

MICHIGAN WORKS! WEST CENTRAL
WDB/LEO JOINT MEETING
VIA ZOOM
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, 2020

MINUTES

LEO Members Present

Anderson, Janet
Byl, Larry
Cooper, Burt
DeLaat, Ken
Emig, Larry
Hogenson, Tom

LEO Members Absent

Johnson, Les
Howard, Linda
Walls, Karl

WDB Members Present

Eisler, David
Griffin, Nancy
Gustad, Eric
Marek, Ron
Massy, Dan
Roberts, Carla
Romanowski, Cynthia
Smith-Olson, Debbie
Stark, Liz
Thompson, Sheri
Trucks, Mary
Vyse-Staszak, Janet
Wilson, Adam

WDB Members Absent

Cooper, David
Emerson, Donnie
Johnson, Megan
Johnson, Peter
Kemnitz, Karl
Kosheba, Dan
Kulesza, Lisa
Timmers, Jon
Vanderputte, Larissa
Vasquez, Jill
Visser, William

Michigan Works! West Central Staff

Bennett, Merri
Buss, Mark
Davis, Toni
Eppley, Jonathan

Keene, Shelly
Marr, Chad
Palmer, Don
Reed, Brigitte

Sanders, Julie
Shoemaker, Connie
Smith, Aleshia
Smith, Cassie
Williams, Ellen

Other

Splane, Rob – West Coast Integration

Call to Order

LEO Chairperson, Larry Emig brought the joint meeting of the Workforce Development Board/Local Elected Officials to order at 12:33 p.m. via Zoom. There is a quorum of both the WDB and the LEO.

Introduction of Guests

Guests/staff welcomed and introduced.

Welcome New Board Member

◇ Adam Wilson

Adam has been with Nestle/Gerber for about seven years and HR Manager in Fremont for about two years. Michigan is “home” for him and he is happy to be back and is especially enjoying the summer time.

Consent Agenda (*Action Item*)

◇ Minutes of June 3, 2020 WDB/LEO Joint Meeting – Emailed Prior

◇ June Financial Report – Emailed Prior/Handout (Goldenrod)

Tom Hogenson moved to accept the Consent Agenda as printed; supported by Carla Roberts; motion accepted unanimously by both the WDB and the LEO. 12:41 p.m.

Mason County Information

Don Palmer, Talent Specialist, explained that he has been working alone in the Ludington Center for the past 17 weeks. He has taken care of many clients with unemployment claims from various parts of the state. These claims range from routine filings to correcting their inadvertent errors made when filing or certifying.

With the state’s COVID restrictions frequently changing, he has been receiving a number of calls on potential clients seeking to work toward a new career or improving and moving up in the career they are now in. The largest percentage of these new WIOA clients have chosen the health professions (CNA, RN, etc.). Getting these clients started is usually with a masked meeting in

the parking lot, followed by DocuSign materials to complete, barriers set and follow up calls completed.

The Ludington Center works closely with the other Centers as well as various schools, the local Community College and certification agencies to make this unique situation the best it can be for the clients to move forward and make a difference in their life.

Michigan Works! West Central Shining Star Award Recipient

Shelly explained that each year the Michigan Works! Association celebrates one staff member from each of the Michigan Works! Agencies. The Shining Star Award is designed to highlight a frontline staff who, through dedication and outstanding contributions to workforce development, personifies the Michigan Works! mission. All West Central staff have an opportunity to nominate the staff person who they think deserves it.

This year's Michigan Works! West Central Shining Star award winner received the most nominations, in part, due to the way he handled the COVID-19 pandemic and the Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) crisis. Here is what some of his colleagues had to say about his work and commitment.

- » The way he helped with hundreds of UIA calls was amazing! He had empathy and patience. He was able to deescalate situations to help calm clients who were extremely irate or upset.
- » His attitude was positive through all of the turmoil. He lifted everyone up through some of the roughest days with his humor, compassion and support when needed.
- » He maintains a cool and calm demeanor when handling even the toughest clients. I have yet to see him in a bad mood and he is always willing to help co-workers with anything they need.

