



Networks  
Northwest  
Talent / Business / Community



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# Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Regional and Local Plans

*Northwest Region*

*Program Year 2020 – 2023*

Networks Northwest is a regional organization covering the ten counties of Northwestern Lower Michigan, Region 2, providing programs and services in the areas of Talent, Business, and Community Development. We serve as the region's economic development Collaborative Development Council, the Regional Planning organization, the Michigan Works! Agency, and the state's first Regional Prosperity Board. The Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) represents a significant proportion of the agency's funding and service mix; partner and correlating programs also fall under the Networks Northwest umbrella. It is the goal of the agency to leverage all funding sources for their highest and best use, to achieve efficiencies in administration, while providing the highest quality services to the individuals, employers, and other organizations in the region.

This plan outlines both the regional strategies and the local area operations related to WIOA. Many of these elements are interrelated with multiple other services, provided internally and/or externally. One of the hallmarks of Networks Northwest is collaboration in public-private partnerships. This is certainly the case of implementing WIOA, the process used to develop these strategies, and the future of providing workforce development services.

The mission of Networks Northwest is to build stronger communities and enhance the quality of life in Northwest Michigan by providing a regional framework for effective collaboration among integrated service networks, and by directly providing services related to talent, business, and community development. This dual role of regional leadership and convener of networks at a strategic level, along with frontline operations, makes us uniquely positioned to lead regional conversations and strategy development related to talent.

The Regional and Local Plans for Northwest Michigan's implementation of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, to be implemented between program years 2020 through 2023, have been designed within the framework outlined by the State of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity instruction in Policy Issuance 20-07 change 1.

Of noted significance, late 2019 and early 2020, the COVID-19 novel coronavirus emerged and quickly developed into a global pandemic. The pandemic was the catalyst for Governor Gretchen Whitmer to sign the *Stay Home, Stay Safe* Executive Order (2020-21) on March 23, 2020, which essentially closed businesses and establishments, deeming non-essential (as described in the order), workers to refrain from traveling to their place of employment, and additionally restricted travel for all individuals in the region. That and additional executive orders had a swift and severe impact on the state of the economy and workforce in Region 2. As the pandemic continues, individual, public sector organizations and private sector businesses have experienced increased, new and unexpected barriers that impact significant portions of daily activities and operations. The health crisis is not over yet, and the region will continue to proactively design service delivery models to effectively and efficiently provide services to meet the emerging and anticipated needs of the community.

# Table of Contents

## Regional Plan

Planning Process

Regional Analysis

Workforce Analysis

Population - Updated August 2022

Labor Force Participation

Unemployment - Updated August 2022

Long-term Unemployment

Disability - Updated August 2022

Public Assistance

Education - Updated August 2022

Geographic Factors

In-demand Skills

Skills for In-demand industries and occupations

Employability skills

Computer Literacy

Basic Academic Skills

Occupational Skills - Updated August 2022

Workforce Development Activities - Strengths and Weaknesses

Regional Service Strategies

In-demand Industry Sector Initiatives

Advanced Manufacturing

Agriculture

Energy, Construction and Transportation

Healthcare

Hospitality

[Information and Business Services](#)

[Education and Public Service - Updated August 2022](#)

[Regional Strategies](#)

[Serving the Hardest to Serve](#)

[Employer Engagement](#)

[Career Pathways](#)

[Increasing Awareness of In-demand Occupations](#)

[Increasing Awareness of demand for specific occupations](#)

[Increasing Awareness of career opportunities in the region](#)

[Veterans Services](#)

[Apprenticeship](#)

[Administrative Costs](#)

[Supportive Services](#)

[Networks](#)

[Transportation](#)

[Housing](#)

[Child Care](#)

[Coordination with Economic Development](#)

[Collaborative Development Council](#)

[Business Retention Visits](#)

[Regional Prosperity Board](#)

[Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy](#)

[Performance](#)

## **[Local Plan](#)**

[Regional Analysis](#)

[Labor Market Data and Economic Conditions](#)

[Strategic Vision](#)



[Strategic Priorities](#)

[Strategic Positions](#)

[Alignment of Local Resources and across Core Programs](#)

[Workforce Development System](#)

[Programs](#)

[Self-Directed Services](#)

[Career Services](#)

[Veterans Services](#)

[Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling](#)

[Training Services](#)

[Youth Services](#)

[WIOA In School and Out of School Youth](#)

[Jobs for Michigan's Graduates](#)

[Talent Tours](#)

[Business Services](#)

[Local Coordination](#)

[Access, Career Pathways, and Credentials](#)

[Access to Services](#)

[Career Pathways](#)

[Co-enrollment](#)

[Recognized Credentialing](#)

[Employer Engagement using Sector Initiatives](#)

[Advanced Manufacturing](#)

[Agriculture](#)

[Energy, Transportation and Construction](#)

[Healthcare](#)

[Hospitality](#)

[Information and Business Services](#)

[Coordination](#)

[Coordination with Unemployment Insurance Programs](#)

[Coordination with Economic Development Services](#)

[Economic Development Organizations](#)

[Collaborative Development Council](#)

[Joint Retention Visits](#)

[Entrepreneurial skills](#)

[One-Stop Delivery System](#)

[Continuous Improvement](#)

[Access to American Job Centers - Updated August 2022](#)

[Non-discrimination](#)

[WIOA Required Partners](#)

[Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment & Training Activities](#)

[Career Services, Basic and Individualized](#)

[Training Services](#)

[Youth Services](#)

[Basic Skills Deficiency](#)

[Youth Activities](#)

[Out-of-School Youth](#)

[In-School Youth](#)

[Jobs for Michigan's Graduates](#)

[Northwestern Michigan College \(NMC\) Collaboration](#)

[MiSTEM Collaboration](#)

[Waivers](#)

[Coordination with Education](#)

[Supportive Services](#)

[Coordination with Supportive Services](#)

[Per Participant Funding Cap](#)

[Coordination with Employment Services](#)

[Delivery of Employment Services](#)

[Point of Contact](#)

[Direct Delivery of Services](#)

[Services](#)

[Self-service](#)

[Facilitated Services](#)

[Staff-Assisted Services](#)

[Staffing Levels](#)

[Unemployment Insurance \(UI\) Work Test](#)

[Reemployment Service Eligibility Assessment \(RESEA\)](#)

[Veterans](#)

[Migrant and Seasonal Workers](#)

[Navigators & Barriers to Employment](#)

[Business Resource Network Navigator](#)

[Healthy Michigan Plan Navigators](#)

[Coordination with Adult Education](#)

[Memoranda of Understanding \(MOUs\) and Infrastructure Funding Agreements \(IFAs\)](#)

[Grant Recipient](#)

[Sub-grantee Selection for Title I](#)

[Local Levels of Performance](#)

[High-Performing Board](#)

[Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement](#)

[Allocating Infrastructure Funds](#)

[One-Stop Partner Contributions](#)

[Individual Training Accounts](#)

[Public Comment](#)

[Technology Integration](#)

[Priority of Service](#)

[Coordination of Rapid Response Activities](#)

[Rapid Response](#)

[Endnotes](#)

[Appendix A: Hot Jobs Report](#)

[Appendix B: Local Policy - Supportive Services](#)

[Appendix C: Local Policy - Individual Training Accounts](#)

[Appendix D-1: 14 Youth Elements](#)

[Appendix D-2: Local Policy - Basic Skills Deficient](#)

[Appendix D-3: Local Policy - Youth Requires Additional Assistance](#)

[Appendix E: Adult Education Memorandum of Understanding](#)

[Appendix F: Local Board Mission and Vision](#)

[Appendix G: Local Policy - Michigan Training Connect](#)

[Appendix H: Local Policy on Priority of Service](#)

[Appendix I: Local Policy - Rapid Response](#)

# Regional Plan

*Northwest Region*

*Program Years 2020 - 2023*

## Planning Process

In 2014, Networks Northwest coordinated a robust, comprehensive, and region-wide public input campaign to explore several factors that make a region prosperous and resilient. This effort aligned with Governor Snyder's call for Regional Prosperity Plans, and the result was a series of reports called [Framework for Our Future](#). Each of the reports, along with supplemental documents, focus on 9 key community topics:

- **Growth & Investment**, including a Community Placemaking Guidebook, an inventory of Commercial Corridors, and a seasonal population analysis;
- **Housing**, including inventory of housing stock by county, target market analyses by county, and a guide for employers seeking to provide housing supports to their workforce;
- **Transportation**, including a regional Transportation Improvement Plan, a report of access to non-emergency transportation for health care needs, and a Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning;
- **Arts & Culture**;
- **Recreation**;
- **Natural Resources**;
- **Talent**, including a needs assessment of manufacturing companies in the region, and a report of in-demand occupations;
- **Healthy Communities**;
- **Food & Farming**.

Collectively, these reports comprise the Regional Prosperity Plan for Northwest Michigan. The collaboration necessary to evaluate the relevant data, develop strategies, and identify potential resources for implementation was unprecedented. Dozens of organizations were involved in creating the plans, through stakeholder input and public awareness activities.

Primarily, local partners took part in the planning activities through participation in networks that focus on the topic area. These networks are convened by Networks Northwest, with the exception of Arts & Culture and Food & Farming. However, all networks participated and supported the process.

In order to adequately plan for coordinated and effective WIOA services, the Networks Northwest board served as the network for the Talent topic. Board membership is comprised

of multiple WIOA partner agencies, and includes representation organizations administering all four Titles of the WIOA. Additional membership represents supportive services agencies, local units of government, philanthropic organizations, and in-demand industry sectors. The board's leadership in the region is recognized and respected partially because of its vast membership and robust representation of the communities served.

Public input sessions for purposes of the Regional Prosperity Plan were focused on challenges identified by the board, and potential strategies included in the Board's Strategic Agenda (see the Strategic Vision section in the Local Plan). Members of the public were given a structured opportunity to brainstorm new strategies for solving Talent Development challenges, such as the occupational skills gap, barriers to employment, and talent attraction.

In order to garner input from groups that represent the full scope of the region's population, the following public input mechanisms were used:

- Focus Groups with migrant and seasonal farmworkers, senior citizens, low-income groups, and single parents;
- Online public comment, conversation, and brainstorming;
- Public Input "Expos" held during afternoon and evening hours at accessible locations throughout the region;
- Talent Lunches with local employers.

Networks Northwest partnered with the Traverse Bay Poverty Reduction Initiative to encourage and ensure public participation by individuals living in poverty at any and all public input opportunities. A partnership was also formed with the Disability Network, who facilitated participation by people with disabilities.

These numerous and varied public input opportunities informed both the Regional Prosperity Plan and the WIOA Plan. In addition to the process described above, the Networks Northwest board further explored several aspects of WIOA, especially those that mean change in programming for the region. They held focused conversations on the following priority areas:

- Youth program changes
- Serving the Hardest to Serve
- Employer Engagement
- Industry-Recognized Credentials
- Career Pathways

The Title IV WIOA program provider, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), is represented on the board and also participated in the process. Title II Adult Education is also represented on the board and participated. However, additional engagement was conducted with the MRS

district manager and the Adult Education coordinator to allow for additional WIOA Partner involvement.

The numerous aspects of the processes described above were the groundwork for the WIOA Regional and Local Plans first produced in 2016. The continued and thorough exploration of these issues along with creative collaborative brainstorming, have informed the strategies, program design, and goals of this revised plan for 2020-2023.

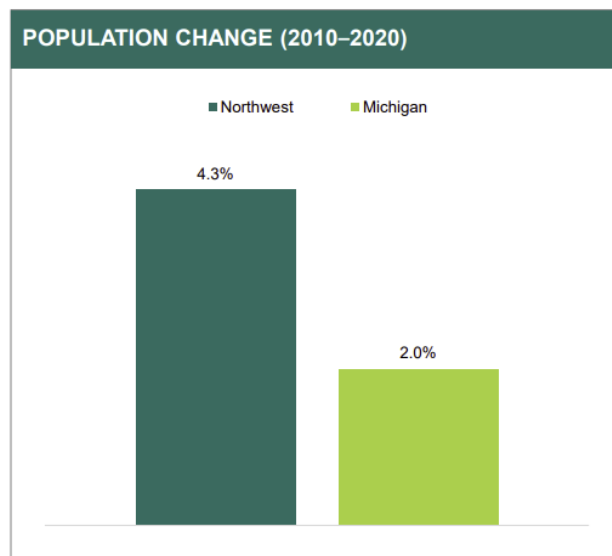
## Regional Analysis

The Northwest Prosperity Region, or Region 2, consists of ten counties, including Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford. Below is an analysis of regional labor market data and economic conditions for the region. This analysis includes existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations, the employment needs of employers in those sectors, as well as labor market data, trends, educational levels, geographic factors, and more.

## Workforce Analysis

### Population - Updated August 2022

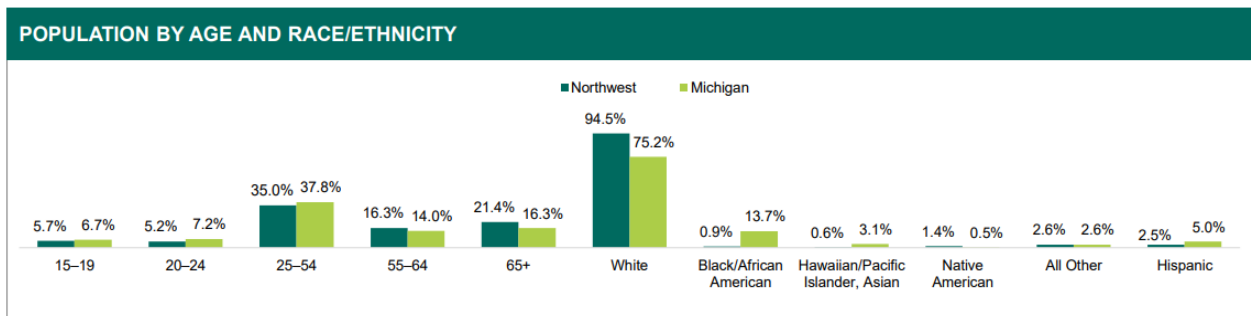
In 2020, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the total population in the Northwest Michigan Prosperity Region was 310,800. This was an overall increase of 4.%, or 12,900, since 2010 when the population was 297,900. Grand Traverse County saw the largest increase in population of any county in the region, growing by 8,300, or 9.5%. From 2010 to 2020, Michigan's population grew by just under 194,000 (2.0%). Over the decade, the population nationwide expanded by 7.4% (or about 22.7 million).



Source: Decennial Census, Annual Population Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

According to the 2020 American Community Survey estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of the Northwest region stands at 308,000, representing a 2,000 increase since 2019. The population has grown in the last five years by over 6,000 people, or more than 2% between 2013 and 2019, a larger increase by percentage than the state overall which gained less than 1% over the same period. Nationwide, the population rose by almost 4%. With the exception of Charlevoix County, each of the ten counties in the Northwest Prosperity Region saw increases in their respective populations. Most of the increase in population for the region occurred in Grand Traverse County, which grew by 3.3%, or 2,989 people. Growth in the region is projected to continue, but at a slower, before peaking at 328,400 in 2039.<sup>1</sup>

The nature of the increases in population is important to note, as it has significant ramifications for the workforce. Although the overall population increased, most of the increase occurred among older workers and those at or beyond retirement age. The region is also home to a larger share of older residents compared to that of the state. Of the total regional population, 39.0 percent were aged 55 or older. This is compared to 31.2% for the entire state. The region’s population continues to age, suggesting the region has a higher demand for services, but fewer workers to meet that demand. Attracting working-age talent should help balance services with demand.



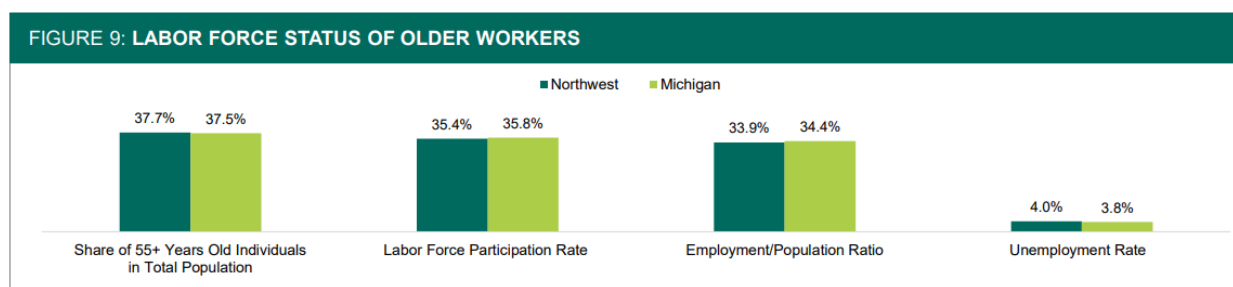
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates



## Labor Force Participation

In Northwest Michigan, the labor force measured 150,400 in 2019, up about 3,800, or 2.6%, from 2013. While the trend is in the positive direction, this number is still significantly lower than it was before the recession<sup>1</sup>. This loss of workforce in the region is one of several reasons that employers are currently struggling to find qualified candidates for their open positions.<sup>2</sup>

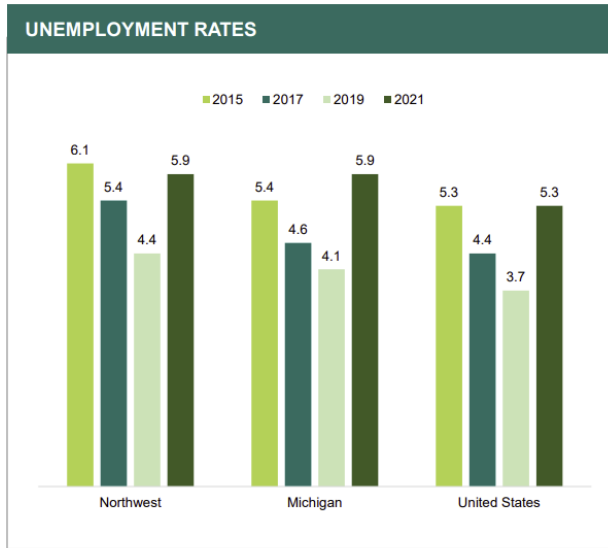
With many workers in the region aged 55 and older, labor force participation rates in this demographic are of particular interest. As of 2018, about 34% of older workers had jobs, nearly matching the statewide share. The jobless rate for older workers in Northwest Michigan was 4 percent from 2014 to 2018, or 0.2 percentage points greater than the state.<sup>1</sup>



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014–2018 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates

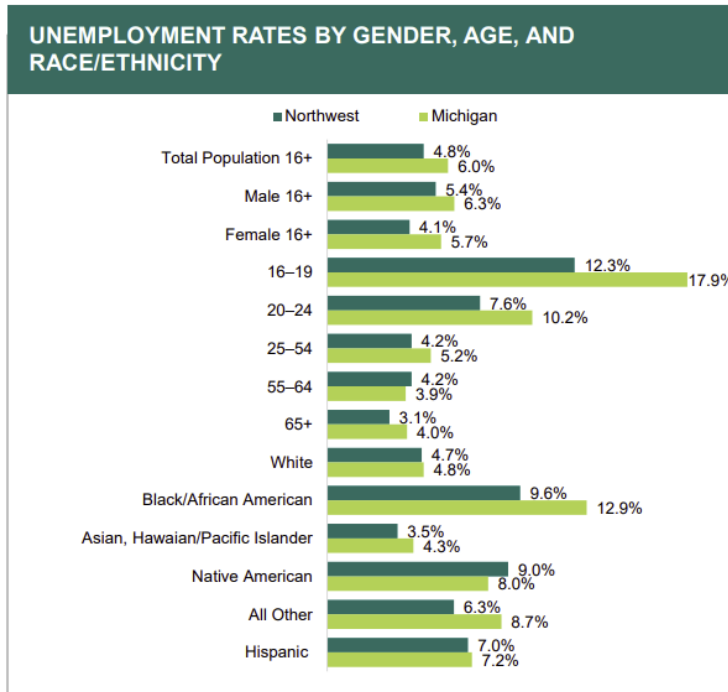
## Unemployment - Updated August 2022

The unemployment rate in the Northwest Prosperity Region has closely followed statewide and national trends. With the COVID19 pandemic, the regional jobless rate in 2021 nearly returned to the 2015 rate. From 2015 to 2019, there was a drop in unemployment by nearly 2,600 individuals in the region. In the two-year period from 2019 to 2021, unemployment increased by just under 1,900.<sup>1</sup>



Source: Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, Michigan Department of Technology, Management & Budget

Regional jobless rates were lower for many demographic groups than the statewide rate. The overall jobless rate of the population 16 years and older in Northwest Michigan was 1.2 points lower than the state rate for the 2016–2020 period. During the same time period, there were more males (78,200) than females (70,900) in the region’s labor force. Females faced a lower unemployment rate than males, however, both were lower than the state jobless rates.<sup>1</sup>



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

Although Michigan’s economy, workforce, and community support structures continue to be significantly impacted by a global pandemic as a result of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus, unemployment rates reflect what is termed as full employment. The Department of Technology, Management and Budget Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives (DTMB-LMI) indicates current unemployment rates (May 2022) for the 10-county region as shown below.

Antrim County	5.5%
Benzie County	4.8%
Charlevoix County	4.5%
Emmet County	5.0%
Grand Traverse County	3.6%
Kalkaska County	5.6%
Leelanau County	3.9%
Manistee County	5.4%
Missaukee County	4.4%
Wexford County	4.5%

The rates above place the average unemployment rate for Region 2 at 4.7%, which is slightly higher than the State of Michigan rate of 4.3% (May 2022), and almost a full percentage point higher than the nation’s rate of 3.6%, according to the DTMB-LMI’s website.

With the region at essentially full employment, employers, education providers, and the vast network of workforce development partners in the region will need to work together to attract and retain new talent.

### Long-term Unemployment

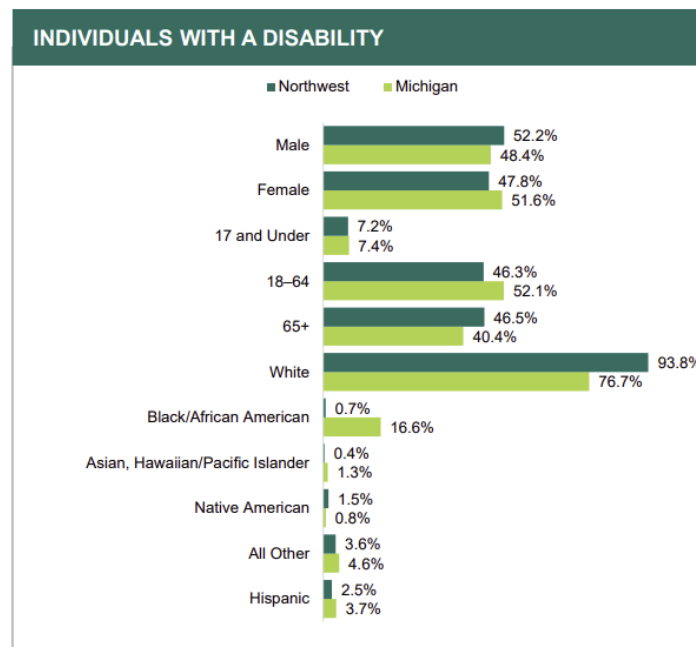
Long-term unemployment measures individuals who have been out of work for at least 27 consecutive weeks. Long-term unemployment causes significant mental and financial stress for individuals and families affected by remaining unemployed for such an extensive period of time, and can indicate labor markets are operating inefficiently. High levels of long-term unemployment can indicate many different aspects of the labor market, including unmet demand for the skills and credentials offered by talent within various occupations or occupation clusters in the region. It can also reflect an overall low demand for talent.

During the 2008 recession, long-term unemployment in the region was high, but according to the DTMB-LMI, recent years have seen a decline. In 2015 and 2017, long-term unemployment for the region was 34% and 21%, respectively<sup>2</sup>. While updated regional long-term unemployment data is not currently available, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has seen the national rate increasing over recent months<sup>3</sup>. We have seen the impact the coronavirus pandemic has had on unemployment, but we will have to wait to see the impact, if any, on

long-term unemployment. Historically, the long-term unemployed rate in Northwest Michigan has exceeded the State of Michigan and most prosperity regions in the State<sup>2</sup>.

### Disability - Updated August 2022

Disability is one of several factors that can lead to poverty and other forms of economic distress. Disability increases with age. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 44,000 people in Northwest Michigan reported a disability during the 2016–2020 period. In contrast to the state, those with a disability in the region were more likely to be male (52.2 percent). Like the population spread, nearly 94% of people with a disability were white.<sup>1</sup>

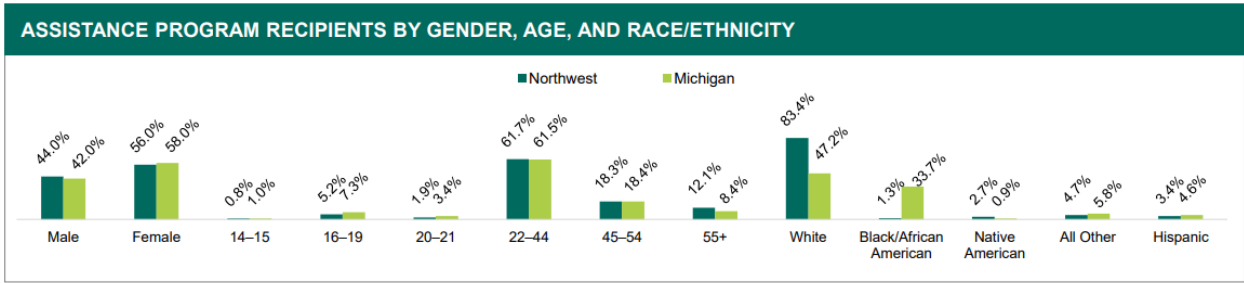


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

This indicates opportunity to provide employment to those with a disability, and to assist employers in filling their open positions.

### Public Assistance

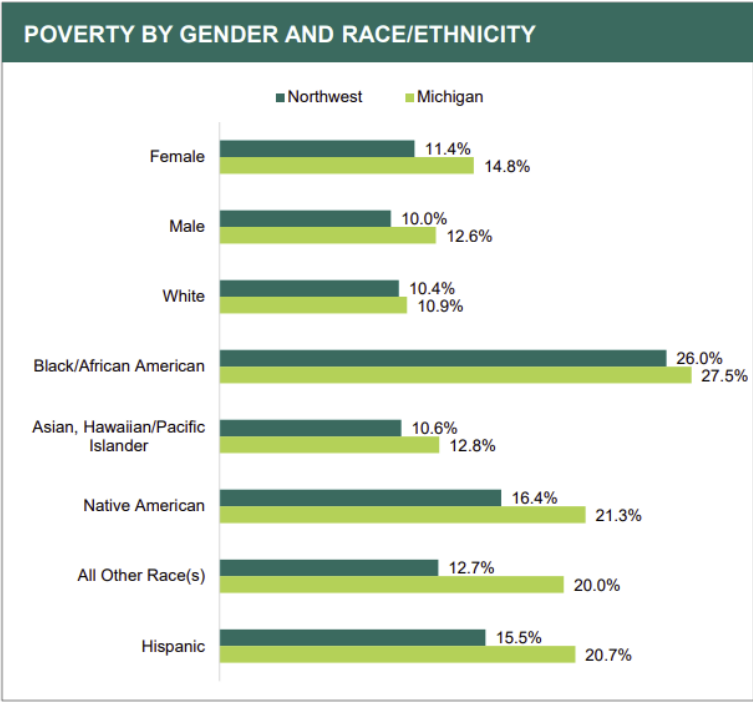
The number of individuals receiving any kind of public assistance during June 2019 was roughly 4,500, a significant decrease of about 50% from 2017<sup>1</sup>. Public assistance includes food assistance, child welfare, utility support, as well as cash assistance. Most program recipients were white and of working age. Females also made up 56% of recipients, but their share was 2 percentage points lower than Michigan’s. The majority of assistance program registrants are in the prime working age of 22 to 44 (about 62%), while approximately 83% of the registrants are White and 1.3% are Black/African American.<sup>1</sup>



Source: Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

### Poverty Rate - Updated August 2022

According to 2016–2020 five-year estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, 10.7 percent (or 32,000) of Northwest Michigan’s population lives below the poverty line. Statewide, 13.7 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. Black/African American individuals have the highest poverty rate in the region at 26.0 percent. For every demographic category, the poverty rate is lower in the region than that of the state.<sup>1</sup>

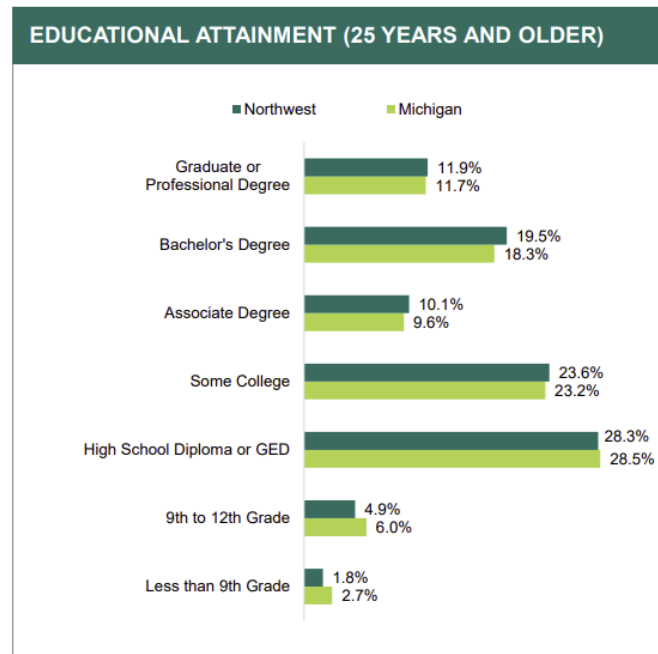


Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

### Education - Updated August 2022

The skills and abilities of the region’s workforce are indicated by several factors, one of which is educational attainment. Educational attainment is based on the number of residents 25 years and older for each level of education. The region slightly outperformed the state in terms of the share with a high school diploma or GED, an associates degree, or a bachelor’s degree. The Northwest region is on trend with state averages regarding attainment of educational

milestones. Northwest Michigan had a smaller share of its population with less than a high school diploma than the Michigan average. <sup>1</sup>



Source: 2016–2020 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau

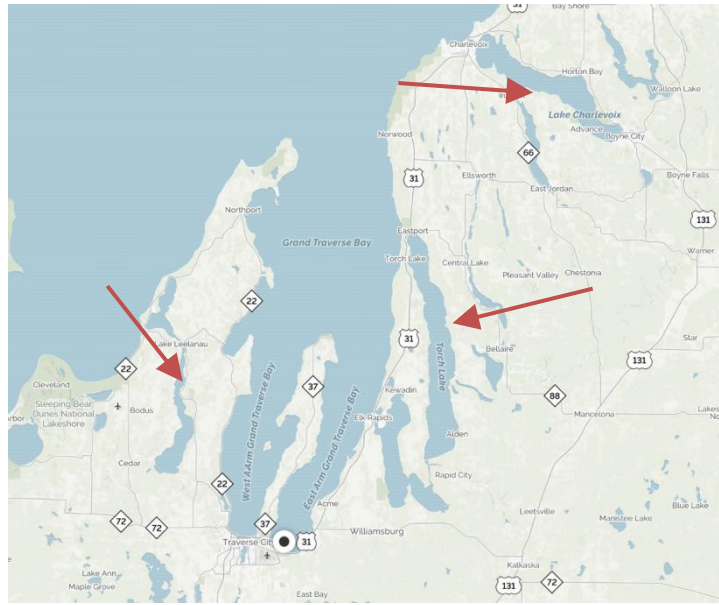
## Geographic Factors

The ten-county region of Northwest Michigan is rural in nature and geographically expansive, totaling more than 4,700 square miles, not including a multitude of inland lakes and rivers. Because it is so large, the local area has divided the region into subregions, as follows:

- **North:** Charlevoix and Emmet Counties;
- **East Central:** Leelanau, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, and Antrim Counties;
- **South:** Wexford and Missaukee Counties; and
- **West:** Benzie and Manistee Counties.

These subdivisions allow for more manageable planning and program delivery. The counties assigned to each subdivision follow the labor shed and commuting patterns for the area.

In addition to the vast size of the region, commuting and transportation in general are complicated by scattered bodies of water. For instance, Lake Charlevoix in Charlevoix county runs Northwest to Southeast across the county, Torch Lake runs North to South in Antrim County, and the North and South arms of Lake Leelanau split part of Leelanau County in two. These numerous bodies of water present significant challenges both for commuters and for companies transporting goods to and from the area. Examples such as these are abundant throughout the region.



## In-demand Skills

Networks Northwest has developed and refined a demand-driven, employer needs-based strategy for design and implementation of all workforce programs. This strategy is based on the premise that meeting employer needs is the most effective way to serve job seekers while still meeting the needs of employers.

Determination of employer needs and demand occupations in the region is a complex and fluid process. It is the responsibility of Networks Northwest administrative staff to ensure that federal and state workforce funding is invested in the most efficient and effective manner.

The Northwest Michigan Workforce Development Board has aligned local priority industry clusters with those identified by the State of Michigan, which include:

- Agriculture
- Construction
- Energy
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing

Hospitality and Education/Public Service have been identified as additional priority industries for the region. The demand occupations within each cluster are created using state labor market information, occupational projections, trends in job postings, and demand from employers identified through local-level relationships. The list of in-demand occupations, organized by cluster, is available through our *Hot Jobs Report* (Appendix A). This serves both

as a means for increasing awareness of in-demand jobs and career options, career pathway exploration, as well as a basis for the approved list of occupations for training.

### Skills for In-demand industries and occupations

Employability skills, computer literacy skills, basic academic skills, and occupational skills are all fundamental for the workforce. In order for workers to move into jobs that are accessible, fulfilling, and pay a wage that can sustain a family, the worker must possess the right combination of necessary skills. However, employers participating in forums and responding to surveys by workforce entities and educational institutions report that many in Northwest Michigan's workforce lack the full suite of skills needed to obtain in-demand jobs.

