

Prosperity Region 8 Regional WIOA Plan
Michigan Works! Southwest and Kinexus

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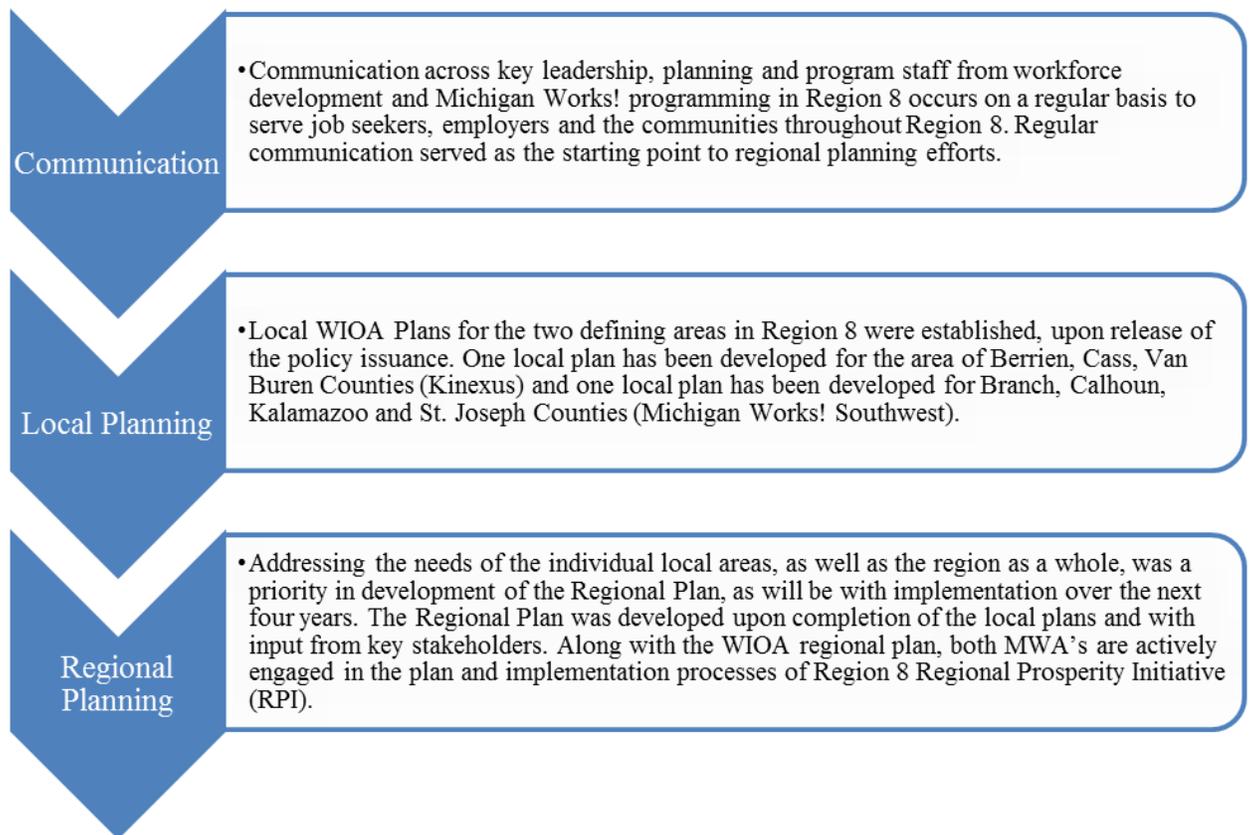
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1. Planning

Kinexus provides economic, community, and workforce development services inclusive of Michigan Works! programming to Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties and Michigan Works! Southwest provides workforce development services and Michigan Works! programming to Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties. Between these two organizations, all seven counties in Prosperity Region 8 are represented in the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan. Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest provide customer services that align with the needs of both job seekers and employers based upon labor market data and established best practices. central to these services are the combined efforts of the two Michigan Works! agencies to provide aligned customer centric services in which all job seekers and employers receive the appropriate service in a timely manner.

Overview of the Region 8 Planning Process:



Leadership, planning and program staff from Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest communicate regularly to best serve the region in the area of workforce development, as well as partnering with education and economic development entities throughout the region; and

compilation of the plan was done through the same channels used for this existing model of communication and planning for Region 8.

Local WIOA Plans, as guided by policy requirements, were then developed for the Michigan Works! Southwest area, as well as for the Kinexus area. The local plans will serve as a four year blue print that will align service delivery strategies and support the states vision and strategic operational goals. The Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest Local Plans set forth the strategy to:

- Direct investments in economic, education, and workforce training programs that meet the current and future needs of industry sectors within Region 8. The investments will ensure that all individuals, including youth and those with barriers to employment, have the in demand skills that our employers need to be competitive in the global economy;
- Apply job-driven strategies in the one-stop system; and
- Enable economic, education, and workforce partners to build a skilled workforce through innovation and alignment of, employment, training, and education programs.

The proposed Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest Local Plans include the following required elements:

- Analysis of local labor market data and economic conditions including a description of the Michigan Works! Southwest Workforce Development Board’s strategic vision and goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, as well as an analysis of expected levels of performance for Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Literacy, and Wagner-Peyser, as described in the WIOA. The following are the baseline measures reviewed:
 - WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth
 - Measurable Skills Gain
 - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
 - WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy
 - Employment Second Quarter After Exit
 - Employment Fourth Quarter After Exit
 - Median Earnings
 - Credential Attainment Rate
 - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
 - WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser
 - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
 - WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation

- A description of each Workforce Development Boards' strategy to align local resources, required partners, and entities that carry out core programs to achieve the strategic vision and goals.
- A description of the strategies and services that will be used to facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs and improve coordination between workforce development programs and economic development partners.
- A description of the one-stop delivery system.
- A description of coordination of WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with the provision of transportation and other appropriate supportive services in the local area.
- A description of how both Workforce Development Boards will coordinate relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities with education and workforce investment activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.
- A description of coordination of WIOA Title I workforce investment activities with adult education and literacy activities under the WIOA Title II.
- A description of training services in Region 8.
- A description of the actions the Workforce Development Boards will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing boards, including effectiveness and continuous improvement criteria the board will implement to assess their one-stop centers, a description of the allocation of one-stop center infrastructure funds and a description of the roles and contributions of one-stop partners, including cost allocation.

Upon development of the Local WIOA Plans in both areas, key staff were identified by Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest to orchestrate the writing of the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan in support of the Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI);

http://www.swmpc.org/downloads/rpi_plan_final.pdf . These key staff were also charged with organizing key stakeholders to guarantee accurate information reflective of the work being done in Region 8. The Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan includes input from:

- Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest Planning and Policy staff,
- Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest Business Services staff,
- Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest Executive Leadership staff,
- Program staff, from all counties in Region 8, serving in the following programs:
 - WIOA Adult,
 - WIOA Dislocated Worker,
 - WIOA Youth staff,
 - PATH staff (TANF funded) and
 - Employment Services staff (Wagner-Peyser funded).

The areas of expertise, as represented by these staff, included throughout the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan are reflective of the needs, goals and assets of Region 8, including, but not limited to:

- Education and training opportunities available to job seekers and the established workforce throughout Region 8,
- Employer strengths and challenges of employers throughout the region,
- Successful job seeking models for unemployed or underemployed individuals throughout the region,
- Community organizations' missions and resources to Michigan Works!' stakeholders,
- Supportive services available to job seekers,
- Future growth and development throughout the region, and
- Tools and resources available to all stakeholders.

A true collaboration, relying on the strength and knowledge of key staff and stakeholders, and the extensive resources available, throughout Region 8 was key to development of and the planning for the implementation of the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan.

