



Michigan Works! The Job Force Board Transitional Plan for Youth Activities

April 1, 2000 - June 30, 2005

**Michigan Works! The Job Force Board
2950 College Avenue
Escanaba, MI 49829**

Updated March 2002

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Comprehensive 5-Year Youth Plan
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1. **Local Vision and Goals**

A. Describe your broad strategic, economic, and workforce development goals for youth.

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board and its Career Connections Group (Educational Advisory Group) have been working to implement the goals of this region's Comprehensive Strategic Plan.

The vision of the Job Force Board is to "Design a comprehensive workforce development system, which creates a workforce with the knowledge and skills necessary to sustain and improve the economy of the Central Upper Peninsula."

The Job Force Board assigned goals one and two to the Career Connections Group. As a result, two committees, the Career and Employability Skills Committee and the Contextual Learning Committee are the workgroups implementing the strategies of the regional plan.

Goal #1: 90% of employers (having over 50 or more employees) will indicate that job seekers' academic and employability skills are at or above those desired by the employer.

The Job Force Board and its local Chambers of Commerce surveyed the regional business community on workforce development issues. Responses from the business community indicated that at this time on 18% of the employers surveyed felt their entry-

level workforce possessed the entry-level skills needed to succeed on the job. A Career Preparation survey completed by counselors, teachers and administrators in the winter of 2001 indicated that on a Likert Scale (1-5), the average score across all levels of education for “teachers give students opportunities to learn about different careers” was 2.91. The results of these two surveys indicate that more work needs to be done in this area with business, education and youth.

The Career and Employability Skills Committee met with members of the business community to streamline the employability skills definition as defined by Michigan’s Benchmarks and Standards. The consensus of the workgroup is that business wants a succinct definition that describes those entry-level skills that are needed to succeed in the workplace. Business wants educators to speak the same language. Youth need a consistent message from business and education.

Currently, educators are measured on how well schools perform on the MEAP. Curriculum standards do not have measurability for success in employability skills. Committee research indicates WorkKeys to be a proficient tool in measuring workplace skills. Before discussion can take place at the state and local level on incorporating WorkKeys or similar assessments that measure workplace competencies, educators and policy makers must be educated on these assessments and business needs.

Goal #2: To develop a seamless educational system providing life-long learning opportunities, where each public school and institutions of higher learning will

actively participate in at least one career contextual learning curriculum.

The Contextual Learning Committee is researching program that offer teachers curriculums that support project-based learning opportunities. The consensus on the definition of contextual learning fostered some serious debate between business and educators before reaching a consensus. The committee would like to see classroom teachers teach students curriculum subjects in a way that brings relativity of subject matter to careers and or career pathways. Almost all schools in this region have adopted career pathways and Boards of Education have signed papers supporting their school system in implementing pathways into their courses.

In order for youth to be exposed to contextual learning, educators must teach contextually. Regionally, youth have job shadowing experiences in 8th and 10th grade. Regionally, school districts are implementing teacher job shadowing as part of professional development for teachers. The Board would like to see teacher job shadowing increased because hands on experience can bring relativity of subject matter to career context.

The operational part of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan identifies strategies that support the activities for youth that are prescribed under the Workforce Investment Act:

1. To provide assistance to youth in achieving academic and employment success by improving education and skills competencies, and by providing effective connections to employers;
2. To ensure ongoing mentoring opportunities for eligible youth;
3. To provide training opportunities for eligible youth;

4. To provide continued supportive services for eligible youth;
5. To provide incentives for recognition and achievement for eligible youth; and
6. To provide opportunities for eligible youth in activities related to leadership, development, decision-making, citizenship, and community service.

B. Describe your youth vision and how the WIA workforce investment System will help attain these goals.

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board's vision for comprehensive youth oriented services is an integrated system at the local level that brings together the expertise, experience and leadership of existing federal, state, and local youth programs. Through the process of collaboration and the redirection of resources, this system provides learning options, work experience, skills development and leadership development, counseling and support, connections to both post secondary education and training and good jobs for eligible 16 to 21 year olds.

The goals of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan support multiple opportunities for youth to access career development. The Michigan Works! Service Center System continues to participate in school events such as career fairs, job shadowing and classroom presentations. Career Fairs and classroom presentations help to present to the youth information on business needs. The Michigan Works! Service Center System is working to create more and to strengthen business and education partnerships. It is hoped that this will bring an increased awareness of workforce needs to youth and educators. Area youth are provided universal access to the community's youth

development opportunities through the Michigan Works! Service Center and other community locations. Youth are able to access information on education and training opportunities; mentoring resources; linkages between academic and occupational learning; skill, aptitude, and academic assessment; work experience; comprehensive guidance and counseling; support services; etc.

