



**Governing Board Meeting
Grand Rapids NW Service Center**

215 Straight Ave. N.W. Grand Rapids, MI 49504

The public may attend in-person or by remote participation via Teams.

[Join the meeting now](#) Meeting ID: 218 135 719 261 7 Passcode: aH2GX2PC

Monday, April 27, 2026 ▪ 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment – Agenda Items
3. Approval of February 23, 2026 Minutes **Action Required**
4. Report on Financial Activities: *Kirsti Jones, Chief Financial Officer*
 - a. ACSET Financial Report - Notes to March 2026 Board Financials **Information Item**
 - b. Proposed FY 27 Budget *(75% affirmative vote of members present)* **Action Required**
5. Report on Administrative Activities: *Jacob Maas, Chief Executive Officer*
 - a. ACSET Personnel Actions Report **Information Item**
 - b. ACSET Operations Staffing **Information Item**
6. WDB Service Summary Dashboard and Solutions Driven Updates **Information Item**
Angie Barksdale, Chief Operating Officer
7. Other Business **Information Item**
 - a. MiCareerQuest: May 20, 2026 DeVos Place ([VIP Tour Sign up](#) or [Volunteer Sign Up](#))
 - b. Orientation and Service Center Tours
8. Public Comment
9. Adjournment

Next Scheduled Governing Board Meeting: Monday, June 22, 2026

Remaining Meetings:

August 24, 2026

October 26, 2026

December 7, 2026



Governing Board Meeting
Grand Rapids NW Service Center
215 Straight Ave. N.W. Grand Rapids, MI 49504
The public may attend in-person or by remote participation via Teams.
[Join the meeting now](#) Meeting ID: 274 063 151 091 Passcode: n8gRnn
Monday, February 23, 2026 • 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Governing Board Members Present: Commissioners Beltman, De Young, Hatfield, Kallman, LaGrand, Alexander, Cyr, Nash, Zylstra, Belchak, Perdue

Governing Board Members Absent: Commissioners Wirtz, Morales, Moss

Staff Present (physical location or virtually): Jacob Maas, Angie Barksdale, Kirsti Jones, Janette Monroe, Tawanna Wright, Jeff Dornbos, Tasha Evans (virtual), Amy Lebednick (virtual), Chad Patton (virtual), Malinda Powers (virtual)

Guests/Public Present: William (Bill) I. Tucker, CPA, (Maner Costerisan)

1. Call to Order at 8:30 a.m. by Commissioner Mark De Young. Commissioner De Young requested introductions by those present.
2. Public Comment- None.
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes **Action Required**
 - a. October 27, 2025
 - b. December 8, 2025

Motion – Com. LaGrand

Second – Com. Belchak

Item Approved by Vote – All members present voted affirmatively. Motion carried

4. 2026 Governing Board Election of the Chair and Vice-Chairperson **Action Required**
 Tawanna Wright, Staff Attorney, stated that the newly elected officers will begin their duties at this Governing Board meeting immediately following the election. Based on the rotation listed in the Interlocal Agreement, it is Kent County's turn to serve as Chairperson, and Montcalm County's turn to serve as Vice-Chairperson of the Board for 2026. Matt Kallman, Melissa LaGrand and Nancy Morales are the representatives from the Kent County Board of Commissioners. Nathan Alexander is the sole representative from the Montcalm County Board of Commissioners.

Motion – Com. LaGrand nominated Com. Kallman to serve as the Chairperson of the ACSET Governing Board for 2026.

Second – Com. Hatfield

Item Approved by Vote – All members present voted affirmatively. Motion carried

Motion – Com. Hatfield nominated Com. Alexander to serve as the Chairperson of the ACSET Governing Board for 2026.

Second – Com. Cyr

Item Approved by Vote – All members present voted affirmatively. Motion carried

5. Report on Financial Activities:

- a. Presentation of the Audited Financial Statements **Action Required**
 Bill Tucker, CPA, Maner Costerisan, presented a summary of the annual audit results, which is an opinion of ACSET's financial statements for the year ending June 30, 2025. As a result of the single audit, Bill reported on ACSET's internal control over financial reporting and its major federal programs. Bill stated that no findings were reported. A brief discussion took place, and Bill answered board members' questions. Com. Kallman requested a motion to accept the audit as presented.

Motion – Com. Belchak

Second – Com. LaGrand

Item Approved by Vote – All members present voted affirmatively. Motion carried

- b. ACSET Financial Report – Notes to December 2025 Board Financials **Information Item**
 Kirsti Jones, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed ACSET's statement of revenue and expenditures for the three months ending December 30, 2025. A brief discussion took place in which staff answered board members' questions.

- c. Renewal of Line of Credit **Action Required**
 Kirsti Jones reported that ACSET holds a \$325,000 line of credit with Fifth Third Bank, which expires in March 2026. Kirsti reported that this line of credit would only be needed in the event of unforeseen expenses or a delay in receiving cash requests. Kirsti reported that ACSET is requesting that the line of credit be increased and renewed in the amount of \$700, 000. The increase is requested based on two factors: 1.) uncertainty of future government shutdowns and the delay to access of funds, and 2.) ACSET's costs have increased in recent years, and the requested line of credit increase amount would cover one payroll plus additional accounts payable for one to two weeks. Kirsti further noted that there would be no change in the applicable interest rate for the higher amount and that historically, ACSET has not made any draws on this line of credit. A brief discussion took place and staff answered board members' questions.