2. Analysis of regional labor market data and economic conditions

In planning workforce development strategies in Region 8 for the next four years, it is critical to understand the demographics of the current population, along with current and projected employment data.

Population/Demographics

Per a 2012 estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau / DTMB, Center for Shared Solutions, the total population for the seven county area was 778,106.

Per EMSI, the 2013 race demographics for Region 8 are as follows:

- All other races – 3%
- Two or more races, Non-Hispanic – 2.5%
- White, Hispanic – 4.5%
- Black, Non-Hispanic – 9.6%
- White, Non-Hispanic – 80.4%

Per a 2012 estimate from the U.S. Census Bureau / DTMB, Center for Shared Solutions, the age distribution of work eligible individuals is as follows:

- 15% ages 15 to 24,
- 12% ages 25 to 34,
- 26% ages 35 to 54, and
- 28% ages 55 and older.

In reviewing this information, for preparation, it is important to look at industry employment by age, for Region 8. Industries with a lower share of older workers in Region include:

- Accommodation and Food Services – 9% are over the age of 55,
- Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services – 16% are over the age of 55,
- Construction – 18% over the age of 55, and
- Finance and Insurance – 20% over the age of 55.

On the other hand, industries in Region 8 with a higher share of older workers include:

- Public Administration – 29% over the age of 55,
- Educational Services – 26% over the age of 55,
- Wholesale Trade – 24% over the age of 55, and
- Information – 22% over the age of 55.

In planning, the aging of the workforce and preparing for the next generation of workers to avoid gaps will be integral in the work of the sector strategy consortium groups, discussed in Section 3.

Educational Attainment in Region 8 of the Population Ages 25 and older.

Partnerships throughout Region 8 will continue to work with education partners, as well as work to develop training opportunities to meet the needs of employers and job seekers in the area. Current educational attainment in Region 8, as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau / DTMB, Center for Shared Solutions, is as follows:

- Less than High School Diploma - 12% of the population, totaling 60,578 Residents
- High School Graduate, GED or Alternative - 32% of the population, totaling 164,259 Residents
- Some College or Associate's Degree - 33% of the population, totaling 165,638 Residents
- Bachelor's Degree or Higher - 23% of the population, totaling 118,823 Residents

This analysis is crucial in understanding the barriers of gaining employment for individuals with lower education levels.

Disability

Per the U.S Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009-2013, the percent of the population ages 18-64 with a disability, by county, is as follows:

- Berrien: 12.4%
- Branch: 12.3%
- Calhoun: 13.5%
- Cass: 13%
- Kalamazoo: 10.9%
- St. Joseph: 10.2%

Working with employers and vocational rehabilitation partners, as discussed throughout this plan, remain a priority of the workforce development work being completed throughout Region 8.

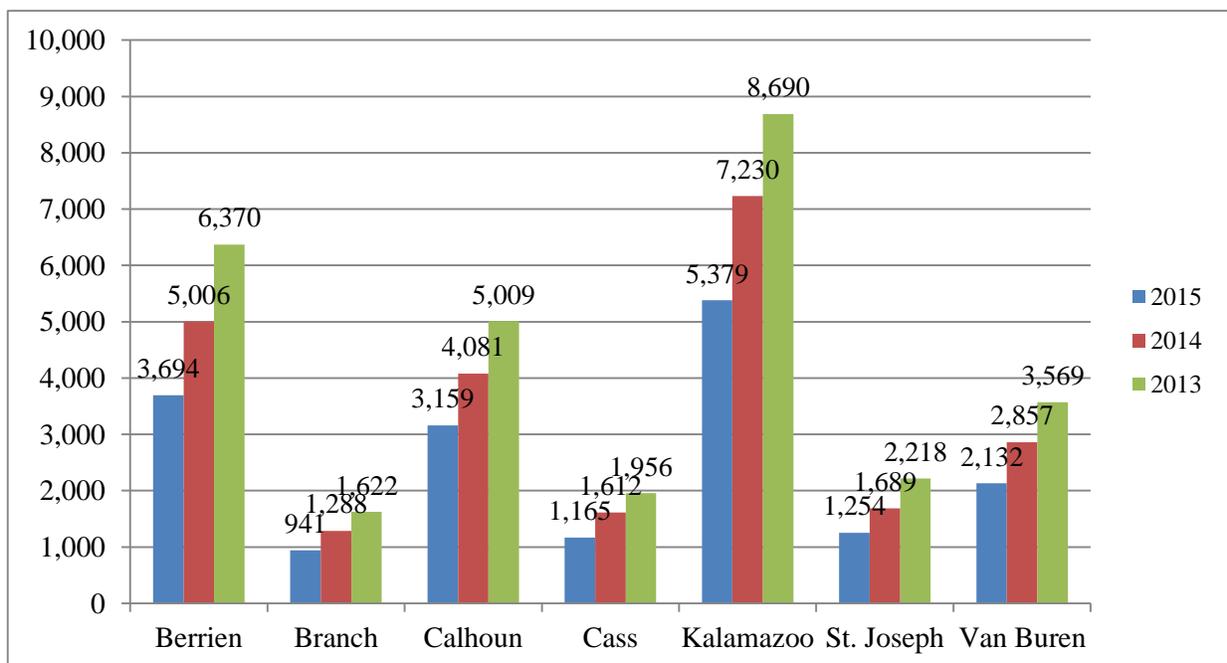
Equity

Region 8 is committed to equity in every aspect of our work, and we must serve the most disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups in our region effectively. The Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 are committed to working with diverse communities and individuals to best meet the needs of the communities in the region. Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest strive to incorporate equity principles and practices in our services and programs and hold ourselves accountable for creating a rich culture of diversity and inclusion throughout the region.

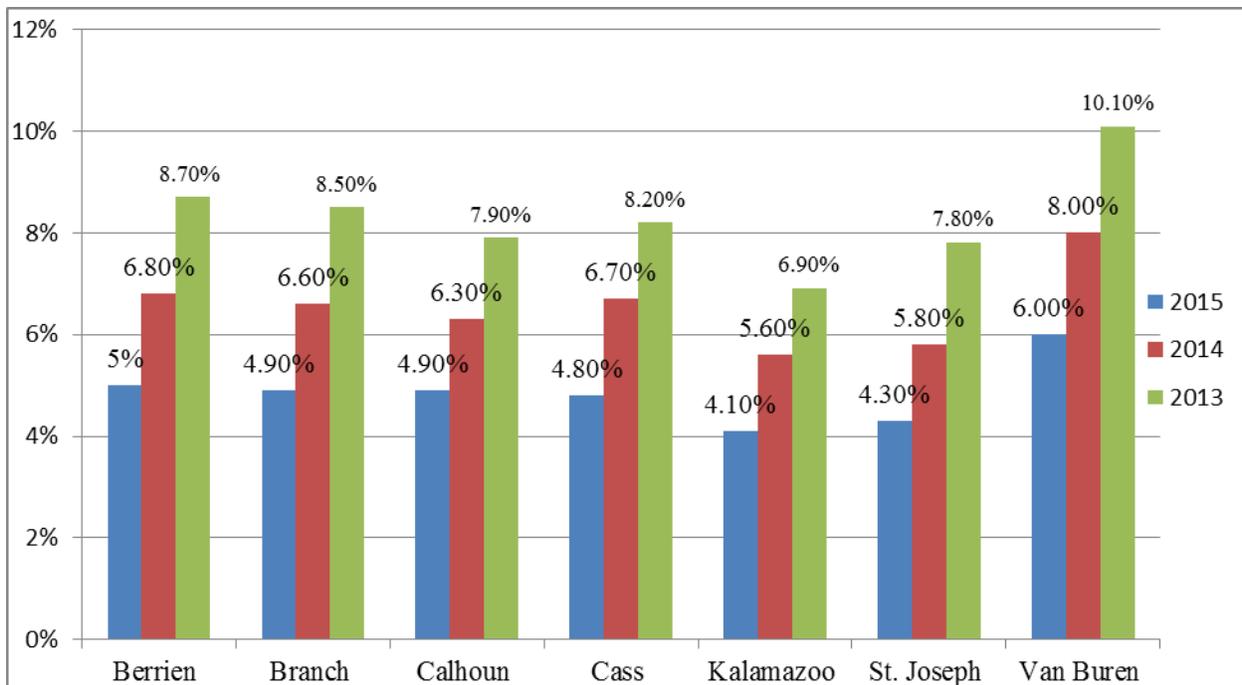
Unemployment and Jobless Rate

The number of unemployed individuals by county by year is reflected below. As the number of unemployed individuals continues to decrease throughout Region 8, it will be important to work strategically to meet the needs of both the job seekers and the employers.