As workers struggle to find jobs for which they're qualified, employers throughout the region face challenges in finding qualified candidates to fill their open positions. In some cases, they receive applications from job seekers who do not have the skills necessary for the job; in other cases, they receive no applications at all. This dynamic reflects what is often termed a 'skills gap, which refers to the discrepancy between the specific skills that employers need to fill open positions and the skills that are currently held by the workforce. The severity of a skills gap can vary based on industry or occupation, by region, and by employer needs and expectations. While it is virtually impossible to completely eliminate a skills gap in any region, workforce planning attempts to minimize its impact by attracting and training talent that can meet the needs of the region's employers.

### Employability skills

Employability skills are those that are applicable to every job, in every community. They include skills like:

- Communication
- Teamwork
- Reliability
- Problem-solving
- Organizing & Planning
- Timeliness
- Initiative
- Self-management

While employability skills are often referred to as "soft skills," they should not be seen as insignificant. These abilities are often first on the list when employers are asked what they look for in hiring new employees. Lack of employability skills is one of the most common reasons for termination and can also contribute to employee retention issues. While the general perception is that lack of employability skills is a problem of 'the youth', employers report the need across most working-age demographics. Of interest is the perception, at least, that older



workers, veterans, and many in the disability community struggle less with employability skills than do other populations.

### *Computer Literacy*

In today's economy, almost every job requires use of computers and technology to be successful. In fact, the ability to perform basic computer operations is even necessary prior to beginning employment; more employers are finding value in using online systems for job postings, job applications, and screening tools. Individuals with low levels of computer literacy are at an instant disadvantage when it comes to applying for and performing on a job. An individual's technology literacy can be dependent upon access to technology-related equipment—whether a personal computer, smart phone, or other devices. Regular use of technology is necessary in order to learn its various applications, and to prepare a job seeker for using it on the job. When access to technology is limited (often due to poverty), a “digital divide” occurs; those living in poverty are less likely to succeed in today's job market, due in part to limited technological skills and abilities. School systems across the region are attempting to bridge this divide by integrating computers and tablets into the classroom by providing iPads or laptops/netbooks to students. Google Classroom helps prepare many students for the world of work. However, school systems in affluent communities are better positioned to provide this additional equipment and experience to their students than those in poverty-prone areas.

Another factor influencing digital literacy is the availability, or lack thereof, of broadband infrastructure. High speed internet is essential to using technology and learning its applications in the workplace. This infrastructure is available in many areas of the region, but is most common in densely populated areas. Broadband is available in all of the region's growth and investment areas; however, fiber— which provides ultra-high Internet speeds—is only available in a handful of communities, and many parts of the region, particularly rural areas, still depend on dial-up or costly satellite-based access to the Internet, which is not always reliable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for all individuals in a region to have access to all aspects of technology- including hardware, software, and reliable internet access. Whether employees, citizens, or students, individuals without these technological resources quickly found themselves at a disadvantage as stay-at-home orders were implemented, and schools and employers were forced to find creative solutions to assist with access to work and learning. While internet service providers attempted to bridge the gap for those without internet service by offering internet service at no charge, in some areas the infrastructure does not exist to support such services. Progress made in this arena will have positive impacts on individuals and communities lacking this critical infrastructure.

### *Basic Academic Skills*

As with most systems integrated into the western culture of the 21st century, the employment system continues to change. Jobs of all types require more occupational training, higher levels of math, and stronger language and communication skills. Poor math skills, in particular, present obstacles to employment for many workers who are laid off from jobs that become obsolete, and now lack the math skills necessary to compete in today's job market. Their use of math on previous jobs was minimal or non-existent; but now, in order to retrain for in-demand positions, these workers need to re-learn math from a very basic level, either through university programs, Adult Education, or non-credit courses at postsecondary institutions.

For those working toward a degree, postsecondary institutions report increasing enrollments in remedial classes. While these high school-level, non-credit classes rarely count toward a degree program, they still require the student to pay tuition and fees, and can quickly use up the limited time and financial resources and assistance available. However, these skills are absolutely necessary for students who are not prepared for college-level academics.

For adult workers who need remediation in basic academic skills, Adult Education programs provide free access to basic academic learning, both in preparation for a High School Equivalency Certificate and preparing to transition to postsecondary training. However, Adult Education has historically seen significant decreases in public funding. State aid for adult education funding in Michigan decreased from \$80 million in 2004 to \$20 million in 2014. In recent years the funding has started to increase, but not to the levels needed to meet the demand and needs of programs. Again, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted funding across most state and federal programs, and Adult Education is preparing for a season of decreased funding.

Less funding typically results in a corresponding decrease in availability of services, including closure of facilities and limited access points. There are gaps in the region where customers of adult education services must travel long distances—sometimes an hour one-way—to attend the program. Distance learning models of service delivery have been established in an effort to eliminate this issue; however, these students often don't have access to computers at home or may have limited access to high speed internet, or are not comfortable or successful with distance learning methods. Our program has worked to alleviate these barriers through the purchase of *Chromebooks* and internet access jet packs that can be checked out at each lab. Students must check in with the teacher weekly to ensure positive instructional services and promote academic progress.

### *Occupational Skills - Updated August 2022*

Occupational Skills are those skills that are specific to a given occupation. For instance, a Certified Nurse Aide must be able to take vital signs; welders need a certain competency level in using a welding torch; and software developers must master various coding languages. A

skills gap can occur for these occupational skills when training is not available; when training is available but students do not participate in the programs or do not possess the basic academic skills to succeed in the programs; or when the community is unaware of the demand for the occupation.

Local employers have expressed a need for skills and certificates in their respective industries. The list below is a small sample of needs described by employers:

**Advanced Manufacturing:** Process improvement/Lean, safety, 3D Printing, machine setup and operation, blueprint reading, welding, robotics, hydraulics, and design.

**Agriculture:** Knowledge of seasonal crops for the region, food safety, Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Handling Practices (GHP), harvesting, processing, packaging, logistics, and unmanned aerial vehicles.

**Automotive, Construction and Transportation:** Site safety including OSHA-10, measuring, cutting, framework, carpentry, HVAC, electrical, energy efficiency, CDL, and CDL endorsements including Hazmat.

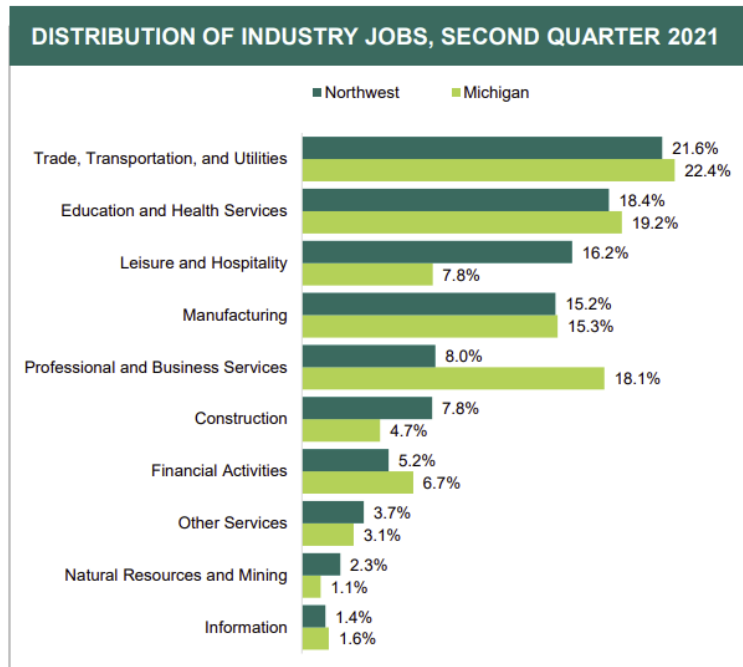
**Healthcare:** Certified Nurse Aide (CNA), first aid, vital signs, medical terminology, medical billing, Registered Nurse (RN), RN specializations including pediatric and cardiac care, surgical technology, dementia care, and home health.

**Hospitality:** Customer service, ServSafe, TIPS, phone etiquette, food prep, restaurant management, culinary chef, landscaping, gaming dealers, and hotel management.

**Information and Business Services:** Sales, supervisor/management, software development, computer programming including, network administration including Cisco, marketing, and insurance.

**Education and Public Service:** security training, early childhood education, secondary and postsecondary education, counseling, communication, technology.

Over the past several years, the Northwest Lower Michigan region has enjoyed solid increases in jobs across almost every industry, with the Trade, Transportation, and Utilities, Education and Health Services, and Leisure and Hospitality industries comprising almost 60% of the region's growth. Manufacturing and Professional/Business Services also saw modest growth rates.<sup>1</sup>



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, Michigan Department of Technology, Management & Budget

The demand driven system in Northwest Michigan is not unlike other prosperity regions, in that a significant shortage of available talent needed to fill jobs continues to exist. There are several reasons for this, some of which may include:

- Lack of individuals willing and available to fill low-wage, entry-level, low-skilled positions exists;
- Job seekers looking for work have their choice of a multitude of job openings to meet their needs, leaving mid- to high-skilled jobs unfilled;
- With the region in a rapid upswing of an economic recovery from the 2008-2010 downturn (outside of the pandemic), the rate of business growth is higher than the rate than the system's ability to train unskilled workers or identify workers willing to transition from one industry to another;
- Some occupations, especially those in the advanced manufacturing industry, are still attempting to overcome a stigma that work environments in those industries are unsanitary, low-skilled, and have very little opportunity for advancement;
- Workers who have previously held jobs in the manufacturing industry who lost those jobs during the relatively recent economic downturn are unwilling to return to that industry. This is unfortunate because the advanced manufacturing industry in Northwest Lower Michigan has more than bounced back from the downturn, and employers are often willing to pay high wages to fill much-needed positions;
- Workers who are willing to transition from one industry to another, or return to an industry for an occupation for which they are at least partially skilled, find that their current skill levels are inadequate, as many industries have quickly embraced rapidly advancing technology, requiring even semi-skilled workers to receive some training in order to meet employer needs.

Northwest Michigan Works! continues to address these barriers to employment by working with Networks Northwest, Economic Development Organizations, employers, and other community organizations and stakeholders to explore these issues and collaborate to solve them. Potential strategies include:

- Conduct in-depth study to further define barriers to employment;
- Provide outreach to the community and other stakeholders to market in-demand jobs and short-term training opportunities;
- Develop robust career pathway information in the region;
- Continue to work to resolve the region’s affordable housing and child care issues;
- Continue to partner with employers, labor, and other partners to develop pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunities throughout the region, especially to fill the traditional professional trades occupations;
- Identify non-traditional occupations to which Registered Apprenticeship opportunities may assist with meeting training needs for unique occupations.

### Workforce Development Activities - Strengths and Weaknesses

Workforce Development includes a wide variety of activities designed and implemented with the expressed purpose to contribute to economic development and overall community viability and strength through a focus on employment and education. The Northwest region believes we are stronger together, and intuitively reaches out to partners to bring their unique strengths and perspectives to solve problems and advance the region as a whole. With relatively scarce resources overall, partners in the region have found a natural collaborative rhythm as we work together to meet the needs of the region.

The Northwest region is strong in the following areas:

Strength	Evidence
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Active Career &amp; Educational Advisory Council (CEAC)</li> <li>● Multiple collaborative initiatives and activities, Career Fairs, the Adult Career Training (ACT) program, and the Skills Up North (SUN) program</li> <li>● Regional Prosperity Board</li> <li>● Sub-regional Retention Visits</li> <li>● Gong Pro Training Fund grants in collaboration with multiple companies, New Jobs Training Program, Michigan Economic Development Corporation, and local economic development organizations</li> <li>● Collaborative development of the <a href="#">Regional Prosperity Plan</a></li> <li>● Development of Business Resource Networks</li> <li>● Development of MiCareer Quest</li> <li>● Strong partnerships with secondary and post-secondary educational providers</li> <li>● Job Fairs across MWA regions</li> <li>● Shared Career Advisor and collaborative agreement with the Northwest Lower Michigan MiSTEM Region</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared Career Advisor and collaborative agreement with Northwestern Michigan College</li> <li>• Participation on regional EDO Talent Development Committee</li> <li>• Chair of Veterans Community Action Team's Employment subcommittee</li> <li>• Participation in the Steering Team for the Community Health Innovation Region</li> <li>• Collaboration with 2 other MWAs in application for a US DOL grant targeted to address the opioid crisis</li> </ul>
Employer Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer Forums</li> <li>• Just-in-Time Trainings</li> <li>• Retention Visits</li> <li>• Multiple successful hiring events, including virtual events</li> <li>• Business Services Team assigned to employer relationship management; all are Certified Business Solutions Professionals</li> <li>• Sector Initiatives</li> <li>• Works closely with Regional Economic Development Organizations</li> <li>• Strong partner in industry-led collaboratives like the Grand Traverse Manufacturing Council and the Home Builders Association</li> <li>• Active and successful Business Resource Networks</li> <li>• Active as the region's USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Sponsor</li> <li>• Global Trade Alliance</li> <li>• Employer of the Day</li> <li>• Employer participation in Career Connection workshops</li> </ul>
Performance	The region has always met or exceeded all WIA and WIOA performance measures, and actively monitors expected WIOA performance requirements for the region.
Career and Technical Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant enrollments; 40% of students in the Wexford-Missaukee ISD</li> <li>• Waiting lists for numerous programs</li> <li>• Responsive to employer needs</li> <li>• Active in the Career &amp; Educational Advisory Council (CEAC)</li> <li>• Offer summer camps for middle school students through the Newton's Road program</li> <li>• Promotion of US DOL Registered Apprenticeships throughout the region</li> <li>• Promotion of Educational Development Plans for the region's 3 Intermediate School Districts</li> <li>• Shared Youth Career Advisor positions in the ISDs</li> <li>• Shared Career Advisor position at Northwestern Michigan College</li> <li>• Jobs for Michigan's Graduates In School and Out of School programs</li> </ul>
Training for Business and Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All post-secondary institutions offer customized training services for business customers</li> <li>• New Jobs Training Program is administered by a local community college</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>with strong relationships across the system</li> <li>• Highly successful Going Pro Training Fund activities</li> <li>• Successful development of US DOL Registered Apprenticeships</li> <li>• Retention Workshops</li> </ul>
Use of Data and Labor Market Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Networks Northwest is known as the regional resource for data regarding in-demand industries and occupations</li> <li>• <a href="#">Hot Jobs Report</a> and <a href="#">Framework for Talent</a> in Northwest Michigan</li> <li>• Implementation and ongoing development of innovative <a href="#">Benchmarks Northwest</a> website</li> </ul>

The weaknesses of the region’s response to employer needs are opportunities for improvement and growth. All stakeholders involved in providing workforce-related services are needed to assist in meeting these challenges. Many of the weaknesses identified here are addressed in the Regional Strategies as well as the Workforce Development Board’s Strategic Vision.

- The community’s lack of awareness about in-demand occupations and the skills needed to obtain them.
- Dwindling resources to support employment and training.
- Limited use of work-based learning programs, such as apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships.
- Residual misperceptions about the public workforce system, although this has improved significantly in recent years (misperceptions include the belief that Michigan Works is the Unemployment office, that we only work with low-skilled individuals, and that job postings are only for entry-level positions).
- Training for soft skills is limited.
- Employers’ are unaware of the “hidden” talent pool – individuals with disabilities.

The region’s capacity to provide the workforce development activities necessary to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, is only limited by financial resources. All other necessary elements are in place, offering a system of services that support completion of programs, placement into positions, and job retention. Current financial resources of the workforce development system are insufficient to meet employers’ current hiring needs, both in terms of recruitment assistance and training. However, financial assistance for training programs may be leveraged with other programs, such as the New Jobs Training Program, Going Pro Training Fund, federal financial aid, local scholarship programs, and more. Additional grant funding is pursued from a variety of sources to support training needs.

## Regional Service Strategies

See the [Workforce Development System](#) section of the Local Plan for a description of local workforce development activities in the region, including available education and training opportunities. Unless otherwise indicated, the term “program staff” refers to frontline services providers for all four core WIOA titles.

## In-demand Industry Sector Initiatives

Sector-based initiatives can vary from fully formed councils, with governance structure, staff support, and strategic plans, to as-needed, pop-up activities that may be temporary in nature. The Northwest region’s utilization of sector initiatives varies and continues to evolve, but leans more toward a less-structured, demand-driven response to employer needs. However, the program development, planning, and delivery of workforce development services are organized around the framework of industry clusters.

Networks Northwest was an early adopter of the sector approach. We created and maintained several Regional Skills Alliances, including Healthcare, Agriculture, Entrepreneurship, Hospitality, and Advanced Manufacturing. These alliances provided a network of employers in each specific industry, worked with educational partners to develop new training programs designed to meet employers needs, and offered training funds to create a skilled workforce. Due to the profound success realized by these alliances, we incorporated this approach into general workforce programming, ultimately disbanding the formal alliances. We now align all efforts around the region’s in-demand industry sectors. Here are a few examples of how we do business:

- All training, including employer-based (OJTs, Incumbent Worker, Customized), must fall into one of the in-demand industry sectors;
- Classroom training funds are directed to in-demand industry sectors with the most need;
- Our *Hot Jobs Report*, which identifies in-demand occupations within the in-demand industry sectors is updated regularly with a combination of input from available labor market information, job postings, and employer input;
- Every in-demand sector in the region is represented on the Regional Prosperity Board;
- Employer Forums are convened by industry sector to gather input from employers and support their workforce-related needs.

Historically, we have seen industry-based groups form or revitalize with employers taking the lead, due to the recognition that working collaboratively helps everyone. Northwest Michigan Works! staff take active roles with these industry associations, and will continue to work collaboratively to ensure alignment with the needs of each sector.



Strategies for continuing and building upon our use of the sector approach incorporate many of the Michigan Industry Cluster Alliance tenets. We plan to implement the following strategies:

- Assist employers with access to Labor Market Information, including increasing understanding and possible uses of such information;
- Assess each industry cluster, identifying those sectors and subsectors that lack a formal network of employers, and facilitating the development of a collaborative body of employers; ensure all such collaborative bodies are well-represented throughout the region;
- Facilitate closer connections between employers and educators for the purpose of updating curriculum;
- Provide a mechanism for regional career awareness campaigns by industry;
- Increase training of specific occupations most in-demand for specific industry sectors;
- Improve our system's understanding of the overall needs of the industry, in addition to talent needs.

Use of the strategies listed above will vary by industry, and will depend on factors related to projected growth of occupations within the sector, earnings potential for job seekers, and long-term employment options. It is anticipated that training, while available via Individual Training Accounts based on customer choice, will be targeted towards the industry sectors with the highest earning potential combined with efficient and advanced credentialing options in the following industries: Advanced Manufacturing; Energy, Construction and Transportation; Healthcare; and Information and Business Services. Technology has been identified as an emerging industry section. Support for occupations that are affected by seasonality and are lower in wage will focus on marketing those careers on a regional basis.

See the [Employer Engagement through Sector Initiatives](#) section of the Local Plan for specific activities occurring in the Northwest region.

Below are descriptions of the multiple factors that influence the economic vitality of the in-demand industry sectors, including projected jobs, anecdotal information from local businesses, and regionally-specific influences.

### Advanced Manufacturing

In recent years, a combination of factors has contributed to the emergence of a nationwide manufacturing-specific skills gap that continues to impact Northwest Michigan. Ten to twenty years ago, many manufacturing companies went out of business when contracts for automotive manufacturing were transferred to foreign competitors. Dislocated workers and their families experienced traumatic times, losing their financial security and domestic stability. Entire communities were impacted; due to the loss of these base jobs, other non-manufacturing businesses were forced to close, such as restaurants and retail stores.

Manufacturing is now making a comeback and is more technologically complex and sophisticated than ever before. The companies that diversified, invested in new technology, and pursued global customers are now thriving. However, the perception that manufacturing jobs are unstable and the memory of the trauma to our communities still lingers; many students and job seekers are not interested in pursuing training in manufacturing fields. Career tech and post-secondary programs have responded by offering early and middle college programs as well as dual enrollment options to increase training and foster increased interest in these in-demand occupations. Meanwhile, many workers who were dislocated due to economic downturns and shifts within the industry do not have the more advanced skills required to move into these new high tech manufacturing positions. These skills include knowledge of and competence in processes, machinery, materials, tools, and even programming.

With advanced manufacturing jobs on the rise, many opportunities are available to job seekers looking for non-seasonal, full-time positions, with a sustainable wage. Manufacturing jobs often pay more than jobs in other industries.

Industry	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
31-33 Manufacturing <sup>4</sup>	15,580	15,590	10	0.1%

While the manufacturing industry has seen rapid growth over the past decade, industry growth now appears to be leveling off. The manufacturing industry currently employs almost 16,000 individuals at more than 500 businesses in Northwest Michigan. The vast majority of manufacturing jobs in the region are located in Grand Traverse, Wexford, Emmet, and Charlevoix counties, which are also home to population centers in the region. Northwest Michigan manufacturing businesses serve a variety of industries. There is still a large supplier relationship to the automotive industry, but manufacturers in the region also produce components and goods for the food service, medical, and energy sectors. The top manufacturing sectors (comprising 2/3 of all manufacturing employment in the region) include:

- Food (including beverage and fruit processing)
- Plastics, Rubber, and Paper Products
- Fabricated Metal
- Machinery
- Transportation Equipment (including aerospace and boats, as well as car parts)

As growth in the manufacturing industry begins to slow, a similar slowdown is expected in occupations across the industry, although entry-level operator/productions jobs are expected to see some growth. Likely the industry is experiencing a lull as employers allow for available

talent to gain skills to meet current needs, an echo of what we consistently hear from local employers.

## Agriculture

Most farms in Northwest Michigan are operated as small family farms that face additional economic pressure as the size and scale of farming operations continue to increase. To remain competitive in the face of financial pressures created by statewide, national, and global food policy, many small farms are diversifying, looking for new markets, or adding value to their products through on-site processing. Although Northwest Michigan is still the “Cherry Capital,” there is a growth of startup agriculture businesses in winemaking, distilleries, hops, raw juices, cheese, jams, and more. However, the skill sets needed for managing this business growth are lacking among the farm owners and managers. Additionally, farm and value added processing equipment is increasingly high tech, requiring specialized skills to operate.

Agriculture is a growing industry in Northwest Michigan, which includes crop and animal production, as well as timber operations. There is also a large sector of food and animal processing micro-businesses that are considered manufacturers, but which are symbiotic to the growth in agriculture, as those businesses rely on regionally-grown products and provide revenue and jobs for farmers.

Industry	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
11 Crop and Animal Production <sup>4</sup>	3,080	3,460	380	12.3%

In the past decade, the agriculture sector in Northwest Michigan has continued to see strong growth, able to support almost 3,500 jobs in the region. The majority of the increase comes from jobs in animal production (almost 300). Individuals in the region, both locals and visitors, continue to express demand for locally produced food and food products, which may contribute to the increase in jobs to support the industry.

The industry is also experiencing shifts in its workforce. As significant numbers of farmers prepare to retire without passing farms on to heirs, new farmers face high start-up costs that create barriers to establishing themselves in agriculture. Without new farmers to replace those retiring, significant acreages of farmland and valuable skill sets are endangered.

Many farms in Northwest Michigan depend on a skilled migrant workforce. However, immigration-related issues are having impacts on farms and workers throughout the region. Farmers report difficulties in finding workers with the appropriate skills, which threatens their ability to grow labor-intensive crops.

Growth in the agriculture industry supports job growth over all occupation clusters. Occupation clusters expected to see the most significant growth (almost 25%) include Farmworkers in both animal and crop production.<sup>4</sup>

A surge in interest in locally grown, produced, and environmentally friendly products supports continued growth in the local agriculture industry. Farmer’s markets are popular in many communities, another demonstration of the ties between industries, in this case between tourism and agriculture.

### Energy, Construction and Transportation

This sector is a blending of traditionally clustered industries, considering the connections and impacts that each has on the other. With a high school diploma/GED and short-term training or an apprenticeship, there are great opportunities to learn a trade and make excellent wages. Many of the occupations in these industries require similar skill sets, so there is also an opportunity to move between the sectors for additional career mobility.

Industry	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
23 Construction <sup>4</sup>	6,300	7,210	910	14.4%

The region’s construction industry was hit hard by the 2008 recession; many companies went out of business and the skilled workforce left the area. As the economy continues to recover, we see a significant increase in construction projects, both commercial and residential, especially in the region’s population center of Traverse City. However, construction companies are among the most desperate to find skilled workers, because of the high level of skills needed and the extremely fast growth of their projects. With modest growth estimated at approximately 15%, local employers are limited by the region’s availability of skilled workers. Growth is expected to begin at the entry level, mostly as Construction Laborers, but also as skilled Carpenters.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Contractors with specialized skills, like roofers, masons, construction equipment operators, electricians, plumbers, and HVAC technicians, anticipate robust growth.<sup>4</sup> As more workers enter the construction industry and move through various career pathways, the rate of growth is expected to increase.

Industry	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
48-49 Transportation and Warehousing <sup>4</sup>	2,510	2,630	120	4.8%

Transportation of goods and materials continues to grow as the economy improves. In the 2nd quarter of 2019, trade, transportation, and utilities was the region’s largest private industry,

employing about one in five workers. This was similar to the statewide share.<sup>1</sup> This industry is especially important to Northern Michigan because of our geographic location: products made here that will be sold elsewhere are typically transported by truck, although some rail infrastructure exists and some industries take advantage of air transport. The region’s current infrastructure is primarily supported by trucks, causing a substantial demand for Heavy and Tractor-trailer Truck Drivers and Light Truck or Delivery Services Drivers<sup>4</sup>. With competitive wages offered, an increasing number of job seekers are seeking training and employment opportunities related to truck driving.

Industry	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
Energy <sup>5</sup>	1,170	1,140	-30	5%

Growth in the energy industry, encompassing the natural gas, electric and alternative power generation in the region, has stalled, although demand for jobs in the energy industry supports over 1,000 jobs region-wide. Employers in the industry are already expressing a lack of talent, and the energy industry is poised to become one of the region’s leading hot jobs. This is especially significant considering the strong link between the energy industry and the expected high-growth construction industry.

With the region’s talent moving toward high-wage, well-marketed, in-demand occupations like Electrical Power-line installers and Repairers; demand for the occupation remains. Other occupations within the industry have seen slow-downs, especially those related to raw material extraction/generation used by the oil industry. The energy industry tends to move forward cautiously, reacting to fluctuating federal and state regulatory requirements.

## Healthcare

The Healthcare sector continues to grow, and offers a wide variety of jobs, from entry level to highly specialized. Career pathways in this sector are promising, as skill sets transfer from one occupation to another, with multiple stepping stones available. The region supports the Munson Healthcare system, based in Traverse City and is comprised of nine hospitals throughout Northern Michigan. Between its hospitals and partners, the healthcare entity employs close to 10,000 employees, including 1,000 physicians, according to their website. In addition to Munson Healthcare, McLaren Northern Michigan Hospital operates out of Petoskey (Emmet County) and employs over 200 physicians and additional staff. Together Munson Healthcare and McLaren Northern Michigan Hospital form the hub for healthcare-related occupations in the region, supporting a multitude of other occupations, both healthcare and non-healthcare, throughout the 10-counties. Long-term projections anticipate continued and significant growth in the healthcare industry, a demand likely driven in part by the characteristics of an older population.

Industry <sup>4</sup>	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
621 Ambulatory Health Care Services	6,560	8,030	1,470	22.4%
622 Hospitals	7,560	8,040	480	6.3%
623 Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	2,275	2,707	432	19%

Home Health is a subset of the industry that faces particular complications in recruiting for open positions. Home Health Aides are entry-level workers, and there is no standard training or credential for the occupation. However, these workers are expected to perform at a higher level than their classification would indicate; they must perform their duties in an unsupervised setting, in the home of patients. This situation calls for the ability to think on your feet and make judgment calls on the spot, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and high levels of professionalism. In our geographically vast region, workers often must travel great distances to get to their worksites, requiring travel reimbursement costs. Because home health services are often funded by Medicare, companies are limited in the pay scale they can offer due to the regulatory cap on reimbursements. All of these factors present barriers and higher levels of complexity for home health agencies' attempts to recruit qualified workers.

Certified Nurse Aide is another difficult position to fill, although it offers a standard training and industry-recognized credentials. Also, the location of the work is typically fixed, such as at a hospital or nursing home. This provides some stability for the workers. Unfortunately, entry into the position usually begins with on-call/part-time status, no guarantees of regular hours, and is usually the night shift - a position difficult for families with children to tolerate. Although most companies recruit heavily by emphasizing the flexibility of the position, career pathways opportunities, and paid training, job seekers are reluctant to begin a new career if they are unsure they will be able to support their families once they start working. This again makes for difficulties in recruitment.

Local employers have seen Home Health and Certified Nurse Aide as potential entry points on the healthcare career pathway.

The current need for registered nurses continues to grow and is projected to increase by over 12% in the next 10 years. The job postings we see in our region often include specializations, such as operating room, neonatal, and cardiac. So there is a need not only for more graduates of Registered Nursing programs, but also training in specialized skill sets.

Occupation <sup>4</sup>	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
Registered Nurses 29-1141	3,005	3,375	370	12.3%
Medical Assistants 31-9092	745	910	165	22.1%
Home Health Aides 31-1011	585	805	220	37.6%
Personal Care Aides 39-9021	1,575	2,045	470	29.8%

## Hospitality

The Northwest region is well-known for its hospitality and tourism economy. Cities such as Petoskey, Traverse City, and Manistee attract hundreds of thousands of visitors per year, especially in the summer. Smaller towns and villages offer year round recreational options, such as boating and kayaking, hunting and fishing, snowmobiling, and scenic trails.

Leisure and hospitality employed nearly 18% of workers in Northwest Michigan in the 2nd quarter of 2019, reflecting the heavy influence of tourism in the region. This was just over 6 percentage points greater than Michigan.<sup>1</sup> The retail industry is also expected to grow at a rate of almost 2.5%. Linked by the region's ability to draw on tourism, Leisure and Hospitality, along with Retail, have a high impact on the region's economy.

Industry <sup>4</sup>	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
44 & 45 Retail & Trade	16,720	17,120	400	2.4%
72 Accommodation and Food Services	16,010	16,870	860	5.4%

Hospitality employs over 32,000 individuals in the region in retail, food service, accommodations, and recreation businesses. Most of the jobs are in food service and retail, and these jobs are expected to continue to grow, adding almost 1,500 new jobs across the 10-county region through 2026.

The shortage of workers willing to fill occupations in the hospitality industry has deepened over the last few years. Hospitality employers are desperate for workers. Although hospitality

jobs are numerous, they are typically seasonal and wages can be low compared to the cost of living. We are beginning to see employers in this industry increase starting wages in order to attract workers, with some offering signing bonuses as an added incentive.

Occupation <sup>4</sup>	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
Food preparation and serving workers 35-0000	13,285	14,330	1,045	8%
Cashiers 41-2011	4,135	4,075	-60	-0.1%
Retails Salespersons 41-2031	5,215	5,415	200	4%

### Information and Business Services

This industry cluster includes businesses that provide services to other businesses and to individuals, such as accounting, legal, information systems, communications, waste management and insurance. The sector employs almost 12,000 individuals.<sup>4</sup> This industry is linked to growth in all other industries, which is expected. As the industries in this sector continue to grow, numerous job opportunities will be available, ranging from entry level with minimal training to a Bachelor’s Degree or higher. The majority of jobs in this sector belong to professional office workers.

Industry <sup>4</sup>	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
52 Finance and Insurance	3,440	3,580	140	4.1%
54 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3,200	3,240	40	1.2%
56 Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	4,740	5,030	290	6.1%

Employers in the Information Technology industry are especially concerned about the lack of trained software developers and other computer programmers. The “brain drain” appears to be a significant contributing factor to this issue, because traditional college students leave the



area and do not return upon completion of their education. In addition, completions at post-secondary institutions in the region are low, partly because the need is so high that students are recruited before finishing their degree. This trend to hire workers prior to completing their degree is beginning to be seen across multiple industries and occupations, especially those in technology-related occupations.

Occupation <sup>4</sup>	2016 Jobs	2026 Jobs	Numeric Change	% Change
Insurance Sales Agents 41-3021	430	475	45	10.5%
Customer Service Representatives 43- 4051	1,750	1,790	40	2.3%
Accountants and Auditors 13-2011	785	835	50	6.4%

### Education and Public Service - Updated August 2022

The newly identified in-demand sector includes occupations that provide necessary services to the community. Occupations providing education, social services, security and emergency services like teachers, social workers, law enforcement, corrections officers, and firefighters are included in this sector. The community has always needed these occupations, but the labor shortage has impacted the ability to meet the demand for these types of jobs. By recognizing this level of demand, the Board can directly address training and employment placement into these types of occupations.

### Regional Strategies

The following were developed by the local board through the process described above.

#### Serving the Hardest to Serve

The “Hardest to Serve” have significant barriers to employment, such as housing, transportation, lack of marketable skills, low educational attainment, disabilities, soft skills, and more. WIOA law states that among eligible and interested individuals, priority must be given to the hardest to serve. Employers in the region continue to identify lack of employability (or “soft”) skills as one of the most significant barriers to employment for those job seekers that are considered the hardest to serve.

Our strategy for addressing this issue is to utilize our relationship with our WIOA One Stop Operator. Through a collaborative process involving input from WIOA required partners and

business and industry, our goal is to facilitate employability training programs for soft skills. The program will be developed with employer input and delivery of the training sessions will involve employers to the greatest extent possible. A portable credential will be obtained through proper demonstration of skills, so that the certificate has value to employers. In addition, Networks Northwest continues to expand its work-based learning programs to incorporate soft skills training wherever possible.

## Employer Engagement

The need for an employer focused demand workforce development model is as important now as it has ever been. Employers continue to have needs across all industries and skill levels. Networks Northwest continues to be a regional leader in employer engagement.

Employer needs should be identified and workforce programs should be developed to meet those needs. In today's workforce climate, it would be difficult for any one entity or organization to identify and address all employer needs. Networks Northwest will continue to act as a regional convener; bringing employer focused services together while also increasing employer accessibility.

