

**Workforce Development Board
Meeting Minutes
September 16, 2021**

CALL TO ORDER: Workforce Development Board Chair, Frank Tecumseh, called the virtual meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

Kathy Olsen introduced attendees. Randall Hazelbaker was participating from Branch County Board of Commissioners, Jared Hoffmaster was participating from St. Joseph County Board of Commissioners, and Mike Quinn was participating from Kalamazoo County Board of Commissioners.

WDB Members Present:

Dr. Adrien Bennings (Educ)	Jared Hoffmaster (PS)	Frank Tecumseh (PS)*
Cathy Knapp, alternate for Jill Bland (Econ Dev)	Kris Jenkins (Educ)*	Elizabeth VanDusen (PS)
Dan Dunn (PS)*	Jackie Murray (PS)	Ken Willcutt (Labor)
John Fiore (MRS)	Jose Orozco (CBO)	* Exec Committee
Randall Hazelbaker (PS)*	Mike Quinn (PS)	
	Windy Rea (Job Corps)	

WDB Members Absent

Richard Anderson (Labor)	Lisa Johansen (DOC)	David Sutherland (PS)
Trevor Bidelman (Labor)	Derek King (PS)	Angila Wilson (PS)
Karen Doubleday (DHHS)	Dave Maurer (PS)*	Mike Wilson (Veterans)
Jessica Eyster (PS)	Brian O'Donnell/	* Exec Committee
Lisa Godfrey (PS)*	Chantel Paxton (PS)	

Michigan Works! / Upjohn Institute Staff Present:

Jakki Bungart- Bibb	Aseel Hussein	Amy Meyers
Ben Damerow	Ashley Iovieno	Kathy Olsen

Michigan Works! Services / Program Staff Present:

Dawn DeLuca (YOU/KRESA)	Amanda Sutherland (YOU/KRESA)
Sam Dougherty (WDI)	Mark Waurio (PATH/WEUI)

Guests Present:

Senator John Bizon	Rep. Julie Rogers	Alyssa Stewart (UWBCKR)
Rep. Beth Griffin	Chris Sargent (UWBCKR)	

TRANSPARENCY & INTEGRITY OF WDB DECISIONS

Kathy Olsen asked members present if there were any items on the agenda requiring a vote 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 Ken Willcutt and supported by Jared Hoffmaster to approve the WDB Executive Committee meeting minutes of August 19, 2021.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Dr. Adrien Bennings, Dan Dunn, John Fiore, Kris Jenkins, Randall Hazelbaker, Jared Hoffmaster, Cathy Knapp, Jose Orozco, Mike Quinn, Windy Rea, Elizabeth Van Dussen, Ken Willcutt.

NAYS: None. **ABSTENTIONS:** None. **MOTION CARRIED.**

CITIZENS' TIME

None.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) – John Fiore reported the DART Committee met on September 14, 2021. Members provided agency updates at the meeting. He highlighted the update from Hank Bostic from Disability Network Southwest Michigan regarding a 21-day challenge focused on disability justice that will be taking place during the month of October. The Challenge is co-sponsored by the United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region (UWBCKR) and Disability Network. Individuals can [register to participate](#). Each weekday during the Challenge, participants will receive an email prompt on a specific topic related to disability justice that will include a brief introduction to a topic, followed by links to relevant videos, audio clips or articles. The time commitment is expected to be 10-15 minutes per day exploring the content in the areas of the disability justice movement and ableism. The DART Committee also discussed the Desktop Training modules already developed as well as a new module currently under development that will be focused on assistance and accommodations to help customers affected by long-term COVID-related health issues. Mr. Fiore also announced the DART co-chair, Joel Cooper, will be retiring at the end of September 2021. He also reported that the transportation millage will be on the Kalamazoo ballot in November. The millage outcome has the potential to impact transportation for individuals with disabilities within the County of Kalamazoo.

NEW BUSINESS

WDB Policies

WDB Policy 20 Rev 03 – Incentive Payments (Exhibit B)

Kathy Olsen reported WDB Policy 20, Revision 03 pertaining to Incentive Payments was updated. In the Background section, the word ‘character’ was removed, and language was inserted to acknowledge the uniqueness of individuals served. The CFR references were updated in the References section and language to align with Training and Employment Guidance Letter 21-16 was added under the Policy section to clarify assessment tools for pre- and post-tests.