Unemployment
Source: Michigan Labor Market Information



Jobless Rate
Source: Michigan Labor Market Information



Per the Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives April 2016 Report, since April 2015, all four of the local metro counties, in Region 8, recorded substantial employment gains:

- +1,000 (or +3.0%) in Van Buren County,
- +1,100 (or +1.8%) in Calhoun,
- +2,000 (or +2.9%) in Niles-Benton Harbor, and
- +3,875 (or +3.1%) in Kalamazoo.

Wage Data

Per, DTMB, Occupational Employment Statistics, there is a diverse mix of job titles in Region 8, and the occupational wage range is quite large, spanning from \$8.54 per hour to \$34.47 per hour. The median wage in the Region was \$15.16 /hour in 2012. In Region 8, Occupational Employment totals 278,370 with the median Occupational Wage at \$15.16.

- High Employment / High Wage Categories
 - Management
 - 13,380 Employed
 - \$20.89 - \$74.12 Wage Range

- Architecture and Engineering
 - 6,760 Employed
 - \$18.43 - \$46.32 Wage Range
- Healthcare Practitioners and Technical
 - 16,810 Employed
 - \$14.63 - \$50.65 Wage Range
- Business and Financial Operations
 - 10,960 Employed
 - \$15.57 - \$42.59 Wage Range
- Computer and Mathematical
 - 3,150 Employed
 - \$15.53 - \$45.58 Wage Range
- High Employment / High Wage Occupations
 - General and Operations Managers
 - 3,240 Employed
 - \$44.04 Median Wage
 - Registered Nurses
 - 6,010 Employed
 - \$29.51 Median Wage
 - Financial Managers
 - 850 Employed
 - \$43.86 Median Wage
 - Industrial Production Managers
 - 900 Employed
 - \$42.44 Median Wage
 - Mechanical Engineers
 - 1,400 Employed
 - \$34.66 Median Wage

Growth

In Region 8, DTMB, Occupational Employment Statistics (this information is inclusive of the Benton Harbor, Kalamazoo, and Battle Creek Economic Forecast Regions) projects growth of 13,800 over the time period of 2008-2018 with a +3.8% projected change in employment over the same time period. As discussed throughout the regional plan, Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 are working with economic development and training institutions to meet the needs of the high growth occupations, outlined below, in healthcare.

- High-Growth / High-Demand Occupations
 - Home Health Aides
 - 45.7% Growth
 - 111 Annual Openings
 - Registered Nurses
 - 18.3% Growth
 - 231 Annual Openings
 - Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants
 - 14.6% Growth
 - 115 Annual Openings
 - Network Systems and Data Communication Analysts
 - 32.7% Growth
 - 26 Annual Openings
 - Dental Hygienists
 - 23.7% Growth
 - 30 Annual Openings

- High-Growth / High-Wage Occupations
 - Physician Assistants
 - 30.2% Growth
 - \$39.77 Median Wage
 - Compliance Officers
 - 28.6% Growth
 - \$28.93 Median Wage
 - Accountant and Auditors
 - 13.5% Growth
 - \$26.44 Median Wage
 - Industrial Engineers
 - 11.5% Growth
 - \$32.67 Median Wage
 - Construction Managers
 - 12.0% Growth
 - \$35.68 Median Wage

The high growth industries in Region 8, per the DTMB, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, are as follows:

- Administrative and Support and Waste Management
 - +3,875 Jobs
 - +29.4% Percent
- Manufacturing
 - +2,125 Jobs
 - +4.1% Percent
- Health Care and Social Assistance
 - +1,025 Jobs
 - +2.4% Percent
- Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
 - +950 Jobs
 - +25.0% Percent
- Wholesale Trade
 - +800 Jobs
 - +9.0% Percent

The declining industries in Region 8, per the DTMB, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives, are as follows:

- Educational Services
 - -1,625 Jobs
 - -5.7% Percent
- Public Administration
 - -1,000 Jobs
 - -8.0% Percent
- Information
 - -675 Jobs
 - -19.9% Percent
- Construction
 - -650 Jobs
 - -6.6% Percent
- Transportation and Warehousing
 - -525 Jobs
 - -6.2% Percent

Industries in Region 8

In order to effectively serve employers and job seekers in Region 8, in creation of this plan, an analysis of industry growth and decline was reviewed and the following information was determined.

The top ten industries by employment in Region 8, per the DTMB, Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives are as follows:

- Manufacturing
 - 53,245 Jobs
 - 18.8% share of the existing workforce in the Region
- Health Care and Social Assistance
 - 43,525 Jobs
 - 15.3% share of the existing workforce in the Region
- Retail Trade
 - 31,525 Jobs
 - 11.1% share of the existing workforce in the Region
- Accommodation and Food Services
 - 27,525 Jobs
 - 9.7% share of the existing workforce in the Region
- Educational Services
 - 26,275 Jobs
 - 9.2% share of the existing workforce in the Region
- Administrative and Support and Waste Management
 - 16,600 Jobs
 - 5.8% share of the existing workforce in the Region
- Public Administration
 - 11,475 Jobs
 - 4.0% share of the existing workforce in the Region
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
 - 9,775 Jobs
 - 3.4% share of the existing workforce in the Region
- Wholesale Trade
 - 9,475 Jobs
 - 3.3% share of the existing workforce in the Region
- Finance and Insurance
 - 9,400 Jobs
 - 3.3% share of the existing workforce in the Region

Industry Specific Data for Region 8

Industry Data: Manufacturing

The manufacturing industry in Michigan's Region 8 is strong with 53,245 in the workforce and constitutes a significant portion (18.8%) of the region's economy. The Location Quotient, an indicator of the industry's prominence within the region, is very high. With the national average of 1 indicating an equal proportion of the region's industry, Region 8's manufacturing industry LQs range from 1.2-4.4, and average 2.3.

The region has also seen significant growth since 2010, growing 5,411 jobs; a 10% growth rate. Growth in the Region's Manufacturing industry were widespread, and were focused in fabricated metal product manufacturing, plastics and rubber product manufacturing, and food manufacturing, per the DTMB/Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives. In addition, the expected change for the future is 5.4%, adding an additional 3,049 jobs to the region.

Also of note is the aging of the workforce population within manufacturing, with over 50.2% of the workforce being 45 years of age or older and only 6.8% under the age of 24. These indicators spell out current and upcoming worker and talent shortages that will require innovative talent pipeline strategies throughout Region 8.

