



## Introduction

The **Job Force Board** is a business-led policy and oversight organization responsible for creating a comprehensive, community-wide response to the challenges of building a highly skilled workforce and a competitive regional economy. As a convener of community leaders or stakeholders, the **Job Force Board** engages in an ongoing strategic planning process to identify strategies, actions and measurements that will create and maintain a healthy and growing economy, equipped with a local workforce that has the knowledge and skills needed by businesses in a technological and competitive marketplace. The result will be to draw from a vibrant pool of skilled workers enabling business and industry to thrive year-round. In turn, this business vitality creates the potential for higher paying jobs; thus improving the overall regional economy.

## Mission

The **Job Force Board** believes that a sound economic base is essential to maintain the quality of life in the six county region it serves. The Board fosters economic development and encourages and supports employers to promote full employment for our residents.

## Role of the Job Force Board

The strategic role of the **Job Force Board** is defining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in our region. We focus on desired economic and workforce development results in all segments of the community, develop short and long-term community goals for workforce development and also encourage community involvement.

Businesses' workforce requirements shape the goals of the **Job Force Board** and the **Michigan Works! Service Center System**. By listening to businesses, the board is able to direct the workforce toward value-added, career preparation services, and toward education and training that produces marketable skills that are in demand for those businesses.

## **Strategic Direction**

Global competition demands that, even at the local level, we must rethink workforce and economic development processes. Cooperative action is required by all community stakeholders to encourage and sustain community growth. Throughout the environmental scanning strategic planning process, emphasis is on collaboration and alignment of goals and activities among community stakeholders. In order to remain competitive, the strong leadership of these community stakeholders must make tough, important decisions to achieve economic growth.

Our most valuable asset is the intellectual capital of our people. Improvement in basic skills, career preparation, occupational skill enhancement and real-time access to strategic labor market information is critical in order for the Central Upper Peninsula to be regionally and globally competitive.

Successful business / education partnerships are an essential component in our strategic direction. The goals forged within the strategic plan center around the necessity of education and training to meet the demands of business and industry now and in the future. Education and training must provide optimal learning environments, and the opportunity for all members of the workforce to develop the education and workplace skills needed to compete in a technologically driven economy.

This executive summary will describe how our community leaders are focused on, and dedicated to, an integrated and aligned workforce development system.



## *Strategic Goals*

The **Job Force Board** set forth the following strategic goals to build the overall economic competitiveness of our region in 3 key areas:

### **1. Workforce Improvement for Economic Development**

*Goal: To build regional competitiveness through collaborative partnerships*

*Strategies:*

- (a) Support entrepreneurship to foster entrepreneurial spirit in the workforce and to support a diverse economy by:
  - Providing entrepreneurial awareness at Michigan Works! Service Centers Supporting
  - Supporting and seeking ways to continue integrated entrepreneurial curriculum in K-16.
- (b) Support partnerships that align career pathways with economic development goals by:
  - Marketing current and projected labor market demand to students, educators and parents through the Career Connections Group and education stakeholders.
  - **Michigan Works!** Service Centers assisting K-12 and beyond with career pathways and preparation.
- (c) Establish and grow regional partnerships by:
  - The **Job Force Board** providing a communication structure to educate and inform community stakeholders on initiatives that enhance the region's economic viability.
- (d) Support and promote industry led alliances that are aligned with workforce board strategic plans and regional economic development by:
  - Fostering industry led collaborative groups
  - Building capacity in conveners of industry led alliances.

## 2. Resource Supply and Demand Management

*Goal: Manage human resources to meet industry demand*

Strategies:

- (a) Develop a region-wide recruitment plan by:
  - Increasing linkages between **Michigan Works!** Service Centers, secondary school guidance services and post-secondary placement offices.
  - Maintaining and growing market share of job seekers accessing **Michigan Works!**
- (b) Market availability of workforce to existing and potential business by:
  - Publishing, promoting and marketing federal, state and local labor market data.
- (c) Provide value added labor exchange service by:
  - Aligning knowledge, skills and abilities with employer requirements to reduce post-hire training and turn-over costs.
  - Maintaining and growing market share of business use of the Michigan Talent Bank.
- (d) Expand and enhance retention services by:
  - Developing an employee peer mentoring system for first-time or at-risk entrants to the labor force.
  - Promoting and supporting human resource services to business and industry.
- (e) Support improve income through industry partnerships by:
  - Developing career ladders to move entry level workers to more skilled levels.
  - Developing career lattices to move workers laterally
  - Developing career progression models that transition working poor to family sustaining wages.

### **3. Skills Development for Business and Industry**

*Goal: Build and prepare a skilled and competitive workforce for Central Upper Peninsula business and industry*

**Strategies:**

- (a) Identify skills among the labor supply by:
  - Implementing a soft and hard-skill inventory of job seekers accessing **Michigan Works!**
- (b) Identify skill demand by:
  - Aggregating primary and secondary data to measure the demand for occupations and skill-sets by regional employers.
- (c) Train the labor market for skill gaps by:
  - Developing and delivering employer demand driven occupational skill-based training.
  - Promoting contextual learning applications to teachers and students.
- (d) Promote systems that validate skill attainment and credentialing by
  - Supporting and promoting incumbent worker training that aligns with business and industry demand and results in skill attainment and a credential for the learner.
  - Supporting and promoting skill credentialing to meet technology demands of business and industry.