

Workforce Investment Act Comprehensive Five-Year Plan

Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

Program Year 2009

Section I: Adults and Dislocated Workers

I. Labor Market Analysis

In order to set a realistic and meaningful vision for integrated workforce development services, it is important to understand the vital data, as well as the strengths and weaknesses, of the Northwest Michigan region's workforce and economy. Our goals should challenge us to a new level of economic health and vitality. To accomplish these things, the foundation of knowledge about our current conditions and a solid historical perspective provide the context from which to move forward.

The Northwest Michigan Council of Governments and its many regional partners assess the region's economy and workforce on a regular basis. Below is a summary of current conditions.

Population: The population of the ten-county region of Northwest Michigan has grown considerably since the year 2000, with an increase of 5.59%. Although overall growth has slowed in recent years, increases in population continue to be higher than much of the rest of the state. Three of our ten counties are ranked in the top 10 of 83 counties in the state in population growth. Net migration appears to be the primary factor in the population increase, with our largest county – Grand Traverse – ranking 5th in the state for net migration. (<ftp://www.nwmcog.org/PopulationEstimates/2000-2008/2008-Counties-NW-Pop-Estimate.pdf>) (See also a map of Michigan counties showing percent change in population: <http://www.nwmcog.org/data/population/Map-Counties-PopChg-00-08.pdf>)

Labor Force: At the same time that our population is growing, we are seeing a net decrease in the labor force. As of April 2009, the labor force had decreased by 0.9% in just one year. The percent of the labor force with employment had decreased by 7.1% during the same time period. (<http://www.nwmcog.org/data/employment/UnemploymentRates.pdf>)

We can attribute this decrease in available workers to the high percentage of retirees in our net migration population. The age structure of the labor force is a critical factor in workforce development planning. An imbalance of workers entering and leaving the workforce can result in shortages or an oversupply of workers in specific occupations or entire industries. Increased demand for health care services for an aging population indicates greater need for training in the healthcare industry.

In addition, seasonal employment patterns have historically contributed to a higher unemployment rate in the region. However, greater diversification of industry types in the region has decreased the gap between regional and state unemployment rates. The most recent unemployment rates as of this writing (April 2009) show a 13.7% rate for the Northwest region, and a 12.7% rate for the state of Michigan. (<http://www.nwmcog.org/data/employment/UnemploymentRates.pdf>)

Personal Income: There continues to be a discrepancy between the average income in this region and that of the state, although it has improved in recent years. The most recent data (2007) shows the area's per capita personal income (PCPI) as \$31,656 compared to \$34,423 for the state of Michigan and \$38,615 for the nation. (<http://www.nwmcog.org/data/economic/PCI-1969-2007-NW.pdf>)

Industry Trends: Significant job losses have been felt in a wide range of industries throughout the ten-county region, including automotive retail, construction, gaming, insurance, manufacturing, news media, and technology. However, we cannot conclude that these industries are in decline; we have seen job increases in some of the same industries, especially manufacturing and technology. Our conclusion remains, then, that industries are changing in a variety of ways. Local manufacturing companies have already – and continue to – diversify in areas that are more promising than the automotive industry, including aerospace and green technologies.

Job losses occur in companies of all size. Larger companies trim their workforce in both large and small numbers, depending upon the scale of their reduction in work. Some larger companies are hiring, especially those who have diversified. Small businesses and start-ups offer employment opportunities in a wide range of fields, such as coffee production and sales, wine-making and tasting, energy assessment and energy efficiency equipment installation, and home and long-term health care.

Tourism continues to heavily impact the region's economy, with several high-growth occupations related to this industry. Business growth opportunities are tied directly to this industry. Healthcare, especially home and long-term care, is also a significant industry for economic growth and job creation.

The largest growing industry in the Northwest region is Agriculture. Farming, as an occupation, is projected to experience a 21% growth from 2009 to 2012 (Economic Modeling Specialists Inc. [EMSI], Highest Ranked Occupations Report).

In-Demand Occupations: The Northwest Michigan Workforce Development Board approves a list of in-demand occupations for the region. The list is determined based on three primary factors:

- Labor market information research from various data sources,
- Trends identified through personal relationships with Business Services staff, and
- Recent placement rates of Michigan Works! customers.

The list changes as needed. The most recent list, including in-demand green occupations, is included as Attachment A.

In-Demand Job Skills: Occupations that are currently in demand require a variety of job-specific skills, for which specialized training is required. This can include on-the-job training, short-term vocational training, and classroom training leading to a credential. Training opportunities for most of the in-demand occupations can be found on the Career Education Consumer Report web site, www.mycareereducation.org. Programs include Nursing, Certified Nursing Assistant, Computer Information Systems, Maritime, Medical Transcription, Welding, and many, many more. Training institutions in our region are well-known for collaboration with local employers and industry organizations in order to provide training in current required skills.

Employers throughout our region make it known that they look for certain soft skills for any position. These include reliability, attitude, honesty, punctuality, respect, teamwork, communication, and attention to detail.

II. Michigan Works! System

The system of workforce development services in Northwest Michigan goes beyond the level of integration required by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). One-Stop Partners share the vision of the revolving door: making services accessible to customers and transitions from one program to another as seamless as possible. Wherever possible, One-Stop Centers offer programs from multiple agencies, including Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Veterans and Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker Services, Department of Human Services, Michigan Small Business & Technology Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, temporary employment agencies, training providers, and more. Memoranda of Understanding have been executed between the Workforce Development Board and each of the required One-Stop Partners. Copies of these MOUs have been forwarded to DELEG.

Specific workforce development programs located in all Michigan Works! One-Stop Service Centers are:

- Employment Services
- Core and Intensive Services for individuals and employers
- WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker
- WIA Youth
- Business Services
- Jobs, Education and Training (JET)
- Food Assistance Employment & Training
- Trade Act
- Adult Education Learning Labs

Delivery of the services listed above is provided by Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, Michigan Works! Division.