County Name	2010 Jobs	2014 Jobs	4 Year growth #	4 Year growth %	2014 Location Quotient	Expected Change
Cass County	1,879	1,971	92	5%	2.37	111
Branch County	2,058	2,148	90	4%	1.89	122
Van Buren County	2,588	2,378	-210	-8%	1.2	153
St. Joseph County	7,157	8,750	1,593	22%	4.4	424
Berrien County	11,580	12,131	551	5%	2.29	686
Calhoun County	10,488	12,165	1,677	16%	2.54	622
Kalamazoo County	15,723	17,341	1,618	10%	1.74	931
Source: EMSI	51,473	56,884	5,411			3,049
						5.40%

Manufacturing Average Hourly Earnings:

County Name	2013 Avg. Hourly Earnings
Berrien County	\$16.10
Branch County	\$14.86
Calhoun County	\$16.61
Cass County	\$15.38
Kalamazoo County	\$16.79
St. Joseph County	\$15.31
Van Buren County	\$15.48
Source: EMSI	\$15.79

Industry Data: Healthcare

The Healthcare industry in Michigan's Region 8 is a significant portion of the region's economy, employing 43,525 people and representing 15.3% of the workforce. The Location Quotient, an indicator of the industry's prominence within the region, is average to below average. With the national average of 1 indicating an equal proportion of the region's industry, Region 8's Healthcare industry LQs range from .5-1.23.

The region has seen moderate growth since 2010, growing 1,169 jobs; a 3% growth rate. However, the expected change and outlook for the future job growth is 10%, expecting to add an additional 4,012 jobs to the region. Health care and social assistance, the Region's second largest industry, saw the most jobs in ambulatory health care services and hospitals, with smaller, but still significant employment in nursing and residential care facilities and social assistance, per the April 2016 Report from DTMB/Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives.

Also of note is the aging of the workforce population within Healthcare, with over 46.3% of the workforce being 45 years of age or older and only 9.9% under the age of 24. The bulk of the jobs lie between the ages of 25-54 years of age.

County Name	2010 Jobs	2014 Jobs	4 Year growth #	4 Year growth %	2014 Location Quotient	Expected Change
Kalamazoo County	18,302	18,307	5	0%	1.19	1863
Calhoun County	8,396	9,028	632	8%	1.23	854
Berrien County	7,977	7,596	-381	-5%	0.93	812
Van Buren County	1,643	1,710	67	4%	0.56	167
St. Joseph County	1,623	2,366	743	46%	0.77	166
Branch County	848	880	32	4%	0.5	86
Cass County	624	695	71	11%	0.54	64
Source: EMSI	39,413	40,582	1,169			4,012
						10.00%

Healthcare Average Hourly Earnings:

County Name	2013 Avg. Hourly Earnings
Berrien County	\$28.40
Branch County	\$26.40
Calhoun County	\$25.49
Cass County	\$23.56
Kalamazoo County	\$26.69
St. Joseph County	\$19.88
Van Buren County	\$22.19
Source: EMSI	\$24.66

Skills

As noted in the State Plan, these occupations all require a solid foundation in basic skills, such as reading, communication, math, and cognitive abilities that influence the acquisition and application of knowledge in problem solving. Most require active learning and critical thinking skills. In addition, these occupations require workers to possess technical skills and knowledge related to their specific occupational discipline and to master certain tools and technologies and even achieve particular certifications.

Strengths and Weaknesses

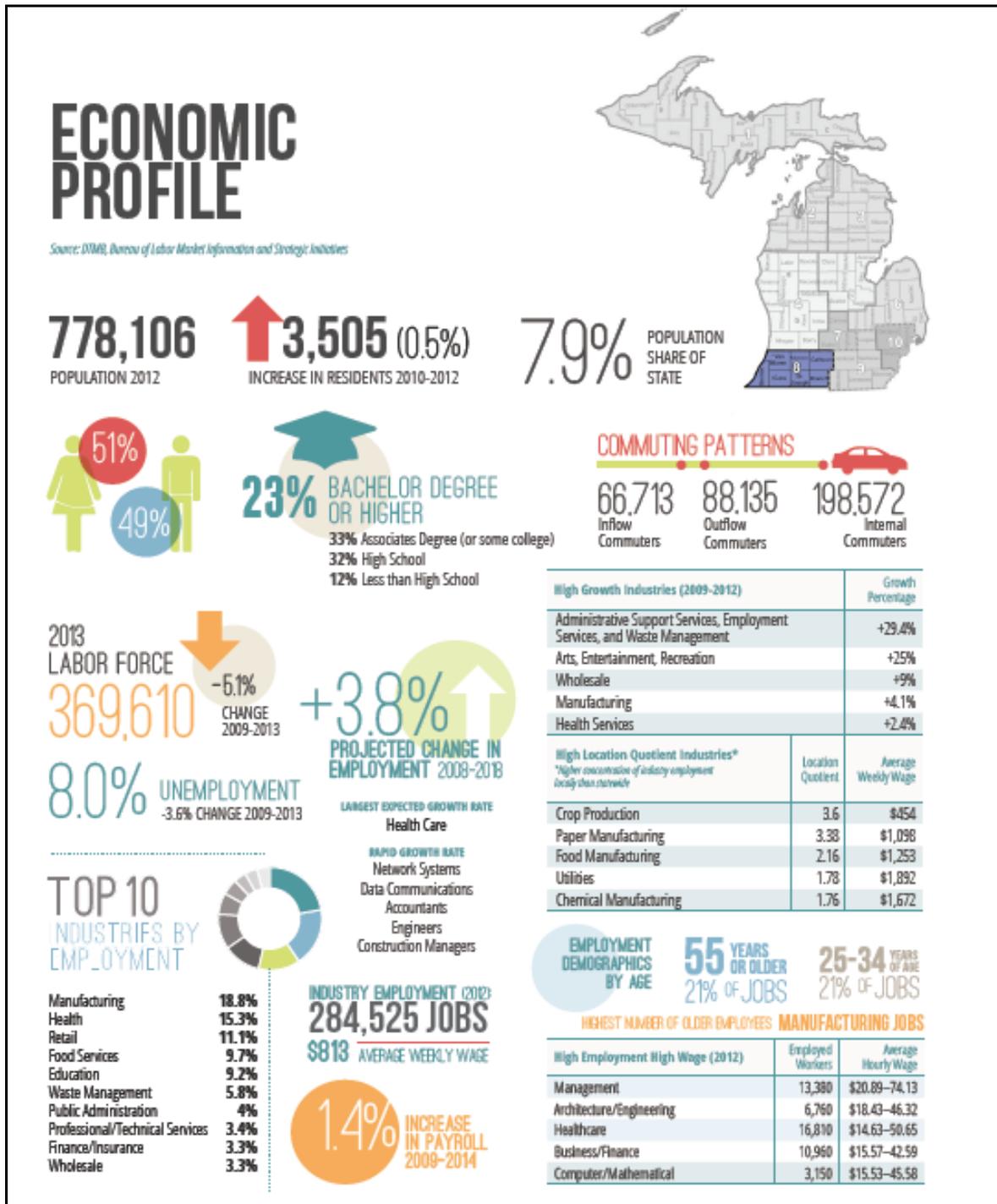
Age: As concluded by DTMB, manufacturing registers the highest number of older employees (jobs held by workers ages 55+) in Region 8. This may make the Region susceptible to potential talent shortfalls, especially if there are not enough skilled workers able to replace existing workers upon retirement or other exits from the labor market.

Decreasing Unemployment Rate: Just as is with Michigan's economic growth being largely dependent on the talent of its citizens, so is that as of Region 8. Currently in Region 8, there is a failure to match the supply of talent with the demand of employers, especially in the high growth industries discussed above. While Region 8's unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing, the result has been fewer unemployed residents actively seeking jobs. It is important to note that the unemployment rate does not include marginally attached workers and individuals working part-time but wanting full-time work, presenting an opportunity to Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest to work with this population. However, this still means employers are not getting the talent they need to achieve maximum success and workers are losing out on higher wage jobs that would allow them to be better providers for their families. The Business Services Teams are actively outreaching to individuals not reported in the unemployment rate to assist in matching the unreported talent with appropriate employers.

