



2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Apprenticeship Ambassadors at the White House

Setting the strategic direction of workforce planning for West Michigan

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Montcalm County Commissioner

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Allegan County Commissioner

Matt Fenske
Chair, Ottawa County Commissioner

Frank Garcia
Ottawa County Commissioner

Ben Geiger
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Matt Kallman
Kent County Commissioner

Melissa LaGrand
Kent County Commissioner

Malinda Pego
Muskegon County Commissioner

Kurt Reppart
City of Grand Rapids Commissioner

Bob Scolnik
Chair, Muskegon County Commissioner

Larry Tiejema
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Kent County Commissioner

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Western Michigan

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(retired from the board Oct 2022)
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Holland Board of Public Works

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STAFF

Jacob Maas, CEO
Angie Barksdale, COO
Bob Perkins, CFO

LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Our annual report provides an important opportunity for us to reflect on our work, the impact we've had on our communities, and the environment in which we've served. While we can't say that the years-long COVID-19 pandemic is over, 2022 has given us reasons to be hopeful. From increased traffic in our service centers to slight shifts in job seeker attitudes seen in the 2022 job seeker survey, things are moving in the right direction. We are pleased to share a summary of West Michigan Works! (WMW!) primary activities and some of our major accomplishments in the 2022 program year (ending September 30).

Early in the year we created a new division: development and innovation. This new team gives us additional capacity to scale program initiatives and develop future opportunities to meet the region's workforce needs. We also launched a 501(c)3, Strategic Workforce Solutions. The nonprofit entity will allow WMW! to coordinate with community and government organizations, facilitating strategic planning, providing job training services, and implementing workforce innovations and program development.

In May, the U.S. Department of Labor released a proposed rule by the Employment and Training Administration — one of the most significant and devastating proposed rule changes the network has encountered since its inception. The change would reduce or eliminate critical services to both job seekers and employers. In response, more than 1,500 individuals and businesses signed on to the letter supporting our state's workforce system. We do not expect a decision from the DOL until early 2023, but regardless of the outcome, we are grateful for the continued support of our partners.

Our service centers remain accessible and focused on the needs of the communities they call home. This year, we moved the Ionia and Holland service centers to new, larger locations that provide better access to WMW! and partner services. After nearly two years, our Rockford service center reopened with expanded services.

The exceptional in-person and virtual services provided by our navigators, career coaches and business solutions representatives remains unmatched. West Michigan employers, supported by our business solutions team, once again led the state in Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) awards.

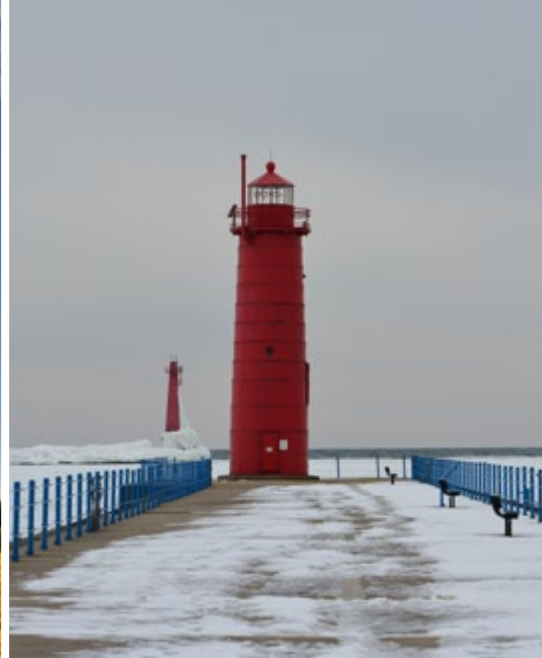
WMW! apprenticeship program successes have propelled us into national conversations about developing and expanding apprenticeship programs. Our work with businesses and educators was recognized when we were named a U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Registered Apprenticeship Technical Assistance Center of Excellence and presented with the 2022 Best Practice Award. WMW! was also recognized by the DOL Employment & Training Administration as an Apprenticeship Ambassador for our role in the expansion, diversification and modernization of registered apprenticeships.

