted customized training efforts in logistics and construction trades, collaboration with KRESA to arrange tours of the new CCC, supporting dislocated workers, and collaborating for student engagement participation in the EV Jobs Academy with MWSW. Skilled trades and technical instruction remain a primary focus.

NEW BUSINESS

WDB Plans (*Exhibits C - E*)

Amanda Rosenberg requested Board consideration and approval of the three workforce development plans included in the agenda packet. Details for each plan were described in the corresponding Exhibit and are listed below:

- FY2025 Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) Program Employer-Led Collaborative (ELC) (*Exhibit C*)
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) AY2024/FY2026 (*Exhibit D*)
- FY26 Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) Application Assistance (*Exhibit E*)

Motion made by Frank Tecumseh and supported by David Maurer to approve the three plans as presented. Motion carried.

CEAC Action Items (*Exhibit K*)

Debbie Horn requested approval for the 2026 CEAC Meeting calendar. The CEAC Committee has previously approved the calendar, and policy requires WDB approval.

Motion made by David Maurer and supported by Frank Tecumseh to approve the 2026 CEAC meeting calendar as presented. Motion carried.

STAFF REPORTS (*Exhibits L & N*)

Business Solutions - Ashley Iovieno reported that the Dashboard (Exhibit L) was included in the agenda packet and contains the updated numbers of employers served and services provided through December 2025. Ms. Iovieno also stated that September 2025 unemployment rates for the four-county region ranged from 3.9% to 5.1%, which continues to show an increase compared to past numbers. The state unemployment rate is currently 4.6%, while the national rate is 4.4%.

Ms. Iovieno further reported that the most recent Lightcast reports were included as a link in the email sent to Board members and can also be found on the Michigan Works! Southwest website. Currently, no significant changes are posted. The top four occupations remain within the healthcare sector. There are 283 unique job postings in the MWSW area, which is below the average of 300.

Ms. Iovieno also reported that the Going PRO Talent Fund section of the dashboard now reflects FY26 Cycle 1, with awards announced in mid-December. The other two sections pertain to FY25 figures, which are still in progress. It is important to note that GPTF's budget has been significantly reduced, resulting in approximately \$29 million being available statewide, compared to \$55 million in previous years.

Additionally, Ms. Iovieno reported that the Michigan Works! Association is organizing an AI Summit titled "AI at Work" scheduled for April 28th and 29th at the MotorCity Casino Hotel in Detroit. Registration for this event is now open and encourages the participation of employers. The link will be shared with the group in a follow-up email. <https://www.michiganworks.org/ai-at-work> National Apprenticeship Week this year will be April 26th through May 2nd and plans for that week are underway.

Ms. Iovieno reported that the Race to Talent Event, focusing on apprenticeships, took place at the Michigan Works! Association Conference on Monday, September 8th, at the Radisson in Kalamazoo. The event was highly successful, attracting over 50 attendees. A panel discussion featured employers who have successfully established apprenticeship programs, and these organizations were recognized with an award for their contributions. Notably, Bronson Healthcare Group, Better World Builders, and Ripple Effects were highlighted for their exemplary programs. An apprentice also shared valuable insights about her experiences, enriching the discussion. The R2T event aimed to educate additional employers in the process of establishing apprenticeship programs and has generated several promising leads. Ms. Iovieno showed a video highlighting the "Race to Talent" event.

Operations

Amy Meyers reported that during the past quarter, multiple monitoring and oversight activities were completed with no significant findings. The Going PRO Talent fund (GPTF) was monitored by State LEO staff and included in a statewide performance audit by the Michigan Office of the Auditor General, with no issues identified. Ms. Meyers also reported that a December on-site programmatic review of the PATH, FAE&T, and BRES program resulted in the identification of one file containing errors which were promptly corrected, resulting in no further required action. Additionally, the annual Cycle III monitoring conducted in October across key administrative and programmatic areas resulted in no findings, making MWSW one of five MWAs with no findings.

Ms. Meyers further reported that program performance data included in the dashboard highlights PATH's first quarter outcomes, with over 500 individuals served and an employment rating exceeding 41%, along with FY2025 annual outcomes, as shared in previous years during Monitoring and Evaluation Committee meetings. Data included performance outcomes and demographic information for PATH, FAE&T, GEMS, and TAA.

Directors Report

Ms. Bungart-Bibb reported that the House of Representatives overturned the previously approved state budget allocation of \$645 million in December. This decision impacted three projects, two of which had significant impact locally. These two projects include the Regional Innovation Project grant, designed to support the expansion of apprenticeships in the healthcare sector, and the Talent and Growth funding initiative.

Ms. Bungart-Bibb outlined the Association's legislative priorities that will garner the strongest support during budget season. She explained that reasonable implementation of Medicaid requirements includes a planning period in 2026 with full implementation slated for 2027. Additionally, she highlighted the reduction of the Going PRO Talent fund from \$55 million to \$30 million, affirming that MWSW will continue advocating for restoration of those funds. Furthermore, the expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs will continue to be a key focus of the legislative agenda.

Ms. Bungart-Bibb shared that the statewide Advocacy Day is scheduled for March 11, and additional details will be provided. She also reported on her participation in an Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. on February 4, where the primary focus was WIOA reauthorization and the need for adequate and sustainable workforce development funding. While WIOA reauthorization has historically received bipartisan support, current discussions suggest that momentum has slowed. As a result, operations will continue under the current WIOA framework.

Ms. Bungart-Bibb also reported that Congress is working to pass multiple funding packages ahead of the January 31 deadline, in order to avoid a partial government shutdown. She noted that there has been some movement on this issue in recent days.

In conclusion, Ms. Bungart-Bibb announced that she was selected to participate in the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Leadership Fellowship, an 18-month national program that includes 80 fellows from across the country. Participation will require significant travel and time commitment over the next year. She expressed excitement about the opportunity to learn from other leaders and conveyed her appreciation for the support of her team.

OLD BUSINESS

None

PUBLIC TIME

None

MEMBERS’ TIME

Frank Tecumseh reported that Battle Creek Unlimited in Battle Creek received a \$7 million appropriation for the “Make it in Michigan” initiative. This funding will be used to construct a drone radar facility, marking a significant step toward attracting drone-related businesses to the area. This development has the potential to attract companies that may require apprenticeships.

Jose Orozco reported that Voces experienced some delays in the disbursement of state funding for a local commercial project. Mr. Orozco seeks advocacy to ensure the continuation of these grants.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Full Workforce Development Board – Thursday, February 19, 2026 (9:00-10:30 am)
At the Career Connect Campus, 3500 Vanrick Drive, Kalamazoo, MI 49001
- Executive Committee – Thursday, April 16, 2026 (9:00-10:30 am)
At the Michigan Works! Service Center, 1601 S. Burdick Street, Kalamazoo, MI 49001
- Career and Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) – Monday, March 16, 2026 (1:00-3:00 pm)
At the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007
- Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) – Tuesday, March 12, 2026 (2:00-4:00 pm)
At the Upjohn Institute, 300 S. Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, MI 49007

ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional reports or business for the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:21 a.m. by Brian O’Donnell.

Debbie Horn Date

Brian O’Donnell Date

APPROVED

These minutes were approved on _____