To address this challenge, the partners in Region 8 are working collaboratively with employers, economic development, training providers, and other partners, by employing several strategies to boost the education/skill level of workers and Michigan's unemployed and low income population with available job vacancies, discussed throughout this plan.

Additional Resource: Snapshot

One additional important data set to review is the Economic Profile as compiled by RPI. This snapshot confirms the above data, highlighting healthcare and manufacturing as the top employers in the identified industry in Region 8.



3. Regional Service Strategies

Kinexus and Michigan Works Southwest have developed systems and best practices through effective communication and data sharing that effectively meet the needs of job seekers and employers in Region 8. As outlined below, many of these strategies will be expanded and streamlined throughout the life of this plan to prioritize regional planning efforts.

Geography

Region 8 is located in the southwest corner of Michigan. The region shares a border with Indiana and has a major interstate highway that connects Detroit and Chicago. The region includes a mixture of urban and rural areas that are attractive to a variety of industry sectors.

Business Services Teams

The two workforce agencies in Region 8 utilize the Business Services model to engage employers in the region. The business services leads for the region, regularly collaborate with community stakeholders to meet the needs of job seekers and employers. The work of these teams throughout Region 8 will continue to be streamlined throughout the implementation of the WIOA.

The work done by Certified Business Solutions Professionals leverages partnerships between business, workforce development, educators and economic developers to help businesses in Region 8 be successful and to meet their demands for a skilled workforce.

The demand-driven model requires the workforce development system to place business as the primary customer. To help attract, retain and expand local businesses, Michigan Works! in Region 8 has established strong relationships with local businesses and economic development organizations. Through these relationships Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest are able to leverage an increasing number of jobs for Region 8 job seeker customers while assuring that the needs of local businesses are being met thereby serving the needs of both the supply and demand side of the equation.

A focus on employers as a primary customer does not minimize the Region 8 Business Services Teams' commitment to excellent customer service for job seekers. Using our industry consortiums and local labor market data allows our business services team to provide job seekers with the appropriate training and targeted job placement strategies to help families maintain financial self-sufficiency.

Establishing a Business Services Team (BST) is a key strategy in implementing the demand-driven model, which is utilized throughout Region 8. The BST concept has three key features:

- A focus on business as the driver and primary customer
- Development of a team of workforce development professionals specifically trained for and committed to developing relationships with businesses
- Understanding the value and role in strategic collaborations with regional economic development and education partners to provide business solutions

The BST concept calls for a coordinated, systematic, team approach to business outreach and engagement.

Regionally the work of the Business Services Teams include, but is not limited to:

- Outreach and recruitment assistance,
- Screening applications,
- Job postings on Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC),
- Local and regional hiring events and job fairs for all job seekers,
- Attraction and retention assistance in partnership with economic development partners, Training and funding opportunities for new and incumbent workers, including connecting the unemployed with work-based learning opportunities throughout Region 8,
- Work with educators and employers to understand and improve opportunities for individuals with disabilities, veterans, youth, or other hard-to-serve populations,
- Approaching the ever changing workforce through a two generational approach, and
- Industry specific consortia work throughout Region 8 (See Section 4 for more information).

To support the work of the Business Services Teams throughout Region 8, Business Service Staff need to engage with multiple partners including the following:

- Education and Training Providers,
- Vocational Rehabilitation Partners,
- Veteran Services Partners,
- Economic development organizations,
- Area Chambers of Commerce,
- Local units of government,
- Organized Labor Unions,
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation,
- Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan,
- BSPs from other Michigan Works! areas outside of Region 8.

Pure Michigan Talent Connect will also be used by all program staff and the Business Services Team to assist employers and job seekers by providing strategic tools through the web based portal connecting the two. Talent Connect provides tools for employers to identify and develop

their talent base while also giving job seekers the opportunity to create a personalized plan to help them more effectively navigate career decisions.

Talent District Career Council

The existing Southwest Michigan Region 8 Talent District Career Council (TDCC) works together and serves in an advisory capacity to all Workforce Development Boards within Region 8, representing the counties of Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren. The mission of the Southwest Michigan Region 8 Talent District Career Council (TDCC) is to create and support a regional talent preparation and development system that will provide all students, youth to the adult learner, with the necessary academic, technical, and work behavior skills that will meet business and industry needs to maintain and enhance the regional economy of the seven county region.

The TDCC is the body to recommend action for system change and be the catalyst to bring the educational system and workforce talent development/acquisition system into alignment to support the regionally developed strategic plans.

To accomplish its mission, the TDCC will advise the local Workforce Development Boards on matters related to educational components of talent preparation and development services and federal adult education. It shall consider and comment, when required, appropriately related grants such as the Adult Education and/or Perkins Funds.

The TDCC in cooperation with the Adult Education 107 Regional Fiscal Agent will create processes for the selection of adult education providers to ensure alignment with local and regional strategic plans.

To achieve its primary purpose, the TDCC is specifically responsible:

1. To serve in an advisory capacity to local Workforce Development Boards on a broad range of youth and adult educational issues, including advisement of strategic workforce development plans.
2. To coordinate with other educational entities, in guiding career development programs and career pathways, such as high schools, community colleges, career and technical education, adult education, programs, Michigan Works! Service Centers, prisoner reentry programs, corrections education, veterans' programs, and college access networks in support of the local Workforce Development Boards' mission and strategic workforce development plans.
3. To assist the local Workforce Development Boards, consistent with the WIOA of 2014, with the development and implementation of career pathways.
4. To support contextual learning opportunities that aligns to the learner's career pathway.
5. To ensure career and educational advising is available to all students.

6. To maximize existing community-based resources that will avoid duplication of services.
7. To provide direction, strategies, and support for implementing, improving, and expanding regional Adult Learning initiatives to include educational, job training and life skills programs in collaboration with the State Section 107 fiscal agent.
8. To ensure educational programs and service delivery align to the Department of Education and the Workforce Development Agency requirements

To date, this group has been crucial to addressing the regional education and training needs and is prioritizing this critical role they play in Region 8 moving forward.

Career Jump Start/MAT2

The Career Jump Start initiative was launched in 2013 by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) in response to employer feedback gathered during the inaugural Governor's Economic Summit. With the ultimate goal of directing more high school graduates into high demand jobs to help close the skills gap in Michigan, the original intent of the CJS initiative was to provide funding to establish "career liaison" positions within each of the ten Prosperity Regions as well as additional resources to support related statewide marketing efforts. Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest have each appointed a Career Liaison to meet the needs of the policy.

In addition, Region 8 follows the guidelines that have been established for how the CJS initiative will now be administered and supported through the Prosperity Regions framework. Under this new structure, the designated Michigan Works! Agency lead contact for each Talent District Career Council (TDCC) will serve as both the administrative agent and fiduciary, and will be responsible for coordinating the efforts of all TDCC partners to ensure that the CJS initiative is successfully implemented. In this case, Michigan Works! Southwest fulfills this role.

The goal is to continue to streamline and expand the work of the Career Jump Start Initiative over the course of the next four years. In order to do so, the career liaisons in Region 8 focus on the following core components of the CJS initiative:

- Assist the Talent District Career Council in their duties;
- Establish a connection to community resources in order to create a talent pipeline;
- Market applicable programs;
- Disseminate initiative information;
- Coordination of outreach events;
- Maintain communication with all key stakeholders;
- Increase enrollment in credential issuing training programs;

- Assist MWA with meeting or exceeding their required WIOA credential attainment performance measures;
- Utilize Pure Michigan Talent Connect and the Eligible Training Provider List as a primary source of in-demand career and education information when developing and implementing regional marketing and outreach strategies;
- Expand Talent Tours, including assistance to the partners to meet or exceed their requirements to facilitate at least two Talent Tours per year, as well as assisting with the identification of additional partners;
- Identify employers seeking to establish or expand youth work experience opportunities;
- Leverage expanded partner networks to build awareness of Career and Technical Education (CTE) and/or Early/Middle Colleges with a focus on increasing the number of industry partners providing work-based learning opportunities;
- Collaboration with adult education programs located within the region;
- In Region 8, where MAT2 programs exist, the Career Liaisons disseminate information to students, parents, and educators and assist the partners with meeting or exceeding all required metrics and deliverables.