We are honored to have many talented individuals and dedicated businesses serving alongside us. We were represented by John Buchan, workforce board member and executive vice president of Mobile Solutions at NN, Inc., at the Talent Pipeline Challenge at the White House. The event, hosted by President Biden, honored businesses, educators and non-profit organizations that support skills training in their communities. The innovative work of the Discover Manufacturing Industry Talent Council was recognized when Steve Heethuis, council chair and training director at NN Autocam Precision Components Group, received the 2022 Michigan Manufacturers Association Talent Champion of the Year award.

The inaugural 2021 job seeker survey gave a voice to employee experiences during a transitional period when businesses and industries were reopening and the country was emerging from the pandemic. The 2022 survey brings hope; job seekers and employees have a slightly better outlook. We share that optimism and look forward to strengthening our partnerships and programs in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Mark Bergsma, Workforce Board Chair
Senita Lenear, Chief Elected Official
Jacob Maas, Chief Executive Officer



ABOUT WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!

West Michigan Works! is committed to creating a **diverse and qualified** workforce for West Michigan.

West Michigan Works! is one of sixteen agencies within Michigan's workforce development system. Having created the first integrated system in the country, Michigan has long been a leader among the nation's workforce systems.

PRINCIPLES

We rely on labor market data and input from employers and industry talent councils to identify common skill gaps, training needs and industry trends. Regional collaboration and problem-solving address talent, curriculum and advocacy issues on a broader level, resulting in a larger skilled labor pool and increased job placements.

DEMOGRAPHICS

West Michigan Works! serves employers and job seekers in Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon and Ottawa counties. The region has a population base of 1.5 million and includes the city of Grand Rapids, the second largest city in the state. It is home to several economic development agencies and a strong network of educational institutions: seven ISDs, three community colleges and 11 colleges and universities.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

West Michigan Works! (WMW!) operated 54 programs under 80 grants during the year ending September 30, 2022. Each grant dictated the population to be served, how the funding could be used and the time frame in which the funding needed to be spent.

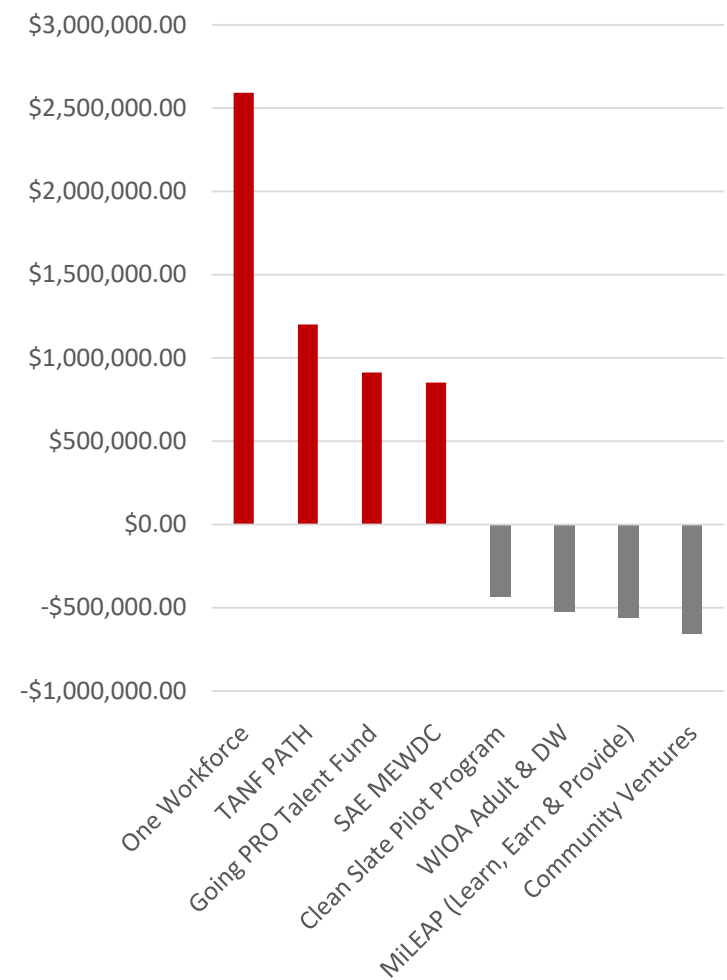
WMW! was awarded \$40,471,025 during the year ending September 30, 2022, an increase of \$1,955,500 over the previous year. During this time period we utilized \$34,367,232 of new and carried over awards.