- » I feel he is a very upbeat person with a wonderful personality willing to go above and beyond to help anyone.
- » I nominate this person because he always has the best attitude with clients and customers on the phone and in person. He is always willing to help out at a moment's notice.

The Michigan Works! West Central Shining Star Award nominee is Talent Specialist Don Palmer.

Plans/Modifications Summary – Handout *Blue* (Action Item)

1. WIOA Local and Regional Plan (PI 20-07) – Action – Signatures Required

Local Plans serve as four-year action plans to develop, align, and integrate service delivery strategies and to support the state's vision and strategic and operational goals.

Regional Plans must incorporate the Local Plans for each of the local areas within the planning region consistent with the requirements of the WIOA Final Regulations. Being identified as Prosperity Region 4, Michigan Works! West Central (4a) works with West Michigan Works! (4b) to develop the Regional Plan.

All Regional and Local Plans, and any modifications to such plans, are subject to a 30-day public review and comment period. Both the Local and Regional Plan are currently posted on our website for the 30-day comment period.

2. WIOA Statewide Activities Funding for Program Year 2020 High Concentration of WIOA Eligible Youth (PI 20-15) – Action – Signatures Required

The Department of Labor Economic and Opportunity (LEO) is allocating WIOA Statewide Activities funding to provide additional assistance to local areas that have a high concentration of WIOA eligible youth. Michigan Works! West Central has received a total allocation of \$5,503. The funding will expire on June 30, 2021.

3. Statewide Rapid Response Allocations for Customer Relationship Management (CRM) for Program Year 2020 (PI 20-18) – Action – Signatures Required

For PY20, the Department of Labor Economic and Opportunity (LEO) has allocated \$4,708 to Michigan Works! West Central (MWWC) to support existing CRM systems or for the purchase or renewal of software licenses that will aid in the identification of and information gathering for potential layoffs or opportunities for layoff aversion. This funding is made available on a one-time basis. MWWC will use the funding to assist with the cost of renewing our current Salesforce licenses.

4. RESEA (PI 20-19) – Action – Signatures Required

RESEA, Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment program, provides additional services for persons identified by UIA as likely to exhaust Unemployment Insurance benefits. RESEA is an extension of Employment Services. This Plan for CY 20 includes \$63,276 in funding for services to this population.

5. Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 – Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope. (PATH) Program – No Action Required

Michigan Works! West Central has voluntarily requested to de-obligated \$75,000 of TANF funding bringing our total allocation to \$492,858. The de-obligation request is based on the expenditure projections and the pause in the PATH program due to COVID-19.

Ken DeLaat moved to approve the WIOA Local and Regional Plan (20-07); the WIOA Statewide Activities Funding for Program Year 2020 High Concentration of WIOA Eligible Youth (20-15); the Statewide Rapid Response Allocations for Customer Relationship Management for Program Year 2020 (20-18); and the RESEA (20-19) as

presented by Shelly Keene, Executive Director; supported by Nancy Griffin; motion accepted unanimously by both the WDB and the LEO. 12:51 p.m.

Michigan Works! West Central Organizational Charts – Handouts

Shelly stated that as far as she knew the Boards had not received an organizational chart for Offender Success. Offender Success staffing is mostly contracted services.

Shelly explained that there are a couple changes to the West Central organizational chart. West Central had a part-time Business Services Specialist for employers in Lake County. Based on performance and the fact that the event was over and with the additional uncertainty of COVID-19, he was let go. She also had to look at staffing of the BRNs and the cost of being able to sustain three full-time staff for four counties. It was decided that Mark Buss, former Success Coach for Osceola County would be moved to the Business Services role. Mark has an extensive background working for Community Mental Health and is a perfect fit to be in charge of the Healthcare Employer Led Collaborative. In addition, Mark is providing Business Services in Osceola and Lake Counties, giving Jon and Merri more time to focus on Apprenticeships. The transition has gone well; there was only one company in Mecosta County, so Cassie Smith, Success Coach, has transitioned to both Mecosta and Osceola and Julie Sanders, Success Coach has added Lake County to her schedule.

One other change, last week Linda Albright, Talent Specialist in Osceola County has announced her retirement. Her last day will be on September 4, 2020. The position will be posted internally on Monday. Once staff have an opportunity to transfer, we will then post the Talent Specialist position for the county with the opening.

