



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



MCareerQuest 2023



# Setting the strategic direction of workforce planning for West Michigan

## LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

Jim Storey, Chair  
Chair, Allegan County Commissioner

David Hatfield, Vice-Chair  
Barry County Commissioner

Tony Baker  
Kent County Commissioner

Ron Baker  
Montcalm County Commissioner

Rebekah Curran  
Ottawa County Commissioner

Kim Cyr  
Muskegon County Commissioner

Mark De Young  
Allegan County Commissioner

Matt Kallman  
Kent County Commissioner

Melissa LaGrand  
Kent County Commissioner

Joe Moss  
Chair, Ottawa County Commissioner

Darrell L. Paige  
Muskegon County Commissioner

Kelsey Perdue  
City of Grand Rapids Commissioner

Larry Tiejema  
Ionia County Commissioner

Milinda Ysasi  
City of Grand Rapids Commissioner

## WORKFORCE BOARD

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Berends Hendricks Stuit

Heather Daniel, Vice-Chair  
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ITC Holdings, Inc.

Ryan Bennett  
West MI Plumbers and Fitters #174

Kenyatta Brame  
Cascade Engineering

John Buchan (retired from the board June 2023)  
NN Inc. Mobile Solutions and Power Solutions

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Greater Muskegon Economic Development

Tonia Castillo  
Ottawa Area ISD

Jordan Clark  
Meijer, Inc.

Cathy Cronick  
Michigan Rehabilitation Services

Paul David  
Fleis & VandenBrink

Jay Dunwell  
Wolverine Coil Spring

Jim Fisher  
Second Act, LLC

Kristin Garriss  
Goodwill Industries of West Michigan

Jennifer Heinzman  
Barry County Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development Alliance

Jon Hofman  
Holland Board of Public Works

TaRita Johnson  
The Right Place, Inc.

Gregory S. King  
Lakeshore Advantage

David Kitchen  
West Michigan Electrical JATC

Charles Lepper  
Grand Rapids Community College

Shana Lewis  
Trinity Health

Scott McLean (board service ended June 2023)  
Corewell Health Ventures

Kolene Miller  
Perrigo

Dan Rinsema-Sybenga  
Muskegon Community College

Jen Schottke  
West Michigan Construction Institute

Michelle Seigo  
Department of Health & Human Services  
Ionia/Montcalm Counties

Samantha Semrau  
Kendrick Plastics

Dan TenHooopen  
Heart of West Michigan United Way

Labor Liaison AFL-CIO

Mark Thomas  
Northview Public Schools

Sara Whisler  
CarbonSix

Dr. Stacy Young (board service ended June 2023)  
Montcalm Community College

## 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, partnerships created and strengthened, the impact we've had on our communities, and the environment in which we served. Despite economists' certainties that we were heading for a recession in 2023 we have experienced some of the strongest labor force participation and lowest levels of unemployment since the pandemic. We also continued to see high levels of population growth outpacing many other counties across the state. From increased traffic in our service centers to slight shifts in job seeker attitudes seen in the 2023 talent survey, things are moving in the right direction. We are pleased to share a summary of our primary activities and some of our major accomplishments in the 2023 program year (ending September 30).

Late November the U.S. Department of Labor issued a final rule regarding Wagner-Peyser changes allowing Michigan, Colorado and Massachusetts to deliver Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES) services using current staffing models – an alternative to full State merit-staffing. This gratifying decision speaks to the unwavering support of our partners and Michigan legislators while these regulations were under consideration. Your actions helped in a tremendous way.

This past year we hosted our seventh annual MiCareerQuest event. We were truly excited to see it return to an in-person event. We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to those who contributed to the event's success. Through your contributions nearly 8,000 youth from across our region explored hundreds of high-demand occupations. The event was an example of the level of innovation that can be achieved when organizations tackle industry challenges with a collaborative spirit.

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. We also want to thank the entire West Michigan Works! team for helping make this year the success that it was and serving over 12,000 more job seekers than last year. Every year we have also been able to work with the state to pull wage record data on every individual that we interact with through our centers. Their total wages reached over 1.3 billion dollars which is up over 300 million dollars than last year and roughly 2.5 times higher than 2021.

We would like to thank our board and committee members as well as the hundreds of partners across our region who have helped contribute to the vibrancy of our communities in 2023. We are confident that with our strong partnerships we can get through any challenge that 2024 may bring.