Five One-Stop Service Centers provide services to the ten counties of Northwest Michigan:

| | |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Grand Traverse Michigan Works! Service | Kalkaska Michigan Works! Service Center |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Center 1209 S. Garfield, Suite C Traverse City, MI 49686-4330 (231) 922-3743 or (800) 442-1074 Hours of operation: M-F, 8:00 – 5:00 | 103 Third Street, Units C & D Kalkaska, MI 49646 (231) 258-8889 Hours of operation: M-F, 8:00 – 5:00 |
| Manistee Michigan Works! Service Center 1660 US 31 South Manistee, MI 49660 (231) 723-2535 Hours of operation: M-F, 8:00 – 5:00 | Petoskey Michigan Works! Service Center 2225 Summit Park Dr. Petoskey, MI 49770 (231) 347-5150 Hours of operation: M-F, 8:00 – 5:00 |
| Cadillac Michigan Works! Service Center 401. N. Lake St, Suite 700 Cadillac, MI 49601 (231) 775-3408 Hours of operation: M-F, 8:00 – 5:00 | |

The Kalkaska and Cadillac Service Centers are expanding temporarily to accommodate increased numbers of customers and staff and in order to deliver the programs planned under the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Additional office space for privacy between customers and staff is planned in both centers; additional space for the Adult Education program is planned in the Cadillac center.

A temporary One-Stop Center was located in Mancelona from July 1, 2008 to April 1, 2009, and now remains open as an Adult Education Learning Lab. This satellite office was arranged in response to community need. Two large local employers laid off a cumulative total of 340 workers during 2008. With a population of only 2,000 people, these dislocations had immense impact on the small village. The Workforce Development Board moved quickly to make services available to the affected workers, and will do the same in other areas of the region if necessary.

Development of each center’s capacity to meet customer needs is a continuous quality assurance effort. Quality assurance is provided through the monitoring system, which reviews programmatic offerings on a regular basis. Any non-compliance findings result in a corrective action reply from the contractor. Administrative recommendations provide feedback to the contractor for quality improvement. In addition, customer satisfaction surveys, feedback through the web site, concerns expressed to DELEG, and mystery shopper reports help to shape customer service efforts. Technical assistance for program delivery, customer service, and operational capacity is provided by NWMCOG on a regular basis.

Assurance of coordination and avoidance of duplication among programs have been primary goals of the local board since they began developing an integrated service delivery system. The efficiency of an integrated, single-contractor system continues to best meet the needs of a geographically expansive, rural region. Within this integrated system, the board looks to each funding stream for its most effective use, and carefully considers how each program can best meet client needs. Analysis includes the following factors:

- Is it a general or specialized function?
- Is it a one-of-a-kind service, or can other sources provide the same service?
- How much flexibility is there?

- Can some of the funding stream’s responsibilities be met by another source, so it can become more focused?
- What is the degree of need versus the level of funding available?
- How does this program meet the needs of local businesses to stay competitive and ensure sustainability?
- How does this program enable workers to acquire the skills necessary to succeed in today’s 21st Century knowledge economy?
- How does this program contribute to the overall goals of the Workforce Development Board, as outlined in its Strategic Plan?

Decisions about staffing patterns, location of service centers (full service and temporary satellite centers), availability and types of supportive services, and any limitations of services are based on this analysis.

Approximately three years ago, the Workforce Development Board determined that concentration of workforce development services in specific industry sectors was a desirable strategy for the Northwest region. NWMCOG applied for and received start-up grants from DELEG to operate three Regional Skills Alliances (RSA): KAL-TEC, a skills upgrade initiative for Kalkaska County; the Healthcare RSA, focusing on home and long-term care; and TeamWork NorthWest, a Hospitality RSA. The RSAs coordinate educational opportunities for new and incumbent workers based on the needs of local employers. Funding for continuation of these programs comes from a variety of sources, with the ultimate goal of fully integrating the RSAs into the Michigan Works! infrastructure. Collaboration occurs in full force right now: RSA programs are promoted in the One-Stop centers; screening for entrance into training programs is conducted by Michigan Works! staff; and coordination with other educational opportunities for advancement is planned with all partners.

The Regional Skills Alliance programs are one of many ways in which the Workforce Development Board is able to assure the quality of training offerings in the region. The RSAs coordinate training offerings based on employer need. Requests for trainings are made by employer partners within the network. Training programs are procured through a bidding process, in which the potential training provider must specify teaching methodologies, materials, accessibility provisions, and qualifications of teachers. More specific requirements may apply, depending upon the training sought. Proposals are rated by NWMCOG staff and contracts approved or denied by a vote of the board. Any training provider under contract with NWMCOG is subject to fiscal and programmatic monitoring.

As required by WIA, ITA-eligible training providers must be vetted and approved by the local board. NWMCOG staff reviews applications by training providers through the Career Education Consumer Report and approves them based on quality of services.

III. Local Performance Measures

The Northwest Michigan Workforce Development Board accepts the local performance measures indicated in Attachment B.

IV. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

With funding from the Workforce Investment Act and the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, Sections 7(a) and 7 (b), the full array of Core Services is available to all customers entering any one of the five Michigan Works! service centers, regardless of program eligibility. Each customer is greeted by a MWA staff person and directed to the resource area for further information.

All core service customers are advised to enter a resume in the Talent Bank and are encouraged to utilize the Talent Bank to generate valuable leads. These individuals are also provided with written information on the No Worker Left Behind program, and encouraged to attend an orientation where they can learn more about the educational opportunities it provides. Resume software is available to assist in creating or updating resumes, and job search books, tapes, and videos reinforce employability skills. Labor market information, career research materials, career assessment software such as MOIS or O*Net, and information about occupational training sites and financial aid are available to assist customers in targeting a job goal. Other Core Services include automated community resource directories and software tutorials. Career Advisors and Employment Specialists are always available in the resource area to provide further information, answer questions, alleviate confusion, or direct a customer to an appropriate resource.

