

## Michigan Works! West Central

### WIOA

### Local Plan

#### Introduction and Strategic Vision

The West Central area, categorized as 4a within Prosperity Region 4, encompasses six rural counties in West Central Michigan. The region boasts a self-sustaining economy with a significant presence in both industry and agriculture, particularly in food processing. While many residents are employed locally, some commute daily to urban centers within the 4b portion of the region, as well as to neighboring regions to the north and east for work opportunities.

The West Central Workforce Development Board (WDB) and Local Elected Officials (LEO) collaborate to uphold the Strategic Vision outlined in the Michigan Plan. They are dedicated to partnering with stakeholders on the Core programs to advance this vision, thereby contributing to the broader objectives set forth for the State.

The local vision is for the core services and outcomes to come together at appropriate points to link into the whole as given in the state strategic plan in specific areas identified, including:

- A Jobs Strategy supported by a demand driven system that focuses on industry clusters and meeting the needs of area employers.
- A Talent Enhancement strategy that supports economic development and workforce development to increase the skills of the workforce
- A strategy for youth that is supported by activities that prepare youth for further training and employment.
- A strategy for Adult Learners and Employers that is supported by Adult Education and work-based learning opportunities.

Specific activities and plans are discussed in this initial plan. The expectation is that the local plan will have additions as building the system progresses and opportunities grow.

#### 1. Analysis of Local and Regional Labor Market Data

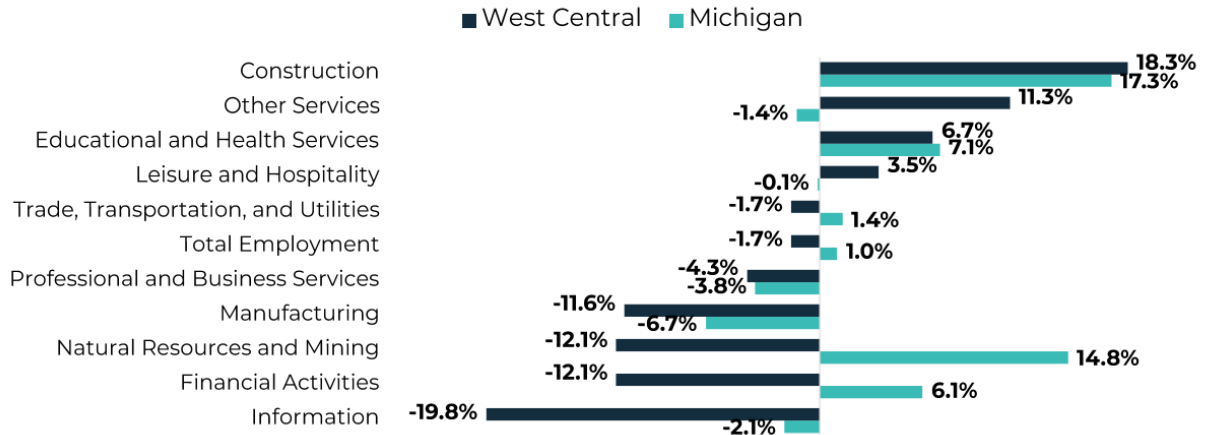
##### A. Regional Analysis and Local Data

#### **Knowledge and Skills Necessary to Meet Employer Needs**

Current Labor Market information (LMI) for West Central Michigan, provided by the DTMB, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, and Local Area Unemployment Statistics, shows that the 2025 unemployment rate in West Central was 6.6 percent which is greater than the statewide average.

Online job advertisements in West Central show broad distribution across occupations with particularly strong demand in healthcare, retail and service-related fields. The most frequently advertised positions include Registered Nurses, Retail Salespersons, and Home Health and Personal Care Aides, which together represent a significant share of regional job postings.

Private Sector Job Trends, 2019–2025



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Table 10)

Recent projects to highlight demand occupations and support training throughout the West Central Region have included the MiCareer Quest, a promotion to students, parents, educators, and employers to stay connected and engaged to industry throughout the region. Promotion of Going Pro to employers throughout the region ensures a workforce that is informed of state-of-the-art technologies.

Industry promotion through events targeted at youth have included hosting a Dream to Destination conference for youth throughout the West Central Region and highlighting the achievements of youth employed in a wide range of sectors at the 20 Under 30 event.

The top three industries in the West Central Region were Trade, Transportation and Utilities, Manufacturing, and Education and Health Services, which are very similar to the state. About one in five jobs in West Central were related to Manufacturing. The industry had a notably higher share of jobs in the area than in the state. West Central Michigan offers training scholarships and career services for individuals under the Workforce Innovation and

Opportunity Act (WIOA) who are interested in pursuing a career choice that has significant growth in the region and offers a living wage.

Career opportunities exist across all education levels, for high school completers through holding graduate or professional degrees. This trend aligns well with the goals of WIOA and will allow career pathway development and apprenticeship opportunities for those individuals who are accessing the workforce system.

Among residents aged 25 and older, 37.5 percent have a high school diploma as their highest level of education, while 22.6 percent have some college but no degree. Only 13.3 percent hold a bachelor’s degree indicating potential gaps in advanced credential attainment in the workforce.

2025 Online Advertised Job Postings in the West Central Michigan Works! Area

| <b>Job Title</b>  | <b>Postings</b> |
|---|-----------------|
| Registered Nurses   | 602             |
| Retail Salespersons   | 481             |
| Home Health and Personal Care Aides                           | 408             |
| First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers                | 359             |
| Customer Service Representatives                              | 251             |
| Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners | 242             |
| Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers                    | 210             |
| Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers                       | 177             |
| Postsecondary Teachers  | 174             |
| Fast Food and Counter Workers                                 | 171             |

Source: The Conference Board-Lightcast Help Wanted OnLine (Table 16)

High-demand, high-wage occupations in West Central Michigan are defined by a combination of projected job growth, annual openings, and median wages. Occupations requiring a bachelor’s degree or higher often represent the fastest-growing and highest-paying careers, particularly in healthcare, education, and technical fields.

At the same time, many occupations that require an associate degree, apprenticeship, or long-term on-the-job training also meet the criteria for high-demand and high-wage employment. Examples include Carpenters, Electricians, and Machinists, which offer strong earning potential and career advancement opportunities.

Occupations requiring post-secondary certificates or moderate-term training can typically be completed in less than one year and also meet the criteria for high-demand employment in the

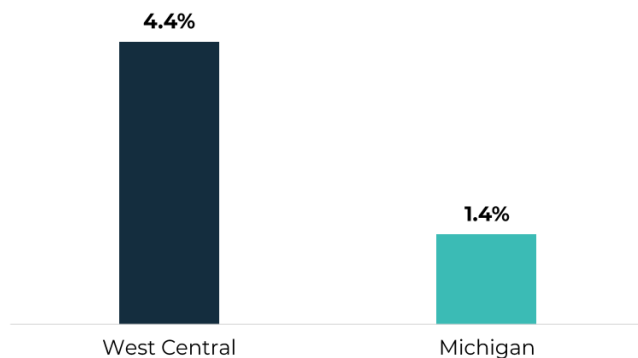
region. These roles provide accessible pathways for individuals seeking to quickly enter the workforce.

While occupations requiring only a high school diploma and short-term training are also in demand, they tend to offer lower wages. However, these entry-level opportunities remain critical for workforce participation and can serve as the first step in a career pathway that leads to higher wages and skill development over time.

### Analysis of Current Workforce

An Analysis completed by the State of Michigan’s Department of Technology, Management and Budget Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives provides the population estimate for West Central Michigan grew 4.4 percent which outpaced the state which grew by 1.4 percent. Nationwide, the population rose by more than 6 percent over this period.

Population Change, 2015–2025



The overall unemployment rate in West Central Michigan was 6.6 percent, which is higher than that of Michigan. Males 16 + in the region had a jobless rate 1.6 percentage points greater than that of females in the region. The local jobless rates by age and gender were lower than most statewide averages. Females in the area had a noticeably lower jobless rate than the statewide rate. The unemployment rate for those who are Black/African American was notably higher than all other demographic groups in both the West Central area and in Michigan.