Sincerely,

Jim Storey, Chief Elected Official

Mark Bergsma, Workforce Board Chair

Jacob Maas, Chief Executive Officer



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

West Michigan Works! is one of 16 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 nearly 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

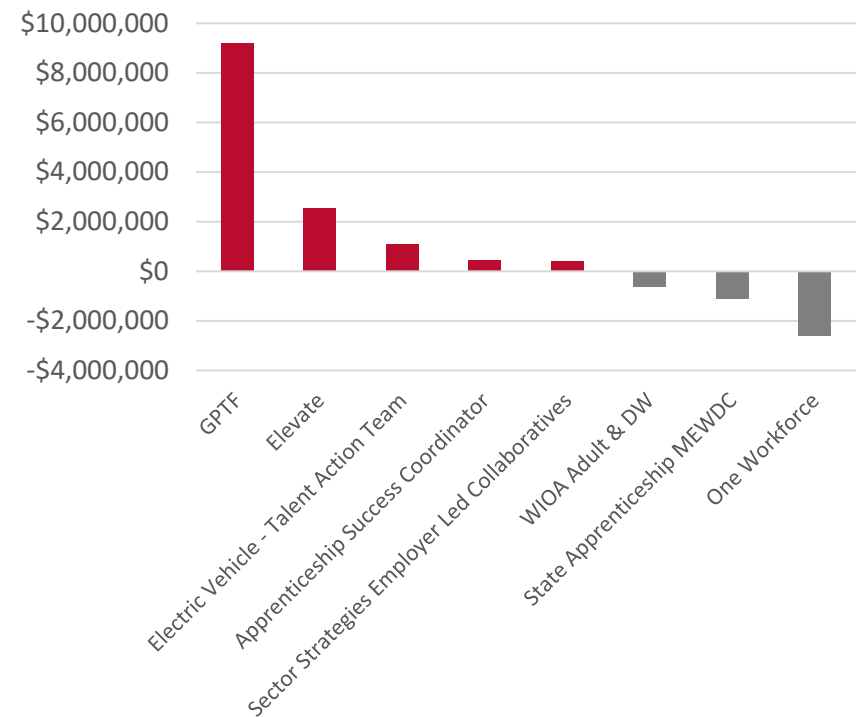
West Michigan Works! (WMW!) operated 54 programs under 86 grants as well as eight different Talent Councils/events during the year ending September 30, 2023. Each grant dictated the population to be served, how the funding could be used and the time frame in which the funding needed to be spent.

WMW! was awarded \$48,875,517 during the year ending September 30, 2023, an increase of \$8,324,880 over the previous year. During this time period we utilized \$37,042,446 of new and carried over awards.

