



Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act

LOCAL PLAN PY 2024-2027

PI: 24-13

07/18/2024

Approval Request Form

1. Michigan Works! Agency Name and Number: 05
2. Plan Title(s): WIOA Local Plan for Program Years 2024-2027
3. Policy Issuance Number: 24-13
4. Plan Period: 09/01/2024 through 08/31/2028

The Chief Elected Official(s) and Workforce Development Board hereby request approval of this document. Please insert the printed name of each signature provided below:

Signature of Authorized Chief Elected Official Printed Name:	Date:
Signature of Authorized Chief Elected Official Printed Name:	Date:
Signature of Authorized Chief Elected Official Printed Name:	Date:
Signature of Workforce Development Board Chairperson Printed Name:	Date:

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1. Analysis of Regional Labor Market Data and Economic Conditions

1.1. Regional Analysis

Population and Unemployment Trends

The population of the Tri-County Area (consisting of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties, Michigan, and heretofore referred to as “BCVB”) is estimated at 280,294 as of 2023 per Lightcast data. From 2000-2023, BCVB is estimated to have lost 9,526 residents (a 3.3% decline). Over the same period, however, the population of the State of Michigan has increased by an estimated 125,301 residents (1.3% growth). The U.S. population also grew over this 23-year period, increasing by an estimated 54,106,337 individuals (equivalent to 19.2% growth).

99.2% of regional population contraction from 2000-2023 is attributable to losses in Berrien County, in which 54.6% of the regional population currently resides. Since 2000, Berrien County has shed an estimated 9,454 residents (5.8% contraction). This rate of population loss far exceeds both Cass and Van Buren Counties: Cass County actually *grew* by an estimated 0.5% over this period (adding 279 residents), while Van Buren County experienced an estimated population decline of 0.5% (a loss of 350 residents).

Population declines are projected for Berrien and Cass Counties over the period 2023-2028, while Van Buren County is projected to see population growth as a result of the eastern reaches of the county becoming a bedroom community for the bordering Kalamazoo-Portage, MI MSA. The aggregate population loss anticipated for BCVB over the period 2023-2026 is 717 residents (equivalent to 0.3% contraction).

Geography	2000	2010	2023	2028	% Change, 2000-2023	% Change, 2010-2023	% Change, 2023-2028
<i>Berrien</i>	162,453	156,813	152,999	152,348	-5.8%	-2.4%	-0.4%
<i>Cass</i>	51,104	52,293	51,383	50,834	0.5%	-1.7%	-1.1%
<i>Van Buren</i>	76,263	76,258	75,913	76,395	-0.5%	-0.5%	0.6%
<i>Tri-County</i>	289,820	285,364	280,294	279,578	-3.3%	-1.8%	-0.3%

SOURCES: U.S. Census Bureau Annual Estimates of the Resident Population, Lightcast Data Set 2024.1. Accessed April 17, 2024.

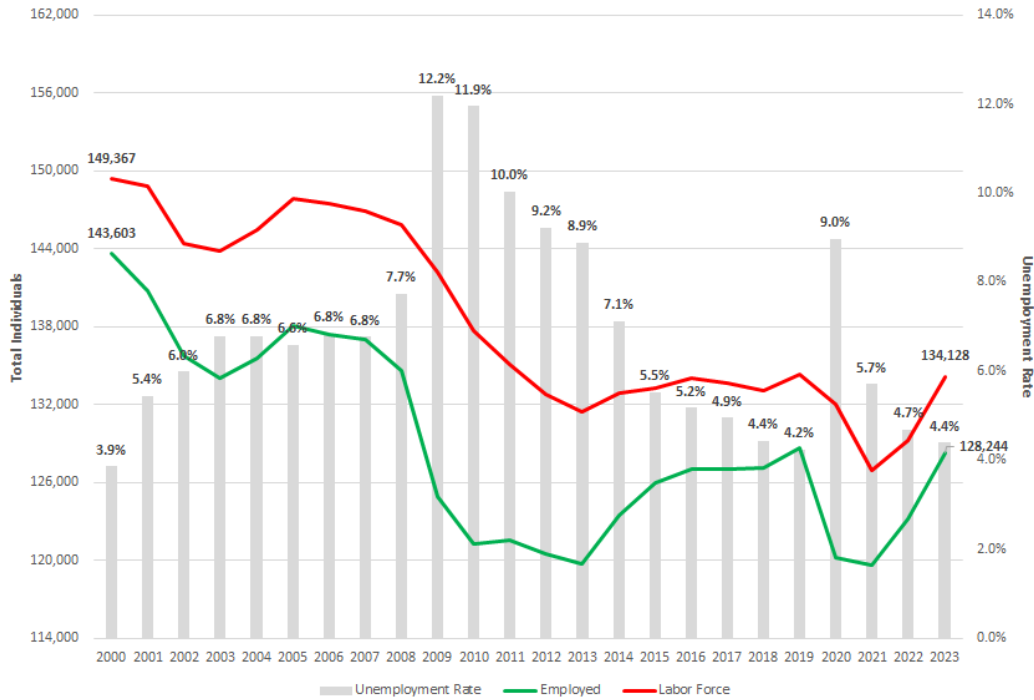
Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS)

The region’s annual unemployment rate sits at 4.4% as of 2023, down from a pandemic-induced spike in 2020 when the unemployment rate jumped to 9.0%. While the regional unemployment rate remains two-tenths of a percentage point higher than 2019’s pre-pandemic annual baseline (4.2%) and the unemployment level has increased by 189 workers over this period (a 3.3% increase), regional unemployment has largely recovered from COVID-induced tumult.

The pandemic era was also characterized by deep labor force contraction: BCVB’s labor force shrank by over 7,400 workers from 2019-2021, a figure equivalent to nearly 6% of the region’s 2019 annual average workforce total. Since that time, however, the regional labor force has grown by 5.7% with the addition of over 7,200 workers; 2023’s annual average labor force was just 0.1% smaller than 2019’s pre-pandemic baseline average (equivalent to 191 fewer workers).

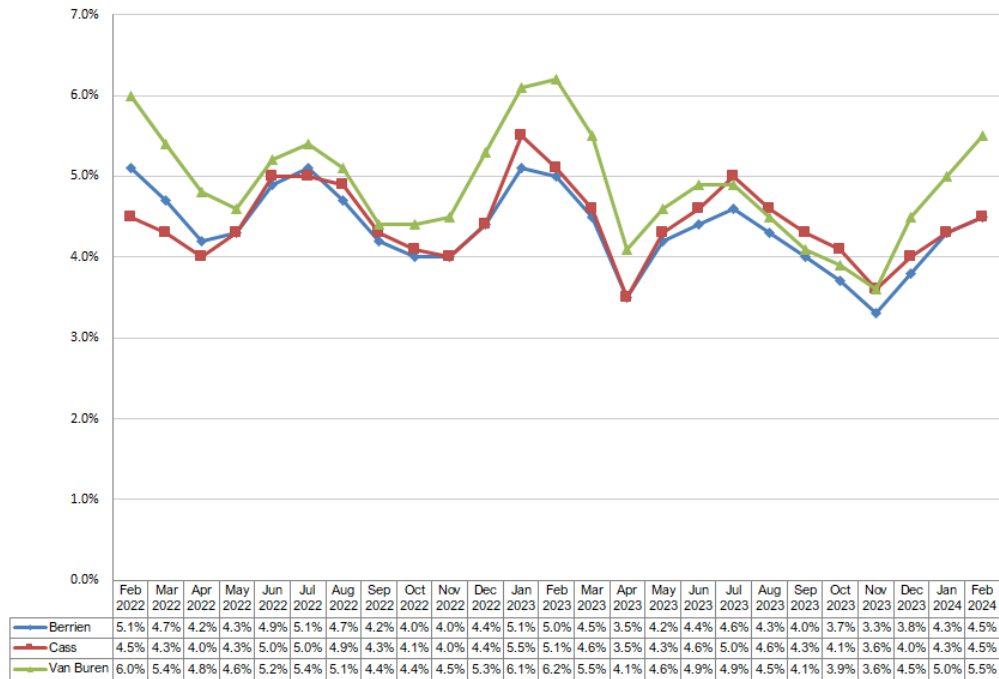
While the region’s labor market has largely recovered from the effects of COVID, this does not tell the whole story: since 2000, the regional workforce has lost 15,239 total workers (a figure equivalent to 10.2% contraction), the annual average employment level has fallen by nearly 15,000, and regional unemployment has increased with 2023’s annual average unemployment rate of 4.4% being one-half of a percentage higher than in 2000 (3.9%). While regional labor force levels were declining throughout the 2000s as a result of population outflow and Midwestern manufacturing sector contraction, the Great Recession accelerated this trend and BCVB has never recovered with the result being persistent talent shortages during boom cycles that throttle regional economic growth potential. Visualizations of regional labor market data can be found in Figure 1 and Figure 2.

Figure 1: "Annual BCVB Workforce Data, 2000-2023"



SOURCE: Michigan Center for Data and Analytics. Data Set 2000-2023. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Figure 2: "BCVB Unemployment Rates (Not Seasonally Adjusted), Feb. 2020-Current"



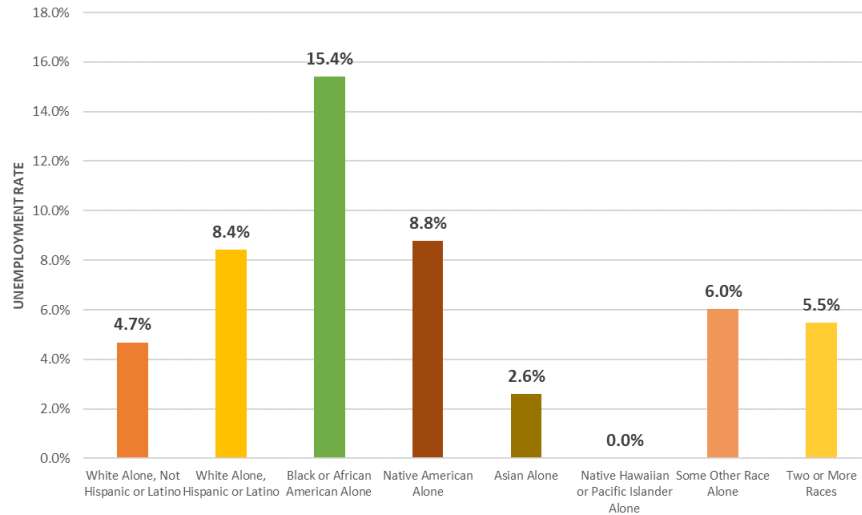
SOURCE: Michigan Center for Data and Analytics. Data Set Feb. 2022-Feb. 2024. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Demographics

Unemployment by Race of Worker

At 15.4%, the annual unemployment rate for BCVB residents ages 16 and over who self-report as being Black/African American alone is 9.6 percentage points higher than the annual Census unemployment rate for all residents ages 16 and over and more than triple the unemployment rate of 4.7% for those who self-identify as “White Alone, Not Hispanic or Latino.” Also note the elevated unemployment rates for those who self-identify as being “Native American Alone” (8.8%), “White Alone, Hispanic or Latino” (8.4%), and “Some Other Race Alone” (6.0%). See *Figure 3: “Unemployment Rates for Population Ages 16+ by Race/Ethnicity, BCVB”* for a visualization of this data.

Figure 3: “Unemployment Rates for Population Ages 16+ by Race/Ethnicity, BCVB”

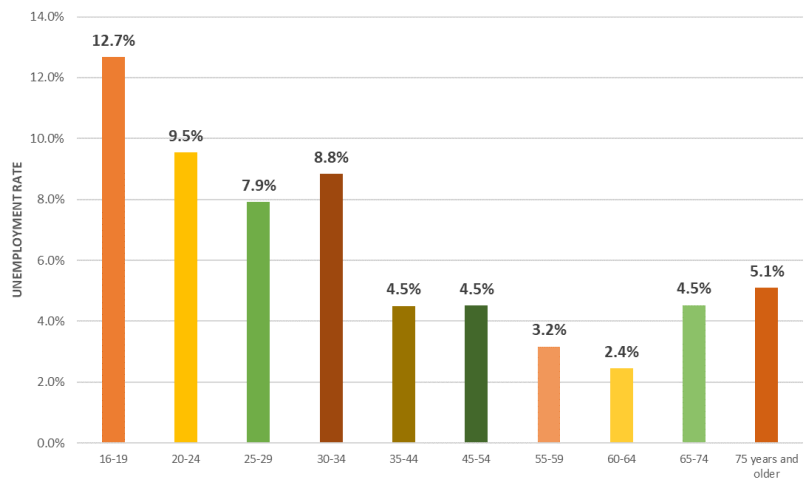


SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Unemployment by Age of Worker

The regional population ages 16-19 has the highest unemployment rate at 12.7%, with rates generally decreasing for every subsequent age group thereafter until bottoming out at 2.4% for the cohort ages 60-64 (a broad trend that is presumably attributable to the impacts of both increasing levels of postsecondary educational credentialing and greater job security in non-seasonal sectors). Unemployment rates tick up again slightly for cohorts over the age of 65 that are more likely to be working part-time seasonal jobs than their prime working age peers, but all cohorts over the age of 35 have unemployment rates that fall below the annual Census average for all residents ages 16 and over (5.8%). See *Figure 4: “Unemployment Rates by Age Cohort, BCVB”* for a visualization of this data.

Figure 4: “Unemployment Rates by Age Cohort, BCVB”

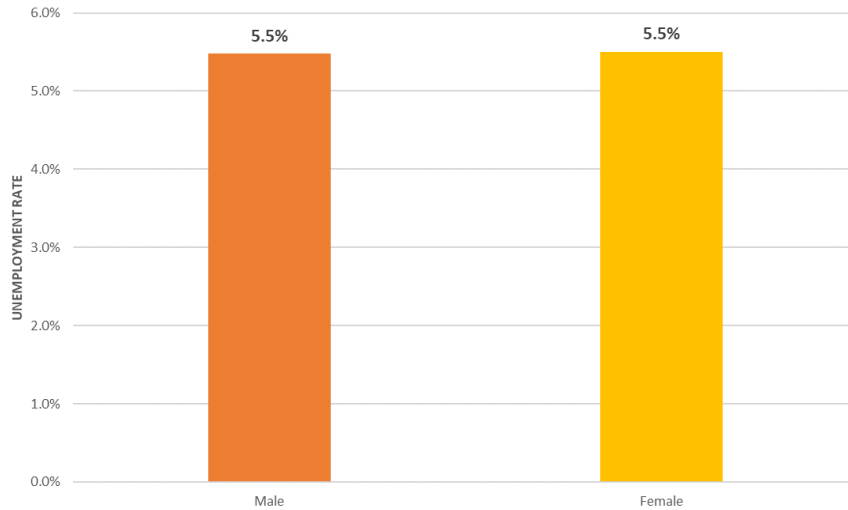


SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Unemployment by Gender of Worker

While regional unemployment rates are equal between male and female workers ages 16 and over at 5.5%, the labor force participation rate for males (81.0%) in BCVB is 7.4 percentage points higher than that for females (72.6%). Please see *Figure 5: “Unemployment Rates by Gender of Worker, BCVB”* for a visualization of this data.