Motion – Com. Hatfield

Second – Com. Alexander

Item Approved by Vote – All members present voted affirmatively. Motion carried

6. Muskegon Service Center *(75% affirmative vote of members appointed and serving)* **Action Required**
 Jacob Maas, Chief Executive Officer, reported that the current lease for the Muskegon Service Center will expire June 30, 2026 and ACSET is in the process of evaluating responses to its recent RFP to select a new location. Jacob noted that the selected site would provide access to public transportation, ensure ease of commute for residents, and meet all ADA requirements. Jacob requested approval from the Governing Board to proceed with relocating the West Michigan Works! Muskegon Service Center should the procurement process determine that an alternative location is the most suitable option. Following discussion, staff addressed board members' questions, and a roll call vote was conducted.

Motion – Com. LaGrand

Second – Com. Cyr

Roll Call taken

Yays – Com. Beltman, De Young, Hatfield, Kallman, LaGrand, Alexander, Cyr, Nash, Zylstra, Belchak, Perdue
Nays – None.

Item Approved by Vote – All 11 members present voted affirmatively. Motion carried

7. Policy Approval: Document Retention Policy **Action Required**
 Jeff Dornbos, Staff Attorney, reviewed ACSET's statutory obligations to maintain and retain documents in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Management and Budget Act, and the Michigan Penal Code, noting that the specific requirements are outlined in the Retention Schedules included in the board packet. Jeff presented a proposed revision of the ACSET Document Retention Policy, highlighting its revised format and the corresponding schedules. A discussion followed, during which staff answered GB members' questions, and GB members also proposed minor revisions to the proposed policy language. Jeff

requested the Governing Board's approval of the proposed Document Retention Policy (26-001), which includes the additional revisions proposed by Commissioners Belchak and Perdue.

Motion – Com. LaGrand

Second – Com. Belchak

Item Approved by Vote – All members present voted affirmatively. Motion carried

8. Report on Administrative Activities:

- a. ACSET Personnel Actions Report **Information Item**
 Laura Krist, Human Resource Director, reported that there have been five (5) appointments, six (6) separations and one (1) promotions/transfers.
- b. ACSET Operations Staffing **Information Item**
 Laura Krist reported that ACSET currently has 213 out of 239 positions filled. Laura answered board members' questions.
- c. Request to Update Staffing Chart **Action Required**
 Laura Krist reported that upon reviewing the current staffing chart and assessing program and departmental needs, staff determined that it would be appropriate to remove eleven (11) long-vacant positions from the staffing chart. Laura reported that following structural redesign withing the Talent Solutions, Business Solutions, Development and Innovation, and Fiscal departments, these positions were no longer necessary for effective operations. Laura confirmed that no current employees would be impacted by the deletions and noted that positions can be added in the future if needed. Laura requested Governing Board approval to delete the eleven (11) titles from the ACSET staff chart. Discussion took place and staff answered board members' questions.

Motion – Com. Cyr

Second – Com. Belchak

Item Approved by Vote – All members present voted affirmatively. Motion carried

9. Workforce Development Board (WDB) Service Summary Dashboard and Solutions Driven Updates **Information Item**

WDB Service Summary Dashboard

Angie Barksdale, Chief Operating Officer, shared the Service Summary for October 31, 2025 through December 31, 2025, with board members. Angie noted that service center traffic experienced a slight decline in November due to UIA being temporarily closed during the second week of the month, which resulted in some individuals not being referred until December. GB members expressed interest in seeing outcome-oriented measures. Staff noted that outcome data, particularly wage information derived from unemployment filings, can lag one to two quarters behind service delivery. Staff agreed to explore ways to add outcomes to the dashboard, or periodic summaries to future board materials.

Solutions Driven Updates

Summaries of each initiative highlighted under solutions-driven updates include a notation identifying its alignment with strategic plan goals. These "alignment indicators" are ***Diversity and Inclusion, Enhanced Relationships, and Pipeline Development.***

Grant Updates:

- a. Make Michigan Home: Angie Barksdale reported that the grant received a six-month no -cost extension through July 31, 2026. Additional information provided is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***
- b. FutureTech Careers Program (formally known as Strengthening Community Colleges Grant 4 (SCC4)): Additional information provided in board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***
- c. Early Childhood Education (ECE) Registered Apprenticeships: Angie Barksdale reported that the grant's performance period has been extended and that an additional \$40,000 was also awarded to support

the continued expansion work of the grant. Additional information is provided in the board packet.

Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development

- d. The Michigan Citizen Reentry Initiative (MICRI): Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Diversity and Inclusion***
- e. Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD): Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Diversity and Inclusion***
- f. Michigan Skilled Immigration Integration Program (MISIIP): Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Diversity and Inclusion, Pipeline Development***
- g. Grand Rapids Community College One Workforce Grant: Angie Barksdale highlighted that this grant was delivered in partnership with Grand Rapids Community College, Muskegon Community College and Montcalm Community College ended in December 2025. Angie emphasized the positive impacts achieved through training and upskilling efforts across the region. Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***
- h. Barrier Removal and Employment Success (BRES) Expansion: Angie Barksdale reported that this grant has been extended through September 30, 2026. These funds will help remove barriers directly related to employment such as childcare, transportation, and housing. Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Pipeline Development, Diversity and Inclusion***
- i. MDARD Specialty Crop Grant: Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***
- j. Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF):
Fiscal Year 2025: Information provided in the board packet.
 - Cycle 1: In total, 322 applications were submitted to the state. 175 employers received a total of \$11.2M. Training may occur January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025.
 - Cycle 2: In total, 222 applications were submitted to the state. 49 employers received a total of \$10.8M. Training may occur July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.Fiscal Year 2026: Angie Barksdale reported that despite a 40% statewide budget reduction in GPTF, ACSET secured approximately 30% of those available funds for the region.
 - Cycle 1: In total, 336 applications were submitted to the state. 100 were awarded a total of \$6.4M. Training may occur January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026.
 - Employer Led Collaborative (ELCs – formerly Industry Led Collaboratives): Applications are tentatively scheduled to open in March 2026.