## SIGNIFICANT INCREASES/DECREASES IN FUNDING

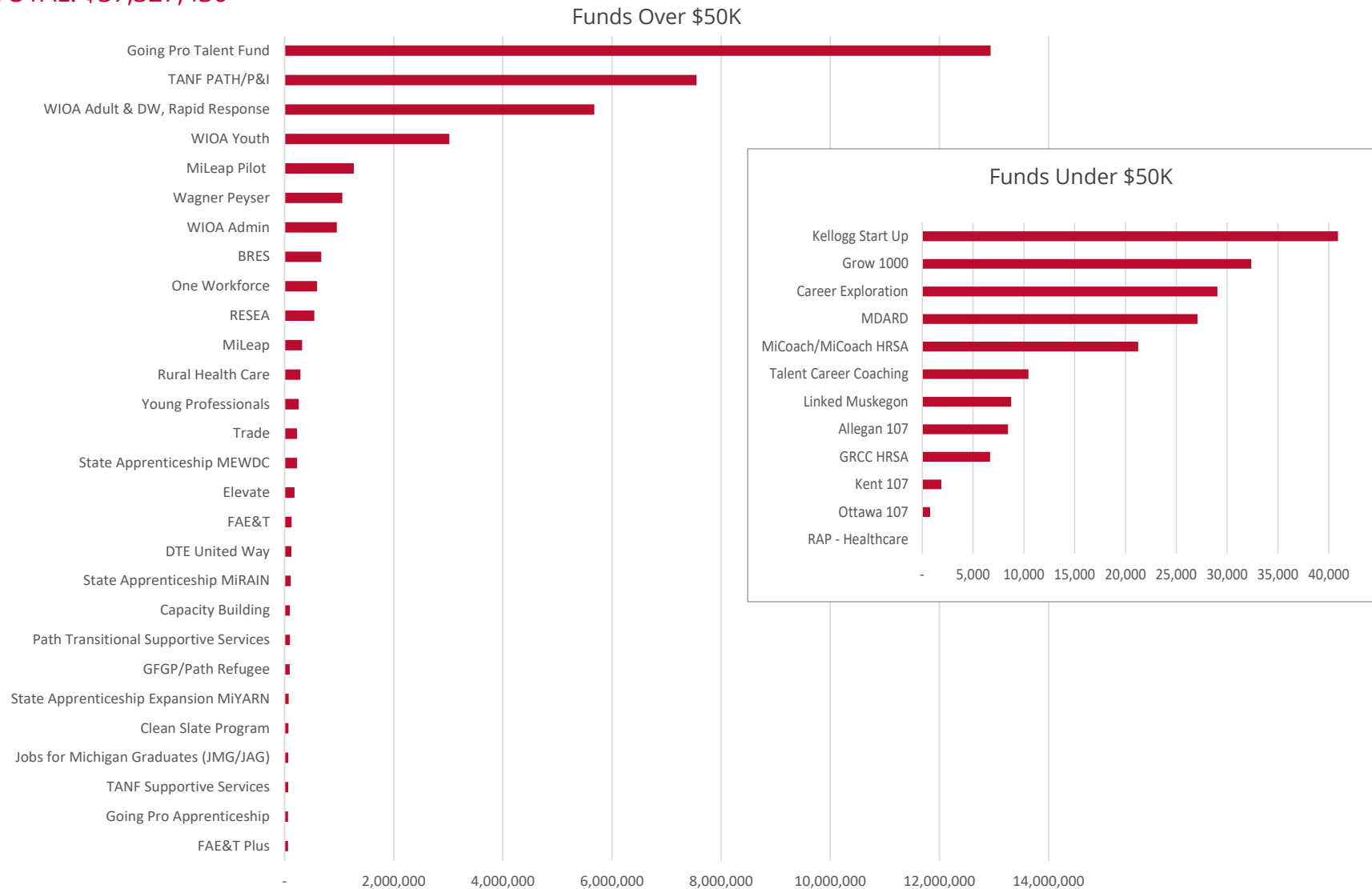
The state awarded an additional cycle of Going Pro Talent Fund (GPTF) awards during the year ending September 30, 2023, accounting for nearly \$4 million of the GPTF increase. Elevate, Electric Vehicle Talent Action Team, Apprenticeship Success Coordinator, and Sector Strategies Employer Led Collaboratives grant awards also increased from last year. WIOA Adult & DW, State Apprenticeship MEWDC and One Workforce grant funding decreased during the year ending September 30, 2023..