Figure 5: “Unemployment Rates by Gender of Worker, BCVB”



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

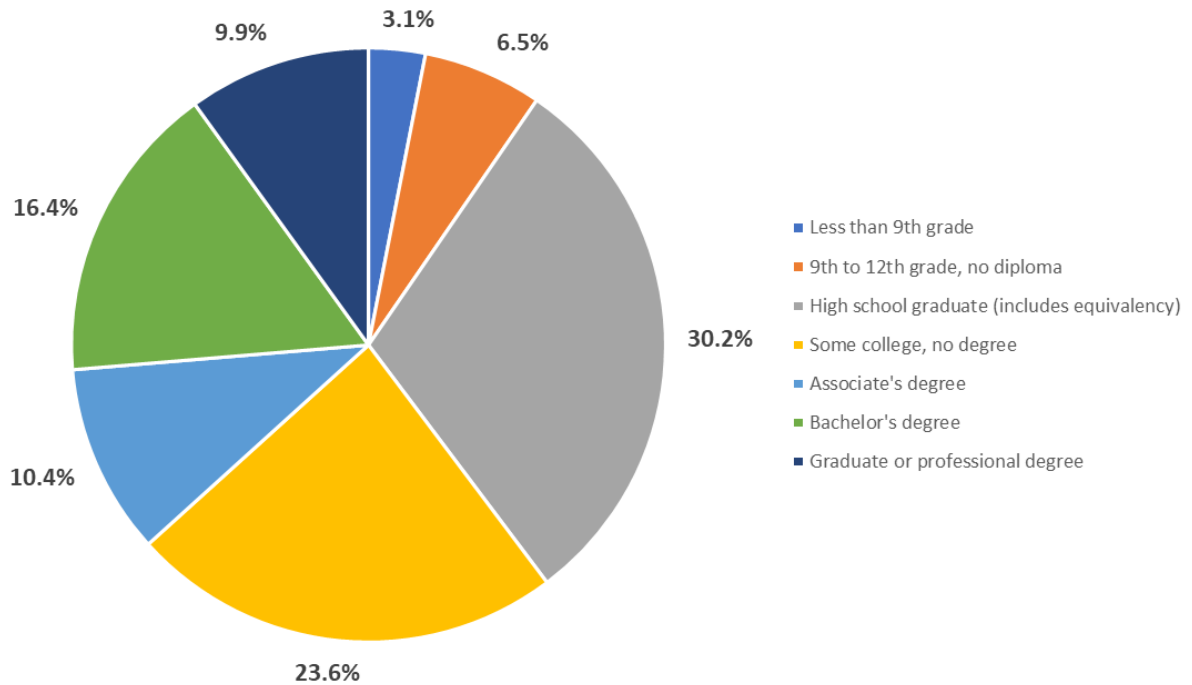
Educational Attainment for the Population Ages 25 and Over, BCVB

9.6% of the BCVB population ages 25 and older lack a high school diploma, a figure which exceeds the Michigan statewide average by 1.4 percentage points. BCVB is characterized by comparatively higher shares of residents that claim a high school diploma/equivalent (30.2% of the population ages 25+) or some college/an associate’s degree (33.9%) as being their highest level of educational attainment. Consequently, it can be concluded that a majority of BCVB adults concluded their academic careers following high school or shortly thereafter, a trend common to manufacturing-centric regions that lack major universities. See *Figure 6: “Educational Attainment for the Population Ages 25 and Over, BCVB”* for a visualization of this data.

Educational Attainment Level	Total Population Ages 25+	Population Share (%)
<i>Less than 9th Grade</i>	6,079	3.1%
<i>9th Grade to 12th Grade</i>	12,817	6.5%
<i>High School Diploma (or Equivalent)</i>	59,473	30.2%
<i>Some College</i>	46,459	23.6%
<i>Associate Degree</i>	20,456	10.4%
<i>Bachelor's Degree</i>	32,305	16.4%
<i>Graduate Degree and Higher</i>	19,614	9.9%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Figure 6: “Educational Attainment for the Population Ages 25 and Over, BCVB”



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Educational Attainment for the Regional, Statewide, and U.S. Populations Ages 25+

9.6% of the BCVB population ages 25 and older lack a high school diploma or equivalent, a figure that is lower than the current national average (10.9%) but higher than the rate for the State of Michigan (8.2%). The share of adult residents claiming a high school diploma as their highest level of educational attainment is higher in BCVB (30.2%) than both the statewide (28.4%) and national averages (26.4%). The same is true of so-called “middle-skill” levels of educational attainment (i.e., those individuals with a postsecondary education that is less than a four-year degree); in BCVB, 33.9% of residents fall under this categorization which is higher than the same data point for both the State of Michigan (32.2%) and the United States as a whole (28.5%). A smaller share of BCVB residents possess a bachelor’s degree or higher postsecondary credential as their highest level of educational attainment (so-called “high-skill” levels of educational attainment): just 26.3% of BCVB residents ages 25 and over possess a four-year degree or higher credential in comparison to 31.1% of all Michiganders and 34.3% of all Americans.

Educational Attainment Level	BCVB Population (%)	Michigan Population (%)	U.S. Population (%)
Less than 9th Grade	3.1%	2.6%	4.7%
9th Grade to 12th Grade	6.5%	5.6%	6.1%
High School Diploma (or Equivalent)	30.2%	28.4%	26.4%
Some College	23.6%	22.5%	19.7%
Associate Degree	10.4%	9.7%	8.7%
Bachelor's Degree	16.4%	18.9%	20.9%
Graduate Degree and Higher	9.9%	12.2%	13.4%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Employment Status by Educational Attainment, Civilian Population Ages 25 to 64

Higher levels of educational attainment are generally associated with increased labor force participation and lower unemployment rates as those with higher levels of education have more occupational opportunities available to them. Among BCVB’s prime working age population ages 25-64, only 58.3% of those without a high school degree or equivalent credential are active labor force participants, a figure 26.1 percentage points lower than the labor force participation rate for the high-skill regional workforce (84.4%). Similarly, the unemployment rate for those without a high school degree or equivalent credential in BCVB is 16.0% while the rates for those with a high school diploma, postsecondary credential of less than four years, and a bachelor’s degree or higher credential are just 6.6%, 4.1%, and 1.8%, respectively. It must be noted, however, that these populations are not of equal size (those without a high school diploma or equivalent credential represent only 10.0% of the prime working age population of BCVB while the “high-skill” cohort comprises 26.2%).

Subject	BCVB Estimates	BCVB (%)
Total Civilian Population Ages 25-64:	140,313	-
Less than High School Graduate:	14,053	10.0%
In Labor Force:	8,186	58.3%
Employed:	6,879	49.0%
Unemployed/Unemployment Rate:	1,307	16.0%
Not in Labor Force:	5,867	41.7%
High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency):	40,433	28.8%
In Labor Force:	29,228	72.3%
Employed:	27,306	67.5%
Unemployed/Unemployment Rate:	1,922	6.6%
Not in Labor Force:	11,205	27.7%
Some College or Associate Degree:	49,061	35.0%
In Labor Force:	39,116	79.7%
Employed:	37,499	76.4%
Unemployed/Unemployment Rate:	1,617	4.1%
Not in Labor Force:	9,945	20.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher:	36,766	26.2%
In Labor Force:	31,014	84.4%
Employed:	30,453	82.8%
Unemployed/Unemployment Rate:	561	1.8%
Not in Labor Force:	5,752	15.6%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Poverty Rate by Educational Attainment for the Population Ages 25 and Over

11.9% of the BCVB population aged 25 years and over currently lives below the poverty line. Regional data reflects a correlation between lower levels of educational attainment and elevated poverty: while 31.2% of BCVB residents ages 25 and older without a high school diploma or equivalent credential live below the poverty line, just 4.5% of those with a bachelor’s degree or higher level of educational attainment do as well.

Subject	Estimated Percentage Below Poverty Level
Total Population 25 Years and Older:	11.9%
Less than High School Graduate:	31.2%
High School Diploma (or Equivalent):	14.8%
Some College or Associate Degree:	9.8%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher:	4.5%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Overall Poverty Trends

In total, 14.8% percent of the total BCVB population for whom poverty status is determined lives below the poverty level per the most recent Census data. This is higher than both the Michigan statewide (13.1%) and U.S. (12.5%) poverty rates.

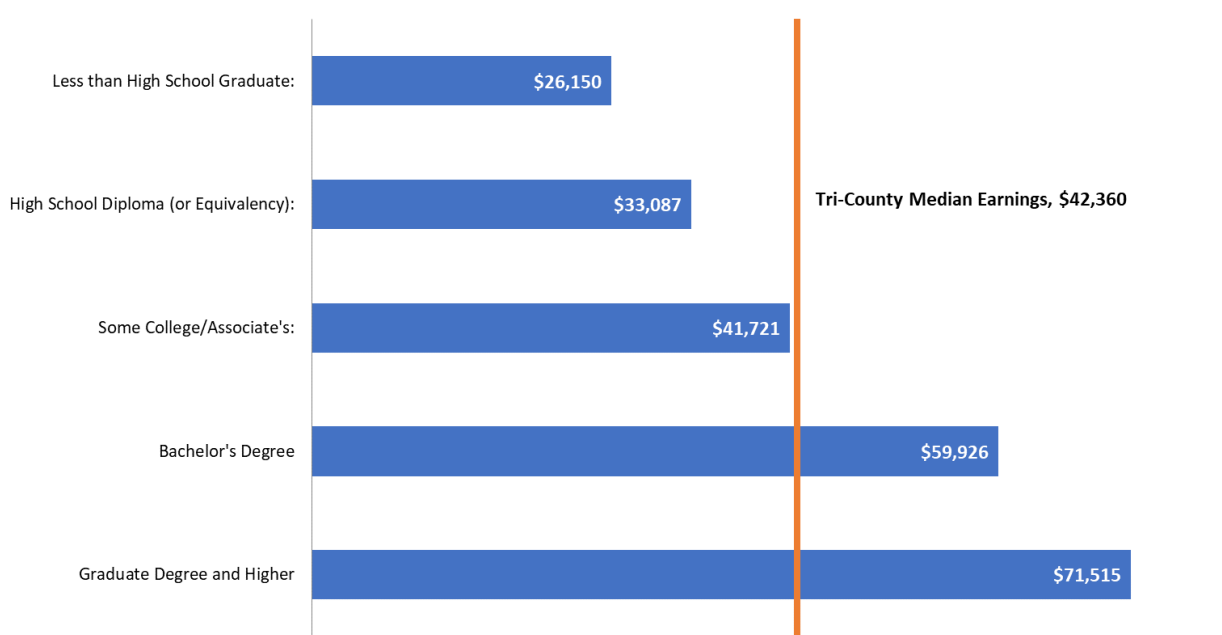
Subject	Poverty Rate (%)
Total Population for Whom Poverty Status is Determined	14.8%

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Median Earnings by Educational Attainment Level for the Population Ages 25 and Over

Median earnings increase exponentially with higher levels of educational attainment. Among BCVB residents ages 25 and over, the weighted median earnings for those without a high school diploma or equivalent credential (\$26,150) and those with a high school diploma as their highest level of educational attainment (\$33,087) fall below the overall weighted median earnings for the region (\$42,360). The median earnings for the middle-skill workforce are \$41,721—roughly equal to the overall regional weighted median for the cohort ages 25 and over—while the weighted median earnings for those with a bachelor’s degree (\$59,926) and those with a graduate degree or higher credential (\$71,515) are substantially higher. See *Figure 7: “Median Earnings by Educational Attainment Level for the Population Ages 25+, BCVB”* for a visualization of this data.

Figure 7: “Median Earnings by Educational Attainment for the Population Ages 25+, BCVB”



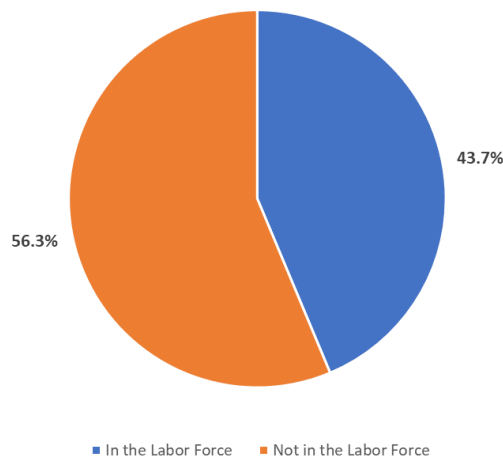
SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Labor Force Status for Civilian, Noninstitutionalized Disabled Individuals Ages 18 to 64

Among the civilian, noninstitutionalized BCVB population ages 18 to 64, the labor force participation rate for those without a disability (81.3%) is nearly double the figure for those with a disability (43.7%). For those disabled residents who are labor force participants, 87.6% are employed and 13.4% are unemployed; this is lower than the unemployment rate for the regional cohort ages 25-64 that lacks a high school diploma (16.0%, see “Employment Status by Educational Attainment, Civilian Population Ages 25 to 64”). Visualizations of this data can be found in Figure 8 and Figure 9.

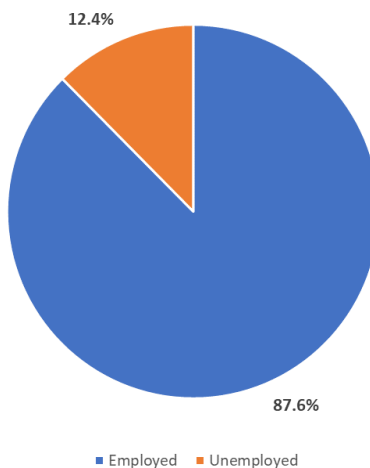
Regional job posting levels have remained elevated relative to pre-pandemic baselines as BCVB employers remain in dire need of talent, with these ongoing talent shortages hampering the output and expansion plans of local businesses in some instances. As a result, hiring managers have increasingly turned to non-traditional applicants to maintain a continuous talent pipeline. Berrien-Cass-Van Buren Workforce Development Board, Inc. recognizes this pressing issue and will continue to work with local employers to identify and mitigate outstanding barriers to employment among area residents through WIOA service provision. Additionally, Berrien-Cass-Van Buren Workforce Development Board, Inc. will seek to increase labor participation rates among non-traditional workforce elements including the elderly, disabled, and formerly incarcerated individuals.

Figure 8: “Labor Force Participation Among Adults Ages 18 to 64 with a Disability, BCVB”



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Figure 9: “Unemployment-to-Employment Ratio for Disabled Labor Force Participants Ages 18 to 64, BCVB”



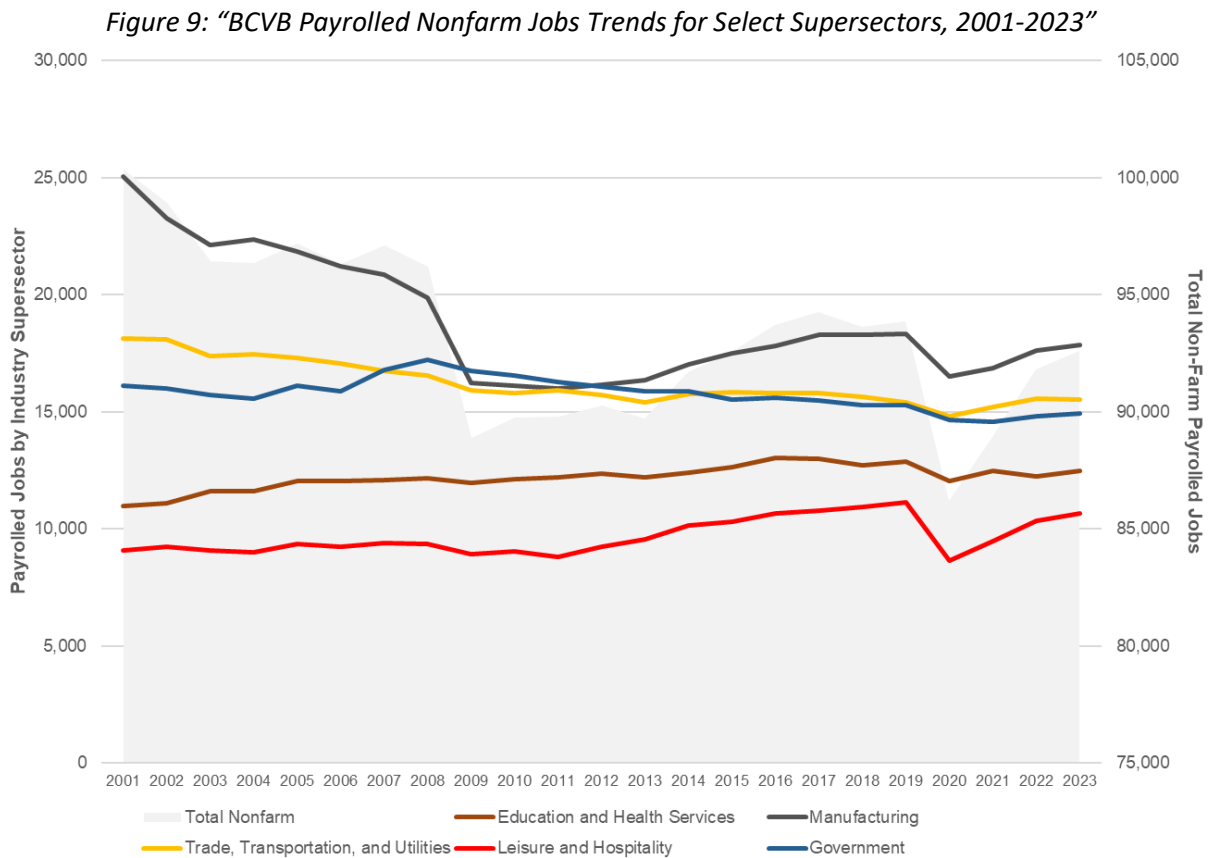
SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Economic Overview

Nonfarm Payrolled Employment, 2001-2023

The manufacturing supersector, the largest in BCVB by both total payrolled employment and economic output, has suffered the greatest overall occupational losses since 2001 with supersector employment contracting by 28.7% between 2001 and 2023 (a loss of 7,170 jobs). A majority of these losses occurred prior to the Great Recession: by 2007, the supersector had already shed 4,160 payrolled jobs (equivalent to 16.6% of total 2001 manufacturing employment). After reaching a nadir of 16,000 in 2011, the manufacturing supersector experienced near-continuous job growth through 2017 before leveling off as sector activity slowed nationwide. Like most supersectors, the pandemic precipitated job losses with local manufacturing employment shrinking by 1,821 (-9.9%) over the period 2019-2020, but supersector employment has since recovered somewhat and is now down only 455 jobs (-2.5%) from 2019’s baseline.