Michigan Works! West Central had one-third of its population between ages 25-54. The area was older than the statewide average, with more individuals ages 55 and older according to the 2020-2024 Five-Year Estimates, American Community Survey, US Census Bureau. However, these individuals had a lower labor force participation rate than what was seen statewide with 45.7 percent participation rate for older workers in the West Central Region versus 39.6 percent in Michigan. The unemployment rate for older workers (65+) in the West Central Region was 3 percent while the remainder of Michigan was 4.2 percent. Meanwhile individuals under the age

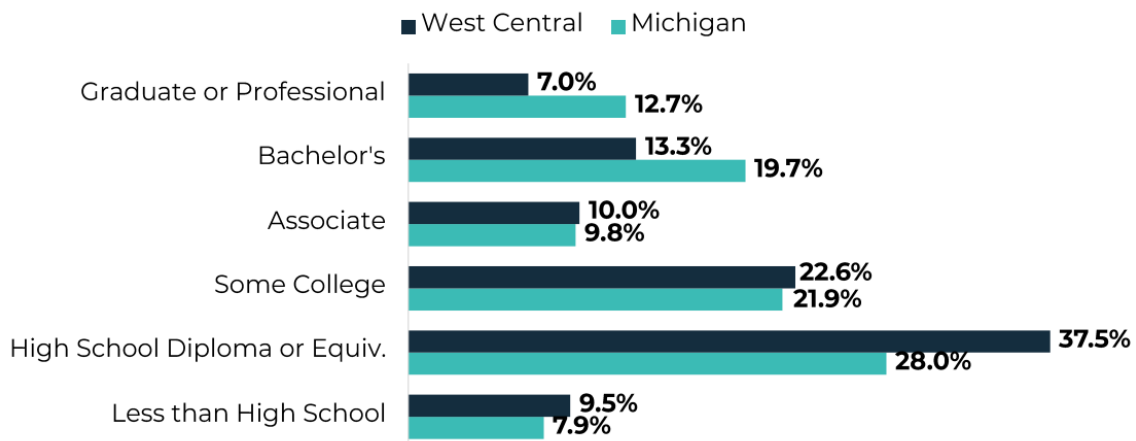
of 24 in West Central faced lower rates of unemployment compared to those in the same age group across Michigan.

According to 2020-2024 U.S. Census Bureau nearly every group in west Central, other than Native Americans experienced greater rates of poverty compared to Michigan. Those who are Black/African American have the highest poverty rate of those living in West Central Michigan at 27.5 percent. This was one percent higher than the rest of the state. These disparities highlight the need for targeted workforce strategies to improve access to training, supportive services, and employment opportunities for populations facing barriers.

In December of 2023, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services reported that there were nearly 7,600 assistance program recipients in West Central Michigan. The region had a much lower share of recipients who were Black/African American than that of the state.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population with a disability in West Central was nearly aligned with the distribution across the state. Fewer women in the area had a disability compared to men. More than 90 percent of individuals with disabilities in the West Central area were white compared to about three-quarters of statewide individuals. A higher share of males in the area had a disability compared to females. Just over 40 percent of those with a disability in the region were age 65 or older, the same as the statewide distribution.

The chart below shows educational attainment throughout the West Central Region. The residents held a higher education attainment in every area other than Bachelor’s and Graduate or Professional level. Nearly one third had a high school diploma or equivalent as their highest form of education. Addressing these challenges will require continued alignment between employer needs, training investments, and targeted workforce strategies to ensure individuals can access career pathways that lead to long-term economic stability.



Source: 2020-2024 Five-Year Estimates, American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau (Table 3)

## **Analysis of Workforce Development Activities**

Although West Michigan has experienced population increases, a steady decrease in unemployment rates, and slightly better than state averages in most of the workforce trends, it remains a region in need of intentional workforce development. This includes seeking ways to provide access to those not currently utilizing the welfare reform or other workforce systems, provide one stop barrier removal services in coordination with existing and newly sought out community partners, better preparing individuals to attend various training opportunities, and finding ways to increase the labor force by re-engaging people with disabilities who are otherwise capable of working. West Michigan is relentlessly pursuing innovative and relevant solutions to these challenges through unique partnerships and resources to meet individual and employer needs.

Using sector strategies, the West Central Region continues to convene and connect to create a network of partners to meet the demands of the region's current employers as well as the emerging industry needs in order to achieve a skilled workforce.

As previously mentioned, Industry Councils have been established within the region to help identify employer needs from the industry-wide perspective. These councils allow for the identification of best practices and shared strategies as well as increased articulation of what areas employers may need workforce development assistance.

Key roles of each of the industry sector councils include:

- Information conduit; sharing trends and best practices affecting talent.
- Talent Initiatives; leading, supporting and promoting talent initiatives throughout West Michigan.
- Training Needs; sharing current training needs with educational partners to develop curriculum, create career pathways and nurture a supply chain of talent.
- Networking; promoting networking among employers, educators, workforce development and economic development professionals for the purpose of developing a skilled workforce.

Educating Youth and enhanced outreach activities allows for a better understanding of what the regional economy looks like and what career opportunities are in existence post high school or following postsecondary education. Building the talent pipeline will increase the skilled talent pool and retain young people in our area. MiCareer Quest (<http://www.micareerquest.org>), a region wide career exploration event for youth, Jobs for Michigan Graduates (JMG) and the Summer Youth Work Experience Program are all examples of current workforce development activities targeted at increasing the local labor force and addressing the education and skill gaps in our region.

West Central Michigan is also focused on identifying and advocating to provide more meaningful and efficient services to individuals with disabilities. These initiatives include addressing the infrastructure improvements needed to lessen the barriers brought by housing, transportation, and internet access as well as increasing the training and employment opportunities that are available to this population. Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) is a core partner and a representative is co-located inside of many of the service centers. In addition, West Central Michigan has established relationships with the Michigan Bureau for Blind Services, Disabilities Advocates, and Disability Networks. These agencies are sharing resources and are at the table investigating ways to share common intakes, assessments, and making direct connects to opportunities.

In rural areas or where public transportation is unavailable, support services, such as mileage reimbursement or auto repairs, may be provided to assist individuals with getting to and from workforce development activities including education and employment.

Adult Education and Literacy programs are made available through established and emerging partnerships with local providers. All of the West Central Region Service Centers provide instruction and testing onsite with established Service Providers or through direct services. In areas that have expanded resources, community conversations and informational tours are taking place to increase awareness of workforce development services. In some communities, Michigan Works! staff conduct workshops and initiate career coaching as part of the educational curriculum.

Short term Occupational Skills Training and Higher Education opportunities are also available throughout the region and are funded with local WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth allocations for those who qualify. West Central works closely with training providers to ensure that the supported programs lead to an industry recognized credential and that the credential falls in line with employer demand. Recent initiatives have also shown that training providers including community colleges are responsive to the development and delivery of a curriculum that directly addresses the skill gaps.

The geographic factors of the region present many challenges to both the rural communities and employers. Although some training opportunities are offered online, many are only available in the urban areas, making transportation a barrier that often discourages individuals from pursuing Occupational Skill Training or Higher Education. Commuting patterns suggest that many people living in the rural areas are working in urban locations however there is still a large gap presented for both employers and residents when they are not able to obtain the skills needed to live and work in the same community. Efforts to better assess training needs and accessibility of training programs are being made in collaboration with the West Michigan Industry Councils, Higher Education providers, Vocational Training partners, Michigan

Rehabilitation Services (MRS), Adult Education providers, Veterans Services, and other community partners.

Work-based training is available and is a viable option that allows individuals to learn the skills that employers need without attending an occupational skill based or higher education training. Depending on the desired skill, the training type, and the length of the training, this may assist residents with employment opportunities that will require an education attainment of high school diploma through associate's degree (approximately 80 percent of projected jobs). Work-based training can be funded with local WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker allocations and for those who qualify, this is a very desirable option.

Work-based training opportunities include:

- *On-The-Job-Training* – intended to provide a participant with the knowledge and skills necessary for the full performance of the job. OJT is a critical tool that can help job seekers enter successful employment. The term “on-the-job training” means training by an employer that is provided to a paid participant while engaged in productive work in a job that:
  - Provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job;
  - Provides reimbursement to the employer of up to 75 percent of the wage rate of the participant for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training; and
  - Is limited in duration as appropriate to the occupation for which the participant is being trained, taking into account the content of the training, the prior work experience of the participant, and the service strategy of the participant, as appropriate.
- *Pre-Apprenticeship Training* – designed to provide work experience that can help participants obtain the skills needed to be placed into a registered apprenticeship.
- *Registered Apprenticeships* – designed to combine paid learning on-the-job and related technical and theoretical instruction in a skilled occupation. This training is an important component of the education and training services that the workforce system can provide to its participants and should be used as a strategy to train and employ job seekers. Registered Apprenticeships offer job seekers immediate employment opportunities that usually pay higher wages and offer continued career growth.
- *Customized Training* – aimed at meeting the special requirements of an employer with a commitment to employ after successful completion of the training.