A full list of grant recipients statewide is available online at Michigan.gov/TalentFund. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

- k. State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) 2025: Angie Barksdale reported that WMW is one of five organizations selected to receive SAE grant funding from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). WMW will receive \$212,360 to support 32 registered apprentices in non-infrastructure occupations. The SAE grant program is designed to assist organizations that currently sponsor or partner with sponsors of Registered Apprenticeship Programs. Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***
- l. Regional Innovation Project (RIP) Grant: Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

Industry Talent Council Initiatives: There are a variety of ways to stay connected to the innovative work taking place under each of the WMW Industry Talent Councils (ITC). Angie noted that GB members can view the remaining content provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

Multi-Industry Initiatives:

- **Lunch & Learn Series** – Additional information is provided in the board packet
- a. **Agribusiness Talent Council of West Michigan (ATC) Mission: The Agribusiness Talent Council is an employer-led collaborative that seeks to expand the talent pool by promoting career pathways and opportunities in West Michigan agribusiness industry.**
Additional information is provided in the board packet.
 - b. **Construction Careers Council (CCC) Mission: The Construction Careers Council creates a bright future for West Michigan’s construction industry by building a diverse and qualified workforce.** Additional information is provided in the board packet.
 - c. **Discover Manufacturing (DM) Mission: We Exist to Inspire and Expand Manufacturing Talent in West Michigan.** Additional information is provided in the board packet.
 - d. **Explore Hospitality: We elevate one of West Michigan’s leading employment sectors by developing careers, cultivating talent, and promoting a thriving, dynamic hospitality industry.** Additional information is provided in the board packet.
 - e. **West Michigan Health Careers Council (WMHCC) Mission: The purpose of WMHCC is to provide an employer-led collaborative council of healthcare employers, educators, workforce development, and economic development organizations working together to meet West Michigan’s healthcare talent needs.** Additional information is provided in the board packet.
 - f. **West Michigan Tech Talent (WMTT) Mission: West Michigan Tech Talent looks to engage employers of Information Technology professionals with best practices, resources and a community to grow, develop, recruit and retain a diverse and inclusive world class IT workforce in West Michigan.** Additional information is provided in the board packet.

Programs

- a. **West Michigan Works! Registered Apprenticeship Programs (WMW RAP):**
Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development, Diversity and Inclusion***
- b. **Ascend Youth Programming:** Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Pipeline Development, Diversity and Inclusion***
- c. **MiCareerQuest:** Additional information covered in Item #10b and in the board packet. ***Pipeline Development***
- d. **Elevate:** Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development, Diversity and Inclusion***
- e. **Retention Solutions Network (RSN):** Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Diversity and Inclusion***
- f. **Gain Employment. Maintain Support. (GEMS) formally known as Learn, Earn and Provide (LEAP) Pilot:**
Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Pipeline Development, Diversity and Inclusion***

Initiatives

- a. **West Michigan Education-to-Employment Partnership (E2P):** Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***
- b. **Section 107a:** Additional information is provided in the board packet. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

10. Other Business

a. Walk in Item: City of Grand Rapids funding application

Jacob Maas, Chief Executive Officer, reported that WMW is responding to an invitation to apply for City of Grand Rapids Neighborhood Investment Plan (NIP) funding. This is an annual process to issue funds from a variety of federal programs, such as Community Development Block Grant and Opioid Settlement, to community organizations. Jacob reviewed that this project would provide employment supports and training to help 50 Grand Rapids residents overcome barriers and access skill-building opportunities aligned with high, in-demand jobs. Jacob noted that because two members of the Governing Board are from the City of Grand Rapids, they are not required to vote on this as it would be considered a conflict of interest towards ACSET's application. Discussion took place and Jacob requested Governing Board approval to continue moving forward with the process.

Motion – Com. Cyr

Second – Com. Hatfield

Item approved – All members voted affirmatively. Motion carried

b. Bev Drake Essential Service Awards:

Jacob Maas reviewed that the ESAs are scheduled to take place today in partnership with the Economic Club of Grand Rapids, recognizing six individuals from across the region. Jacob highlighted that Muskegon County had several award recipients this year. Additional information is provided in the board packet.

c. MiCareerQuest: Jacob Maas reviewed that the event will take place on May 20, 2026, noting that the event is expected to bring 8,000-9,000 students to DeVos Place for hands-on career exploration. Jacob emphasized that the event requires approximately 1,000 volunteers and invited board members to share the opportunity with partners and consider volunteering or signup for tours. Additional information is provided in the board packet. [VIP Tour Sign up](#) or [Volunteer Sign up](#))d. Orientations and Service Center Tours: Jacob Maas stated that staff would be scheduling board member orientations and offering service center tours for those new to the Governing Board or who had not visited a center recently. Jacob shared that an orientation could be held virtually for convenience and encouraged members to take part in a tour to better understand services delivered across the region.e. Cyber Event Update: Jacob Maas reported that a recent cyber incident occurred on February 8, when unusual network activity was detected by WMW's managed service provider. By that evening, the experts had been engaged to begin containment, forensics, and system restoration. Jacob reported that all agency devices – including computers, phones, and displays –required existing security systems and backups significantly reduced the impact of the event. Cleanup efforts are nearly complete. Jacob thanked staff for their effortless work around the clock to get our organization back up and running smoothly. A brief discussion followed, and staff answered board members' questions.f. 2026 HotJobs! List: Jacob Maas reported that the newest HotJobs! list has been released, noting that it serves as a key tool for career awareness and training alignment across the region. Jacob explained that the list includes links to videos, wage information, and sortable features that allow users to explore occupations by credential level or job type. Jacob added that the list also guides West Michigan Works!' training investments, as occupations must appear on the list to qualify for training support.