SIGNIFICANT INCREASES/DECREASES IN FUNDING

One Workforce and State Apprentice Expansion were new grants awarded during the year ending September 30, 2022. PATH TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and Going PRO Talent Funds saw significant increases from the prior year.

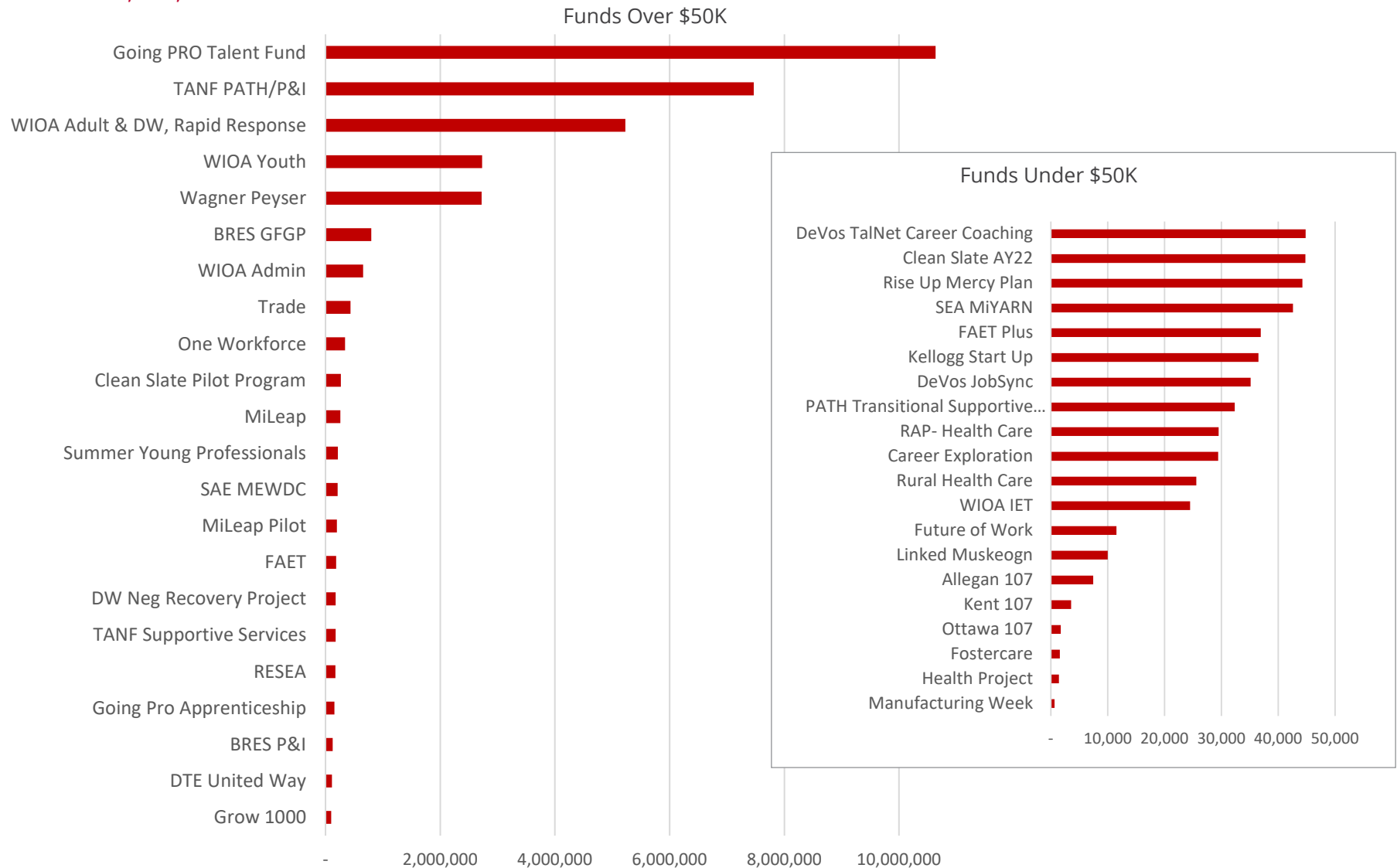
Clean Slate and Community Ventures funding were not renewed. WIOA was awarded less dollars and MiLEAP was a multi-year award with no new funding during the year ending September 30, 2022.