Our strategy for ensuring an employer engagement friendly environment throughout the local area includes maintaining and fostering collaborative relationships with a wide spectrum of industry focused service providers to include: the Procurement Technical Assistance Center, the Small Business Development Center, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, post-secondary education and training institutions, local economic development organizations, and community based organizations. Additionally, specific collaborative activities may include the following:

- Expand outreach to employers through the use of joint business retention visits. Networks Northwest takes a lead role in employer engagement through scheduling and conducting business retention visits. Based on employers' needs and desires the Networks Northwest Business Services team works to bring appropriate partners to the table who are best able to address employer needs.
- The Networks Northwest's Business Services Department will continue to take an active role in employer advisory groups throughout the region. Involvement can include membership in industry collaborations, intermediate school districts industry advisory councils, and local chambers of commerce. Working in partnership with these organizations greatly increases the reach of Networks Northwest's employer engagement.

Networks Northwest will be partnering with one of the region's largest economic development organizations to develop and operationalize a talent attraction strategy. Objectives for this partnership will include the use of an interactive regional job posting website designed to

build on the local area’s strong “Live. Work. Play.” appeal; the development of a network to identify employment opportunities for trailing spouses and significant others; and the utilization of navigators to assist job seekers in obtaining housing, accessing services and integrating into the area.

## Career Pathways

Career Pathways are a critical component to the identification of sustainable living-wage jobs and careers. These Career Pathways must provide job seekers and employees with a clear understanding of the opportunities that exist within the pathway. Workforce development programming, when utilizing a well-developed Career Pathway, will provide participants with a defined easy-to-follow guide to entering and progressing through an industry of choice. While Career Pathways can take many different forms, Networks Northwest will partner with employers, training providers, and educational institutions to develop comprehensive regionally available Career Pathway programs. Career Pathway material and information will be offered in both digital and printed formats.

Networks Northwest will continue its work in this area by first focusing those careers that are most in need by employers. Our specific strategy will include partnering with employers during the early developmental stages for each industry. Employer input regarding required skills, education, and training will be critical to ensure an accurate pathway is presented to participants. Additionally, Networks Northwest will work with training and educational providers to identify resources available throughout all stages of the Career Pathway. Understanding training and educational requirements is an important aspect to ensuring job seekers and employees understand the full aspect of opportunities available and enter the industry at an appropriate level with a defined path during career advancement.

Emphasis will be placed on providing training and education opportunities that result in industry-recognized portable credentials. Earning these credentials will benefit employers by filling their need for skilled talent along the pathway as well as provide participants with increased career opportunities and potential income. The career pathways systems developed will give program staff, educators, employers, parents, and participants a tool to use in mapping out career pathways on an individual basis.

## Increasing Awareness of In-demand Occupations

Throughout the entire process utilized to develop the Regional Prosperity Plan, as well as engagement with employers, partners, board members, and communities, Networks Northwest has heard a very clear message: the people of the region need to be aware of available career options in the region. The Workforce Development Board’s Strategic Agenda and the Regional Prosperity Plan identify increasing awareness of in-demand occupations as a priority strategy.

Our strategy for addressing this issue is multifaceted, but ultimately involves wide-ranging and targeted marketing campaigns related to both specific occupations and to overall awareness that good jobs exist here.

### Increasing Awareness of demand for specific occupations

Increasing the awareness of regionally available occupations continues to be a priority of Networks Northwest. Our work here begins by thoroughly understanding the needs of the employers we serve. Across all industries a common theme from employers is the desire for a locally educated and trained workforce. Networks Northwest will assist employers in meeting their workforce needs by ensuring the regional talent pool is aware of the living wage family sustaining careers available throughout the region.

Our Career Advisor staff will continue their involvement with the K-12 Educational Development Plan (EDP) process. By working directly with and in the education system we are able to ensure students are aware of the many career opportunities available to them in Northwest Lower Michigan. Employer involvement is a key component of the EDP process as they are often involved in career days as classroom guest speakers, and offer company tours and mentorship opportunities.

Our *Hot Jobs Report* for the region continues to be a popular tool utilized by participants, stakeholders, employers, and educators. Organized by industry sectors, the report gives an at-a-glance update regarding in demand occupations by industry, hiring trend information, credential requirements, and expected wage ranges.

Through collaborative relationships with our Business Services department the WIOA Youth program teams stay informed and aware of the region's in demand careers. Youth staff regularly participate in student focused programming aimed at increasing the students' career awareness and education. Examples of career focused programming include job fairs, career fairs, talent tours, and industry awareness events.

### Increasing Awareness of career opportunities in the region

The Northwest Michigan MiCareerQuest event will resume in May of 2021. Previously, this event was lauded as a region wide success with over 2,500 students participating. The expanded event in 2021 will increase the awareness of youth, educators, volunteers and parents about viable career opportunities in the region.

Additional career awareness events, focusing on the areas most in-demand occupations will include Networks Northwest's participation in National Manufacturing Day, Touch a Truck, and an area wide career day high school speaker circuit.

Networks Northwest will continue to support its relationship with the Northwest Lower Michigan MiSTEM region to bring additional awareness to in demand STEM related careers.

Through a unique relationship, a Networks Northwest Career Advisor will be assigned to work directly with the MiSTEM Regional Director and K-12 educators to increase awareness of regionally available STEM occupations.

## Veterans Services

Veterans receive priority of service across all employment and training programs. They also have access to co-located Veterans Career Advisors (VCA) if they meet eligibility criteria. This region will go above and beyond to assist America's Veterans with accessing services. One challenge to providing services to veterans is that very few of them self-identify their veteran status when they visit the service center. Although only a small percentage of Wagner-Peyser applicants were veterans or eligible spouses, we continue to look for ways to continue to provide excellent customer service and important referrals to community partners.

Key to our strategy in addressing Veteran Services is the inclusion of a Networks Northwest senior staff member on the region's Veteran's Community Action Team (VCAT) leadership team. As the Chair of the VCAT Employment Pillar Networks Northwest will educate and inform community partners regarding Veteran employment and training opportunities, programs and services.

Networks Northwest partners with various veteran service organizations to offer workforce focused orientations specifically developed to assist veterans in overcoming barriers and increasing access to training and employment.

Capitalizing on our strength of collaborations, Networks Northwest will continue to partner with community based veteran focused organizations to host veteran job fairs, veteran ID days, and veteran employment bootcamps.

## Apprenticeship

US DOL Registered Apprenticeship offers an "earn and learn" option to job seekers, allowing them to earn a wage while learning on the job. It offers employers the opportunity to develop their own pipeline of skilled talent. We feel this is a fitting strategy for employers who are looking to fill entry and mid-level skill gaps in their existing workforce.

Operating in a rural service delivery requires the Networks Northwest Apprenticeship staff to remain innovative and responsive to employers needs. Our status as an US DOL Registered Apprenticeship intermediary assists us in fulfilling this responsibility. As the intermediary we are able to offer employers a wide range of apprenticeship related services that greatly reduce the employer's administrative burden associated with US DOL registered apprenticeships.

In direct response to employer demand, our apprenticeship team continues to promote apprenticeships in non-traditional apprenticeship occupations with our area's small to medium

sized rural employers. These employers often find themselves with key talent vacancies in fields that are not supported by traditional education and training programs. US DOL registered apprenticeships give the employer an opportunity to grow their own talent pipeline, ensuring the availability of a skilled workforce. Collaborating with employers, industry associations and education and training providers the Networks Northwest apprenticeship team brings the value of US DOL registered apprenticeships to employers in occupations such as bee keeping, goldsmithing, culinary, and wine making.

## Administrative Costs

Networks Northwest does not have any administrative cost arrangements that currently exist among regional partners, nor does it plan to establish any at this time. Networks Northwest is willing to consider partnerships related to pooling financial contributions to support Region 2's administrative costs.

## Supportive Services

Supportive Services are essential to the success of the workforce development system's customers. Ensuring that these services are available and readily accessible is critical to implementation of regional strategies.

A wide variety of supportive services are available to participants across workforce development programs operating in the region, including the WIOA, including but not limited to:

- Private vehicle registration, insurance, and repair for a vehicle to be used for work or training
- Transportation assistance (private vehicle mileage reimbursement, public transportation passes)
- Eye exams and glasses
- Clothing for interviews
- Clothing and tools/materials needed for employment (i.e. work boots, tools, scrubs)
- Medical exams required to enter a training program or for employment
- Licensing and certification fees
- Identification (driver's license, state identification card, birth certificate)
- Technology needs
- Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities related to employment and education

In addition to those and others listed above, supportive services not listed on the Supportive Services Local Policy can be requested. See Appendix B for the Local Policy on Supportive Services.

## Networks

Among the many possible supportive services, the three most in need, especially for the hardest to serve populations, are Transportation, Housing, and Child Care.

Networks Northwest is home to the local Regional Planning Organization (RPO). This department specializes in taking regional approaches, and working with local governments and communities to develop efficient, connected plans and services. The RPO is the designated entity for regional transportation solutions, and acts as a liaison to the Michigan Department of Transportation as well as local transit providers. Networks Northwest also acts as a regional data and policy resource regarding housing issues, convening networks on transportation and housing, which focus on regional collaboration and solutions.

Both networks consist of provider agencies – transit and housing – as well as other stakeholders, and they offer opportunities for enhanced communication, visioning sessions, and joint activities. They host summits, promote public comment sessions, coordinate training on policy implications, and facilitate public awareness about transportation and housing challenges and potential solutions.

## Transportation

Networks Northwest works with the Michigan Department of Transportation on various programs within the region that include a Rural Task Force, and Small Urban Task Force and the Traverse Transportation Coordinating Initiative (TTCI). These groups plan for, incorporate, and implement the region's transportation goals across all spectrums. The Community Development Department also works with local transit agencies, organizations, and communities in broadening the options and expanding alternatives of transportation choices in the region. With the completion of the 2020 Census, it is the expectation that a new Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) will be formed for the densely populated portions of the greater Traverse City area. An MPO is an agency created by federal law to provide local elected officials input into the planning and implementation of federal transportation funds to metropolitan areas with populations of greater than 50,000. MPOs must plan for regional transportation planning expenditures and are responsible for the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning process for their urbanized area. The TTCI and Networks Northwest have been gearing up for MPO status since the last Census.

## Housing

High costs of housing in our rural, tourism-oriented area have undermined employers' attempts to recruit professionals from other areas. Housing that provides handicap-accessible entry and living areas is a barrier to employment for people with disabilities. The explosion of short-term rentals has served to compound the lack of long-term rental options and the lack of



available, affordable rentals as well as residential home prices, forcing workers with lower incomes to live farther away, compounding the issue of transportation.

Networks Northwest convenes a Housing Solutions Network and supports their work with information and analysis related to housing needs. In order to discuss and strategies on housing issues, the Housing Solutions Network hosts an annual Housing Summit, which most recently featured multiple speakers and breakout sessions, provides a forum for stakeholders to learn more about the challenges of residents who are unable to access affordable housing, and has become an event in which the communities seeking additional housing can connect with developers seeking to create much-needed housing.

In response to the needs voiced during the Housing Summit a new entity, [Housing North](#), has been formed. It was established to focus solely on housing issues and addresses affordable housing needs by focusing on communications and education, advocating for new initiatives at all levels, and facilitating new housing developments.

Networks Northwest updated the local [Target Market Analysis](#) which quantifies the number and types of housing needed in the next five years at both at the county level and for each of the more populated regions within each county. This study is relied upon by communities, organizations, and developers alike as a guide to the actual demand and types of housing needed.

## Child Care

Across the northwest part of Lower Michigan, families are struggling to access affordable, quality child care—especially for infants and toddlers. While traditionally considered a family concern, access to child care has become an economic development issue as business leaders look to attract and retain talent in an improving economy. Networks Northwest has issued a report on the situation: [Making Childcare a Regional Priority](#) which documents the current state of child care in the ten-county region. As of 2018, there were 444 licensed childcare providers in the region which was not enough to meet the needs of the region’s workers. To make the situation more dire, most of these operators shut down during the Stay Home Stay Safe phase of COVID-19 and it is still unknown how many have not or will not be reopening.

## Coordination with Economic Development

Economic prosperity can be found at the confluence of community, business, and talent development. Networks Northwest embraces this philosophy and remains committed to its recognized role as an economic development leader serving the 10 counties of Northwest



Lower Michigan. Our leadership position requires us to take on many roles that can be best defined as the convenor, supporter, coordinator, and provider of services.

### Collaborative Development Council

Networks Northwest remains the lead entity for the Northwest Michigan Collaborative Development Council (CDC). As such, we are uniquely positioned to convene the region's economic and workforce development leaders. With the environments of economic and workforce development continuing to evolve and rapidly becoming synonymous, this leadership group focuses on identifying and transforming local priorities into economic development projects that have positive, change evoking, regional significance. Networks Northwest and the CDC leadership team is positioned with the ability to be responsive and agile to the economic development needs of Northwest Lower Michigan.

### Business Retention Visits

The Northwest Michigan Works! Business Services Team is active at the tactical level of economic development through its participation in business retention visits. Often taking the lead role, Northwest Michigan Works! Business Services Representatives rally the support of local economic developers, the Michigan Economic Development Corporations, and a variety of other key local, regional and state partners to meet with area companies. These visits ensure our employers' workforce and economic development needs are identified to the appropriate partners and service providers. Employers leave these visits with a new understanding of, and direct access to, the region's talent and economic development tools.

### Regional Prosperity Board

The Regional Prosperity Board remains one of the strongest in the State. The board is comprised of the workforce development board, local elected officials, and representation from multiple sectors that make up Northwest Lower Michigan. This eclectic membership supports the board's commitment to continue to function as a leading talent, business and community agency for the region. With multiple business and public sectors represented from across the 10-county region, the board is best able to identify, address, and act on a large variety of economic and workforce development opportunities and improvements.

### Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The region is currently developing a comprehensive economic development strategy. The effort is being led by Networks Northwest and supported by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Each of the region's economic development organizations are intricately involved to ensure their areas are represented regarding the topics of workforce, housing, commercial corridors, community marketing, opportunity zones, and community redevelopment.

## Performance

The Northwest region successfully negotiated with the Department of Labor and Economic Development regarding WIOA Program Years 2018 and 2019 expected levels of performance for the four primary indicators, including:

- Employment Rate, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit;
- Employment Rate, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit;
- Median Earnings, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit;
- Credential Attainment, within 4 quarters after exit.

The mutually agreed-upon performance indicator levels are as follows:

### Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act

<u>Adult</u>	<u>PY 2020</u>	<u>PY 2021</u>
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	88.3%	88.8%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	85.7%	86.2%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	\$7,123	\$7,123
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	88.0%	88.0%
Measurable Skills Gains	45.7%	45.7%
<u>Dislocated Worker</u>		
Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	94.5%	94.5%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	92.0%	92.0%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	\$10,008	\$10,008
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	79.4%	79.4%
Measurable Skills Gains	52.5%	52.5%
<u>Youth</u>		
Employment or Placement Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	84.5%	84.5%

Employment or Placement Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	83.5%	83.5%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	\$4,705	\$4,705
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	61.1%	61.1%
Measurable Skills Gains	26.9%	26.9%

## Wagner-Peyser Act

Employment Rate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	64.4%	64.4%
Employment Rate 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter after Exit	64.9%	64.9%
Median Earnings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit	\$5,478	\$5,491

The Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) and Networks Northwest have both agreed to the performance targets outlined above for Program Years 2020 and 2021. Should negotiations need to occur regarding established or future performance targets, such negotiations will be based on, at minimum, previous years' performance data and regional demographic and economic data.

An additional WIOA Performance Measure has been defined by both the USDOL and LEO: Effectiveness in Serving Employers. Baseline data is being collected on this measure, which is expected to be included in future local performance targets.

# Local Plan

*Northwest Region*

*Program Years 2020 - 2023*

## Regional Analysis

### Labor Market Data and Economic Conditions

All information presented in the [Regional Analysis](#) section of the Regional Plan is incorporated into the Local Plan.

### Strategic Vision

The local board is currently revising its “Strategic Agenda for Talent” which will be complete and adopted in 2020. The Strategic Agenda for Talent will have a foundation built on four Strategic Priorities and three Strategic Positions. The process of developing each strategic priority and position included comprehensive research and input from employers, job seekers, Networks Northwest staff, and educational, workforce, and economic development partners.

Throughout the strategic agenda, Networks Northwest will serve in various roles to include:

- **Influencer** of talent-related federal, state, and local policy
- **Catalyst** for continuous improvement in collaborative ventures and coordinated programs
- **Provider** of quality workforce development services that effectively prepare talent to meet employer needs

### Strategic Priorities

Each of the following Strategic Priorities requires in-depth knowledge of employer needs, tools and resources for job seekers, and strong connections to a variety of partners.

#### **Strategic Priority #1: Reduce barriers to success for employers and the workforce**

The key strategies within this strategic priority are to:

- Support viable, innovative solutions that reduce barriers
- Provide and connect with resources to overcome barriers

Networks Northwest will engage in several primary activities to achieve these key strategies. Those activities include:

- Partner with resource providers for housing, transportation, and childcare
- Educate communities about the impact of barriers on economic prosperity

- Promote non-traditional economic opportunities, especially for the ALICE population

### **Strategic Priority #2: Improve the foundational skills of the workforce**

The key strategies within this strategic priority are to:

- Provide Adult Education
- Provide soft skills training
- Support STEM Education

Networks Northwest will engage in several primary activities to achieve these key strategies. Those activities include:

- Link Adult Education to Career Pathways
- Connect businesses to STEM programming
- Integrate soft skills training across programs and services

### **Strategic Priority #3: Increase career pathways**

The key strategies within this strategic priority are to:

- Coordinate apprenticeships and work-based learning
- Support credential attainment
- Provide tools for pathways mapping

Networks Northwest will engage in several primary activities to achieve these key strategies. Those activities include:

- Conduct career awareness events
- Sponsor apprenticeship programs
- Allocate resources for postsecondary training, including MiReconnect

### **Strategic Priority #4: Strengthen employer effectiveness**

Networks Northwest will engage in several primary activities to achieve these key strategies. Those activities include:

- Support talent attraction
- Coordinate workforce training
- Provide retention services
- Coordinate access to talent

Networks Northwest will engage in several primary activities to achieve these key strategies. Those activities include:

- Develop Business Resource Networks and employer collaboratives
- Deliver soft skills training for incumbent workers
- Connect with partners for access to hidden talent

### Strategic Positions

Our three Strategic Positions are built on our ability and willingness to assert our role as the primary workforce development resource for employers, job seekers, and our communities.

We will be the primary resource for employers on the following:

- Improving soft skills of new and current workers
- Accessing talent for recruitment and hiring
- Retaining talent
- Support for training new and current workers
- Connecting with other business resources

We will be the primary resource for job seekers on the following:

- Accessing available jobs
- Effective job search
- Building foundational skills
- Connecting to resources
- Creating a career pathway

We will be the primary resource for the community on the following:

- The current skills of the labor force
- Occupation and industry data: wages, current employment, projections
- Information on employer needs

### Alignment of Local Resources and across Core Programs

Three of the four core WIOA programs are already very well-aligned in the region. Networks Northwest is the umbrella agency for Titles I, II, and III. Title II is delivered in partnership with the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District.

Title IV of WIOA is delivered by the state agency Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The regional office is located in Traverse City, which is also the location of the Networks Northwest administrative office and the region's largest American Job Center (AJC). Although MRS is not co-located in the AJC, they once were, and relationships among frontline staff have been nurtured and maintained. MRS staff use the AJC on a regular but limited basis, with counselors spending time in the resource room on a regular basis, discussing services with walk-ins and referrals. MRs staff regularly access the Cadillac and Manistee AJCs as well.

Development and use of Career Pathways is one strategy that the board will lead in order to better align all core programs and local resources, including educational partners and employers. Career Pathways provide customers with a plan for long-term success, with milestones and increased earning potential along the way. Apprenticeships are one approach for implementing Career Pathways, beginning with pre-apprenticeships that can include remedial training in the Adult Education program, and continue to leverage the benefits of the combination of classroom and work-based learning.

Networks Northwest administration will continue to facilitate greater and stronger connections across all programs. This strategy begins with purposeful inclusion – making sure that all programs are included in planning, program management, and service activities. This can be as simple as bringing representation from each of the four core programs together for planning a career fair, and as complex as creating committees to address more complex and/or significant concerns in the availability and delivery of services.

## Workforce Development System

Workforce Development activities in Northwestern Michigan are strong, varied, and collaborative. Multiple partners work together to deliver employment and training services to employers and individuals from all walks of life.

The public workforce development system consists of services provided through Northwest Michigan Works! as well as the State of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). Priority of service is given to veterans who are customers of all employment and training services. In addition, individuals with disabilities are provided with reasonable accommodations in order to fully participate in services. The region focuses on providing services to customers who are the 'hardest to serve'. When applicable, program design and service delivery emphasizes post-secondary credential attainment to support the Governor's 60x30 plan.

## Programs

Programs offered via the workforce development system include the four core programs, and several more.

- Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth (WIOA Title I)
  - National Dislocated Worker Grants
  - Rapid Response
- Adult Education (WIOA Title II and State of Michigan Adult Education)
- Wagner-Peyser Employment Services (WIOA Title III)
  - Employment and Reemployment Services
  - Veterans Employment and Training



- o Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker
- o Labor Exchange through Pure Michigan Talent Connect
- o Reemployment Services & Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)
- o Work-Based Training for Special Populations
- Vocational Rehabilitation (WIOA Title IV)
- Trade Adjustment Act and all iterations
- Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope. (PATH)
- Jobs for Michigan's Graduates
- Career Technical Education (CTE) programs
  - o Skills Up North (SUN)
  - o Adult Career Training (ACT)
- Offender Success
- Business Resource Network
- Going Pro Training Fund
- Senior Community Service Employment Program, operated by the AARP Foundation

The services provided via these programs are listed below.

### Self-Directed Services

Customers, including individuals with disabilities and other barriers, may access a variety of resources using the resource room in any of four American Job Centers in the region. Computers are available for the general public to use for job search purposes. The computers in the Resource Room provide visitors access to websites to aid in career pathway exploration, job search (including Pure Michigan Talent Connect), resume and cover letter assistance, and more. Safe and reliable access to the internet helps self-directed job search reach the resources and tools they need to connect with employment.

In the American Job Centers, staff members are available to help customers with general job search services. These staff-assisted services are recorded in the One-Stop Management Information System (OSMIS) as Wagner-Peyser services. Services may include helping someone complete a job application, reviewing resumes, helping a customer load resume paper into the printer, looking through job opportunities with the customer and providing guidance on which best matches his/her skill set, and many more. Reasonable accommodations are provided as needed to individuals with disabilities.

The Northwest Michigan Works! website, [nwmiworks.org](http://nwmiworks.org), offers customers virtual access to our staff who can provide services virtually, via the phone or web-based platform, or physically in the AJC - whichever method is preferable to the customer and best suits the service(s) needed. The ability to provide services virtually has been fully embraced as our teams

continue to provide much needed services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has provided us an opportunity to delve into the world of virtual service delivery - a long-term goal that was quickly realized as the pandemic continues to run its course. Even after the pandemic, we see applications for a region like ours: expansive and rural, where public transit can be quite limited. Access to AJC staff through our website allows us to provide services unique to a customer's specific needs with the flexibility of time and location needs.

## Career Services

Career Services are intended to support a job seeker at a more intensive level than those provided through Employment Services. These services are available in two categories, based on the level of staff assistance.

Basic Career Services require minimal intervention by the staff member and usually do not necessitate an appointment. These can include the following:

- Initial assessment
- Labor market information
- Job postings and information about vacancies
- Information on in-demand occupations and industries
- Community resources directories
- Walk-in assistance in job search and completion of job applications
- Information on unemployment insurance and public assistance
- Use of the resource room

Staff-assisted Career Services are provided in groups and/or one-on-one by trained Career Advisors, and can include:

- Career exploration, including career pathways
- Assistance with all aspects of job search, such as resume and cover letter writing, interviewing, and networking;
- Career assessments and job search preparation;
- Case management for eligible individuals, to assist in removing barriers and accessing community resources;
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan for Adults, Individual Service Strategy for Youth;
- Job readiness services;
- Group career counseling as well as one-on-one;
- Specialized assistance for dislocated workers, through Rapid Response for companies who are downsizing or closing;
- Work experience opportunities for a variety of eligible individuals who need a transitional phase to long-term, self-sufficient employment.

## Veterans Services

The career services listed above are available to veterans at any time, and are provided via priority of service. However, additional and specialized assistance for veterans with significant barriers to employment are also available. Barriers may include disabilities, homelessness, lacking GED, low-income, and more. This assistance involves intensive case management and employment preparation, referrals to community resources, and connections to veterans assistance programs that will assist the veteran in becoming job ready. Services are delivered by veterans employed by the State of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

In the Northwest Region, two Veterans Career Advisors work in our region, and have dedicated office space in our Traverse City and Manistee AJCs. In addition a Veterans Employment Representative is housed in the Traverse City AJC, providing an additional linkage to employers for job seekers who are also veterans. It is a privilege to be able to host staff with access to additional resources to benefit the region's veterans.

Customers are screened as they enter the AJCs, and those who self-identify as veterans or spouses of veterans, receive an opportunity to receive services from the Veterans Career Advisor. All veterans are referred to Career Advisors to potentially receive one-on-one services, which may also include enrollment in the WIOA.

## Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) offers employment counseling to assist individuals with disabilities. Trained counselors come from different backgrounds, and have education and training in career counseling, vocational evaluation, job placement, community resources, and many other areas related to employment.

Vocational rehabilitation is a process. Potential customers attend an orientation in order to be fully informed and learn about the program. The counselor works in partnership with the customer to take steps toward long-term employment. A central value of MRS is "informed choice." This means that the customer actively participates through the entire rehabilitation process. Together, the counselor and customer gather the information necessary to make the best choices. The information gathered includes evaluation of the customer's strengths, resources, priorities, abilities, interests, and rehabilitation needs.

To begin the process, the individual completes an application, with accommodations provided if necessary. Based on the application, an MRS counselor determines eligibility. Eligibility criteria require that the individual:

- Has an existing physical or mental impairment;

- Experiences vocational or work-related barriers because of the disability;
- Needs assistance from vocational rehabilitation; and
- Can benefit from vocational rehabilitation services that will lead to employment.

Services may be provided based on priority groups, depending upon resource availability.

Upon determination of eligibility and priority group, a vocational evaluation is conducted. This allows the counselor and customer to explore job options, the local job market, different working conditions, and the impact of the disability on potential employment. The result of the evaluation is to set a career goal and jointly develop an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

All services deemed necessary will be included in the IPE. These may include:

- Vocational guidance and counseling;
- Job search, placement assistance and job-keeping services;
- Referral to other agencies for needed services;
- Accommodation services such as interpreter, note taker, captioned telephone, frequency modulation system, etc.;
- Job licenses, tools, equipment and initial supplies;
- Rehabilitation and/or assistive technology services;
- Training, either on-the-job or in school
- Hearing aids, artificial limbs, braces and other health services;
- Specific post-employment services needed to maintain and/or regain employment.

When the customer is ready to seek employment, services will also include cover letter and resume writing assistance, interviewing skills, handling tough questions about his/her disability, job coaching, and more.

Customers are referred to receive services from MRS as appropriate, and referred customers continue to receive services from Michigan Works! throughout MRS's eligibility determination period, which can take up to 6 months. Collaborative case management is pursued if MRS staff and Michigan Works! staff determine such a relationship would benefit the customer.

## Training Services

Training Services are available to individuals who need skill upgrading or development in order to obtain gainful employment. These services include:

- Work-based training, such as On-the-Job Training, Apprenticeships, Customized Training developed by employers, and Incumbent Worker Training;
- Classroom training for eligible individuals in short-term, occupational training programs, available through an Individual Training Account voucher-based system (see Appendix C).

Northwest Michigan Works! also partners with Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District to deliver Adult Education services, including:

- Preparation classes for the GED;
- High school classes in order to obtain a diploma;
- English Language Learner (formerly known as English as a Second Language) classes;
- Adult Basic Education for improving basic math, reading, and writing skills;
- Digital literacy classes;
- Citizenship programs.

Adult Education services are open entry, open exit, so individuals may enter the program at any time and do not have to wait for a schedule of classes. Learning is individualized based on a diagnostic assessment, so students focus on the content they need to learn and do not spend time learning things they already know. This allows them to complete the program quickly and continue on to postsecondary training or employment.

Post-secondary training is available through four primary educational institutions in the region: North Central Michigan College, Northwestern Michigan College, Baker College of Cadillac, and West Shore Community College. Among these institutions, training programs that cover each of the in-demand industry sectors are available.

Additional occupational training is provided through a handful of private vendors, some online and some located in the region. These include, but are not limited to, New Horizons (computer training), Intuit (online QuickBooks training), Pinnacle Truck Driving School, Road Warrior Truck Driving School, Agape Healthcare (C.N.A.), Grandvue Medical Facility (C.N.A.), and more. Other Eligible Training Providers are identified as they become known to Northwest Michigan Works! staff, which usually occurs through the normal course of doing business with partners and partner agencies in the region.

## Youth Services

Youth Services are offered by Northwest Michigan Works! through multiple programs. Regardless of the program, goals and outcomes are aligned with the WIOA's goals, including secondary and post-secondary credential attainment and employment.

### *WIOA In School and Out of School Youth*

Partnerships are leveraged and established as we work to identify individuals who are potentially eligible for the WIOA Youth Program and in need of employment or reemployment services, whether those services will be provided as In-School Youth (ISY) or Out-of-School Youth (OSY). Referral sources are wide-ranging and can include:

- JMG participants

- Homeless shelters
- Youth Centers and Programs
- Secondary schools, including alternative high schools
- Adult Education Learning Lab students who are nearing completion of their High School Diploma or GED
- Age-appropriate youth who interact with Resource Room Staff
- Probation officers and law enforcement agencies who may interact with age-appropriate individuals
- Disability Network
- Domestic violence shelters
- Child and Family Services
- Refugee Assistance Agencies

Most ISY are referred through the JMG program, while OSY enter the workforce development system through referral streams like those listed above. Co-enrollment in other WIOA and alternate programs is explored as needed and appropriate, but individuals eligible for WIOA Youth are enrolled to receive services under that program initially. Intake for referrals typically involves informal discussions between the potential participant and Career Advisor, where education and employment goals are explored and the Career Advisor attempts to get a sense of services that may be needed and whether or not the referral is eligible and suitable for the WIOA program.

Eligible and suitable referrals are enrolled in the WIOA Youth program and the Individual Service Strategy is developed. All WIOA Youth program participants receive an objective assessment to determine basic skills deficiency. Locally the TABE has been selected as the primary objective assessment tool, and TABE results may also support eligibility related to basic skills deficiency. Additional assessments are provided as appropriate to gather information regarding the participant and to inform the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) developed collaboratively by the participant and the Career Advisor. The ISS is considered to be a living and breathing document that can be revised as barriers are identified and goals change. The ISS is the basis for all services provided to a participant, and staff are to ensure the ISS is unique to each participant and that the plan is feasible to achieve.

As the Career Advisor begins to deliver WIOA services to the participant, activities and case notes are entered in the OSMIS and the ISS is reviewed regularly to ensure services provided and planned to be provided are in alignment with the ISS. Services provided under the WIOA Youth Program are called 14 Youth Elements, and all are at the disposal of the Career Advisor to provide to a participant. Participants who are in need of services or funding from other workforce programs, like WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker, may be co-enrolled in those programs as well in an attempt to assist the participant to achieve their goals and successful program outcomes. Participants who have barriers that need to be addressed by an agency

other than Northwest Michigan Works! are referred to other community agencies who can provide the assistance needed.

If the ISS includes employment as one of the desired outcomes, the Career Advisor collaborates with Business Services Representatives who will help make connections with local employers in the target industry/industries with the goal of ultimately placing the participant in unsubsidized employment. Additional services may be provided to assist in that placement, such as Work Experience, Job Shadowing, and On-the-Job Training.

When the Career Advisor determines the participant is ready to move to the exit phase of services, the enrollment is exited in the OSMIS, and service provision is limited to those services available as follow-up services. Follow-up services are offered to all WIOA Youth participants at exit, and are to be considered when developing the ISS.

### *Jobs for Michigan's Graduates*

In addition to WIOA Youth services, we also provide youth services under the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates model for in-school youth, and via case management services to out-of-school youth, both of which include the following:

- Employability skills training, work experience, training options, and access to a network of service providers that offer mentoring, financial literacy, study skills, entrepreneurship, leadership development, substance abuse prevention, high school drop-out prevention, credit recovery, and more;
- Talent Tours;
- Strong partnerships with career tech centers, Adult Education, postsecondary institutions, and employers.

In our region specifically our intention is to continue JMG services with our staff embedded in the ISD's Career and Technical Centers or classrooms, and other classroom locations. This allows our staff to create and maintain relationships with students, teachers, and administrators to foster the connection between educational and private businesses in the area. The JMG Specialist is able to deliver the JMG curriculum, meet students at their level, encourage and mentor them to create and follow up on goal setting and stand alongside the student as they make the transition from high school to college, military career, or into the workforce.

The JMG curriculum is delivered in many fashions, such as classroom assignments, leadership activities and conferences, and combining formal and informal interactions with students. Students take the lead on what and how they learn the curriculum through project based learning and the specialist is really there to guide them through the process. The core values

of a productive citizen continue with student exposure to the community through employer visits, talent tours, and community service opportunities.

The JMG Specialist can connect students with future employers. The talent pipeline is a primary focus of many of the partner employers in the region. Specialists are able to access dollars to create work experiences for JMG students, offering them the opportunity to gain experience and more exposure to their chosen career pathway.

### Talent Tours

Talent tours are intended to expose students to a variety of career paths and give them the chance to explore what a job in their target field of study can look like. Talent tours explore the day to day operations of a particular job, exposing students to company culture, and students can interact with employees and ask questions about daily routines or how they like the job. While on a tour students are typically exposed to leadership and team members so they get a feel for both sides of the house. They will also become aware of what credentials or education is often needed to work in particular positions within the company. Talent tours are meant to give an overview of a career path that students may be interested in. Students then can make a better informed decision about their future. Educational partners are typically afforded an opportunity to participate in talent tours as well.