Jobs for Michigan Graduates

Under the leadership of Kinexus, Michigan Works! Southwest actively participates in Jobs for Michigan Graduates programming working to raise Region 8's, as well as the state of Michigan's high school graduation rate by expanding mentoring, job readiness, leadership development, and other academic support for students either at risk of dropping out or those who have already dropped out.

Veterans Services

Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists are State of Michigan employees who provide intensive, individualized services to meet the employment needs of eligible veterans and spouses with significant barriers to employment.

Services provided by these employment service professionals in assisting eligible veterans and spouses reduce and/or eliminate barriers to employment. Services include, but are not limited to:

- Resume development,
- Interviewing skills, networking
- Direct referral to other service providers

Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest complies with the Jobs for Veterans Act by giving veterans and eligible spouses priority of service status for all programs.

Veterans Regional Job Fair

Michigan Works! organizations in Region 8 have come together in the past to offer a region wide Veterans Career Fair to connect Veterans and their s with employment opportunities that appropriately pair with their transferable skills. This job fair not only assisted Veterans in their transition to the civilian workforce but also assisted employers in understanding this transition to available positions within their businesses. This event will continue to be evaluated in regard to holding another one in the future.

Veterans Community Action Team – VCAT

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency has recently expanded its Veterans Community Action Team program to veterans and their families living in Michigan’s Prosperity Region 8, which includes Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph and Van Buren counties. This group works to assist the more than 55,000 veterans in Southwest Michigan with creating easier access to comprehensive health, employment, education and quality-of-life opportunities thanks to a collaboration that brings together local, state and federal resources and services. Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to work with this partnership driven collaborative to assist veterans in Southwest Michigan.

Sector Partnership National Emergency Grant

The United States Department of Labor (USDOL) awarded the Workforce Development Agency (WDA) SP NEG funds to provide employment related services for dislocated workers. SP NEG funds are structured to advance and complement the more integrated and comprehensive dislocated worker services envisioned by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

For Region 8, Michigan Works! Southwest serves as the administrator of these funds for all of Region 8. The focus of SP NEG in Region 8 is offering a unique opportunity to broaden the applicant pool in addition to the requirements of serving those workers who have been laid off due to plant closure or mass layoff, for individuals who are nearing the exhaustion of their unemployment compensation and for those who are long term unemployed without any unemployment benefits and have given up hope for the opportunity of re-employment. Central to the success of the participants served under this grant are the Region 8’s Michigan Works! Service Centers’ fully integrated non-siloed talent pipeline approach to anyone in search of a job or career.

Under Career Services, participants will have standardized entry services that will provide them with accurate and clear information on all available services; and through effective guidance,

staff will target the right services the first time and ensure jobseekers receive appropriate services aligned to their needs. There will be a continuum of services over time until goals are met in which the intensity of services and the contact methodology is based on individual need and service availability.

Regional planning funds to enhance or expand the Michigan Industry Cluster Approach are also included in this funding. These funds should be used to ensure partnerships and regional assets are aligned and integrated, and may include, but are not limited to, development of regional plans, partnership and program development, asset mapping, staff training to facilitate regional planning and development of social and/or peer learning networks.

Prisoner Reentry

The mission of Prisoner Reentry, funded through the Michigan Department of Corrections, is to enhance public safety by reducing offender recidivism through a seamless plan of services and supervision, delivered through state and local collaboration. This plan will be developed with each prisoner from the time of his or her entry into the prison system through parole and reintegration into the community. Positive reentry of individuals in Region 8 will rely on cross county collaboration and leveraging of resources to guarantee employment placement and successful transition back into the communities throughout the region.

Other Regional Partnerships

By developing positive and cooperative relationships with state agencies, at the local levels, such as the Unemployment Insurance Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan Rehabilitative Services, the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, the Department of Education, and others, we can better serve our business customers and job seekers through unduplicated, coordinated services. Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest work collaboratively with the following agencies throughout Region 8 with a goal of inclusion and universal access:

- Disability Network of Southwest Michigan: an organization dedicated to educating and connecting people with disabilities to resources while advocating for social change.
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services: a statewide agency that works with individuals and employers to achieve quality employment outcomes and independence for individuals with disabilities.
- Bureau of Services for Blind Persons: an organization committed to providing opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired to achieve employability and/or function independently in society.

- Job Accommodation Network: an organization that provides free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and the Americans with Disabilities Act legislation to individuals and employers.

4. In Demand Industry Sectors

Regional Priorities and Collaboration

In Region 8 much of our collaborations and priorities are focused on an industry cluster approach. As defined per the state of Michigan, “a cluster is a geographic concentration of related employers, industry suppliers, and support institutions in a product or service field. For the purposes of workforce development, Michigan's clusters are broad industry sectors. There is growing evidence that industry clusters are an effective organizing framework for positively impacting economic and workforce development activities.” With that, Michigan has implemented the Michigan Industry Cluster Approach throughout the workforce system and identified Agriculture, Energy, Health Care, Information Technology & Media, and Manufacturing as five priority clusters.

As representative in the data presented above, Manufacturing, Healthcare, Hospitality and Agriculture present the major occupation sectors and occupations within the region and will continue to be the priority of Region 8. However, in addition, in planning for the future and aligning with the State of Michigan industry sectors and cluster approach, Region 8 will also focus on the IT and Energy sectors in the future, as appropriate.

Current Sector Based Partnerships and Business Involvement

Current consortium groups in Manufacturing and Healthcare exist in Region 8 and an Agriculture Consortium is in the planning stages. The two existing consortium groups are active throughout the region in the following ways:

- Employer group and individual employer STTF applications;
- Joint career fairs and other events to assist job seekers and employers;
- Identifying needs and challenges of their specific industry;
- Connecting job seekers with employers; and
- General information and resource sharing.

Members of the consortium group are reflective of Region 8, and include partners in:

- Education and Training,
- Economic Development,
- Workforce Development and
- Employers.

The strong employer involvement in the consortiums is the foundation in which the groups are built on and is critical to the groups continuing to serve as change agents throughout the region. Each consortium provides expertise and understanding of the specific industries, guiding each consortium's collective efforts.

Southwest Michigan Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium

With the lack of qualified candidates to fill entry-level, technician-level and engineering job openings in Southwest Michigan, the Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium formed in 2011. Today, 158 local manufacturing companies and 17 service provider organizations are invited to meet quarterly to discuss and develop innovative and integrated strategies to address this crucial issue, including on-the-job training, apprenticeships, career advancement, and payment of education, according to their website.

The consortium focuses on three strategic areas to address the skilled labor shortage: recruitment, screening and training. The Southwest Michigan Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium uses a locally developed, innovative and integrated model to address these strategic areas and attract, screen, and train qualified candidates for current and future advanced manufacturing career opportunities.

Listed below are some of the innovative approaches in conjunction with training institutions that have been implemented to address the needs:

- Glen Oaks Community College (GOCC) Business and Industry Training
- Kellogg Community College (KCC) Regional Manufacturing Technology Center (RMTC)
- Kellogg Advanced Manufacturing Assembly Program
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) CNC Operator Academy
- KVCC Mechatronic Technician Academy
- Michigan Advanced Technician Training Program (MAT²®) - Innovative, industry-driven approach to a training program that combines theory, practice and work

In addition, the Southwest Michigan Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium, prioritizes Project Lead The Way, an engaging, project-based K-12 curriculum that prepares the students to be innovative and productive leaders in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM).