Occupational job shifts among other regional supersectors have been more modest over the period 2001-2023 in comparison to manufacturing. Nonfarm payroll job losses have been steep since 2001 with declines largely reflecting the fortunes of local manufacturing (again underscoring the importance of the sector to regional employment). Nonfarm payroll employment plummeted during the Great Recession, but subsequent years brought gains until 2017. BCVB nonfarm employment totaled 92,612 as of 2023, down 7.7% from 2021’s level and 1.3% from 2019’s pre-pandemic baseline. See *Figure 9: “BCVB Payrolled Nonfarm Job Trends for Select Supersectors, 2001-2023”* for a visualization of this data.



SOURCE: Lightcast Data Set 2024.1. Accessed April 17, 2024.

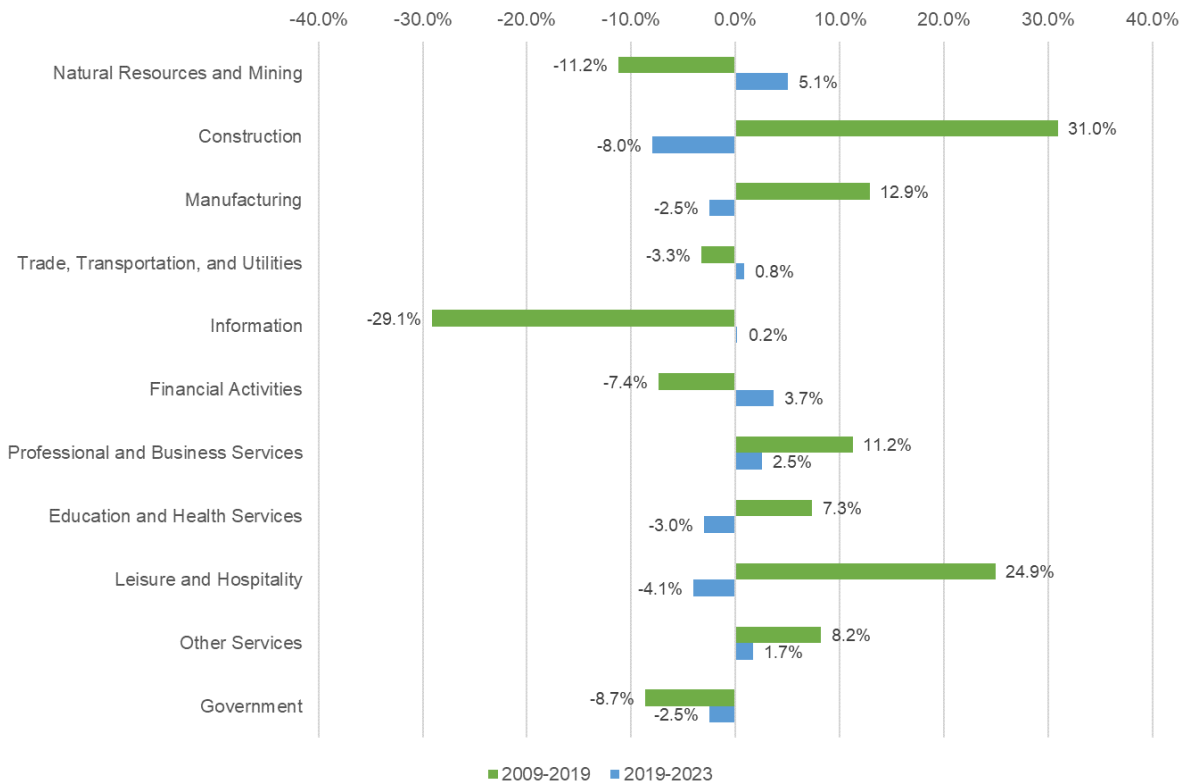
Nonfarm Supersector Payrolled Job Growth Trends, 2009-2023

In terms of relative payrolled employment shifts since 2019 (i.e., the employment change rate as a share of supersector employment at the beginning of the period), a slight majority of regional supersectors (six of the eleven total) have experienced net growth with “Natural Resources and Mining,” “Financial Activity,” and “Professional and Business Services”

seeing the largest relative gains. The three supersectors that saw the most substantial payrolled job losses from 2019 to 2023 were “Construction,” “Leisure and Hospitality,” and “Education and Health Services”; these three supersectors accounted for 57% of total regional nonfarm job losses over this period (with their combined losses totaling 1,110 jobs).

Interestingly, many regional supersectors that have seen net pandemic-era employment losses were those that saw substantial job growth in the aftermath of the Great Recession. From 2009-2019, the three supersectors that saw the largest relative job gains were “Construction,” “Leisure and Hospitality,” and “Manufacturing,” all of which have yet to fully recover from the effects of the pandemic. Other supersectors that saw employment growth over the period 2009-2019 include “Professional and Business Services,” “Other Services,” and “Education and Health Services” (which also has yet to fully recover its pandemic-era job losses). See *Figure 10: “Relative Pre-Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Employment Shifts by Supersector”* for a visualization of this data.

Figure 10: “Relative Pre-Pandemic and Post-Pandemic Employment Shifts by Supersector”

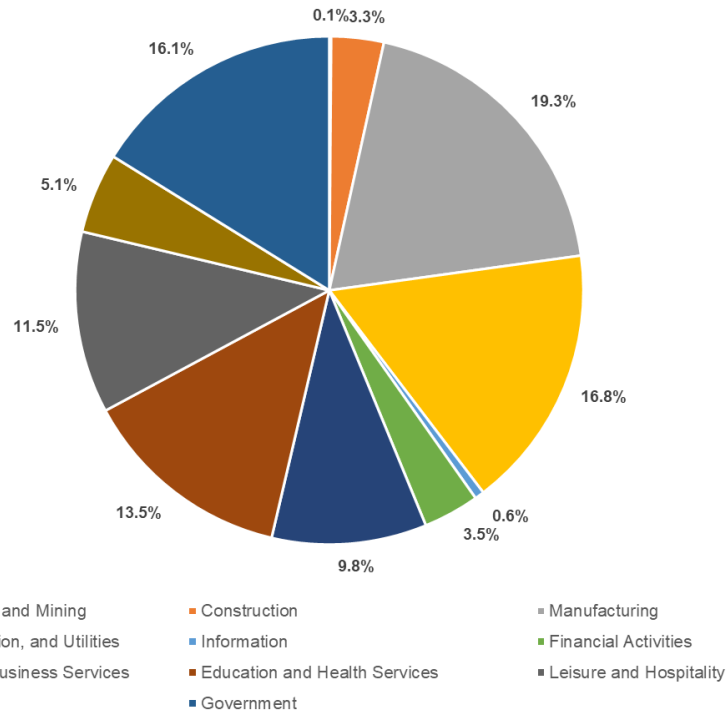


SOURCE: Lightcast Data Set 2024.1. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Nonfarm Payrolled Job Share by Supersector, 2023

The top five supersectors in BCVB on the basis of their share of the total number of overall nonfarm payroll jobs in the region are currently (in order) “Manufacturing,” “Trade, Transportation, and Utilities,” “Government,” “Education and Health Services,” and “Leisure and Hospitality.” These five supersectors account for 77.1% of total nonfarm payrolled employment in the tri-county area. See *Figure 11: “Breakdown of Supersector Employment as a Share of Total Nonfarm Jobs, BCVB”* for a visualization of this data.

Figure 11: “Breakdown of Supersector Employment as a Share of Total Nonfarm Jobs, BCVB”



SOURCE: Lightcast Data Set 2024.1. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Payrolled Job Shifts by Supersector (2019-2023)

Six supersectors experienced payrolled job growth over the time period 2019-2023. The three that led absolute job growth over this period were “Professional and Business Services” (+225 jobs, a 2.5% increase), “Trade, Transportation, and Utilities” (+131 jobs, a 0.8% increase), and “Financial Activities” (+116 jobs, a 3.7% increase). All four of the “core” supersectors that drive regional payrolled employment saw declines during the pandemic: “Construction” (-266 jobs, an 8.0% decrease), “Education and Health Services” (-392 jobs, a 3.0% decrease), “Leisure and Hospitality” (-452 jobs, a 4.1% decrease), and “Manufacturing” (-455 jobs, a 2.5% decrease). In total, these four core sectors accounted for a combined loss of 1,565 jobs, or 75.3% of total regional post-pandemic payrolled employment contraction.

Supersector	2019-2023 Change	2019-2023 Change (%)
Professional and Business Services	225	2.5%
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	131	0.8%
Financial Activities	116	3.7%
Other Services	79	1.7%
Natural Resources and Mining	5	5.1%
Information	1	0.2%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-129	-4.2%
Construction	-266	-8.0%
Government	-382	-2.5%
Education and Health Services	-392	-3.0%
Leisure and Hospitality	-452	-4.1%
Manufacturing	-455	-2.5%

SOURCE: Lightcast Data Set 2024.1. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Notable BCBV Subsectors

The following table provides an overview of 15 subsectors in BCBV with both significant job totals and high employment concentrations, a figure which measures the total number of jobs in a subsector in a region relative to what would be anticipated given national averages. The national average employment concentration for any industry is 1.00; anything higher than this is indicative of a greater number of jobs than would be anticipated for the area, while anything lower than 1.00 is less than would be anticipated (in effect, this provides a numeric benchmark to analyze what industries a region is known for). The three BCBV subsectors with the highest location quotients are “Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing,” “Crop Production,” and “Primary Metal Manufacturing.”

Subsector	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2023 - 2022 Change	Avg. Earnings Per Job	2023 Job Concentration
<i>Electrical Equipment, Appliance, and Component Manufacturing</i>	2,602	2,096	-506	\$168,053	10.50
<i>Primary Metal Manufacturing</i>	1,339	1,183	-156	\$74,894	6.02
<i>Crop Production</i>	2,089	1,984	-105	\$43,743	5.92
<i>Beverage and Tobacco Product Manufacturing</i>	1,065	1,603	538	\$47,548	5.37
<i>Utilities</i>	1,335	1,321	-14	\$211,183	3.96
<i>Plastics and Rubber Products Manufacturing</i>	1,648	1,717	69	\$67,051	3.71
<i>Machinery Manufacturing</i>	2,273	2,566	293	\$94,828	3.38
<i>Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing</i>	2,745	2,999	254	\$71,555	3.19
<i>Wood Product Manufacturing</i>	587	588	1	\$63,125	2.30
<i>Printing and Related Support Activities</i>	421	422	1	\$66,862	1.87
<i>Support Activities for Agriculture and Forestry</i>	594	718	123	\$44,979	1.86
<i>Unclassified Industry</i>	350	650	300	\$51,788	1.76
<i>Transportation Equipment Manufacturing</i>	1,770	1,871	101	\$79,930	1.68
<i>Religious, Grantmaking, Civic, Professional, and Similar Organizations</i>	2,596	3,067	471	\$34,386	1.64
<i>Rail Transportation</i>	208	251	43	\$93,820	1.60

SOURCE: Lightcast Data Set 2024.1. Accessed April 17, 2024.

In-Demand Occupations

Short-Term In-Demand Occupations, BCBV

The following table provides an overview of the 25 occupations in the BCBV region with the highest number of job openings projected through 2028. In addition to total anticipated openings, occupations were vetted based on their academic prerequisites and median hourly pay: all occupations listed have regional median hourly wages of \$19.51 or higher (the average living wage for the region per MIT’s “Living Wage Calculator”) and require some form of postsecondary licensure/certification or academic credentialing—this list can then be regarded as consisting of so-called “middle-skill” and “high-skill” occupations. Note that some listed occupations show negative short-term growth but high numbers of total openings through 2028: while this is indicative of net occupational contraction due to industry or macroeconomic factors, attrition of the existing regional workforce for these jobs as a result of factors including (but not limited to) retirement and career changes is projected to result in elevated totals of replacement job openings regionally in the coming years.

Occupational Title	2023 Jobs	Growth 2023-2028	Total Openings	Median Hourly Earnings
<i>General and Operations Managers</i>	1,860	130	890	\$39.91
<i>Postsecondary Teachers</i>	839	156	556	\$36.31
<i>Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks</i>	824	-2	491	\$20.03
<i>Registered Nurses</i>	1,599	38	482	\$36.28
<i>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products</i>	917	47	463	\$29.94
<i>Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers</i>	727	10	440	\$20.16
<i>Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education</i>	1,166	38	429	\$28.85
<i>Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</i>	727	24	409	\$22.03
<i>Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers</i>	483	33	276	\$19.84
<i>Accountants and Auditors</i>	622	26	268	\$29.62
<i>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</i>	506	50	254	\$25.60
<i>Insurance Sales Agents</i>	449	47	235	\$26.10
<i>Software Developers</i>	506	79	223	\$44.56
<i>Mechanical Engineers</i>	589	54	220	\$37.80
<i>Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education</i>	639	21	219	\$29.29
<i>Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Operators</i>	456	7	218	\$20.92
<i>Industrial Engineers</i>	572	48	212	\$38.86
<i>Police/Sheriff Patrol Officers</i>	474	24	209	\$29.71
<i>Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists</i>	332	34	190	\$25.43
<i>Human Resources Specialists</i>	415	13	188	\$26.92
<i>Business Operations Specialists, All Other</i>	354	30	187	\$30.91
<i>Electricians</i>	373	8	174	\$28.26
<i>Teachers and Instructors, All Other</i>	277	-1	167	\$20.41
<i>Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics</i>	351	12	163	\$21.65
<i>Sales Rep.of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel</i>	279	18	154	\$27.61

SOURCE: Lightcast Data Set 2024.1. Accessed April 17, 2024.

Long-Term In-Demand Occupations, BCVB

The following table provides an overview of the 25 occupations in the BCVB region with the highest number of job openings projected through 2033. In addition to total anticipated openings, occupations were vetted based on their academic prerequisites and median hourly pay: all occupations listed have regional median hourly wages of \$19.51 or higher (the average living wage for the region per MIT’s “Living Wage Calculator”) and require some form of postsecondary licensure/certification or academic credentialing—this list can then be regarded as consisting of so-called “middle-skill” and “high-skill” occupations. Note that some listed occupations show negative long-term growth but high numbers of total openings through 2033: while this is indicative of net occupational contraction due to industry or macroeconomic factors, attrition of the existing regional workforce for these jobs as a result of factors including (but not limited to) retirement and career changes is projected to result in elevated totals of replacement job openings regionally over the coming decade.

Occupational Title	2023 Jobs	Growth, 2023-2033	Total Openings	Median Hourly Earnings
<i>General and Operations Managers</i>	1,860	211	1,772	\$39.91
<i>Postsecondary Teachers</i>	839	298	1,155	\$36.31
<i>Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks</i>	824	-6	975	\$20.03
<i>Registered Nurses</i>	1,599	74	967	\$36.28
<i>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products</i>	917	66	910	\$29.94
<i>Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers</i>	727	5	868	\$20.16
<i>Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education</i>	1,166	67	860	\$28.85
<i>Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</i>	727	30	811	\$22.03
<i>Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers</i>	483	48	544	\$19.84
<i>Accountants and Auditors</i>	622	45	537	\$29.62
<i>Industrial Machinery Mechanics</i>	506	81	505	\$25.60
<i>Insurance Sales Agents</i>	449	76	466	\$26.10
<i>Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education</i>	639	38	439	\$29.29
<i>Software Developers</i>	506	133	438	\$44.56
<i>Mechanical Engineers</i>	589	87	431	\$37.80
<i>General and Operations Managers</i>	1,860	211	1,772	\$39.91
<i>Postsecondary Teachers</i>	839	298	1,155	\$36.31
<i>Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks</i>	824	-6	975	\$20.03
<i>Registered Nurses</i>	1,599	74	967	\$36.28
<i>Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products</i>	917	66	910	\$29.94
<i>Inspectors, Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers</i>	727	5	868	\$20.16
<i>Elementary School Teachers,</i>	1,166	67	860	\$28.85

Occupational Title	2023 Jobs	Growth, 2023-2033	Total Openings	Median Hourly Earnings
<i>Except Special Education</i>				
<i>Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers</i>	727	30	811	\$22.03
<i>Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers</i>	483	48	544	\$19.84
<i>Accountants and Auditors</i>	622	45	537	\$29.62

SOURCE: Lightcast Data Set 2024.1. Accessed April 17, 2024.