Those customers in need of services beyond the Core Services meet with a Career Advisor to determine the level and degree of Intensive Services necessary. It is often appropriate to conduct a more comprehensive assessment that may include reading and math testing to determine the level of basic skills; an occupational interest assessment, or an evaluation of job-specific skills. The customer and Career Advisor develop an individual employment plan, which identifies the customer's primary goal and lists the specific, sequenced steps that need to be taken to reach the goal. For each step, the plan shows a targeted time frame, where the service can be received, the date of the referral made for that service, and the expected outcome. It will also indicate the dates of completion for each step so that progress can be tracked.

Other Intensive Services provided may include any of the following: job search skills instruction; resume lab; network group; job development, referral, or placement; basic education skills training, literacy or other academic preparation; employment counseling; rehabilitation planning and accommodations; job retention coaching; small business development counseling; advocacy; case management and follow-up.

Unemployed or under-employed adults and dislocated workers who are unable to obtain employment through Core or Intensive Services may access occupational training through No Worker Left Behind. The training must be an occupation determined to be in demand by the Workforce Development Board, and can be obtained at any training institution in Michigan listed on the Career Education Consumer Report.

In addition to the educational opportunities offered to the unemployed and under-employed, funding from WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker may be utilized to provide Incumbent Worker Training to businesses. Training for these workers will be arranged via the current process for Incumbent Worker

Training that is funded by Statewide Activities Rapid Response funding. See the Rapid Response Activities section of this plan for more information.

Because WIA funding is limited and it is expected that there will be more customers needing occupational training than funding will permit, the Workforce Development Board has established the following policies regarding use of funding under No Worker Left Behind:

- Customers interested in training must attend an Assessment Workshop (see American Recovery & Reinvestment Act – Intensive Services Activities) in order to ensure that goals are realistic and achievable given local labor market conditions;
- Customers who lack basic skills will be referred to a Northwest MI Works! Learning Lab for basic skill upgrade prior to approval for training;
- No Worker Left Behind will fund \$5,000 per year for up to two years for an approved training program;
- All customers are required to apply for federal PELL grants and other financial aid from the training institution – this funding will be first source of use;
- Training must result in a degree or certificate and prepare for an occupation listed on the board-approved occupation list.

The MWA will continue to utilize specific, customized contracts with employers and training programs for on-the-job and customized training for workers. The following criteria will be used to determine the appropriateness of WIA funded training offered to special populations by community-based and other private organizations:

- The financial stability of the organization;
- The relationship of the specific training program to the workforce development needs of the region;
- Performance related to program completion rate, attainment of job specific skills, post-training and job retention rates;
- Cost, especially related to comparable training providers.

Supportive Services are provided to individuals through WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker funding. The local policy, formulated in accordance with BWP PI 04-04 and subsequently updated, is included as Attachment C.

American Recovery & Reinvestment Act – Training Activities

Additional WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities will be provided with funding from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Because of the additional funding received from ARRA, the Northwest region's WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker funding allocation increased by 26%. We intend to increase participants served in Classroom Training, On-the-Job Training, and Incumbent Worker Training activities by 28%. In addition, we plan to significantly increase the

number of participants served through workshops covering topics such as basic computer use and soft skills required in any employment endeavor.

Occupational Training: At the time of this writing, the Northwest region is funding over 700 students in classroom training programs, and over 100 in on-the-job training activities. This is a substantial increase – more than 3 times – over enrollment only two years ago. Because the usual mix of funding that supports No Worker Left Behind will not increase in the coming years, we will make use of a portion of ARRA funding to pay for continued training activities for current enrollees, and to support new students. We want to ensure that none of our current classroom training (CRT) participants have to lose financial support for their training programs before completion. We want to ensure that a significant number of new CRT students can be started up during the '09-10 school year. And, we intend to significantly increase the number of participants involved in occupational training.

Budget:

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Continuation of current CRT students through '09-10 school year | \$430,000 |
| New CRT students in '09-10 school year | 460,000 |
| Incumbent worker training | 100,000 |
| On-the-job training | 247,000 |
| | |
| Total for direct occupational training | \$1,237,000 |

The total above represents 53% of ARRA funds, and 19% of the combined ARRA and Formula funding.

The Northwest region anticipates serving approximately 225 customers with this funding.

Remedial Training: Lack of remedial skills, such as math and reading, is the primary barrier to education and employment for a vast number of our customers. Our Adult Education Learning Labs provide open-entry, open-exit, individualized learning plans for those in need of remedial skills, but are currently at capacity and do not have the staff in place to meet the current and projected need for remedial skills training. With ARRA funds, we plan to hire additional certified teachers to increase the capacity of our Adult Education program, with a focus on the provision of remedial skills training. This program, called UpSkill, will provide classes for groups of learners who have skills between the 4th and 8th grade levels. Outcomes of the program include educational gains to the level required for each individual's chosen career, the National Career Readiness Certificate, computer literacy, and supports in transition to continued education or employment.

We will also provide a needs-related payment to participants in the UpSkill program, to assist with transportation and child care costs.

Budget for 1 year:

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 Adult Education teacher in each Michigan Works! Center | \$200,000 |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------|

| | |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| Learning Lab | |
| Materials & testing fees | 40,000 |
| Needs-related payments | 250,000 |
| | |
| Total | \$490,000 |

Total costs of the UpSkill program represent 21% of ARRA funding, and 8% of combined ARRA and formula funding.

We anticipate serving 60 customers in the UpSkill program.