Motion made by Kris Jenkins and supported by Dr. Adrien Bennings to approve the changes to the WDB Policy 20 Rev 03 – Incentive Payments.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

AYES: Dr. Adrien Bennings, Dan Dunn, John Fiore, Kris Jenkins, Randall Hazelbaker, Jared Hoffmaster, Cathy Knapp, Jackie Murray, Jose Orozco, Mike Quinn, Windy Rea, Elizabeth Van Dussen, Ken Willcutt.

NAYS: None. **ABSTENTIONS:** None. **MOTION CARRIED.**

STAFF REPORTS

Shining Star Awards and Employer of the Year (Exhibit C)

Ben Damerow reported on the Michigan Works! Association’s annual Shining Star Award. A summary of the nominees from Michigan Works! Southwest, along with their photos, was included in the Agenda packet (Exhibit C). Staci Pierce, a Career Navigator for Employment Services, was nominated for her excellent customer service. On many occasions, Staci helped individuals navigate the system so well that customers would call her back just to share their good news and positive outcomes. Another nominee, Chad Timmerman, Resource and Internship Coordinator for the PATH and FAE&T programs, was nominated for his positive attitude and willingness to jump in wherever needed. The third nominee and recipient of the Shining Star Award representing Michigan Works! Southwest was Blaine Farr, Career Coach and Coordinator for Adult and Dislocated Worker Services. Mr. Damerow reported that Mr. Farr was acknowledged yesterday at the Michigan Works! Association’s annual

conference. One of Mr. Farr's highlights was the number of Unemployment Insurance customer contacts he made during 2020 while still providing excellent service to his adult and dislocated worker customers. Mr. Damerow expressed appreciation for everything these three individuals did over the past year to provide excellent customer service.

Mr. Damerow also announced that Bronson Healthcare was awarded the Michigan Works! Association's Employer of the Year Award at this year's conference. This was a very competitive award with eleven nominees. He reported Bronson is a great employer model in terms of how they engage with the workforce system. This includes their commitment to membership in the Employer Resource Network® (ERN®), a recipient of a Going PRO Talent Fund grant for training new and incumbent workers, establishing new apprenticeships, and participating in MiCareerQuest® Southwest since its implementation in the Michigan Works! Southwest area.

Frank Tecumseh requested that Mr. Damerow pass along the Board's appreciation to the Shining Star Award nominees and noted that the hard work they do certainly does not go unnoticed and their accomplishments are extremely impressive.

Business Services Activities

Ashley Iovieno announced the addition of Kabrena Clark to the Michigan Works! Southwest Business Services Team. Ms. Clark replaced Paula Kizer who has accepted a Talent Development Specialist position at the Upjohn Institute. She then reported on business services operations that included updates pertaining to the Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF), Job Fairs, and Manufacturing Day.

Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) – Ms. Iovieno reported that since the last Board meeting, several information sessions and numerous conversations have occurred with employers and partners to help inform and educate them on the guidelines for the Going PRO Talent Fund for Fiscal Year 2022. Staff are waiting for official notice from the State as to the budget amount that will be approved. The application period for employers opens on September 20, 2021 and closes at 5:00 p.m. on October 15, 2021. Anyone interested in learning more about this grant should contact Ms. Iovieno or a member of the Business Services Team.

Job Fairs – Ms. Iovieno reported the Business Services Team has been busy over the summer months recruiting employers for job fairs and assisting them with filling job openings. There have been several events where staff have partnered with area community organizations as well as events hosted by Michigan Works! Southwest. Most recently, staff participated in the *City of Portage Career Exploration Showcase* event that was used to help connect and educate job seekers on careers within the city of Portage. An event called *Recipe for Success* is scheduled for later today at the Battle Creek Michigan Works! Service Center. The event is being held outside under a tent and will be similar to one held in May at the Kalamazoo Service Center. Fifteen (15) employers will be participating in-person, along with five area partners, as well as nine additional employers that are not able to attend in-person but will be included on the menu of job openings. In response to an inquiry pertaining to the shortage of school bus drivers, Ms. Iovieno reported that Michigan Works! staff have been working with the schools during the past few months to help them recruit for these positions through Employer of the Day events and targeted Job Fairs.