- *Incumbent Worker Training* – designed to assist employers with training current workers in specific circumstances to meet the needs of employers and increase the skill level of workers.
- *Transitional Jobs* – designed to work with employers to assist individuals with barriers to employment who are chronically unemployed or have an inconsistent work history. The goal is to establish a work history, demonstrate work success, and develop skills for the individual that will lead to employment. Employers assisting in this realm have no obligation to hire the individual after the training is completed.

B. Strategic Vision

As described in the introduction, we see the area as contributing to the success of both, the local area, the region and the State by focusing contributions on specific strategies outlined in the State plan.

C. Local Performance Goals for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education, and Literacy, Wagner-Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation

Michigan Works! West Central participated in performance goals negotiations with LEO (Labor and Economic Opportunities). The goals below were agreed upon between both entities. Michigan Works! West Central will negotiate with LEO for goals for the coming year.

| <b>Performance Goals – PY 2024</b>                 |                   |                               |                   |                      |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Performance Measure</b>                         | <b>WIOA Adult</b> | <b>WIOA Dislocated Worker</b> | <b>WIOA Youth</b> | <b>Wagner Peyser</b> |
| Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit | 85%               | 88%                           | 79%               | 77%                  |
| Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit | 84%               | 86.5%                         | 79%               | 71%                  |
| Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit | \$8,500           | \$9,382                       | \$5,060           | \$8,000              |
| Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters After Exit | 84%               | 83.4%                         | 74.3%             | NA                   |
| Measurable Skills Gain                             | 66%               | 72.6%                         | 53.6%             | NA                   |
| Effectiveness in Serving Employers                 | Baseline          | Baseline                      | Baseline          | NA                   |

| <b>Performance Goals – PY 2025</b>                 |                   |                               |                   |                      |
|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Performance Measure</b>                         | <b>WIOA Adult</b> | <b>WIOA Dislocated Worker</b> | <b>WIOA Youth</b> | <b>Wagner Peyser</b> |
| Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit | 85%               | 88%                           | 79%               | 77%                  |
| Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit | 84%               | 86.5%                         | 79%               | 71%                  |
| Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit | \$8,500           | \$9,382                       | \$5,060           | \$8,000              |
| Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters After Exit | 84.4%             | 83.4%                         | 74.3%             | NA                   |
| Measurable Skills Gain                             | 66%               | 72.6%                         | 53.6%             | NA                   |
| Effectiveness in Serving Employers                 | Baseline          | Baseline                      | Baseline          | NA                   |

D. Local Strategy to align local resources for Core Programs to achieve strategic vision and goals.

There are several ways local resources are aligned and areas where items toward alignment to attain the strategic vision are in place and under development.

The view of alignment is that programs and funding designated for specific purposes and populations have a long history and expertise in the delivery of services to the populations and individuals they serve.

The WIOA Adult and DW programs along with the WIOA Youth program and Wagner Peyser funding are administered and operated by Michigan Works! West Central. Services are aligned by virtue of being provided under the same delivery umbrella and by staff who are trained in the different programs. The Adult, Dislocated Worker programs are aligned both by being similar in design and by being provided by the same staff. The WIOA youth program is also provided using the same process; with customers, being served by the program that best meets their needs, including services that are concurrent or consecutively delivered.

The Employment Service provided with Wagner-Peyser funding is a service that is provided by Michigan Works! West Central staff. The staff work together and frequently, jointly provide basic services to customers. This alignment is expected to continue. It facilitates cross training and keeps staff up to date by being involved in the delivery of multiple activities.

The provision of RESEA services is an employment service that brings persons identified by the Unemployment Agency as likely to exhaust unemployment insurance, is another opportunity to recruit dislocated and adult workers who may need additional skills.

**Adult Education** using WIOA funding is a small but important part of the overall strategy. Federal funding plays an important role in the overall services to adult learners. There are three school districts that receive this funding in the West Central area. They are Fremont Public Schools, Mason County Central Schools and White Lake Adult Education. They operate several sites in the six-county area. The partnership includes the WIOA programs participating in outreach and recruitment access to WIOA services. Fremont Public Schools for example runs GED preparation and high school completion in the Big Rapids and Reed City Centers. A representative from Mason County Central Adult Education represents this sector on the WDB. Mason County Central provides GED preparation and high school completion from the Baldwin and Ludington Center. White Lake Adult Education provides GED preparation and high school completion in the Shelby office.

The federally funded services are in addition to the State Adult Education programs that are coordinated from the Kent ISD in Kent County for Region 4.

The local strategy is to maintain and strengthen the linkages with Adult Education customers. West Central is a GED testing site, and provides access to online preparation in five counties where GED testing would otherwise not be available. GED testing is available in Mason County from West Shore Community College.

**Vocational Rehabilitation** is provided by Michigan Rehabilitation Services or MRS, which is a part of the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunities. MRS staff are co-located at West Central Workforce Development and DHHS offices. There is a history of good communication and cross referral of customers.

The strategy is to maintain and expand the level of cooperation and services to persons with disabilities by encouraging services and case management linkages to mutual customers. One way to monitor progress is to schedule meetings on a regular basis which include program management to review how the partnership is going. Bi-Annual meetings are suggested initially, with changes as needed by the partners.

## 2. Description of the Workforce Development System in the local area

### A. The programs included in the system:

The Core programs include:

- WIOA Adult

- WIOA Dislocated Worker
- WIOA Youth
- Adult Education
- Wagner-Peyser
- Vocational Rehabilitation

#### Non-Core Programs

- Partnership Accountability Training Hope (PATH) providing job assistance and training to parents receiving cash assistance.
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, provides specialized services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers that are delivered through local Agricultural Employment Specialists.
- Trade Act, provides training to workers who have lost their jobs as a result of an increase in imports or shift of jobs to foreign countries.
- Fidelity Bonding Program of Michigan, which assists high risk job seekers in obtaining employment by providing an incentive for employers to hire job seekers who are qualified but may be considered high risk.
- Offender Success Program, working with the Michigan Department of Corrections and local partners assisting with employment and training for persons paroled in the service area.
- Telamon Corporation, the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) provides eligible farmworkers and their dependents with the means to reach self-sufficiency through better employment.

#### B. Local Board Strategy to Work with Core Programs and Other Programs

As stated earlier, the WDB/LEO oversees the Core Programs of, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, and Wagner-Peyser. They also oversee the Trade Act and PATH programs. These programs are operated by Michigan Works! West Central staff. All services that cannot be provided by staff in-house are offered through various Memorandum of Understanding with entities throughout our six-county region.

The delivery of these programs is largely integrated with each other, with cross-trained staff providing a comprehensive array of training and preparation for employment of activities to the extent allowed by the individual programs.

The strategy is to provide general direction to the programs under the guidance of the boards to meet the needs of business and job seeking customers, and preparation to enhance the job readiness and skill level of the workforce, as part of an overall strategy to play our part of serving the overall region.

Close coordination with agency partners, both in the Core Services of Vocational Rehabilitation delivered by Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Adult Education, where the strategy is both to support these efforts in providing specialized services to the eligible populations for those programs, and to include these programs as part of the overall regional effort. The goal is for participants of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Adult Education to benefit from the specialized services they are eligible for, and recognizing the talents of these individuals make important contributions for their benefit in working toward self-sufficiency, and the benefit of employers and the overall region.

Job Corp is a core partner that serves youth aged 16-24 by assisting with High School Diploma (HSD), High School Equivalency (HSE), job training, and certificate opportunities. The residential facility located in Grand Rapids is considered a valuable resource for youth throughout the West Central region.

Coordination also takes place with the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). The SCSEP is a job training, work experience program for individuals 55 or older currently unemployed with a family income at or below 125% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. The participants are placed in a work experience at a public or non-profit agency for an average of 20 hours a week to increase job readiness skills to become more employable make a self-sustaining wage.

Each partnership is unique and the services available are important to the populations served. For example, the PATH program involves intensive and ongoing communication and working relationships with the Department of Health and Human Services, to the extent that the program is truly operated by two agencies doing their individual parts. This level of close coordination and working relationship results in the successful delivery of PATH services.

The non-Core programs of Trade Act, are operated as part of Wagner-Peyser as they have been historically based on funding and authorization, and because of the requirement for merit based staff. These programs are also integrated and are part of existing services delivered directly by Michigan Works! West Central staff selected by the board. The Fidelity Bonding is also available through the Wagner-Peyser services, as access and application points, although it is administered by the LEO.

