

**Workforce Development Board  
Meeting Minutes  
November 16, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER:** Workforce Development Board Chair, Jackie Murray, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. at Battle Creek, Unlimited, 4950 W Dickman Road, Suite 1, Battle Creek, Michigan.

**INTRODUCTIONS:** Individuals attending in-person and virtually, introduced themselves.

**WDB Members Present:**

Morris Applebey (Labor)	Karla Meeks (PS) <sup>∨</sup>	David Sutherland (PS)
Jill Bland (Econ Dev)	Jackie Murray (PS)*	Frank Tecumseh (PS)*
Kathi Cain-Babbitt (Labor)	Brian O'Donnell (PS)*	Elizabeth VanDussen (PS) <sup>∨</sup>
Randall Hazelbaker (PS)*	Jose Orozco (CBO)	Dr. Paul Watson (Educ)
Alan Ives (PS) <sup>∨</sup>	David Pawloski (Labor)	
Kris Jenkins (Educ)*	Sabrina Radenovic (PS) <sup>∨</sup>	* Exec Committee
Dave Maurer (PS)*	Charles Rose, alternate (CBO) <sup>∨</sup>	<sup>∨</sup> Attended Virtually

**WDB Members Absent**

Karen Doubleday (DHHS)	Jeff Heppler (PS)	Windy Rea (Job Corp)
Jessica Eyster (PS)	Jared Hoffmaster (PS)	Ken Willcutt (Labor)
John Fiore (MRS)	Lisa Johansen (DOC)	
Lisa Godfrey (PS)*	Derek King (PS)	

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

Kelli Adams (ERN)	Kathy Olsen	Kathy Szenda-Wilson (Pulse) <sup>∨</sup>
Jakki Bungart-Bibb	Amanda Rosenberg	Shelby Springett
Amy Meyers	Ashley Iovieno <sup>∨</sup>	

**Michigan Works! Services / Program Staff Present:**

Jim Benton (YOU/KRESA) <sup>∨</sup>	Laura Shafer (YOU/KRESA)
Stacy Evans (MWSW/Upjohn)	Amanda Sutherland (KRESA)

**Guests Present:**

Heather Ignash (BCU)	Kylee Johnson <sup>∨</sup> (for Rep. Julie Rogers)
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**RECOGNITIONS**

Amy Meyers presented the Michigan Works! Southwest's Shining Star Awards for the months of September and October 2023 and expressed a congratulations to each recipient for their accomplishment.

**September Shining Star** – Laura Schafer was recognized as the September Shining Star. Amy Meyers reported Laura Schafer is a reliable team player who is willing to take on special projects in addition to her everyday workload. She is an excellent communicator and is someone who strives towards continuous improvement. She demonstrates excellent problem-solving skills and is dedicated to the work she does.

**October Shining Star** – Stacey Evans was recognized as the September Shining Star. Amy Meyers reported Stacey Evans is incredibly knowledgeable and always is willing to step in and answer questions. She is welcoming, especially towards new staff as they learn their new roles. She also has the ability to multitask and assist others when needed, which shows great dedication and commitment to her work.

Ms. Meyers reported the Shining Star Award was established to celebrate front line staff who, through dedication and outstanding contributions to workforce development, personify the Michigan Works! mission. Today's awardees are not the typical faces one would see when they walk into a local service center, both individuals work behind the scenes, providing support for others. She further stated that both individuals were critical with the July 1<sup>st</sup> transition of services to Upjohn/Michigan Works! staff. Additionally, this past quarter, a nomination was received for an admin staff. Admin staff are normally not recognized because the award focuses on front-line staff. However, the support provided to the administrative team by Shelby Springett, Administrative Assistant for MW! Southwest, is very worthy of recognition. Ms. Springett "works tirelessly day-in and day-out" and one of her responsibilities is to handle all the nominations and publish and distribute a monthly employee spotlight. With the continued efforts of all front line staff, Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to set new benchmarks for excellence.

### **TRANSPARENCY & INTEGRITY OF WDB DECISIONS**

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

### **PUBLIC TIME**

None.

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

**Motion made by Morris Applebey and supported by Jose Orozco to approve the October 16, 2023 Workforce Development Board quarterly meeting minutes. Motion carried.**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation Committee** (*Exhibit B*)

Jackie Murray reported the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee met in October to review the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and services. Staff monitoring prior to the committee meeting included reviewing thirty files as well as interviewing participants. She referred members to the written summary of the staff Monitoring Report (Exhibit B) that was included in the agenda packet for further details. During the October committee meeting, four participants were also interviewed. She reported one of the individuals began his experience with Michigan Works! Southwest when he met with a veteran's representative at the Three Rivers office in February 2023. After meeting with other MWSW staff, he decided to reinvent himself by enrolling in truck driver training. He now drives a 53 foot semi and absolutely loves what he is doing. The other three individuals interviewed by the committee were all pursuing training programs in the medical field. One was enrolled in training to be a Medical Assistant, another was in training for Medical Coding and Billing, and the third was waiting to take the State exam to be certified as a Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA). It was evident that program staff work with the participants to help them learn about multiple options that are available.