Impacts of COVID -19 on Michigan Works! West Central

◇ Service Delivery

Shelly explained that staff continue to provide services remotely due to the Governor's latest Executive Order that went into effect on July 31, 2020. All staff were scheduled to be back in the Centers full time on August 3. That was not possible due to Executive Order 160. Staff will continue to work remotely until that Executive Order is lifted.

A couple days after the June Board meeting, West Central experienced a crisis situation and our phone system basically failed as it couldn't keep up with the call volume. West Central's phone number was shared in a Facebook group from Detroit that had over 20,000 members and within a few minutes the phone system was over loaded. It would take less than 15 minutes for our voicemail boxes to record 150 messages. After about four weeks of averaging well over 1,000 calls a day, we have gone back down to about 1,000 calls a week.

Staff are scheduling appointments for those individuals who cannot complete their task virtually. Partner agencies are also meeting with clients by appointment.

West Central had originally planned to wait to re-open until DHHS and UIA opens, but Shelly heard that DHHS will not open until after the first of the year. Jane Vyse-Staszak said she has not heard anything at this point. West Central will not wait until the first of the year, the local economy needs our help in assisting employers to find much needed employees. Once staff return to the Centers services will be provided by appointment only.

Liz Stark, Adult Education, said they are working with students by appointment only and are tutoring ten high school graduates and will have another four at the end of the month. This is their 50th year anniversary for working with adult ed.

◇ Employer Service

Merri Bennet, Business Services Director, stated that the job fairs have changed over to virtual and seem to be doing okay.

◇ Fiscal

Brigette Reed, Finance/MIS/IT Director, explained that Fiscal staff are back in the office preparing for the audit next month.

Offender Success Update – Handout

Ellen Williams, Offender Success Program Manager, informed the Boards that the data from the MDOC typically lags one quarter behind.

Page 1 shows raw enrollments minus net enrollments which then equal negative neutral discharge number.

Page 2 is year-to-date average for housing, this is up for length of stay from 2018. However, it is low and there is only one other Region in the state with a lower rate. A slight increase to this data is expected due to COVID. Participants are laid off or have lost their jobs and are not moving out of housing as quickly as normal.

Page 3 shows services are down slightly from previous year but this may be attributed to participants finding their own services.

Ellen explained that CLEAR has resumed in all three counties; Kent, Muskegon and Ottawa. Police officer's time for Ottawa is a leveraged resource. Behavioral Health Services are providing services via a virtual platform. A trauma counseling program is still being worked on, it was halted due to COVID. RN and ES services were provided throughout COVID pandemic. A Request For Proposal for RNs in Kent and Muskegon counties were sent out. The deadline to

apply was August 3, 2020. Proposals from Alternative Directions and Good Will of West Michigan were received.

The truck driving program is accepting participants again. The 48th participant was enrolled. The truck driving program has a 97% success rate. OS is also working on a heavy equipment program that would mirror the truck driving program.

The Offender Success program received a COVID grant for \$1,500 from United Way of the Lakeshore for Muskegon, Newaygo and Oceana counties. The funds were used for cell phones and minutes for individuals who needed to be quarantined due to COVID and cleaning supplies for houses.

June Program Reports – Handout

Aleshia Smith, Quality Assurance Performance Specialist, explained the most common barrier among WIOA participants is being low income. Followed by having a basic skill deficiency or being an English language learner. WIOA youth primarily seek career services while WIOA adults and dislocated workers primarily seek training services. The most popular training fields are in health care and transportation. WIOA participants earn on average about \$2 more per hour after their exit from the program.

The most common barrier for Wagner Peyser participants is long term unemployment followed again by those that are basic skill deficient. These participants are primarily men between the ages of 24 and 44. There was a steep drop-off of participants served in April, this was due to COVID-19 closures. May and June began to see a rebound.

Employer services shows a large spike of jobs filled in January due to a very successful job fair for Ventura in Evert. Again the effects of the pandemic are seen in the number of jobs filled for the month of April and a slow rebound starting in May.