SIGNIFICANT INCREASES/DECREASES IN AWARDS BY PROGRAM



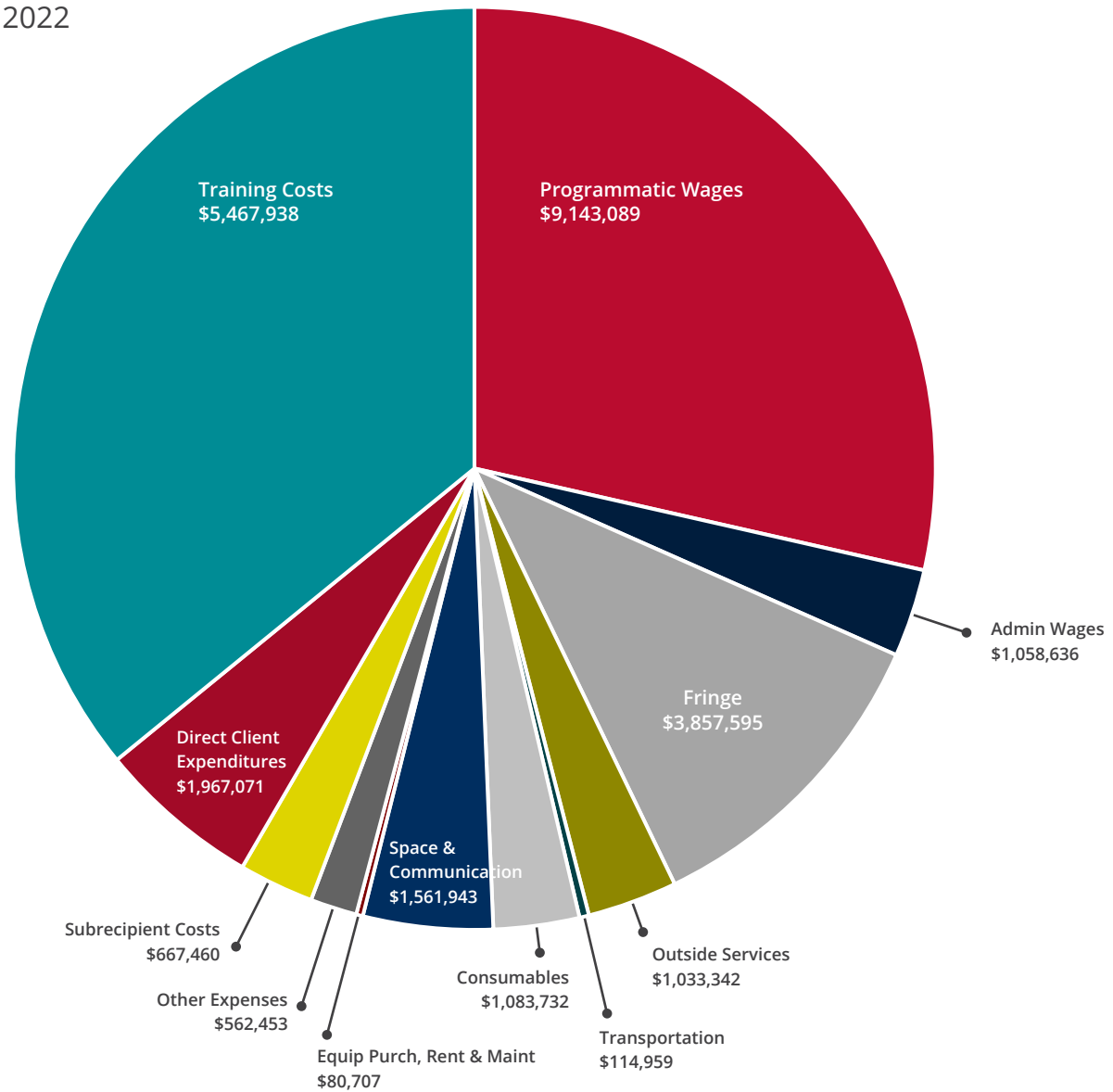
EARNED INCOME BY PROGRAM FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

TOTAL: \$34,367,232



EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY FOR THE
YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

TOTAL: \$34,367,232



39,482

Job Seekers Served

2,836

Employers Served

9,695

Jobs Filled

\$1.08 Billion

Wages Earned*

*Total wages earned by individuals going through the West Michigan Works! system.