11. Public Comment: None

12. Adjournment at 9:51 a.m. by Commissioner Kallman.

Recorded by: _____ Received by: _____

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

Area Community Services
Employment & Training Council
215 Straight Ave NW
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

*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. TTY 711*

MEMORANDUM

TO: ACSET Governing Board
FROM: Kirsti Jones, Chief Financial Officer
DATE: April 27, 2026
RE: March 2026 Board Financials

Revenues

Revenues for the nine months ending March 31, 2026, total \$29.8M, which is \$1.6M above budget and \$396k below the prior year.

Expenditures

Operating expenses are \$1.4M above the FY25-26 budget and \$54k above the prior year.

Wages and fringe benefits are up \$542k (4.31%) over the prior year, mainly due to annual wage increases (average 3.8% per employee) coupled with the higher cost of employee benefits.

Consumable supplies are \$129k higher than prior year mainly due to \$84k of Trade/TAA promotional items that were purchased as part of the program requirement to recruit new participants.

Outside services are below FY25 due to lower consulting fees for fiscal and expenses that did not repeat this year include the compensation study, the personalized retirement reviews, and certain contract employees.

Other expenses are \$149k below the prior year due to various employee training courses that were not repeated, as well as spending related to the one-time MIRECONNECT grant.

Training for the fiscal year to date is \$12.1, \$589k below the previous year. Of that decrease, \$431k is due to GPTF expenses.

Direct client expenses are higher than the prior year mainly due to spending on two new programs, Make MI Home and Talent and Growth Barrier Removal.

Area Community Services Employment and Training Council
Michigan Works Agency Programs
Statement of Revenue & Expenses
For the Nine Months Ending March 31, 2026

	YTD Thru March 2026 Actual	YTD Thru March 2025 Actual	YTD 2025/2026 Budget	Budget Variance	Budget Variance %
Total Revenue	\$ 29,823,323	\$ 30,219,254	\$ 28,187,700	\$ 1,635,623	5.80%
Expenses					
Operating Expenses					
Wages	\$ 9,287,841	\$ 9,165,425	8,459,000	\$ 828,841	9.80%
Fringe Benefits	3,827,400	3,407,597	3,084,500	742,900	24.08%
Consumable supplies	619,238	490,112	508,400	110,838	21.80%
Transportation	96,724	126,835	150,300	(53,576)	-35.65%
Outside services	350,880	763,467	713,600	(362,720)	-50.83%
Space and communications	1,162,645	1,163,166	927,200	235,445	25.39%
Equipment rent and maint	47,706	53,932	57,100	(9,394)	-16.45%
Equipment purchases	-	18,787	50,000	(50,000)	-100.00%
Other expense	530,314	679,416	618,900	(88,586)	-14.31%
Total Operating Expense	15,922,750	15,868,737	14,569,000	1,353,750	9.29%
Subcontractors	\$ 413,248	\$ 397,567	\$ 1,312,600	\$ (899,352)	-68.52%
Training	\$ 12,085,477	\$ 12,674,461	\$ 10,740,400	\$ 1,345,077	12.52%
Direct Client Expenses	\$ 1,401,849	\$ 1,278,489	\$ 1,565,700	\$ (163,851)	-10.47%
	\$ 13,900,574	\$ 14,350,517	\$ 13,618,700	\$ 281,874	2.07%
Total Expenses	29,823,323	30,219,254	28,187,700	1,635,623	5.80%
Excess of Revenue over Expense	-	-	-	-	0.00%

Unaudited

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Area Community Services
Employment & Training Council
215 Straight Ave NW
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

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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. TTY 711*

MEMORANDUM

TO: ACSET Governing Board
FROM: Kirsti Jones, Chief Financial Officer
DATE: April 27, 2026
RE: Proposed FYE 2027 Budget

The proposed budget for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2027, is presented for your consideration.

Revenues

The proposed 2026-2027 budget plans for \$34,592,000 of total revenue, which represents a 7.8% decrease compared to the approved FY2025-2026 budget. ACSET has not yet received allocations for the 2026-2027 fiscal year or projections from the State of Michigan. The proposed budget was prepared, assuming a 10% decrease in funding for WIOA and Wagner Peyser. There are also several one-time grants that expire September 30, 2026, including BRES Expansion (\$1M), MiROAR (\$200k), MI SIIP (\$250k), and Talent and Growth Barrier Removal (\$311k). These decreases were partially offset by new funding for the National Farm Worker's Jobs Program, Michigan Skills Fund, Sector Strategies ELC, and the State Apprenticeship Expansion program.

Expenditures

The budget for salaries and the associated fringe expenses is expected to increase approximately \$164k due mainly to increasing rates for health insurance. Although wages also include increases for merit raises, we are not automatically filling positions as they become vacant and expect that to lead to flat wages overall.

The other operating expense categories have been adjusted accordingly and include initial planned expenditures for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Direct client expenses are down mainly due to the expiration of BRES funding. Also, due to the anticipated decrease in WIOA funding and the expiration of funds mentioned above, training expenses are expected to decrease.

A budget modification will be presented to the board for approval once finalized allocations are received from our grantors.



Request Action

We ask that the proposed budget be considered for approval.