## SIGNIFICANT INCREASES/DECREASES IN AWARDS BY PROGRAM



## EARNED INCOME BY PROGRAM FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

**TOTAL: \$37,327,436**



### KEY

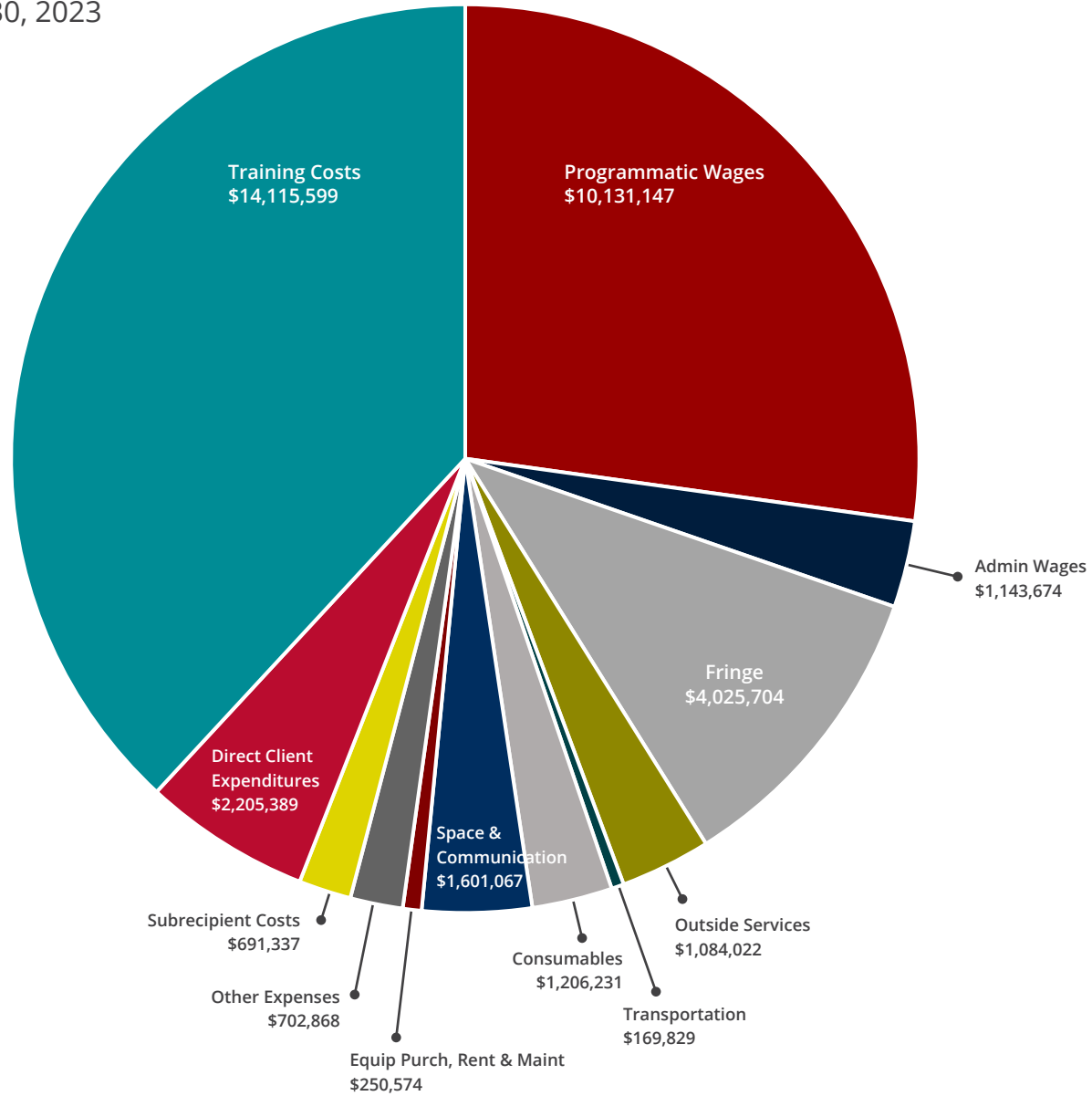
BRES - Barrier Removal Employment Success  
 FAE&T - Food Assistance Employment & Training  
 HRSA - Health Resources & Services Administration  
 MDARD - Michigan Dept. of Agriculture & Rural Development

MiRAIN - Michigan Registered Apprenticeship Innovation Network  
 MiLeap - Michigan Learn, Earn and Provide  
 MiYARN - Michigan Youth Apprenticeship Readiness Network  
 PATH - Partnership Accountability Training Hope

RAP - Registered Apprenticeship Program  
 RESEA - Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment  
 TANF - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families  
 WIOA - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY FOR THE  
YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

TOTAL: \$37,327,436



61,317

Job Seekers Served



41,490

Gained Employment



\$1.34 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

3,640

Employers Served



6,629

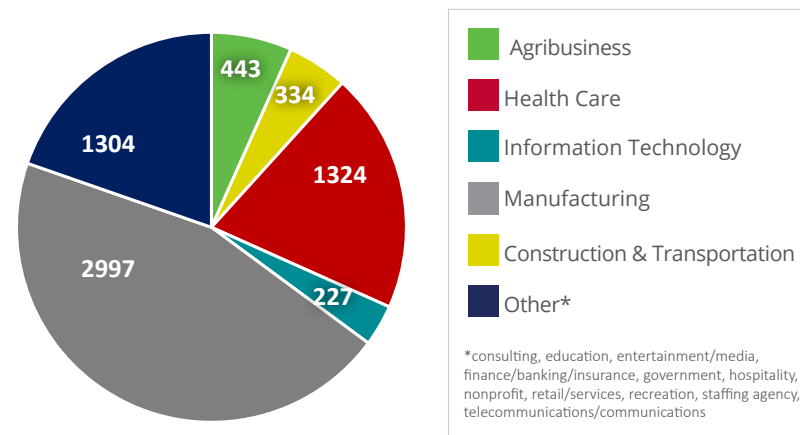
Jobs Filled

## 2023 AT A GLANCE

### TRAINING COMPLETED BY INDUSTRY

	New Hire	Classroom	Apprenticeship	Credentials Earned
Construction	42	535	1	8
Health Care	125	676	38	395
Information Technology	37	32	0	20
Manufacturing	170	114	0	20
Other	144	200	0	454
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>1,557</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>897</b>