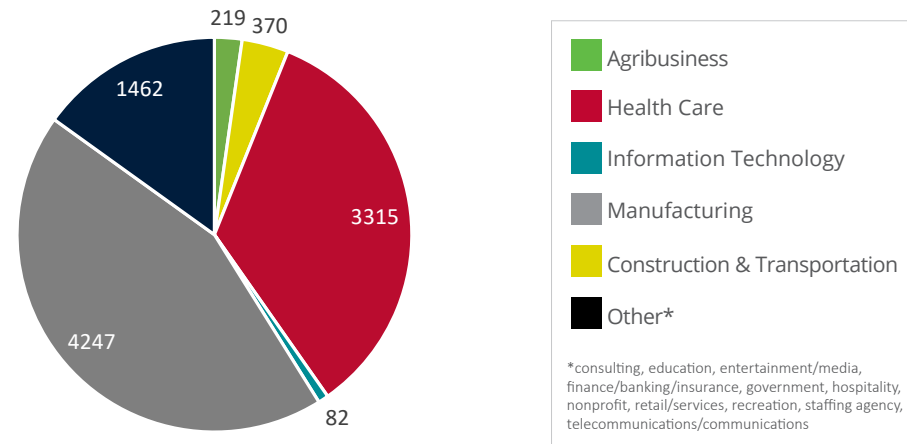
Source: State of Michigan Workforce Development, Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity

2022 AT A GLANCE

TRAINING COMPLETED BY INDUSTRY

	New Hire	Classroom	Apprenticeship	Credentials Earned
Agribusiness	0	0	0	0
Construction	32	237	1	11
Health Care	44	377	53	166
Information Technology	22	4	0	3
Manufacturing	220	34	0	8
Other	120	119	1	234
TOTAL	438	771	55	422

JOBS FILLED BY INDUSTRY



CAREER AWARENESS EVENTS

	Students	Schools	Employers
Career AG-xploration ■	320	21	17
Discover Manufacturing Week ■	5,749	75	71
Junior Achievement Career Speaker Series ■ ■	1,725	-	43
MiCareerConversations ■ ■ ■ ■ ■	1,394	58	27
{MI}Code Experience ■	1,560	70	50
Ottawa ISD College and Career Days ■	75	1	3
Traveling Roadshows ■	624	19	50
TOTAL	11,447	244	261

■ Agribusiness Talent Council
 ■ Construction Careers Council
 ■ West Michigan Health Careers Council
■ West Michigan Tech Talent
 ■ Discover Manufacturing



Discover Manufacturing Week tour at Enterprise Tool & Die.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS

West Michigan Works! currently holds the sponsorship for 33 U.S. Department of Labor registered apprenticeship programs.

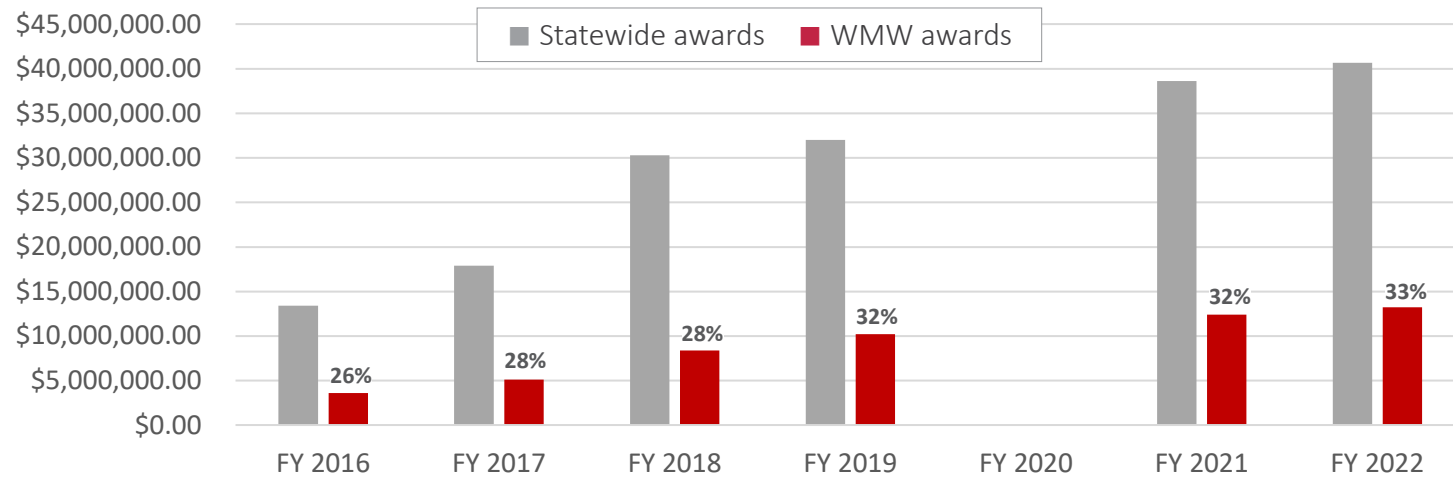
	Adv Manufacturing	Construction	Health Care	IT
Active Apprentices	71	31	34	0
Completed Apprenticeships	49	23	161	4
Employers	55	13	18	7