American Recovery & Reinvestment Act – Intensive Services Activities

Workforce Investment Act funding (including ARRA) provides intensive services for those individuals who cannot find suitable employment using self-directed core services such as those available to the general public in Service Center resource rooms. Use of these services is intended to lead directly to employment if possible. If lack of educational credentials or other employment related skills is a barrier to finding employment, individuals may access training services under No Worker Left Behind (see ARRA-funded training services plans above). The Northwest Michigan Workforce Development Board intends to use ARRA funds for expansion of intensive services in order to more accurately direct customers toward a realistic career path.

Expanded Assessment Activities: Northwest Michigan Works! has seen increased numbers of customers during this lagging economy. As we attempt to serve each individual and assist all customers with individual career plans, we have observed the following:

- Workers’ career goals often do not reflect employment in occupations that are in-demand
- Workers are unable to identify how the skills they attained in previous jobs will transfer to other types of employment
- Workers are discouraged by lack of success in their hunt for jobs or by a perception that no jobs are available are, and therefore are not motivated to pursue advanced assessment or more in-depth career research
- Increased emphasis on training under No Worker Left Behind has led to high number of adults inquiring about education or training without a clear educational or career goal or with goals that are not realistic

We have developed a new process for assessing customers’ current skills as well as potential career paths that addresses the issues above. We will use existing space in the Adult Education Learning Labs to offer assessment workshops on Fridays and two evenings during the week. We will hire 5 ½ time professional staff members to facilitate these workshops. The workshops will consist of group presentations that orient customers to the purpose of assessing skills and interests, and reinforce the importance of aligning goals with existing opportunities. Assessments will consist of computer-based, self-directed programs, with individual support from the facilitator. Specific assessments include MI-

CAR, O*Net, WorkKeys (National Career Readiness Certificate), and PowerPath (a systematic screening for learning difficulties). Customers will also have the opportunity – again with assistance – to research local career and educational opportunities. They will also be advised to meet individually with a Career Advisor for further career planning and next steps to achieving their goals.

Budget for 1 year:

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Staff | \$110,000 |
| Equipment | \$6,600 |
| Assessment and screening materials | \$15,000 |
| | |
| Total: | \$131,600 |

The total cost for this program represents 5.6% of ARRA funding and 2% of combined ARRA and Formula funding.

We anticipate serving 7200 people with this assessment program.

American Recovery & Reinvestment Act – Core Services Activities

While Intensive Services and Training opportunities are essential to assisting many individuals with finding suitable employment, Core Services are available to the general public. The Northwest Michigan Workforce Development Board has determined that additional Core Services are necessary for the job-seeking public.

Expanded Workshops: The Northwest Michigan Works! Service Centers currently offer workshops in topics that assist individuals with improving their job search, such as Resume Writing, Interviewing, Networking, and effective use of the Michigan Talent Bank. Expanded workshop offerings under ARRA will include the following:

- Job Loss/Grief/Depression
- Financial Literacy
- Planning your Second Career
- Career Exploration
- Job Retention
- Dealing with difficult people/positive communication
- Anger Management
- Stress Management/Stress Relief
- Nutrition/Smart Shopping
- Time Management/Organization
- REALITY Job Search
- Customer Service training

- Welcome to the World of Computers

The workshop topics above will be offered at the Service Centers. Some of the topics will be offered via partnerships with other agencies; the rest will be taught by two additional staff people hired to develop, coordinate, and facilitate these offerings. These two staff members will travel to all five centers and will manage the workshop schedules to meet local need.

Budget for 1 year:

| | |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 2 FTE professional staff, including travel | \$120,000 |
| Equipment & materials | \$10,000 |
| | |
| Total | \$130,000 |

The total cost for expansion of workshop offerings represents 5.5% of ARRA funding and 2% of combined ARRA and Formula funding.

Workshops will be available to all customers who enter the center.

Technology Center Classrooms: It was recently determined that each Michigan Works! Service Center is in need of classroom space. The Adult Education Learning Labs are often used during their current down times (Fridays) for workshops and group activities. However, there is greater need for workshop offerings and group learning environments, and Labs will be in use on Fridays with the expanded Assessment program (see above). These classrooms will be available for use by a variety of programs, such as the UpSkill program, Workshop offerings, additional resource room space when needed, and group activities as needed. Classrooms will include computers, internet access, and presentation equipment.

Budget:

| | |
|----------------------|----------|
| Computers | \$28,000 |
| Furniture | \$8,500 |
| Projection Equipment | \$8,000 |
| Internet connection | \$4,000 |
| | |
| Total | \$48,500 |

The total cost for Technology Center Classrooms represents 2% of ARRA funding and .7% of combined ARRA and Formula funding.

The Technology Center Classrooms will be used by a variety of programs and therefore will serve an inestimable number of customers.

V. Rapid Response Activities

Rapid Response Activities are fulfilled through the Business Services division of Michigan Works! Business Liaisons are assigned to specific county territories to provide employer customers easy access to the full realm of workforce/economic development services available through the Northwest Michigan Works! system. Serving as the MWA representative on the Rapid Response Team, the Business Liaison works closely with the Department of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth Rapid Response Section, providing the assistance necessary to ensure that workers transition to new employment as quickly as possible.

The Business Liaisons 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 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 Liaisons and local employers often pave the way to successful Rapid Response meetings. When a local employer is facing massive layoffs or closure, trust is a critical factor because of the often confidential information that is revealed at these meetings. Business Liaisons, along with the RRS Workforce Consultant, inform the employer of the array of services available to his/her dislocated workers, providing reassurance in the process.

Michigan Works! has arranged for on-site orientations at local businesses, in order to assist dislocated workers prior to layoff. In some cases, companies have provided office space for our staff, allowing workers to meet individually with a Career Advisor and begin the transition process.