Manufacturing Day – Staff have been working with area partners to plan safe and engaging events for Manufacturing Day so that students can get exposure to the field of manufacturing. Plans in the Battle Creek area are being led by Heather Ignash from the Business Services Team and includes career panels showcasing industry professionals. Staff are also working with other area partners across the four-county Michigan Works! Southwest area to plan other engaging events for students.

Labor Market Information (Exhibit D) and Operations Update

Michigan's Labor Market News – Jakki Bungart-Bibb reported the [September edition of Labor Market News](#) features an article on the impact of COVID-19 on Michigan's labor market. It reviews key trends since the start of the pandemic and how the effects have been felt disproportionately across demographic groups. The Data Spotlight and Infographic of the Month both review responses to the Current Population Survey supplemental

questions that ask how the pandemic has affected an individual's ability to work. This edition covers the relevant rankings including over-the-year changes in online job postings for Michigan's Prosperity Regions, as well as a state-to-state ranking of how labor force participation has changed since February 2020. The publication reports the national unemployment rate at 5.4%, the Michigan unemployment rate at 4.8%, and a range from 4.85 to 6.6% for the four counties in the Michigan Works! Southwest area. Following the meeting, the link to the Labor Market News was emailed to members and guests.

Job Demand Dashboard - Ms. Bibb reported the [Job Demand Dashboard for Region 8](#) continues to show a large number of online job postings. The Southwest region increased 3.2% from last month; and increased 81.5% compared to this time last year. This ranks the Southwest region 2nd in the State for percentage change over the last year. The top occupations showing up on the list are Registered Nurses, retail sales workers, and frontline supervisors of retail sales workers. Customer service reps and janitors moved up on the list rounding out the top 5 and passing truck drivers on the demand list.

Ms. Bibb also reported on an additional labor market information resource, [Regional Economic Trends](#) which is a publication available on the [Upjohn Institute website](#). This is a monthly report designed to deliver up-to-date information on local economic conditions. Each issue summarizes the latest county-level data on employment, job growth and job postings in an easy-to-read format.

Following the meeting, the link to the Job Demand Dashboard for Region 8 and the link to the Upjohn Institute publications were emailed to members and guests.

Burning Glass Analytics and Real Time Jobs Data (Exhibit D) - In addition to the verbal report, the website link to the labor market reports generated from Burning Glass Analytics and Real Time Jobs Data (*Exhibit D*) that identified top detailed occupations, skills greatest in demand, and employers with the most job openings in Prosperity Region 8, Michigan Works! Southwest, and each of the four counties in the MW! Southwest Area for the period July 1 through August 31, 2021 was included in the agenda packet notice.

Operations Update – Ms. Bibb provided a recap of the Register for Work update that was provided at last month's Executive Committee meeting. She reported that in Michigan, registering for work at a Michigan Works! Service Center has historically been a required component of the unemployment process. This requirement was waived during the pandemic. Since then, there have been conversations about changing the requirement and even permanently removing the requirement. In July, the Governor signed Senate Bill 501 to strengthen Michigan Manufacturing. This bill included the register for work requirement as part of the unemployment process. The Michigan Works! directors, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (MI-LEO), and the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) have been meeting regularly and are working together to confirm the process flow and to set a date for implementation of that requirement. Currently, staff are waiting for the implementation date to be announced.

Also, at last month's meeting, Ms. Bibb reported on an expungement event scheduled to be held on August 20, 2021. The City of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Defender, the Attorney General's office, and Michigan Works! Southwest partnered to hold the event at Bronson Park in Kalamazoo. The expungement clinic was a huge success resulting in 113 individuals receiving hearing dates. Kalamazoo will continue to hold bi-weekly clinics offering the same services on a smaller scale. In response to an inquiry from one of the Board members, Ms. Bibb reported quite a few lawyers participated in the Kalamazoo event. Michigan Works! Southwest staff are in conversations regarding scheduling similar events in the other counties within the Michigan Works! Southwest area. She extended appreciation to the Michigan Works! Southwest staff for their work on this event. She also reported staff from the Attorney General's office and from LEO reached out to Michigan Works! Southwest after the event to ask if Michigan Works! staff would be interested in providing technical assistance to other areas in planning for similar events across the State. She noted it is always a great honor to receive acknowledgement from State partners.