Critter Barn exhibit at the AG-xploration event in Muskegon.

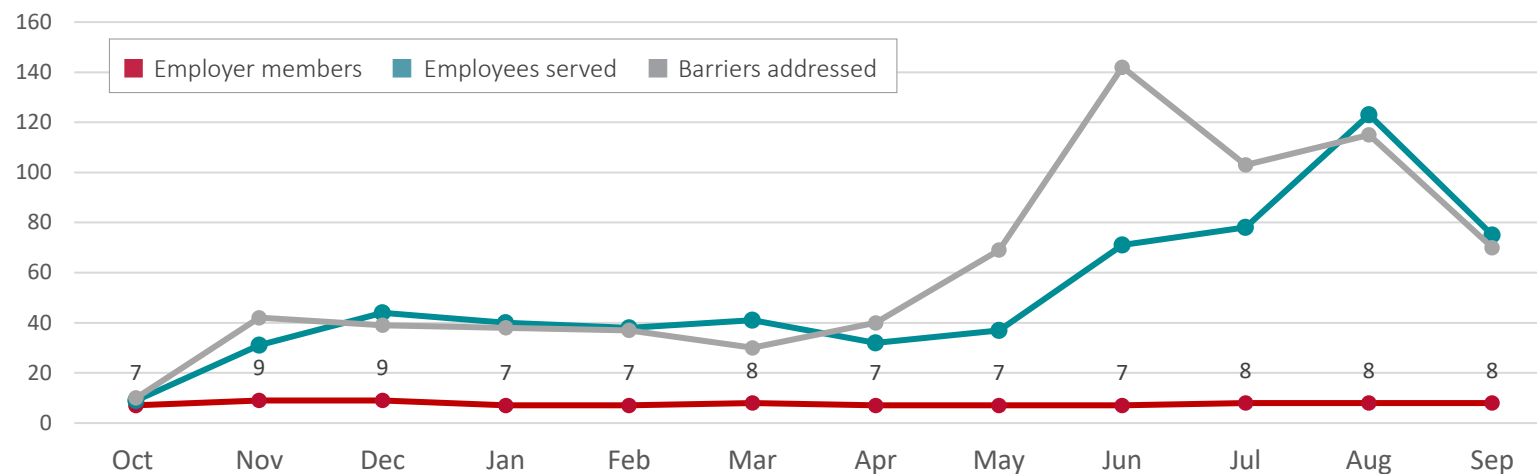
2022 AT A GLANCE (continued)

GOING PRO TALENT FUND



*Going PRO Talent Fund was not included in the state's 2020 budget; funds were needed for pandemic relief.
Source: State of Michigan, Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

RETENTION SOLUTIONS



Regional collaboration is essential to addressing current & future talent needs.

The following employer-led industry talent councils worked with key workforce and education/training partners to address talent shortages, increase worker retention and engage youth. Here are a few highlights from 2022:



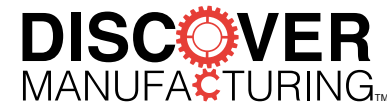
- The Agribusiness Talent Council (ATC) created a community-based event, Career AG-xploration, for students and families to learn about the industry through hand-on activities.
- The council was awarded a specialty crop block grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to train over 130 people on food safety and create five promotional videos.
- ATC partnered with the Michigan State University Product Innovation Center to connect 35 start-up and scaling-up food processors with information about Going PRO Talent Fund and other WMW! support services to help their operations grow.