Additional Business Services connections offer early detection of layoffs and closures. Business Liaisons convene a team of partners in Business Enhancement Teams (BET). These teams were created to share resources for business retention and layoff aversion. Membership on BETs is subregional (generally covering 2 -3 counties in our 10-county region). Members include Michigan Works! Business Liaisons (coordinators of the team), local economic development organization leadership, Michigan Economic Development Corporation representative, Small Business & Technology Development Center leadership, Procurement Technical Assistance Center leadership, Chamber of Commerce representatives, and any other community partners with a formalized stake in business retention. This model also incorporates partner feedback assessing effectiveness in market penetration and layoff aversion.

One of the many resources that a Michigan Works! Business Liaison can offer to a business is funding for Incumbent Worker Training. Incumbent Worker training programs are used to increase the success of local businesses. Much-needed training for an employer's existing workforce can enhance the company's competitive advantage, avoid layoff and/or closure, and retain businesses. A well-trained

employee is positioned for advancement within the company. A portion of ARRA funding has been allocated to provide additional Incumbent Worker training services to local companies.

Consistent with the program goals of both the Workforce Investment Act and No Worker Left Behind, the MWA includes Incumbent Worker training as a priority for local funding. The MWA's goals include improving and increasing incumbent worker training, responding to the needs of local employers, and improving the core employability skills of the current workforce. Layoff aversion is a wise investment of workforce development funding.

VI. Funding

Priority of Service: Any customers who cannot find satisfactory employment as a result of Core Services may initiate an appointment for Intensive Services. Based on the first appointment, the staff will determine the degree of need, duration and extent of Intensive Services needed. If case loads swell to the point that all customers needing Intensive Services cannot be served, a priority system will be implemented in which economically disadvantaged customers will be served first. We do not anticipate experiencing problems with serving customers at the Intensive Services level, however, limitations may be based on level of staffing and the number of group services versus the need for individual appointments. Regardless, the Northwest MWA is committed to maintaining high standards of customer service, requiring response to requests for Intensive Services on a fairly immediate basis.

It is expected that the level of WIA funding will not be sufficient to serve all customers who seek training services. Therefore the Michigan Works! system implements a priority of service policy for training services throughout the program year. For those customers who seek training services, the No Worker Left Behind process will be used. Customers attend an orientation to learn about the program, prepare requested documentation for the assessment process, and meet individually with career advisors for further processing.

The administration monitors weekly both the expenditures and obligations for training services. We have always allocated a high proportion of funding for training services, and will continue with that commitment. Constant communication with program administrative staff gives us regular awareness of need – based on expenditures and obligations – versus resources. A waiting list is used on a consistent basis as a means of tracking need, and allows us to budget accordingly.

The Northwest Michigan Workforce Development board endorsed a priority of service plan that gives suitable training candidates priority when they meet the following conditions: recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and other NWLB-eligible individuals. Within this priority of service plan, Veterans will be given top priority, providing they meet eligibility criteria and are deemed suitable for training, as is consistent with the Jobs for Veterans Act of 2002.

Procurement of Workforce Development Services: NWMCOG awards all workforce development grants and contracts using an open and free competitive bidding process. No requirements are placed on

prospective bidders that could restrict competition. The primary considerations in selecting agencies or organizations to deliver services within the NWMWA service area are as follows:

- Organizational capacity to deliver services on a region wide basis if required;
- Integration with programs operated by other partners in the One-Stop system; and
- Demonstrated performance by the bidder in delivering comparable or related services, measured by success in meeting performance goals, as well as factors concerning cost, quality of training and characteristics of participants.

The first step in the bidding process is solicitation and determination of qualified bidders. A legal notice placed in the four major newspapers in the region as well as on the NWMCOG web site soliciting qualified bidders. In addition, NWMCOG is member of an online bidding service, to which thousands of agencies are subscribed. Interested Organizations are requested to submit a letter of interest by a specified date outlining how the entity meets the qualifications required, along with a copy of their most recent audit enclosed. All organizations submitting letters of interest are notified whether they meet the qualified bidder status.

Request for Proposal (RFP) packages are mailed to qualified bidders and a bidders' conference is held. The RFP includes the date on which the proposals are due and a requirement that the bidder certify to the best of its knowledge and belief that cost data in the proposal submitted are accurate, complete and current. The RFP also includes pertinent attachments and defines the services requested. Information is also obtained from the bidders to determine agency or organization-demonstrated performance.

Upon receipt of the proposals, an analysis is conducted by MWA administrative staff, which includes a comparison of the proposal to the RFP specifications, to each other, and to independent estimates of price or cost reasonableness (if applicable). The methodology used for technical evaluations and the results of the analysis is documented. The Workforce Development Board receives a report from staff and selects the bidder whose proposal is deemed by them to be the most advantageous to the program with respect to price, technical, customer service, and other factors considered. Documentation of the bid process is filed with a copy of the resulting contract.

Procurement of Training Services: Training programs offered by community-based or other private organizations for special populations facing multiple barriers to employment, such as disabled, homeless or non-English speaking individuals, and offenders are procured following a competitive bidding process as described above.

Both on-the-job training situations for individual job seekers and customized training programs developed to meet the specific needs of an employer or group of employers will utilize customized contracts developed according to policies and procedures previously established to meet WIA and welfare reform requirements. The MWA believes that this system will continue to ensure fairness and accountability in the awarding and monitoring of contracts under WIA.

Chief Elected Official designated as the Grant Recipient for the Northwest Michigan Workforce Development Board:

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The Fiscal Agent designated as the Grant Recipient for the Northwest Michigan Workforce Development Board:

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VI. Review, Comment, and Publication

This plan has been published to the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments web site, www.nwm.org, for a period of 30 days, for the purpose of public review and comment. Comments may be submitted via the email address provided on the web site or hard copy mail to the NWMCOG office.