The Youth Council acts as the focus for leadership and change in youth activities within local areas. The Youth Council continues to be pro-active in bringing Community Stakeholders, whose constituency is youth, to the table to talk about workforce development/career development opportunities, identifying areas that can contribute to the whole puzzle as opposed to taking a slice of the pie of youth dollars. Services are designed to be accountable, and to be evaluated by results against established benchmarks, which will be reviewed and evaluated yearly, to assure continuous improvement. The Career Connection Groups' work at the committee level and helped to increase communication between business and education.

At the end of the initial five-year period of this initiative, it is anticipated that the number of youth accessing meaningful services and resources will increase as more resources are leveraged throughout the community.

C. Describe who are the youth customers of the workforce investment system in your area.

There are approximately 4,300 economically disadvantaged youth, ages 14 to 21, in the central Upper Peninsula. An estimated 2,350 are in school youth, with the balance

either a high school graduate or no longer attending school. Of the total eligible youth population, approximately 430 are handicapped. All area youth seeking labor exchange services have access to the Michigan Works! Service Center System.

D. Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used at the local level to award grants and contracts for youth activities under Title I WIA, including how potential bidders are being made aware of the availability of grants and contracts.

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board will adhere to its procurement policy (Attachment A in original plan), which follows the guidelines set forth in Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD/OWD) Policy Issuance 99-34, A Procurement Policy, issued August 11, 1999.

E. The state has delegated responsibility to local boards to provide the definition regarding the sixth youth eligibility criterion at Section 101(13)(C)(vi).

The Michigan Works! The Job Force Board has identified the following youth eligibility criterion.

In-school youth who are at risk of dropping out as defined as a youth who has having two or more of the following characteristics:

- is deficient in basic literacy skills;
- is a dropout;

- ❑ is homeless;
- ❑ is a ward of the court or foster child;
- ❑ is pregnant or parenting
- ❑ is in need of special assistance to complete education or retain employment.

Out-of-school youth who are at risk as defined as an out-of-school youth who has two of the following characteristics:

- ❑ is basic skill deficient
- ❑ high school dropout
- ❑ has a limited work history; or
- ❑ has not completed a year of post-secondary education or training;
- ❑ exhibits dysfunctional behaviors that are barriers to education, training, and/or employment.

F. Describe the current status of the one-stop service center, including all existing youth activities and how they have been included in the development of the one-stop integrated service delivery system

Michigan Works! The Job Force Board has a Michigan Works! Service Center in each of its six counties (Alger, Delta, Dickinson, Marquette, Menominee, and Schoolcraft).

Each Michigan Works! Service Center offers the full range of universal, core,

intensive, and training services to the employers and residents, including youth, of the region, based on their need of services. Out of school youth have access to job openings, labor market information, job search assistance, job placement assistance, and when eligible, education and training opportunities at each of the service centers. In addition, there is a Job Corp representative located in the Marquette office.

In-school youth have accessed the one-stop service centers as part of their work-based learning activities during the summer component of our Youth Services. All youth development services provided by member agencies of the Youth Council will be accessible through the service centers. Michigan Works! Service Center personnel have been assigned to area school district to help raise the awareness of the Michigan Works! Service Center System within local school districts and increase access by youth to the Service Centers. This strategy aligns to the Strategic Plan to develop a seamless education system that provides (K through Adult Learning) multiple opportunities for career development and work-based learning. Michigan Works! Service Center Staff work in coordination with local Career Preparation Coordinators to provide services and information along the Career Pathways, helping to focus on the present and future needs of business

For The Job Force Board, business is the primary customer of the Michigan Works! Service Center System. Business involvement includes working with the Job Force Board to identify job and skill requirements of the current workplace and to provide a bona fide connection between the youth of the community and the area businesses. Youth who are referred to business through our labor exchange and/or

intensive services will receive a services of workshops that focus on “soft skills” such as problem solving, communications, getting to work on time, etc. This *Youth Works!* initiative has increased its partnership over the past year to include working with the Marquette Partners in Education Marquette/Alger Resource Education Service Agency to develop an employability skills curriculum that will have a pre-post assessment attached. Youth will need to successfully complete the modules before obtaining a certificate. This Youth Works! initiative has been endorsed by regional businesses. In addition, the Michigan Works! Service Center System is currently developing *portfolios*” for youth. Business roundtables have also endorsed this concept.

Youth enrolled in intensive services will have an individual service strategy (ISS) that identifies goals, strategies and outcomes as they progress through our Michigan Works! Service Center System.

II Strategies for Improvement

A. Describe how the local board and youth council will develop and manage effective youth programs

The Job Force is this region’s Youth Council. A sub-committee of the Job Force Board leads discussion and overview of youth activities.

The Youth Council’s purpose is to provide the expertise in and knowledge of the workforce needs of youth to develop and recommend local youth employment and training policy. This policy incorporates youth development; establish linkages with other organizations serving youth; and evaluate a range of issues that impact young

people's success in the workforce.