PATH participants are primarily white females and their highest education level is the 12th grade. On an average, participants in unsubsidized employment earn almost one dollar more per hour after 90 days of employment. Hours worked also increases with employment retention, yet on average, participants appear to be working only part time.

Business Resource Network Update – Handout

Julie Sanders, Success Coach, explained that the report shows that the BRN are continuing to serve individuals at the BRN employers. The non-BRN employers are now being served with the COVID grant made possible through the Fremont Area Community Foundation. Julie and Cassie are working on marketing materials and have a two-day training this week. They are anxious to return to meeting with the BRN employers for onsite visits.

Cassie Smith, Success Coach, noted that the majority of her clients are seeking assistance with readjusting and revising their budgets from being unemployed and now with the decrease in funds they had from unemployment.

Outreach Activities

◇ Apprenticeships

Merri Bennett, Business Services Director, explained that since the Going Pro Talent Fund is no longer available the Going Pro Apprenticeship grant is the main way to help employers fund USDOL apprenticeships. Just like the Talent Fund this grant will reimburse employers \$3,000 per apprentice. There are also less restrictions on this grant, so this grant is a perfect reason for employers to start an apprenticeship program. Many employers have not called all their employees back but others are still having problems filling open positions, so an apprenticeship is an ideal way to do that. Merri, Mark and Jon will begin holding regular

zoom information sessions for employers and training providers. They are also in the process of forming a regional apprenticeship consortium with other Michigan Works! agencies and training providers in northern counties to make the process as easy as possible for employers.

◇ COVID-19 – MEDC & Ag Grants

Merri explained that the State of Michigan has implemented the Michigan Small Business Restart Program to support Michigan’s small businesses that are reopening and have experienced a loss of income as a result of COVID-19. The funding is across 15 local or nonprofit economic development organizations (EDOs) covering all 83 counties in the state to provide a base amount of \$3.5 million per EDO for grants up to \$20,000. At least 30% of the funds awarded under the program must be provided to women-owned, minority owned or veteran owned eligible businesses. The application period opened July 14, 2020 and closes today August 5. During a webinar the state says they already had 22,000 applications.

The Michigan Agricultural Safety Grant Program supports the needs of Michigan’s agricultural processors and farms. The program supports the implementation of COVID-19 monitoring and mitigation strategies and awards grants to farms and agricultural processors with ten or more employees. The grant application went live on July 15 and was available on a first come first serve basis. As of this date, August 5, applications are still being taken.

Business Activity – Handouts

◇ Employer Led Collaborative Grant

Mark Buss, Business Services Specialist, gave an update on progress with the Employer Led Health Care Collaborative. The Collaborative met virtually on June 17, 2020 with good representation including employers, education/training partners and Economic Development partners all in attendance. In addition to reviewing the project objectives of the MICA 2.0

grant, it was determined to move forward with creating a Request For Proposal to hire a public relations firm to create a Health Care Collaborative marketing plan and materials, including updating our webpage. The group will meet again this fall and will begin to monitor the numbers of the program participants that have started a health care career or are projected to do so.

◇ Job Fairs

Jonathan Eppley, Employment Services Specialist, explained that West Central has held three multi-employer virtual job fairs since June 3. The next job fair is scheduled for August 6. In addition, several single-employer virtual job fairs for North Lake Correctional Facility (GEO) group were held.

◇ Rapid Response

Jon stated that it was announced in the spring that Vitro in Ewart was going to close at the end of their Fiscal Year June 30, 2020. This was the result of financial struggles exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Production lines were sent to other Vitro facilities in the US and Mexico. West Central did participate in three Worker Orientation meetings in June at which every employee participated.

Jon explained that it was announced early June that the Big Rapids JC Penney store would be closing its doors permanently. The store had been closed due to COVID-19 but reopened in June to liquidate inventory and is slated to close September 27. Because the Manager was transferred to Traverse City it has been difficult to obtain information. 20 people will be affected, of which 16 are part-time. Jon is working to deliver Rapid Response packets.

◇ Success Stories

Work Share

The Seven Slot Grille worked with Business Services Specialist Mark Buss to help their employees work but also be part of the Work Share application. Navigating the uncertainties associated with the pandemic has been difficult. The Work Share program provided means for businesses and organizations to begin to emerge from the Stay-at-Home orders.