### Business Services

Business Services is the key to our employer focused demand driven system. Fully integrated into the areas they serve, our Business Services Representatives have a keen understanding of what the Northwest Lower Michigan business community's needs and desires in regards to workforce development programming and services. A sampling of these services includes:

- Assisting businesses with creative and customized approaches to recruitment and training through the use of job boards including the PMTC, in person and virtual job fairs, career awareness campaigns, career pathways and sector based initiatives;
- Active participation with intermediate school district industry advisory boards, industry associations, and community based business focused organizations;
- Advocating for the region's hardest to serve job seekers by working closely with the Offender Success, PATH, Adult Education and Jobs for Michigan's Graduates programs;
- A team dedicated specifically to identifying and developing USDOL registered Apprenticeship programs;
- Serving employers and their at risk employees through Business Resource Networks;
- Core partners of the Networks Northwest Business Services Department, collaborating with the Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Michigan Economic Development Center and Global Trade Alliance;



- The region's lead entity for business retention visits, ensuring collaboration with local economic development organizations as well as regional and state partners;
- Key contributors to the job seeker focused Career Connection program, ensuring job seekers are aware of current employment trends and employer expectations;
- Ensure job seekers have convenient access to employers with immediate hiring needs through the orchestration of American Job Center hosted Employer of Day events;
- Connection between Networks Northwest job seeker customers and employers, helping to ensure job ready customers are matched to employer hiring needs.

## Local Coordination

The programs above are provided in an integrated, holistic manner, offering a seamless experience to the customer. In order to truly integrate at an efficient level, the local board has decided to deliver Title I and Title III programs through its workforce development arm, Northwest Michigan Works!, Inc. This in-house program delivery provides for less administrative overhead, allowing more funds to be directed toward programs. In addition, the direct delivery of programs provides for higher quality assurance, and tighter alignment. This prevents the dilution of services due to potential competing visions and strategies at contracted organizations.

For programs that are delivered outside the realm of the workforce system's administrative agency, partnerships and relationships are critical to ensuring alignment and effective program delivery. Partnerships with Title II and IV providers are strong, and will be maintained and strengthened through the alignment of WIOA services and performance measures. Relationships with required WIOA partners are also well established, and will be strengthened by further communication regarding WIOA programming, priorities, and activities. In order to facilitate the strengthening of those relationships, the board has adopted two primary strategies.

1. *Use the Career & Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) to ensure that the workforce system is engaged with the education system.* The CEAC, including membership, goals/metrics, and responsibilities are governed by the Labor and Economic Opportunity as outlined in State of Michigan Policy Issuance 19-29 and is designed to bring education and business together in an effort to effectively develop and implement training strategies designed to resolve talent issues experienced by the region's employers. These regular meetings ensure ongoing conversations, planning, and strategic activities that respond directly to the needs of employers. The close collaboration of the local Intermediate School Districts, Community Colleges, MiSTEM, private industry, and other stakeholders is key in creating talent pipelines to feed immediate and future needs of local employers.

2. *Position Networks Northwest as a lead agency in the region for talent development activities and knowledge of workforce issues.* Networks Northwest continues to develop resources for services, data, and local intelligence on both job seeker and employer needs will ensure that we are at the table for ongoing conversations regarding talent.

## Access, Career Pathways, and Credentials

### Access to Services

Access to employment, training, education, and supportive services is a challenge in rural areas, especially for individuals with disabilities and other barriers. While AJCs are located in 4 of the 10 counties (Grand Traverse, Emmet, Wexford, and Manistee), 6 counties lack the convenience of access to a job center relatively close to their home. We are always searching for strategies to increase access to individuals residing in the 6 outlying counties. Access to all four core programs is available through all four centers. However, the affiliate centers (located in Petoskey and Manistee) will be transitioning from open part-time hours to full-time. The location of the center in Petoskey is not ideal to serve the entire county or surrounding areas, primarily because of the geographic landscape; several inland lakes make travel to the center a difficulty. Travel to access our services is a significant barrier for many residents of the region.

The board has identified multiple strategies to expand access to services, including offering virtual workshops, enhancing use of technology for interaction and service delivery, and establishing additional partnerships in the region to hold ‘office hours’ in locations closer to areas of the region that are potentially under-served.

- Northwest Michigan Works! provides workshops virtually, in-office, and at locations outside of the regular job center locations. Called Career Connection, these workshops are unique in that they not only offer a learning opportunity for customers to improve their job search, but also networking time with Career Services staff, Business Services Representatives, and other job seekers. Career Connection are held at a variety of locations with the support of community partners. Promotion of the workshops is conducted by both the system and by the hosting partner (for locations outside of the AJC). Many times employers attend the Career Connection workshops in order to offer a first-hand employer perspective, while also informally meeting potential candidates to fill open positions with their company. Our goal is to increase the number of Career Connection workshops throughout the region, and provide them in more locations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we will focus our efforts on increasing our virtual attendance.

- Hiring and Career Events are held throughout the region in partnership with educational institutions, chambers, and other community based organizations. These events allow employers and job seekers to connect for hiring opportunities as well as for career exploration. Career Services staff are always on hand to provide services to job seekers in attendance, and make relevant connections. Our goal is to serve as the official hub for all hiring events throughout the region; we will publish a calendar on our website, and offer to partner with any entity seeking to coordinate an event aimed at jobseekers. While the region has historically offered a variety of larger hiring events throughout any given year, we are also aiming to offer more frequent smaller hiring events, providing employers with a venue to fill open positions that is available when they need it.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has provided an opportunity to find creative methods of service provision virtually. Northwest Michigan Works! has adopted, and will continue to adopt, technology platforms to allow for seamless interaction and service delivery, including electronic signatures and document completion/submission, online chat, Zoom, Google Meet, and more. As we work to ensure all workshops are offered virtually, we will identify additional methods to connect with individuals in need of services. Already we have begun to offer virtual job fairs. As the pandemic eases and in-person service delivery is once again available, Northwest Michigan Works! expects to continue a blend of service provision virtually and in-person - offering the blend of services that best meets the needs of each individual. In addition, our social media presence has significant following and we promote hot jobs, events, and job search tips through this venue.
- In response to the pandemic, Adult Education (Title II) services have continued without interruption through virtual access while the centers were closed. In 2012 the adult education program added distance learning options to their programming. In the ensuing eight years, this program grew by lending chromebooks and data jetpacks for student use. Online classrooms through a kiosk were created where students could enter and gain access to software and resources. Most recently, educational assessments were allowed to be administered remotely. Distance Learning instruction is built on a blended learning model. While students may access software and use textbooks as an educational tool, teacher contact and instruction is instrumental in helping students make gains and achieve their goals. Thus, cell phones were provided to each of the teachers while they worked from home so that students would be able to reach their teachers with questions and for support. Google Meet and Zoom are also utilized to promote student face-to-face teacher interaction.
- MRS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors utilize public access points to meet with customers within reasonable travel distance from their residence. Public access points include the American Job Centers, public libraries, and schools. Through this strategy,

MRS has a physical presence in every county of the region. Information about Vocational Rehabilitation services can be accessed online on the [MRS website](#), including the application for services, Customer Handbook, and virtual orientation.

## Career Pathways

Long-term career planning is incorporated based on individual circumstances for all workforce customers. Specifically, the Northwest approaches career pathways in terms of empowering customers in any of the WIOA programs to envision educational and/or career advancement, instead of simply focusing on short-term attainment. This is done by assisting the customer with obtaining the training and/or credentials necessary to achieve their identified goals. For example, the Adult Education program works with each student to identify career goals at the beginning of their participation, mapping out educational goals that build on their GED and transition them to post-secondary training.

Northwest also is currently developing a Career Pathways tool that will live on our website. Engaging this site will enable users to navigate career pathways at a local level as each pathway will identify local employers in which we have collaborated with to create said pathway. We will be creating multiple pathways for the website and as employers come on board we will be able to customize each pathway with local opportunities. While exploring the site you can learn what jobs are available in the region with what employers. You will also learn what it takes to get credentialed in each career field and what if any credentials are necessary for the job you're researching. A wage range depending on experience will be available as well as local resources for training opportunities.

Partnerships with local employers and educational institutions are also paramount in ensuring a career pathways system for all, as well as improving access to activities leading to a recognized postsecondary credential

## Co-enrollment

Facilitating career pathways for customers is purposeful and strategic, encompassing coordination with program partners, which may include, but is not limited to, co-enrollment in core programs. Adult career services, youth, MRS, Northwest Michigan Works! Apprenticeship team, and adult education staff currently co-enroll those participants for which it makes sense, based on their identified needs and goals. Trade Adjustment Assistance participants are screened for Dislocated Worker Eligibility. Co-enrollment may also result in collaborative case management, which is easily facilitated between staff across the region. .

## Recognized Credentialing

The board joins Governor Whitmer in her efforts to challenge Michigan's citizens to earn a post-secondary credential as part of the 60 by 30 initiative, with the goal of arming at least

60% of Michiganders with a post-secondary credential by 2030. [According to the Lumina Foundation](#), Michigan still lags behind the nation, with only 49% with a credential, less than the nation's credential rate of 51%. Data provided by the Lumina Foundation shows 100% of the Northwest Lower Michigan region counties fall below the national rate as well - many significantly. Activities leading to a recognized post-secondary credential inherently involve engaging vital partners such as employers and educational institutions. An example of such a partnership is the Regional ISD Strategic Plan and Educational Development Plan (EDP) project.

The Regional ISD Strategic Plan is the result of efforts on behalf of all four Northwest's ISDs. The plan aligns with the workforce development board's strategic agenda and includes emphasis on connecting students' EDP to career goals. The EDP project provides a framework for occupational exposure opportunities to be built into the curriculum during 5th, 8th, and 10th grades, allowing students, teachers, and counselors to create a meaningful EDP. The project ensures that thorough career exploration is conducted in order to select an appropriate career goal. The EDP is used as a pillar for aligning educational tracks and class selections with career goals.

In practice our Career Advisor role instructed and coached at all levels of the EDP process. From creating and disseminating approved curriculum to teaching lessons in the classroom. The Career Advisor was there to demonstrate and answer questions for classroom teachers. A Google Classroom was created to house all EDP lessons so that all teachers in our local ISDs would have access. Hands on events are a big part of this project as well, the Career Advisor collaborated and led many such events to further make the connection between education and private industry. Events such as a Friday Night Live Career Vehicle Event, Manufacturing Day events, MiCareerQuest events, schools career fairs, and more are also part of helping students make their future plans.

Northwest Michigan Works is happy to help facilitate students' journeys from education to the business world from as early as elementary school all the way through high school. Utilizing the lessons created by the EDP project as well as career events to expose and get students interested in local opportunities is the main focus .

Other deliberate activities that are aimed at improving access to postsecondary credentials leading to portable and stackable industry-recognized certifications include expanding access to the following.

- **Work-based Learning Scholarships.** Occupational training funds are committed to scholarships for low-skilled, eligible participants to attend short-term training programs that incorporate a work-based learning component. These are available via Individual Training Accounts.

- **On-the-Job Training (OJT).** Employers are offered OJT contracts as incentives to hire and train individuals who are lacking some of the necessary skills, and corresponding credentials for the job. Employers are encouraged to promote post-secondary credentialing as part of career pathway development for their new hires.
- **Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeships.** Northwest Michigan Works! can sponsor apprenticeships for any employer in any occupation, as well as manage the tracking and documentation requirements with the U.S. Department of Labor. Northwest Michigan Works! works collaboratively with secondary and postsecondary educational partners and the region's employers to develop pre-apprenticeship training models, of which the Skills Up North and the Adult Career Training programs implemented in collaboration with 2 different ISDs in the region are examples of ongoing pre-apprenticeship work. Additional pre-apprenticeship programs have been held related to occupations in construction.
- **Just-in-Time training.** These intensive, short-term training programs teach students the foundational skills necessary for an in-demand occupation. It further prepares them for additional training and corresponding credentials, based on the company's needs. Examples include Industrial Sewing, CNC, and Construction Laborer.
- **Michigan Advanced Technician Training (MAT2).** MAT2 is a partnership between Baker College of Cadillac, MEDC, Wexford-Missaukee ISD, Northwest Michigan Works!, and local employers. The program trains and credentials individuals in Mechatronics, a cross-functional and broad-based specialty. Employers sponsor and hire participants, while graduates commit to working with that employer for a minimum time period.
- **Mobile Digital Fabrication Lab ("Fab Lab").** This mobile training facility for digital manufacturing is a result of a partnership between North Central Michigan College, Northern Lakes Economic Alliance, employers, Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians, and local school districts. The Fab Lab travels to local companies and high schools to provide training and credentialing as needed;
- **Going Pro Training Fund (GPTF).** The GPTF provides support to employers who wish to upskill their existing workforce while providing incentives to grow their business, ideally resulting in new hires and higher wages for all workers as they gain valuable skills.

In an effort to further awareness of existing post-secondary credentials available within the region, the board intends to develop a campaign to increase the number of post-secondary credentials offered by existing and new education institutions listed on the Michigan Training Connect (MiTC). Listing additional options for training programs offered in the region will not only draw individuals to the Pure Michigan Talent Connect site, it will also help to inform citizens of the many opportunities available to them when it comes to credential attainment. As part of this campaign, we will need to connect the value received by the training providers as a result of listing their training programs on the MiTC. On its most basic level, the MiTC can function as a portal to Career Pathways, providing the link for individuals to see the potential benefits of earning a post-secondary credential, including increased wages and more options for them as they move through their career. At the same time, concurrent activities can be

planned to bring together employers and training providers/educational institutions to offer a space for collaboration where communication can be shared between all parties, with the expressed goal of increasing the value of existing credentials and potentially developing credentials where gaps are identified.

## Employer Engagement using Sector Initiatives

Networks Northwest facilitates engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors, in the development and continuous improvement of workforce development programs. This engagement ensures that employers are guiding the system, and that the system is delivering programs and services that ultimately meet their needs. The three core programs administered by Networks Northwest have been participating in these engagement activities, and benefitting from the guidance provided by employers. Employers also benefit by learning more about the programs. Facilitation of employer engagement is primarily done with a sector-based approach. Activities conducted include Employer Forums, surveys, participation in industry associations and councils, employer panels, membership in collaborative networks, attendance at local networking events, and more. The overall strategy is to align local resources, required partners, and entities that carry out core programs with the intent of serving employers.

Sector initiatives are led by the workforce system, but involve participation and support from multiple agencies and employers. Activities are conducted in response to needs expressed by employers. Current and ongoing activities are listed below.

### Advanced Manufacturing

Four manufacturing councils exist throughout the region, and the Northwest Michigan Works! Business Services Team has relationships with all of them: Northern Industrial Association; Grand Traverse Area Manufacturing Council; Cadillac Area Manufacturing Association; and Manistee Manufacturers Council.

All of these councils are heavily focused on talent issues at this time. Therefore, most have focused their efforts on assisting membership with recruitment. The Grand Traverse Area Manufacturing Council has coordinated a large Talent Tour on Manufacturing Day for the last several years. Wexford Missaukee ISD continues to partner with local K-12 school districts, employers and Northwest Michigan Works! to offer area students talent tours on National Manufacturing Day. Our northern ISD, Chalevoix/Emmet, has partnered with Northwest Michigan Works and several local employers to run talent tours during a week-long Manufacturing event. Our connections to local middle schools have assisted in this initiative, and we assist by providing staff members as chaperones, event logistic coordination, as well as remaining the bridge between education and business. . Multiple other career awareness and recruitment activities occur throughout the year in relation to manufacturing companies



and specifically, in partnership with these associations. Employer partners in these efforts include Clark Manufacturing, Skilled Manufacturing Inc., Kalkaska Screw Products, TranTek, ACAT Global, Avon Automotive, Springfield, Inc., Cone Drive, RJG, Team Elmer's, Cadillac Rubber, FIAMM, Rexair, TentCraft, Frankfort Manufacturing, and many more.

The workforce system supports training in Advanced Manufacturing in multiple ways. In addition to training individual customers who are interested in manufacturing, we are prepared to coordinate Just-in-Time Trainings in a variety of manufacturing occupations. We also promote manufacturing training programs, such as apprenticeships. Our in house Apprenticeship team has the ability to create in partnership a training program or apprenticeship program with local employers.

Education providers continue to redevelop programs for manufacturing careers in response to the changing word of manufacturing. They have experienced such low enrollments in the past that many had closed or suspended programs. It takes significant resources to develop a college program. Networks Northwest continues to respond to this challenge by assisting local colleges with surveys to employers, employer forums, and potential student surveys to ascertain future priorities such as justifying creation of new, modular, and robust manufacturing programs.

The Northwest Michigan Works! Business Services team works extensively with local manufacturers. Their needs are significant, the jobs can be challenging for recruitment, and skill needs are varied. In many cases, companies are willing to train on the job, especially for entry level positions, if a willing and motivated candidate can be found. The Adult Education Learning Labs and our partnership with local CTE programs such as ACT and SUN are also extremely beneficial when a candidate has the aptitude for manufacturing but needs to upgrade his/her math skills in order to be successful. Some local manufacturers have embraced the opportunity to hire individuals with disabilities, and our partnership with MRS has been very helpful.

Multiple work-based training opportunities are available to our Advanced Manufacturing employer customers, including Customized, Incumbent, and On-the-Job Training services, as needed and appropriate.

## Agriculture

The Farmers of northwest lower Michigan have embraced growth opportunities provided by local food movements, including farmers markets, farm-to-table restaurants, and farm-to-school programs. However, growth necessitates management of the business of farming and takes the farmer from the field to the office. There are also numerous small businesses that take a local farm product and add value through processing. These businesses include



winemakers, jams, hummus, hops, and many more. Many of these farms and value-added food companies need help with business planning, access to capital, identifying target markets, creating a viable pricing structure, and marketing. Assistance with these struggles is primarily delivered by the Northwest region of the Michigan Small Business Development Center. Additional partners provide funding support to these local businesses, and our relationships with them are critical to our continued support and involvement with the agriculture industry. These partners include the local economic development organizations, revolving loan funds (VentureNorth in the Northwest region), Northern Initiatives, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and more.

Multiple work-based training opportunities are available to Agriculture employer customers, including USDOL Registered Apprenticeships, Customized, Incumbent, and On-the-Job Training services, as needed and appropriate. Apprenticeships specifically offer a viable succession plan for farmers who are looking ahead to retirement.

Networks Northwest also served as the grant recipient when the local Food Innovation Hub received an MDARD Regional Food System grant. This food hub is now operational, managed by a new nonprofit, and housing multiple small agriculturally-related food businesses. We maintain connections to the regional food system, and the growers, producers, and processors who comprise it. Employer partners in the Agriculture industry include The Redheads, 9 Bean Rows, Cherry Capital Foods, St Ambrose Cellars, Sleeping Bear Apiaries, Stormcloud Brewing, Northern Organics, Food for Thought, Graceland Fruit, and many more.

Additionally, the system's partnership with Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Program of the Talent Investment Agency assists in leveraging resources to support the agriculture industry. The Agriculture Employment Specialist covering the region is closely connected to the Ag Skills Alliance coordinator.

## Energy, Transportation and Construction

This varied but connected cluster of industries is especially in need of skilled workers. Employers' outcry for workforce system support has been significant, and we continue to focus on both training and recruitment services to provide assistance.

Sector-based efforts are coordinated with the local colleges and training providers. Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) is a key partner in the five counties including and surrounding Grand Traverse County. Northwest Michigan Works! has collaborated with NMC on their Building Tomorrow events. Building Tomorrow is a hands-on construction trades awareness and readiness event for area high school students. When Northwest MiCareerQuest was brought to the area NMCs Building Tomorrow Event made a transition into this larger hands on event.

The Transportation industry is also experiencing significant labor shortages. The impact of this industry on multiple other sectors makes it a lynchpin in the region's economic vitality. In order to address the need, Networks Northwest will dedicate funds for Individual Training Accounts to support multiple truck-driver trainings; the number per year will be determined based on funding availability. We will also pursue Just-in-Time training as appropriate. Educational partners in this industry include Pinnacle Truck Driving and Road Warrior Trucking.

The construction industry's needs are significantly high as well. The recent rebound in development has put pressure on the industry to quickly ramp up. The lack of well-trained and capable workers has impeded potential growth of the companies and the region. Networks Northwest partners with NMC who coordinates a career fair and expo event called Building Tomorrow now rolled into the Northwest MiCareerQuest. Region wide we are collaborating with employers and schools to bring hands on career events to our k-12 students. This talent pipeline creation strategy has received support from partners and employers alike. . Employer partners in this industry include the local Home Builders Association, Kendall Electric, Windemuller, D&W Mechanical, Springfield Inc., UA Local 85, Airgas, Northern A-1 Services, Builders Exchange, Burdco, Team Elmer's, Hallmark Construction, and significant representation from small independent contractors

Northwest Michigan Works! has successfully developed a USDOL Registered Apprenticeship to be used by employers in the construction industry.

Utilities operating in the region are in need of skilled talent to fill critical positions that help to support the region's infrastructure. Jobs like electrical power-line installers and repairers, power plant operators, and others remain unfilled while utility companies search for skilled workers. While current levels of job openings fall slightly below the State and National levels, the industry itself has seen growth over the last few years, and we expect to see that rate of growth increase over the next decade. Charlevoix-Emmet ISD has produced some cohorts of line-workers; additional cohorts are expected.

## Healthcare

As expressed in the Regional Plan, Healthcare is a priority industry in the region for very good reason. The very high demand for workers, variety of career options, and extreme lack of skilled workers make this industry especially complex and in need of support.

Sector-based activities are focused on recruitment activities as well as training programs. Networks Northwest dedicates funds for Individual Training Accounts to support multiple C.N.A. training, due to such a high need for that occupation.

Previous Employer Forums have indicated a large need for Home Health Aides among other entry level healthcare positions. A constant partner in this undertaking has been the region's

Area Agency on Aging. From partnering with Networks Northwest to study regional needs for healthcare workers (Career Awareness Campaign for the Home Health Aide occupation) to a new project, working on a Career Pathways project. This project will be accessible on the Northwest Michigan Works! website and will allow users to explore multiple career pathways while learning where to go locally for more information and/or educational opportunities. Users will also be able to find basic information about wages, job outlook, and more by navigating their chosen pathway.

The Career Awareness Campaign identified target audiences such as stay-at-home parents, college students, and recent retirees. The messaging focused on the rewarding and fulfilling aspect of the career. The campaign included a dedicated website with a feed of home health positions posted on Pure Michigan Talent Connect. A committee of home health agencies advised and provided input on the campaign. Employer partners in this effort included Monarch Home Health, In-Home Health, Harbor Care Associates, Comfort Keepers, and more. While the results of the campaign were mixed, we intend to convene similar networks of industry specific employers to continue brainstorming effective methods to promote healthcare occupations throughout the region.

Multiple work-based training opportunities are available to Healthcare employer customers, including Apprenticeships, Customized, Incumbent, and On-the-Job Training services, as needed and appropriate. Additionally, non-traditional apprenticeships in home health aide, certified nurse aide, and other healthcare occupations offer an alternative training option for these companies.

## Hospitality

Because many hospitality-based positions are seasonal and lower in pay, our services to hospitality employers are focused on assisting with job postings, promoting job openings, and sending customers to job fairs. However, additional services are available for those positions that offer full-time, year-round employment. These services may include On-the-Job Training or enhanced support for recruitment, as needed and appropriate.

Northwest Michigan Works! has partnered with Boyne Resorts, North Central Michigan College and the American Culinary Federation in the development of an innovative Department of Labor Registered Culinary Apprenticeship Program offering on the job training with executive chef mentors along with an engaging hospitality curriculum taught by an instructor with firsthand knowledge. The ACF will provide online courses preparing the apprentices to achieve their Sous Chef certification. The apprentices will earn two additional credentials including the DOL National Credential and the NCMC Hospitality Certificate. After completion, the journey workers will have an opportunity to mentor new apprentices or relocate within any of the Boyne locations across the nation.

In addition, Boyne Resorts participates in our Business Resource Network, a program that assists with employee retention issues. We have seen the benefit of having a third party available to the workforce of companies that have traditional challenges such as turnover and working with individuals with barriers. As the Culinary Apprenticeship program expands to other hospitality employers, it is our intention to also expand on our Business Resource Network offerings and create another BRN cohort to serve the Hospitality sector.

### Information and Business Services

Many occupations in this sector require college degrees, primarily at the Bachelor's level. The local region's training support is limited to short-term programs, and therefore our sector-based work is focused on Information Technology. These occupations require various industry certifications, stepping stones, and short-term training options. Employer partners represent multiple industries, as well as IT and software companies, because companies from all sectors require IT infrastructure.

An ongoing activity in support of this sector is the Northwestern Michigan College and Northwest Michigan Works Regional Job Fair. This is a new combined effort and brings together the efforts of the Information Technology Career Fair, the NMC Job Fair, and the Jobs for Vets Hiring Event. Job fair fatigue and the recognition that many employers were participating in all three events brought the partners together to better serve the community. The employers involved in the IT Career Fair have always expressed interest in pre-screening of attendees and this continued into the combined event. Employers were able to preview guaranteed attendees and let our teams know they wanted to speak with certain individuals. As a result, employers see fewer applicants, but those applicants are typically a very good fit for the open positions. Students from NMC's Computer Information Technology programs also attend, so they can ask questions about the careers available from local companies. Other educational providers exhibit as well, including New Horizons and Ferris State University. Employer partners include SafetyNet, Hagerty Insurance, Munson Medical Center, Wyant Computers, InForth Technology, and more.

Another sector-based activity in Information Technology was the development of a Software Developer Apprenticeship program. This program utilized a customized schedule of classes in NMC's Computer Information Technology – Developer program, in combination with on the job learning. Due to lack of employer and job seeker (apprentice) involvement, this apprenticeship was decertified by the USDOL. Northwest Michigan Works! Apprenticeship team is committed to working with employers and educational partners such as our community colleges to create new apprenticeship opportunities when the right mix of students and employer needs arise.

Multiple work-based training opportunities are available to our Information and Business Services employer customers, including Apprenticeships, Customized, Incumbent, and On-the-Job Training services, as needed and appropriate.

## Coordination

### Coordination with Unemployment Insurance Programs

All workforce development frontline staff are knowledgeable about unemployment insurance programs, but are not subject matter experts on how the unemployment insurance system works. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided an excellent opportunity for front-line staff to learn more about how unemployment insurance works in Michigan - valuable skills that can be carried through as the pandemic eases and the focus on unemployment begins to abate. Even armed with this knowledge, staff have full access to information related to unemployment, which can be passed along to unemployment insurance claimants in need of claim assistance; some resources include direct phone lines connecting customers directly to a representative from the unemployment insurance agency, materials available on the unemployment insurance website, as well as fact sheets. They may not have the answer to all questions related to unemployment insurance, but they know where to find the information and are trained to do so in order to provide the highest levels of customer service possible to customers who are often reacting to a recent job loss and are receptive to any assistance we can provide.

Our region is fortunate to have a local Unemployment Insurance office located in the Traverse City American Job Center. This has made it much more convenient for customers who have questions about their claim and are experiencing problems to access the assistance needed. In addition, we have at least one dedicated phone line available in all AJCs that automatically prioritizes customers calling UIA via a dedicated phone line in the customer service queue, providing meaningful assistance to claimants. Each Job Center has either a room or a portion of the public resource room that has dedicated computers for use in filing a claim. Written step-by-step instructions are also available to customers needing assistance.

Employer customers often have questions about the unemployment system, and our Business Services Representatives are asked for help. They are well-prepared with web sites, resources, and information to provide to companies. UIA provides informational sessions to companies at least once per year in the region; we are present at this session (it is often held in our conference room) and provide companies with information about our services as well.

In order to ensure that all staff across all programs, including Adult Education, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and other partners, are knowledgeable about the resources from UIA, Networks Northwest will implement annual training sessions. These sessions will identify and

share UIA resources, the latest fact sheets and web sites, and any additional information of value to attendees.

## Coordination with Economic Development Services

More than ever before, the topic of Talent Development leads most conversations focused on Economic Development. Communities interested in economic growth and prosperity must address the talent gaps within their workforce and work collaboratively with local, regional and state level partners to overcome skills gaps and worker shortages. For this reason, Networks Northwest continues to connect with local economic development agencies and state departments to ensure a positive economic trajectory for the region.

## Economic Development Organizations

Networks Northwest and Northwest Michigan Works! partner closely with the region's 4 economic development organizations; The Alliance for Economic Success, The Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce, The Northern Lakes Economic Alliance and Traverse Connect. Collaboration takes place at both the leadership and staff levels and includes joint participation in regional job fairs, support of business retention and growth projects, talent attraction initiatives, fostering internship and apprenticeship opportunities, and administering various grant opportunities.

## Collaborative Development Council

As the lead entity for the Northwest Lower Michigan Collaborative Development Council (CDC), Networks Northwest is able to convene the region's economic development organizations and state partners. These convenings bring together like minded organizations with a focus on improving the overall economic prosperity of the region. Through these meetings CDC leadership is able to identify and prioritize the region's economic opportunities and priorities. Working collaboratively, the leadership team operationalizes these strategies within their respective subregions; while still maintaining and supporting a unified region wide approach to economic development

## Joint Retention Visits

The joint retention visit is an invaluable component of the region's overall menu of economic development services and programs. Northwest Michigan Works! Business Services Representatives take a lead role in business retention visits. Partnering closely with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation and the local economic development entity, the Michigan Works! Business Services Representative ensures employers' business related concerns and needs are discovered and explored on a regular basis. These regularly scheduled meetings also allow company leadership the opportunity to learn more about the services available at the local and state levels. Information gathered during these visits can be valuable in shaping future economic and talent development strategies.

## Entrepreneurial skills

Northwest Lower Michigan has a strong history of, and bright future for, entrepreneurship. Support for entrepreneurs is provided by the Northwest Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC), local chapters of SCORE, and Junior Achievement. The SBDC offers training and counseling for entrepreneurs and early growth stage companies. Working closely with the Northwest Michigan Works! Business Services Team, SBDC staff ensure customers have access to the most complete set of business services available. Likewise, as the Northwest Michigan Works! Business Services Representatives serve their customers by being able to identify opportunities to refer and connect employers and entrepreneurs to the SBDC. Northwest Michigan Works! and SBDC leadership meet on a regular basis to discuss joint programming opportunities and collaborative projects.

## One-Stop Delivery System

### Continuous Improvement

Networks Northwest provides WIOA Titles I and III via in-house service delivery through its workforce development arm, Northwest Michigan Works!, Inc. Networks Northwest provides administration and coordination for Title II, in partnership with Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, who delivers the educational services. These services are continuously improved through internal and external feedback, ongoing program development, a close watch on performance measures, and continuous collaboration with local partners. Title IV is delivered by Michigan Rehabilitation Services, and is available through well-connected partnership and referrals from the other programs.

Internal monitoring is conducted on all workforce programs over the course of a program year. Title I and National Dislocated Worker Grants include a file review for 100% of the enrollments at the time of registration and at exit, verifying each enrollee is eligible and verifying documentation to support eligibility and data validation is acceptable. Shortly after enrollment and again at exit, the ISS/IEP is evaluated for compliance with state and local requirements as well as for quality. As Title I participants are exited, employment and performance outcomes are also monitored. Title II conducts a 100% file review at least annually. Monitoring of Title III is typically conducted via observation, and includes observations of individual RESEA appointments (along with their ISS), ensuring all required posters are appropriately posted and up to date, and observing customer and staff interactions in the Resource Room. Internal monitoring also occurs for PATH, Offender Success, and Trade programs. Providing internal monitoring continuously provides the opportunity to identify and resolve problems before they significantly impact quality and performance for each individual



program, while at the same time striving for quality service delivery. The consistency of monitoring on a regular basis as well as reviewing all programs provides us the ability to see overarching trends over time and across programs. Issues that are discovered through this process inform staff professional development, program changes, and new goals and objectives. It is the goal to review and improve the way in which programs are monitored. It is intended that any review and restructure of monitoring methods will result in more frequent, effective and efficient internal monitoring activities.

In addition, the LEO monitoring unit conducts reviews of workforce programs according to their own schedule, with comprehensive reviews for each program typically conducted once every two years. As required by law, Networks Northwest has a single audit conducted by an independent firm.

### Access to American Job Centers - Updated August 2022

Within the 10-county region, Northwest Michigan Works! has four American Job Centers (AJCs). At each AJC, job seekers are provided an opportunity to prepare for, obtain, and advance in meaningful employment. Additionally, employers may access services to easily identify skilled workers and capitalize on other available supports for retaining their current workforce.

Comprehensive service centers are located in Traverse City and Cadillac. Both provide a full-range of high-quality services to both employers and job-seekers.

Traverse City Michigan Works! Service Center 1209 S. Garfield, Suite C Traverse City, MI 49686 (231) 922-3700 Hours of Operation: M - F, 8:00- 5:00	Cadillac Michigan Works! Service Center 401 Lake St, Suite 700 Cadillac, MI 49601 (231) 775-3408 Hours of Operation: M - F, 8:00 - 5:00
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Affiliate service centers are located in Manistee and Petoskey. Affiliate centers also provide high-quality services to the public, albeit at reduced hours.

Manistee Michigan Works! Service Center 400 River Street Manistee, MI 49660 (231) 398-3150	Petoskey Michigan Works! Service Center 2240 Mitchell Park Dr. Petoskey, MI 49770 (231) 347-5150
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Hours of Operation: M - F, 8:00- 5:00	Hours of Operation: M - F, 8:00- 5:00
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Each AJC is co-located with Adult Education programs and services, including Learning Labs. One-stop partners are also co-located, wherever possible and include Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker staff, Veterans Services, Offender Success, and Department of Health and Human Services.

The use of technology is especially critical in terms of reaching those in the most rural counties of Northwest Michigan. The world wide web provides access to multiple job search resources like the Pure Michigan Talent Connect; O\*Net OnLine; Michigan eLibrary; career resource tools; veteran information and resources; local community services; as well as how-to videos for job search, resume development, cover letters, and information videos on various occupations.

