



Legislative Committee

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Meeting ID: 257 603 023 223 1 Passcode: 6cr9se6P
Thursday, January 15, 2026 • 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

AGENDA

Members: Jim Fisher (Chairperson), Nora Balgoyen, Mark Bergsma, Jay Dunwell, Jeran Culina, Nate Henschel, TaRita Johnson, Andy Johnston

Charge: *The Legislative Committee will educate legislators representing the 7-county region on workforce development programs and their impact on the local economy. The group will advocate for resources and goodwill with state and federal legislators. The committee's role is **Connections** and **Advocacy**.*

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Welcome and Call to Order | |
| 2. Approval of October 21, 2025 Minutes | Action Required |
| 3. Upcoming Events | Information Item |
| a. National Skills Coalition (NSC): February 4-6 | |
| b. Michigan Works! Association (MWA) Advocacy Day: March 11 | |
| c. National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) 2026 Forum: March 23-26 | |
| 4. State/Federal Advocacy Updates | Discussion Item |
| 5. Legislative Visits/Tours | Discussion Item |
| 6. Updates from Members | Discussion Item |
| 7. Other Business- | |

Next Scheduled Legislative Committee Meetings:

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

April 16, 2026

July 16, 2026

October 15, 2026

November 17, 2026 – if needed



Legislative Committee

[Join the meeting now](#)

Meeting ID: 254 658 622 730 Passcode: dj6nC3ss

Tuesday, October 21, 2025 • 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Members: Jim Fisher (Chairperson), Nora Balgoyen, Mark Bergsma, Jay Dunwell, Jeran Culina, Nate Henschel, TaRita Johnson, Andy Johnston

Present: Jim Fisher, Mark Bergsma, Jay Dunwell, Nate Henschel, TaRita Johnson, Andy Johnston, Jacob Maas, Angie Barksdale, Janette Monroe

Charge: *The Legislative Committee will educate legislators representing the 7-county region on workforce development programs and their impact on the local economy. The group will advocate for resources and goodwill with state and federal legislators. The committee's role is **Connections and Advocacy**.*

1. Welcome and Call to order by Chairperson, Jim Fisher at 10:32 a.m.

2. Approval of July 22, 2025 Minutes

Action Required

Motion – Mark Bergsma

Second – TaRita Johnson

Item Approved by Vote – Motion carried.

3. Approval of 2026 Meeting Schedule

Action Required

Motion – Mark Bergsma

Second – TaRita Johnson

Item Approved by Vote – Motion carried.

4. State/Federal Advocacy Updates

Discussion Item

a. State and Federal Budget Updates and Impacts:

The committee held discussion on the current federal and state budget environments. While federal funding remains accessible, there are concerns about potential disruptions if the shutdown continues. At the state level, the budget process resulted in notable reductions to workforce development programs, including a significant decrease in funding for the Going Pro Talent Fund and the discontinuation of several other initiatives. Some funding was partially restored, and new allocations were made for regional training and apprenticeship programs. The group discussed the importance of identifying alternative funding sources and exploring legislative options to support long-term program sustainability.

b. Going Pro Talent Fund Advocacy:

The committee discussed ongoing advocacy efforts related to the Going Pro Talent Fund. Outreach activities have included engagement with stakeholders, legislators, and agency leaders. There was discussion around improving program clarity, addressing concerns about employer selection criteria, and enhancing communication strategies. Suggestions were made to strengthen advocacy through unified messaging, targeted outreach, and the use of data and impact reporting to demonstrate program effectiveness

c. Budget Process Transparency and Political Dynamics:

The group discussed the structure and timing of the state budget process, noting limited visibility and stakeholder involvement. Emphasis was placed on the need for thoughtful advocacy approaches that maintain constructive relationships with decision-makers. The conversation also highlighted the evolving nature of influence within the budget process and the importance of promoting transparency and inclusiveness to support informed decision-making and program development.

- 5. Legislative Visits/Tours **Discussion Item**
Discussion took place and agreed to cancel the November 18 meeting and reconvene in January. Focus for the January meeting should be on key legislative tours/meetings, strategies and exploring supplemental funding opportunities.
- 6. Update from Members **Discussion Item**
TaRita Johnson reported that The Right Place Economic Outlook breakfast takes place on December 9 and will share the invitation to register with the committee members.
- 7. Other Business – None.
- 8. Adjournment at 11:28 a.m. by Jim Fisher. Next meeting is scheduled for January 15, 2026 at 10:30 a.m.

Recorded by: _____ Received by: _____

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Area Community Services
 Employment & Training Council
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 Grand Rapids, MI 49504
 (616) 336-4100

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

MEMORANDUM

TO: Legislative Committee of the West Michigan Works! (WMW)
 Workforce Development Board (WDB)

FROM: WMW Staff

DATE: January 15, 2026

RE: Michigan Works! Association Advocacy Day 2026
 Wednesday, March 11, 2026 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. (Lansing, MI)

Description

This dynamic event connects workforce development professionals and Michigan Works! leaders with state legislators to discuss Michigan’s workforce system, share success stories, and advocate for key legislative priorities. Attendees will participate in scheduled meetings with lawmakers, engage in policy discussions, and build relationships that strengthen Michigan’s workforce ecosystem. Don’t miss this opportunity to raise awareness and champion policies that drive economic growth and career advancement statewide.

Location:

[Heritage Hall at the Michigan State Capitol](#)
[323 W. Ottawa Street](#)
[Lansing, Michigan 48933](#)

Agenda

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.	Michigan Works! Association Board of Directors Meeting
9:05 – 9:30 a.m.	Opening Remarks & Advocacy Day Briefing
9:45 – 11:45 a.m.	Legislative Visits
11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.	Lunch & Morning Debrief
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.	Legislative Visits
5:00 – 7:30 p.m.	Dinner & Drinks – Sidecar Slider Bar

If you are interested in attending and or if you need a hotel reservation, please let us know by January 23, 2026.