The next section provides an analysis of the knowledge, skills, and abilities commonly required for in-demand occupations with employers withing the Berrien, Cass and VanBuren counties.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Needed in In-Demand Industries and Occupations Specific to BCBV Employers

An analysis of BCBV's existing and emerging high-demand, high-wage occupations indicates that these roles are primarily concentrated in a few categories: Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations, Information Technology Occupations, Architecture and Engineering Occupations, Business and Financial Occupations, and Management Occupations. To effectively assist job seekers, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for each of these occupational categories. Additionally, knowing the relevant tools, technologies, and certifications (where applicable) that successful candidates should be familiar with is crucial.

To determine the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities for each occupational group, data was gathered from Economic Modeling Specialists, Inc.'s (Emsi's) "Skills Transferability Index," which identifies the required competencies for current job openings in the BCBV area.

These occupations require a strong foundation in basic skills such as reading, communication, math, and cognitive abilities that influence knowledge acquisition and application in problem-solving. Most of these roles also demand active learning and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, workers in these occupations need to possess relevant technical skills, vocational/academic certifications or credentials, and working knowledge specific to their field, along with proficiency in certain tools and technologies.

- **Healthcare Practitioner and Technical Occupations**

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Understanding the information and techniques required to diagnose and treat human injuries and diseases is crucial in all critical healthcare occupations. This includes knowledge of symptoms, treatment options, drug properties and interactions, and preventive healthcare measures.

Knowledge	Skills	Abilities
Medicine and Dentistry	Active Listening	Problem Sensitivity
Biology	Reading Comprehension	Oral Comprehension
Customer & Personal Service	Speaking	Oral Expression
English Language	Critical Thinking	Deductive Reasoning
Psychology	Monitoring	Inductive Reasoning

Tools and Technologies and Certifications

Tools and technologies in healthcare occupations encompass various innovations that enhance the quality and efficiency of health service delivery, such as electronic medical records and time management tools. Many healthcare careers require licensure, leading to a wide range of certifications. Beyond job-specific requirements, key certifications are

focused on specific areas of patient care.

Tools and Technologies	Certifications
Quality Assurance Patient Electronic Medical Records Microsoft Office Time Management Quality Control	Basic Life Support Certification in Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Advanced Cardiac Life Support Pediatric Advanced Life Support Nurse Administration

- Business and Financial Occupations**

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Occupations in this category require workers to have skills in communication, critical thinking, and time management. They must also be able to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with others. Additionally, those employed in these roles need to understand economic and accounting principles and practices, financial markets, banking, and the analysis and reporting of financial data.

Knowledge	Skills	Abilities
Mathematics Economics and Accounting Customer & Personal Service English Language Personal & Human Resources	Mathematics Active Listening Critical Thinking Judgment & Decision Making Reading Comprehension	Oral Comprehension Written Comprehension Problem Sensitivity Deductive Reasoning Information Ordering

Tools and Technologies and Certifications

Most occupations in this category require the use of office productivity software (e.g., Microsoft Office) for documents, spreadsheets, publications, and database management. Besides productivity software, many tools and technologies in business and financial occupations involve risk management and technical skills, such as Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Numerous certifications in this field are occupation-specific, such as Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Series 7.

Tools and Technologies	Certifications
Microsoft Office Business development Risk Management Project management Generally Accepted Accounting Principles	Certified Public Accountant (CPA) Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FIRA) Certified Internal Auditor (CIA) General Securities Representative Exam (Series 7) Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA)

- Information Technology Occupations**

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

These positions demand a crucial combination of technical, business, and problem-solving skills. Information technology jobs require knowledge of circuit boards, processors, chips, electronic equipment, and computer hardware and software, including applications and programming. Design and systems analysis skills are also essential. Abilities for these roles are typically related to computer usage and programming. For example, job seekers should possess aptitude in mathematical reasoning, numerical ability, and deductive reasoning.

Knowledge	Skills	Abilities
Computer & Electronics Customer & Personal Service Mathematics English Language Design	Active Learning Reading Comprehension Complex Problem Solving Critical Thinking Troubleshooting	Mathematical Reasoning Number Facility Oral Comprehension Problem Sensitivity Deductive Reasoning

Tools and Technologies and Certifications

Computer occupations involve various technologies. Depending on the specific role, individuals in these positions need to be familiar with everything from traditional software packages to advanced programming languages such as Structured Query Language (SQL), Java, and Linux. There are also numerous certifications associated with computer occupations. Some certifications are specific to a particular software or technologies, like the Cisco Network Associate certification, while others are more general, such as the Project Management Professional certification. Below is a list of these and other certifications for Information Technology occupations.

Tools and Technologies	Certifications
Project Management	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)
Microsoft Office	American National Standards (ANSI)
Product development	American Society for Quality (ASQ)
Quality Assurance (QA)	National Electrical Code (NEC)

- **Architecture and Engineering Occupations**

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Architecture and engineering occupations are both technical but also practical, so they require a mix of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Mechanical applications, mathematics, and the laws of physics are among the most important areas of knowledge for this category of occupations. Necessary skills are utilized to make decisions after analyzing tremendous volumes of data and mathematical information. Leading skills in this occupational category are complex problem solving, critical thinking, and judgment and decision making.

Knowledge	Skills	Abilities
Engineering and Technology Design Mechanical Mathematics Physics	Complex Problem Solving Critical Thinking Active Listening Judgment and Decision Making Operations Analysis	Information Ordering Mathematical Reasoning Deductive Reasoning Visualization Written Communication

Tools and Technologies and Certifications

Many architecture and engineering occupations are expected to employ tools and technologies targeted at process improvement, with an aim to improve the quality of output and reduce defects and/or inefficiencies (e.g. Quality Assurance, Six Sigma). Similarly, many certifications for Engineers and other jobs in this occupational category also revolve around process improvement. Other relevant certifications revolve around industry standards, including certifications in American National Standards (ANSI), National Electrical Code (NEC), and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards.

Tools and Technologies	Certifications
Project Management	Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)
Microsoft Office	American National Standards (ANSI)
Product development	American Society for Quality (ASQ)
Quality Assurance (QA)	National Electrical Code (NEC)
Six Sigma	Environmental Protection Agency standards (EPA)

- **Management and Supervisory Occupations**

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Occupations in this category require workers to have skills in public speaking, active listening, and critical thinking. Workers must also have a knowledge of administration and management strategies, as well as personnel and human resources standards. Additionally, these workers must be able to effectively express and comprehend both oral and written communication.

Knowledge	Skills	Abilities
Administration and Management	Speaking	Oral Expression
Customer and Personal Service	Active Listening	Oral Comprehension
English Language	Critical Thinking	Written Comprehension
Personnel and Human Resources	Reading Comprehension	Problem Sensitivity
Mathematics	Coordination	Written Expression

Tools and Technologies

Computer knowledge is a requirement for most professional occupations. Therefore, an understanding of spreadsheet and word processing software is a fundamental requirement to successful employment. Given rapid advances in communication technologies and software, workers in this occupational category must feel comfortable using electronic mail software as well as common delivery platforms such as smart phones and tablets.

Tools and Technologies
Spreadsheet software
Personal computers
Electronic mail software
Word processing software
Notebook computers

1.2. Description of the local board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce (including youth and individuals with barriers to employment).

The strategic vision of the Berrien, Cass, Van Buren Workforce Development Board (BCVB WDB) is for Southwest Michigan to become the state's most competitive economy, driven by a work-ready talent pool equipped with the necessary skills and education to support employers. Through the local Michigan Works! system, the BCVB WDB delivers sustainable and systemic solutions to the most critical workforce challenges faced by employers.

The BCVB WDB’s vision and goal for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, inclusive of youth and individuals with barriers to employment, is to increase the employability and employment of individuals in the tri-county area through specific technical skills training, knowledge expansion and soft skills development. The focused strategy is to impact the key factors facing our region and the state, including a less educated, older, and shrinking workforce. Strategic focus on increasing education attainment, early engagement of youth in workforce activities and retaining talent work to increase the economic vitality of the region. The Michigan Works! and Investment committees steer the services provided to the local workforce through outreach, information sharing and recruitment of tri-county partners, with focus on the

following:

- Educate several groups about local in-demand careers and how to acquire knowledge and skills to support employment in the careers. The groups include students, parents, teachers, counselors, non-profits and administrators.
- Expand awareness of and access to adult learning opportunities for local in-demand careers.
- Understand the employer needs to train a workforce and build a talent pipeline.

The board will achieve its vision by leveraging new and existing partnerships with local K-12 education partners, the private sector, post-secondary institutions, community-based organizations, foundations, and other grant-funded programs administered by BCVB Michigan Works!. The board will continue to emphasize the following goals:

- Prioritization of training funds to prepare youth and adults for local in-demand jobs.
- Improve work-based learning opportunities for youth aged sixteen and older.
- Partner with local high school and community college administrators and educators to align curriculums with a focus on producing career-ready graduates.
- Development of Career Pathways for youth and adults.
- Enhance apprenticeship programs in BCVB through partnership with employers.

These goals will have a positive impact with emerging workforce employment and readiness rates. Retaining talent in the region will continue to be a top priority for BCVB Michigan Works! and private sector partners.

WIOA Local performance goals for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, Wagner- Peyser, and Vocational Rehabilitation as described in the WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A) will be required by the BCVB Workforce Development Board and implemented by the local Michigan Works! system as directed by Federal and State policy through the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). The local MW system will also follow additional local performance measures as approved by the Michigan Works! Committee of the WDB.

The BCVB WDB has achieved multiple successes and accomplishments over the period of the last WIOA local plan. A sample of the accomplishments are noted below:

- Met WIOA performance metrics.
- Added USDOL approved apprenticeships; increased employer awareness of apprenticeships and have identified new apprenticeships to be approved by DOL in PY24.
- Maintained successful partnership with Michigan Rehabilitative Services (MRS) and the Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) to continue training local students and job seekers in healthcare-related occupations.
- The Business Resource Network “The Link” continued to support the workforce of local employers to sustain employment.

1.3. Performance

BCVB Michigan Works! expects the levels of performance for the 2024 and 2025 program years under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by Title III of the WIOA, to be announced late summer of 2024. The BCVB Michigan Works! local plan will be modified, if needed, to correspond with updated performance when determined. The performance levels for program years 2022 and 2023 are reflected below. BCVB Michigan Works! will continue to track the performance levels, as well as Retention with the Same Employer in alignment with the final rule released March 25, 2024:

	Program Year 2024	Program Year 2025
WIOA Adult		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	90.9%	90.9%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	88.4%	88.4%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$9,350	\$9,350
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	83.5%	83.5%
Measurable Skills Gain	54.0%	54.0%
WIOA Dislocated Worker		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	90.0%	90.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	86.5%	86.5%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$9,100	\$9,100
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	83.0%	83.0%
Measurable Skills Gain	57.6%	57.6%
Youth		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	83.3%	83.3%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	86.9%	86.9%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$4,600	\$4,600
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	66.5%	66.5%
Measurable Skills Gain	48.7%	48.7%
Wagner-Peyser		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	67.0%	67.0%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	65.6%	65.6%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$8,000	\$8,000

1.4. Description of the local board’s strategy to align resources, required partners, and entities that carry out core programs to achieve strategic vision and goals.

The local board will align local resources and necessary partners to execute core programs, improving existing services and partnerships, enhancing employer engagement, collaborating with community partners, advancing academic training, and promoting workplace literacy programs. The BCVB WDB oversees its programs to fully support and implement WIOA, aiming to increase educational attainment and readiness for high-demand industries that meet employer and job seeker needs. BCVB WDB will continue to seek new funding to increase programs offered and support to retain and obtain employment.

Utilizing Labor Market Information (LMI) data to anticipate and respond to shifts, and with strong support from educational institutions, the board ensures maximum success in serving workers with low skill attainment and barriers to employment.

Through continued support from K-12 and post-secondary education systems, career and technical education partners, community organizations, and employers, the Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren WDB maintains alignment of our local workforce with high-demand occupations.

2. Workforce Development System

2.1. Programs included in the system

The Michigan Works! BCVB system offers access to essential programming and the Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTCC) without charge to job seekers and employers. Services include facilitating labor exchanges for employers, providing resume assistance, furnishing labor market information, assisting with job search planning, and offering career services to job seekers.

Under the State School Aid Act 107 Adult Education and WIOA Title II providers, services are co-located within the Benton Harbor Michigan Works! Service Center, ensuring seamless service delivery for adult education learners. The Michigan Works! system delivers these services through two full-service centers and two outreach centers across Southwest Michigan. These locations are accessible to individuals with disabilities, ensuring that all job seekers and workers have access to the resources needed to succeed in today's economy.

The following core and additional programs can be found at each service center:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Program Services - Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth employment and training workforce activities.
- Welfare Reform Services (Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope (PATH) and Food Assistance Employment & Training)
- Offender services through two key programs: Offender Success and Second Chance programs.
- Clean slate related services through barrier removal funding.
- Intermediary apprenticeship services are available to employers to strengthen workforce.
- Barrier removal services are available to job seekers seeking to retain or retain employment.
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Services.
- Veterans Employment Services to ensure Veteran population receives services in an equitable manner.
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker Services are presently located in two full-service centers to ensure the migrant population receives services in an equitable manner.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services are by referral to the local vocational rehabilitation agencies within Berrien, Cass and Van Buren.
- Vocational Education is referred to the vocational team and provides referrals to applicable vocational educational institutions.
- Adult Education, BASWM, HSE, and High School preparation are provided at our Michigan Works! Benton Harbor location. Adult learners may also be referred to other community adult education institutions and programs across the tri-county area for ease of access and suitability.
- English as a Second Language (ESL) will be provided to the community.

2.2. Description of the local board's strategy to work with entities carrying out core programs and other workforce development programs to provide service alignment.

WIOA brings together, in a strategic coordinated effort, the core programs focusing on skills development. The local board recognizes that to meet our local region's needs, workforce development programs must be aligned to prepare an educated and skilled workforce.

To ensure alignment, the local board continues to expand community collaborations, enhance academic and workplace literacy programs, and implement innovative services and activities for all workers, inclusive of youth and individuals with barriers to employment. Ongoing collaborations with partner employers and training institutions have resulted in stronger relationships to build enhanced programs, in turn increasing the number of credentials and measurable skill gains within the service area. These partnerships are comprised of a wide range of area stakeholders, including education and training partners, economic and workforce development agencies, and major employers. Current Michigan Works! staff-driven activities include:

- Going Pro Talent Fund applications
- Partnership meeting with local training institutions
- Tooling U - SME
- Business Resource Network meetings “The Link”
- Career Education Advisory Committee (CEAC)
- Onsite and Virtual Job Fairs
- Industry experts, such as Society of Manufacturing Engineers (SME)
- MEP (MMTC)
- Michigan Workforce Training & Education Collaborative (MW-Tec)
- Electric Vehicle Statewide Consortium
- On-demand Orientation of Available Services, Training Information, Career Pathways, Job Readiness Workshops, and LMI.

For instance, through the Career Education Advisory Council (CEAC), Michigan Works! staff facilitate coordination between the K-12 school system, Career & Technical Education Programs, alternative and post-secondary education, and employers. This collaboration aims to better align educational programs with the needs of high-demand occupations in our region.

Manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality, information technology, architecture/engineering, agri-business, financial, and construction trades are the primary industry sectors driving job share and projected growth in Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren Counties. The BCVB WDB focuses its collaborations and priorities on these industry clusters to ensure a successful talent exchange and the development of an effective talent pipeline.

3. Working with Entities Carrying Out Core Programs

3.1. Expand access to employment, training, education and support services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.

To expand access to employment, training, education, and support services, the WDB relies heavily on the Michigan Works! Talent and Business Solutions teams to 1) meet the needs of local employers and 2) enhance the coordination and delivery of services for employers and job seekers from core program entities. Established goals for the talent and business teams include:

- Establishing strong relationships with employers
- Gathering sector intelligence to identify high-demand occupations, industry sectors, and skill requirements
- Providing a single point of access and seamless services for area employers and all eligible individuals, including those with barriers to employment
- Thinking innovatively to solve employer workforce issues

The labor market intelligence (LMI) generated by these teams is used by the Michigan Works! Committee, a part of the WDB, to determine jobseeker training priorities and identify key in-demand employment sectors. This information helps set training priorities for the local Michigan Works! system, which are communicated to training providers to ensure training activities lead to recognized postsecondary credentials, including industry-recognized certificates or certifications that are portable and stackable.