- The Construction Careers Council (CCC) piloted Women in Construction Week, honoring 17 women from seven employers across West Michigan.
- CCC participated in Careers in Construction Month and piloted traveling roadshows. CCC facilitated 13 roadshows in October with 14 employers, reaching over 400 students.
- CCC piloted Construction Inclusion Week at Godwin High School with local employers.



- West Michigan Tech Talent helped catalyze the post-covid tech community through direct sponsorship and promotion of multiple in-person events, organizations and meetups.
- The council continued the success of the Mi{Code} Experience program, virtually connecting classrooms to industry professionals.
- The council extended its reach to industry professionals through LinkedIn with over 900 subscribers.



- Discover Manufacturing hosted virtual and in-person events for Discover Manufacturing Week with 5,740 registered students, 59 manufacturers, and 35 schools.
- The council awarded four scholarships of \$1,000 or more to individuals pursuing post secondary training in a manufacturing field.
- Discover Manufacturing introduced a popular "5 in 25" series, introducing local manufacturers to five initiatives, programs or partners they need to get to know in 25 minutes.



- The West Michigan Health Careers Council (WMHCC) underwent comprehensive strategic planning to ensure council strategies and initiatives aligned with current employer needs.
- The council obtained state grant funding to cover costs for 29 individuals to receive certifications and employment as certified nurse aides.
- WMHCC supported and raised awareness for several grant programs that resulted in the training of 2,088 individuals (an increase of 110.7% over the previous year) at a total investment of \$3,239,933.75 (a 34.85% increase).

2022 TALENT SURVEY

In 2021 West Michigan Works! contracted with Datawise, formally known as the Center for Social Research (CSR) at Calvin University, to conduct a survey to help workforce development teams and employers better understand the current state of the job market and workforce given the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout 2022, West Michigan Works! continued to see low engagement from job seekers when it came to available employment services and hiring events. We launched our 2022 talent survey seeking to understand what barriers job seekers were experiencing in the current labor environment.



Respondents completed surveys between May and June 2022.



KEY FINDINGS

The key findings remain similar to what was reported in 2021, however, there was a slight decrease in the number of job seekers who believed "potential wages aren't enough" and "job skills do not match with available jobs."

- Job seekers are actively looking for work, with little success.
- There are gaps in job seeker expectations for wages and experience.
- Older workers (55+) are having the most difficulty finding work.

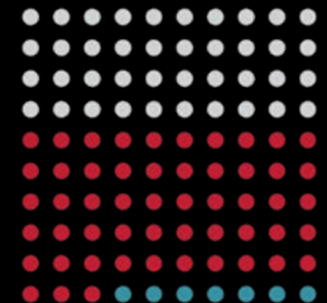
PARTICIPANTS

1413

survey respondents

1027

were looking for work



More than

60%

are putting in a lot of effort to find work, but only

7%

are having a lot of success with their job search.

BARRIERS to finding work

2021 ■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree

2022 ■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree

Potential wages aren't enough.



Skills don't fit available jobs.



Workplaces aren't welcoming.



Current job makes it hard to look.



Don't have tools or ability to job search.



At this point, any employer not paying \$18/ hour minimum with a week of vacation shouldn't be surprised no one wants to work for them. Jobs are to support us and our families; they aren't a hobby.

RESOURCES

While survey results highlighted several barriers job seekers in Michigan are facing, respondents also identified resources and recommendations that would ease the strain of working and finding work.

RESOURCES JOB SEEKERS WOULD USE

79% Financial help for childcare

71% Technology & equipment

79%* On-site childcare

65% Rapid retraining

64% Plans for protecting health

* for those with children requiring childcare



Scan the QR code for more survey findings and recommendations.



Techni/color career fair at Baxter Community Center.



Techni/color happy hour networking event on the OST rooftop.

2022 EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

West Michigan Works! recognizes OST as the 2022 Employer of the Year for their ongoing support of the Michigan Works! system, West Michigan Tech Talent, and the region's tech industry.

OST has played a major role in our region's IT sector development and growth. As a founding member of West Michigan Tech Talent, OST has been involved in recruiting members and introducing the council to regional and national initiatives career exploration initiatives. They have been a consistent and enthusiastic participant and supporter of industry initiatives to educate individuals about tech careers, recruiting volunteers and providing leadership and financial/in-kind support.