As described elsewhere in this plan, Northwest Michigan Works! has begun to deliver many services both in-person as well as via a virtual platform. The COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity to adopt technology (web-based contact form, online chat tools with bot technology) to help customers connect with staff, although many still prefer the standard telephone call or texting as a means to contact a Career Advisor. Services like intake, registration, workshops, and others can be delivered through a variety of platforms, including Google Meet, Zoom, Online Chat, or other technology that works best for both the customer and the staff person.

Additionally, the Networks Northwest website hosts an orientation video for Northwest Michigan Works! allowing customers to virtually experience the services available at each of the centers. All of these technological tools allow for customers to access one-stop services in a variety of ways, regardless of geographic location throughout the region.

In addition to technology, career services are also available as a result of partner relationships throughout the region. For example, Career Advisors are regularly available at Benzie Area Christian Neighbors and Next Generation Learning Center. Several local libraries also provide space for Career Advisors to meet with customers as well, offering a location closer to their home than an existing AJC. Career Advisors are free to meet with and provide services to customers in public locations that best meet the customer’s situation and needs.

### Non-discrimination

Networks Northwest and Northwest Michigan Works!, Inc. are committed to non-discrimination in the delivery of and access to workforce programs and services. This commitment is demonstrated in a myriad of ways, complying with the nondiscrimination provisions of the WIOA and Americans with Disabilities Act.

All registered one-stop center customers receive a copy of the document titled “Equal Opportunity is the Law” as well as the agency’s “Complaint Policy and Procedure” handout. This handout outlines the necessary steps in the case a customer suspects discrimination. The “Equal Opportunity is the Law” poster, in English and Spanish, is also prominently displayed in all the one-stop service centers and at Networks Northwest, near public entrances and in common areas. Further, an approved Equal Opportunity tagline is present on all one-stop publications and websites.

Customers are provided appropriate auxiliary aids and services, including assistive technology devices and services, where necessary to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, the available programs or activities. Reasonable accommodations are made for customers requesting such accommodations to ensure equal access and opportunity. Interpretive services, including American Sign Language, are provided to customers as needed through Language Line. While all customer workstations are fully accessible, Northwest Michigan Works! is interested in establishing at least one station in each Service Center with enhanced accessibility to include specialty software like JAWS and other software, hardware and other accommodations that are commonly needed to meet customer needs.

Training opportunities on matters such as equal opportunity and non-discrimination, the American with Disabilities Act, and serving those individuals with disabilities will be attended by Northwest staff regularly so as to stay abreast of best practices and procedures.

Internal monitoring of programs includes provisions for assessing non-discrimination and equal opportunity within each Northwest Michigan Works! service center. Additionally, LEO conducts regular reviews of the Northwest’s Equal Opportunity policy and procedures, further ensuring access and opportunity for all individuals. The board continues to identify areas that can be improved to allow for greater access to services for persons with all abilities.

### WIOA Required Partners

Partner Name	Program
Northwest Michigan Works!	Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth
Northwest Michigan Works!/Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District	Title II: Adult Education and Literacy
Networks Northwest	Title III, Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services Trade Adjustment Assistance
Michigan Rehabilitation Services	Title IV: Vocational Rehabilitation

North Central Michigan College Northwestern Michigan College	Postsecondary Career and Technical Education programs, Carl D. Perkins
Michigan State Housing Development Authority	Family Self Sufficiency Program
AARP Foundation	Title V of the Older Americans Act, Senior Community Service Employment Program
State of Michigan, Department of Health & Human Services	SNAP & TANF
Telamon	National Job Farmworker Program
Native American Programming	Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians Little River Band of Ottawa Indians Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
State of Michigan, Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity	Veterans Employment & Training Services Migrant Seasonal Farmworker Programming Unemployment Insurance

Resource contributions include programs and services provided by each agency, depending upon eligibility, for shared customers via referral. Resource contributions, described and formalized through signed Infrastructure Funding Agreements, for costs associated with AJC infrastructure are negotiated each Program Year with each partner. Each WIOA Required Partner's share of IFA costs, if any, are calculated and applied through the use of a methodology developed in partnership with LEO, the Michigan Works! Association, the Michigan Works! agencies, and other Partners. Expected infrastructure costs are reconciled against actual costs at least quarterly.

## Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment & Training Activities

### Career Services, Basic and Individualized

WIOA Career Services are provided to individuals who have been determined to be eligible, suitable and willing to participate in the WIOA program as either a Dislocated Worker or Adult. Career Advisors and staff working in the Resource Rooms work together to provide WIOA services. As an entry point into the Northwest Michigan Works! system for workers who have been dislocated from their jobs and are now filing for unemployment insurance benefits, Resource Room staff act as one of the primary sources of referrals for individuals to the WIOA

program. Resource Room staff engage in conversation with individuals they come into contact with, whether physically within the Resource Room or through an alternate form of technology, including telephone conversations. During these informal conversations, staff are attempting to determine which individuals may be in need of WIOA services to achieve their employment goals.

When a Career Advisor receives a referral to the WIOA program, additional assessments are conducted, including written assessments and informal conversations, with the expressed purpose of determining program eligibility, suitability, and willingness to engage in program activities. It is during this time where a relationship begins to be developed between the Career Advisor and the customer. Once the Career Advisor and customer agree to move forward with enrollment, eligibility paperwork is completed, and design of the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) begins. The IEP is essentially a plan of services that guides service provision throughout the WIOA enrollment. The focus of the IEP is around identification of barriers leading to sustainable employment and how to best provide services and referrals to remove or mitigate identified barriers. The region very often sees participants with barriers like transportation, limited/no access to childcare, computer literacy limitations, lack of job search skills, and/or lack of hard skills needed to compete for in-demand occupations. All services provided to a WIOA participant are to be represented in the IEP, which can and should be modified and updated over the course of the participant's time in the WIOA program.

Some participants will receive an objective assessment as part of their IEP. The Northwest region uses the TABE to as the standard objective assessment to provide to WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers. While the TABE is not required for all WIOA Adults and Dislocated Worker participants, it is encouraged for those entering training programs with rigorous academic components. Additional assessments are available to inform career exploration, career pathways, and other characteristics to be considered for a participant's unique plan of services. WorkKeys (in addition to the TABE) can be appropriate for customers who intend to enter an occupation without first receiving training services. Kuder Journey is an online assessment tool that helps customers identify occupations that match their interests and work values, skills, and natural aptitudes. Customers in need of obtaining their high school diploma or equivalent, in need of remedial education services, or who have been determined to be basic skills deficient as defined by WIOA are referred to the Adult Education Learning Labs, which are co-located in each AJC. Services received in the Learning Labs may be provided concurrently with other WIOA services, as appropriate.

Participants work with Career Advisors to identify career targets that match their interests and that are also in-demand within the region. As targets are identified, participants are exposed to labor market information regarding the occupations and industries in which they are interested. Customers learn about wages, credential requirements, and local demand for each occupation.

They also learn about what a typical day on the job might look like for occupations of interest. Participants may conduct this research through a variety of methods and tools, including internet-based research, videos, informational interviews, and more. Knowledge is power, and the more information a participant has about possible career fields, the more likely they are to succeed when they become employed.

In addition to services described above, WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers may receive any or all of the services available to participants through the program, including but not limited to:

- Job search assistance
- Assistance applying for jobs
- Assistance creating a resume, cover letter, references, and/or portfolio
- Assistance with interviewing, which may include mock interviews and online interviewing
- Assistance with how to negotiate and accept a job offer and how to move through the onboarding process
- Development of employability skills
- Training, including classroom training, on-the-job training, or becoming part of a United States Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship
- Supportive Services
- Networking techniques, which may include practicing their 'elevator pitch'

Services may be provided in a workshop format or one-on-one. Many times a combination of both mediums are needed. One-on-one career counseling is needed in many situations, especially to discuss certain types of employability skills or other topics particular to a specific participant. Other times, participants benefit from hearing one another's stories and picking up tips and tricks that have worked for other participants. Providing both environments is important to service delivery design.

Regardless of the services provided, Veterans receive Priority of Service to all services and have access to specialized services because of their status as a veteran, eligible spouse of a veteran, or transitioning service member. Veterans typically are in need of assistance as they work to translate skills developed in a military environment to those in civilian jobs.

Services may be provided in-person or virtually - whichever method works best for the services needed and in a manner that best meets the needs of the participant. Virtual service delivery may include telephone, Zoom, Skype, Google Meet, Facebook Live, Live Chat, and more.

## Training Services

The focus of training programs is to improve job seeker customer's skill sets in a way that meets employer demand. Because a vast range of skills is needed among employers, and a variety of skill sets exists within the local labor pool, we utilize a variety of training models.

- **Adult Education:** Open-entry, open-exit learning labs assist students to achieve their GED or High School Diploma, improve their basic academic skills, or learn English as a second language. Students may also receive remedial education or digital literacy education. Each student's education plan is individualized based on thorough, diagnostic assessments. Career planning is integrated into orientation and programming, to ensure that students continue on to postsecondary training and/or on-the-job learning.
- **Classroom Training:** Eligible participants can attend an existing training program that prepares them for an in-demand occupation. Examples include completing a degree, or pursuing a short-term training program such as office assistant, project management, or accounting. This training service is available through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITA). All classroom training programs funded with WIOA dollars are included on the eligible training provider list, or Michigan Training Connect.
- **Work-based Learning Scholarships:** Eligible participants can attend an existing training program that is short-term, occupationally-specific, and incorporates hands-on training. Examples include Certified Nurse Aide and Truck Driving. This training service is available through the use of ITAs.
- **Just-in-Time Training:** Employers work with a training provider of their choice to develop an accelerated vocational training program. Northwest Michigan Works! recruits, screens, and enrolls a full class. Examples include Basic Machining, Welding, and Food Service. This training service is available through the use of ITAs.
- **Customized Training:** Employers work with a training provider of their choice to develop a customized training program. Employers and Northwest Michigan Works! together conduct recruitment, screening, and interviewing. Employers commit to hire successful trainees and contribute 50% of the cost of the training.
- **On-the-Job Training:** Employers hire an eligible participant and provide training on the job. The employer is reimbursed 50% of the worker's wage for the training period.
- **Incumbent Worker Training:** Northwest Michigan Works! can subsidize the cost of training for existing workers. Funds are limited, but application is easy and eligibility of training participants is simpler than other training programs.
- **Work-Based Training for Special Populations:** Job seekers can access scholarships that must include work-based learning, like Apprenticeships and On-the-Job Training.
- **US DOL Registered Apprenticeships:** Endorsed by the United States Department of Labor, Apprenticeships combine work-based learning with related technical instruction, after the trainee has been hired.

With the exception of On-the-Job, Customized and Incumbent Worker Training, all of the above training models must result in an industry-recognized credential.

Unlike with the previous legislation (Workforce Investment Act – WIA), WIOA Adults and Dislocated Workers are not required to access basic career services prior to enrolling in the program. However, many individuals seek additional assistance, often provided under the WIOA Program, if they are unable to secure employment with self-directed and/or staff facilitated services in the resource rooms. Many individualized career services are also available prior to enrollment in a program, however customers who require long-term one-on-one career advising, and/or who enter a WIOA-funded training program, must enroll in the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker (or Youth) programs.

## Youth Services

Youth and young adults in the region are impacted by many factors. Among others, these include housing, nutrition, health care, parental support, transportation, drug use, and criminal behavior. Partners of the workforce investment system and other service providers are available to address many of these issues. These providers include school homelessness services, free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs, county health departments, public transportation, substance abuse treatment providers, and juvenile justice.

In a perfect scenario, all of the above issues would be resolved and/or not applicable. Supportive and healthy environments would make fertile ground for teaching employability skills, and drop-out prevention would not be necessary. While the above providers are doing their part to address these issues, the workforce system must do its part to support youth in their efforts to prepare for sustainable, family-supporting employment. Together with partners like secondary and post-secondary education institutions, WIOA Required Partners, the Disability Network, and other community and faith-based organizations (for example Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, Child and Family Services, and Crossroads for Youth), Northwest Michigan Works continues to develop a framework of services designed to assist local youth and young adults as they move toward self-sufficiency.

In order to most effectively meet the needs of youth in the region, the following services are available to individuals ages 16 to 24 under the WIOA Youth program:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
- Alternative secondary school offerings or dropout recovery services;
- Paid and unpaid work experiences with an academic and occupational education component;
- Occupational skill training, with a focus on recognized postsecondary credentials and in-demand occupations;
- Leadership development activities (e.g., community service, peer-centered activities);
- Supportive services;
- Adult mentoring;
- Follow-up services for at least 12 months after program completion;



- Comprehensive guidance and counseling;
- Integrated education and training for a specific occupation or cluster;
- Financial literacy education;
- Entrepreneurial skills training;
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services;
- Postsecondary preparation and transition activities.

These required program elements are delivered in a seamless fashion, with individualized strategies to fit the needs of each youth participant.

The services listed above are currently delivered directly by Northwest Michigan Works! staff, but partnerships have been established and are in development whereas other appropriate community partners may also provide services, as applicable and appropriate, under the WIOA Youth program. See Appendix D-1 for an outline of WIOA Service delivery by agency, including an identification of possible community partners and agencies with which Northwest Michigan Works! anticipates the pursuit of a formalized agreement to provide services. Services provided by a partner agency and are funded by the WIOA Youth program will be awarded as the result of a competitive bidding process. If services are provided free of charge by the partner agency, then the provider will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Networks Northwest.

## Basic Skills Deficiency

See Appendix D-2 for the local area's definition of Part B of Basic Skills Deficiency.

## Youth Activities

Youth activities in the Northwest region are as follows:

- WIOA Youth Program administered by Career Advisors
- Jobs for Michigan's Graduates Program administered by JMG Specialists
- Northwestern Michigan College shared position, Employment Specialist
- MiSTEM partnership shared position, Career Advisor

The WIOA Youth program primarily focuses on Out-Of-School Youth (OSY), but we encourage In-School Youth (ISY) opportunities as well. When Career Advisors begin working with a customer who is deemed eligible for WIOA Youth, a review of our services is provided, eligibility and suitability are determined, and the general expectations and anticipated experience of the program are explained to the customer. Once enrolled, the Career Advisor and participant begin designing the plan of services (Individual Service Strategy, or ISS) to be provided to the participant in order to achieve the customer's and program's goals. The planning of the ISS may take multiple sessions, and is structured as coaching sessions where



discussions, assessments and other career exploration take place; a focus on barrier identification also occurs. Once ready, the Career Advisor works with the participant to identify possible employers of choice and/or training that is needed to obtain desired employment objectives. With the help and tutelage of the Career Advisor, the participant takes the next steps in their plan with the ultimate goal of unsubsidized employment or potentially enrollment in post-secondary education.

As barriers are removed, and when others are identified during the service plan, they are addressed - either using a partner or community resource, or with program-specific funding dollars. For example, if not for a transportation issue the participant could be gainfully employed, the purchase of bus tokens or gas cards may effectively eliminate this barrier to employment.

### Out-of-School Youth

There is a need in the Northwest region to provide intensive, specialized services for young adults who are not in school and struggling with multiple barriers. Residents aged 16-19 and 20-24 typically experience unemployment at much higher levels than the rest of the population. This group is in need of help and will be served when they meet eligibility criteria outlined by the WIOA.

The Northwest region's strategy for serving out-of-school youth ages 16 to 24 is to develop a comprehensive mix of services, utilizing an intensive case management model. This model embraces a "whole-life" approach, encompassing the participant's education, work, soft skills, life skills, employability skills, leadership, and more. The goal is for the participant to actively participate in the program, with 12 or more months of follow-up services to be provided post-exit.

Case managers are deployed throughout the region to serve out of school youth. The Career Advisors will work with program participants to create an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) for each youth. This plan will identify barriers, and select any and all of the 14 program elements that are appropriate to that individual youth. The ISS is a dynamic document, and will change throughout participation to reflect goals obtained and changes to the participant's situation.

Out-of-school Youth with disabilities are assisted with the mix of services appropriate to their needs, and are connected to Michigan Rehabilitation Services for vocational rehabilitation counseling as needed.

## In-School Youth

Services for youth who are currently in school will be coordinated in a classroom setting whenever possible, and with individual appointments as well. This population in particular also requires at least some coordination with parents and/or guardians.

Eligibility for in-school youth is as follows:

- A. Age 14 to 21 and attending school; and
- B. Low-income individual; and
- C. Fall within one or more of the following categories:
  - 1. Individual with a disability
  - 2. Basic skills deficient
  - 3. English language learner
  - 4. Offender
  - 5. Homeless, runaway, or foster child
  - 6. Pregnant or parenting
  - 7. An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment

The local policy defining Youth who Need Additional Assistance is attached to this plan as Appendix D-3.

Most of the region's in-school youth are provided services under the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) program. This model recognizes that adult intervention helps youth make the right choices, but it is often missing from the lives of disadvantaged youth. It is also essential that youth learn "soft skills," the types of skills that are applicable to any job. These include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, respect for authority, and personal accountability. These are the skills in highest demand from employers around the region, regardless of industry or occupation.

The Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) program incorporates all of the above and more. Positive relationships with adult instructors are a foundation of the program. The curriculum consists of teaching youth 37 competencies that prepare them to be strong citizens and effective workers.

In order to ensure that youth have experience-based opportunities, the program incorporates a part-time, competitive wage Work Experience program for each student, as appropriate, in the public or private sector. This provides youth with the most effective form of soft skills training, while also supporting them with intensive case management and job coaching.

In-school Youth with disabilities will be assisted with the mix of services appropriate to their needs, and will be connected to Michigan Rehabilitation Services for Pre-Employment Transition Counseling.

When JMG participants are identified as individuals who are in need of services that can be provided under the WIOA In-School-Youth (ISY) program, the appropriate referral is made to a Career Advisor and the enrollment process begins. Other sources of WIOA ISY referrals can come from secondary schools, parents, or by self-referral. Most ISY participants are in need of intensive case management services, experiencing a multitude of barriers. All services available under the WIOA Youth Program are available to an ISY participant.

### Jobs for Michigan's Graduates

The Jobs for Michigan's Graduates program is a mix of in-school and out-of-school programs. Currently we have 5 programs, Charlevoix/Emmet ISD, the Traverse Bay Area ISD, the Wexford/Missaukee ISD, Cadillac Area Public Schools and Innovations High School, and CASMAN Academy. Each of our five JMG Specialists carry a caseload of 50 or more new students in addition to those in follow up.

JMG's mission of equipping young people with the skills necessary to overcome barriers and achieve success in education, employment, and as citizens is aligned with our organizational values and fits with our mission as well. JMG Specialists carry this mission out in numerous ways including classroom curriculum, informal conversations, leadership conferences, talent tours, referrals to external partners when appropriate, work experience opportunities and more.

In order to ensure that youth have experience-based opportunities, the program incorporates a part-time, competitive wage Work Experience program for each student, as appropriate, in the public or private sector. This provides youth with an effective form of soft skills training, while also supporting them with intensive case management and job coaching.

JMG Specialists support the goal to serve at least 375 total students between the JMG In-School and Out-of-School programs, with enrollments in WIOA for students who are eligible and in need of WIOA services.

Networks Northwest is committed to braiding JMG with WIOA Youth, both in terms of funding and programming when appropriate. We have entered into a contract with the Youth Solutions Inc., the JMG administrative entity, for the last six years and intend to do so again for future years. We will continue to partner with the local Career Tech Centers, as well as alternative schools to deliver the program and meet performance requirements of both programs.

The ultimate goal of all activity, regardless of the program, is full-time employment and long-term retention. Each youth's ISS will facilitate the goals, objectives, and milestones, in order to achieve success.

### Northwestern Michigan College (NMC) Collaboration

A recent partnership with Northwestern Michigan College highlights our efforts to search for and serve those individuals in need of Northwest Michigan Works! services. We have an embedded staff person on the college campus able to deliver Career and Employment services to both walk-in traffic and in the classroom when needed. Our shared position is a 50-50 split between Northwest Michigan Works! and the college; the staff person is able to provide Michigan Works! services and make appropriate referrals to the Michigan Works center for those in need of more one-on-one services and/or enrollment into an appropriate program. Services being delivered on campus are as follows:

- Resume help
- Mock interviews
- Career assessment
- Career pathway planning

These services can be delivered both individually and classroom setting. Our Employment Specialist is flexible and can adapt to campus needs. Working with the Advising Department at NMC has allowed for considerable access to the students at NMC, and again a shared mission to connect our customers/students with employment has only enhanced a valuable and established partnership.

### MiSTEM Collaboration

Our partnership with the MiSTEM Network Northwestern Lower Michigan Region includes a shared position, a Career Advisor, who works with area schools to bridge private industry and educational institutions. Bringing these two worlds together is a big commitment and an even bigger undertaking. It has taken someone that knows both worlds and has the energy and drive to achieve the mission. The Career Advisor position is charged with exposing students to career possibilities with a special emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) careers. Our Career Advisor can help in the following ways:

- Career Exploration Planning for Schools (K-12)
- Career Exploration Resource Development and Curation
- Career Pathways
- Building Connections Between Schools and Businesses
  - Business Tours
  - Classroom Connections
  - Career Event Planning

- Career Speakers
- Working with Businesses to Engage Students in Their Work

Career exposure takes place in collaboration with school counselors, teachers, and administrators. Classroom curriculum has been updated, professional development has been enacted, guest speakers have been scheduled and career exploration events have all occurred in an effort to bring private business into the classroom. Studies show that exposure to careers as early as lower elementary increases student interest and eventually helps students make better informed career decisions. Essentially these students have an advantage in the job market before they even enter it. Several projects are underway that will work together to advance this mission:

- Career Cards offer elementary students exposure to different careers.
- Multiple “Touch a Truck Events” provide elementary students with a hands-on experience with vehicles used in transportation and occupations related to law enforcement and protective services.
- Curriculum development gives middle school students exposure to resume writing and other pertinent workforce skills
- MiCareerQuest offers an exciting opportunity for students to be exposed to an enormous gathering of employers to actual experience elements of in-demand occupations
- Talent Tours
- Work Experience
- Access to locally developed web-based Career Pathways materials, which guides them as they research careers and find local information on how to gain entry into the industry; information about wages, demand outlook, and local testimonials among other great information is also available.

As with most programming, Northwest Michigan Works! leverages the available resources, services, and expertise offered by each program and staff in order to provide the services the Youth in our region need most in order to achieve their educational and employment goals. Partnering with community agencies and organizations further enhances the value and available opportunities in the region. We are better together, and our youth experience that first-hand.

## Waivers

Northwest Michigan Works! takes advantage of appropriate waivers to ongoing workforce development activities in the region. Waivers provide increased flexibility that allows the

Agency to more effectively respond to the needs of employers and job seekers. Waivers in use in the Northwest Michigan region include

- A waiver of the requirement to expend 75 percent of WIOA Title I Youth State formula funding on the OSY population. The Northwest region reserves the option to lower this amount to 50 percent.

No locally-requested waivers are in use at this time.

## Coordination with Education

The Northwest Michigan Career & Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) has replaced what were previously known as the Educational Advisory Group (EAG) and the Talent District Career Council (TDCC). The CEAC advises the Workforce Development Board on issues related to education and careers. The CEAC is the local entity that formally guides collaborative partnerships with local school districts, employers, postsecondary institutions, advocates, and training providers. Members include the following:

- At least 1 Workforce Development Board member
- Employers (at least 2) who represent documented in-demand industries that provide high-wage and high-growth careers
- Representation from labor unions
- Local school district offering CTE or Adult Education Programs
- Intermediate School District offering CTE or Adult Education Programs
- Post-secondary institution
- Career and technical education administrators (non-instructional)
- Public school parent
- Academic educator
- Lead Business Service Representative from the Michigan Works! Agency
- Business Development Manager from the MEDC
- Economic Analyst from the Department of Technology, Management and Budget Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives
- Talent Development Liaison (LEO-WD)
- Secondary and Post-secondary Perkins staff

- Regional MiSTEM representative

The collaborative group identifies significant talent needs and collectively develops and implements training strategies to effectively meet employer talent needs. The Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) requires each CEAC complete an initial certification process, with subsequent re-certifications occurring bi-annually. Certifications provide guidance related to the Council's membership requirements, the establishment of metrics to achieve high performing outcomes and more. The CEAC is encouraged by Federal legislation to provide recommendations to the local Board in the development of workforce development strategies, especially as they relate to secondary and postsecondary educational institutions. As an advisory group, the CEAC will also coordinate with other educational entities in guiding career development programs and career pathways, which in addition to educational institutions may also include other programs like prisoner reentry programs and veterans programs.

The CEAC ensures that the workforce system is engaged with the education system. The CEAC, including membership, goals/metrics, and responsibilities as governed by LEO (Policy Issuance 19-29 and subsequent changes) and is designed to bring education and business together in an effort to effectively develop and implement training strategies designed to resolve talent issues experienced by the region's employers. These regular meetings ensure ongoing conversations, planning, and strategic activities that respond directly to the needs of employers.

The CEAC operating in the Northwest Michigan region has established the following metrics for Program Year 2020:

- Establish 10 new US DOL Registered Apprenticeships between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2021.
- Increase number of career pathway and exploration events promoted within Prosperity Region 2 by 10%
- Post, repost, or engage with 60x30 posts on social media platforms
- Establish or continue 6 American Job Center activities that promote 60x30
- Establish or continue 6 partner based activities that promote 60x30

In addition to use of the CEAC for connection and coordination with education institutions, the workforce system develops and maintains relationships with public and private training providers. Northwest Michigan Works! employs dedicated staff members to specialize in training programs. These individuals are the go-to resource for knowledge of training vendors

and programs; their role is to support career advisors (regardless of program), manage ITAs, and maintain relationships with training vendors.

Another area where relationships with training vendors is critical is in employer services. All postsecondary institutions in the region offer training programs for employers, either already developed or customized based on need. Educators are often invited to attend the Employer Forums (see Business Services and Engaging Employers using Sector Initiatives sections) so they can hear first-hand from employers about skill shortages and workforce needs. Each Business Services Representative on our Business Services Team serves on at least one advisory board for programs at the local career tech center and/or college. Business Services Representatives often call on community college partners when partner employers are interested in access to the New Jobs Training Fund program, and to connect companies with training services for Apprenticeships, Customized Training, Incumbent Work Training, and Going Pro Talent Fund. Although communication is regular and ongoing throughout the year, the Business Enhancement Teams offer an opportunity for formal sharing of new programs, focus areas, and needs with education partners.

## Supportive Services

Northwest Michigan Works! provides supportive services to eligible participants in all workforce programs for which supportive services is an allowable cost, including:

- WIOA Adult
- WIOA Dislocated Worker
- WIOA Youth
- PATH
- Jobs for Michigan's Graduates
- Offender Success

MRS and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) also have the ability to provide supportive services as part of their programming; participants who are mutual customers of multiple programs may receive supportive services funded by more than one program concurrently, although Northwest Michigan Works!, MRS, DHHS and other partners who may provide supports attempt to coordinate services as much as possible.

One of the most daunting barriers to employment in our large rural region with inland lakes and other bodies of water placed throughout the region is transportation. With limited public transit available and long distances to travel to jobs and training, the provision of supportive services related to transportation has been extremely important to supporting participants as they work toward successful outcomes. Clothing for training or for the first few weeks of employment may also be provided to participants who are pursuing the acquisition of skills or starting a new job that requires specific types of clothing. Examples may include steel-toed



boots, scrubs, and safety glasses. Participants in training may also receive assistance with fees and other costs associated with testing to receive industry-recognized credentials. Supportive services may also be provided as assistive devices for those with disabilities.

Included as part of the initial assessment for participants is identification of barriers related to training and employment; emerging barriers may be identified throughout the period of case management. As barriers are identified, the case manager determines the options for mitigating or removing the barriers. Considerations may include a survey of community resources available to the participant, reviewing personal resources that may be available to the participant, and services that may be provided by Northwest Michigan Works!. The process for providing supportive services includes an assessment by the case manager to determine the barrier and which supportive service will be most helpful. Supportive services deemed necessary to be provided by Northwest Michigan Works! are processed through a procedure whereby the case manager requests the support, a manager reviews and approves or denies the request, and the case manager makes the appropriate entries and notations in the OSMIS. If not already represented there, the barrier and supportive service are included in the participant's ISS/IEP in the One-Stop Management Information System or in the IPE by the vocational rehabilitation counselor.

The local supportive services policy is attached to this plan as Appendix B.

Northwest Michigan Works! does not offer needs related payments at this time.

## Coordination with Supportive Services

In every county throughout the region, a human services collaborative body convenes multiple human services organizations on a monthly basis. This group represents a vast array of supportive services and other applicable community resources. Northwest Michigan Works! participates with every group and regularly attends meetings, representing WIOA Titles I, II, and III. MRS also participates, representing WIOA Title IV. Through this connection and others, the entire workforce system is made aware of numerous resources and initiatives. Examples of programs and supports that have been shared at meetings and through an email listserv are:

- Application fair for Section 8 housing
- New substance abuse prevention program
- Support network for adoptive families
- Community Health Needs Assessment
- Affordable Care Act navigator available at the local health clinic
- Applications for the Double Up Food Bucks program
- Training for case managers working with people with disabilities

The above are just a few examples of the wealth of information that is shared through these groups. Information also includes new staff and programs at partner agencies, changes in bus routes, new times for food pantries, and more.

In addition to the strategic coordination provided by Networks Northwest (described in the regional plan), frontline staff in the AJCs and at MRS are well-versed in transportation resources, and make an effort to inform transportation partners about ours. In addition to the supportive services described above, the staff have access to directories and schedules for local transit authorities, where they are available. Customers have access to transportation information in the AJCs through handouts and using computers in the resource rooms. Workshop calendars may be shared with transit authorities for placement on the busses and in waiting rooms, and are promoted on the Northwest Michigan Works! website, social media pages, and with local partners. Partners, including those from transportation, are periodically invited to present at staff meetings so that our knowledge of their programs and services are up to date. This also provides the opportunity to share information about workforce development services.

Because the frontline staff are so knowledgeable about the challenges of the workforce, especially those with barriers to employment, they have become a source of data and anecdotal information for transportation planning. The staff attend transportation planning events and summits, providing insight on behalf of those who are most in need of the services.

## Per Participant Funding Cap

While there is currently not a per participant funding cap in place, the board considers per participant costs throughout the workforce program planning process. Every effort is made to ensure per participant costs are not exorbitant.

## Coordination with Employment Services

Northwest Michigan Works! is fortunate to operate Titles I, II, and III, an arrangement that naturally affords an environment conducive to maximize coordination of the provision of workforce development services from the various titles with little to no duplication of services. Customers in need of or who are receiving less intensive services are typically enrolled in and provided services under Wagner-Peyser/Employment Services. While Employment Services customers receive staff-assisted services, those customers are not generally case managed. Customers who request or who are identified as in need of more intensive one-on-one services are referred to the WIOA program. Other workforce programs like Trade Adjustment Assistance and PATH may identify and refer customers to Employment Services or one of the WIOA programs for co-enrollment, taking advantage of services and funding offered as a result of braiding multiple funding sources.

## Delivery of Employment Services

Employment Services are delivered through a variety of funding streams, including Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance, PATH, and the three titles of the WIOA. Employment Services delivered under Title IV are delivered directly by Michigan Rehabilitation Services. With the exception of Title IV, workforce development programs are delivered directly by Networks Northwest and Northwest Michigan Works! staff, which allows for a seamless service delivery model all within a single AJC.

Employment Services are typically provided in the Resource Room of each AJC, but can be provided one-on-one. Front line staff have been trained to assist customers in need of varying levels of assistance.

### Point of Contact

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lisa.schut@networksnorthwest.org			
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### Direct Delivery of Services

Employment services delivered through Wagner-Peyser are delivered by a combination of merit-based staff and non merit-based staff. Merit-based staff are employed by Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, DBA Networks Northwest, is a Special Purpose Unit of Government, while non merit-based staff are employed by Northwest Michigan Works!. employees of this organization are merit-based staff. Northwest Michigan Works!. The board has chosen to take advantage of the recent changes in merit-based staffing requirements for the delivery of Wagner-Peyser services.

Employment Services are delivered directly by staff under the agencies described above. This arrangement allows for direct control over staffing, and increased effectiveness and efficiency through monitoring and continuous improvement.

### Services

Wagner-Peyser services are provided at no charge to both job seekers and employers.

Northwest Michigan Works! Staff greet customers as they enter the Resource Room in the Service Center. Customers check in at the G\*Stars screen, indicating the services they intend to pursue during their visit. They also receive a Customer Intake Form that can be used to enter demographic information about the customer into the various systems that support workforce development activities, including Pure Michigan Talent Connect, G\*STARS, and OSMIS. In addition to customer information, staff make notations on the Customer Intake Form to be used

after the customer's visit to make entries into the appropriate systems, as applicable. Customers are asked if they have served in the military, so as to receive priority of service and to ensure compliance with ES policy and the Jobs for Veterans Act. Opportunities are made available for customers to disclose any disabilities and request reasonable accommodations. Further, all One-Stop Service Center customers receive equal access to Employment Services. Automated door openers, wheelchair accessible pathways, bathrooms, and workstations ensure universal access to services.

As the staff begin to interact with the customer, they are skilled at listening and asking questions that will provide information about what each customer needs. When staff identify customers who may benefit from a level of more intensive services are referred to a WIOA Career Advisor, who determines WIOA eligibility, suitability, and the willingness of the applicant to participate in the WIOA.

Customers who need minimal or no staff assistance as they begin their job search or career transition will work relatively independently in the Resource Room. The following Employment Services are among those made available:

- Access to the Pure Michigan Talent Connect;
- Labor Exchange Services;
- Access to job search resources via the Internet;
- Local components of the ES complaint system;
- The Unemployment Insurance Work Test;
- Accommodations and information to Unemployment Insurance claimants;
- Services to Veterans;
- Services to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers;
- Participation in a system for clearing labor between states;
- Fidelity Bonding program; and/or
- Any other additional services as necessary to ensure access to Employment Services for all who seek them.

### Self-service

Self-services are available for job seekers and employers in all of the Northwest Michigan Works! Service Centers. Each center includes a resource room located at the front of each center and structured for self-service use. In the resource rooms, customers have access to public-use computers, a library of job search information, copier, fax machine, résumé paper, and more. On these public-access computers, customers have access to the web-based Pure Michigan Talent Connect, in addition to other job search tools and business-related resources.