BCVB Michigan Works! offers work-based training services as an effective strategy for employers needing to develop a highly skilled workforce. These services include customized training, on-the-job training (OJT), incumbent worker training, and registered apprenticeships tailored to the employer's current needs. Employers can collaborate with a training provider of their choice to develop a customized training program. Once established, employers and Michigan Works! staff work together on recruitment, screening, and interviewing. Employers commit to hiring successful trainees and

contribute part of the training costs. Any work-based training service must incorporate innovative technologies, processes, or procedures, skills upgrades, workplace literacy, or other appropriate industry-specific purposes.

Underserved populations are a focus of WIOA services. BCVB MW will be intentional to reach job seekers in the service area that are mostly affected by poverty - specifically the ALICE population. BCVB Michigan Works! will deliver services at partner locations to ensure "access" is possible. BCVB Michigan Works! routinely applies for grants that support the outreach and facilitation of services to those in poverty and hard to access areas.

3.2. Facilitate the development of career pathways and co-enrollment, as appropriate, in core programs.

The local board recognizes the critical importance of preparing for careers in a highly competitive workforce. This requires that both individuals and industries have viable career pathways to build a highly skilled workforce, ensuring long-term sustainability and self-sufficiency. BCVB Michigan Works! is committed to creating career pathways that lead to sustainable careers. By integrating all aspects of the workforce system, it has become easier for employers and job seekers to understand the significant impact of an engaged workforce system. BCVB Michigan Works! will be launching a Career Academy designed to build a strong talent pipeline, assess interests and aptitudes, remove barriers, and utilize a combination of secondary and postsecondary education, along with apprenticeship programs, to prepare eligible individuals for successful long-term careers.

The WDB, through the local Michigan Works! system and in collaboration with secondary and postsecondary education representatives, will continue to develop and implement career pathways in the tri-county area. These pathways will align with the education, employment, and training services needed by adults and youth, particularly those facing barriers to employment. Employer-focused needs will be central to career development discussions. When appropriate, education and workforce preparation activities and training for specific occupations or occupation clusters will be offered concurrently and through co-enrollment. The board anticipates that these rigorous and high-quality education and training services will effectively prepare individuals to succeed in the local and regional economy.

3.3. Improve coordination between workforce development programs and economic development

To enhance access and coordinate services effectively, the BCVB WDB provides direct service delivery. This approach reduces overhead costs, improves customer access, streamlines processes with training providers, and supports a demand-driven operational model. The WDB prioritizes training to ensure that education and training activities lead to recognized post-secondary credentials, including industry-recognized certificates and certifications that are transferable and stackable. There is direct alignment with the local career and technical education (CTE) programming to ensure youth prepare for post-secondary education, an apprenticeship program or going directly into the workforce.

The WDB collaborates with a diverse range of education and training providers, including those with expertise in assisting individuals with disabilities and adults in need of adult education and literacy activities. These providers serve the local area, maximizing consumer choice, leading to credentialing, and offering competitive employment opportunities for all individuals, including those with disabilities.

The effectiveness and accessibility of CTE training providers and their ability to offer industry-recognized credentials are reviewed annually on Michigan Training Connect (MiTC).

With leadership of WDB, BCVB Michigan Works! has started to adopt pre-apprenticeship programs that support career laddering within in-demand occupations. The Michigan Apprenticeship Readiness Certificate (MARC), BCVB Michigan Works! can engage more employers and encourage a larger number of job seekers and incumbent workers in career focused education resulting in higher wages.

3.4. Strengthen linkages between the One-Stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs

BCVB WDB supports strengthening the linkages between the One-Stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs. The One-Stop provides a location where job seekers apply for work and to receive career coaching services.

4. Business Strategies and Services

4.1. A description of strategies and services that will be used in the local area to facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs.

The BCVB Michigan Works! Business Team adopts a demand-driven approach, assessing and implementing workforce solutions to enhance recruitment, retention, and long-term company viability. The local WDB ensures quality connections between businesses seeking qualified workers and individuals seeking employment.

It is crucial that current or future workers needing skill upgrades or retraining are enrolled in high-demand training areas, leading to higher wage earnings based on eligibility and suitability requirements. The Michigan Works! BCVB WDB supports recruiting a wide range of job seekers, from highly professional to less-skilled candidates, to meet the diverse needs of the business community. Our Business Team proactively understands the human resource needs of businesses, continuously outreaching, recruiting, and equipping the talent pipeline with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet employer demands.

Given the rapid changes in the global economy, workforce development is essential for retooling and recruiting future talent. The focus is on the region's high-demand industries, currently identified by data as Advanced Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality, and Agriculture. Insights gained through industry collaboratives and employer interactions are shared with our Talent Team to guide training and placement efforts.

4.2. A description of strategies and services that will be used in the local area to support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area.

BCVB Michigan Works! supports employers with business development services through an integrated business retention and attraction program. They have strengthened relationships with local community colleges, training providers, economic development organizations, and planning commissions. By sharing information and best practices, they ensure a unified approach and eliminate non-value-added services. BCVB Michigan Works! collaborates with Cornerstone Alliance, Market Van Buren, Manufacturing Growth Alliance, and local ISDs to enhance talent pipeline strategies and business retention and expansion services, reinforcing their sector strategy approach.

4.3. A description of strategies and services that will be used in the local area to improve coordination between workforce development and economic development.

Michigan Works! BCVB collaborates closely with local economic development organizations to deliver comprehensive workforce and economic development services to employers, businesses, and entrepreneurs in the region. This partnership typically involves joint company visits, resource identification, and significant collaborative efforts to execute projects promptly and competitively. The Business Solutions Team participates in monthly regional meetings with economic development partners to stay informed about upcoming projects and available resources to support the business community. These meetings also provide an opportunity for state partners to share programs that support key workforce sectors. For example, MDARD might showcase a program impacting seasonal work.

BCVB Michigan Works! also provides Workforce Proposals, using labor market information and regional data to assist EDO Partners during the site selection and company attraction process. Additionally, Michigan Works! BCVB often refers economic development inquiries to local EDO partners, such as Cornerstone, Market Van Buren, and Southwest Michigan Chamber, and state partners at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

4.4. A description of strategies and services that will be used in the local area to strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs.

The Michigan Works! BCVB business team regularly meets with companies to understand their current recruitment and training needs. Using data gathered by the Talent team on unemployment insurance participants seeking employment, they can provide immediate referrals. MW BCVB promotes on-the-job training for unemployed participants to help

update their skills and reduce the financial burden of initial onboarding for employers. Additionally, we involve community partners in our Rapid Response teams to conduct Worker Orientations, providing vital links to job seekers displaced by layoffs.

5. Promotion of Entrepreneurial Skills Training and Microenterprises Services

Michigan Works! BCVB collaborates closely with regional economic development organizations to provide comprehensive services, ensuring that regional employers have the necessary tools to attract, expand, and retain their workforce. This includes joint company visits, regional training sessions for employers, and coordination of grant activities to foster company growth and employee skill development.

Partnerships with local agencies, such as Cornerstone Alliance and the Edward Lowe Foundation, provide general knowledge and guidance to individuals on business start-ups and entrepreneurial training. Michigan Works! refers individuals interested in entrepreneurial and microenterprise services to these external consultants or agencies that work with startup companies. These agencies are equipped to provide individuals with the tools necessary to write a business plan, gain access to capital, and prepare financials for loans.

BCVB Michigan Works! integrates partners when identifying workforce needs within the service area. Leveraging the local CEAC for support letters for grant applications has been an effective approach to acquiring local input and support. In other cases, BCVB Michigan Works! supports local non-profits to secure funding, such as the New Heights expansion project for housing. Michigan Works! helped with a grant proposal that will support job seekers who have been involved with the criminal justice system.

6. One-Stop Delivery System

6.1 Description of how the local board will ensure the continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system and that such providers will meet the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers

The BCVB WDB delivers services directly, which ensures reduced overhead, lower contractor costs, improved direct customer services, lean process implementation, productivity gains, and a more demand-driven operational model for employers, workers, and jobseekers. Any sub-recipient and their respective staff are actively engaged in the Kinexus Group's continuous improvement process. This involves participating in team activities, embracing Kinexus' values of seizing opportunity, being inspirational, and driving change, all while fulfilling their daily responsibilities and supporting continuous improvement initiatives.

6.2 How the local board will facilitate access to services provided through the One-Stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.

Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren Service Centers serve as a one-stop shop for all core programming, providing seamless delivery of services to a diverse range of individuals, including employers, job seekers, persons with disabilities, public assistance recipients, veterans, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, ex-offenders, adult education participants, Friend of the Court referrals, juvenile justice, corrections, and those who are employed, unemployed, or underemployed. With two full-service centers and two outreach locations across the area, Michigan Works! BCVB ensures access to core programs and partner agencies.

Full-Service Center Locations:

Full-Service Center Locations:	
<p>Benton Harbor Service Center 499 W. Main Street Benton Harbor, MI 49022 1-800-285-9675</p> <p><u>Days and Hours of Operation:</u> Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.</p>	<p>Paw Paw Service Center 32849 Red Arrow Hwy. Paw Paw, MI 49079 1-800-285-9675</p> <p><u>Days and Hours of Operation:</u> Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.</p>

Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren acknowledges that transportation challenges can prevent jobseekers from visiting full-service centers in person. To address this, Michigan Works! BCVB has established a transportation pilot program for those with limited transportation who need access to services. Additionally, MW BCVB enhances accessibility by offering certain services online through the Michigan Works! website and real-time virtual appointments with staff. We have also expanded our reach by setting up the following outreach locations where staff can meet with jobseekers.

Outreach Locations:	
<p>Cass County Administration Building 120 North Broadway Street, Room 219 Cassopolis, MI 49031</p> <p><u>Days and Hours of Operation:</u> Monday through Friday 8:00a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Closed daily from 12pm-1pm (Lunch hour)</p>	<p>Southwestern Michigan College-Niles Campus 33890 US-12 Niles, MI 49120</p> <p><u>Days and Hours of Operation:</u> Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Closed daily from 12pm-1pm (Lunch hour) Fridays- Closed</p>

6.3 How entities will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of the WIOA (Section 188), if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 12101, et seq.)

Michigan Works! and One-Stop partners are committed to delivering services equitably by implementing a universally accessible system designed to meet the diverse needs of all customers, including those with disabilities and employment barriers.

As recipients of federal funds, Michigan Works! and One-Stop partners will adhere to regulations concerning non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and inclusion, including:

- Section 188 of the WIOA
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended
- Titles I and II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- The Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines

To ensure comprehensive access for individuals with physical, mental, cognitive, and sensory disabilities, Michigan Works! will provide staff with relevant and appropriate training. This includes training on assistive technology and strategies for effectively serving individuals with disabilities. All staff working directly with the public will be required to complete this training. Accommodation for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request.

6.4 A description of the roles and resource contributions of the One-Stop partners

All one-stop partners collaborate to support job seekers and employers utilizing services through the one-stop centers. They focus on addressing the needs of both employers and job seekers, sharing information, cross-referring to core and educational programs, and providing valuable resources and data for business services. These collaborative efforts enhance opportunities for sustainable employment and career development, contributing to the economic vitality of Southwest Michigan.

The BCVB WDB has established Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) that include financial support for the infrastructure of the one-stop (AJC/Michigan Works! Service Center system). These MOUs, which may include an Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) where applicable, outline clear expectations for service delivery and associated costs from each entity. While MOUs are in effect for three years, IFAs are reviewed annually.

BCVB Michigan Works! will enhance the partnership with the Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker (MSFW) program. Through being more intentional to identify partner opportunities, it will strengthen opportunities for MSFW job seekers to acquire training and better jobs.

7. Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

Each service center offers a complete range of self-assisted basic career services. BCVB's comprehensive service centers and outreach locations provide various on-site assistance aimed at improving job search skills and outcomes. Career Development Specialists facilitate basic career services and workshops. All job seekers and customers are encouraged to register on Pure Michigan Talent Connect, allowing staff to monitor services and offer resources for local employment opportunities.

Basic Eligibility Criteria:

To be eligible for participation in the WIOA Adult program individuals must:

- Be age 18 years or older and
- Be a citizen of the United States or an eligible non-citizen and
- If the individual is a male, born after January 1, 1960 who is 18 years of age or older; be registered for selective service

And Dislocated Worker program individuals must:

- Have suffered a dislocation and
- Be a citizen of the United States or an eligible non-citizen and
- If the individual is a male, born after January 1, 1960 who is 18 years of age or older; be registered for selective service

Michigan Works! BCVB will verify and document participant eligibility requirements and use the necessary verification documents as outlined in the WIOA manual.

Basic career services may include the following components:

- Program details and initial assessments
- General information, such as employment statistics, training provider performance, one-stop system effectiveness, available support services, assistance with unemployment claims, and service center utilization
- Group activities, including referrals to workshops, job search networks, and peer support groups
- Job search services, including finding eligible training providers, job referrals, workshops, and personalized job development

Individualized Career Services

Career Services are designed for individuals who need more than basic assistance to achieve self-sufficient employment. These services focus on identifying and overcoming employment barriers through a detailed assessment and Individual Service Strategy (ISS). To access Individualized Career Services, eligibility determination and enrollment are required. Administered by the Career Development Specialist, Individualized Career Services include:

- Comprehensive and Specialized Assessments: Thorough evaluations of participants' skills and needs, utilizing diagnostic tests and tools like the CASAS Assessment, as well as in-depth interviews to pinpoint barriers and set goals.
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP): Formulating a plan that defines employment goals, specific objectives, and the necessary services to achieve these goals, including strategies to address obstacles.
- Individual or Group Counseling/Career Planning: Tailored or group sessions to aid in career planning and decision-making.
- Case Management: Continued support for participants engaged in training services.
- Short-Term Prevocational Services: Training in essential work-related skills, including communication, interviewing, punctuality, personal maintenance, and professional conduct, to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or further training.
- Financial Literacy Training: Education on managing personal finances.
- Literacy Activities: Assistance in improving reading and writing skills.
- Out-of-Area Job Search and Relocation Assistance: Support for job searches and relocation when needed.
- Internship and Work Experience Activities: Opportunities for hands-on experience through internships and work experiences.

Training Services

Participants who have received at least one individualized career service and are deemed by their Career Development Specialist (CDS) to be unable to secure or retain employment through these services may be considered for training services, pre-apprenticeship, and apprenticeship programs. Before enrolling a participant in a program, a CDS will:

- Assess whether the participant possesses the necessary skills and qualifications to complete the program.
- Verify that the training program is closely aligned with employment opportunities in the local area or another location to which the participant is willing to relocate.
- Confirm that the participant cannot obtain funding for the training from other sources, ensuring optimal use of available resources.
- Ensure that the participant makes an informed choice when selecting an eligible training provider.

Training Services may include:

- Occupational Skills Training: Skill development, upgrading, and retraining through individual training accounts (ITAs) with various public and private occupational/technical training vendors and educational institutions.
- On-the-Job Training: Opportunities with local employers.
- Job Readiness and Work Experience: Training activities aimed at preparing individuals for employment.
- Pre-Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships: Programs that provide hands-on experience and training in specific trades.
- Community Programs: Initiatives combining workplace training with related instruction.
- Adult Education and Literacy: Programs that integrate educational activities with other training services.
- Customized Training: Training programs developed in partnership with employers or groups of employers, with a commitment to hire the participant upon successful completion.

Follow-up Services

Follow-up services are considered a career service and must be provided as appropriate for adults or dislocated workers placed in unsubsidized employment for up to twelve months from the start of employment. These services should be delivered as needed, at a minimum frequency of once per quarter. The level of follow-up required may differ among participants, with those facing multiple employment barriers and limited work histories needing more intensive follow-up to ensure long-term success. Not all adults will require or desire follow-up services.

Follow-up services may include, but are not limited to:

- Counseling on workplace issues.
- Additional career planning and guidance.
- Communication with the participant's employer and assistance with work-related problems.
- Information on further educational opportunities.
- Referrals to community support services.
- Administrative case management follow-up.
- Supportive services.

Follow-up services do not affect the date of exit for performance reporting purposes. Practices will be evaluated during WIOA reviews, and inadequate or insufficient follow-up, especially if less than twelve months and without justifiable reasons, will be documented as findings. Staff must ensure that follow-up services are documented in the case file, including copies of email correspondence, labor market information materials sent or given, and referrals made, with case notes labeled "Follow-up Services." All follow-up services must be entered into OSMIS.