NWMCOG will submit any comments that express disagreement with the plan to the DELEG.

Section II: Youth

I. Local Vision and Goals

The Northwest region's five-year vision for youth is all-inclusive, consistent with labor market trends, and forethinking in its emphasis to integrate and to retain area youth talent into our growing economy. To ensure young people obtain the skills needed in the evolving economy, key labor trends, locally

identified job retention factors, and high-growth industry demands will all factor into curriculum planning for student success in a knowledge-based economy.

State standards for performance assessments will guide the evaluative process, and will measure specific youth progress in attaining literacy and numeracy skills vital to lifelong success.

Organizational alignment across industry sectors allows for more comprehensive and more advanced youth programming. Michigan's Creating a 21st Century Workforce Initiative, with area regional skills alliance initiatives, business liaisons, community resources, and creative local grassroots initiatives are all valuable and expanding means of positioning youth for success in the workforce. Experts in education, career development, economic analysis, and youth development will continue to complement and to advise the Workforce Development Board and Education Advisory Group planning process.

A primary goal in the Northwest Michigan Workforce Development Board's strategic plan is to improve the core employability skills of the current and future workforce. In order to assess the readiness of youth customers for employment, the Northwest MWA continues to assess and prepare workers using the Work Keys assessment system. Youth who will enter classroom training are given Work Keys assessments, followed by individualized educational services and work experience activities tailored to assist them in achieving appropriate work-based competency levels. Individual Service Strategies are developed to include activities planned to improve literacy and numeracy skills. All youth are post-tested to evaluate learning gains.

Another goal in the board's strategic plan is to improve the linkages between school curriculum and work place requirements. For youth, the Northwest MWA has an objective to increase school-to-work opportunities. High school dropouts, who have not been successful in traditional school settings, will be referred to the MWA's Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School to obtain a GED or to earn credits toward a diploma. Academic courses are taught in a contextual learning environment, with daily work activities incorporated into the curriculum. Employability skills and work place readiness activities are stressed. Additionally, students will identify and work to resolve or manage barriers which have prevented them from success. Leadership training, stress management techniques, and other pro-social skills training will help youth to sustain positive relationships beyond the classroom.

Youth who have dropped out of high school may also be referred to the newly developed YouthBuild program, which incorporates high school completion or GED into a leadership-oriented construction trades training program.

Collaboration between the Northwest MWA and the regional five-county Poverty Reduction Initiative Education and Training Committee has led to an insightful Employability Skills Survey that was shared with area educators in curriculum and workforce alignment. Local employers in five counties ranked the top ten employability skills, and the top ten reasons for employee termination in the first 90 days of employment. Also assessed and valuable to curriculum alignment were prevalent core academic and critical thinking skills essential to job retention.

The following services for youth will continue to be offered.

- Youth programs to promote post-secondary education: Opportunities include classroom training; post-secondary education counseling; exposure to post secondary opportunities through “College Nights;” facilitation of college registration and financing via support in filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); coordination with secondary vocational programs, community colleges, university outreach programs, military recruiters, and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Leadership development activities include opportunities for students to participate in student government and the daily decision-making process.
- Mentoring opportunities include job shadowing and work experience programs. The Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative specifically targets foster care youth transitioning to workforce.
- Training: Work experience training and on-the-job training with regional employers are available, as are classroom training opportunities to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills, or obtain a high school diploma or GED.
- Community Service: Annual summer programs benefiting the community offer work experiences serving area non-profits.

Youth Career Advisors are housed in each Center so that all youth customers can have direct access to specialized youth services.

American Recovery & Reinvestment Act Youth Activities

The Northwest Michigan Workforce Development Board will utilize ARRA WIA Youth program funds to support a summer work experience program for economically disadvantaged youth ages 16 – 24. The purpose of the program is to build job skills, good work habits, and other employability skills, and to provide assistance for a wide variety of projects needed by local units of government and non-profits.

The program model is designed as follows:

- 16 roving crews consisting of 6 youth trainees and 1 youth crew leader (one crew per county and other crews assigned per worksite demand)
- Pay minimum wage of \$7.40/hour to participants and \$8.50/hour to crew leaders for 40 hours/week
- Utilize worksite application process for determination of jobs to be accomplished by the roving crews
- 60 additional slots for individual work experience sites (not crews); some wages could be higher than minimum wage depending upon the job
- 12 individual slots that would go beyond summer
- Staff: 16 crew supervisors; 5 work leaders at Beaver Island; 5 Youth Advisor Assistants; 2 Program Managers (total 28)

Work site owners will provide an educational component that can range from the historical significance of a natural site to budgeting personal finances to natural resource conservation.

Youth participants will be assessed for work readiness skills throughout the program. Pre-test will occur during the first week of participation. Post-test will occur during the last week of participation, providing significant length of enrollment. Intermittent testing will occur at two-week intervals. All assessments will be administered using the same instrument.

In addition to work readiness skills, all youth participants will also learn job search techniques, connect with local community leaders, and will be exposed to area resources by partner agencies.

Budget for Summer Youth Work Experience 2009:

| Activity | Duration | Cost |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 16 roving crews of 6 plus 1 crew leader = 112 slots | 10 weeks, participants; 12 weeks crew leaders | \$ 383,500 |
| 60 individual slots | 8 weeks | \$ 155,928 |
| 12 longer individual slots | 40 weeks | \$ 215,222 |
| Subtotal – participant wages/fringe | | \$ 754,650 |
| Staff – 28 | Approx. 16 weeks for most; 40 weeks for a few | \$ 341,356 |
| Supplies* | | \$ 341,776 |
| Total | | \$1,437,782 |

*includes vehicle rental, gas, tools, equipment, training costs, materials, telephone, etc.