Each computer is equipped and configured to maximize the customer's experience and make it as easy as possible for the individual to use available resources. For example, not only is the Internet home page set to the Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC), but also there are

shortcuts to the site and the Internet browser favorites displays PMTC, as well as other useful Internet resources.

Some employers provide us with physical employment applications, which are available in the resource rooms for customers to complete. Staff are available to assist with applications as needed. Completed applications are forwarded to employers periodically while the position(s) remain open. Employer customers may also use the fax and copy machines, as part of the self-services available in the service centers. A physical job board is maintained in each resource room that consists of printed lists of job postings from the Pure Michigan Talent Connect. Job postings are grouped by county to allow job seekers to easily identify by geography available jobs near their desired location.

In addition, employer customers have access to interview rooms and can connect with Business Services staff who can provide a wide variety of employment services. Employers have access to local labor market information on Benchmarks Northwest, a local website full of data that will help to inform data-based decision making. Examples of data included on the website that employers find helpful are information regarding wages, numbers of jobs, and credentialing information.

### Facilitated Services

Many customers receive a combination of Self-service and Facilitated services that are provided by Career Services Assistants who are stationed throughout the resource room. Facilitated services may include:

- Assistance with career exploration and assessment resources;
- Searching for job openings on the internet or assistance in reviewing the job board;
- Completing physical and online employment applications;
- Writing and printing résumés and cover letters;
- Using the phone, FAX, and copy machines; and
- Provision of forms or information needed for partner services;
- Creating and updating Pure Michigan Talent Connect profiles
- Referrals to the WIOA program and other workforce programs
- Providing linkages to community and partner agencies, including information about services available through those organizations.

### Staff-Assisted Services

Most customers receive a combination of Self-services, Facilitated services, and Staff-assisted services. Services may be provided by Career Services Assistants or Career Advisors. Customers who struggle to find work solely through self-service and facilitated services, or who request types of services requiring more intensive assistance may receive Staff-assisted services.

- Assistance with financial aid
- Provision of assessments regarding skills, interests, and the need for supportive services
- Provision of information and meaningful assistance with filing for unemployment insurance
- Job search assistance
- Career guidance
- Referrals to specific job openings

Various instructional workshops are offered to the public by staff in each AJC. Workshops are now also offered virtually. Workshops are made available based on identified customer needs and frequency of workshops are limited by staffing levels. Examples of workshops regularly offered include:

- Job Search Strategies
- Resume and Cover Letter Workshops
- Interviewing
- Career Connection
- Veterans Employment Services Orientation

Content of workshops is varied in an effort to offer a single job seeker options to learn more about each topic. For example, one week Job Search Strategies might focus on using LinkedIn as a job search tool, while the next week the same workshop may focus on Pure Michigan Talent Connect profiles. Keeping content current and varied offers customers content that meets their needs. Workshops help customers become more familiar with services provided by AJC staff when they view a video describing services provided by Northwest Michigan Works!. The video is also available online.

Business Services staff, referred to as Business Services Representatives, provide a multitude of staff-assisted services to employers, both in the field and at the service center. Employers who seek assistance at the service center are directed to staff who can help answer questions and describe the various services available to employers. Employers also have access to space at the service center to conduct interviews. Staff-assisted services to employers include:

- Pure Michigan Talent Connect training;
- Assistance with talent recruitment, candidate pre-screening and referrals;
- Workforce assessments;
- Developing customized training solutions, including Going Pro Talent Fund applications;
- Offering interviewing guidelines and best practices; and
- Provision of Labor Market Information.

In addition, Business Services Representatives work to develop collaborative relationships between local workforce and economic development partners, some of which include:

- Michigan Small Business Development Center
- Procurement Technical Assistance Center
- Global Trade Alliance of Northern Michigan
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation
- Chambers of Commerce
- Traverse Area Human Resource Association
- Local Non-Profit Agencies

Business Services Representatives work collaboratively with Career Advisors and other Partners to host multiple hiring events throughout the region. Partners may include any of the WIOA Required Partners as well as local community colleges, Career Technical Centers, and others. Restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic was the impetus for our recent virtual hiring event, of which we intend to hold more. We also intend to regularly hold hiring events that may focus on an in-demand industry or occupation cluster, or involve multiple in-demand industries. Frequently held hiring events will allow employers increased access to job seekers when they have positions to fill, which results in an overall increased responsiveness of the agency.

### Staffing Levels

Employment Service staff are available to assist job seekers with facilitated and/or staff-assisted services. Staffing levels for provision of Employment Services at each AJC are as follows:

<u>Service Center</u>	<u># of FTEs</u>
Traverse City Service Center	5 FTE
Petoskey Service Center	3.5 FTE
Cadillac Service Center	4 FTE
Manistee Service Center	4 FTE

### Unemployment Insurance (UI) Work Test

To register for work, UI claimants enter their profile in the Pure Michigan Talent Connect, either at a One-Stop Service Center or another location with Internet access. The claimant must appear in person at a service center in order to meet the requirements of the work test, although that requirement is currently waived due to the coronavirus pandemic. To complete the work test, MWA staff verifies a claimant's profile is entered in the Pure Michigan Talent Connect and then date-stamps the verification form, UIA 1222 form, as the claimant's proof of registration. MWA staff enters proof of registration into the online system prior to 6:30 p.m. every day, so that the UI determination process can proceed. The UIA 1222 is filed for reference and retained in a locked file cabinet for 5 days at the AJC, at which point it is shredded.

During the course of providing services to a claimant, a MWA staff member may become aware of an incident of possible non-compliance (Able, Available and Seeking Work), such as refusing an offer of suitable work. Non-compliance will be reported immediately, or within 48 hours of the incident of non-compliance, by the MWA to Unemployment Insurance using the OSMIS to report a potential UI Eligibility Issue. Refusal of work may be reported by employers through the PMTC.

## Reemployment Service Eligibility Assessment (RESEA)

The RESEA Program is intended to provide customized services to UI claimants who have been identified as most likely to exhaust their Unemployment Insurance benefits. The expected result is that this early intervention will return the unemployed claimant back to work sooner than if they had not received RESEA services.

Activities provided under the RESEA Program are administered in accordance with policy set forth by the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. RESEA services will only be provided to participants eligible for the program. To be eligible to participate in the RESEA Program, customers must be referred by the Unemployment Insurance Agency.

Claimants listed on the Weekly Claimants List may be contacted via email or letter, encouraging them to schedule and attend their RESEA appointment with Northwest Michigan Works!. When a claimant calls to schedule their RESEA appointment with Northwest Michigan Works!, the MWA staff will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the customer's schedule. Appointments will be held with the claimant within 21 days of the "Letter Sent Date". Should the claimant be unable to keep their RESEA appointment date, they claimant may reschedule their RESEA appointment once within the 21 days of the "Letter Sent Date". The MWA does not excuse claimants from their obligation to schedule a RESEA appointment or meet RESEA activity requirements.

When the RESEA service is provided, the following activities are delivered:

- Orientation to services provided by Northwest Michigan Works!
- Confirmation of an active profile on Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTC)
- Assessment of UI Eligibility\*
- Verification of the Monthly Record of Work Search Form (Form #1583)
- Development of an Individual Service Strategy (ISS)\*
- Review specific Labor Market Information (LMI)
- Provide at least 2 hours of Career & Reemployment Services

\*Performed and provided in a one-on-one confidential setting



All RESEA activities are provided in such a way that each RESEA participant receives services appropriate to meet their unique needs. The MWA recognizes the benefit to provide value to the services received during this appointment. The Orientation is provided by video or as a verbal summary if provided virtually over the phone. The staff person providing RESEA services locate and review the PMTC profile, providing feedback to the customer as appropriate. The Assessment of UI Eligibility is conducted by asking the participant the prescribed questions; potential eligibility issues are reported through the OSMIS. The Individual Service Strategy is developed in a one-on-one setting with the participant and is designed to meet the unique situation of the participant. The review of Labor Market Information is typically provided via a conversation with the participant, although participants may receive a brochure on in-demand occupations, or the staff may teach the participant how to find relevant information regarding the local labor market on the internet. All RESEA participants who attend their appointment discuss different options to fulfill the requirement to complete an additional 2 hours of career and reemployment services, which could include any one or combination of the following:

- Workshops
- One-on-one career counseling
- Assessments
- Online career exploration

Documentation for RESEA services is recorded electronically in the OSMIS as case notes. Data entry may occur as early as the date the service was provided, but no later than 48 hours after the date of service. Career & Reemployment Service Outcomes are recorded in OSMIS within 48 hours of completion.

At the discretion of the Case Manager, a second RESEA appointment may be scheduled for participants who successfully complete the first RESEA appointment. Initial efforts will focus on non-seasonal claimants, who will typically be referred to the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act. The second RESEA appointment will include provision of all required activities that were provided at the first RESEA appointment, with the exception of the MWA Orientation.

## Veterans

Employment Services staff provide the same quality of services to all customers, inclusive of veterans. Northwest Michigan Works! ensures that provision of Employment Services complies with the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002, which requires that all U.S. veterans and eligible persons receive priority in vocational guidance, training, and job placement services.

The Northwest MWA has an established local policy for veteran's priority of service. The local policy guides staff in implementing priority of service for this population, beginning with identifying veterans as quickly as possible. Strategies to identify veterans include asking every customer who enters the service centers "Have you served in the military?" and providing an opportunity for veterans, or the spouse of a veteran, to self-identify on the Northwest Michigan Works! Customer Intake Form. Identified veterans will receive facilitated services, at minimum, if desired.

To ensure veterans' priority, the Northwest MWA does the following:

- Provide priority service for facilitated and staff-assisted employment services to veterans;
- When taking applications in the service center for employment opportunities, applications completed by veterans are identified as such and provided to the employer first;
- If there is a line for using computers, staff ensure veterans go to the front of the line; and
- When referring to WIOA-funded services, Wagner-Peyser staff make certain that veterans are identified so that priority of service can be provided for Career and Training Services as well.

In addition, Career Services Specialists are aware of the 24-hour hold for job orders in order to give priority to veterans and regularly promote it to both veteran job seekers and employers.

Veterans who are eligible, suitable and willing to engage in the WIOA program are enrolled and provided individualized case management services.

Employment Services staff provide a Military Service Questionnaire (MSQ) to all veterans and eligible persons who identify themselves as such. If the veteran or eligible person qualifies for a referral based on their MSQ responses, they will be referred immediately to a Veterans Career Assistant (VCA), a process that is completed electronically to increase efficiency. The VCA will further evaluate the referral. Referrals who, upon evaluation by the VCA will not receive services from the VCA are re-referred to a Career Advisor who prioritizes the referral for WIOA enrollment and services.

Upon referring to the Veterans Career Advisor, the Employment Services staff will:

- Ensure that the customer has an active Wagner-Peyser registration in the OSMIS; if necessary, the staff will create the registration and record the service(s) provided;
- Complete the appropriate sections of the "For Staff Use Only" section of the MSQ;
- Enter the activity in OSMIS recording the official referral; and
- Follow Up with the receiving VCA to ensure the MSQ was received and relay any additional information that may be relevant to the VCA.

The region also has access to a Veterans Employment Representative (VER), who liaises with local employers to advocate for veteran job seekers. The VER has access to all services, including funds related to work-based training services, to which other Business Services

Representatives have access. The VER may participate in Business Services Team meetings. The VCAs and VERs are invited to participate in weekly case reviews to advocate for job seekers and connect job seekers with employment opportunities.

The VER and VCAs have designated office space available to them at all AJC locations. The VCAs are an integral part of the Workforce Development team, providing individualized services and case management in conjunction with Michigan Works! staff. Business Services Representatives regularly communicate with the VCAs and share job postings and employer-specific information. Shared locations and open communication allow for seamless referrals for Wagner-Peyser customers.

### Migrant and Seasonal Workers

Migrant and Seasonal Workers (MSWs) receive equitable access and opportunity to leverage the full range of employment services that are provided to non-MSW customers. Standard/self services such as fact sheets, information handouts, and other forms, such as the Customer Intake Form are made available in Spanish, the primary language of MSFWs in the Northwest region. Additionally, front line staff is empowered to use Language Line, a translation service and Google Translate, an app that has proven to be effective in communicating with non-English speakers.

MSW Outreach workers are available for facilitated and staff-assisted services, on-site at the service center locations. Staff diligently work to identify MSWs in the resource room and connect them with the Outreach Worker via direct referrals. MSW Outreach workers are located near the Resource Room, enabling for a warm handoff when making direct referrals. Northwest Michigan Works! ensures all front line staff are up to date on identifying MSWs and providing comprehensive employment services for this specialized population. The MSW Outreach workers have access to the Business Services Representatives to help connect MSWs to employment opportunities, as needed. In addition, MSWs interested in learning the English language are referred to the Adult Education Learning Lab for English language services.

At this time, there is no plan to provide additional services or activities for which Wagner-Peyser Funds may be used.

### Navigators & Barriers to Employment

The board has designated and trained staff to provide specialized services to targeted groups of individuals within the region. These 'Navigators' become experts as they interact and assist individuals with barriers related to employment.

## Business Resource Network Navigator

Our Business Resource Network (BRN) Navigator provides services to BRN participating employers and their at risk employees. The services provided are targeted at removing barriers and ensuring participants have the skills necessary to retain their current employment while also preparing the employee for career advancement within the organization. Services may be provided to BRN participants individually or in group sessions. When appropriate, the BRN Navigator may call upon local partners to provide subject matter expertise. Examples of services offered through the BRN Navigator include, but are not limited to:

- Personalized budgeting and financial management
- Soft skills training
- Referrals to workforce development programming for training and education
- Physical and mental health referrals
- Assistance accessing childcare
- Overcoming transportation barriers
- Ensuring food security
- Securing temporary and permanent housing
- Assistance accessing community resources

The BRN Navigator develops partnerships with community organizations in an effort to develop new resources for families and individuals, especially for those areas where gaps in resource availability exist. The BRN Navigator works closely with participating employers to coordinate times and activities to best serve the participants. In addition, employers of the BRN provide the Navigator with onsite office space. Working onsite greatly enhances employee participation and acceptance of the services being offered.

The BRN Navigator refers BRN participants to workforce development programs as appropriate.

## Healthy Michigan Plan Navigators

Each AJC has designated a Healthy Michigan Plan Navigator who takes the lead in ensuring materials and information are available to Healthy Michigan Plan beneficiaries who visit the AJC in need of employment services. Available materials include brochures, handouts, and magnets displaying work search activity reporting schedules for the beneficiaries. AJC Front line staff have received training on general requirements that some Healthy Michigan Plan beneficiaries are required to complete. HMP Navigators in the AJCs provide an opportunity for individuals in the region who are in need of employment services, but may not otherwise have visited the AJC with an opportunity to become aware of and receive services resulting in gainful employment. HMP beneficiaries have access to all resources available in the Resource Room, and may use those resources to complete work search and reporting requirements. The

HMP Navigator ensures materials are up to date and front line staff are aware of the most recent developments regarding employment-related requirements for the HMP beneficiaries.

## Coordination with Adult Education

In 2002, funding for Adult Education in Michigan was reduced from \$80 million to \$20 million. At this time, several adult education programs in the region were unable to continue providing services. Those local school districts who were closing programs approached Networks Northwest and Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, and asked that a partnership be formed to ensure that services would remain available despite the drastic reduction in resources. The two entities formed a relationship that remains intact to this day.

The roles and responsibilities of each entity are outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement, attached as Appendix E. In short, Traverse Bay Area ISD (TBAISD) receives state funds, employs and evaluates teachers, and awards high school credit. The workforce system coordinates the program through the Regional Director of Adult Education, an employee of the NW MI Works!. It is the grantee for the WIOA Title II (AEFLA) funding and supplements support for the programming from its facilities budget. Lab Aids are employed by the workforce system to complete data entry into the MAERS system.. Adult Education services are provided through the Northwest Michigan Works! Learning Labs that are housed within Northwest Michigan American Job Centers.

State Adult Education Funding in Michigan is distributed on a regional basis. TBAISD is the regional fiscal agent for Region 2 and collaborates with the CEAC (Career Educational Advisory Council) of the WDB to design a regional strategy that aligns adult education programs into an efficient delivery system that provides instruction that is contextual and based on career planning. As the fiscal agent, TBAISD is responsible for awarding contracts to local providers of adult education services. In order to coordinate with the workforce development board, as required in WIOA Sections 107(d)(11)(A) and (B)(i) and WIOA Section 232, TBAISD works through the Career and Educational Advisory Council to review applications and make a recommendation to the workforce development board, which then advises TBAISD on awards. The process takes into account the availability of services throughout the region, and ensures that programming is available across the wide geographic reach of the region. In addition, the local Workforce development board reviews the local WIOA Title II (AEFLA) applications to ensure consistency with the local workforce plan. of services with the WIOA Title I plan.

The following Adult Education services are available throughout the region through the Northwest Michigan Works! Learning Labs:

- Adult Basic Education

- Adult Secondary Education
- High School Completion
- High School Equivalency
- English Language Learning (formerly English as a Second Language)
- Workplace Literacy

A Michigan certified teacher provides individualized instruction through on-line computer software and board approved textbooks. Tutoring is also an option for the lower functioning student. Blended Learning options are available due to the online software programs being utilized. To accelerate achievement of goals, students are able to check out Chromebooks and data ports to facilitate learning at home. Any student utilizing this option must meet with a teacher at least once a month. Contact is maintained through phone calls, Google Hangouts or email.

Multiple providers of literacy services and English Language Learning programs are in existence in the region, including literacy councils and remedial programs from local colleges. The workforce system coordinates services with these providers in a variety of ways. In 2014, we convened an Adult Learning Partnership that brought together representatives from all of the stakeholders. This partnership jointly developed the following programs:

- A website was created to help residents of the region who are interested in accessing adult education opportunities. This web site focuses on the need of the student, and the program they are most likely to look for when coming to the site. All literacy councils in the region, along with Learning Labs, are listed here. The information includes address, phone, hours, instructors, and email. The potential student can browse or search by program or by geographic location. [www.NorthwestMichiganAdultEd.org](http://www.NorthwestMichiganAdultEd.org).
- TAPET (Transitioning Adults to Postsecondary Education and Training). This program consisted of multiple initiatives that were designed to help adult education students continue their education beyond High School equivalency or high school completion. This was done knowing that in today's economy, postsecondary training is essential to improving an individual's economic opportunities. Initiatives included:
  - o Career Preparation that, incorporating career assessments, planning, and goals related to their adult learning plan;
  - o Study Skills Course, designed to help them in both their adult education program as well as in college;

- o Campus Day Visits, giving adult Education students tours of local colleges, an opportunity that many of them missed earlier in life because they didn't finish traditional high school;
  - o Financial Aid Application support, such as specialized workshops and classes with financial aid officers from local colleges;
  - o Mentoring program, which paired former adult education students who have been successful in their postsecondary programs with new students.
- A website was created to help all non-traditional students with learning more about postsecondary opportunities. The focus is assisting adults with accessing the many resources available at local colleges that can address barriers. These resources include mentoring, tutoring, writing centers, math support, and more. By collaborating with all of the local colleges, links to their supports and offerings are readily available at this website: [www.CollegeforAdultStudents.org](http://www.CollegeforAdultStudents.org).

The Northwest Michigan Works! Learning Labs are housed inside the one-stop American Job Centers. Satellite services are also provided in local libraries to increase access. There is full integration with all programs in the delivery of all activities. All customers are shared based on the customer's needs. An unlimited license to Kuder Journey, a flexible and scalable online career planning system has been purchased for the Northwest Michigan Works! program. This tool will be employed by all programs to facilitate the conversation and build resources on career planning and pathways. Workforce programming provides participants with the opportunity to improve their skills through various stepping stones of education and work experience utilizing all the resources of all the programs.

Some of the challenges related to career pathways include the following: There is no consistent, generally accepted definition of the term "Career Pathways;" following an individual through multiple stepping stones will necessitate a much longer time period of participation in our programs; every industry and occupation is different.

Components of these systems may include the following:

- Thorough assessments
- Basic academic education
- Occupational training
- Work-based learning

Progression through each of the above results in industry-recognized credentials and an increase in job prospects and potential income. The career pathways systems developed will give program staff, educators, employers, and participants a tool to use in mapping out career pathways on an individual basis.



## Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs)

Memorandums of Understanding are in place with Required WIOA Partners in the region, including:

- Northwest Michigan Works!
- Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
- Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (*signed agreement not yet received*)
- Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians
- State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
  - Michigan Rehabilitation Services
  - Bureau of Services for Blind Persons
  - Veterans Services
  - Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers
  - Unemployment Insurance
- North Central Michigan College
- Northwestern Michigan College
- Department of Health and Human Services
- American Association of Retired Persons Foundation
- Michigan State Housing Development Authority
- Telamon

Executed MOUs are in place for three years and have been submitted to the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. They will be reviewed and updated during the 3-year time period as needed.

Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFAs) with the applicable WIOA Required Partners in the region have been negotiated and are in place. Executed IFAs and the IFA spreadsheet delineating FTEs and Cost Allocations based on FTEs have been submitted to the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. Subsequent IFAs will be evaluated and executed on an annual basis.

### Grant Recipient

The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments is responsible for disbursement of grant funds. This entity, now doing business as Networks Northwest, has had numerous federal contracts over many years. The agency has been a State of Michigan subrecipient to deliver federally-funded programs under the Workforce Investment Act, The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families welfare-to-work program, Trade Act, and several other workforce development programs for 40 years. In addition to workforce development programs, Networks Northwest administers business and community development programs for the ten-county region. These include the Small Business



Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Global Trade Alliance, several sector alliances, and the State of Michigan's Offender Success program. The agency is also the local Regional Planning Organization, which provides numerous services to local governments and their communities throughout the region.

The grant recipient has decided to direct deliver WIOA Career services, through the One-Stop delivery system, including eligibility determination, outreach and intake, assessments, labor exchange services, provision of labor market information and local in-demand occupations, use of the eligible training provider list, referral to barrier removal services, and all other Career services described in WIOA Section 134. A competitive process to award sub-grants and contracts for this spectrum of services is therefore not required. Training services are provided via Individual Training Accounts (see the Individual Training Accounts section, below). No contracts for training services are in use at this time.

## Sub-grantee Selection for Title I

In the event a competitive process is needed to award sub-grants resulting in contracts for WIOA Title I activities, the following process is expected:

1. Develop and publish the Request for Proposal (RFP), describing the activities to be performed and including proposal requirements.
2. Score received proposals against a previously established scoring mechanism based on elements described in the RFP.
3. Award the sub-grant and enter into an agreement with the winning bidder.

Records related to the RFP process will be retained for review purposes.

## Local Levels of Performance

Local levels of performance are described in the [Performance](#) section of the Regional Plan.

Negotiations between the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity for Program Year 2020 are expected to take place during Fall 2020.

## High-Performing Board

In 2014, Networks Northwest became the state's first agency to reach Tier 3 of Governor Snyder's Regional Prosperity Initiative. This was done by combining the workforce development board and the local elected officials, and adding representation from additional community stakeholders. This Regional Prosperity Board continues to serve as the governing body for Networks Northwest.

The board developed a clear mission and vision for the organization, attached as Appendix F, as well as organizational hallmarks and values.

The Board has these primary purposes:

- To provide strategic resources (data, leadership, education, publications, models, staff time, funds, etc.) for the region's economic and community vitality.
- To provide for an annual Regional Prosperity Plan for use by community officials, businesses and organizations.
- To discuss and create macro-level recommendations for impact around the core elements of the Regional Prosperity Plan.
- To connect and support regional networks around topics related to economic and community vitality.
- To provide oversight for financial and operational effectiveness. This is done in part through committee: Executive/Governance; Finance/Audit; Career & Educational Advisory Council.

Networks Northwest prides itself on being well-connected to the employer community in the region. This is evidenced by robust board membership, with representation from local chambers of commerce, economic development, every in-demand industry sector, small family-owned companies, and the largest employers in the area.

### Effectiveness and Continuous Improvement

The board is committed to ongoing and continuous improvement, which will ensure that it serves as a high-performing board. At the time of this writing, the Governor's Talent Investment Board has not issued factors or criteria. However, the following standards have been established locally, to ensure that each board member as well as the board as a whole is serving with the utmost quality.

- Each new board member attends an extensive board orientation session;
- Every board member is assigned to a committee;
- Meeting agendas are designed for strategic discussion on topics that have significant impact on program design, service delivery, and community vitality;
- Board meetings and committees emphasize assessment of the agency's fiscal and programmatic performance;
- The board is data-driven, utilizing the following quantitative information to guide program direction and strategic decision-making: performance outcomes, audits and monitoring reviews, labor market information, and numerous prosperity and economic indicators;
- Recruitment of new membership targets those who express interest in being active and engaged;
- Annual planning includes purposeful engagement of the board with legislators and other significant groups of influence;
- Board members review and share best practices with agency staff;
- Professional development for board members is available through attendance at conferences and economic/education summits;

- The agency ensures participation of board members in presenting the annual report to groups and communities they represent.

Standards of effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria for assessing the American Job Centers will be developed.

### Allocating Infrastructure Funds

Infrastructure Funding Agreements guide the process for funds received from partners related to infrastructure. Funds received from partners as part of this process are collected based on actual costs, which are calculated at least quarterly over a program year. As such, IFA funds received are not allocated; rather they are reimbursements for actual infrastructure costs already incurred.

### One-Stop Partner Contributions

One-Stop Partners contribute funds related to infrastructure as outlined above. Other contributions from partners include arrangements for which Northwest Michigan Works! and the Partner share costs associated with a single staff person. In cases like this, Northwest Michigan Works! is the employer of record, incurring those costs associated with the employment and work completed by the shared position. According to formal agreement between the two agencies, the partner agency contributes a designated portion of costs associated with the position. Employees working under these arrangements represent the highest levels of collaboration and partnership found throughout our region by ensuring local workforce development needs and innovations in talent development are evolving to meet the ever changing needs of our communities.

Partners frequently take opportunities to contribute funds, food, or other resources to support local events led by Northwest Michigan Works!, for example MiCareerQuest and local hiring events.

### Individual Training Accounts

Training services are available to eligible participants in need of additional skills to achieve long-term, sustainable employment via Individual Training Accounts. Career Advisors work with customers to assess skill sets, identify training needs, and plan for appropriate training services. The customer is tasked with conducting research to ensure commitment and suitability. In addition, the career advisor counsels the participant on training choices, and facilitates access to the Michigan Training Connect list of approved training vendors and programs. The customer is able to freely select from approved training programs, ensuring fully informed customer choice. Training providers with programs that have been identified by

the customer, but are not on the eligible training provider list are encouraged to become an approved training program.

Upon selection of a training program, the participant meets with the Classroom Training Specialist, who helps ensure the participant is connected with the training institution, enrolls in the training program, and is ready to complete planned training services. The participant signs an Occupational Training Agreement, which identifies the training provider, program, training start and end dates, approximate cost by class or program, and support services necessary to participate. This agreement then generates vouchers to fund the planned training, either in part or in whole.

All training services are provided via Individual Training Accounts. No contracts for training services are utilized at this time.

Individual Training Accounts are limited to training programs and providers that have demonstrated effective outcomes, including their ability to offer training programs that can result in an industry-recognized credential and employment in in-demand occupations and industries. The Northwest Michigan Works! Agency approves or denies approval for training providers and programs according to a standardized and objective process in order for training providers/programs to be deemed an Eligible Training Provider (ETP), resulting in their training program to be posted publicly on the Michigan Training Connect (MiTC). Only training providers/programs deemed eligible may receive the WIOA Title I-B training funds to train participants. The local policy (see Appendix G) outlines the approval and denial of approval criteria and the corresponding methodologies and procedures used to approve or deny approval of training provider applications to the MiTC.

## Public Comment

This plan has been published for public comment and review on the agency's website. Members of the local board and members of the public, including representatives of business and labor organizations, may review the plan by downloading it from [www.networksnorthwest.org/localplans](http://www.networksnorthwest.org/localplans) or by verbal request by contacting the Networks Northwest office at 231-929-5000. Comments may be submitted to Networks Northwest via the comment form on the website, or through the phone number above.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the plan will be made available in alternate formats, such as large print or audiotape, in response to special requests. All Networks Northwest board meetings are open to the public, comply with the physical requirements of the ADA, and welcome public comment.

Outreach for the purpose of reviewing the plan may be conducted in the following ways:

- Direct email to partner organizations, informing them of the opportunity to comment and encouraging their review and feedback;
- Legal notices in local newspapers;
- Notice in the Networks Northwest email newsletter
- Request for feedback via social media.

Comments received will be responded to individually. Modifications may be made to the plan if comments are determined to be significant enough to warrant plan adjustments. Comments and responses will be attached to the plan in the final version and submitted to the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity.

## Technology Integration

Several of the WIOA programs, as well as partner programs, are integrated via the One-Stop Management Information System (OSMIS). This is one tool which staff may use to enhance fundamental case management tasks across programs such as WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth; Employment Services; Welfare Reform; Food Assistance Employment and Training; and Trade Act.

Networks Northwest uses the G\*STARS membership system for tracking customer traffic in the AJC and associated planned services. Customers are issued a G\*STARS membership card and password at intake. Whenever customers return, they swipe or login to the kiosk located at the entrance to the AJC and as they enter workshop rooms, and indicate the services they intend to use while at the American Job Center. The G\*STARS system provides us with data regarding the number of customers visiting the AJC each day and which services they utilize. This data is used to make decisions based on data regarding the allocation of resources needed throughout our existing AJCs and informs decisions about the potential expansion of AJCs in areas without an AJC. Recently, the developers of the G\*STARS system have enhanced their product to allow for the potential of a customer portal. Networks Northwest intends to explore the need and application of a customer portal to increase access to information, services, and staff for individuals in the region.

The Northwest Michigan Works! system utilizes a career assessment tool called Kuder Journey. This tool is available to all programs in the system, including all core programs and potentially partner programs. Kuder Journey, a web-based application, directs customers to take a series of three brief assessments that assess an individual's career interests, aptitudes, and work values. Responses for all three assessments are combined and analyzed by the Kuder Journey system, and provides customers with suggestions regarding careers and career pathways that appear to be a good fit to their unique person. Results are stored in the customer's online profile, which remains available to the customer as long as they wish to access it. The Career Advisor works with the customer to review the results and facilitates exploration in the various

occupations and fields of interest. The tool also provides integrated labor market information and information regarding credentialing, training providers, and other information for the various occupations. The Kuder Journey suggests additional steps to be completed to obtain employment in each occupation of interest. The Career Advisor uses Kuder Journey results to assist in the development of the ISS/IEP. Multiple case managers have access to Kuder Journey results for common customers, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Kuder Journey as an assessment tool.

Northwest Michigan Works! uses Salesforce as a case management tool for Business Services teams, and is the location where each individual Business Services Representative records services provided to employer customers. Capturing services provided to customers in Salesforce allows us to share information with local economic development organizations and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. We track multiple aspects of our services, including recruitment, job postings, job fills, and hiring events; training services; retention visits; and referrals made to partner organizations.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Northwest Michigan Works! has recently used Constant Contact as an outreach tool to reach customers who would otherwise visit local AJCs, but are not able to do so given the health crisis. Individuals identified in Pure Michigan Talent Connect as potentially interested in meeting employers with job openings they may want to pursue were invited to a virtual job fair. We expect additional virtual hiring events will be held, and we will likely continue to use Constant Contact or other outreach tools to connect with individuals who may be interested in upcoming events or information pertaining to their situation.

We look forward to the technology changes planned for the OSMIS by the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity in collaboration with local Michigan Works! agencies.

## Priority of Service

Occasionally funds to provide training services to WIOA Adult participants reach levels that are limited. In such circumstances, funding requests for participants in training are subject to Priority of Service criteria outlined in the Local Policy for Priority of Service.

Priority of service is applied when the number of eligible participants who are seeking training exceeds the availability of funding for training.

Veterans and eligible spouses are given the highest priority, providing they meet eligibility criteria and are deemed suitable for training, as is consistent with the Job for Veterans Act of 2002.

The Local Policy for Priority of Service is attached to this plan as Appendix H.

## Coordination of Rapid Response Activities

Coordination of local Rapid Response Services follows, at minimum, guidelines outlined by the State of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, and includes multiple partners throughout the region. a Local Policy and education of all parties involved. Career Advisors and the Business Services team have received training and have access to guidelines outlined in the Local Rapid Response Local Policy, Appendix I; They, in addition to community partners who may also have a role to play in the implementation of Rapid Response activities, are prepared to mobilize, collaborate, and communicate with all parties involved to ensure the affected employees are provided the appropriate services. Northwest Michigan Works! coordinates with all applicable local partners to provide wrap around services for the affected employer and employees.

## Rapid Response

Rapid Response activities are fulfilled through the Business Services team of Northwest Michigan Works! Business Services Representatives are assigned to specific county territories to provide employer customers easy access to the full range of services available through the Northwest Michigan Works! system. Serving as the MWA representative on the Rapid Response Team, the Business Services Representative works closely with the State of Michigan's Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's Rapid Response section, to provide the assistance necessary to ensure that workers transition to new employment as quickly as possible.

The Business Services Representative's maintain ongoing contact with the Rapid Response Section Workforce Consultant. Often being the first to hear of a pending closure or layoff, they have made it a practice to notify the Workforce Consultant immediately upon learning of any forthcoming worker dislocation in their assigned territory, whether or not a Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification (WARN) notice is required.

The close relationships already established between Michigan Works! Business Services Representatives and local employers often pave the way to successful initial Rapid Response meetings and subsequent worker orientation meetings. When a local employer is facing layoffs or closure, trust is a critical factor because of the often confidential information that is revealed at the initial meeting. Business Services Representatives, along with the RRS Workforce Consultant, inform the employer and union representative(s) of the array of services available to dislocated workers including Layoff Aversion IWT, State Adjustment Grants (SAGs), and National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs). State Adjustment Committees will be established when appropriate.