In addition to the Job Force Board, membership includes youth. This representation is imperative to the design and implementation of services for youth. The scope and role of the Youth Council is to impact the broad range of workforce development programs for youth. The Youth Council:

1. Makes decisions on youth funding under WIA based on certain decision-making authority delegated by The Job Force Board.
2. Works to develop a more Comprehensive and integrated system of workforce development programs and services for youth.
3. Helps to develop a stronger merging workforce including students enrolled in the high schools in the region.
4. Focuses on the strengths or assets of youth and seek strategies to develop and capitalize on those assets.
5. Deals with a broader array of workforce development programs for youth that are supported with a wider range of funds from various sources.

The Youth Council coordinates youth activities that:

1. Provide eligible youth seeking assistance in achieving academic and employment success, effective and

comprehensive activities, which shall include options for improving educational and skill competencies and provide effective connections to employers.

2. Ensure ongoing mentoring opportunities for eligible youth with adults.
3. Provide opportunities for training for eligible youth.
4. Provide incentives for recognition and achievement to eligible youth.
5. Provide opportunities for eligible youth in activities related to leadership, development, decision-making, citizenship, and community service.

B. Describe the strategy for providing Comprehensive services to eligible youth, including any coordination with foster care, education, welfare, and other relevant resources. Include requirements and activities to assist youth who have special needs or barriers to employment, including those who are pregnant, parenting, or have disabilities.

Part of The Job Force Board's strategy for providing Comprehensive services to eligible youth will lie in the membership of the Youth Council. Criteria for membership will promote the involvement of key youth activities related organizations including the Family Independence Agency, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, local secondary and/or post secondary educational institutions, and other community based organizations. In

addition, the Michigan Works! System design includes having workforce development professionals' work within schools to recruit youth to the Michigan Works! System.

The Youth Council assures that programs serving youth have the following components:

1. Comprehensive objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant.
2. Development of individualized service strategies for participants that identify an employment goal, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate services for the participant taking into account the assessment conducted.
3. Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities, in appropriate situations.
4. Strong linkages between academic and occupational learning.
5. Preparation for post-secondary education, where appropriate.
6. Effective connections to intermediaries with strong links to the job market and local and regional employers.

The members of the Youth Council and their respective constituents comprise a network for youth who are in need of specialized services to overcome barriers to education, training and eventually unsubsidized employment. This network addresses the

needs of the disabled, pregnant and/or parenting teens, and other at risk youth by providing the unique interventions required by the youth to achieve their goals.

C. Describe how your local area will meet the act's provisions regarding youth program design.

The Job Force Board provides a continuum of services and programs for youth that meet the provisions of WIA, and more importantly the needs of the region's youth through its Michigan Works! Service Center System. Based on an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each youth a service strategy is developed. This strategy identifies an employment goal, (including non-traditional employment when appropriate), appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate services. Elements of the this strategy may include any of the following components:

- (1) Preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities which may include tutoring, study skills training, career exploration, instruction, and work experience leading to completion of secondary school, including drop out prevention.
- (2) Strong linkages between academic and occupational learning that may include stress the use of applied academics.
- (3) Preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities including career exploration, job shadowing and internships.
- (4) Effective linkages with intermediaries with strong employer connections through adult mentorship and role modeling.
- (5) Alternative secondary school services leading to the completion of a secondary

diploma or equivalent rather than leaving school.

- (6) Summer employment experiences that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning.
- (7) Paid and unpaid work experience in the private or public sector under close supervision of an employer or employer representative to develop and enhance specific work related skills and abilities.
- (8) Occupational skill training leading to the attainment of a recognized credential or its recognized equivalent relating to unsubsidized employment.
- (9) Leadership development opportunities that may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors.
- (10) Comprehensive guidance and counseling which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral as appropriate.
- (11) Support services that are required to remove barriers to the completion of educational, training, or employment related goals.
- (12) Follow-up services for not less than twelve months as appropriate to insure the goals and outcomes originally identified are attained, or if they cannot be attained, alternative outcomes are sought.

For youth ages 14 through 18, who are registered in the system The Job Force Board anticipates that they will:

- (1) Attain basic skills, as appropriate, work readiness, and/or occupational skills.
- (2) Attain secondary school diplomas or their equivalent

- (3) Be placed and retained in post-secondary education or advanced training, or placed and retained in the military service, employment or a qualified apprenticeship.

For youth ages 19 through 21, they anticipate that they will:

- (1) Enter unsubsidized employment and retain employment for at least 6 month.
- (2) Attain recognized credentials relating to achievement of educational skills, which may include attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, or occupational skills, by participants who enter unsubsidized employment, post-secondary education, advanced training, or unsubsidized employment.

III Review, Comment, and Publication Documentation

The MWA has published this plan in accordance with Section 118 (c) of the act.

Documentation will be maintained on file for monitoring by MDCCD.