The Youth Summer Work Experience program represents 81% of ARRA WIA Youth Funding and 45% of combined ARRA and Formula Youth funding.

We anticipate serving 184 youth customers with this funding.

II. Youth Customers

Promoting inclusion, it is the intent of the Workforce Development Board to allow for maximum flexibility broadening its definition of eligibility through the guidance of the EAG. Therefore, the Northwest MWA serves youth requiring assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment even if youth do not meet the specific guidelines below. On a case-by case basis, up to five percent of the youth served annually may be represented by youth with extenuating circumstances who may not otherwise qualify. Such cases are subject to administrative approval. Circumstances may include failure to succeed in a traditional school setting, or involvement with the juvenile justice system.

As a standard practice, youth targeted for support include those with poor attendance rates, test scores, or grades. Additional risk factors are taken into consideration.

WIA youth customers will be drawn from two categories: in school and out-of-school. In addition to the eligibility requirements of the Act, it is anticipated that the in-school youth will exhibit the following characteristics:

- At risk of dropping out of school;
- Disabled; or
- Performing below grade level.

A minimum of thirty percent of WIA youth funds will be spent on out-of-school youth, who are expected to display the following characteristics:

- Dropped out of high school;
- Basic skills deficient; or
- Disabled.

III. Competitive Bid Process for Delivery of Youth Services

NWMCOG awards all workforce development grants and contracts using an open and free competitive bidding process. No requirements are placed on prospective bidders that could restrict competition. The primary considerations in selecting agencies or organizations to deliver services within the NWMWA service area are as follows:

- Organizational capacity to deliver services on a region wide basis if required;
- Integration with programs operated by other partners in the One-Stop system; and
- Demonstrated performance by the bidder in delivering comparable or related services, measured by success in meeting performance goals, as well as factors concerning cost, quality of training and characteristics of participants.

The first step in the bidding process is solicitation and determination of qualified bidders. A legal notice placed in the four major newspapers in the region as well as on the NWMCOG web site soliciting qualified bidders. In addition, NWMCOG is member of an online bidding service, to which thousands of agencies are subscribed. Interested Organizations are requested to submit a letter of interest by a specified date outlining how the entity meets the qualifications required, along with a copy of their most recent audit enclosed. All organizations submitting letters of interest are notified whether they meet the qualified bidder status.

Request for Proposal (RFP) packages are mailed to qualified bidders and a bidders' conference is held. The RFP includes the date on which the proposals are due and a requirement that the bidder certify to the best of its knowledge and belief that cost data in the proposal submitted are accurate, complete and current. The RFP also includes pertinent attachments and defines the services requested. Information is also obtained from the bidders to determine agency or organization-demonstrated performance.

Upon receipt of the proposals, an analysis is conducted by MWA administrative staff, which includes a comparison of the proposal to the RFP specifications, to each other, and to independent estimates of

price or cost reasonableness (if applicable). The methodology used for technical evaluations and the results of the analysis is documented. The Workforce Development Board receives a report from staff and selects the bidder whose proposal is deemed by them to be the most advantageous to the program with respect to price, technical, customer service, and other factors considered. Documentation of the bid process is filed with a copy of the resulting contract.

Documentation of the bid process is filed with a copy of the resulting contract, which is reviewed by the MWA Director prior to signing the contract or recommending its signing to the Workforce Development Board.

IV. The One-Stop integrated service delivery system for youth

There are five full-service Northwest Michigan Works! service centers in the region to provide easy customer access and system identification. All of the centers are state certified.

Services available for eligible youth that are provided by or coordinated by the Youth Advisor include system intake, assessment, employability planning, case management, employment counseling, job search coaching, training, job placement, referral, and follow-up. Occupational training programs available include paid work experience, on-the-job training, customized employer training, and formal classroom training. Youth who are deficient in basic skills can attend one of five learning labs for computer-assisted instruction in reading, writing, language arts, math, and GED preparation. The labs are housed in Michigan Works! Service Centers for convenient customer access.

In addition to direct referrals from other community organizations, the MWA youth staff work closely with the local public and alternative schools to support work-based activities such as internships, co-op, work experience, job shadowing, career awareness, and other activities to transition students from school to work. The MWA coordinates with area schools in identifying recent dropouts or youth who have not been successful in local alternative education programs for referral to the Beaver Island Lighthouse Alternative School, a residential program operated by the Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District, the MWA's contractor for youth programs.

Michigan Works! provides a single point of contact for business through the Business Liaison, who represents all programs and services available to employers in their specific labor markets, and serves as the conduit for referral to other agencies. The Business Liaison coordinates the provision of these services from a variety of community resources to meet specific employer needs and to ensure that Michigan Works! youth training programs match the employers' current and future requirements.

V. Strategies for Improvement

To plan for, develop, and manage a comprehensive and effective youth program, the Workforce Development Board has assigned the authority and responsibility to the EAG to act as the policy maker and system builder for youth programs in the region. The EAG in the Northwest MWA functions as the Youth Council. In this capacity, the EAG:

- Oversees the planning process;
- Determines the needs for new programs/partners;
- Develops and maintains a collaborative infrastructure of youth service organizations to support access to and attainment of high wage, high skill employment;
- Establishes a close working relationship with the region's public schools and community colleges to promote academic enrichment, high school completion and post-secondary readiness;
- Ensures integrated youth services are coordinated and delivered through the Michigan Works! Service Centers;
- Recommends vendors and programs that have demonstrated success as service providers for WIA youth programs and services;
- Monitors outcomes to assure youth success;
- Provides updates to the WDB concerning program effectiveness, equitable distribution of resources, and recommended improvements.

The Education Advisory Group has been very active in the region for the many years. It advises the WDB on issues related to education, plays an active role in developing and implementing the region's strategic plan, and oversees career preparatory activities in the local school districts.