The Region 4 Offender Success program effort is also administered by the local boards for an expanded area of thirteen counties, six of which are under Michigan Works! West Central. The other counties in the Region 4 Offender Success area include Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon, and Ottawa.

Funding for education through the Carl D. Perkins legislation has an impact on joint customers. Funding for training, equipment and special populations are available to qualifying students, and there continues to be a significant overlap of participants in the youth and adult populations. The delivery of services is based on the needs of the individuals who are served and ongoing linkages at the staff and administrative levels.

3. Description of Local Board working with entities to carry out Core Programs and other programs

A. Expand access to employment, training, education, and supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment

The Local Board via administrative staff work with program staff on plans to serve customers and expand the reach of outreach activities to increase awareness on potential customers and employers to use the services available for the programs under the oversight of the board.

Some programs and activities, including WIOA training activities, and services provided by Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Adult Education have a finite amount of funding available which limits their capacity. These programs have some flexibility, but there is little opportunity to meet the need with the funding they have. Linkages and shared costs where possible help and is desired on a customer-by-customer basis but there is little remaining capacity for expansion. For this reason, expanded access through awareness and use of the system may have a modest effect on the number of participants who receive training and other services.

Activities that work with employers and job seekers on matching skill levels with employment and modest training are key to expanding access to result in more job matches and job placements. These activities are based on awareness and using the Workforce Service Centers as the One Stop shopping and increasing the effectiveness of employer and job seeker services, including to Veterans and persons with barriers to employment.

B. Facilitate the development of Career Pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate in core programs

The number of job seeking customers may be expanded using co-enrollment or consecutive enrollment as tools to provide more services that are comprehensive. The use of common or consecutive employment plans among partners will facilitate the use of Career Pathways. Co-enrollment is common where it benefits the participants and is used to provide more services that are comprehensive, beyond what a single program may provide. Sequential enrollment is also common, as participants complete one facet of their training and move on to the next.

The area uses Michigan's Industry Cluster strategy to target training to be both employer driven and to use Career Pathways developed for targeted industries and employers. This includes identifying persons seeking training in identified Industry Clusters as a local priority group for services. The focus on Industry Clusters, Manufacturing and Health Care have been targeted, is not exclusive, as employers with a need for workers in related or other industries are also part of the employer driven system and these other employment opportunities are important in the smaller local economies that make up the region. In addition, in recognition of the significant commuting pattern of workers, primarily within Region 4, and to adjacent regions, West Central recognizes the Industry Clusters selected to be employer driven as part of the regional effort.

C. Improve access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential

Training remains a key to both employment for workers and meeting the needs of employers. Improved access is an outcome of the increased awareness of the services available at Workforce Service Centers and additional coordination among partners.

An emphasis will continue to favor short-term trainings or the WIOA programs becoming involved in the last one or two years of training.

This includes the development of credentials with education and employers that can be used for those immediate job openings that require training on the job.

4. Description of Strategies and Services that will be used in local areas to:

A. Facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs.

Employer engagement will be expanded via a strategy that builds on the strengths of the current delivery system from providing job matching of job seekers and employers, training of current workers via the Going Pro Talent Fund by application and Incumbent Worker training, and new workers via OJT. New hires that have also been trained prior to hire via WIOA and other training will be closely tied to employer demand and will often use the Industry Cluster Strategy. A Business Trades Collaborative has been formed to

respond to the needs of employers in this industry. This has fostered communication within the industry, assisted with ensuring that the WIOA program is responding to employer needs and furthered career laddering opportunities within this industry. This will continue to be an area that is focused on ensuring employer needs are met.

The Business Services team is comprised of three representatives that are focused on engaging employers and assessing their needs. In addition, they assist with establishing partners with local agencies and non-profits. An Apprenticeship Specialist has been added as well to foster the development and expansion of current apprenticeships throughout the region.

- B. Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area.

Employer Driven" is more of a mission statement than a goal. Considering the employer as a customer who hires workers trained, prepared, or matched through the employment and training system should be integral to the system's approach and response.

The challenge lies in preparing for future job demands. Therefore, training programs focus on current and anticipated needs.

Engaging employers to provide training tailored to their specific requirements, often following broader occupational training, is crucial. This is particularly important for small and mid-sized employers.

The area offers Incumbent Worker training and helps businesses apply for the Going Pro Talent Fund, using these opportunities to inform them about additional services. On-the-Job training is also utilized to meet business needs.

- C. Improve coordination between workforce development programs and economic development.

Michigan Works! participates in a few employer visits and retention calls with economic development professionals and links closely with MEDC on Going Pro Talent Fund contacts and employer visits.

Additional linkages involving LMI and Business Services will allow for interaction to be expanded through the sharing of information and involvement at appropriate points.

Our efforts to date fully recognize the importance of both new businesses, and the retention and expansion of existing businesses. The addition of an Apprenticeship Specialist increases the ability to respond to employer needs.

The area has hosted training on Apprenticeships for economic developers, community colleges, universities, and local intermediate school districts. A particular focus has been the Early Childhood Educator Apprenticeship Program. This initiative required coordinating providers throughout the region to develop a unified response to the shortage of early childhood educators.

- D. Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

Through the Wagner Peyser program, Michigan Works! West Central will provide the Unemployment Insurance Agency Work Test for claimants to ensure that they are able to work, seeking work, and have not refused suitable work. In addition to the Work Test, Re-employment services are provided to those who will benefit from more intensive staff assisted services.

A designated group of individuals receives services through the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program. These individuals are referred directly to Michigan Works! from the UIA. The goal of this program is to provide one-on-one services to claimants deemed most likely to exhaust their UI benefits prior to obtaining employment. Direct individualized services to the RESEA participants makes it more likely that they will return to the workforce quicker.

Michigan Works! West Central will have the up-to-date UIA forms readily available to the general public and will also assist individuals with obtaining forms electronically. The UIA help number is provided to claimants as appropriate.

Michigan Works! West Central values the opportunity to establish rapport with claimants through the register for work and RESEA referrals. These workers are provided with information on the Dislocated Worker program and services they may access.

5. A description of how the local board will coordinate local workforce investment activities with regional economic development activities that are carried out in the local area and how the local board will promote entrepreneurial skills training and micro-enterprise services.

The board will work with economic development to coordinate activities and build on the established linkages in place. Additional linkages are always possible, and a regional perspective is desired that can be fostered through the local Workforce Development Board. The Right Place in Grand Rapids is also providing economic development services in Newaygo, Mason, Mecosta, Lake, and Oceana Counties. This linkage and the close relationship with West Michigan Works! will foster increased involvement and promote regional thinking.

Thinking regionally will help coordinate these activities for new and existing businesses. For example, the state Labor Market Information staff can provide information about the labor force for a commuting radius around the employer's place of business. This information does not consider boundaries but gives the area an opportunity to plan and coordinate services for specific employers, or groups of employers in an area.

Entrepreneurial skills and specific training is available via several educational institutions and will be examined when the skills involved are linked to the larger employment market, thereby giving participants additional options and opportunities appropriate to their situations at different times in their careers.

With the recent launch of JMG program in the past two years, there has been an increased emphasis on fostering entrepreneurial skills in youth. Portions of the JMG curriculum specifically address the need for new businesses in the region and promote development through youth programming.

6. Description of the one-stop delivery system in the local area, including:

- A. How the Local Board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and jobseekers.

Continuous Improvement in terms of services would be measured and achieved in several ways. Using information on the populations served and the outcomes attained will enable continuous improvement to be considered from both the aspect of increasing performance over a period of time but increasing services to those individuals with additional barriers to employment, and whose barriers warrant significant investment of funding to address. Given the opportunity to make recommendations on these factors is seen as a major opportunity for input and suggestions that are appropriate for the local resources and delivery system. Job seeker voice has been enhanced by placing tablets that survey employers and job seekers entering the service centers. There are questions about the services they received while in the service center and if they met their needs.

Joint meetings of the WDB/LEO will include a showcase that frequently includes an employer and/or participant or program that has received or delivered services. This promotes involvement and awareness of the practical application of services provided and a familiarity with the programs. Partnerships will be highlighted. These meetings also include a review of performance and expenditures as well as progress toward meeting enrollment goals and outcomes. The meetings include in person testimonials from both employers and job seekers attesting to the services provided to them and how it impacted their lives or the employer.

- B. How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.