Director's Report (*Exhibit E*)

Ben Damerow acknowledged Representative Rogers and her staff for their assistance with the expungement fair activities and noted that their assistance was critical in helping to get the word out. He then reported on the Director's Report that was emailed to members prior to the meeting.

Federal Updates – Mr. Damerow reported there are two major items currently being negotiated:

- In August, the Senate passed a \$1.2 trillion infrastructure package with a bipartisan vote. The package would provide an additional \$580 billion for roads, bridges, airports, ports, broadband, electric vehicle charging, and water projects over the next 5 years. Governor Whitmer and MDOT estimate this legislation would bring an additional \$7.26 billion to Michigan for traditional infrastructure projects. There is very little direct workforce development funding in the legislation. What is included is dedicated funding through the Department of Energy related to clean energy apprenticeships/home energy auditors and several connected transportation workforce studies are mentioned throughout the bill.
- The House recently passed the \$3.5 trillion budget resolution, previously passed by the Senate, which sets out instructions to the various congressional committees for how they can spend money on programs within their jurisdiction for the budget reconciliation package. The House Education and Labor Committee and the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee have primary jurisdiction over WIOA and connected workforce development programs. The American Jobs and Families Plan is included in the \$3.5 trillion budget resolution and proposes a \$100 billion investment in workforce development over the next 10 years. Senate Stabenow joined 12 of her Senate Democrat colleagues in support of this workforce investment in a letter to Senate leadership. House Speaker Pelosi, in order to pass the budget resolution, agreed to a September 27th deadline to pass the bipartisan infrastructure package passed by the Senate.

PATH Reengagement – Due to COVID-19, the State of Michigan allowed flexibility with participation in the PATH program over the past year and a half. On September 1, 2021, full participation in PATH became mandatory again. Individuals receiving cash assistance are required to participate up to 40 hours a week in work search activities. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, and Michigan Works! continue to meet on a regular basis to analyze barriers that are limiting individuals from reemployment opportunities and participating in the program. Mr. Damerow highlighted staff member, Sarah Pohl, and her efforts in participating on a Statewide subcommittee working on the PATH program. He has received some positive feedback about the work she has been doing and the recommendations that she has been providing pertaining to the PATH program.

Other - Mr. Damerow provided additional updates that were not included in the written report. It was announced yesterday that the State of Michigan came to a resolution on the budget and at this time specific funding amounts for programmatic line items is unknown. This morning, prior to today's meeting, Mr. Damerow reported he received a preview of the Governor's presentation to be given at the Mackinac Policy Conference next week. In summarizing, he reported there are five buckets of funding recommendations for the American Rescue Plan funds. They are focused on addressing needs of small businesses, housing, childcare, broadband and Michigan's workforce. The recommendations include a \$100 million increase for the Going PRO Talent Fund over the next three years; \$215 million for the Reconnect Program; and an additional \$50 million for supporting the creation of new apprenticeships. He asked the legislators in attendance if they had any additional information that they could provide.

Representative Rogers reported she has not yet been briefed on the budget line items, and that many legislators will not be going to the Mackinac Conference because they were informed that they will be in session and will likely be voting on the budget. She also announced that she was recently appointed as one of the co-chairs of the Arts and Culture Legislative Caucus and if anyone has arts related items please make her aware of them. She will work to showcase art in the communities and promote funding for the arts as well as the economic impact that arts have on the communities.

Representative Griffin reported that she too has not yet been briefed on the budget line items. As chair of the House Workforce, Trades and Talent Committee, she is watching very closely, along with Appropriations Chair Albert, the movement and discussions pertaining to the workforce and the different buckets that these funds are included in. She reported that it is good that there have not been any discussions regarding making cuts in those areas. Although the federal government still has work to do, in the Michigan House, legislators see workforce development as very important. She encouraged Michigan Works! to continue helping members of the community get reengaged in the workforce and expressed appreciation for the important work that Michigan Works! does. She encouraged individuals to contact her with questions and for convenience she put her cell number in the meeting chat. She also shared one of many positive stories her office had regarding the work of Michigan Works!. Her office staff was assisting an individual over numerous phone calls to straighten out his Unemployment. The assistance that Michigan Works! provided to her and her staff in navigating the UI system was extremely helpful, and it is because of this collaboration that she and her staff, as well as the customer, were able to help others navigate the UI system.