Southwest Michigan Healthcare Consortium

The focus of the Southwest Michigan Healthcare Consortium is to develop health care industry-based partnerships that promote the economic health and welfare of Region 8 businesses and workers.

The overall focus in forming this alliance was to develop healthcare industry-based partnerships that would promote the economic health and welfare of the region's businesses and workers. Regional activities address healthcare worker shortages, skill shortages, training mismatches, employee recruitment, retention, and organizational design issues that are common across this geographic area.

Throughout the years, resources have been shared and combined efforts have been made to address common issues. In September 2011, an information gathering survey, along with an invitation to meet to discuss healthcare employer needs, was sent to healthcare providers in numerous counties in Region 8. These actions led to conversations where employers identified areas where they needed support. They were:

- Recruitment of qualified candidates
- Background checks
- Lockouts of clinical sites
- Retention issues
- Home healthcare aide certification

As a result of the initial meeting, five regional strategies were developed:

- Share best practices in a forum that includes healthcare employers and partners representing workforce development, education, and economic development.
- Plan and hold periodic career fairs to assist with meeting current employer needs.
- Explore and identify a common assessment tool to assist employers in finding good candidate matches early on in the recruitment process.
- Develop and maintain a database of current healthcare providers within the five county area.
- Conduct periodic needs surveys and share the results.

The group continues to grow throughout the region, streamline their work and enhance the industry throughout Region 8.

Regional Career Fairs

Employers throughout Region 8 play a role in the planning and implementation of a nontraditional career fair model that has been implemented throughout the region on numerous

occasions, including the Veteran Job Fair discussed in Section 3. This successful career fair model calls for pre-event preparation, in order to assist in preparing the best possible job seekers for the employers, including, but not limited to,

- Resume review of job seeker resumes planning to attend the career fair, by Michigan Works! staff or employer representatives,
- Mock interviews by Michigan Works! staff or employers prior to the event,
- Employability skill building workshop opportunities and
- Employer panel information sharing/question and answer opportunity.

Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest continue to partner with economic development and training partners across Region 8 to meet the needs of employers and foster growth of in demand sectors and occupations.

5. Administrative Cost Requirements

Annually and upon receiving regionally allocated funds from the Workforce Development Agency, Kinexus and Michigan Works Southwest leadership teams analyze performance and administrative requirements of regional funds to ensure that all distributions comply with state policy. Upon completion of this analysis, the leadership teams of both organizations determine administrative cost arrangements for the region for that year or the funding stream. An MOU will be completed, agreed upon and signed by the directors of both Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 clearly stating the cost sharing requirements for that year or that funding stream.

6. Transportation and Supportive Service Coordination

To meet the needs of employers and job seekers throughout Region 8, transportation and support service coordination has ample opportunity to be enhanced through the potential breaking down of county line restrictions and barriers of service area alignment by county, and will be prioritized throughout the life of this plan.

Transportation

Throughout the region, public transportation, through the guidance and assistance of Michigan Works!, has already started work to break down the geographic barriers of county lines and have completed trial projects of transporting job seekers and workers across county lines to job search and ultimately maintain employment, through meeting points at county lines.

Existing community transportation partners, who Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to work with to explore options of cross regional transportation include:

- Battle Creek Area Transit
- Branch Area Transit Authority, Inc.
- Kalamazoo Metro Transit
- Marshal Albion Transit Authority
- Michigan Great Southwest
- Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
- Saint Joseph County Transit Authority
- Strategic Leadership Council

In addition, Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest, will work collaboratively with the Regional Prosperity Initiative to break down transportation barriers. The Southcentral Planning Commission, leading the RPI, per their website, has been charged by the Michigan Department of Transportation with conducting regional transportation planning for areas outside metropolitan areas (Kalamazoo County and the Northwestern section of Calhoun County). Metropolitan area transportation planning is conducted by the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study (KATS) and the Battle Creek Area Transportation Study (BCATS) within their respective Metropolitan Planning Areas. SMPC currently contracts with the Kalamazoo Area Transportation Study to provide regional transportation planning and related activities, and Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest, will continue to support and assist in the development of these activities.

Supportive Services

Supportive services, often restricted by policy guidelines, will also analyzed for coordination across the geographic area to best serve job seekers and workers. Potential partners could include, but are not limited to:

- 211
- Childcare Resources (throughout the region)
- Community Action Agency (throughout the region)
- Community Collaborative Bodies (throughout the region)
- County Land Banks (throughout the region)
- Goodwill (throughout the region)
- Housing Resources, Inc.
- Meals on Wheels (throughout the region)
- Salvation Army (throughout the region)
- Southwest Michigan Community Development Corporation
- United Way (throughout the region)

Staff from both Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest are active within their respective counties, as well as across the region, with support service providers and transportation entities to assist in guiding as well as leading future coordination of transportation and supportive service delivery across the region.

7. Collaboration

With the demand-driven model, as discussed, requiring the workforce development system to place business as the primary customer, Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest strive to be one stop shops within their given counties, as well as in the region as a whole, to assist prospective employer clients and existing customers with business development services through an integrated business retention and attraction program. In order to be successful it is critical that a coordinated partnership with economic development services and providers within the region remain a priority.

Partnerships

Both Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 have established relationships with local area community colleges, economic development organizations, planning commissions as well as the MEDC and strive to enhance service delivery.

In order to ensure regional collaboration and success of employers and industry in Region 8, partner meetings to discuss best practices, current projects and review available resources are held regularly in the form of project specific meetings or the work of the industry specific consortiums, active in Region 8 (See Section 4 for more information).

Economic Development

Current economic development organizations engaged in regional planning, include,

- Southwest Michigan First,
 - Southwest Michigan First covers the region in its' entirety, and the organization and their team are passionate about creating jobs and cultivating a strong economy in Southwest Michigan. Per their website, Southwest Michigan First was created for one singular purpose: To assist companies in growing jobs. Southwest Michigan First focuses their activities on services and collaborations that promote Business Growth, including but not limited to: Business-to-Business Marketing, Supply Chain Recruitment, Workforce Development, Capital Acquisition, Site Selection, Consulting Services, Brand Development, and Efficient Government.
 - Michigan Works! throughout Region 8 are actively involved in the Southwest Michigan First spearheaded regional planning meetings and plan to continue so as the region prioritizes economic development in all counties.
- In addition to collaborating with Southwest Michigan First partnerships have been formed to assist the following economic development organizations with their work:

- Albion Economic Development Alliance,
- Battle Creek Unlimited,
- Branch County Economic Growth Alliance,
- Cornerstone Alliance,
- Marshall Area Economic Development Alliance,
- Southwest Michigan Economic Growth Alliance, and
- Van Buren County Economic Development Corporation.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation is also a critical partner in Region 8 in offering business assistance services and capital programs for business attraction and acceleration.

Training and Education

Education and training providers currently involved with economic development and assist with regional planning, include, but are not limited to:

- Berrien Regional Educational Services Agency
- Branch County Intermediate School District
- Calhoun County Intermediate School District
- Glen Oaks Community College
- Kalamazoo Regional Educational Services Agency
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College
- Kellogg Community College
- Lake Michigan College
- Saint Joseph County Intermediate School District
- Southwestern Michigan College
- Van Buren ISD
- Western Michigan University
- Other:
 - EFE Programs throughout the region

In addition, Michigan Training Connect, housed within the Pure Michigan Talent Connect system, will be used throughout Region 8 to provide job seekers with the tools they need to choose a training program to become employed in a high demand job industry.

Over the course of the next four years, training and education options for job seekers and workers in Region 8 will continue to be identified and developed. Information gained from employers, in partnership with the identified economic developers and training institutions will remain a critical tool in creating and implementing needed trainings based on the demands of the industries in Region 8.