Pursuant to Article II, Section 6(a) of Area Community Services Employment & Training (ACSET) Amended Bylaws dated April 26, 2021, a seventy-five percent (75%) affirmative vote of the members present is required for the budgets and amendments. This means a minimum of 8 members must be present, then 6 must vote "Yes".

Area Community Services Employment and Training Council
General Fund
Michigan Works! Budgetary Request
For the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2027

	Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Proposed Budget	Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Approved Budget	Increase (Decrease)
Revenues			
Grant Income	\$ 34,542,000	\$ 37,493,000	\$ (2,951,000)
Program Income	50,000	20,000	30,000
Total Revenue	\$ 34,592,000	\$ 37,513,000	\$ (2,921,000)
Expenses			
Operating Expenses			
Wages	\$ 11,087,000	\$ 11,267,000	\$ (180,000)
Fringe benefits	4,449,000	4,105,000	344,000
Consumable supplies	745,000	676,000	69,000
Transportation	112,000	200,000	(88,000)
Outside services	388,000	949,000	(561,000)
Space and communications	1,250,000	1,233,000	17,000
Equipment rent and maint	55,000	76,000	(21,000)
Equipment purchases	-	75,000	(75,000)
Other expense	751,000	823,000	(72,000)
Total Operating Expense	18,837,000	19,404,000	(567,000)
Subcontractors	\$ 726,000	\$ 1,745,000	(1,019,000)
Training	\$ 13,561,000	\$ 14,282,000	(721,000)
Direct Client Expenses	\$ 1,468,000	\$ 2,082,000	(614,000)
	\$ 15,755,000	\$ 18,109,000	\$ (2,354,000)
Total Expenses	34,592,000	37,513,000	(2,921,000)
Excess of Revenue over Expense	-	-	-

Unaudited

ACSET Personnel Actions – April 27, 2026

Appointments

<u>Class</u>	<u>Employee</u>	<u>Appointment</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
Accountant	Alora Behro	Permanent	4/13/26	Administrative
	Tyler Robak		4/13/26	Administrative
Career Coach	Syrena Webb	Permanent	3/16/26	Grand Rapids SE

Separations

<u>Class</u>	<u>Employee</u>	<u>Appointment</u>	<u>Separation Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
Accountant	Emily Khoury	Permanent	2/17/26	Administrative
Marketing & Communication Coordinator	Brooke Thomas	Permanent	3/10/26	Administrative
Talent Development Instructor	Ryan Nykamp	Permanent	4/10/26	Ottawa
Talent Development Manager	Andrika Lyons	Permanent	4/16/26	Grand Rapids NW
Talent Development Specialist	A'miya Ezell-Taylor	Permanent	3/31/26	Muskegon

Promotions/Transfers

<u>Class</u>	<u>Employee</u>	<u>Appointment</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
Career Coach to Talent Development Instructor	Jessica Haight	Permanent	4/27/26	Barry

Current

April 2026

CLASSIFICATION	Approved	Filled (Permanent)	Filled (Other)	Vacant
Accountant	3	2	0	1
Accounting Assistant	4	4	0	0
Accounting Manager	1	1	0	0
Apprenticeship Success Coordinator	2	2	0	0
Assessment Specialist	3	3	0	0
Assistant Manager	14	14	0	0
Attorney	2	2	0	0
Business Solutions Director	1	1	0	0
Business Solutions Manager	2	2	0	0
Business Solutions Representative	13	12	0	1
Business Systems Analyst	1	1	0	0
Career Coach	54	50	0	4
Career Navigator	28	24	0	4
Chief Executive Officer	1	1	0	0
Chief Financial Officer	1	1	0	0
Chief Operating Officer	1	1	0	0
Computer Support Specialist	2	2	0	0
Director of Development and Innovation	1	1	0	0
Executive Assistant	1	1	0	0
Facilities Coordinator	1	1	0	0
Facilities Assistant Manager	1	1	0	0
Facilities Manager	1	1	0	0
Grant Development Manager	1	1	0	0
Human Resource Assistant	3	3	0	0
Human Resource Director	1	1	0	0
Industry Council Lead	6	6	0	0
Information Technology Manager	1	1	0	0
Marketing & Communications Coordinator	3	2	0	1
Marketing & Communications Director	1	1	0	0
Payroll Coordinator	1	1	0	0
Performance Analyst	5	5	0	0
Policy Manager	4	4	0	0
Project Coordinator	9	8	0	1
Project Manager	7	6	0	1
Quality Assurance Specialist	9	9	0	0
Records Service Specialist	5	5	0	0

Resource Specialist	4	4	0	0
Success Coach	3	3	0	0
Talent Development Instructor	11	9	0	2
Talent Development Manager	1	0	0	1
Talent Development Specialist	7	7	0	0
Talent Solutions Director	1	1	0	0
Talent Solutions Manager	6	6	0	0
Youth Solutions Manager	1	1	0	0
TOTALS	228	212	0	16