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

Kathy Olsen reported the Disability Resource Team (DART) Committee met on November 14, 2023. Michelle Miller-Adams, Senior Researcher at the Upjohn Institute, gave a short presentation on a research project that she is working on regarding connecting young adults, ages 18-26, with disabilities, to employment. She is beginning her research with a focus on intellectual/developmental disabilities and services delivered in Kalamazoo County through county-level agencies. The project will include policy research, data collection and analysis, as well as interviews with families, young adults, and service providers. She hopes to meet one-on-one with DART members to discuss each agency's work. Attendees of the DART meeting also provided updates regarding their agencies.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Plans**

Amanda Rosenberg requested Board consideration and approval of two workforce development plans.

***FY2024 Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) (Exhibit C1)*** – Amanda Rosenberg reported the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Act is a federal program that assists U.S. workers who have lost their jobs because of foreign trade. The program seeks to provide adversely affected workers with opportunities to obtain the skills, credentials, and support necessary to becoming reemployed. As discussed during previous director reports, TAA expired on June 30, 2022 and has yet to be reauthorized, meaning that no new certifications can or have occurred since July 1, 2022. However, customers of companies that have been certified can continue to be served. The planned allocation to serve these customers for FY2024 for Michigan Works! Southwest is \$644,820. This allocation represents a decrease of \$59,615 compared to the previous fiscal year. Trade services that are available to workers over the course of their participation in the program include case management activities such as comprehensive assessments, employability skills assistance, and career counseling. Trade participants are typically dual enrolled in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. TAA program funds can also be used to fund classroom, on-the-job, and registered apprenticeship training. In response to a question regarding the decrease in funding, Amy Meyers reported no additional companies have been certified since the TAA legislation expired and the funds will be used to serve participants from companies that were previously certified.

***FY2024 Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope. (PATH) (Exhibit C2)***- Amanda Rosenberg reported the second plan for the Board to consider is the Fiscal Year 2024 allocation for the Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope. (PATH) program. The grant amount of \$2,688,825 is supported from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) federal funding, and Penalty and Insurance (P & I) state funding. This allocation reflects a decrease of \$131,372, when compared to the FY2023 allocation. Eligible participants for PATH include Family Independence Program recipients (also known as FIP or cash assistance) and other applicants referred by the Department of Health and Human Services. FIP applicants begin with a 10-day application eligibility period (AEP) where they can work one-on-one with a Career Coach to identify and address current barriers and begin working on other activities related to gaining employment. PATH also provides individuals with training, work experience opportunities, and supportive services to help obtain and retain employment. In response to a question, Amy Meyers reported the PATH allocation is based on the number of PATH participants and number that begin AEP. She added that TANF is due for reauthorization, however, the timeline for that occurring is uncertain.

**Motion made by Brian O'Donnell and supported by Frank Tecumseh to approve the FY2024 Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and the FY2024 Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope. (PATH) Plans. Motion carried.**

### **WDB Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC)**

***CEAC 2024 Meeting Calendar (Exhibit D1)*** – Kathy Olsen reported State Policy requires the Board to approve the meeting calendar for the Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC). She requested Board consideration and approval for the proposed CEAC 2024 calendar that was included in the agenda packet.

**Motion made by Dave Maurer and supported by Kathi Cain-Babbitt to approve the WDB Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) 2024 Meeting Calendar Motion carried.**

## **STAFF REPORTS**

### **Business Services Activities and Dashboard (Exhibit E)**

Ashley Iovieno provided an update on the Business Services Dashboard that included information regarding the current unemployment rates, job demand, the Going PRO Talent Fund, employers served, career exploratory events, and National Apprenticeship Week.

**Unemployment Rates** – Ms. Iovieno reported the updated unemployment rates for September 2023 were noted on the second page of the Dashboard (Exhibit E). The Michigan Unemployment rate was reported to be 3.9%, with the national rate at 3.8% and the rates for the four counties in the Michigan Works! Southwest service area ranged from 3.8% to 4.4%. St. Joseph County was at 4.2%, Kalamazoo County was at 3.8%, Branch County was at 3.8%, and Calhoun County was at 4.4%.