Employers

There are hundreds of businesses currently involved with Kinexus, Michigan Works! Southwest, the identified economic development organizations and the identified training organizations, including numerous businesses from emerging sectors/industries.

One current project in Region 8, that will continue throughout the span of this plan, is the attraction and expansion of Clemens Food Group, representative of the Agriculture Sector in Region 8. This project has thus far and will continue to require the efforts of numerous state and local economic developers, Michigan Works!, state and local government and workforce development professionals and organizations to guarantee their successful expansion into the region. For this specific project, Michigan Works! is working directly with Clemens Food Group on the recruitment and training of job seekers to meet the employers needs for the over 800 positions the company needs to fill in order to operate a successful operation by the Fall of 2017.

Regional Prosperity Initiative

The RPI is a voluntary competitive grant process designed to encourage local private, public and non-profit partners to create vibrant regional economies, and Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest are active in the Regional Prosperity Initiative in Region 8. To achieve coordinated regional services, the collaborative relationships among local and regional partners, as facilitated by RPI, allows the state, as well as private and non-profit stakeholders, to recognize local efforts and work in closer collaboration with local and regional decision makers to support efforts for economic prosperity.

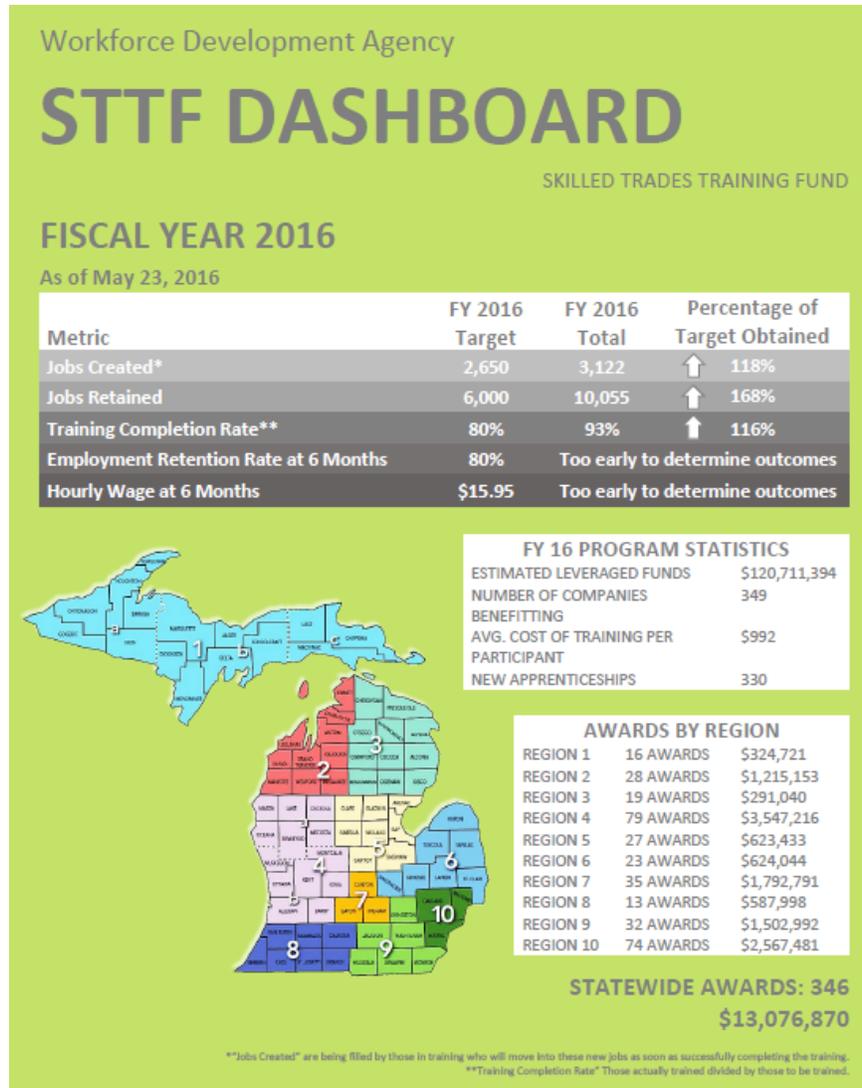
As is with the Regional Prosperity Initiative, Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest value and rely on regional collaboration to work to eliminate overlapping responsibilities and competing visions as to economic priorities, as well as to avoid redundancies and gaps in services.

Skilled Trades Training Fund

Just as the state sees collaboration between Michigan Works! Agencies, economic development and education as essential in achieving demand-driven training that addresses talent shortages preventing growth of Michigan industries, so do the partners in Region 8. Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest work together to coordinate and maximize Skilled Trades Training Fund benefits for Region 8 by working together to meet the needs of employers. STTF focuses on assisting companies in meeting their talent challenges through providing competitive awards for employer responsive training that enhances talent, productivity, and employment retention while increasing the quality and competitiveness of Michigan's businesses.

As both Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 spearhead the STTF every year, collaboration amongst the two organizations, training institutions across the region and regional economic development partners are critical to the success of this opportunity to employers in Southwest Michigan.

Per the STTF Dashboard, available below, Region 8 was awarded 13 awards for fiscal year 2016 totaling \$587,998, and Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest plan to continue to work collaboratively to assist employers in Southwest Michigan in achieving this opportunity.



Other

The Southwest Michigan Procurement Technical Assistance Center (**PTAC**) provides services in all seven counties in Region 8 and assists businesses who wish to sell products and services to the federal, state, and local governments. PTAC services, include the following and, are offered at no charge:

- **Training Events:** PTAC hosts training seminars and networking events to assist businesses in Region 8 in learning more about government procurement topics.
- **Bid Match:** A customized search is created for each client to identify federal, state, and local government bid opportunities. Over 2,000 websites are explored each day.
- **Custom Market Research:** PTAC researches what, when, how, quantity, and frequency of government buys of the client's products/services. Competitor's government history is also researched. A custom marketing strategy is designed to meet the needs of each client.
- **Government Registrations:** Assistance is offered to complete the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM), the State of Michigan, and other registrations.
- **Subcontracting Assistance:** PTAC helps clients identify subcontracting opportunities with government prime contractors.

Coordination with business, economic development and education is critical to the growth of business and industry, as well as the success of job seekers in Region 8.

8. Regional Performance Goals

As noted in the state plan, “detailed guidance is pending from one or more federal partners regarding data definitions, sources, validation, and submission requirements. The Workforce Development Agency, which oversees the WIOA Title 1 Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs, WIOA Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy, and Title III Wagner-Peyser, will work with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services and Licensing and Regulatory Affairs which oversees the WIOA Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation program (Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Bureau of Services for Blind Persons respectively), to adopt joint performance reporting requirements as outlined in the WIOA Act Section 116. Joint performance measures for the WIOA will consist of six customer outcomes specific to core indicators of performance and employer (customer) satisfaction by program.” In addition, per PI 15-28, “Given the ongoing transition from the WIA to the WIOA, states were given the option in USDOL TEGL 30-14 to negotiate PY 2015 performance levels, or to extend PY 2014 performance levels to cover PY 2015, the last year of WIA performance. The State of Michigan chose to extend its PY 2014 performance levels to cover PY 2015.”

Kinexus and Michigan Works! Southwest are currently striving to meet the extended Program Year 2014 performance levels. Upon issuance of official policy regarding required local and regional performance measures for PY2016, and subsequent years, leadership staff across the two Michigan Works! agencies will analyze performance requirements and collectively negotiate to reach agreements locally, across the region and ultimately with the Governor, as appropriate, on local levels of performance for the performance accountability measures outlined in the WIOA Section 116, including meeting the measures identified in the State of Michigan Unified Plan.