Each county has a Workforce Service Center that is open during regular business hours. In addition, staff from programs frequently meet with customers and employers on site, for recruitment and specific programs. These include the Going Pro Talent Fund, Incumbent Worker Training, youth programs, Trade Act orientations and hiring events.

Customers may request alternate times to meet with staff when there is sufficient reason and phone, text and e-mail contacts are available. Outreach may be arranged on site with employers and schools for example.

Business Service representatives have frequent contact with employers and facilitate outreach and recruitment activities and other services.

DocuSign has been used to share documents with both employers and job seekers, providing them ample opportunities to review and complete either in person or through virtual means as appropriate.

- C. How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of the WIOA (Section 188), if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.

West Central requires all staff to comply with these requirements and there is annual training for staff. Training includes but is not limited to disability awareness, best practice for working with individuals who have a disability, Mental Health First Aid, and use of assistive technology. Michigan Works! West Central complies with regular audits regarding the physical accessibility of facilities. Michigan Rehabilitation Services are co-located in the service centers, providing an opportunity for information sharing and partnership. Programs are designed with inclusivity in mind and incorporate accommodations as appropriate.

- D. A description of the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.

The roles for the Core programs are to coordinate or co-coordinate services with other WIOA services and activities. Non-Core programs coordinate referrals and services for individuals and may be integrated into the system.

Coordination involves both an awareness of the services available, which is largely in place and coordination both for individuals who can best be served by two or more programs.

The two basic types of partnership are with the Core Programs where there is cost sharing. The Core programs administered through the Michigan Works! system is delivered through an integrated system where contributions are determined. The MRS and Adult Education Core programs provide services from area Centers and contribute to the Centers in both coordinated services and use of space in the Centers they use.

Some non-Core programs have linkages, there is cross referral of customers, and the numbers are small with each program paying for the services they provide. In these cases, cost sharing may be minimal or may not be done. For example, when the service is provided, and use of the Center is sporadic, intermittent, and driven by an occasional customer. To foster an awareness of available services, it is routine for Michigan Works! West Central to host a community fair offering a time to connect with area resources. Core and non-core programs are invited to participate.

7. A description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area.

Activities available to Adult and Dislocated Workers include an assessment of their experience and skills based on work history and training, interest, and an approved test.

Activities range from Career Services to Training Services and include OJT, and ITA training. Three Party OJT's involving employee leasing and temporary employment are included. Training Services with or without an ITA, those based on accompanying an OJT or Work Experience for example will be prioritized to training that provides a credential or certification, including certification that is stackable at the beginning of a series of possible trainings. Without an ITA refers to training provided in conjunction with an OJT, or Customized or Incumbent Worker training.

This is a continuation of having allowable activities available to meet the needs of employer and job seeking customers ITA and OJT are the primary activities. Other activities may be provided as needed.

These activities partner with other training funds, including the Going Pro Talent Fund, and collaborating on participant-based funding such as Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation.

8. A description of the design framework for Youth programs in the local area, and how the 14 program elements required in 20 CFR Section 681.460 are to be made available within that framework.

Youth activities include activities provided with WIOA funding as noted in Policy, some activities may be provided through linkages or by local entities, including school districts and alternative schools. These include tutoring, dropout prevention, alternative secondary school including cyber schools, and various occupational and entrepreneurial training.

Work Experience, Occupational Skills Training, Supportive Services, guidance and counseling and financial literacy are common activities for the program. Some activities like financial literacy may be provided by the program or by collaboration with partners.

All the 14 program elements are made available to youth participants. The 14 elements are embedded in the promotional materials for the youth program and in the orientation to services. However, not every youth participant must receive services from all program elements, but the appropriate elements are provided to assist the youth to remove barriers and obtain short- and long-term goals. Specific program services will be provided to a youth participant, based on each participant's objective assessment and individual service strategy.

Other funding may be leveraged to augment services, for example, the area has benefitted from training funding for youth from the DTE Foundation through United Way of the Lakeshore, which is used for wages to participants.

9. A local definition of B Basic Skills Deficiency, which reads "a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at the level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society."

Definition of a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family or in society. Low educational functioning levels can be a significant barrier to educational and/or employment success, thus all participants must be assessed to determine any basic skills deficiencies. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act defines the term "Basic Skills Deficient" as an individual:

- A. Who is a youth, that has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test, or
- B. Who is a youth or adult, that is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

Michigan Works! West Central will follow the federal definition for youth/adults who are basic skills deficient as identified by an assessment score at or below grade level 8.

Michigan Works! West Central will use Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) as a valid and reliable assessment tool and provide responsible accommodations to

youth with disabilities or a youth with a language barrier in the assessment process in making this determination.

10. A description and assessment of the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local area, including activities for youth who are individuals with disabilities, which shall include an identification of successful models of such activities. Further, local areas are to define “requires additional assistance” for In-School and Out of School Youth eligibility criterion in their local plan.

A low-income youth who needs additional assistance is a person between the ages of 14 and 24 and requires additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment. Local areas are required to define additional assistance criterion. Michigan Works! West Central’s definition for youth who requires additional assistance includes the following:

- A. GPA less than 2.0 in secondary or post-secondary education;
  - B. Are deemed at risk of dropping out of school by a school official;
  - C. Have been referred to or are being treated by an agency for a substance abuse related problem;
  - D. Have experienced recent traumatic events (examples: death of a parent, a parent incarcerated, been removed from place or residency, victim of abuse, or reside in an abusive environment);
  - E. Have a physical/mental/learning limitation that prohibits an individual from working in certain occupations;
  - F. No employment history;
  - G. An employment history of less than six months for one employer;
  - H. Member of a single parent household;
  - I. Child of an incarcerated parent;
  - J. Victim of human trafficking;
  - K. Living in rural areas lacking adequate transportation to employment.
- J. Information regarding any waivers being utilized by the local area, in accordance with any Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity/Workforce Development Agency (LEO/) communicated guidelines or requirements regarding the use of the waivers.

Michigan Works! West Central has acknowledged that the State of Michigan has been granted a waiver to lower the out-of-school expenditure requirement. Currently, Michigan Works! West Central will be utilizing the waiver.

12. Description of how the local board will coordinate relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs and activities with activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services and avoid duplication of services.

WIOA funded post-secondary education will be focused on preparing the participant for employment in a demand occupational area. This activity will be coordinated with other funding, including grants, and services, such as services to special populations with educational institutions to provide needed services to assure the success of the participant. Coordination in this example would be with the Talent Specialist, the Special Populations staff at the educational institution and the participant.

At the secondary level school-based activities, including training at alternative and cyber schools that promote dropout prevention and high school completion, may be linked to work experience that assist the participant in job readiness and the application of training learned. Coordination again occurs at the local level with the Talent Specialist, staff at the school and participant, to assure consistency in providing services and participant goals.

Michigan Works! West Central works closely with the Adult Education providers in the area. In all six of the Michigan Works! service centers, Adult Education is co-located and provides services directly at the service centers. The co-location promotes collaboration and assists all programs with referrals. Adult Education and Michigan Works! collaborate to identify student needs and align services to meet student goals without duplication of services.

Duplication is avoided by close coordination, except in unusual cases where the receipt of separate but coordinated services is part of the action plan for the participant. For example, if funding is coordinated, several programs may assist a participant and assure that the same item is not paid twice, but that the participant receives the support they need.

13. Determination if the MWA will provide Supportive Services and Needs Related Payments

The MWA plans to provide supportive services to participants that enable them to participate in activities and services in their ISS. There will be restrictions governed by local and state policy among various programs including PATH to keep the payment amounts similar or within an acceptable range.

Supportive Services are provided by the Talent Specialist for Career Services and Youth Services. They are provided to enable the participants to participate in activities covered in the ISS. This includes services needed to participate in WIOA funded activities and activities

that may be funded by other programs or entities that assist the participant in participating or receiving the services given in the ISS. Determinations are made on an individual basis.

Services are requested, approved, and tracked. Support Services may be provided in consultation and support of other programs and funding and may be part of a cost sharing. Michigan Works! West Central has a Board approved local support service policy. Please see Attachment A, Michigan Works! West Central Supportive Service Policy.

14. Description of how the local board will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area. funding with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the area.

Coordination will be on a program and individual participant basis. The applicable supportive service policy is used. Unusual situations are covered on a case-by-case basis.

Supportive Services, including transportation assistance, are coordinated by Talent Specialist on an individual basis, in consideration of the needs of the customer and availability of services from all sources. Where either more than one entity or program provides services to a customer, consecutively or concurrently, the Talent Specialist will coordinate service delivery.