**Job Demand** – The third page of the dashboard showed details of job demand in the Michigan Works! Southwest services area. This month, job postings for Registered Nurses (RNs) ranked first, with retail salespersons coming in second, for a total of 11,825 ads which is a 17.9% decrease from last month. Employers with the most openings continue to align closely with the occupations with the most openings.

**Going PRO Talent Fund** – This month, Michigan Works! Southwest submitted forty-nine (49) applications for FY2024 cycle 1 Going Pro Talent Fund grants, for a total of \$3.1 million in funds requested. This is slightly lower than the FY2023 cycle 1; however, many employers expressed interest in waiting until cycle 2 to apply. This is the second year that the cycle 2 application period exists, thus, it is expected that there will be more applications in cycle 2 this year than in 2023 as employers get accustomed to two cycles. When both cycles are considered, it is expected that the numbers will balance out. Page four of the Dashboard represents the GPTF data for FY2023. When FY2024 awards are announced, the Dashboard will be updated to reflect the new year. FY2024 GPTF training can begin January 1, 2024.

Jakki Bungart-Bibb reported that 7% of the GPTF grants are designated for admin costs and noted that staff put in a lot of time up front; however, the percentage of admin reimbursement is only allowable up to the amount a company spends from their grant. There are many reasons that could affect a company completing their training plan. MW! Directors are advocating for a dedicated funding source because the work needs to be done regardless.

**Employers Served** – The last page of the Dashboard highlights the number of employers served and services provided, this data is up to date as of October 2023.

**Career Exploratory Events** – Ms. Iovieno reported the past couple of months have been busy with career exploration events. Michigan Works! Southwest sponsored Branch County's Career Day on October 19, 2023 at the Dearth Center in Coldwater. They also sponsored and hosted, in partnership with many other organizations, MiCareerQuest™ Southwest at the Kalamazoo Expo Center. Approximately 450 ninth grade students from Branch County attended the Branch County Career Day; and approximately 4,000 eighth grade students attended the MiCareerQuest™ Southwest two-day event. Additionally, on the first day of the MiCareerQuest™ Southwest, an evening event was open to the public and over 360 individuals attended. Ms. Iovieno expressed a huge thank you to all the partners and employers who helped make these events possible, as they would not have happened without their support and leadership.

Jakki Bungart-Bibb reported she was in Chicago the past few days for a USDOL conference, and the MiCareerQuest™ Southwest that was held in Kalamazoo was mentioned as a best practice. She noted that she is very proud of this event and thanked all involved.

**National Apprenticeship Week** – Ms. Iovieno reported this week is National Apprenticeship Week and to celebrate, an Apprenticeship 1.0 session was held earlier this week in partnership with Southwest Michigan First. Approximately fifteen (15) employers and partners were in attendance. The USDOL representative for the Michigan Works! Southwest area presented pertinent information for building an apprenticeship program and various funding opportunities available through Michigan Works! Southwest were discussed.

Board member, Jackie Murray reported she attended the event, along with a couple of employees from her company who were interested in learning more about apprenticeships. They found the session to be very informative.

Board member, Jill Bland reported the Apprenticeship 1.0 session was held in partnership with a Southwest Michigan First Business First event and the session was recorded. The link, <https://vimeo.com/884503837>, is posted on their website and it can be shared with members following today's meeting.

### **Labor Market Information**

*Michigan's Labor Market News* – Ashley Iovieno reported the November edition of the Labor Market Newsletter has been released and a link to the publication will be shared with the Board in the follow-up email that will be sent after the meeting. This month the data spotlight is on Unemployment and Labor Force by Gender and Race for the 3rd quarter of 2023. The map of the month features Union Membership Rates across the U.S. in 2022. Michigan fell into the 10.0% to 14.9% category.

### **Operations Update & Dashboard (Exhibit F)**

Amy Meyers reported the Operations Dashboard (Exhibit F) was included in the agenda package. In follow-up from the previous meeting, staff had not received the final report with year-end numbers for the PATH program. Since then, that information was received and on page two of the Dashboard, the numbers reported on the top half of the page are for the new year that began October 1, 2023. The chart on the bottom half of the page reflects the final data for last year for which the time period was October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023. The data for the Learn, Earn and Provide (LEAP) program and Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES) is for one month of activity and is reflected on page three of the Dashboard. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Wagner-Peyser programs operate on a July 1 through June 30 program year and the data on page four are the final performance outcomes that were reported to the USDOL for the first quarter of the program year.