Performance Outcome Tracking

BCVB Michigan Works! aims to ensure that all participants achieve positive results from their WIOA involvement. To support this, staff will follow up with participants both during their participation and for a minimum of 12 months afterward. Contact attempts and documentation for performance outcome reporting are recorded in case notes, rather than as an activity in OSMIS. Outcome tracking will be conducted at the following three points:

- Training Component Outcome - Follow-up will occur within a reasonable timeframe after enrollment in a training component and will continue monthly until the completion of the training to assess the success of the training placement.
- Job Placement Outcome - Follow-up on job placement will take place within a reasonable timeframe after placement. Both the employer and the participant will be contacted to evaluate whether the job match was appropriate.
- Post-Exit Outcomes - Follow-up contacts will be made for no less than 12 months after a participant exits the WIOA program. These contacts will be substantive, providing a thorough evaluation to determine if additional services are needed. Follow-up will occur at least every 60 days post-exit, as well as during the 2nd and 4th quarters following the exit quarter.

8. Youth Program Framework

Michigan Works! BCVB has designed its youth framework around the following requirements. Individuals interested in youth programming will have:

1. An eligibility determination,
2. The provision of an objective assessment,
3. Development of an individual service strategy (ISS), and
4. Participation in any of the fourteen (14) WIOA youth program elements.

Michigan Works! makes each of the following fourteen (14) services available to all youth participants:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.
2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.
3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:(i) Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;(ii) Pre-apprenticeship programs;(iii) Internships and job shadowing; and(iv) On-the-job training opportunities.
4. Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the Local WDB determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123.
5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.
6. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors.
7. Supportive services, including the services listed in § 681.570.
8. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation.
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as provided in § 681.580.
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.
11. Financial literacy education.
12. Entrepreneurial skills training.
13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

Michigan Works staff have the discretion to decide the specific program services provided to each youth participant. These services will be tailored based on the participant's objective assessment and individual service strategy. When necessary and appropriate, Michigan Works staff will refer youth to other local programs or partners that can offer program elements not provided by Michigan Works, at no additional cost to the participant.

9. Basic Skills Deficiency

BCVB Michigan Works! defines "basic skills deficient" youth as those with English reading, writing, or computing skills below the 9th-grade level, as determined by standardized testing.

If standardized testing is not available, the job seeker will be considered basic skills deficient if they meet one or more of the following criteria, and the reason for not testing will be documented in OSMIS:

- English reading, writing, or computing skills are below the 9th-grade level.
- English has been the participant's second language for two years or less.
- In and/or out of the justice system for at least two years without attaining a High School Equivalency (HSE).
- In and/or out of foster care for at least two years without attaining an HSE.
- Did not complete grade 9.

- Has not held a job for a period longer than 90 days.
- Has been a victim of abuse or a violent crime.
- Chronically homeless.
- Lacks basic computer skills.
- IQ test results under 100.
- Cognitive analysis results from a licensed practitioner.
- Proof of an Individualized Education Plan.

The reason for not testing and the criteria used for determination must be detailed and documented by staff in the OSMIS case notes section.

The WIOA Youth definition of “other responsible adult” requires a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult’s signature and approval for youth services eligibility. "Other responsible adults" include:

- A relative 18 or older with whom the individual resides.
- An adult who has been delegated custodial or administrative responsibilities in writing, either temporarily or permanently, by a parent or appropriate agency.
- An agency or organization representative who is in a position to know the individual’s circumstances (e.g., clergy, schoolteacher, probation or other officer of the court, or foster parent).
- A representative of an agency that provides services to the individual and is aware of the individual’s circumstances (e.g., social worker, homeless shelter official, child protective worker, foster worker, or health clinic official).

10. Youth Workforce Investment Activities

Michigan Works! BCVB One-Stops serve as a vital connection between workforce development, education, the justice system, and social service agencies working with youth. Michigan Works! One-Stop staff collaborate with local employers to offer youth entry-level jobs, internships, mentoring, on-the-job training, and work experience in high-demand occupations. Youth services include intensive case management, mentoring, advocacy, referrals to shelter and housing, healthcare, supportive services, childcare, transportation, job training, and education.

BCVB Michigan Works! provides all fourteen youth services, with barriers identified and addressed in Individual Service Strategies (ISS) that outline plans for overcoming these barriers, leading to self-sufficiency, continuing education, and employment. Youth activities are available to all, including those with disabilities. The BRES Expansion grant provides the financial resources necessary to remove barriers for both youth and adult job seekers.

Michigan Works! has a collaborative relationship with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) to ensure that youth and adults receive the services needed to support job retention.

The BCVB WDB’s definition for youth who “require additional assistance” includes the following:

- GPA less than 2.0 in secondary or post-secondary education
- Dropping out of post-secondary education
- Fired from one or more employers (for any reason, including attendance)
- No employment history
- Employment history of less than six months for one employer
- Member of a single-parent household
- Gang affiliation
- High absenteeism rate from school
- Responsible for taking care of siblings or other family members

- Recreational or addictive use of drugs or alcohol
- In need of credit recovery
- Living in rural areas lacking adequate transportation to employment
- Received an Individual Education Plan (IEP), an accommodation under Section 504 plan, or an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) through Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)
- Child of an incarcerated parent
- Victim of human trafficking
- Repeated at least one secondary grade level or are one year over age for their grade
- Emancipated youth
- Aged out of foster care
- Has five or more suspensions or has been expelled
- Serious emotional, medical, or psychological problems diagnosed by a professional

According to 681.310(b) & 681.250(c) of the Federal Register, no more than five percent of in-school youth newly enrolled in a given program year may be eligible based solely on the "requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment" condition and the "low income" condition. This exception requires the MWA to calculate the five percent exception based on new enrollees for each condition for the program year, rather than the total caseload. Due to the limited number eligible for the five percent allowance, the MWA reserves the 5% exception determination within the administrative operations.

11. Local Waivers

BCVB Michigan Works! is following issued LEO guidance on WIOA Out-of-School waiver, allowing BCVB to use up to 50% of WIOA Youth funds on In-School Youth in accordance with Labor and Economic Opportunity Workforce Development communicated guidelines.

12. Secondary and Post-Secondary Education Programs

BCVB Michigan Works! employs a demand-driven approach, focusing on aligning efforts, initiatives, programs, and funding with key industry sectors. Staff regularly utilize occupational, industry, and LMI data to produce timely and relevant reports that guide operational activities and inform the local board, partners, and stakeholders. BCVB Michigan Works! collaborates extensively with regional partners, including community agencies, employers, economic developers, career technical education providers, secondary and post-secondary education providers, and other organizations with shared interests. These collaborative efforts offer opportunities to:

- Maximize and leverage additional funds and services for activities not funded under WIOA.
- Form or re-establish collaborations to improve the service delivery model.
- Engage with partners across a large geographic area to avoid duplication of services and facilitate cross-agency referrals.

The BCVB region features three formal career technical training facilities: the Van Buren Vocational Technical Center, the LMC Hanson Center (Berrien County), and the SMC M-TEC (Cass County). These centers offer specialized training to meet the needs of employers in high-demand sectors. Michigan Works! has established collaborations for a wide range of trainings, including USDOL Registered Apprenticeships for roles such as Registered Nurse, Certified Nursing Assistant, Surgical Technologist, Medical Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, and Phlebotomy Technician. Pre-apprenticeship programs are also being developed to support career pathways for youth and adults.

In addition to technical training facilities, LMC, SMC, Western Michigan University Southwest Extension, and Ferris State University at Dowagiac/Niles offer a variety of Pure Michigan Training Connect registered certificate and degree programs for high-demand occupations identified by LMI data and supported by the local WDB board.

13. Support Services and Needs Related Payments

The BCVB Michigan Works! One-Stop system offers support services to eligible job seekers when such services are deemed reasonable and necessary to:

- Remove barriers to employment entry;
- Provide job retention assistance;
- Enable participation in career pathways activities; and
- Fulfill training-related requirements as specified by course curriculum.

Support services are only provided when all other resources have been exhausted and documented in the ISS, and when it is verified that job seekers lack the means to remove the barriers without assistance from BCVB Michigan Works!. A case note in OSMIS suffices for this documentation. Upon providing the service, full documentation must be maintained in the participant's case file and OSMIS record. This includes a determination of need and expected outcomes in the IEP/ISS and case notes, as well as supporting fiscal documentation such as cost estimates, bids, check requests, receipts, and invoices.

14. Coordination with WIOA Title I

In providing supportive services, staff will adhere to the BCVB WDB program policy in effect for the respective WIOA program. Supportive services may include employment or training-related clothing, tools, equipment, supplies, and transportation. These services are available to program job seekers when:

- They are allowable (authorized) by program guidance and expense.
- They are necessary to enable participation in employment and training activities.
- The job seekers are unable to obtain supportive services through other community programs and resources.

BCVB Michigan Works! staff collaborate with local transit authorities and the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission to address public transportation barriers that impede job seekers' access to work or other self-sufficiency services. Participation with local transit authorities has enabled Michigan Works! to provide critical feedback and establish necessary routes, including making Michigan Works! a designated pick-up location. Lack of reliable transportation is frequently identified as a major barrier for participants in BCVB. The program allows low-income residents and recipients of any DHHS benefit to access transportation support.

Additionally, Michigan Works! maintains a partnership with a faith-based nonprofit organization that repairs cars for distribution to residents in need of vehicles or vehicle repairs. This partnership has enabled Michigan Works! to assist low-income residents and job seekers in obtaining reliable transportation and repairs while continuing to work.

15. Funding Caps

The BCVB WDB local program policy governs the limits and conditions of WIOA supportive services.

- Support service cap per job seeker is limited to \$3,000, except for vehicle purchases which will be \$5,000.
- The maximum lifetime amount for training is \$10,000, \$5,000 per year.

16. Plans, Assurances and Strategies

Preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers, requires a comprehensive strategy involving cooperation from all community agencies. Michigan Works! has established community connections to ensure core programs and activities are implemented without duplicating services. This network allows agencies to refer eligible participants to appropriate services efficiently.

Ongoing communication and coordination reduce duplication and strengthen cross-referrals between agencies, allowing providers to use a layered approach for service provision. This means multiple activities can be made available concurrently to individuals needing various services. Tools like ISS, IEP, and employment plans effectively identify multiple needs and integrate services to meet those needs.

Parole officers, probation officers, and other juvenile justice and law enforcement representatives are connected to WDB programs and service centers through a referral system. This system encourages youth offenders to access Michigan Works! BCVB services, integrated programming, and alternative education after leaving the justice system. Michigan Works! supports requiring participation in its programs as a condition of maintaining probation and avoiding incarceration.

Educational connections are fostered through new or expanded partnerships with educational institutions. Both short- and long-term programs offering portable and stackable certifications are identified to serve a variety of individual needs. Local school districts are encouraged to create alternative education opportunities and link programming with existing alternative schools and community partners.

The Career Education Advisory Council (CEAC) enables collaborative efforts with area educators and institutions to identify and align the skills needed for the local and regional economy. Efforts focus on organizing education, training, and other services to accelerate individuals' education and career advancement. This helps individuals obtain a secondary diploma or equivalent while concurrently earning a post-secondary credential, entering the workforce, or advancing in a high-demand occupation or sector.

Social service connections with DHHS and the PATH program refer individuals into WIOA programs that provide employability skills, work experience, and guidance on completing the next level of education (HSE, high school completion, or post-secondary studies).

Housing can be a significant challenge for job seekers in the BCVB service area. Job seekers with housing barriers, including youth and adults, are connected to housing through local housing commissions in various communities. All service-providing agencies must identify requirements and activities to assist individuals with special needs or barriers to employment, including those who are pregnant, parenting, or have disabilities.

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) collaborates with individuals and employers to achieve quality employment outcomes and independence for individuals with disabilities. MRS fulfills its mission through excellent customer service and robust partnerships. Michigan Works! BCVB aims to support MRS by strengthening relationships between individuals with disabilities, employment services, and employers. This collaboration helps utilize and leverage available resources, including educating partners on assessing individuals with disabilities and providing appropriate employment and training opportunities. Referrals to MRS services are prioritized by Michigan Works! staff.

To address current workforce demands, employers are informed about the benefits and best practices for hiring individuals with disabilities. This talent pipeline is ready to enhance business solutions for employers.

17. Employment Services Plan

17.1 Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) Contact Person:

MWA Number: 05

Paul Kirk, Vice President of Workforce

499 W. Main Street, Benton Harbor, MI 49022

1-800-285-9675 or policy@kinexus.org

17.2 Use of Service Provider for delivery of Employment Services (ES)

For program years between 2024-2027, under the guidance of the Workforce Development Board for Michigan Works! BCBV, Wagner-Peyser services will be directly provided by MW BCBV. Effective July 1, 2025, this service must be provided by a local merit-based entity.

1	2	3	4	5
MWA Provided	Contracted Service Provider	Name of Entity	Type of Entity	Merit Based Entity
X				

17.3 Description of WP Services Provided

Wagner-Peyser funded services are offered free of charge to both employers and job seekers. Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren provides Employment Services at two locations in Southwest Michigan, both of which are accessible to individuals with disabilities. These services include labor exchange for employers, resume assistance, labor market information, job search planning, and career development for job seekers.

A key aspect of Michigan’s strategy for economic transformation is equipping workers with the self-sufficiency skills needed to thrive in today’s economy.

Employment Services are provided equitably to all individuals, regardless of their place of residence, current employment status, or occupational qualifications. No preference in referrals will be given to any job seeker or group except as legally required. Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren ensures that the ES service provider will not make referrals to employers known to discriminate.

17.4 Labor Exchange Services Utilizing the Three Tiers of Service

Tier 1: Self-Service

The Michigan Works! resource area is available free of charge to both job seekers and employers. These resource areas are equipped with modern computer workstations, all running Windows 10, Microsoft Office, and Google Chrome, with direct internet access.

Tier 2: Staff-Assisted Services

Staff-Assisted Services for Employers: Assisting employers with using self-service tools, which may include help with navigating the Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC) and distributing and collecting job applications.
 Staff-Assisted Services for Job Seekers: Providing basic career assistance, including help with using self-service tools, navigating the PMTC and other internet sites, inputting information on the PMTC, printing and copying resumes, and job search assistance.

Tier 3: Individualized Staff Assisted Services

Individualized Staff-Assisted Services: These services demand significant staff time to support both job seekers and employers.

For Employers: Services may include entering job orders into the Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC), searching for resumes that match job order criteria, contacting job seekers on behalf of employers for initial screenings, and scheduling interviews. The Michigan Works! Business Solutions Team identifies employers who are seeking a specific skill set in the workforce to the job seekers who are served at the One-Stop Center. Many times the Career Development Specialist will also bring a job seeker’s resume to the Business Solutions Team to see if there is a local employer seeking the job seeker’s skill set.

For Job Seekers: These services are reported under Wagner-Peyser (W-P) service categories in the One-Stop

Management Information System (OSMIS). They may include general services and assistance, help with establishing eligibility for financial aid, initial skill assessments and identifying supportive service needs, providing information and assistance with filing for Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA), job and training preparation, career counseling and guidance, job search assistance, and job placement or referrals to employment.

The Michigan Works! Business Solutions Team identifies employers who are seeking a specific skill set in the workforce to the job seekers who are served at the One-Stop Center. Many times the Career Development Specialist will also bring a job seeker's resume to the Business Solutions Team to see if there is a local employer seeking the job seeker's skill set.

17.5 Delivery of Career Services

Career services encompass a range of support, including career guidance, specific labor market information, job search workshops, resume writing assistance, and other job search activities. These services are provided free of charge to both job seekers and employers and can be accessed in person, through our website, or via online virtual platforms. There are three types of career services available for job seekers:

Basic Career Self-Service: These are services provided to job seekers through electronic resources or at a physical office location with minimal to no staff assistance.

Basic Career Staff-Assisted Service: These services include helping job seekers utilize self-service tools, such as navigating Pure Michigan Talent Connect and other job-related websites. The BCVB team assists with inputting information on the PMTC, printing and copying resumes, and general job search assistance.

Individualized Staff-Assisted Service: These services require a significant amount of staff time and are reported under one of the Wagner-Peyser service categories in OSMIS. They include general assistance, help with completing financial aid applications, skill assessments, and addressing supportive service needs. BCVB service centers also assist job seekers with relevant UIA information and provide meaningful help with filing for unemployment insurance.

17.6 Staff Available to Provide Services

Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass, Van Buren currently has seven Career Development Specialists, four Youth Talent Specialist, and one merit base staff available to provide employment services to jobseekers. The manpower required to provide career services to job seekers is subject to change based on the fluctuation of the workforce demand.

17.7 UI Work Test

There are two requirements within the UI Work Test: registering UI claimants and reporting claimant non-compliance. This test ensures UIA claimants are exposed to job opportunities and are meeting the basic requirements for receiving UIA benefits.