The individual responsible for Joint Adjustment Committees (JACs), State Adjustment Grants (SAGs), and National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs) is:

Lisa Schut, Regional Director  
PO Box 506  
Traverse City, MI 49685-0506  
lisa.schut@networksnorthwest.org  
(231) 929-5081

In the past we have used funds from various National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG) for training options for the Long-term Unemployed and for affected workers of mass layoffs. These programs have been successful in our region, providing incentives to employers, additional training options, support services, and connection to permanent jobs to those who are eligible for services. National Dislocated Worker Grants will be pursued as appropriate and available.

The local Rapid Response policy is attached as Appendix I.



## Endnotes

1 Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB), US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020

2 Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB), US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018

3 The Employment Situation, June 2020, US Bureau of Labor Statistics,  
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf>

4 Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB), US Bureau of Labor Statistics,  
Michigan Regional Long-Term Employment Projections 2016-2026

5 The Energy Industry combines a variety of industry NAICS codes, including Oil and Gas Extraction (21-1000), Utilities (22-1000) and Electrical Equipment and Appliances (33-5000).

# Appendix A: Hot Jobs Report

# HOT JOBS

## NORTHWEST LOWER MICHIGAN



Antrim • Benzie • Charlevoix • Emmet • Grand Traverse • Kalkaska • Leelanau • Manistee • Missaukee • Wexford

Demand Occupations	Wage Range	Projected Growth 2014-2024	Projected Annual Job Openings	Education and Training Beyond High School
Accountants and Auditors	\$20- 34	12.3%	25	Bachelor's degree, license
Carpenters	\$16- 22	12.4%	31	Apprenticeship, license
Computer User Support Specialists	\$14- 24	14.5%	8	Some college, no degree
Computer-Controlled Machine Tool Operators	\$13- 18	29.5%	13	Moderate-term OJT
Electricians	\$16- 26	18.1%	12	Apprenticeship, license
Financial Managers	\$30- 58	9.0%	11	Bachelor's degree
Heating, A/C, and Refrigeration Mechanics and Installers	\$17- 23	20.8%	9	Postsec. nondegree award, license
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	\$15- 19	8.6%	41	Postsec. nondegree award, license
Industrial Engineers	\$27- 39	8.9%	9	Bachelor's degree, license
Industrial Machinery Mechanics	\$17- 28	26.9%	20	Long-term OJT
Insurance Sales Agents	\$17- 34	24.6%	37	Moderate-term OJT, license
Lawyers	\$27- 48	8.6%	9	Doctoral or prof. degree, license
Machinists	\$15- 23	16.5%	38	Long-term OJT
Management Analysts	\$29- 47*	20.0%	7	Bachelor's degree
Market Research Analysts & Marketing Specialists	\$19- 29	20.0%	6	Bachelor's degree
Mechanical Engineers	\$29- 44	9.5%	9	Bachelor's degree, license
Medical and Health Services Managers	\$24- 45	11.9%	12	Bachelor's degree
Nurse Anesthetists	\$82- 97*	11.1%	6	Master's degree, license
Nurse Practitioners	\$36- 48	23.5%	8	Master's degree, license
Occupational Therapists	\$27- 38	20.0%	6	Master's degree, license
Personal Financial Advisors	\$25- 70*	18.9%	8	Bachelor's degree, license
Physical Therapists	\$33- 44	23.4%	12	Doctoral or prof. degree, license
Physician Assistants	\$43- 61	22.2%	8	Master's degree, license
Registered Nurses	\$25- 32	14.8%	109	Bachelor's degree, license
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing	\$17- 32	7.6%	33	Moderate-term OJT

### How we make this list

This list includes occupations that show a favorable mix of projected long-term job growth, projected annual job openings, and median wages. It does not necessarily reflect current hiring demand.

All occupations require education or training beyond high school and have a median hourly wage above the regional median wage. Hourly wage range represents the 25th to 75th percentiles. OJT = On-the-Job Training.

Source: Michigan DTMB, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives



# TOP JOBS BY EDUCATION

Most jobs that pay a desirable wage require some type of formal education or training after high school. The purpose of this tool is to help identify these medium- to high-paying, in-demand jobs in your region as well as the relevant training for these positions. It is important to explore the various postsecondary education and training programs at community colleges, universities, and reputable training institutions in your region and across Michigan. Filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is a great first step in identifying sources of funding to pursue postsecondary education.

## Middle-Skill Jobs

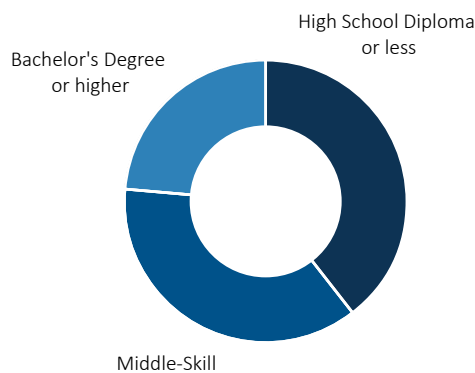
Job title
Carpenters
Electricians
Industrial Machinery Mechanics
Insurance Sales Agents
Machinists

## Bachelor's Degree or Higher

Job title
Nurse Practitioners
Personal Financial Advisors
Physical Therapists
Physician Assistants
Registered Nurses

## In-Demand Jobs by Education

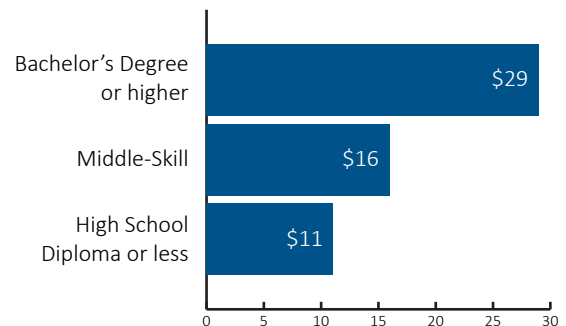
The donut chart below shows the breakdown of real-time job advertisements in the region grouped by required education level. This data is a snapshot of job advertisements posted online.



Source: Conference Board Help Wanted Online data series

## Wages by Education

The bar chart below shows the median wage of occupations broken down by the required level of education. It shows that there is a strong correlation between high levels of education and higher median wages.



Source: DTMB, LMISI, Occupational Employment Statistics 2016

Middle-skill jobs are those that require education or training beyond high school but less than a Bachelor's degree.

# Appendix B: Local Policy - Supportive Services

## Local Policy: Supportive Services

Date: July 1, 2020 **REVISED:** September 29, 2021

To: All Northwest Michigan Works! staff

From: Terry Vandercook, Chief Program Officer

Subject: Provision of Supportive Services to eligible participants

Programs Affected: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Partnership Accountability Training Hope (PATH), and Work-Based Training for Special Populations

Applicable State and/or Federal Guidelines: WIOA Manual dated November 8, 2019; WDASOM PATH Manual, dated November 17, 2014

Funding Source(s): WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker and WIOA Youth, National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs), PATH

### Background

This policy provides guidance on the provision of supportive services for eligible program participants. Supportive services may be made available to those participants in need of additional assistance in order to secure and/or retain employment, participate in a training program, and/or overcome barriers to full participation in allowable activities.

## I. Providing Supportive Services

Section	Policy Provision
General	<p>Supportive services are not entitlement payments and are provided at the discretion of Northwest Michigan Works! program staff, using the Policy Provisions herein and applicable state and federal regulations. Supportive services are provided based on individual circumstances; payment made on behalf of one participant may not necessarily be made on behalf of another.</p> <p>It is the discretion of The Northwest Michigan Works! Regional Director to alter the availability of supportive services at any time during the program year based on funding levels and other priorities.</p>
Need for Supportive Services	<p>Program staff are responsible for verifying the participant’s need for supportive services. Determination of this need should be based on whether the supportive service will assist in removing barriers to employment and/or training.</p>
Available supportive services	<p>The following supportive services are available to be used as appropriate (see program specific policies for additional parameters):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eye exam and glasses</li> <li>• Transportation assistance, in the form of gas cards and/or bus passes</li> <li>• Clothing for interviews</li> <li>• Clothing and/or materials required for a specific job or training program, such as steel-toed boots, scrubs, etc.</li> <li>• Medical exams required for enrollment in a training program or for employment</li> <li>• Application fees</li> <li>• Insurance and registration for a vehicle to be used for work</li> <li>• Licensing, exam, and certification fees</li> <li>• Identification (driver’s license, state ID, and birth certificates)</li> <li>• Assistance with communication tools or services, including internet service, phone service, or other related services and items</li> </ul> <p>The Northwest Michigan Works! Regional Director may update this list at any time.</p> <p>When determining appropriate supportive services, the Case Manager must seek the lowest cost option available.</p> <p>Supportive services not listed above may be available upon request. The Case Manager may request additional supportive services from the Northwest Michigan Works! Regional Director via the Service Center Manager. The request must indicate the need for the supportive service.</p>

## II. Procedure for Providing Supportive Services

Section	Procedure
<p>Vendors</p>	<p>The Northwest Michigan Works! Inc. Accounting Department will work with program staff to establish vendor relationships in each community throughout the region. Vendors will be selected based on their ability to provide the goods or services most commonly needed by program participants, and who will agree to operate on a purchase order basis.</p> <p>The Purchasing and Records Clerk will conduct all procurement activities.</p> <p>In establishing such vendors, efforts will be made to distribute expenditures of supportive services funds throughout a community while also assuring that costs are reasonable in relation to the goods or services being provided. In addition, vendors will be treated courteously and paid promptly.</p> <p>Vendor relationships that operate on a purchase order or payment voucher basis are the preferred method for providing supportive services.</p>
<p>Process</p>	<p>The process for ordering supportive services will be consistent among all programs. Program staff must email the Purchasing and Records Clerk (cc her/his immediate supervisor) a request for the provision of supportive services using the <i>Supportive Services Request Form</i>. The Request Form must include all information as indicated.</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>Supportive services may be provided for while a participant is enrolled in WIOA Career Services, Training, and/or Follow-Up Services (for WIOA Youth); PATH; or Work-Based Training for Special Populations as deemed necessary, appropriate, and in accordance with program specific guidelines.</p>



### III. Program Specific Guidelines

Section	Policy Provision
WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and NWDG	<p>Each service center will maintain a secure supply of cash equivalents. Case Managers will follow procedures for accessing and distributing cash equivalents when providing a cash equivalent item (i.e. gas card, bus pass) to a participant.</p> <p>Supportive services provided must be entered into the appropriate fields in the participant’s record in OSMIS and in the case notes. Case notes are to be as specific as possible and are to include at minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of supportive service(s)</li> <li>• Date provided</li> <li>• Amount</li> <li>• Gas card or bus pass number (if applicable)</li> </ul> <p>If the supportive services are provided for career services, then the Case Manager will enter the supportive services information into OSMIS.</p> <p>If the supportive service is related to training, then the Classroom Training Specialist will enter the supportive services information into OSMIS and the ITA Management platform.</p> <p><i>“Training costs”</i> is defined as those supports required for full participation in the training/class. Classroom training costs do not fall within the purview of this particular local policy.</p> <p><i>“Training supportive services”</i> is defined as those supports not required for participation in the training/class, but will assist the participant in overcoming barriers to participation. Classroom training supportive services <b>does</b> fall within the purview of this particular local policy.</p> <p>For Classroom Training in particular, vendor relationships that operate on a purchase order or payment voucher basis are the preferred method for providing supportive services. Alternatively, vendors can be paid directly. In cases where this is not applicable (i.e. mileage reimbursement), direct participant reimbursement is acceptable.</p>

<p>WIOA Youth</p>	<p>Supportive services provided must be entered into the appropriate fields in the participant’s record in OSMIS and in the case notes. Case notes are to be as specific as possible and are to include at minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of supportive services</li> <li>• Date provided</li> <li>• Amount</li> <li>• Gas card or bus pass number (if applicable)</li> </ul> <p>The following supportive services may be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation assistance, in the form of gas cards and/or bus passes</li> <li>• Clothing for interviews</li> <li>• Clothing and/or materials required for a specific job or training program, such as steel-toed boots, scrubs, etc.</li> <li>• Identification</li> <li>• Child care/dependent care assistance</li> <li>• Housing assistance</li> <li>• Educational testing</li> <li>• Reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities.</li> </ul> <p>Supportive services not listed may be available upon request to the Northwest Michigan Works! Regional Director via the Service Center Manager.</p>
<p>PATH</p>	<p>Supportive services are to be provided as appropriate through the first 180 days of a participant’s employment (the 180-day retention period).</p> <p>Supportive services provided must be entered into the appropriate fields in the participant’s record in OSMIS and in the case notes. Case notes are to be as specific as possible and are to include at minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of supportive services</li> <li>• Date provided</li> <li>• Amount</li> <li>• Gas card or bus pass number (if applicable)</li> </ul>

	<p>Available supportive services listed below are to be provided to participants on an individual basis. Lifetime or yearly limitations are also listed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Gas cards or bus passes, based on actual cost of travel or public transportation.</li> <li>○ Start-up cost of obtaining insurance for an uninsured vehicle that is owned by the participant.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Allowance for public transportation, Uber, Lyft, or private automobile mileage reimbursement.</li> <li>• Automotive Purchases             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To be used toward the purchase of an automobile if it will be used as the participant’s primary means of transportation for employment-related activities, even if public transportation is available.</li> <li>○ Limit: \$4,000/lifetime limit</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Vehicle repair             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Repairs to the automobile owned by the participant and that are necessary for participation.</li> <li>○ Limit: \$900/year</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Vehicle Insurance             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Limited to the time period in which the client is establishing income to allow for their ongoing payment of the insurance up to 90 days at one time.</li> <li>○ Limit: \$2,000/lifetime limit</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Clothing             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Clothing necessary for interviewing or work.</li> <li>○ Local “career closets” and thrift stores should be explored prior to purchasing new items.</li> <li>○ Limit: \$500/year</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Relocation allowance             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Only to be used for participants who have obtained verifiable employment at a location outside commuting distance from their home.</li> <li>○ Limit: \$1,500/per move</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment –Related Medical Expenses May include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employment-related photocopies</li> <li>▪ Completion of an MDHHS Medical Needs form certifying the clients ability or inability to participate in employment-related activities and relevant limitations or retractions</li> <li>▪ General medical or physical examination</li> <li>▪ Employment-related immunizations and test require as an employment or training condition</li> <li>▪ Dental services that are not covered under Medicaid, another health insurance plan, or by a community public health agency</li> </ul> </li> <li>• PATH Transitional Supportive Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To be used to cover miscellaneous employment-related expenses not normally covered by regular supportive services</li> <li>○ Limit: \$200/year</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Work-related expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Only for <b>one-time</b>, work-related expenses that are required to seek, obtain, and retain employment.</li> <li>○ May include purchase of tools, professional license fees, and similar non-continuing expenses.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Additional guidance, restrictions, and policy provisions are included in the PATH Manual, dated November 17, 2014.</p>
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Trade Act	<p>Supportive services provided must be entered into the appropriate fields in the participant’s record in OSMIS and in the case notes. Case notes are to be as specific as possible and are to include at minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of supportive services</li> <li>• Date provided</li> <li>• Amount</li> <li>• Gas card or bus pass number (if applicable)</li> </ul> <p>Individuals who are eligible and approved for training benefits under the Trade Act laws may receive supportive services as mandated by legislation. Trade Act staff will coordinate provision of these supportive services. The following supportive services may be provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Subsistence</li> <li>• Relocation expenses</li> <li>• Supplies</li> <li>• Equipment</li> <li>• Exams and certification fees</li> <li>• Child care</li> <li>• Dependent care</li> <li>• Housing assistance</li> <li>• Needs Related Payments</li> </ul> <p>All supportive services must be related to training funded by the program and/or must be necessary to participate.</p> <p>Additional regulations and policy governing these services are provided in the Trade Act manual.</p>
Restrictions	<p>It is not allowable to use supportive service dollars, including the use of cash equivalents, to neither purchase marijuana in any form on behalf of a customer nor assist a customer in the acquisition or consumption of marijuana in any form. Nor is it allowable to assist with certification, credentialing, or any other supportive service that supports, directly or indirectly, training, employment, job search, job placement, or any other activity related to employment or re-employment for training or career goals that support occupations or fields of study specific to the marijuana industry, including occupations that support, directly or indirectly, research, production/processing, sales, transport, purchase of goods and services tied to marijuana, or any other marijuana-related activity as a component of the training program. There are no exceptions to this prohibition.</p>

Documentation	<p>The Case Manager must document all supportive services provided in the participant’s case notes and IEP/ISS, as well as the Supportive Services module of the OSMIS. If the supportive service is related to training, then the Training Coordinator will email the appropriate Case Manager the necessary information in order for the Case Manager to update the IEP/ISS accordingly.</p> <p>Case notes must also indicate what other sources/resources were considered and the reason they were not available or appropriate. A supportive service should not be provided by WIOA if that service is readily available in a timely manner from another community agency or organization.</p> <p>For the provision of <u>automotive purchases</u>, the following documentation is required to be provided prior to the provision of the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure public transportation is not reasonably available and the participant has no other means to reach the job site reliably.</li> <li>○ Ensure the participant can afford any payments, insurance, and other expenses associated with owning the vehicle.</li> <li>○ Ensure the participant has a valid Michigan driver’s license.</li> <li>○ Verification that the participant does not otherwise own a usable vehicle.</li> <li>○ Verification that the vehicle is registered to an eligible group member and insured, at a minimum, for personal liability and property damage.</li> <li>○ Copy of vehicle inspection by a licensed mechanic placed into the case file.</li> </ul> <p>For the provision of <u>vehicle insurance</u>, the following documentation is required to be provided prior to the provision of the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Copy of participant’s valid driver’s license</li> <li>○ Copy of vehicle registration with participant’s name listed</li> <li>○ Quote for insurance with participant’s name listed</li> </ul> <p>For the provision of <u>vehicle repair</u>, the following documentation is required to be provided prior to the provision of the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Three estimates (with participant’s name listed) must be obtained and the work completed by a licensed mechanic; alternately, use approved vendor</li> <li>○ Copy of participant’s valid driver’s license</li> <li>○ Copy of vehicle registration with participant’s name listed</li> <li>○ Copy of proof that vehicle is insured</li> </ul> <p>For the provision of <u>vehicle registration</u>, the following documentation is required to be provided prior to the provision of the service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Copy of participant’s valid driver’s license</li> <li>○ Copy of proof that vehicle is insured</li> </ul>
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# Appendix C: Local Policy - Individual Training Accounts

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## Local Policy: Individual Training Accounts

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Date: June 1, 2020

To: Northwest Michigan Works! staff

From: Terry Vandercook, Chief Program Officer

Subject: Individual Training Accounts (ITA)

Programs Affected: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth

Applicable State Guidelines: WIOA Manual date November 8, 2019; Michigan Training Connect Manual

Funding Sources: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG)

### Background

Funding for training services is an allowable activity under the WIOA, including NDWG grants. In order to assist customers on a career pathway and/or meet employer demands, training services may be provided using such funding streams. Northwest Michigan Works! uses an Individual Training Account (ITA) system to administer funding for allowable training, based on program specific guidelines. This policy provides guidance on the proper use of ITAs so as to ensure effective use and accountability of training funds.



## Policy

Section	Policy Provision
Definition	An Individual Training Account (ITA) is a mechanism used to support the training costs for participants enrolled in a training activity.
Amounts	<p>An individual ITA shall not exceed \$3,000.</p> <p>Not every participant is expected to need this amount in order to successfully complete training. Rather, this amount allows flexibility for potentially longer-term training programs and corresponding costs.</p> <p>This amount shall not be considered an entitled total amount for every individual participant enrolled in a training activity.</p> <p>Specific program mandates and funding guidelines and/or availability may alter the ITA allowance in this Local Policy. Please see specific program policies for any additional training cost parameters and/or additional allowances.</p>
Length of training	The length of training to be funded shall take into consideration the availability of current and future funding, as well as the ultimate outcome for the customer in terms of job placement and retention. ITAs must include a start date and an estimated end date consistent with the start and end date for the training period, as given by the training institution.

<p>Training Activities</p>	<p>ITAs shall be used to fund training activities that relate to an in-demand occupation (see Local Policy: Key Demand Occupations).</p> <p>Training activities must consist of programs or courses of study for those vendors listed on the Michigan Training Connect (MiTC). This process shall take place before staff commit to a particular training program for a participant.</p> <p>Once eligibility is completed and verified by the MIS Technician, an Occupational Training Agreement (OTA) must be completed and forwarded to the Case Manager’s direct supervisor for final approval.</p> <p>ITAs shall be used as a tool in assisting participants along a career pathway and be in support of the Northwest’s key performance measures, as applicable.</p> <p>It is prohibited to provide an ITA to customers to support education and training in fields of study specific to the marijuana industry, including occupations that support, directly or indirectly, research, production/processing, sales, transport, purchase of goods and services tied to marijuana, or any other marijuana-related activity as a component of the training program. There are no exceptions to this prohibition.</p>
<p>Allowable Costs</p>	<p>ITAs shall be used to administer training costs and training supportive services, as applicable.</p> <p>Training costs are defined as those supports required for full participation in the training/class, such as tuition, related fees, books, and other specific required materials.</p> <p>Training supportive services is defined as those supports not required for participation in the training/class, but will assist the participant in overcoming barriers to participation, such as mileage reimbursement and auxiliary supplies.</p> <p>These lists are not exhaustive and may include other specific items, based on specific program guidelines and funding availability. Please see Local Policy: Supportive Services for additional guidance.</p> <p><b>In School Youth Restriction</b></p> <p>ISY cannot use youth program-funded ITAs. However, ISY between the ages of 18 and 21 may co-enroll in the WIOA Adult program if the young adult’s individual needs, knowledge, skills, and interests align with the WIOA Adult program and may receive training services through an ITA funded by the Adult program.</p>

<p>Number of ITAs</p>	<p>It is not prohibited for an individual participant to be provided with more than one ITA over the course of a single registration. In such circumstances, the expectation is that the subsequent ITAs will follow an established training plan and build upon a completed training program, ideally resulting in a stackable credential (i.e. a customer may use an ITA to complete CNA training and then use a second ITA in order to acquire a LPN certification).</p> <p>Using multiple ITAs also provides the opportunity for staff to provide more intensive and long-term case management services. The use of additional ITAs shall always be within the context of a participant’s career pathway, as well as how it may ultimately support the Northwest’s key performance measures, as applicable.</p> <p>Prior to committing to subsequent ITAs, staff must obtain approval from their direct supervisor.</p>
<p>Priority of Service</p>	<p>Priority of Service for Training shall be followed when using ITAs. Please see Local Policy: Priority of Service for Training for additional guidance.</p>
<p>Exceptions</p>	<p>In order to meet the needs of a job seeker or employer, exceptions to this policy may be reviewed and considered for approval by the Regional Director.</p> <p>Staff seeking exceptions to this policy must first review the case and secure approval from their direct supervisor. It is expected that the direct supervisor will consult with the Training Coordinator. If supported, the direct supervisor may then request a formal exception from the Regional Director.</p>

# Appendix D-1: 14 Youth Elements

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## Local Policy: WIOA Youth Program Elements

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Date: July 1, 2020

To: All Northwest Michigan Works! Staff

From: Terry Vandercook, Northwest Michigan Works! Director

Subject: Delivery of WIOA Youth Program Elements

Programs Affected: Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) - Youth

Applicable State and/or Federal Guidelines: WIOA Manual

Funding Sources: WIOA Youth

### Background

The WIOA funding enables the delivery of a comprehensive array of youth services that prepare youth for post-secondary educational and employment opportunities, attainment of educational and/or skills training credentials, and obtainment of employment with career opportunities. This is accomplished by assessing the participant's skills, interests, needs, and personal goals, creating customized service plans in collaboration with the participant, and expanding the participant's connection to and understanding of the local economy, educational opportunities, and available community services. This process is organized and coordinated around the 14 WIOA youth program elements.

All 14 WIOA youth program elements must be **made available** to every participant. **Made available** means that **all** 14 program elements are available in **all** areas served. While this does not mean that an individual service provider must deliver all 14 elements, they must identify partnerships to ensure availability by referral.

This Local Policy identifies the agencies that will deliver each of the 14 program elements throughout the region, and identifies the delivery method, and the formal partnership arrangement, as applicable.

## Policy

Element 1: Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Tutoring	Grand Traverse Area Literacy Council	In-House
	NMW! Adult Education Learning Labs	In-House
	Khan Academy	Publicly available online
Study Skills	NMW! Adult Education Learning Labs	In-House
	Michigan Electronic Library (MEL)	Publicly available online
	Khan Academy	Publicly available online
Dropout Prevention & Recovery	Jobs for Michigan's Graduates	In-House
	NMW! Adult Education Learning Labs	In-House
GED Preparation	NMW! Adult Education Learning Labs	In-House

Element 2: Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Alternative secondary school services	Traverse City High School	Referral
	Casman Academy	Referral
Dropout Recovery	Jobs for Michigan's Graduates	In-House
	NMW! Adult Education Learning Labs	In-House

Element 3: Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Work experience opportunities, summer and year-round	Local businesses, non-profit organizations, and local governments	Subcontract

Element 4: Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand sectors or occupations in the local area.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Classroom Training & Incumbent Worker Training	Community Colleges, Private Training Vendors, and other appropriate providers	Individual Training Account
On-the-Job Training	Local businesses and non-profit organizations	Subcontract
Pre-Apprenticeships & USDOL Registered Apprenticeships	Local businesses and non-profit organizations	Individual Training Account and/or Subcontract

Element 5: Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Work experience opportunities or Co-Op	Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs	Referral
Integrated Education and Training (IET)	Community Colleges, Private Training Vendors, and other appropriate providers	Individual Training Account and/or Subcontract
	Local businesses and non-profit organizations	Subcontract
	NMW! Adult Education Learning Labs	In-House

Element 6: Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Leadership Development	Jobs for Michigan's Graduates	In-House
	Junior Achievement	Referral
	SEEDS After School Programs	Referral
Community Service & Peer-centered activities	Goodwill Industries	Referral
	Salvation Army	Referral
	Local non-profit organizations	Referral

Element 7: Supportive Services

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Supportive Services	Northwest Michigan Works!	In-House

Element 8: Adult mentoring for at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Mentoring	Big Brothers, Big Sisters	Referral
	Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative (for youth aging out of foster care)	Referral

Element 9: Follow-up services for at least 12 months after completion of participation.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Follow-up Services	Northwest Michigan Works!	In-House



Element 10: Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Substance Abuse Counseling	Addiction Treatment Centers	Referral
Mental Health Counseling & Other needed types of counseling	Individual Providers	Referral

Element 11: Financial literacy education.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Financial Literacy	Junior Achievement	Referral
	Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency	Referral
	Local Financial Institutions	Referral
	Online Tools	Publicly available online

Element 12: Entrepreneurial skills training.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Entrepreneurial Skills Training	Michigan Small Business Development Center	Referral
	Junior Achievement	Presentations
	SCORE	Presentations

Element 13: Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Labor Market Information	Networks Northwest	In-House
	Northwest Michigan Works!	In-House
Career exploration & awareness	Northwest Michigan Works! (EDP & Kuder software)	In-House
	Talent Tours with local businesses and Community Colleges	In-House, in collaboration with Partners
	Michigan Electronic Library, Pure Michigan Talent Connect, O*Net Online, Pathfinder	Publicly available online
Career counseling	Northwest Michigan Works!	In-House

Element 14: Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

Service	Delivering Agency	Delivery Method
Transition Activities	Talent Tours with local businesses and Community Colleges	In-House
	Job shadowing	Referral
	NMW! Adult Education Learning Labs	In-House

# Appendix D-2: Local Policy - Basic Skills Deficient

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## Local Policy: Basic Skills Deficient

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Date: July, 2021

To: All Northwest Michigan Works! staff

From: Terry Vandercook, Chief Program Officer

Subject: Definition of Basic Skills Deficient for purposes of WIOA Youth, WIOA Adult Services, WIOA Dislocated Worker

Programs Affected: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) In-School Youth, WIOA Out-of-School Youth, WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker

Applicable State and/or Federal Guidelines: WIOA Manual dated November 8, 2019

Funding Source(s): Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act WIOA Youth, WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker

### Background

Low educational functioning levels can be a significant barrier to educational and/or employment success. All WIOA Youth participants must be assessed to determine any basic skills deficiencies. WIOA combines the prior definitions of “Deficient in Basic Literacy Skills” and “Basic Skills Deficient” into the singular term “Basic Skills Deficient.”

Basic Skills Deficiency (BSD) is one of the barriers recognized as eligibility criteria for WIOA Youth Participants.

WIOA defines Basic Skills Deficiency as one of the following:

- (a) A youth that has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level; or
- (b) “a youth or adult 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.” This category must be locally defined.

This local policy provides guidance and definition of criteria (b) above.

## Determining Basic Skills Deficiency

Section	Policy Provision																								
Assessment	<p>All WIOA Youth Participants must be assessed for basic skills deficiency using one of the following assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) 11-12*</li> <li>• Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) Reading GOALS*</li> <li>• CASAS Math GOALS*</li> <li>• Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)</li> </ul> <p>Should a Case Manager want to administer an assessment instead of the TABE, they may submit a request to the Service Center Manager. Requests will be evaluated by the Regional Director.</p> <p>*NRS approved assessments for the purposes of recording an EFL gain for the MSG measure. (TABE 11-12, CASAS Reading/Math)</p>																								
Grade Level Basic Skills Deficient	<p>If the participant scores at an 8<sup>th</sup> (8.9) grade level or lower, or NRS level 1-4 out of 6 in reading, writing, or computing skills, then he/she is considered Basic Skills Deficient.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Test Benchmarks: TABE 11/12</u></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <thead> <tr> <th>Level 1: Beginning ABE Literacy 0.0-1.9 Grade Equivalent</th> <th>Level 2: Beginning Basic Education 2.0-3.9 Grade Equivalent</th> <th>Level 3: Low Intermediate Basic Education 4.0-5.9 Grade Equivalent</th> <th>Level 4: High Intermediate Basic Education 6.0-8.9 Grade Equivalent</th> <th>Level 5: Low Adult Secondary Education 9.0-10.9 Grade Equivalent</th> <th>Level 6: High Adult Secondary Education 11.0-12.0 Grade Equivalent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>Reading:</b> 300-441</td> <td><b>Reading:</b> 442-500</td> <td><b>Reading:</b> 501-535</td> <td><b>Reading:</b> 536-575</td> <td><b>Reading:</b> 576-616</td> <td><b>Reading:</b> 617-800</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Math:</b> 300-448</td> <td><b>Math:</b> 449-495</td> <td><b>Math:</b> 496-536</td> <td><b>Math:</b> 537-595</td> <td><b>Math:</b> 596-656</td> <td><b>Math:</b> 657-800</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Language:</b> 300-457</td> <td><b>Language:</b> 458-510</td> <td><b>Language:</b> 511-546</td> <td><b>Language:</b> 547-583</td> <td><b>Language:</b> 584-630</td> <td><b>Language:</b> 631-800</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Alternative Assessments:</b> A new assessment of a participant is not required if an assessment has been conducted by an education or training program within the past 6 months. An assessment conducted by an education or training program may also be used to satisfy post-test requirements.</p> <p><b>Documentation:</b> A copy of the test results will be placed in the participant file; the test results will be entered into the OSMIS and described in a case note. If the assessment is not found in Attachment 24 of the WIOA Manual, the scale score conversion chart must accompany the academic test scoring sheet, with the score and grade equivalent highlighted in the participant file. Refer to the <i>Youth Eligibility &amp; Data Validation</i> checklists for specifics regarding documentation and case note content.</p>	Level 1: Beginning ABE Literacy 0.0-1.9 Grade Equivalent	Level 2: Beginning Basic Education 2.0-3.9 Grade Equivalent	Level 3: Low Intermediate Basic Education 4.0-5.9 Grade Equivalent	Level 4: High Intermediate Basic Education 6.0-8.9 Grade Equivalent	Level 5: Low Adult Secondary Education 9.0-10.9 Grade Equivalent	Level 6: High Adult Secondary Education 11.0-12.0 Grade Equivalent	<b>Reading:</b> 300-441	<b>Reading:</b> 442-500	<b>Reading:</b> 501-535	<b>Reading:</b> 536-575	<b>Reading:</b> 576-616	<b>Reading:</b> 617-800	<b>Math:</b> 300-448	<b>Math:</b> 449-495	<b>Math:</b> 496-536	<b>Math:</b> 537-595	<b>Math:</b> 596-656	<b>Math:</b> 657-800	<b>Language:</b> 300-457	<b>Language:</b> 458-510	<b>Language:</b> 511-546	<b>Language:</b> 547-583	<b>Language:</b> 584-630	<b>Language:</b> 631-800
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<b>Reading:</b> 300-441	<b>Reading:</b> 442-500	<b>Reading:</b> 501-535	<b>Reading:</b> 536-575	<b>Reading:</b> 576-616	<b>Reading:</b> 617-800																				
<b>Math:</b> 300-448	<b>Math:</b> 449-495	<b>Math:</b> 496-536	<b>Math:</b> 537-595	<b>Math:</b> 596-656	<b>Math:</b> 657-800																				
<b>Language:</b> 300-457	<b>Language:</b> 458-510	<b>Language:</b> 511-546	<b>Language:</b> 547-583	<b>Language:</b> 584-630	<b>Language:</b> 631-800																				

<p>BSD Post-test requirements (Youth only)</p>	<p>Basic skills deficient participants who receive services for more than one-year must be post-tested prior to the anniversary of the first youth program service. This must be done each year, through year three, of participation.</p> <p><b>Exception:</b> If the youth attains a high school diploma, recognized equivalent, or college degree, the decision to post-test is optional.</p>
<p>Functionally Basic Skills Deficient</p>	<p>An adult 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 must meet criteria such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is learning English as a Second Language (ESL); or</li> <li>• Has a social, mental or physical impairments as documented by a physician or other qualified service; or</li> <li>• Is enrolled in remedial courses in post-secondary education; or</li> <li>• Self-attested to being Basic Skills Deficient; or</li> <li>• Lacks basic computer skills; or</li> <li>• Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education; or</li> <li>• Enrolled in secondary education with a grade point average of less than 2.0; or</li> <li>• Graduated from secondary education with a certificate of completion and not a high school diploma; or</li> <li>• Has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) while attending secondary training; or</li> <li>• Lacks the short-term pre-vocational skills (i.e. the learning skills, communication skills, or computer literacy skills) an individual needs to prepare for unsubsidized employment or training, as documented by and in his/her comprehensive assessment; or</li> <li>• On-the-Job Training ONLY: if an individual possesses 50% or less of the skills required to do the job as indicated by the training outline</li> </ul> <p><b>Documentation:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A copy of assessment results placed in the participant file; or A copy of a applicable records from Education Institution (transcripts, academic assessments, or other school documentation) placed in the participant file; or</li> <li>2. A case note describing the participant's Basic Skills Deficiency</li> </ol>
<p>Exceptions</p>	<p>Exceptions may be granted to allow WIOA Youth to be considered for functional basic skills deficiency if they meet at least one of the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Will obtain a high school diploma, recognized equivalent, or college degree within one year of enrollment; or</li> <li>2. Is a special-purpose enrollment to allow access to a short-term training or work experience opportunities and will not be enrolled for more than a year</li> </ol> <p>The Northwest Michigan Works! Regional Director may grant exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis. If seeking an exception for a participant, the Case Manager will submit the request in writing (email is acceptable), providing rationale for the request. Exceptions granted will become part of the participant file.</p>

## Appendix D-3: Local Policy - Youth Requires Additional Assistance

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## Local Policy: Youth Requires Additional Assistance

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Date: June 1, 2020

To: All Northwest Michigan Works! WIOA program staff

From: Terry Vandercook, Chief Program Officer

Subject: Local Policy defining locally-identified characteristics of a “Youth Who Needs Additional Assistance”

Programs Affected: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth, In School Youth (ISY) and Out of School Youth (OSY)

Applicable State and/or Federal Guidelines: WIOA Manual dated November 8, 2019

Funding Source(s): Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth

### Background

In order to be eligible for the WIOA Youth program, an applicant must fit the age requirement and be facing at least one of the barriers listed in the Youth chapter of the *WIOA Manual*. While barrier options differ slightly between ISY and OSY, they are primarily concrete such as being a high school dropout, homeless, or basic skills deficient. In the event that a Youth applicant does not meet one of these specific barriers, a generalized barrier option of “needs additional assistance to enter/complete an educational program or obtain/retain employment” may be available.