### JOBS FILLED BY INDUSTRY



### HIRING EVENTS

33

Events

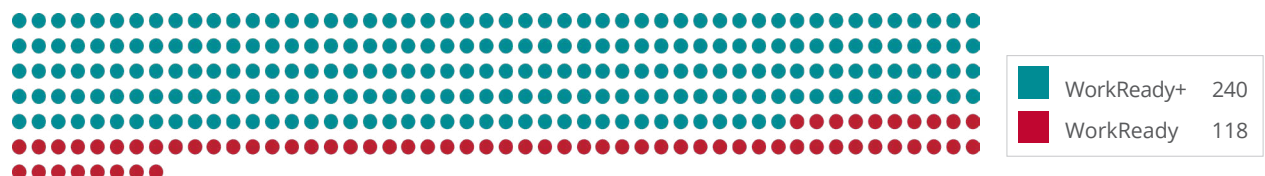
560

Employers

1,171

Job Seekers

### WORKREADY CERTIFICATES ISSUED





# IMPACT AWARDS

Michigan Works! Impact Awards honor those who have fueled the economy by creating jobs and developing talent in their communities.

Kira Malinina | Walters Gardens, Inc.

Kira Malinina was a pensioner from Ukraine, a retired horticulture teacher. She and her family left their home (and a large garden Kira loved) to join Kira's sister in Michigan and build a new life.

As a new refugee who did not qualify for retirement, her goal was to put down roots as an employed resident of Michigan. West Michigan Works! was there to support her with an interpreter and courses in which she excelled — Zeeland Adult Education ESL and drivers training. Her career coach was also able to match Kira with an ideal employer, Walters Gardens, Inc., where she was qualified to work in the lab, field, trial gardens or even production.



Walters Gardens was eager to have Kira on board thanks to her years of horticulture skills. As a new employee Kira was able to acclimate to a new culture in a welcoming environment.

To no one's surprise, Kira was offered a paid position after receiving a work permit. She has since moved into Walters' Trial Gardens division where she applies her knowledge of unusual plants working with new and hybrid plant varieties.

West Michigan Works! recognizes Walters Gardens for fostering a sustainable agribusiness talent pipeline in Holland and West Michigan. And we celebrate Kira Malinina for her hopeful tenacity in pursuing her goal to create a place for herself at Walters Gardens, and a home for her family in West Michigan.



Scan the QR code to watch Kira's story.

# 2023 AT A GLANCE (continued)

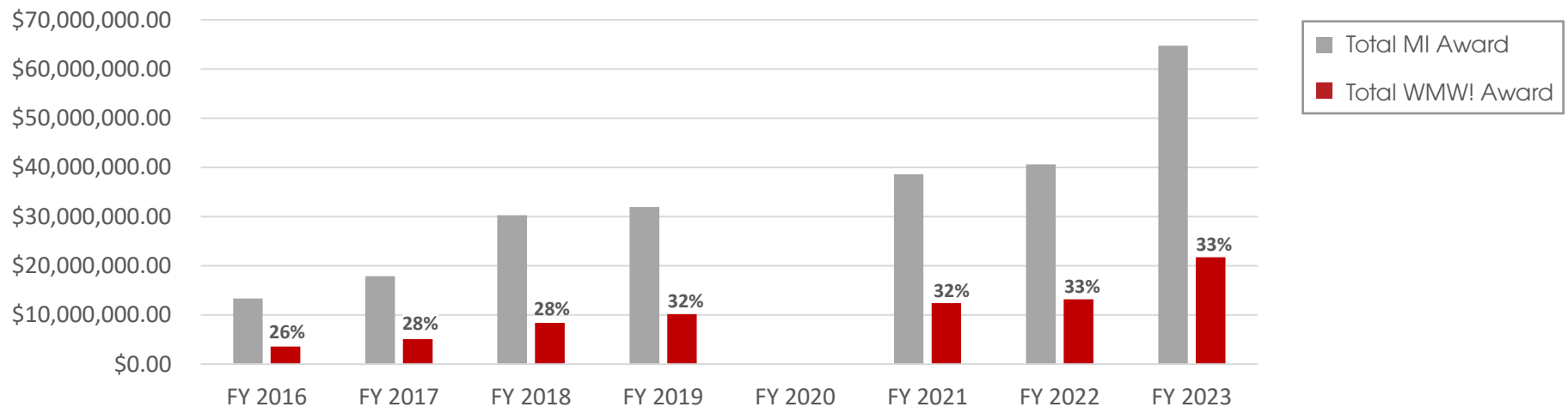
## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS

West Michigan Works! currently holds the sponsorship for 36 U.S. Department of Labor registered apprenticeship programs.

	Adv Manufacturing	Construction	Health Care	IT	TOTAL
WMW-sponsored Occupations	21	6	7	2	36
Active Apprentices	66	48	15	0	129
Completed Apprenticeships*	65	27	183	4	279
Employers	54	6	18	1	79

\*Completed between 2015 and 2023.

## 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 NETWORK

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10

Employer Members



32

Shares Purchased



472

Barriers Resolved



74%\*

Retention Rate

\*among employees using RSN services.

## ASCEND YOUTH SERVICES

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290

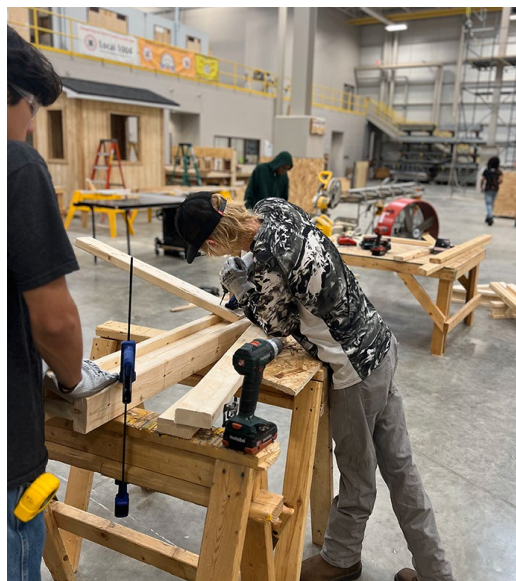
Youth Served

109

Youth Exited

144

Youth Work Experiences



2023 Summer Youth Career Readiness Program



# 2023 EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR

## Herbruck's Poultry Ranch

West Michigan Works! recognizes Herbruck's Poultry Ranch as the 2023 Employer of the Year for their wonderful commitment to the Michigan Works! system, the Agribusiness Talent Council and a better agriculture industry.

Herbruck's Poultry Ranch has played an essential part in supporting and growing the agribusiness field beyond their own operation. They currently serve as an employer champion for the agribusiness sector in MiCareerQuest, helping thousands of students explore agriculture-related careers. Their participation in the Ag-jobs-4-all hiring event reflects a commitment to assisting opportunity populations while their reception of the Best and Brightest in the nation award shows they exceed standards for companies across the country.



Herbruck's Poultry Ranch also offers comprehensive skill development through their apprenticeship program. By partnering with Montcalm Community College and utilizing the Going PRO Talent Fund, Herbruck's provides apprentices with a comprehensive education and the skills required to diagnose and repair crucial machinery. Their commitment to the community and their employees continues with Herbruck's efforts to actively address and remove barriers to employment through their English as a Second Language program, membership in Retention Solutions Network and compensation packages.

We appreciate Herbruck's Poultry Ranch's leadership, support and generosity.