ES Registration of UI Claimants: UIA requires unemployment insurance claimants to complete an ES registration by entering a profile on the PMTC. Claimants are encouraged to create or upload their resumes on the PMTC. The profile can be entered at any BCVB MW office or from any internet connection available to the claimant. Regardless of where the profile is entered, all claimants must meet with Michigan Works! BCVB staff, either virtually or in-person, at least one business day before their first certification. MW staff will review the claimant's online profile, print a resume for MW records, and electronically transmit the validated registration data into the OSMIS. Staff will also provide information on the services and programs offered at Michigan Works! The OSMIS will automatically send the claimant an email confirming their registration. This serves as the claimant's verification. Further details on registration verification can be found in ES Manual Chapter 4.

Reporting Claimant Non-Compliance with the “Able, Available, and Seeking Work” Requirement: Ensuring claimant compliance with being able, available, and actively seeking work ensures that UIA claimants are exposed to job opportunities and meet the requirements for receiving UIA benefits. Michigan Works! staff are responsible for reporting any incidents of claimant non-compliance, such as:

1. Not being able to work.
2. Not being available to work.
3. Not seeking work.
4. Refusing offers of suitable work.

If MW staff become aware that a UIA claimant is in violation of these requirements, they must report the non-compliance to UIA through the Michigan Integrated Data Automated System (MiDAS). Further details on reporting non-compliance can be found in ES Manual Chapter 4.

17.8 Reemployment Service Eligibility Assessment

Only individuals referred by the UIA are eligible for services through the RESEA program. UI will send a letter (UIA 6360) to each claimant, instructing them to contact one of the MWA Service Center locations to schedule their RESEA appointment.

Each week, UI will generate a list of claimants accessible in the OSMIS, including their name, address, date of birth, and email address. Each MWA will receive a consistent number of RESEA claimants weekly. MWAs can use the provided email addresses to contact claimants and explain the RESEA letter they received from UI. If an email address is not provided, a letter may be sent instead. This initial contact allows a personalized introduction to the RESEA program. Attachment A within the official Policy Issuance provides examples of emails and letters that may be used to contact claimants.

A claimant has until the date listed in the letter to contact the MWA to schedule their RESEA. However, the MWA has fourteen days from the "Letter Sent Date" to schedule the RESEA appointment, which may be completed virtually.

If a claimant does not contact the MWA or contacts after the date specified in their letter, the OSMIS will not create a RESEA activity and will automatically send the claimant's information back to UIA with a result code of "No Contact." No MWA action is needed, and the weekly claimants' report will reflect the "No Contact" status eighteen days after the "Letter Sent Date."

If a claimant contacts the MWA after the posted deadline, DO NOT refer them back to UI. UI will send a Fact-Finding form to the claimant requesting details on why they missed their deadline.

When a UIA claimant contacts the MWA to schedule their RESEA appointment, MWA staff must determine the status of the customer's OSMIS registration and take the appropriate action:

- The claimant has an active W-P registration: Match the claimant to the active W-P registration by creating a "RESEA." After this activity is created, the OSMIS will change the claimant's status from "Pending Resolution" to "Resolved" on the "RESEA Weekly File" report, and the RESEA can be scheduled.
- The claimant has an existing W-P registration but it has been "Exited": Manually update the W-P registration. Once updated, schedule the RESEA appointment, changing the claimant's status on the "RESEA Weekly File" from "Pending Resolution" to "Resolved."
- The claimant has no existing W-P registration: Create a new registration over the phone. Once the W-P registration is active, match the claimant to the active W-P registration, changing the claimant's status on the "RESEA Weekly File" from "Pending Resolution" to "Resolved."

After verifying the OSMIS registration, complete the RESEA scheduling information (date, time, MWA location). The appointment must be scheduled by the date in the letter and held within 15 days of the "Letter Sent Date." If the claimant needs to reschedule, the new date must still be within 15 days of the "Letter Sent Date." This can be done through the "Schedule Participant Report" in the OSMIS.

Mandated Subsequent (2nd) RESEA: Subsequent RESEA appointments will be scheduled for half of the individuals who attend an initial RESEA appointment and are still receiving unemployment benefits five weeks after. Scheduling follows the same process as the initial RESEA. MWAs will receive a weekly list of claimants who need to schedule a subsequent RESEA. Voluntary subsequent appointments may be scheduled within 45 business days of the initial RESEA and must be entered in OSMIS. "No show" for voluntary subsequent RESEA appointments must be noted in OSMIS without affecting eligibility.

Reporting Requirements: The OSMIS eligibility section includes RESEA activities identified in this policy. Each activity has a "Yes/No" indicator to document whether the claimant has completed it. The outcome section documents the overall completion status of the activity, requiring a "Yes" in each component field and a completion date. Available values are "Completed all requirements," "Attended but failed to complete," and "No show." Reemployment services outcomes should be documented in the W-P section of OSMIS.

All reporting, except for the reemployment service outcome, must be entered in the OSMIS within 48 hours of the service or outcome. Document any job offers of suitable work in the OSMIS.

First RESEA Appointment Activities: In the computer lab, claimants will:

- Complete an orientation to MWA Services (First RESEA only).
- Receive referrals to appropriate reemployment services.

Afterward, claimants meet one-on-one with a CDS to:

- Complete a UI Eligibility Assessment (Attachment B).
- Discuss labor market information.
- Confirm an active profile on the PMTC.
- Discuss allowable work search activities.
- Develop an IEP, which includes work search activities, accessing MWA services, using self-service tools, and/or approved training (Attachment C).

Second RESEA Appointment Activities:

- UI Eligibility Assessment.
- Verification of the Monthly Work Search.
- Review and update the IEP as necessary using the My Reemployment Plan.

Tracking RESEA activities through case notes is required to monitor participants' involvement in the program

17.9 Participation in a System for Clearing Labor Between States

The Michigan Works! Service Center System will participate in the Michigan Component of the labor exchange network by providing access to Pure Michigan's Talent Connect. It will also manage the receipt and forwarding of specific interstate and intrastate job orders to WD LEO staff for processing. The procedures for inter-state labor clearing will adhere to the guidelines outlined in 20 CFR Chapter 5, part 652.3(d) of the public labor exchange services.

17.10 Service to Veterans

BCVB Michigan Works! staff are required to identify veterans, eligible spouses, and family caregivers of a veteran at each point of entry by encouraging them to self-identify. This is part of implementing Priority of Service for Veterans, eligible spouses, and family caregivers, and it is the responsibility of Michigan Works! staff. Self-attestation is sufficient for identification and referral to a Veteran Career Advisor (VCA). (To choose veteran status for enrollment in a WIOA program, a DD214 is required.)

- All jobseekers who self-identify as a veteran, eligible spouse, or family caregiver of a veteran will immediately be notified by Michigan Works WA staff of their entitlement to priority of services, the array of services available, and referral to a Veteran Career Advisor. This notification must include:
 - As a veteran or eligible spouse, the jobseeker is entitled to receive Veterans Priority of Service.
 - As a veteran or eligible spouse, the jobseeker may be eligible to receive additional personalized employment services from a VCA.
 - VCA services are in addition to other One-Stop services provided by Michigan Works! staff.

If a veteran, eligible spouse, or family caregiver is interested in pursuing VCA services, Michigan Works! staff will provide the customer with a copy of the Military Service Questionnaire. If not, Michigan Works! staff will continue to provide the jobseeker with all other appropriate services and programs as with any other jobseeker, in accordance with the requirements of Veterans Priority of Service.

Providing the Military Service Questionnaire

If a veteran, eligible spouse, or family caregiver is interested in pursuing VCA services in addition to ES services, Michigan Works! (MW) staff must immediately provide the jobseeker with a copy of the Military Service Questionnaire (with instructions). The customer should complete the questionnaire immediately and return it promptly to MW staff, who are available to assist as needed.

When providing the form, MW staff must notify the customer of the following:

- The information is requested on a voluntary basis.
- Completing the form is required for VCA staff services.
- The information will be kept confidential.
- Refusal to provide the information will not result in adverse treatment, but the customer may not be eligible for VCA services.
- The information will be used only in accordance with the law.
- Where to return the completed form.

Reviewing Completed Military Service Questionnaire Forms

Michigan Works! staff will immediately review all completed Military Service Questionnaire forms to determine eligibility for VCA specialist services. This determination will be made using the Guide to Review the Military Service Questionnaire Form.

Once this determination is made, MW staff will complete the "For Staff Use Only" section of the MSQ by:

- Entering the "Reviewing Staff Member" data.
- Entering the "Customer OSMIS ID" data.
- Entering the "Referred to" name of the VCA receiving the referral.

Data Entry

All customers referred to a VCA must have an active W-P registration in the OSMIS. If a registration needs to be created, MW staff will complete it and enter "Referral to Veterans Career Advisor" and any other relevant services in the OSMIS.

Non-Qualifying Customers for VCA Services

For job seekers determined not to qualify, Michigan Works! staff will notify the customer and continue to provide appropriate services in accordance with the priority of service. All non-qualifying customers' MSQs will be kept on file for three (3) years, either in physical or electronic form.

The following are important federal definitions that will be helpful in assisting veterans at the MWAs.

- **Active Duty:** Defined as full-time duty in the Armed Forces. A Disabled Veteran is defined as either:
 - A veteran entitled to compensation or military retirement pay, or who would be entitled to compensation under the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, and who is not classified as a special disabled veteran.
 - A veteran discharged or released from active duty due to a service-connected disability.
- **Eligible Veteran:** Defined as any of the following:
 - A person who served on active duty for more than 180 days and was discharged or released from service with a discharge other than dishonorable.
 - A person discharged or released from active duty due to a service-connected disability.
 - A person discharged or released from active duty by reason of sole survivorship.
- **Other Covered Veteran:** Defined as any veteran who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge was authorized (e.g., Afghanistan and Iraq). An Other Eligible Person is defined as the spouse of any person with a total disability that is permanent in nature resulting from a service-connected disability.
- **Recently Separated Veteran:** Defined as any veteran within the three-year period beginning on the date of their discharge or release from active duty.
- **Special Disabled Veteran:** Defined as a veteran entitled to disability compensation, or one who would be entitled to disability compensation except for receiving military retirement pay, under the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs, for a disability rated as:
 - Thirty (30) percent or more, or
 - Ten (10) percent or 20 percent in the case of a veteran determined under Title 38 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) to have a serious employment disability.
 - A service-connected disability that resulted in release or discharge from active duty.
- **Veteran:** Defined as any of the following:
 - A person who served on active duty for more than 180 days and was discharged or released from service with any discharge other than dishonorable. Acceptable discharges include Honorable Discharge, General Discharge, Under Honorable Conditions, Bad Conduct Discharge, Entry-level Separation, Other than Honorable. Dishonorable Discharge is not acceptable.
 - A person discharged or released from active duty due to a service-connected disability, with no duration of service requirement.
 - A person who served on active duty during a period of war, or in a campaign for which a campaign badge was authorized and was discharged or released from such duty with a discharge other than dishonorable.

It is both acceptable and encouraged for eligible veterans and eligible spouses to be enrolled in all appropriate programs simultaneously with enrollment in the VCA. Nothing in this policy issuance should be interpreted as limiting or restricting veterans' or eligible spouses' access to other services and programs.

Veterans' Priority

Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren, through policy issuance, staff training, and its Memorandum of Understanding with the Labor and Economic Opportunity, State of Michigan Employment Service Agency Veteran Services, will ensure that its Wagner-Peyser Employment Service providers comply with the Jobs for Veterans Act Public Law 107-288 of 2002, Title 38 of the U.S. Code. This act requires that all U.S. veterans and eligible persons receive priority in vocational guidance, training, and job placement services in accordance with the order of priority

established by Public Law 107-288, Title 38 of the U.S. Code. Veterans' priority and other veterans' issues as described in the ES Manual; Section 4:4 will be followed.

Additionally, Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren will ensure that its Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Contractor works closely with the Veterans Career Advisor Program to ensure job seekers of veteran status receive a referral to the Veterans Career Advisor (VCA) assigned on a full-time or part-time basis to each Michigan Works! Service Center. This referral ensures they receive specific workforce development services in addition to those available from Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren's Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Contractors. VCA staff will align with the requirements of the Michigan Works! System Governors Minimum Standards and the Memorandum of Understanding between Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren and the Labor and Economic Opportunity, State of Michigan.

After entering a resume in the Michigan Talent Connect, all veterans will be referred to the Veterans Career Advisor assigned to that full-service Michigan Works! Service Center providing Wagner-Peyser Employment Services. VCAs are assigned to full-service Michigan Works! Service Centers by the Veterans Employment Service to provide specific workforce development services for veterans, in addition to those ordinarily available from Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren's Employment Service Contractor.

Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren and its Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Contractors will ensure that an employee is available in each designated full-service Michigan Works! Service Center providing Wagner-Peyser Employment Services to:

- Ask each customer if they are a veteran.
- Refer each veteran to the Veterans Career Advisor on duty.
- If a Veterans Employment Representative is unavailable, provide contact information for the VCA Representative through a referral process established jointly by the Labor and Economic Opportunity, State of Michigan Employment Agency Veterans Services and Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren.

Additionally, Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren will post a notice in a conspicuous place within each full-service center office advising veterans that a VCA is available to assist them.

17.11 Assurance of Equitable Access for Migrant and Seasonal Workers

Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers are guaranteed equitable and proportionate access to all Employment Services offered. Recognizing that Spanish-speaking individuals are one of our primary customer groups with limited English proficiency, Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren ensures that staff fluent in Spanish are available. Additionally, we have secured language line services to be used as needed.

17.12 Explanation of Services and Staffing the MWA Will Use to Ensure that Migrant and Seasonal Workers Will Be Provided Access to the Same Employment Services, Benefits, Protections, Counseling, Testing, and Job and Training Referral Services Received by the General Population

Migrant and seasonal workers will continue to receive support through an integrated service delivery system. When requested and necessary, those who seek staff-assisted services beyond basic employment offerings are referred to LEO Migrant and Seasonal Farm Worker staff. Employment Services (ES) staff will collaborate with Migrant Services Workers to connect migrant and seasonal workers to additional available resources. Employment and supportive services will be delivered equitably, ensuring that migrant and seasonal workers receive quality services comparable to those provided to non-migrant seasonal farm workers.

17.13 Other Planned Activities

In addition to the previously mentioned services, individuals with disabilities will be supported through an integrated service delivery system. Access to the state’s TDY and the procurement of computer equipment to provide accommodations are incorporated into the design of our service centers at no cost to the job seeker.

Jobseeker Career Path Groups provide an integrated framework that aligns job seekers to services based on their needs rather than categorical funding sources. To ensure job seekers receive the appropriate services promptly, BCVB Michigan Works! has identified service sets offering multiple access points and a customized menu of services. These services develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) that align with business needs. The service sets are categorized into four career paths with descriptive indicators for easy and quick assessment, triaging job seekers to the appropriate value-added services that best meet their education, skill training, and employment needs. The four career paths are:

- Career Exploration: Targets those needing to identify KSAs, interests, and career opportunities for initial entry or re-entry into the workforce, such as dislocated workers, students, and displaced homemakers.
- Career Advancement: Targets those with a lateral work history who lack KSAs for immediate access to advancement opportunities.
- Employment Express: Targets those with identifiable KSAs and an immediate need or motivation to enter the job market, such as recent graduates, skilled workers needing quick reemployment, or those not interested in further training.
- Career Maintenance: Targets those with KSAs that match employers’ needs but who experience yearly seasonal unemployment, regardless of whether they have a return-to-work date.

Our goal is to identify individuals interested in a new career and refer them to the appropriate career paths. All services will be provided seamlessly and transparently to ensure customer needs are met. Additionally, Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren will provide Wagner-Peyser endorsed assessments where applicable.

18. Navigators Utilized in the Local Area

BCVB Michigan Works! employs Customer Care Specialists (CCS) and Career Development Specialists (CDS) as the primary points of contact at One-Stop centers within BCVB. The CCS and CDS serve as navigators, helping individuals access services and conduct appropriate assessments for potential dual enrollment in various workforce development programs.

Based on eligibility, the Navigator enrolls job seekers in suitable apprenticeships and training programs. They also provide labor market information and career development assistance, continuously educating job seekers about available resources related to work and other qualifying activities. These services include:

Employment	Tribal Employment Program
Self-Employment	Vocational Training
Education Related to Employment	Unpaid Workforce Engagement
Job Training	Substance Abuse Treatment
Community Service	Job Search Related to Employment

19. Adult Education and Literacy

As one of the six core programs under WIOA, the AEFLA program is crucial to the workforce development system, offering educational services to adult learners. The local board, through Michigan Works!, has established partnerships and a

referral system to effectively serve adult learners throughout the BCVB service area.