PATH

Kammy is a single mother of four children. She would come into the Big Rapids Workforce Service Center multiple times per week to work on WorkKeys assignments. One of the Talent Specialists let her know that Jets Pizza was hiring, she called immediately and had an interview the very next day. She started working the following Monday earning \$9.65 an hour. “Thank you Michigan Works! West Central for all you have done for me and my family. It is greatly appreciated.”

WIOA

Jacob, a Lake County youth, had attended Wexford County ISD in the Heavy Equipment Mechanic program, graduating in the spring 2019. In October 2019, Jacob came into the Michigan Works! Workforce Service Center inquiring about becoming a truck driver. He had found an opportunity to start employment at the Lake County Road Commission as a mechanic, but in order to obtain employment, he needed to first obtain his CDL. Jacob was enrolled in the Out-of-School program and West Central was able to assist him with the cost of training to obtain his CDL. The employer held the job for him and he started his employment at the Lake County Road Commission earning \$16.81 per hour working 40 plus hours a week. He thoroughly enjoys his job performing maintenance on county trucks and putting his training to use.

Wagner-Peyser

Karyn moved to Big Rapids and stayed at the My Brother's Keeper homeless shelter. She visited Michigan Works! almost every day doing job search. Talent Specialist found a Direct Support Professional opening, which is the field Karyn was interested in. She had an interview with McBride Quality Care Services and told staff she was offered a position earning \$10.80 per hour. "Michigan Works! was a very open, friendly environment, encouraging me to succeed."

What's New in our Region?

Toni and Chad explained that some of the programs are moving to virtual programming. Enrollment packets are now available through DocuSign. It is sometimes necessary to send the packets through the mail and/or schedule one-on-one appointments. All the orientation sessions are now available online but we encounter connectivity issues and schedule phone appointments.

A virtual format is offered to youth as an option for those not wanting to report in person. The youth can participate in a variety of assignments that focus on soft skills and career exploration.

Bridge News Source – Reed City Group – Handout

PPE turns into "tremendous" opportunity for Reed City factory.

Reed City Group in Osceola County is switching gears from fabricating parts for the automotive industry to making personal protective equipment (PPE) for the COVID-19 virus. They are potentially leading the way as the state's manufacturers hope to regain business by making the medical products once sent overseas. At least 30 workers have been hired for the switch and \$5

million in equipment have been purchased for the switch, as its plastic-injection molds now create parts for medical devices.

Now about half of the \$25 million per year business is automotive and it's moving even more into medical device making. The Reed City Group has been asked to bid on still more contracts for PPE, more tooling, and plastics now made at another manufacturer. The impact is resonating.

June 2020 Unemployment Ranking – Handout

The June unemployment is down from May 2020.

NOTE: Dan Massy left at 1:51 p.m.

Next Meeting October 7, 2020 – Idlewild Historic Cultural Center

The next WDB/LEO Joint meeting will be held at the Idlewild Historic Cultural Center, 7025 Broadway Road 49642.

Round-the-Table

- » Roberts, Carla, Fremont Area Community Foundation – the Foundation has shifted from emergency help to recovery. Loans are available to Newaygo County businesses with liberal terms. There is not a lot of applications at this time because companies are requesting grants first.
- » Eisler, David, Ferris State University – Ferris is planning to open up this fall with 27% face-to-face classes; 24% occasional; 37% online and there are 12% that are not on campus. They are moving to single room housing and using every large room on campus for classes. After Thanksgiving there will be remote delivery. Skilled Trades are meeting face-to-face and will continue even after Thanksgiving.

- » Stark, Liz, Mason-Lake Adult Education – the Adult Ed never closed. The programs for 18 and older are open. The Adult Ed is open in all six West Central counties. There is funding for virtual learning with 175 subjects.
- » Vyse-Staszak, Janet, Department of Health and Human Services – Migrant Services are assisting with testing of the food processors and offering supports to seasonal farmworkers and migrants. This will be a significant initiative with the Governor’s new mandate.

Other Business

Reserved for the Public

Adjournment

Meeting stands adjourned at 2:01 p.m.