Please see Attachment A, Local MWWC Supportive Service Policy.

15. Local Funding Caps

The area does not have a per participant funding cap. There may be caps on specific activities, for example, there is a funding cap on an ITA under WIOA. ITA's are renewable at intervals and a cap would apply to one issuance. The intent is to issue periodic approvals contingent on the participant making satisfactory progress toward the completion of training. Limitations may be measures of time or funding. There is always the opportunity for MWWC to waive a cap on an individual participant basis, and such requests are made by the Talent Specialist.

Training approvals are based on the needs of the individual. Coordination among programs is expected and is the norm.

There is considerable overlap in the services that may be provided with Career Services. Duplication is avoided by the programs working cooperatively.

16. A description of plans, assurances, and strategies for maximizing coordination, improving service delivery, and avoiding duplication of Wagner-Peyser Act services and other services provided through the One-Stop delivery system.

All MWWC frontline staff are cross-trained and provide Wagner Peyser, WIAO, PATH and Trade services. The following service strategies are used:

1. Self-Services: these do not involve a great deal of staff assistance. They often involve accessing information and workshops through the website or through social media
2. Facilitated Services: include those services that involve staff assistance with Pure Michigan Talent Connect, assistance with a job search, running copies of applications, cover letters and resumes.
3. Staff-assisted Services: assist with UIA, FAFSA application, basic assessments, referral to job posting or fairs, referral to WIOA for training options

Crossed trained staff have allowed us to maximize coordination across programs and create a process for a referral. During the Wagner Peyser service provision, potential participants are identified and referred to an orientation to learn more about the WIOA program. Initially we begin with the orientation process to share program information with people and allow them an opportunity to build a relationship with the Talent Specialist. At this point we will begin to administer assessments, build a resume, complete the O\*net Interest profiler and review PMTC training connect to explore training options and determine if this is an appropriate option now. This provides an opportunity to explore different career pathways.

17. A description of how the local area is planning to deliver employment services in accordance with the Wagner –Peyser Act of 1933, as amended by Title III of the WIOA.

A. The identification of a point of contact.

Michelle Keene, Executive Director  
Michigan Works! West Central  
14330 Northland Drive  
Big Rapids, MI 49307  
231.660.0285  
[skeene@mwwc.org](mailto:skeene@mwwc.org)

- B. Information regarding whether the MWA provides employment services directly in the local area or if service providers are being used. If service providers are being used, please include the name of the provider, the type of entity, and whether the provider is a merit-based organization. For your entity, please choose from the following: state

governmental agency, local unit of government, special purpose unit of government, school district, intermediate school district, public community college, public university, or other.

Michigan Works! West Central, which is a special purpose unit of government, delivers Employment Services directly.

- C. A description of how Wagner-Peyser funded services will be provided at no cost to employers and jobseekers.

Employment Services are provided at no cost to employers and job seekers through Michigan Works! Service Centers. There is a full-service center in Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana, and Osceola counties. Both customer sectors are targeted through outreach services. Based on available funding, employer events may include: WorkKey services, employer retention visits, employer outreach for specific ES services, employer association group presentations, and general response to employer inquiries. Customer services include all allowable ES services and are delivered one on one and in workshop group sessions.

The Employment Service includes the automated Pure Michigan Talent Connect, as well as additional services by specialized State and County employees who provide services to Veterans and migrant and seasonal farm workers.

All West Central Workforce Service Centers have been reviewed for compliance with the minimum standards, which includes being accessible to persons with disabilities.

- D. An explanation on how labor exchange services will be provided using the three tiers of services: self-services, facilitated services, and staff-assisted services.

The three tiers of service are provided at each of the six Workforce Service Centers. Two to three Talent Specialist are assigned to each of the Centers. Several staff, including the three managers, work in several counties. ES staff are available to provide assistance to customers at each of the three levels of services. All staff are full time employees, and are crossed trained in all programs. Talent Specialists are the “front line” at each Workforce Service Center. They assist customers with questions and are available to assist or provide facilitated access to the public computers at each center.

Workshops and other training are provided periodically at most Centers by the Talent Specialist.

The three tiers of services are:

**Self-service** will be available using both the profile and job listing components of the Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC) Internet-Based system and resource centers.

Access to Pure Michigan Talent Connect is provided at each Workforce Service Center. Over 100 public computers are available at all six of the centers. This counts computer labs which may be used by customers in accessing Pure Michigan Talent Connect. All customer and staff computer stations are connected to the internet and Pure Michigan Talent Connect.

**Staff-assisted self-service (facilitated)** will be available to help job seekers and employers who cannot use the PMTTC or public area unaided, due to the lack of computer familiarity, literacy, disability, lack of access to the system, or some other barrier. Facilitated access will occur through an employment service worker assigned to each center.

**Mediated services** are more intensely staff assisted services that assist the customer in their job search. Mediated services include, but are not limited to, WorkKey services, career guidance, specific LMI, job search workshops, resume assistance, and other job search assistance. An individual may receive those services in a group or individual setting. Customers who receive mediated services are enrolled in one or more mediated services in the system.

E. A description of the manner in which career services are being delivered.

Career services are delivered through three different methods:

1. Self-service;
2. Facilitated, self-help services;
3. Staff-assisted service.

All persons have access to employment-related information and self-service tools, without restrictions.

All staff are proficient in career services and trained in determining when individualized career services may be appropriate to obtain or maintain employment.

F. A listing of how many staff at each site will be available to provide services.

Employment services are provided from each of the six Michigan Works! Service Centers. These are described below:

***Lake County***

Michigan Works! Service Center in Lake County is located at 5252 M-37, just North of Baldwin. This Center has eight workstations dedicated to use for ES customers. The customer demand varies, and the Center had 6850 customer visits in PY 22. An overflow of customers is unusual and would often be associated with a hiring event. Lab computers may be used in the event of an overflow of customers. Two Talent Specialist are assigned to this Center.

***Mason County***

Mason County services are provided from the Lakeshore Resource Network Center located at 920 East Tinkham in Ludington. There are eight customer service computers at this site, and the Center had 14,568 customer visits in PY 22. An overflow of customers is unusual and lab computers may be used as necessary. Three Talent Specialists are assigned to this Center.

***Mecosta County***

Services are provided from the Workforce Service Center located at 14330 Northland Drive on the South side of Big Rapids. The Center has 16 customer service computers available, and had 12,930 customer visits in PY 22. An overflow of customers is unusual and lab computers may be used. Three Talent Specialists are assigned to this Center.

***Newaygo County***

The Workforce Service Center is located at 9075 Mason Drive. The Center has 10 customer service computers and had 6,060 customer visits in PY 22. An overflow of customers is unusual, and lab computers may be used when this happens. Two Talent Specialists are assigned to this Center.

***Oceana County***

The Workforce Service Center is located at 195 N. Michigan Ave, Shelby. The Center has 9 customer service computers and had 6,013 customer visits in PY 22. An overflow of customers is unusual, and lab computers may be used when this happens. Two Talent Specialists are assigned to this Center.

***Osceola County***

The Workforce Service Center is located at 240 East Church Street in Reed City. The Center has 13 customer computer stations and had 7,320 customer visits in PY 22. In a

situation of an overflow of customers, the public computers in the adjacent computer lab are used. Two Talent Specialists are assigned to this Center.

- G. A description of how the Unemployment Insurance (UI) Work Test will be administered. This description must include an explanation of how the registration of UI claimants will be conducted and how reporting claimant non-compliance with the “able, available, and seeking work” requirement will be managed.

Claimants may enter the registration at any location that can access the PMTC. If a claimant chooses to enter the ES registration at a location other than at the Workforce Service Center, the claimant must still come to Michigan Works! Workforce Service Center and have the registration verified. A Michigan Works! staff member will view and verify that the claimant’s profile is in the PMTC before certifying the claimant’s registration. Completion and activation of a profile in the PMTC will meet the registration requirement.

If the claimant(s) did not create a profile in the PMTC and a Mediated Services Registration, they will not have properly completed the registering for work requirement. When the Confidential Information page is completed, a mediated services registration will be created for the claimants. This will ensure that any subsequent services that the claimants receive can be reported correctly.

After verifying the registration, the Michigan Works! staff member will apply a unique stamp and initial each claimant’s verification card and electronically log the name and social security number of each claimant after ES registration has been verified. Any specific evidence of a claimant’s unavailability for or lack of seeking work that comes to the attention of an individual assigned to deliver ES will be reported by completing and providing a copy of the Claimant Advice Slip, to the LARA-UIA.