Adult Education Providers across BCVB:

County	Provider	Class Type
Berrien	Berrien Springs Public Schools Discovery Academy- Adult ESL Address: 242 Sylvester Ave., Berrien Springs MI 49103 Phone: 269-473-0501 BSPS Website	ESL
Berrien	Brandywine Community Schools Brandywine Adult Education Address: 1830 S. Third St., Niles, MI 49120 Phone: 269-683-8805, Ext. 5210 BCS Website	ABE/ASE/HSC/HSE
Berrien	Kinexus Training Center Address: 499 W. Main St., Benton Harbor, MI 49022 Phone: 269-927-1064 Website	ABE/ASE/HSE/ESL
Berrien	Niles Adult Education Address: 620 E. Main St. Niles, MI 49120, Phone: 269-684-4480 Website	ABE/ASE/HSC/HSE
Cass	Cassopolis Public Schools Cass County Jail Address: 321 M-62 Hwy., Cassopolis, MI 49031 Phone: 269-445-3877 CPS Website	ASE/HSC
Cass	Cassopolis Public Schools Squires Education Center Address: 22721 Diamond Cove St, Cassopolis, MI 49031 Phone: 269-445-0536 CPS Website	ABE/ASE/HSC/HSE
Cass	Dowagiac Union School District Pathfinders Address: 501 N. Paul St., Dowagiac, MI 49047 Phone: 269-782-4471 DUSD Website	ABE/HSC/HSE/ESL
Van Buren	Hartford Public Schools Hartford High School Address: 115 School St., Hartford, MI 49057 Phone: 269-621-7139 HPS Website	ABE/ASE/HSC/HSE/ESL
Van Buren	Paw Paw Public School District Adult Education Address: 600 E. Michigan Ave., Paw Paw, MI 49079 Phone: 269-415-5700 PPPS Website	ABE/HSC/GED/ESL
Van Buren	Van Buren ISD Bangor Community Education Address: 801 W. Arlington St. Bangor, MI 49013 Phone: 269-427-6800, Ext. 2100 VBISD Website	ABE/HSC/ESL

Van Buren	Van Buren ISD Covert Address: 35323 M-140 Hwy., Covert, MI 49043 Phone: 269-764-3703 VBISD Website	ESL/Workplace Literacy
Van Buren	Van Buren ISD- Van Buren Technology Center Address: 250 South St., Lawrence, MI 49064 Phone: 269-674-8091 VBISD Website	ABE/ESL/Workplace Literacy/ Family Literacy

All applications for funding under AEFLA are reviewed by the local workforce board to ensure alignment with the local workforce plan. The BCVB WDB recently reviewed these applications and provided feedback to the state to promote consistency with the plan.

Michigan Works! delivers adult education services under the Berrien-Cass-Van Buren Workforce Development Board. Adult education is co-located at the Michigan Works! Service Center in Benton Harbor, ensuring that participants have easy access to these programs and services. Prospective adult learners receive information from staff, including program flyers, referrals, and connections to local adult education program staff across BCVB. During participant orientation, an overview of available Michigan Works! services is provided.

Program staff actively participate in the Berrien Cass Continuing Education Association (BCCEA) consortium meetings and Region 8 Adult Education Providers meetings held quarterly. These meetings focus on proactive strategies, best practices in adult education, and available Michigan Works! services, with the goal of promoting dual enrollment into WIOA.

20. Executed Cooperative Agreements

BCVB Michigan Works! operates under the guidance of the Labor and Economic Opportunity to develop and maintain Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). These cooperative agreements outline how all local service providers, including additional providers, will integrate and provide access to the full range of services available at the local one-stop.

Cooperative agreements, as defined in WIOA Section 107(d)(11), are established between the local board or other local entities described in WIOA Section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the local office of a designated state agency or unit administering programs under Title I of the Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.), excluding Section 112 or Part C of that Title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to Section 121(f). These agreements, in accordance with Section 101(a)(11) of the Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)), aim to enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and other individuals through efforts such as cross-training staff, providing technical assistance, using and sharing information, cooperating with employers, and other collaborative and coordinated efforts.

21. Responsible for Disbursal of Grant Funds

Berrien-Cass-Van Buren Michigan Works! (BCVB Michigan Works!), doing business as Kinexus Group, is a dynamic nonprofit committed to supporting the southwest Michigan region through business, workforce, and community development. BCSVB Michigan Works! focuses on developing the talent and skills of regional job seekers while meeting the needs of southwest Michigan employers by creating and delivering exceptional workforce solutions.

Mr. Todd Gustafson, Chief Executive Officer/ President Kinexus Group
Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass and Van Buren 330 W. Main Street
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
Phone Number: 269-927-1064 policy@kinexus.org

22. Awarding Sub-Grants and Contracts

BCVB Michigan Works! adheres to the guidance issued in the WD Procurement Policy. All procurements utilizing funds from the Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) must comply with the applicable Code of Federal Regulations and LEO guidelines for procurement/request for proposal (RFP). All procurement/RFP transactions will be conducted to ensure full and open competition.

Sub-grants and contracts are awarded through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. The RFP is released on the BCVB Michigan Works! website, through media outlets, and notifications are mailed to current contractors, community partners, and other identified potential bidders. A review committee is formed to evaluate and rate proposals on a competitive basis according to the criteria stated in the RFP. Sub-recipients selected for funding will be approved in the manner required by WIOA or subsequent designations.

23. Negotiated Local Levels of Performance

Michigan Works! current levels of performance are indicated in the graph below. The Labor and Economic Opportunity has advised Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass, Van Buren administration that updated performance targets will be forthcoming. BCVB Michigan Works! anticipates the levels of performance for program years 2024 and 2025 to be announced in August of 2024. Should the levels of performance change, this local plan will be modified to correspond with updated performance, when available.

	Program Year 2023	Program Year 2024
WIOA Adult		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	90.9%	90.9%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	86.5%	86.5%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$8,286	\$8,286
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	89.4%	89.4%
Measurable Skills Gain	42.4%	42.4%
WIOA Dislocated Worker		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	88.1%	88.1%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	82.5%	82.5%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$8,988	\$8,988
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	77.9%	77.9%
Measurable Skills Gain	48.0%	48.0%
Youth		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	82.7%	82.7%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	83.8%	83.8%
Median Earnings 2nd Quarter after Exit	\$3,622	\$3,622
Credential Attainment within 4 Quarters after Exit	79.9%	79.9%
Measurable Skills Gain	37%	37%
Wagner-Peyser		
Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after Exit	67%	67%
Employment Rate 4th Quarter after Exit	64.7%	64.7%
Median Earnings 2 nd Quarter after Exit	\$6,353	\$6,353

24. High Performing Board, Consistent with the Factors Developed by the State Board

24.1 Effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria the local board will implement.

The BCVB WDB is dedicated to developing strategies for continuous improvement of our local workforce system. Programmatic outcomes, business interactions, service enrollment, and operational efficiency are monitored through Salesforce and OSMIS. These platforms enable real-time analysis of agency activities and regional impact, supporting process enhancement and regular reporting generation.

Through the Michigan Works! system, the board has access to master black belt and green belt expertise in Six Sigma, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. This commitment enables the Berrien-Cass-Van Buren Workforce Development Board to:

- Monitor and promote high-quality service delivery to employers and job seekers across the tri-county service area;
- Enhance the capacity of the local and regional workforce system to meet evolving employer and job seeker needs; and
- Cultivate strong partnerships and seamless integration among business, education, workforce, and community leaders to drive innovation in workforce development and program delivery.

The BCVB Workforce Development Board implements the following strategies:

1. Leveraging the BCVB Michigan Works! system to maintain strong connections with BCVB, as well as Southwest Michigan's employer community, reflected in its diverse board membership comprising representatives from:
 - Social service agencies,
 - K-12 and postsecondary education providers,
 - Vocational education institutions,
 - Local unions,
 - Economic development agencies,
 - Major area employers,
 - Local government officials.
2. Committing to ongoing and continuous improvement, ensuring high performance standards through established local practices that include:
 1. Mandatory board orientation for newly selected members,
 2. Subcommittee involvement for board members,
3. Strategic agenda setting for meetings to drive discussions impacting program design, service delivery, and community impact,
4. Regular assessment of fiscal and program performance in board and subcommittee meetings,
5. Data-driven decision-making with a focus on performance outcomes, audits, monitoring reviews, real-time labor market data, and economic indicators,
 6. Purposeful board input in annual agency planning,
 7. Sharing and reviewing of best practices among board members and corporate staff,
 8. Encouraging professional development opportunities for board members,
 9. Providing comprehensive year-end reports to board members for dissemination to their respective organizations, businesses, and constituents.

24.1. Description of how the local board will allocate One-Stop center infrastructure funds.

The BCVB WDB will retain the current One-Stop mandatory partners. To fund the infrastructure of the One-Stops, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and an Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) with shared costs will be established. These agreements will be implemented with each partner co-located in the One-Stop, as well as with core partners who have access but are not physically co-located.

24.3 Description of the roles and contributions of One-Stop partners, including cost allocation.

The development of an MOU/IFA between partners and the One-Stop is in place, detailing the roles and contributions of each One-Stop partner. These agreements provide clear guidance for effective coordination and collaboration of programs, services, and shared costs.

25. WIOA Section 134 Training Services

25.1. Contracts for Training Services – Use of Individual Training Accounts I

Training services, as outlined in the WIOA section 134, will be provided through Individual Training Accounts (ITA) to job seekers leveraging WIOA funding. The ITA document/contract has been approved by the local board and is issued directly to the training providers on behalf of the eligible participant. BCVB Michigan Works! has an established ITA policy.

25.2. Coordination between training service contracts and individual training accounts

Individuals interested in training are provided with labor market information (LMI) on high-demand industries and are informed about local training providers eligible to receive ITA funds through Michigan Training Connect (MiTC). Michigan Works! staff assist individuals in navigating program requirements, FAFSA options, and training program placement rates, ensuring customers can make informed decisions. Michigan Works! staff do not endorse or recommend one training provider over another.

Training funds will be referred to as scholarships, with approvals based on local in-demand occupations. Priority of services will be given to Veterans and qualified spouses, individuals with disabilities, individuals who are basic skills deficient, low-income individuals, and youth residing in high-poverty areas. Ideally, individuals should have a high school diploma or equivalent and be both eligible and suitable for training. However, when applicable, individuals may concurrently work on obtaining a high school diploma or equivalency while engaging in vocational training activities.

25.3. Ensuring an informed customer choice in the selection of training programs

To ensure individuals can make informed decisions about their desired training program and provider, the assigned Michigan Works! staff will assist customers to:

- Complete interest and career readiness assessments;
- Identify and address employment barriers, including transportation to and from training, the length of the training program, and assessment results/education levels recommended for program success;
- Research in-demand occupations using local labor market information and job postings, including required credentials and preferred work experience by employers;
- Develop a career pathway plan that encourages obtaining portable and stackable credentials; and
- Locate qualified training programs on MiTC that lead to industry-recognized credentials, facilitate campus or training location tours, and assist customers in making informed program selections.

26. Review, Comment and Publication of Document

In accordance with Section III of State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Policy Issuance: 24-13, the BCVB Michigan Works! local plan will be available for review and comment for a period of thirty calendar days by external agencies and stakeholders, including businesses, labor organizations, educational institutions, and area residents.

The local plan is available in PDF format on the miworks.org website; printed copies of the plan can be obtained by submitting a written request to:

Kinexus Policy
Kinexus Group / Michigan Works! Berrien-Cass-Van Buren
330 W. Main Street
Benton Harbor, MI 49022

Electronic copies can also be requested via email by writing to policy@kinexus.org.

In accordance with the ADA availability of the final local WIOA Local Plan for Program Years (PYs) 2024 through 2027 will include accommodations or special requests of the plan in alternate formats, such as large print, audiotape, etc. In addition, a public meeting concerning the plan will comply with the physical access requirements of the ADA.

27. Technology-Enabled Intake and Case Management Systems

The use of technology and software enhances the efficiency of our operations, supports high-quality case management, and enables comprehensive service tracking across programs.

BCVB Michigan Works utilizes OSMIS, Salesforce, and DocuSign software for intake and case management purposes. OSMIS and Salesforce systems capture participation data across multiple programs, while DocuSign streamlines participant enrollment. New technologies are being adopted to support areas of increased effort, such as career assessment software and apprenticeship tracking software.

BCVB Michigan Works! uses virtual services to accommodate the schedules of the employer and job seekers. This increased access provides the flexibility needed to serve all in the service area.

Furthermore, restricting administrative access helps prevent data manipulation, ensuring more precise performance reporting.

28. Local Priority of Service

BCVB Michigan Works! will implement a prioritization system where the determination for services will follow tiers. If a local prioritization system is necessary, career services, training, and related expenditures will be limited to applicants who fall into the following categories:

- **1st Priority:** Covered Eligible individuals (veterans and eligible spouses) who are low income, below the minimum self-sufficiency level as identified by BCVB Michigan Works!, recipients of public assistance, basic skills deficient, or facing significant barriers to employment.
- **2nd Priority:** Non-covered individuals who are low income, below the minimum self-sufficiency level as identified by BCVB Michigan Works!, recipients of public assistance, basic skills deficient, or facing significant barriers to employment.
- **3rd Priority:** Veterans and eligible spouses who are not low income, not recipients of public assistance, not basic skills deficient, and do not lack barriers to employment.
- **4th Priority:** Non-covered individuals who do not meet the above priorities may be considered on a case-by-case basis with documented managerial approval. Local policy will restrict enrollment under the WIOA program to adults who do not meet the criteria of being low income, recipients of public assistance, basic skills deficient, or lacking significant barriers to employment.

Furthermore, priority for youth receiving services using WIOA funds will be given to out-of-school youth without a high school credential or equivalency, low-income out-of-school youth with a high school credential or equivalency, and low-income in-school youth. Each youth, regardless of school attendance or income status at the time of registration, must demonstrate a documented barrier to success in the labor market.

29. Coordination of Rapid Response Activities

The BCVB WDB ensures effective oversight to leverage all regional resources for early warning systems, layoff prevention, and rapid response activities. Rapid Response serves both as a provider of direct reemployment services and as a facilitator of additional resources.

BCVB's responses are prompt and comprehensive. In our region, dislocation refers to layoffs affecting five (5) or more workers at a single business. When such layoffs impact fifty (50) or more workers, it triggers a Rapid Response process, prompting collaboration with the LEO WD WIOA Section unit. BCVB Michigan Works! layoff aversion activities may include, but not limited to the following:

- Connect employers with training resources and barrier removal to upskill incumbent workers.
- Engage with partners to support employer efforts.
- Forge connections with economic development organizations at all levels.
- Assist employers to identify workforce needs and offer services to support workforce.

BCVB Michigan Works! actively monitors media reports and utilizes a network of local contacts, including the Business and Talent Teams, to identify downsizings and plant closures that necessitate a Rapid Response. The objective of Michigan Works! in these activities is to swiftly transition affected workers into new careers.

30. Rapid Response Activities

Rapid Response activities involve essential steps to plan and deliver services to dislocated workers, ensuring a swift and smooth transition to employment or training. This support is provided in response to permanent closures, mass layoffs, or natural disasters that lead to significant job losses. The Rapid Response services included in the process are as follows:

1. Initial Rapid Response meeting with the company and union officers (if applicable).
2. Worker orientation meetings for employees. These meetings include presentations by BCVB Michigan Works! and provide information on employment services; WIOA-funded core, intensive, and training services; TAA, if applicable, special population services (MRS, Veterans' services); and local/community services (United Way, local community colleges, credit union counseling, etc.). Collaboration with other state agencies (e.g., Office of Retirement Services, Friend of the Court), are planned as needed. UIA representatives may also participate in worker orientation meetings and provide information on how to file/claim unemployment benefits.
3. The provision of Layoff Aversion Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), which includes an assessment of the potential for averting layoff in consultation with the State or local economic development agencies, including private sector economic development entities and other key partners, up to a year in advance of an actual or potential dislocation.
4. Re-employment Services are designed to prepare participants for re-entry into the workforce and are categorized as basic career services, individualized career services, and training.
5. Application for State Adjustment Grants (SAGs) as an additional increment to a local area's DW funding award to meet documented funding deficits.

6. Application to LEO for a National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG's), another form of assistance provided to DW's. NDWG's are discretionary grants awarded by the Secretary of Labor to provide employment-related services for dislocated workers in specific circumstances.
7. Establishment and organization of a Joint Adjustment Committee (JAC) when indicated.
8. BCVB Michigan Works! has developed a local Rapid Response Policy that can be viewed upon request.

Contact Kinexus' Group at policy@kinexus.org or by phone at (269) 927-1064.