A couple of highlights for the Michigan Works! Southwest area were featured on page five of the Dashboard. The first is that Michigan Works! Southwest is fortunate to have board member, John Fiore, along with staff member, Kathy Olsen, invited to present on a workforce GPS federal webinar held in partnership with USDOL. The title of the webinar was "Effective Communication and Access for Job Seekers Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing," and the focus for their portion of the webinar was to highlight best practices that are utilized to meet the needs of people in the deaf and hard of hearing community who visit service centers. They both presented during the webinar and did a great job. This was a great opportunity to highlight those services that we have available. Over 800 individuals were in attendance. She expressed a huge thank you to both presenters. Kathy Olsen reported that she also learned about the vast amount of technology that is available to assist the deaf and hard-of hearing and that it is changing and adapting quickly as new resources become available.

The second highlight on page five of the Dashboard relates to a success story for the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program that was highlighted on a recent statewide RESEA call. The RESEA program provides customized services to individuals who are most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits. These individuals are referred to Michigan Works! and they attend one or two appointments to access services to help get them back into the workforce. There are a lot of staff in attendance at today's meeting who contribute to helping those individuals. The individual highlighted is Trent. Trent became unemployed as the result of a mass layoff in November 2022. He was ultimately referred to Michigan Works! Southwest and upon referral, Trent's appointment was scheduled, and he met with a career coach. During this initial RESEA appointment, Trent's drive and motivation to reenter the workforce was evident and career coaching staff were able to review his resume and suggest modifications to assist in his employment search. In working with Michigan Works! Southwest, Trent found a job posting for the Workforce Development Institute (WDI) based out of Kalamazoo. Upon applying for that position, which happened to be a career coaching position, Trent interviewed and was offered the job. After sharing the story, Ms. Meyers pointed out that WDI is a Michigan Works! Southwest service provider. Additionally, she noted that in preparation for the State call that she was asked to present, she requested a quote from Trent's supervisor. A few excerpts were pulled from that email to write the story featured on the Dashboard. Trent is now making a difference in the lives of job seekers by helping them access training and employment and staff at Michigan Works! Southwest have the great pleasure of working with Trent every day.

## Director's Report (*Exhibit G*)

Jakki Bungart-Bibb provided State and Federal updates.

**2024 State Legislative Priorities** - The Michigan Works! Association along with the MW! Directors from across the state have outlined 2024 priorities which include the Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF), Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES), skills scholarships, and youth career exploration. The ask last year for the GPTF was \$110 million with a State budget of \$54 million, thus that is why it remains a priority. The BRES funding is a more flexible fund source that allows MW! staff to assess local needs. It has been a great resource to help the ALICE (Asset Limited, Incomed Constrained, Employed) population.

**Federal Update** - The House passed a stopgap bill on Tuesday, November 14, 2023 to keep the government open, putting Congress on a path to avert a shutdown on November 17th. The bill extends funding via a two-step process that would establish two new shutdown deadlines in January and February. As of last evening, both the Senate and the House have passed the bill, and it is pending the President's signature.

**WIOA Reauthorization** - There are ongoing high-level talks aimed at reauthorizing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), with a markup session planned mid to late November. Key proposals include a reformed and dedicated funding stream for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) with a probable cap of \$4k-5k per account. The proposal introduces a mandatory funding stream for ITAs, similar to Unemployment Insurance (UI) or Pell grants. This approach guarantees funding for individuals seeking training at the local level through ITAs, with a voucher system allowing eligible individuals to select training providers from the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) or potentially any area or occupation. Concerns have been raised about the potential impact on formula allocations for local Workforce Development Boards. There are apprehensions that ITAs might undermine the local demand-driven model for employers. Suggestions have been made to reform the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to better align with local demand and offer relevant training options. Additional information is available at: <https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-shift/2023/11/13/where-were-at-on-wioa-00126791>.

**Notice of Proposed Rulemaking** – Staff are still awaiting a final rule for *Wagner-Peyser*. Over 1,000 comments were submitted, and this is now at the White House for review. No additional information is currently available. Proposed Rulemaking for *Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)* is intended to strengthen TANF's role in supporting family well-being and work, as well as creating additional accountability for states to ensure TANF funds serve their intended purpose, while maintaining state flexibility. This is currently undergoing staff review. The comment period is currently open.