Michigan Works! West Central will comply with the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the UI Agency and Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan.

- H. A description of how the Reemployment Service Eligibility Assessment requirements will be administered.

The RESEA program permanently replaces the mandatory Profiling Program. The goal of this program is to provide customized services to claimants deemed most likely to exhaust their UI benefits. Early intervention with a proactive approach should result in returning the unemployed back to work sooner.

West Central staff members must deliver all seven of the RESEA activities listed below. Given the modest number of participants over the six county area, most sessions will be with one or two participants.

1. Orientation to MWA Services
  2. Confirmation of an active profile on Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTC)
  3. Assessment of UI Eligibility performed in a confidential, personalized setting by WP merit-based staff
  4. Verification of the Monthly Record of Work Search
  5. Development of an Individual Service Strategy (ISS)
  6. Review specific Labor Market Information (LMI)
  7. Provide at least 2 ½ hours of Reemployment Services
- I. An explanation of how the MWA will participate in a system for clearing labor between the states by accepting and processing interstate and intrastate job orders as a component of the National Labor Exchange System.

Michigan Works! West Central will participate in the National Labor Exchange system for clearing labor between states by providing access to the Pure Michigan Talent Connect system and receiving and forwarding certain intra-state job orders to designated Talent Investment Agency staff for processing. West Central makes the Career One Stop site available. From this web site, customers may access the state or state's system they are interested in using this link: <http://www.careeronestop.org/jobsearch/findjobs/state-job-banks.aspx>

This is available from the public computers in the lobby of each Workforce Service Center and staff assistance is available on the same basis as for those using Pure Michigan Talent Connect.

- J. An explanation of how the MWA will ensure Veterans will be provided with access to the same employment services received by the general population. This explanation must include a description of the screening process the MWA uses to refer eligible veterans to Veteran Career Advisors for case management services and how priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses will be applied in the delivery of Wagner-Peyser funded services.

Everyone who enters the office for services will self-identify whether they are a veteran. All individuals who self-identify will immediately be identified that they may qualify to receive additional services from a DVOP (Disabled Veterans Outreach Program) Specialist.

If a veteran or eligible spouse is interested in pursuing DVOP services, staff will provide the customers with a DVOP Military Questionnaire form. Upon completion of the form, staff will review the form to determine if they qualify to receive DVOP services. Customers who are deemed qualified to receive DVOP Specialist Services will immediately be referred to the DVOP. Customers who are not eligible for DVOP services will continue to receive services from MWA staff and/or other local Veteran Service Agencies.

Michigan Works! West Central has established partnerships with various local County Veterans Representatives and National Veterans Services organizations and are co-located in several of the service centers in the six-county area.

Information on various programs for veterans has also been made available at each center. As new programs are announced, the Employment Service staff is informed so that these opportunities are made available.

Michigan Works! West Central ensures it will comply with the Jobs for Veterans Act, and that Veterans Priority and other requirements will be provided.

Veterans Priority is provided in accordance with program requirements and is an automatic feature of PMTC. Veteran's priority and other veteran's services are further described in the ES Manual.

- K. An assurance that Migrant Seasonal Workers (MSWs) will have equitable access to and receive the full range of employment services that are provided to non-MSW customers.

Services will be fully integrated with other services provided at center offices. Referrals are made for customers with complete contact information. The MWA will ensure adequate physical facilities, including telephone, equipment, storage, and Internet connection at all designated ES locations reserved for the locally based state employees. MSFWs will be provided with access to the same employment services, benefits, protections, counseling, testing, and job and training referral services received by the universal population. When the MSFW staff is not in the office, contact information is given to the customer with the staff name, telephone number, and the schedule of availability in each of our offices.

- L. An explanation of the services and staffing the MWA will use to ensure that MSFWs will be provided access to the same employment services, benefits, protections, counseling, testing, and job and training referral services received by the general population. This explanation shall include a description of the referral process to MSWs or other appropriate MWA staff.

Michigan Works! West Central will provide all Wagner-Peyser funded services to the Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers. The Oceana County Workforce Service Center has been designated a significant office and will be staffed with bilingual, Spanish speaking staff to handle the flow of monolingual Spanish speaking customers.

When appropriate, Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers will be referred to the MSFW Outreach workers for services that are above and beyond what can be offered through Wagner Peyser funded services.

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

Additional services in terms of workshops have been provided as part of the overall service. Other services include the program participating in Job Fairs and Rapid Response activities, as well as providing the operation of the Trade Act program. Minimal staff assistance may be provided to assist customers in using largely self- service assessments and computer based basic skill enhancement in the centers.

- 18. A description of any navigators being utilized in the local area to provide targeted support and resources to specific groups of individuals with barriers to employment.

Each Service Center has one designated Talent Specialist to assist customers in the navigation of the MI Bridges website.

- 19. Coordination of WIOA and Adult Education

The area has three providers of Adult Education under WIOA. Michigan Works! West Central has arrangements with each of them to provide services from area Workforce Service Centers. In addition to the opportunity to refer customers in need of Adult Education to Talent Specialists, services are available on site at six Centers.

There are several literacy programs, in addition to Adult Education. These are largely operated by volunteers and often arrangements are made for services like tutoring and one-on-one on an individual basis.

The Workforce Development Board appoints a committee that works with the Executive Director to review and score the Adult Education proposals that are submitted under WIOA Title II. The review committee will create a summary of each proposal, recommend a score and then will present the information to the full board for approval.

#### 20. Cooperative Agreements, MOUs

Michigan Works! West Central has MOUs in place for the required partners identified in WIOA.

#### 21. Grant Recipient

Michigan Works! West Central is the Grant Recipient for funding in Michigan Works! West Central area. Michigan Works! West Central is a governmental entity that operates under the guidance of the Local Elected Official representatives of the member units of government, and in partnership with the West Central Workforce Development Board. All required documentation is on file with LEO.

All funding is disbursed in accordance with the requirements of the funding sources.

#### 22. Competitive Process for the selection of Service Providers

Michigan Works West Central operates all major program functions. Service providers are not being utilized.

#### 23. Proposed Local Performance Measures

A chart showing proposed local performance measures has been developed. Please see page 10.

#### 24. High Performing Board and Programs

The WDB and LEO of Michigan Works! West Central will strive to implement oversight, plans and processes that result in high quality services and results for the people and businesses of the area.

##### A. Continuous Improvement Criteria

The establishment of baseline criteria for the revised standards is the first step in knowing where the area is for a starting point. The proposed measures are a reasonable starting point. The boards expect improvement in the combination of outcomes measured on a percentage basis and the number of customers served whose performance applies to the

outcomes on a regular basis. To this end, we anticipate a quarterly review of how the area is meeting the performance measures, as interim measures of annual performance.

B. Allocation of One-Stop Center Infrastructure Funding

Funding for the basic infrastructure of the Workforce Service Centers is based on the overhead and fixed costs of each Center, and in consideration of local and partner funding. These are the basic costs of the physical plant and services.

C. Roles and contributions of partners including cost-allocation

The base contributions and cost-allocation will be in the form of rent for the use of basic Center services in the physical plant, including non-staff costs of items such as, rent, utilities, connectivity, etc.

25. Training Services for Adult and Dislocated Workers

A. Contracts for Services

Contracts for WIOA Career Services, One Stop Operator and the arrangement for the provision of training services will be as described.

Training services will be provided via ITA, OJT Agreement, including three party OJT Agreement, Incumbent Worker Agreement and Customized Training Agreements, in addition to the Career Services and Supportive Services provided by Michigan Works West Central Talent Specialists. OJT agreements may include other related training, including high school completion and courses related to the OJT employment, career ladder or approved industry cluster.

Costs for training will be not more than the customary charges for training or costs determined based on approved criteria, including the % of wage the OJT reimbursement is based on. 50% is the standard determination based on wages of the worker in training.

West Central will provide OJT at reimbursement up to 75% of the wages of the worker based on:

The characteristics of the participant, including length or unemployment and skill level prior to training. (Including but not limited to)

- Worker has a disability
- Worker is an offender

- Worker does not have a high school diploma or equivalent
- Worker has exhausted unemployment insurance, was not eligible for unemployment insurance or was not in the labor force
- Worker is basic skills deficient

The size of the employer, using the previously approved scale that allows higher reimbursement for small businesses.