To incorporate the recommendations of the EAG in to youth planning for the region, MWA staff facilitates access for youth to community resources that lead to academic and workplace success. Michigan Works! youth staff work closely with local school district principals, counselors, and teachers for referral of in-school youth in need of employment and training services, and youth at-risk of dropping out of school. In-school youth participate in school-to-work activities enhancing career readiness. Resources to academic guidance counselors include current labor market information, and career exploration materials. Age-appropriate summer employment opportunities combining academic and occupational learning may be integrated into a youth's education/employment planning.

For many years the MWA has worked closely with the Department of Human Services offices to offer a full range of services to youth in foster care. In addition, the MWA youth programs have served as a source of work-based learning opportunities for disabled, pregnant and parenting youth, as well as those in alternative education programs. A close working relationship with organizations responsible for these programs has ensured that youth with special needs or barriers to employment do not fall through the cracks. While there are no Job Corps centers in the region, representatives of Job Corps visit our service centers frequently, and Youth Advisors routinely provide brochures and points-of-contact for youth as appropriate.

VI. Review, Comment, and Publication

This plan has been published to the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments web site, www.nwm.org, for a period of 30 days, for the purpose of public review and comment. Comments may be submitted via the email address provided on the web site or hard copy mail to the NWMCOG office.

NWMCOG will submit any comments that express disagreement with the plan to the DELEG.

ATTACHMENT A: IN-DEMAND OCCUPATIONS LIST

NORTHWEST REGION

Agriculture

- Farmers and Ranchers
- Agricultural technology & managers

Information Technology

- Computer operations/applications
- Computer information technology
- Computer systems: analysts, engineers, programmers, repairers
- Network administration
- Database administration

Health

- Registered Nurse (RN)
- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
- Certified Nurse Aide (CNA)
- Health information technician/medical records
- Medical secretary/administrative assistant
- Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, including: technicians related to surgical, laboratory, emergency, nuclear, pharmacy, radiology, respiratory, optician, dental hygiene, paramedic/EMT, dental assistant, medical assistant
- Healthcare support occupations, including: medical transcription, medical receptionist, medical billing, health services administration

Professional/Specialty

- Engineering technicians: chemical, civil, electrical, industrial, mechanical, environmental, nuclear, petroleum, metallurgical, plastics, robotics/automation, electromechanical
- Child care providers, early childhood education/child development (limited)
- Aviation pilot (limited)
- Landscaping, nursery, turf management
- Agricultural workers, including: horticulture, nursery, greenhouse, landscaping, turf management

Manufacturing/Precision Production

- Machinery installation, repair & maintenance
- Advanced Manufacturing, including green energy manufacturing

- Machinists/machine tool
- Welding

Mechanics

- HVACR
- Auto mechanics

Transportation and Material Moving & Vehicle Operators

- Truck driver – heavy and tractor trailer (limited)
- Heavy equipment operator

Skilled Trades

- Alternative energy technologies
- Green Building and related Construction

Business

- Entrepreneurship
- Bookkeeping & accounting
- Secretarial/clerical/administrative assistant/receptionist
- Customer service representatives
- Retail clerks
- Receptionist
- Paralegal/legal assistant (limited)
- Financial services sales agents
- Personal financial advisors

Hospitality

- Food service workers & management
- Culinary arts/chef training
- Hotel/motel management

Maritime

- Deck officer
- Engine officer

Other

- Building maintenance
- Grounds maintenance

Developmental

- Bridge to College program
- Adult basic education

ATTACHMENT B: WIA Title I Performance Levels – Northwest Region

Program Year 2009

Performance Levels are maintained at Program Year 2008 levels.

| | Entered Employment Rate | Employment Retention Rate | Average Earnings | Employment and Credential Rate |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Adult | 89.0% | 85.0% | \$10,400 | 83.0% |
| Dislocated Worker | 95.0% | 92.0% | \$13,400 | 77.0% |
| Older Youth (19 – 21) | 83.0% | 86.0% | \$3,300 | 80.0% |

| | Skill Attainment Rate | Diploma or Equivalent Rate | Retention Rate |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| Younger Youth (14 – 18) | 96.0% | 90.0% | 80.0% |

ATTACHMENT C: WIA SUPPORTIVE SERVICES POLICY

Northwest Michigan Council of Governments

Northwest Michigan Works! Agency

Policy on Supportive Service Payments

The Northwest Michigan Works! Agency may provide supportive services to WIA eligible individuals facing specific barriers which hinder their ability to participate in program activities or secure employment. Such services may be provided to individuals who are participating in core, intensive, or training services and are unable to obtain supportive services through other sources.

Within the financial limitations of the WIA program, supportive services may include:

- Transportation (mileage reimbursement, bus passes, gas cards),
- Housing (first/last month's rent, security deposit, utilities),
- Telephone cards,
- Vehicle registration and first month's insurance payment,
- Tools and uniforms required for vocational training or employment,
- Clothing for job interviews,
- Pre-employment medical exams,
- Occupational certifications and licenses.

WIA supportive services are not entitlement payments and are provided at the discretion of the Northwest Michigan Works! Career Advisors. The Advisors are responsible for verifying the individual's need for supportive services, which must be documented on the participant's ISS on the OneStop MIS. Case notes must indicate what other sources/resources were considered and the reason they were not available. Under no circumstance may a supportive service be provided utilizing NWMWA funds if that service is readily available in a timely manner from another community agency or organization.

Before a request for supportive services can be finalized, the Career Advisor must obtain the approval of the Program Director, who may place limits on the duration and amount of the service. Acceptable accounting procedures will be adhered to in the provision of supportive services.

All of the Northwest Michigan Works! Service Centers provide staff and customers with community services directories listing resources available and detailed contact information to address supportive services needs.