CLASSIFICATION	Filled
Participant/Temporary	0

Service Summary Explanation

January 1, 2026 – February 28, 2026

Management Observations and Highlights

- *Service Center Traffic:* In January 2026, reported traffic slightly declined due to unexpected closures due to inclement weather. In February 2026, reported a decline due to UIA system maintenance, OSMIS system downtime and unexpected closures.
- *Businesses Served:* The business solutions team consistently aids a higher number of returning businesses compared to new businesses each month. We persistently seek opportunities to engage with new businesses while prioritizing quality service for existing customers. This quarter marked an increase in both new and returning businesses we have served, likely following the slight dip during the December holidays.
- *Jobs Filled by Industry:* Jobs filled numbers saw an increase this quarter particularly within the Manufacturing industry. Some of this increase is from businesses reporting new hires from their Going PRO FY25 Cycle 1 awards.
- *Training by Industry:* Nursing and transportation related training remain highly sought after classroom training.
- *Going Pro Talent Fund:* Total number of trainings completed *and* paid out each month. Training is not always paid out the same month the training was completed due to delays in businesses reporting and documentation collection. Data is reflective of multiple fiscal years and/or cycles within a fiscal year. Current billing includes training authorized to take place under the FY25 Cycle 2, FY25 Employer-Led Collaborative funding, and FY26 Cycle 1. Due to program changes at the state level, beginning with FY25 Cycle 1, business reimbursement will be processed when all training on the approved training plan has concluded. This will result in the bulk of completions being recorded closer to the end of the training period for any given cycle, thereby explaining the increase within this past quarter.
- *Hiring Events:* During this quarter, hiring events were scheduled based on business demand for individual hiring events or Employer of The Day events. Since converting back to in person hiring events in March of 2025, we are seeing more businesses engage with our team to utilize space at the Service Centers to meet with job seekers.
- *Retention Solutions Network:* Four new member businesses in three counties joined beginning January 1. These are all in the manufacturing industry. That brought the total shares purchased to 34. As employee engagement at those locations starts building, this addition will increase the numbers of employees served, barriers addressed, and barriers successfully resolved.
- *WorkReady Certificates Earned:* After rolling out a new WorkReady process in the summer of 2025, we continue to assess and actively make updates for continuous improvement, including marketing, job seeker access and community partner outreach. These updates will impact the number of individuals earning certificates.



Service Summary Oct. 1, 2025 to Feb. 28, 2026

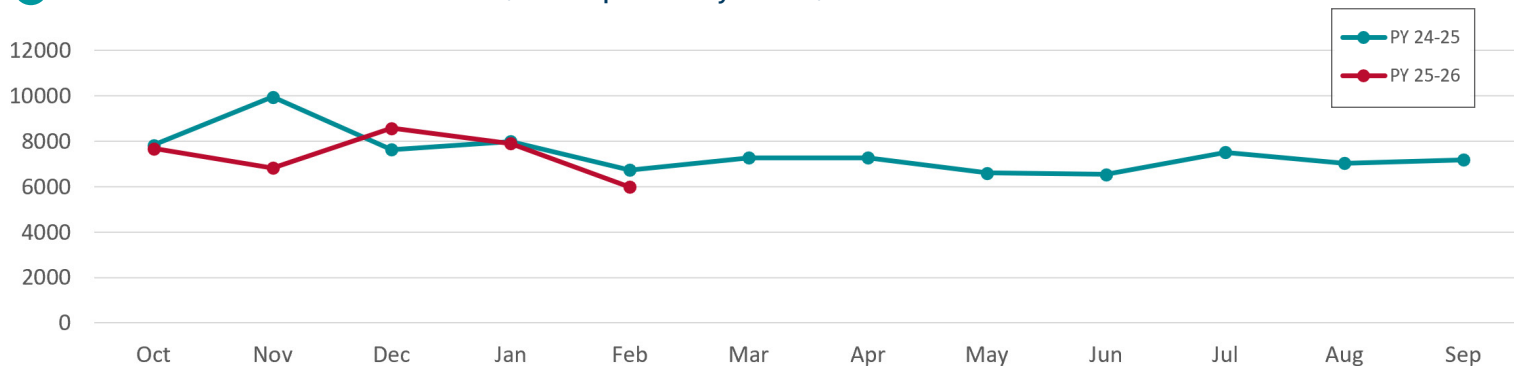
The data shown on this Service Summary indicates the organization's progress toward fulfilling of its services-based strategic priorities, as developed in the 2020 Strategic Plan: Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development and Diversity and Inclusion. Each indicator is a reflection of the work conducted on an operational level to ensure robust service delivery and strategic plan alignment.

Additional information and explanation about the data presented are included the narrative.