Per the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), the local area must define “youth who needs additional assistance” in a manner that is in keeping with the needs of youth in the region.

This local policy identifies 12 criteria to guide the determination of a “youth who needs additional assistance” based on an assessment of ongoing needs of youth in our communities and provides a framework for requesting exceptions and adapt to the changing needs of youth within the service region.



## Policy

Section	Policy Provision
General	When a WIOA Youth applicant meets eligibility requirements for WIOA ISY or OSY, with the exception of possessing one of the specific barriers, consideration may be given to using the general barrier of “youth who needs additional assistance.” The definition of this barrier applies to both ISY and OSY but there is a limit as to how many ISY may use this as their sole barrier.

<p><b>Eligibility criteria:</b> Youth who needs additional assistance</p>	<p><b>Low Income</b></p> <p>All Youth who “need additional assistance” must first meet low income criteria as set by the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act or be approved as part of the <i>5% income exception</i>. Reference the <i>Local Policy – Youth 5% Income Exception</i>.</p> <p><b>Definitions:</b> If a Youth applicant meets at least one of the following definitions, they may be considered a “Youth who needs additional assistance”:</p> <p><b>Employment-based:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited or no work history: Limited or no work history after completing high school or a GED</li> <li>• Have been fired from a job within the 12 months prior to application</li> <li>• Have never held a full-time job for more than 13 consecutive weeks.</li> </ul> <p><b>Education-based:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited school attendance: Missed significant time in school due to truancy, illness, family situation such as continual relocation, homelessness, caring for younger siblings, family emergency, or severe trauma within the family unit.</li> <li>• Have a core grade point average of less than 1.5</li> <li>• Have repeated at least one secondary grade level or are one year over age for their grade</li> <li>• For each year of secondary education, are at least two semester credits behind the rate required to graduate from high school</li> <li>• Are deemed at risk of dropping out of school by a school official</li> </ul> <p><b>Personal/emotional-based:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose of caregiver: Experiencing the loss of a primary caregiver due to death, divorce, incarceration, or extended military service</li> <li>• Have experience recent traumatic events, are victims of abuse, or reside in an abusive environment as documented by a school official or other qualified professional</li> <li>• Addiction: Substance addiction and either participating or soon to enter a rehabilitation/recovery program..</li> <li>• Are emancipated youth</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Limitations:</b> In-School-Youth</p>	<p>No more than five percent (rounded down) of all new ISY enrollments during a program year may be individuals with a sole barrier of “An individual who requires additional assistance”.</p> <p>To request usage of this barrier for an ISY, the Case Manager shall submit their request for approval to the Service Center Manager with an explanation of why it is needed.</p> <p>The Service Center Manager will evaluate the request and work with the Case Manager in an attempt to identify whether or not other eligibility criteria have the potential to apply to the participant, thus no longer requiring the need to use the Youth Who Needs Additional Services barrier for determining eligibility. If alternate methods of determining the applicant is eligible are identified, the Service Center Manager will request the Case Manager pursue all identified alternate methods.</p> <p>Should alternate methods of eligibility be identified and found viable, the request will be denied in favor of one of the alternate methods.</p> <p>If alternate methods are not identified, or are identified but are not viable, the Service Center Manager will forward the request to the MIS Technician. The MIS Technician will review the request to determine if it will exceed the 5% limit before final approval is granted.</p> <p>Under no circumstances will a barrier exception be granted if such an enrollment will exceed the five percent limit.</p> <p>If the use of this barrier is not granted, the Case Manager should explore eligibility in other workforce programs that have the potential to meet the needs of the applicant.</p>
<p>Requests for expanded definitions</p>	<p>A request to include additional eligibility, beyond the local definition, may be submitted to the Service Center Manager with an explanation for the request. The Service Center Manager will review the request and, if found viable, forward it to the Regional Director for approval or disapproval.</p> <p>The request for exception will be documented in a case note and placed in the participant file.</p>

# Appendix E: Adult Education Memorandum of Understanding

Memorandum of Understanding

Between

Northwest Michigan Council of Governments,  
dba Networks Northwest  
PO Box 506  
Traverse City, MI 49685-0506

And

Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District  
1101 Red Drive  
Traverse City, MI 49684

**Purpose**

This Memorandum of Agreement, hereinafter referred to as MOU, establishes terms and conditions between the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, dba Networks Northwest, hereinafter referred to as the Networks Northwest, and the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, 1101 Red Drive, Traverse City, MI 49684, hereinafter referred to as TBAISD. This MOU is entered into for the purposes of delineating the respective roles and responsibilities of the aforementioned entities for delivery of Adult Education and Literacy Services.

**Effective Dates**

This MOU is entered into July 1, 2012 and shall remain in effect until terminated by mutual agreement of the parties. It is dependent upon continuation of funding, acceptable performance, and desire by both parties to retain the partnership.

**Terms of Agreement**

Both parties agree to the following terms:

- Networks Northwest operates Northwest Michigan Works!, Inc., a non-profit organization, under which all services specified in this MOU are delivered.
- Networks Northwest maintains Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title

- II funding for Adult Education.
- TBAISD employs the Adult Education teachers and pays them out of Michigan State I07 funding designated for Adult Education.
- TBAISD will be the employer of record for the Adult Education teachers, with direct supervision from the Adult Education Coordinator, a Northwest Michigan Works!, Inc. employee.
- Northwest Michigan Works!, Inc. will be the employer of record for the Adult Education aides and other non-teaching staff.
- Both parties will share in the hiring decisions for Adult Education teaching staff.

### **Roles of Partners**

Networks Northwest will:

- Provide staffing, as follows:
  - o Adult Education Coordinator:
    - Supervision of Adult Education teachers, aides, and other non-teaching staff.
    - Development of instructional strategies and the program improvement plan.
    - Performance reviews of staff, according to TBAISD processes.
    - Completion of all mandated state reports as required by the I07 funding.
  - o Aides for assistance in each location (FTE distribution to be determined by NWMCOG)
    - Maintenance of Records (MSDS/MAERS)
- Provide management of budget for full scope of Adult Education, including WIA Title I and Title II funding, State of Michigan I07 funding, and any other funds received for the operation of the Adult Education program.
- Provide marketing of Adult Education services for purposes of participant recruitment and community goodwill:
  - o Development and implementation of marketing plan
  - o Web site development and maintenance
  - o Annual Report
  - o Social media
  - o Co-branding of Michigan Works! and TBAISD
- Provide:
  - o Use of Northwest Michigan Works! Service Centers for Adult Education

- Learning Labs including utilities, phone, internet, parking, etc.
  - o Technical support for technology needs in Learning Labs, including software selection, licensing, installation and maintenance, and computer functionality.
  - o Integration of Adult Education services into Northwest Michigan Works! programs and services, where appropriate, and assimilation of Adult Education teachers into staffing communications and processes at service centers.
- Reimburse TBAISD for operating costs related to Adult Education that exceed the amount of State of Michigan I07 funding.

TBAISD will:

- Provide certified Michigan teachers as Adult Education teachers.
- Provide the Northwest Michigan Works! Inc. Accountant access to financial management systems for purposes of managing the full scope of the Adult Education budget.
- Provide the Adult Education Coordinator and Northwest Michigan Works! Inc. Accountant access to the Michigan Electronic Grant System (MEGS) for completing the State of Michigan I07 application.
- Submit Adult Education student counts in the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) and provide Unique Identification Codes (UIC) for new Adult Education students.
- Issue high school diplomas for adult education students.
- Approval of the Master Course list and the adult education calendar by the TBAISD Board of Education.
- Audit adult education student count data.
- House and maintain adult education student records.
- Submit an invoice to Networks Northwest monthly, for operating costs related to Adult Education that exceed State of Michigan I07 funding.
- Provide regular communication to NW MCOG regarding availability and scope of State of Michigan I07 funding.
- Maintain the Adult Education High School completion program at the TBAISD Career Tech Center to be operated within all terms of this agreement.

### **Equal Opportunity**

This contractor and subcontractor shall abide by the requirements of 41 CFR §§ 60-1.4(a), 60-300.5(a) and 60-741.5(a). These regulations prohibit discrimination against qualified individuals based on their status as protected veterans or individuals with disabilities,

and prohibit discrimination against all individuals based on their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. Moreover, these regulations require that covered prime contractors and subcontractors take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment individuals without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, protected veteran status or disability.

### **Indemnification**

The parties in the below Indemnification statement refers to the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, dba Networks Northwest and Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, with each organization being a separate entity.

The work performed by the parties shall be at the risk of the parties exclusively. To the fullest extent permitted by law, the parties shall indemnify, defend (at the parties' sole expense) and hold harmless the other parties (including its officers, employees and agents) from and against any and all claims for bodily injury, death or damage to property, demands, damages, actions, causes of action, suits, losses, judgments, obligations and any liabilities, costs and expenses (including but not limited to investigative and repair costs, attorneys' fees and costs, and consultants' fees and costs) which arise or are in any way connected with the work performed, materials furnished, or services provided under this Agreement by the parties or its agents. These indemnity and defense obligations shall apply to any acts or omissions, negligent or willful misconduct of the parties its employees or agents, whether active or passive. Said indemnity and defense obligations shall further apply, whether or not said claims arise out of the concurrent act, omission, or negligence of the other parties (its officers, employees and agents), whether active or passive. The parties shall not be obligated to indemnify and defend the other parties for claims found to be due to the sole negligence or willful misconduct of the other parties (including its officers, employees and agents).

The parties indemnification and defense obligations hereunder shall extend to claims occurring after this agreement is terminated as well as while it is in force, and shall continue until it is finally adjudicated that any and all actions against the other parties (including its officers, employees and agents) for such matters which are indemnified hereunder are fully and finally barred by applicable laws.

### **Modification or Termination**

This Memorandum of Understanding can be modified at any time by consent of both parties. Either party may terminate this Memorandum of Understanding for any reason with ninety (90) day formal notification to the other party.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement the day and year first above written.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AGREEMENT

For NORTHWEST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
dba NETWORKS NORTHWEST

Elaine Wood  
Elaine Wood, CEO

12-12-14  
Date

For TRAVERSE BAY AREA INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Michael J. Hill  
Michael J. Hill, Superintendent

12/16/14  
Date

# Appendix F: Local Board Mission and Vision



# Networks Northwest

Talent / Business / Community

## Our Vision

We envision a diverse and resilient economy in Northwest Michigan with vibrant, unique communities.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to build stronger communities and enhance the quality of life in Northwest Michigan, by

- providing a regional framework for effective collaboration among integrated service networks;
- and by
- directly providing services related to talent, business, and community development.

## Our Hallmarks

- Public-private partnership
- Visionary leadership
- Responsiveness & adaptability
- Entrepreneurship
- Economy of scale
- Leveraging resources

## Our Values

- Innovation
- Collaboration
- Integrity
- Excellence
- Optimism
- Empowerment
- Celebration

## We Serve

- Businesses
- Community organizations
- Units of government
- Individuals
- Regional or sub-regional topical networks

## Corresponding Goals, Strategies, Objectives, Metrics

- Regional Prosperity Planning and Community Networks
- Programs we operate
  - ◆ Talent
  - ◆ Business
  - ◆ Community

[networksnorthwest.org](http://networksnorthwest.org)

# Appendix G: Local Policy - Michigan Training Connect

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## Local Policy: Michigan Training Connect (MiTC)

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Date: July 1, 2021

To: Northwest Michigan Works! staff

From: Terry Vandercook, Chief Program Officer

Subject: Approving or denying approval of training provider/programs to be an Eligible Training Provider (ETP) on the eligible training provider list on the Michigan Training Connect

Programs Affected: Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Adult; Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Dislocated Worker; Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Youth

Applicable State and/or Federal Guidelines: WIOA Manual dated November 8, 2019; MiTC Policy Manual

Funding Source(s): Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act

### Background

The Michigan Training Connect (MiTC) serves as an important tool for participants seeking training to identify appropriate providers and relevant information such as cost and program outcomes. Using the MiTC, Case Managers can assist participants in identifying training providers offering programs leading to job placement in in-demand industries and occupations that result in positive outcomes and recognized credentials.

The Northwest Michigan Works! Agency (NMWA) approves or denies approval for training providers/programs according to a standardized and objective process in order for training providers/programs to be deemed an Eligible Training Provider (ETP), resulting in their training program to be posted publicly on the MiTC. Only training providers/programs deemed eligible may receive the WIOA Title I-B training funds to train participants.

This policy outlines the approval and denial of approval criteria and the corresponding methodologies and procedures used by the NMWA to approve or deny approval of training provider applications to the MiTC.

## Policy

Section	Policy Provision
Initial Eligibility Approval Criteria	<p>For training programs that have not previously been made eligible, training providers must submit required information, including performance, in order for their programs to be considered for initial eligibility. Programs that receive initial eligibility designation receive the designation for one year.</p> <p>The following information must be provided to the NMWA in order for the initial eligibility to be evaluated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. description of training program services to be offered;</li> <li>2. training program outcomes that meet the minimum standards (listed below);               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Unsubsidized employment during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit</li> <li>b. Unsubsidized employment during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit</li> <li>c. Median earnings</li> <li>d. Credential attainment</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><i>Exception: New training programs are exempt from meeting the training program outcome criteria. New training programs are defined as programs for which the first class has not yet occurred and/or the program is a new offering for the institution.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. proof of proprietary school licensure;</li> <li>4. information concerning whether or not the training provider is in partnership with business, which could include information about the quality and quantity of employer partnerships;</li> <li>5. information to determine high-quality training services, including whether or not the training program leads to a recognized post-secondary credential;</li> <li>6. information that addresses the alignment of the training with in-demand industry sectors and occupations, to the extent possible;</li> <li>7. the ability of training providers to provide training services that are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals who are employed and for individuals with disabilities.</li> </ol> <p>Once the NMWA approves Initial Eligibility, the program is designated as eligible to have an Individual Training Account (ITA) on the MiTC and approved to serve ITA-eligible customers across the State.</p>

<p>Continuing Eligibility Approval Criteria</p>	<p>All ETPs are subject to continued ITA eligibility procedures and minimum performance standards each year thereafter. Continued ITA eligibility is determined on an annual basis. A program’s eligibility period expires July 31 of each year. The program may be removed from the MiTC if they do not renew by July 31.</p> <p>The following information must be provided to NMWA in order to evaluate continuing eligibility criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. training program outcomes that meet the minimum standards that are equal to the WIOA Dislocated Worker minimum standard percentages, which include:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Unsubsidized employment during the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter after exit</li> <li>b. Unsubsidized employment during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter after exit</li> <li>c. Median earnings</li> <li>d. Credential attainment;</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. information identifying the recognized post-secondary credentials received by all training participations;</li> <li>3. program cost information, including tuition and fees for the WIOA participants in the program;</li> <li>4. information on the program completion rate for the WIOA participants;</li> <li>5. the degree to which training programs relate to in-demand industry sectors and occupations within the state;</li> <li>6. the training provider’s ability to offer industry-recognized certificates and/or credentials;</li> <li>7. the quality of the training program; and</li> <li>8. the ability of training providers to provide training services that are physically and programmatically accessible for individuals who are employed and for individuals with disabilities.</li> </ol> <p>Training providers/programs that fail to meet the requirements may be denied approval. The NMWA has the discretion to grant an approval according to stipulations made in this Local Policy.</p> <p>Once the NMWA approves continuing eligibility, the program is designated as eligible to have an Individual Training Account (ITA) on the MiTC and approved to serve ITA-eligible customers across the State.</p>
<p>Local Standards</p>	<p><b>Performance Standards</b></p> <p>The NMWA will follow the minimum performance standards identified by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity – Workforce Development (LEO-WD).</p>



	<p><b>Requesting Additional Information</b></p> <p>The NMWA may, at its discretion, request information in addition to that required for the standard eligibility (initial and continuing) criteria. Supplemental information may be requested of the training provider in order to verify or clarify performance levels or other standard criteria required to be reported by the training provider. Supplemental information may also be requested in order to pursue an exception that may avert a denial of eligibility or to verify the quality of the training provider/program.</p> <p>Examples of supplemental information that may be requested include but are not limited to full performance data including completion, placement/employment, and wage information.</p> <p><b>Other Training Provider/Program Characteristics</b></p> <p>As appropriate, the NMWA may also consider the following characteristics of the training provider/program throughout the approval process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the ability of a training provider to partner with employers and to provide job placement services;</li> <li>• drop-out rate/completion rate of the training provider/program</li> <li>• training provider’s compliance, or lack thereof, with federal disability and accessibility laws;</li> <li>• quality of the credential offered;</li> <li>• level of demand for related occupations within the region;</li> <li>• other applicable characteristics; and</li> <li>• the provider’s student loan default rate.</li> </ul>
<p>Restrictions</p>	<p>Training programs that support education and training in fields of study specific to the marijuana industry, including occupations that support, directly or indirectly, research, production/processing, sales, transport, purchase of goods and services tied to marijuana, or any other marijuana-related activity as a component of the training program. There are no exceptions to this prohibition.</p>
<p>Approval Documentation</p>	<p>The NMWA will maintain files, either electronic or physical, that reflect the approval process for each training provider/program.</p>



<p>Denying Eligibility</p>	<p>It is at the discretion of the NMWA to approve or deny approval of a training provider/program. The NMWA may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deny approval of a training program;</li> <li>• approve a training program that does not meet standard eligibility requirements including failure to meet at least one performance measure;</li> <li>• deny a training program due to possible health and safety issues *The MWA must first notify WD in writing and request approval to remove a training provider from the MiTC;</li> <li>• deny training programs lacking performance documentation; and</li> <li>• deny training programs that provide low-quality or questionable performance data.</li> </ul> <p>In any of the above circumstances, the final decision to approve or deny approval must be made by the Regional Director prior to the issuance of the approval or denial of approval. In addition, all circumstances will be documented and a file maintained.</p> <p>Should the NMWA deny approval of an application, the reason for the denial will be provided in writing to the training provider associated with the application.</p> <p>Training providers and programs that are denied approval for placement on the MiTC have the right to appeal the decision within 30 working days from the date of the denial by following the Grievance and Complaint Policy in effect at the time of denial of eligibility.</p> <p>Approvals will be reconsidered annually.</p>
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**Failure to Meet Minimum Performance Standards**

A training provider/program that does not meet eligibility requirements for Initial or Continuing eligibility (whichever is applicable) may be denied approval for placement on the MiTC.

The NMWA reserves the right to make an exception to this requirement if a training program fails to meet at least one of the minimum performance standards. In such a circumstance, the NMWA may take additional aspects of the training program into consideration, including but not limited to:

1. number of students who participated in the training program
2. local economic conditions
3. limited number of training providers in the region that provide training for program of study
4. students drop out due to outside influences
5. students transfer from one program to another
6. students take advantage of employment opportunities not directly related to area of study often resulting in lower wages
7. data is not available
8. limited number of students enrolled (20 or under)
9. outcomes not significantly below minimum standard performance metric
10. other circumstances presented by the training provider

Should the NMWA grant approval to a training provider/program failing to meet minimum performance standards, the Regional Director will be notified and supplied the rationale for such an approval.

**Health and Safety Issues**

The NMWA reserves the right to deny a Training Provider's initial or continuing Eligibility if the NMWA determines the health and safety of students and others may be at risk. This determination will be made based on sound rationale and supporting documentation, when applicable and available.

**Programs Lacking Performance Documentation**

A training program may be unable to document one or more performance measures. Examples include 1) a program with cohorts lasting more than one year and during which no one graduates and no one drops out and credential attainment cannot be calculated; or 2) all program graduates transfer to continuing education in a related field resulting in no graduates available for employment and wages are undefined.

In such circumstances, the NMWA has the discretion to approve or deny approval of the training program and may request supplemental information in order to verify the quality of the training provider.

	<p><b>Questionable or Low-Quality Data (Implementation of Data Collections Assistance)</b> In the event a training provider presents data that is of questionable or low-quality, the NMWA has the discretion to approve or deny the approval of the training program. The NMWA may request supplemental information in order to make a determination.</p>
<p>Removing a Training Provider/Program from the MiTC</p>	<p><b>Applicable Circumstances</b></p> <p>The NMWA may request a training provider/program be removed from the MiTC under the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inaccurate information</b> - The NMWA discovers information regarding the training provider/program was provided in an inaccurate manner; a termination of eligibility will occur for a period of not less than two years; such a training provider will be liable to repay, from non-federal funds, all of the WIOA training funds received during the period of non-compliance;</li> <li>• <b>Violated WIOA requirements</b> - It is determined an eligible training provider/program has substantially violated any requirements under the WIOA; the provider's eligibility to receive funds for the program(s) in question will be terminated for a period of not less than two years;</li> <li>• <b>Eligibility expires</b> - A training provider/program does not reapply under the continued eligibility procedures; such training providers/programs will be removed from the MiTC and are required to reapply under the continued eligibility provisions, and are subject to meeting minimum performance prior to having their program placed back on the MiTC;</li> <li>• <b>Fails to meet performance</b> - A training program fails to meet minimum performance requirements and is not granted an exception by the NMWA; the training provider's eligibility to receive funds may be suspended for a period of not less than two years, at which time the training provider may re-apply under the continuing eligibility requirements/procedures. Should the NMWA grant approval to a training provider/program failing to meet minimum performance standards, the Regional Director will be notified and supplied the rationale for such an approval.</li> <li>• <b>Non-compliance</b> - A training provider substantially violates the terms outlined in a training agreement, and will be considered to be in non-compliance; an example of a substantial violation is ceasing to continue to provide training services to participants;</li> <li>• <b>Health or safety risks</b> - The NMWA discovers that the health and safety of students or others could be at risk.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Procedure</b></p> <p>The NMWA will first engage in an objective investigation of the circumstances surrounding the possible need to remove a training provider/program from the MiTC; the investigation will be thoroughly documented and presented to the Regional Director, who will make the final determination as to whether or not to pursue the removal. If it is determined that it is appropriate for a training provider to be removed from the MiTC, the Regional Director will follow the procedure below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NMWA will request approval from the LEO-WD by submitting the results of the investigation to the LEO-WD via email at <a href="mailto:MiTC@michigan.gov">MiTC@michigan.gov</a>;</li> <li>• if the LEO-WD does not concur, the non-concurrence will be documented in the file;</li> <li>• if the LEO-WD concurs, the training provider will be removed from the MiTC;</li> <li>• NMWA will issue written notice within 10 business days to the training that the program has been removed from the MiTC. The notice must clearly identify the program and specific reason(s) for the removal. The notice will also advise the training provider of the right to appeal the MWA’s decision within 30 working days from the date of the denial, following LEO-WD’s Grievance and Complaint Policy in effect at the time of denial for placement on the MiTC.</li> </ul> <p>The Program Specialist will maintain files on all cases to which this procedure applies.</p>
<p>Data Collection Assistance</p>	<p>If a provider can demonstrate the collection of program specific performance to be unduly burdensome or costly, the State or local MWA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• must provide access to cost-effective methods for collection of information;</li> <li>• may provide additional resources to assist provider in the collection of information from stateside workforce investment activities under WIOA;</li> <li>• may take steps to assist training providers in collection of supplying required information such as offering technical assistance.</li> </ul>
<p>Other ETP Requirements</p>	<p>All ETPs are subject to the equal opportunity and nondiscrimination requirements contained in Section 188 of the WIOA.</p>

# Appendix H: Local Policy on Priority of Service

## Local Policy: Priority of Service for Training

Date: June 1, 2020

To: All Northwest Michigan Works! staff

From: Terry Vandercook, Chief Program Officer

Subject: Priority Levels for providing Training Services to WIOA Adult participants

Programs Affected: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult

Applicable State and/or Federal Guidelines: WIOA Manual dated November 8, 2019  
20 CFR 1010.110 (definition of veterans and eligible spouses)

Funding Source(s): Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Adult

### Background

WIOA law requires that priority for Training Services be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and/or individuals who are basic skills deficient. Michigan Works! Agencies may identify additional priority levels. Northwest Michigan Works! has determined additional priority levels.

This local policy provides the locally defined levels of priority as well as guidance on how these priority levels should be applied.

## I. Priority Levels

Section	Policy Provision
Level I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recipients of public assistance</li> <li>• Low-income individuals: must meet one of the six definitions of “low income” provided by WIOA law (see WIOA Manual)</li> <li>• Individuals who are basic skills deficient               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To determine Basic Skills Deficiency, apply criteria outlined in <i>Local Policy: Basic Skills Deficient – Youth</i>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Veterans and eligible spouses who meet this level’s criteria will be given priority within this level.</b></p>
Level II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veterans and eligible spouses</li> </ul>
Level III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unemployed individual</li> <li>• Returning Citizen</li> <li>• Individual with a disability; disability is defined by Section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the person’s major life activities.”</li> </ul>
Level IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employed individual whose family income is below the locally defined Self-Sufficiency Level. See the local policy on Self-Sufficiency.</li> </ul>

## II. Guidelines for Applying Priority Levels

Section	Policy Provision
When to apply priority levels	Priority levels will be applied when funds for training are limited, a determination at the discretion of the Northwest Michigan Works! Chief Program Officer.
Procedure	<p>When training funds have been deemed limited, priority will be given according to the characteristics and in the order identified in this Local Policy.</p> <p>When training funds have been deemed limited, final determination to approve funding or not will be made by the Chief Program Officer.</p> <p>Priority does not indicate entitlement to training.</p> <p>Participants in need of training funds who are not approved to receive training funds due to application of priority levels will be added to a waiting list. The waiting list will be evaluated as funding becomes identified and/or available.</p>
Exceptions	The Northwest Michigan Works! Chief Program Officer may grant exceptions to this policy on a case-by-case basis. If seeking an exception for a participant, the Case Manager will submit the request in writing (email is acceptable), providing rationale for the request. Exceptions granted will become part of the participant file.



# Appendix I: Local Policy - Rapid Response

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## Local Policy: Rapid Response

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Date: June 1, 2020

To: All Northwest Michigan Works! Staff

From: Terry Vandercook, Northwest Michigan Works! Chief Program Officer

Subject: Coordination of Rapid Response Activities

Programs Affected: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Dislocated Worker

Applicable State and/or Federal Guidelines: WIOA Manual dated November 8, 2019

Funding Source(s): Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Dislocated Worker, National Dislocated Worker Grants

### Background

WIOA law allows for Rapid Response services in order to identify, plan for, and respond to layoffs and dislocations of workers. Rapid Response allows for locally initiated activities that may prevent and/or minimize the impact of a mass layoff or closure in the community.

This local policy provides guidance on coordinating Rapid Response activities in order to address actual or potential dislocation events.

## Process

Section	Policy Provision
General	<p>When a mass dislocation is expected, the Business Services Representative notifies both Networks Northwest staff and the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) staff.</p> <p>While in contact with the employer, attempts should be made to secure and document the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Company Name and contact information</li> <li>• Company Contact (name and title)</li> <li>• Description of the business, including North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code</li> <li>• Type of dislocation (mass layoff or business closure)</li> <li>• Notification type (WARN, news article, letter, etc.)</li> <li>• Number of impacted workers and total workers at the facility</li> <li>• Brief description of impacted employee skill sets and corresponding occupations that can be linked to a Standardized Occupational Classification (SOC) code</li> </ul> <p>Northwest Michigan Works! staff may provide the following services as Rapid Response activities, potentially in conjunction with the LEO Rapid Response division:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Rapid Response meeting</li> <li>• Worker Orientations</li> <li>• Joint Adjustment Committee</li> <li>• State Adjustment Grants</li> <li>• National Dislocated Worker Grants</li> <li>• Layoff Aversion</li> <li>• Incumbent Worker Training</li> </ul>

## Activities and Services

Section	Policy Provision
Incumbent Worker Training	<p>When Incumbent Worker Training funds via the State's Rapid Response Statewide Activities funding source are available, they will be used to avert layoffs and prevent the need for layoff and/or business closure. Local WIOA funds may also be used to support Incumbent Worker Training. Reference Incumbent Worker Training Local Policy.</p> <p>Northwest Michigan Works! Business Services Representatives ascertain the need for training to upgrade the skills of incumbent workers in order to avoid layoffs. The need for training is typically identified via relationship with employers and partner agencies.</p> <p>If a mass dislocation is unavoidable, additional Rapid Response activities may be provided, as applicable.</p>
Initial Rapid Response Meeting	<p>Business Services Representatives will coordinate an initial Rapid Response meeting with the company, union officers, Northwest Michigan Works! staff, LEO Rapid Response staff, Unemployment Insurance representative(s), and other parties as applicable.</p> <p>The purpose of the meeting is to gather information regarding the layoff, timelines and other useful information such as the skill sets of the affected workers and other characteristics that may assist in ensuring rapid re-employment of affected workers. The dissemination of information to assist both the business and workers through the transition to re-employment should also occur.</p>
Worker Orientations	<p>Northwest Michigan Works! staff may provide Worker Orientation sessions that describe employment and training services available to the affected workers, including services to special populations (Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Veterans' services, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons and others).</p> <p>Northwest Michigan Works! staff may use a survey to assist with collection of information regarding affected workers that could assist with re-employment and potentially enrollment in WIOA and other workforce programs.</p> <p>Individual appointments with affected workers may be scheduled in lieu of a group orientation, if desired or necessary.</p>

<p>Joint Adjustment Committee</p>	<p>Business Services Representatives may assist in the establishment of a Joint Adjustment Committee (JAC) if desired by both management and union officials. The JAC may devise and oversee an implementation strategy that responds to the reemployment needs of the workers and may be established at any point during the plant closing or downsizing process.</p> <p>The role of Northwest Michigan Works! in the establishment of a Joint Adjustment Committee will be to connect the employer with LEO staff for potential neutral chairperson assignment or funding.</p> <p>Northwest Michigan Works! will not act as the neutral chairperson, and will not staff, convene nor select committee members. The function of the JAC will be led by the neutral chairperson and will not involve Northwest Michigan Works! staff members.</p>
<p>State Adjustment Grants</p>	<p>Networks Northwest will apply for State Adjustment Grants (SAG), if available, for additional resources to assist in providing Dislocated Worker services. Criteria that would necessitate application for a SAG include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full obligation, or expected obligation by the end of the program year, of Dislocated Worker formula funding</li> <li>• Mass layoff numbers that exceed the capacity of current staff to adequately provide Dislocated Worker services</li> <li>• Needs of the affected worker pool, such as basic literacy skills development, GED, and/or significant upgrades in skill level in order to obtain suitable employment.</li> </ul> <p>Determination of the need for a SAG application, using the above criteria, will be made by Networks Northwest administrative staff.</p>
<p>National Dislocated Worker Grants</p>	<p>Networks Northwest will apply for National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG), in conjunction with the LEO, if available, for additional resources to assist in providing Dislocated Worker services. Criteria governing the need for NDWG application include the criteria listed above for SAG application, as well as ascertaining the state's ability to provide resources via SAG funding source.</p> <p>Determination of the need for a NDWG application, using the above criteria, will be made jointly by Networks Northwest administrative staff and the region's WIOA Rapid Response Coordinator.</p>

Layoff Aversion	<p>Business Enhancement Teams (BET) may be convened by Business Services Representatives in an effort to share resources for business retention and layoff aversion. BETs typically include the following representation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local economic development organization leadership</li> <li>• Michigan Economic Development Corporation representatives</li> <li>• Small Business Development Center leadership</li> <li>• Procurement Technical Assistance Center leadership</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce representatives</li> <li>• Other community partners with formalized stake in business retention.</li> </ul> <p>Incumbent Worker Training may be used as a layoff aversion strategy when funding is available. Reference Incumbent Worker Training Local Policy.</p>
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## Designated contact

Section	Policy Provision
Contact information	<p>The lead contact responsible for Rapid Response activities is:</p> <p>Jayne Lindblom, Business Services Regional Director Northwest Michigan Works! PO Box 506 Traverse City, MI 49685-0506 (231) 929-5046 <a href="mailto:jayne.lindblom@networksnorthwest.org">jayne.lindblom@networksnorthwest.org</a></p>