OST offers a successful model of career pathway development with innovative practices for their software apprentices/interns without

a related degree. They have utilized Going PRO Talent Fund and incumbent worker training grants to provide growth opportunities for their employees. OST team members promote training grants to other organizations as well, with several tech companies applying for funds after hearing about the opportunity from OST.

We are grateful for OST's support, partnership and leadership.





Introduction to Machine Operations at Thompson MTEC in Holland.



Introductory Machine Operations at Lakeshore Campus in Holland.

2022 PARTNER OF THE YEAR

West Michigan Works! recognizes Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC) as the 2022 Partner of the Year for their partnership and collaboration on regional workforce development programs and initiatives.

GRCC provides job training, adult education and workforce training, as well as certificates and degrees for more than 150 programs, virtually and on campuses in Grand Rapids and Holland. They were a key partner in the development of talent initiatives throughout West Michigan in 2022.

GRCC worked directly with their students and West Michigan Works! to create career pathways through Jobsync and CareerPoint, and to develop career pathway maps through grant programs such as One Workforce.

As the administrator of major workforce initiatives such as One Workforce, Talent Pathways, and Michigan Learning and Education Advancement Program, GRCC provided leadership on the WMW! workforce development board and various committees and councils throughout the year. GRCC and West Michigan Works! met regularly as a leadership team to share insights and leverage each other's resources to create a cohesive workforce development system.

GRCC's partnership is valued, and critical to our ability to innovate and create a regional approach to workforce development.



IMPACT AWARDS

AC Sewing, Inc.
Gul Aqa Ghaznawi
Bethany Christian Services



Gul Aqa Ghaznawi, an Afghani refugee, owned a graphic design/embroidery business before he was forced to leave his home county in November 2021. He was a talented sewer, working for the U.S. military as an embroiderer, crafting military uniform badges.

Soon after his arrival in Michigan, Gul was connected to West Michigan Works! and the refugee resettlement program at Bethany Christian Services. Gul made the most of the resources available to him, participating in job readiness activities, attending ESL classes, and eventually earning his driver's license.

Meanwhile AC Sewing, the leading industrial sewing company in Grand Rapids, met with a business solutions representative at West Michigan Works!. Like many employers, AC Sewing has been challenged recently with finding and training talent, in their case, qualified sewers.

In March 2022, Gul began a subsidized employment opportunity with AC Sewing. With funding from various programs, he received assistance with workplace essentials, interpreter services, a vehicle purchase and most importantly, training. Within months, Gul received his first raise based on performance and completed his first six months of employment with advanced ratings.

West Michigan Works! recognizes AC Sewing for maximizing available resources to develop their workforce while supporting West Michigan's diverse immigrant community. They were able to successfully hire and retain a candidate they would not have considered otherwise. And we celebrate the persistence and strong work ethic that enabled Gul Aqa Ghaznawi to create a new life for himself and his family.



Scan the QR code to watch Gul's story.



Michigan Works! Impact Awards honor those who have fueled the



"Gul has been the real winner throughout this collaboration. I cannot begin to describe the challenges he faced as a refugee with his whole world upturned. However, because of the programs offered at West Michigan Works! he was able to find a long-term career and life-long friends."

- Jim Valkema, owner & president, AC Sewing, Inc.

economy by creating jobs & developing talent in their communities.

**West Michigan Works!
Service Centers**

Allegan County

3255 122nd Ave
Allegan, MI 49010
(269) 686-5079

Kent County

121 Franklin SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507
(616) 336-4040

215 Straight Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504
(616) 336-4460

10075 Northland Dr NE
Rockford, MI 49341
(616) 228-6724

Barry County

130 E State St
Hastings, MI 49058
(616) 649-9850

Ionia County

603 W Adams St
Ionia, MI 48846
(616) 389-8525

Montcalm County

114 S Greenville W Dr
Greenville, MI 48838
(616) 754-3611

Muskegon County

316 Morris Ave
Muskegon, MI 49440
(231) 724-6381

Ottawa County

12331 James St, Suite 130
Holland, MI 49424
(616) 396-2154



westmiworks.org



facebook.com/westmiworks



linkedin.com/company/westmichiganworks

West Michigan Works! is a division of ACSET, an equal opportunity employer/program and a proud partner of the American Job Center network. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. West Michigan Works! is supported by state and federal funds; more details at westmiworks.org/about/.