## PRESENTATIONS

**Hospitality Workforce Development Initiative** - Heather Ignash, Economic Development Specialist for Battle Creek Unlimited, gave a presentation pertaining to a local hospitality workforce development initiative. She reported the newly renovated hotel in downtown Battle Creek is expected to bring over 165 new jobs in the hospitality sector to the space. To prepare for this, a plan was drafted to build on an ongoing talent pipeline and training opportunities within the hotel space. Project goals include a minimum of 160 full-time equivalent jobs of which 60% are filled by Battle Creek residents; establish local partnerships; increase the number of community members who participate in a partner program and hold a certificate or degree; job placement for students who participate in training programs associated with the hotel; and an upskilled current and future workforce that is living, working, and enjoying Battle Creek. Some of the ways in which this initiative will be a unique experience in Battle Creek is that there will be dedicated classroom space on hotel property; a career development professional will be on staff at the hotel; and new programs will be built by educational partners. She shared a list of the many partners involved in the initiative. In working with local and industry partners, new programming is being built that is unique to the hotel and is created with the community and career mobility in mind. The programs include a new Hospitality Work-Based Learning at the high school level; new hospitality undergrad degree options; and internship and work experience opportunities at all levels. The goal is to present career pathways that support

growth and increase skills – from desk to hotel management; from server to head chef; and from housekeeper to event planner. The local impact would be an upscaled population earning more income in a rewarding career; a first class and unique hotel experience for locals and visitors; entrepreneurs bringing new experiences and businesses to the city; and a more vibrant downtown feel, culture, and identity. The plan also includes weaving local businesses into what is offered by encouraging guests to explore the city and by exploring the best ways to bring local small businesses, artists, and entrepreneurs into the hotel. The work with local partners will continue prior to and beyond the hotel’s opening; key roles at the hotel will be filled; marketing will begin for prospective participants and students; and the progress will be monitored and adjusted as needs arise.

**Job Quality Academy** – Amy Meyers, Deputy Director for Michigan Works! Southwest and Kathy Szenda-Wilson, Co-Director of Pulse gave a presentation on the USDOL Job Quality Academy, and the work being done locally. Ms. Meyers introduced the local staff who have been leading the Job Quality efforts. They included Jakki Bungart-Bibb, Ashley Iovieno, and herself from Michigan Works! Southwest; Kelli Adams from the Employer Resource Network® (ERN®); and Kathy Szenda Wilson and Maria Ortiz Borden from Pulse. She reported that in January 2023, a USDOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) titled “Creating Employer and Workforce System Customer Access to Good Jobs” was released. The purpose of this federal guidance was to define the characteristics of a good job; explain why the job quality is important; and show how the workforce system should integrate good job strategies into its employer partnerships and workforce training. She provided a few highlights. They included good jobs are the foundation of an equitable economy; providing good jobs creates a competitive advantage when it comes to employee recruitment and retention; and job quality expectations are directly related to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) for which its purpose is to help people attain economic self-sufficiency, while giving employers opportunities to train, hire, and retain workers. The US Departments of Commerce and Labor jointly identified eight key principles of a good job and four of those principles will have a local focus for the initial job quality work.

Within days of the federal guidance being released an application became available for communities to apply for the USDOL's Job Quality Academy which was designed and operated in partnership with Jobs For the Future (JFF). The Academy is a professional development and strategic planning experience with the goal that by the end of the Academy, selected teams would have a greater understanding of the job quality principles; they would know how to incorporate job quality into their policies and programs; and they would be prepared to take immediate action for making the most impact. The Upjohn Institute applied to participate in this Academy and was one of sixteen (16) teams selected nationwide to participate. The local team will have a focus on the childcare sector.

In Kathy Szenda Wilson’s portion of the presentation, she noted that quality childcare jobs are not possible in the existing environment; however, we do know that “when early childhood works, we all work.” She highlighted key Pulse partners for this work that included the Job Quality partners as well as Battle Creek Unlimited, Southwest Michigan First, and the Edison Early Childhood Education Career Pathway. Existing resources that can be leveraged for this work include a regional planning grant, the Pulse Roadmap, and CEO Summits. The goal is to develop a diverse, action-oriented coalition that helps build the supportive ecosystem necessary to promote and advance quality jobs in the childcare sector. She then shared a video of a Region 8 event that was held to address the childcare crisis. The video is posted on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/sy3wO9G0IKw>. Next steps will be to review existing information and research; identify additional resources; gather employer and employee data on job quality in childcare positions; and build a cross sector regional coalition of key stakeholders. The coalition will guide career pathway development and advancement and help develop technical assistance as well as a comprehensive strategic action plan. In the long term, the goal is to increase the number of employers investing in their employees’ childcare needs; increase public investment in childcare; and improve job quality for childcare workers. The intent of the regional plan of action is to address root causes, take action, create systematic change, and advocate for improvements to address the early learning and care crisis. Factors to address while developing the Early Learning and Childcare Sector include coordination and alignment; training; employer support; embedding Early Learning and Care into organizations and agencies; and having specific strategies and advocacy for this sector. Workforce development recommendations include addressing compensation inequities,