PROGRAM

Ben Damerow introduced Chris Sargent, the CEO of United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region (UWBCKR), and Alyssa Stewart, the Vice President of Impact and Engagement for United Way. He noted the United Way is a great community partner and that he serves on several different boards and committees with both Chris and Alyssa. One big project where they have worked together is the Career.Life.Expo. and now Michigan Works! Southwest is partnering with United Way to help spread the information about the ALICE data.

Chris Sargent acknowledged and recognized the Upjohn Institute and Michigan Works! Southwest as a direct partner for the ALICE Report, both in using it and in helping create localized data. He reported the ALICE data used in this presentation is the third iteration of data that has been gathered over the last six years. The ALICE report continues to be a resource for the community to understand what is really going on in families that are experiencing poverty and even families that are above the poverty limits but are still struggling. He reported there are dozens of non-profit partners that work every day to help reverse these trends and to impact the lives of children and families who are struggling to make ends meet every week and month. He explained that ALICE is an acronym that stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. The presentation included conservative household survival budgets and what it means for working families to be above or below the ALICE threshold. The presentation included survival budgets for various family sizes in the Kalamazoo area and a [link to other county information](#). He then provided an overview of how the ALICE measures show three critical trends at the State level: (1) the cost of living is increasing for ALICE households; (2) worker vulnerability is growing while wages stagnate in ALICE jobs; and (3) the number of ALICE household is on the rise. The data presented also showed systemic inequities, i.e., a breakdown of groups more likely to be ALICE.

Alyssa Stewart shared 2019 point-in-time data that included populations, median household income, the unemployment rate, the percentage of ALICE households, and the percentage of household in poverty for Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo, and St. Joseph Counties. An example of subcounty breakouts of data, as well as a demographic breakdown, for Kalamazoo County was also shared along with a [link to breakout and demographic info for the other counties](#). Information pertaining to the cost of living comparing the ALICE essentials index to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Price Index (CPI) was also included in the presentation. Ms. Stewart then discussed the changing landscape of work and provided data showing an increase in hourly paid jobs as compared to salary jobs. She encouraged attendees to learn and reflect on the ALICE data by connecting to the online data center at www.unitedforalice.org/michigan and to consider how they may be able to influence policies and practices so that they are inclusive of ALICE households. Attendees can also support ALICE individuals by supporting local, state, and federal policies that improve access to affordable housing, childcare, transportation, health care, and programs that support wage growth and improve income opportunities.

In response to a question as to when 2020 data will be available, Ms. Stewart reported they are working with Rutgers regarding an interim report because COVID has had a significant impact on households, especially in the

areas of affordable housing and childcare, and it is important to understand what that impact is. The next full report will be conducted in March of 2022, with data and reports available in 2023.

Ms. Stewart reminded Board members information from these reports can be utilized to support opportunities to have community conversations and build understanding. For example, when speaking with employers, it will be important to utilize the data to show employers how to create sustainable wage jobs and benefits and at the same time discuss how partnerships with non-profits and the public sector can support their employees.

The PowerPoint presentation was sent to Board members and guests following the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

CITIZENS' TIME

No comments.

MEMBERS' TIME

No comments.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Frank Tecumseh reminded members of upcoming meetings and noted that they may take place virtually, in-person or a hybrid of both, depending on the COVID-19 situation at the time. Ben Damerow reported an update from MIOSHA is expected soon.

- The next meeting of the full WDB is scheduled for Thursday, November 18, 2021 from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.
- The next WDB Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 21, 2021 from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Other upcoming committee meetings were listed on the agenda. They included:

- The Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 20, 2021 from 1:00-3:00 p.m.
- The Monitoring and Evaluation Committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, October 26, 2021 from 8:00 – 9:30 a.m.
- The Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 16, 2021 from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other reports or business for the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m.

Kathy Olsen

Date

Frank Tecumseh

Date