## 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.

	LinkedIn Followers	Newsletter Subscribers	Council Sponsorships, Member Dues or Grants	Council Members
	550	160	\$9,500 Sponsorship \$123,540 MDARD \$1,000 Farm Bureau	(12) Allegan ISD, Dykhuis Farms, GRCC, GTF Technologies, Herbruck's Poultry Ranch, Koeze Co, Michigan State University, Ottawa County, Revolution Farms, Riveridge Produce Marketing, Walters Gardens, WMW!
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b> CAREERS COUNCIL	215	243	\$2,000 Sponsorship	(11) ABC Western Michigan Chapter, Christman Company, Control Solutions, Dan Vos Construction, EV Construction, Freedom Construction, GRCC, IBEW 275, Kent Companies, Summit Point Roofing, WMW!
<b>DISCOVER</b> MANUFACTURING™	79	567	\$15,000 Manufacturers Council TRP	(11) Bradford White, Gentex, GRCC, Kent ISD, Miller Knoll, Muskegon Community College, Praeco Skills, Scherdel Sales and Service, The Right Place, Wolverine Coil Spring, WMW!
<b>wmihealth</b> ❤️ <b>careers</b>	300	246	\$9,000 Sponsorship Career Fair Carnival	(12) Aquinas College, Cherry Health, Corewell Health, GRCC, Holland Home, Hope Network, Kent ISD, Pine Rest, Metrics Reporting, Trinity Health, UM Health–West, WMW!
	1,844	511	\$19,000 Council Dues \$3,875 Event Sponsorships	(12) Corewell Health, GFS, GRCC, GVSU, Lakeshore Advantage, National Nail, Randstad, The Right Place, SpartanNash, Tech Defenders, US Foods, Vervint (OST), WMW!

### CAREER AWARENESS EVENTS

	Students	Schools	Employers
Career AG-xploration 	350	20	75
Discover Manufacturing Week 	9,989	56	114
MiCareerQuest     	7,981	77	92
{MI}Code Experience 	2,150	29	58
Kent ISD Health Careers Expo 	20	-	12
Construction Roadshows 	500	13	114
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,990</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>465</b>

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



# 2023 TALENT SURVEY

Insights from our annual talent survey create a holistic view of the job market and workforce pool in West Michigan. This information allows us to partner with employers and community partners to create data-driven solutions that meet our region's talent needs.



## KEY FINDINGS

### PERIOD OF TRANSITION

This year's survey reflects the movement many businesses are seeing among the workforce. Of employed respondents (50.4%), nearly half were considering changing professions or careers at the time of the survey. Many were thinking about leaving their job (34%) or were worried about being laid off (29%).

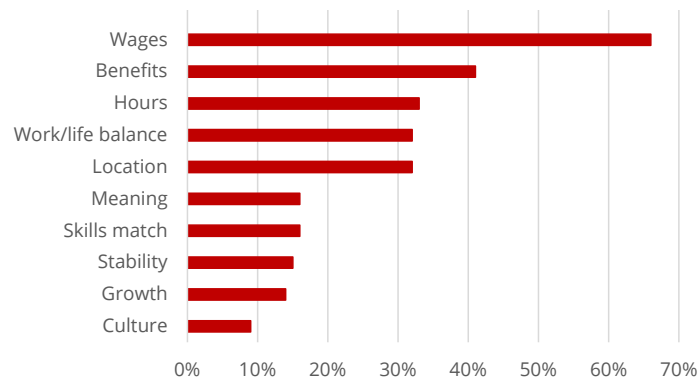
**63%** Looking for new or better work

**50%** Learning new job skills

**44%** Hoping to change careers/professions

### WORK/LIFE BALANCE

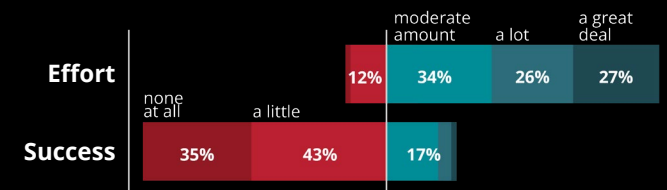
When asked to choose the three factors most important to them, respondents prioritized work/life balance and mental and physical health higher this year.



# PARTICIPANTS

**702**  
survey respondents

**63%**  
were looking for work



More than  
**80%**  
reported putting at moderate effort to find work, but only  
**22%**  
reported having at least moderate success with their job search.

# BARRIERS to employment

2023 ■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree  
 2022 ■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree  
 2021 ■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree

Potential wages aren't enough.



Skills don't fit available jobs.



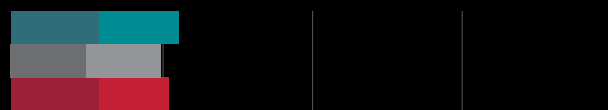
Workplaces aren't welcoming.