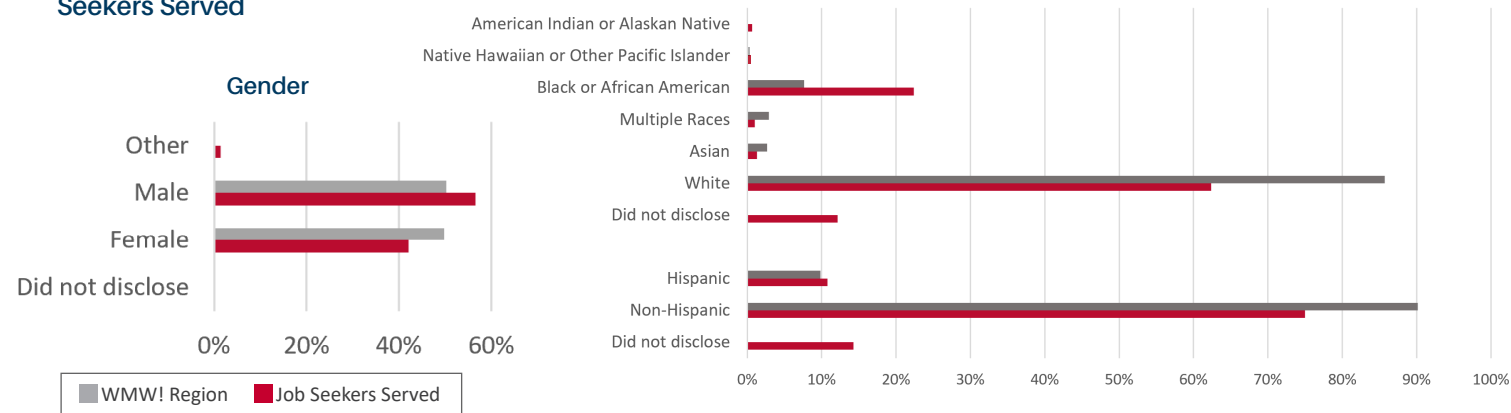
Strategic Plan Alignment

- Enhanced Relationships
- Pipeline Development
- Diversity and Inclusion

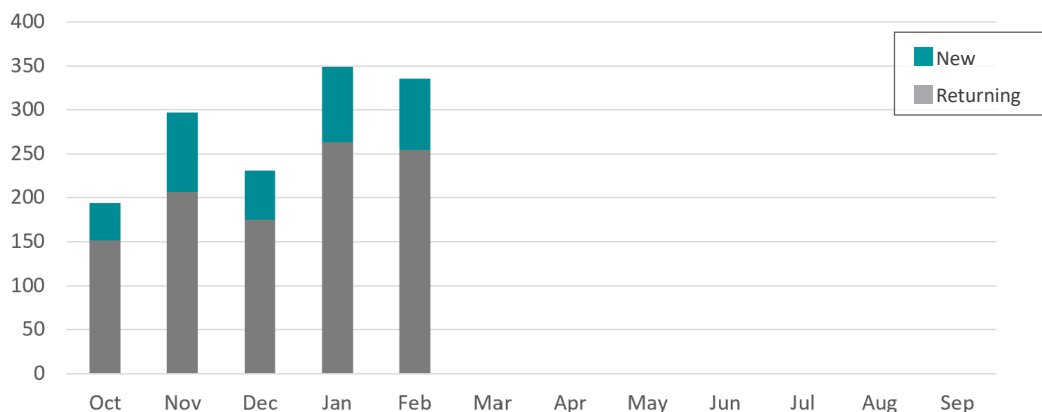
Service Center Traffic & Call Volume (PY comparison by month)



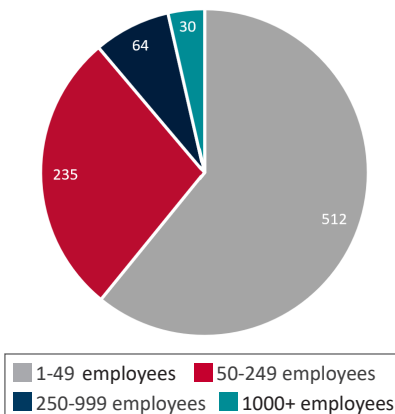
Diversity of Job Seekers Served



Employers Served (unique count)



Diversity of Employers Served (by size)



Jobs Filled: by Industry

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Agribusiness	2	0	1	29	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Construction	19	22	20	13	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Healthcare	482	70	63	59	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IT	3	3	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manufacturing	1,021	91	109	1,346	108	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	120	16	612	273	474	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1,647	202	806	1,726	607	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Training: by Industry

	New Hire	Classroom	Apprenticeship	Credentials Earned
Construction	1	7	14	3
Health Care	30	202	24	84
Information Technology	1	12	1	2
Manufacturing	12	12	46	11
Other	42	162	107	0
Total	86	395	192	171

Active grants supporting new hire, classroom and apprenticeship training this reporting period:

- Sector Strategies Employer-Led Collaborative
- MDARD Specialty Crop Grant
- MiSTAIRS
- Early Childhood Investment Corporation
- One Workforce
- WIOA Individual Training Accounts
- WIOA On-the-Job Training
- WIOA Youth Work Experience

Training (completed): Going PRO Training Fund

	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
New Hire	271	298	329	423	696	0	0	0
Classroom	336	250	452	472	348	0	0	0
Apprenticeship	183	35	74	116	172	0	0	0
Total	790	583	855	1,011	1,216	0	0	0

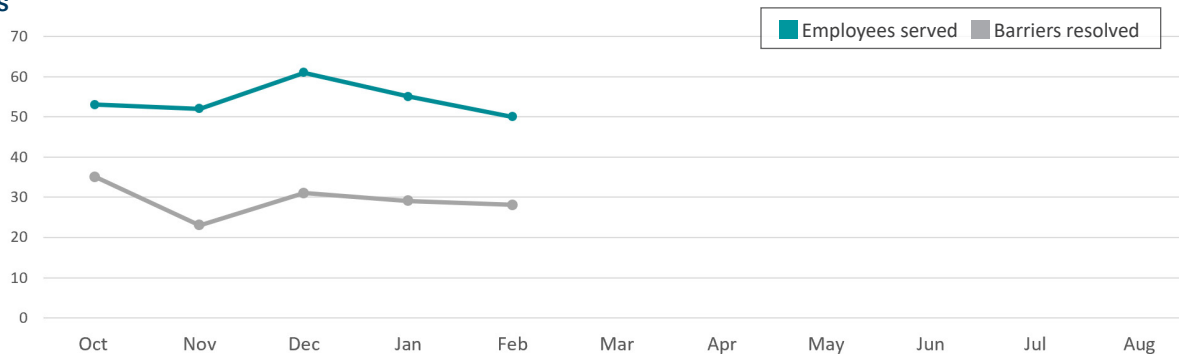
Hiring Events

	Participating		
	Events	Employers	Job Seekers
Q1	5	10	39
Q2	10	55	289
Q3	0	0	0
Q4	0	0	0
TOTAL	15	65	328

Retention Solutions Network

Members
15

Success coach hours
(cumulative, reported quarterly)
379



Talent Development Metrics (cumulative, reported quarterly)

674
Workshops Offered

2,643
Workshop Attendance

91
WorkReady Certificates

Service Summary: Strategic Plan Alignment and Indicator Descriptions

<p>Pipeline Development: Expand the local pipeline of work-ready talent to meet the needs of the workforce and of West Michigan employers.</p>	<p>Enhanced Relationships: Foster widespread networks to collaboratively address workforce needs in the region.</p>	<p>Diversity and Inclusion: Enable a culture that honors the worth and dignity of all people, where staff and customers have equitable access to opportunities.</p>
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The indicators shown on the Service Summary are provided to inform the board about the impact of services provided through a variety of workforce development programs. Each represents the implementation of goals in the Strategic Plan.