- Employer is a small or medium sized employer that has 250 or fewer employees at a given location

#### The Skill Level of the Position

- Training is in a Targeted Industry Cluster (Currently Manufacturing and Health Care). Industry Clusters selected by West Michigan Works! are also included
- The position is being filled because of Employer Based Training such as the Skilled Trades Training Fund, Incumbent Worker Training, Customized Training or a Registered Apprenticeship
- The training is a result of the employer adding new equipment or processes
- The quality of employer-provided training and advancement opportunities including wage increase or attainment of an industry recognized credential

West Central will provide OJT to employed workers when:

The employee is not earning a self-sufficient wage using the 205% poverty or LLSIL approved by the board;

The requirements of 680.700 are met; and

The OJT relates to the introduction of new technologies, introduction to new production or service procedures, upgrading to new jobs that require additional skills, workplace literacy, or workers in an Incumbent Worker program that meets the requirements of 680.790.

Incumbent Worker training may be provided via Customized Training or OJT when the requirements of 680.790 are met. This training would be provided to employed workers.

Incumbent Worker Training may be funded for employers:

- That are in a Targeted Industry Cluster, (Currently Manufacturing and Health Care). Industry Clusters selected by West Michigan Works! are also included

- That is designed to meet the specific requirements of an employer, or group of employers to retain a skilled workforce or avert the need to lay off employees, by assisting the workers in obtaining the skills necessary to retain employment
- That is conducted with a commitment by the employer to retain or avert the layoffs of the incumbent workers

Note, in some cases, the incumbent workers who receive training to upgrade skills avert the layoff of other workers.

#### Cost Sharing for Incumbent Worker Training:

- Program funding will pay or reimburse the federal share of training. A sliding scale based on the size of the employer will be used in accordance with Section 134 (d) of WIOA. These are minimum non-federal shares that will be used on a “not less than” basis
- Non-Federal share is 10% of the costs for Employers with fewer than 50 employees
- Non-Federal share is 25% of the costs for Employers with more than 50 employees but not more than 100 employees
- Non-Federal share is 50% of the costs for Employers with more than 100 Employees
- The non-Federal share may include the wages paid to the employees while they are receiving training
- Incumbent Worker will not reimburse employee wages

#### Training:

- Training that increases the skills and/or skill level (not soft skills or broad overview)
- Increases the competitiveness of the employer and the employees receiving the training

#### Eligible Incumbent Workers:

- Are employed
- Have an established employment history with the employer for 6 months or more
- Michigan Residents

#### Additional Incumbent Worker Information

- Funding may be limited or capped for a particular project or employer
- Incumbent Worker funding may be used with funding from other programs
- Funding may be used for skilled trades for multiple employers, coordinated by an Educational Organization

- Funding may be used for skilled trades for multiple employers coordinated by Organized Labor for Registered Apprenticeships including pre-apprenticeships
- All applications are subject to review. Awards may be less than the amount requested

An ITA may be issued in the amount of the training or partial amount for a period of time, for example \$5,500 and six months, and be renewable when either of those measures is used up, with appropriate waivers from the MWA Administration for higher costs or specialized training. The amount may change from time to time to keep up with training costs.

ITAs will be issued for a period and amount of money but will be renewable based on progress of the participant.

#### B. Coordination between Training Service Contracts and ITAs

In general, participants will be receiving one type of training at a time. These activities would be coordinated with Talent Specialist. In some cases, where participants receive several services, the two training activities would likely be related, such as an OJT employee taking a related class as part of the OJT.

Coordination happens with different partners also. In these cases, the Talent Specialist or appropriate staff from each partner agency work together to assure appropriate coordination.

#### C. Customer Choice in the selection of training programs

Customer choice for training is done with Talent Specialist. There are specific criteria that need to be met in selecting training, such as the training must be in a demand occupation or one for which an employment possibility has been identified. The customer must also be suitable for the training, in being able to demonstrate the prerequisite eligibility of the training institution.

Other factors for the customer and Talent Specialist to consider include the costs, availability, start and end dates when training is available, and distance to training. Customer choice is made in consideration of these factors.

The customer also has significant choice in working with the Talent Specialist to select the type of training program to prepare for. OJT may be a good choice for a customer with some skills who can increase their knowledge while working, while other customers may be more appropriate for more structured training at an institution.

## 26. Comment Period

The local board will provide a copy of the draft plan for interested parties and publish a link on the MWA website to meet the 30-day comment period. In addition, mandatory partners have had an opportunity to be involved in goal setting and plan content prior to publication.

#### 27. Transition to an Integrated, Technology-enabled and Case Management system

West Central will continue to use the state MIS system and will work with other programs to expand the use of the system for other programs. West Central will follow LEO guidance and timeframes to ensure the area is part of an integrated statewide system. In the interim, information will be shared with WIOA partners. West Central does not plan to develop a local system, unless we are directed to do so.

#### 28. Local Priority for Service

Priority for selection will be based on the federal priorities, including veteran's status, poverty, public assistance, and several local priorities. Priorities include recipients of food assistance, people within 205% of the poverty level or the Lower Living Standard, which is also the local definition of self-sufficiency, people interested in training in an approved Industry Cluster. West Central recognizes the Industry Clusters selected for West Michigan Works! as part of the regional effort to promote employer-driven training and broaden the scope of training opportunities for participants to meet the needs of employers.

The 205% poverty level or the LLSIL is intended to include those who are not economically self-sufficient.

#### 29. Local Coordination of Workforce Investment Activities with Statewide Rapid Response Activities

West Central will coordinate Workforce Investment Activities with Statewide Rapid Response. This includes notifying LEO of closures or layoffs and coordinating the presence and involvement of local agencies. West Central will also coordinate, arrange and provide services as part of Rapid Response Activities.

#### 30. Rapid Response Activities

##### A. Initial Rapid Response Meeting

West Central will arrange for initial meetings with the employers and employees as necessary, including organized labor representatives. West Central will provide staff members for WIOA Dislocated Worker, as appropriate, and others as needed to support the State's Rapid Response Efforts.

B. Worker Orientation meetings for Employees with Union Officers as applicable

West Central will arrange and provide staff to meet with workers for Worker Orientation. This includes the Employment Service, WIOA Dislocated Worker and Trade Act program if applicable, and any other appropriate resources identified.

West Central Employment Service staff will coordinate with the LEO Rapid Responses on company closings and permanent worker layoff situations. The Rapid Response will include the LEO and the MWA for Dislocated Worker funding.

Following discussion of the specific situation with LEO and the company/workers, additional resources will be made available to allow worker choice in looking at job and training choices. The full range of choices will be made available in a coordinated manner. This includes working with a Joint Adjustment Committee where these are appointed. There may be a Rapid Response meeting and one or more worker orientation meetings with the employees and appropriate agency resources.

Michigan Works! West Central's role in the function of the JAC's will be to assist and facilitate to the extent needed with LEO, the workers and company's establishment of a JAC. Michigan Works! West Central would assist in seeking out candidates to be selected by the workers to staff and facilitate the JAC and to participate as support to answer questions. The JAC is the worker's organization, so all assistance would be to provide information and choices, not to direct or run the JAC.

C. Layoff Aversion

Layoff aversion will be one of the first topics discussed with the employer, to determine if training assistance could be helpful, and likely to avert layoffs. Layoff aversion efforts may involve referral to MEDC and local Economic Development professionals who may be able to assist the employer in seeking alternate products or markets may be provided. Training may also be an option in a pre-layoff situation. Incumbent Worker Training may be used as appropriate.

If training can assist in averting layoffs, an Incumbent Worker application will be initiated. The training may take form of customized training, OJT or a combination of the two. Training may be provided to workers who are at risk of being laid off, or when it impacts on workers who would be laid off. These efforts will be coordinated by Michigan Works! West Central working with the company, and any training providers that may be involved. Michigan Works! West Central will facilitate the application and registration of the workers.

D. Request for State Adjustment Grant

A State Adjustment Grant or SAG may be requested when a major employer has a layoff event, but is more likely to be requested in response to a downturn that affects a number of employers and workers who work or reside in the area. A SAG may be requested when it becomes apparent that current funding is or will soon be obligated and there are continued and significant requests for training from eligible workers.

E. National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG)

Michigan Works! West Central will apply for National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG) funds as necessary. NDWG grant funds are discretionary funds awarded by the Secretary of Labor to serve dislocated workers and other eligible individuals affected by major economic dislocations, emergencies, or disasters. Michigan Works! West Central will work together with the State of Michigan to secure funding when the need arises.

F. Local Policy on Coordinating Workforce Investment Activities with Statewide Rapid Response Activities.

Please see Attachment B, MWWC Rapid Response Policy.