Current job makes it hard to look.



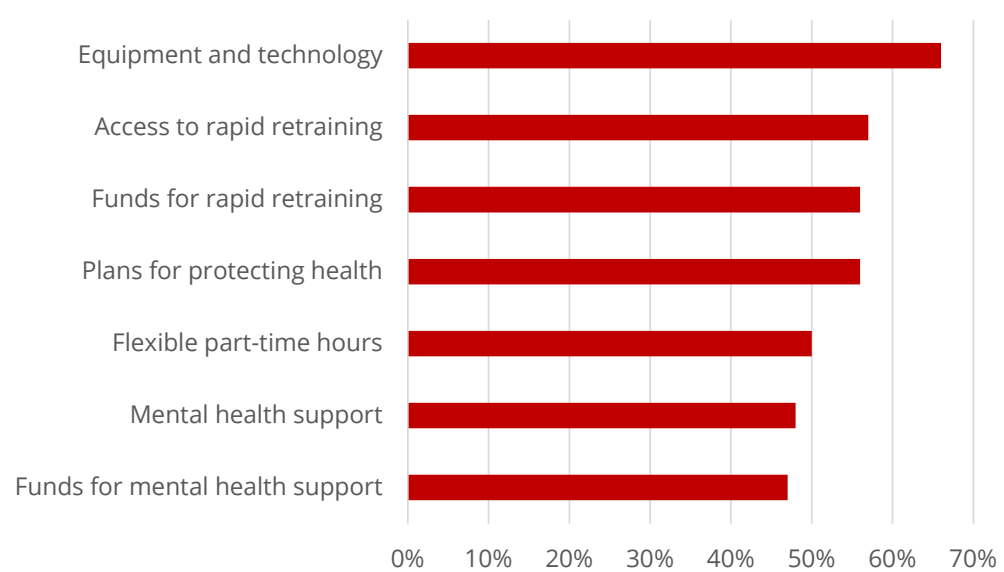
Don't have tools or ability to job search.



# RESOURCES

While survey results highlighted several barriers job seekers are facing, respondents were enthusiastic about potential resources that would help them address barriers to employment.

## RESOURCES JOB SEEKERS WOULD USE



[Scan the QR code for more survey findings and recommendations.](#)

# 2023 PARTNER OF THE YEAR

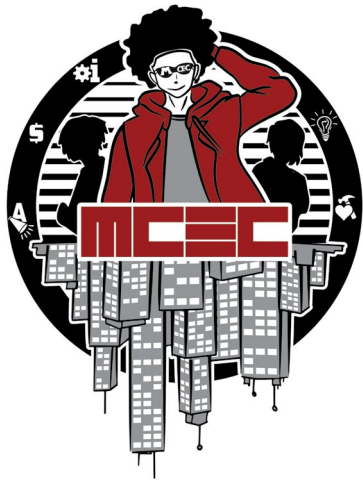
## Muskegon Community Educational Center

West Michigan Works! recognizes the Muskegon Community Educational Center (MCEC) as the 2023 Partner of the year for their collaboration in supporting our youth through career exploration and work experience.

MCEC provides a unique alternative high school experience that enables students to move beyond their barriers and earn a diploma, identify a career path and/or transition into college. They also support Muskegon Public Schools by bringing programs to both the middle school and high school levels to address career readiness prior to senior year.

MCEC has worked closely with West Michigan Works! to support students through programs such as the Career Passport Exploration, MI Career Launch, Ascend Youth Summer Work Experience and MiCareerQuest. They work directly with our Career Coaches to submit youth referrals to programs, such as Ascend Youth, and provide basic employability skills training needs. MCEC actively seeks innovative ideas, programs and grants to support their mission for career readiness.

MCEC's partnership is essential in providing our youth with the skills and resources they need to excel, regardless of their barriers.



## WEST MICHIGAN WORKS! SERVICE CENTERS

### ALLEGAN COUNTY

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

### BARRY COUNTY

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

### IONIA COUNTY

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

### KENT COUNTY

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

Grand Rapids SE Service Center  
121 Martin Luther King Jr St SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
(616) 336-4040

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

### MONTCALM COUNTY

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

### MUSKEGON COUNTY

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

### OTTAWA COUNTY

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



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[linkedin.com/company/westmichiganworks](https://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/](http://westmiworks.org/about/).