Indicator	Strategic Plan Alignment	Narrative
<i>Service Center Traffic & Call Volume</i>	Pipeline Development	This indicator shows the funnel of job seekers entering our system through the service centers and virtual appointments, giving us an opportunity to expand the talent pipeline. In October 2021, we began implementing a new tracking system. During this period, UIA reinstated the Register to Work requirement, which brought more people into the centers. The data does not include attendance at workshops, focused job search, or coaching sessions. This will be added as the tracking system is expanded.
<i>Diversity of Job Seekers</i>	Diversity and Inclusion	This indicator shows the variety of job seekers we work with compared to the region. With the implementation of the new tracking system, we resumed tracking demographic data. Although we are in the early stages of collecting this data, management regularly observes and monitors this information.
<i>Businesses Served</i>	Enhanced Relationships	This indicator shows unique businesses served each month, and reflects the widespread networks developed by staff. A business is counted once per program year as unique; they likely received multiple services throughout the year. A new business is one that has never engaged with WMW. A returning business is one that has received services from WMW in a prior program year(s).
<i>Diversity of Businesses</i>	Diversity and Inclusion; Enhanced Relationships	This indicator shows a comprehensive picture of our business customers based on size (total number of employees). This data is helpful in planning initiatives and for identifying specific business groups. Although we work with any size company, we target those most in need of our services which are often smaller companies without internal HR capacity.
<i>Jobs Filled by Industry</i>	Enhanced Relationships; Pipeline Development	This indicator shows the number of jobs filled with business customers of WMW and with our assistance. The variation in month-to-month numbers may reflect delays in reporting WMW, as well as unique needs within a variety of businesses. Spikes in the numbers may also reflect hiring events supported by WMW.

Indicator	Strategic Plan Alignment	Narrative
<i>Training: by Industry</i>	Pipeline Development	This indicator shows WMW efforts to expand the local pipeline of work-ready talent by supporting training and skill upgrading. The data is presented by industries most in demand in the region. Food Processors, as part of Agribusiness, are currently reported under manufacturing. On-the-Job Training provided to New Hires results in advancement of skills and wages but does not provide a credential. This data does not include training funded by Going Pro Talent Fund.
<i>Training (completed): GoingPro</i>	Enhanced Relationships; Pipeline Development	As one of our largest funding sources for business-driven training, Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) is reported separately. Allowable training funded by GPTF includes new hire, incumbent, and registered apprenticeships.
<i>Hiring Events</i>	Enhanced Relationships; Pipeline Development	This indicator shows hiring events that bring businesses and job seekers together, requiring coordination across multiple departments and programs. We continue to look for new and innovative ways to conduct outreach to job seekers, including greater collaboration with community partners.
<i>Retention Solutions Network</i>	Enhanced Relationships; Pipeline Development	This indicator shows how we leverage networks among community partners to provide services to member businesses. Data reflects services provided by Success Coaches via dedicated on-site hours as well as virtual. Services provided to each employee does not consider the high number of touchpoints with the coach. Barriers addressed can include needs for transportation, housing, medical bills, utilities, and many more, all so that workers can successfully engage and fulfill their role for the business.
<i>WorkReady Certificate Earned</i>	Pipeline Development	This indicator shows the delivery of employability skills training, the highest need for skillsets expressed by the region's business. Job Seekers take a pre-assessment to determine areas of readiness and areas for improvement; they only attend workshops for areas identified as needing improvement. A post-assessment determines their skill attainment and if successful, earns a certificate. This conveys to businesses that they are "work ready." Workshops are offered at service center locations and at partner locations.

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Area Community Services
Employment & Training Council
215 Straight Ave NW
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

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. TTY 711

MEMORANDUM

TO: ACSET Governing Board
FROM: West Michigan Works! Staff
DATE: April 27, 2026
RE: Solutions Driven Updates

Enhanced Relationships:

Foster widespread networks to collaboratively address workforce needs in the region.

Pipeline Development:

Expand the local pipeline of work-ready talent to meet the needs of the workforce and of West Michigan employers.

Diversity and Inclusion:

Enable a culture that honors the worth and dignity of all people, where staff and customers have equitable access to opportunities.

Grant Updates

Make Michigan Home: WMW has been awarded a \$91,250 *Make MI Home* grant (rebranded as West Michigan Rooted) from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. The funds will support training, employment, and retention efforts for Michigan residents. The grant period runs from March 18, 2025, through February 2, 2026 with a six month no cost extension through July 31, 2026. In partnership with the Michigan Office of Growth, WMW will promote an attraction and retention package through *Make My Move*. Make My Move is a national online platform that helps communities attract new residents by offering customized incentive packages to individuals considering relocation. Applications are now live. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

FutureTech Careers Program (formerly known as Strengthening Community Colleges Grant 4): This grant program, awarded to Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC), is designed to enhance the capacity of community colleges to meet the skill development needs of employers and equitably support students in securing good jobs in high-demand industries. The grant program is centered on sector-based career pathways, which have been proven to improve employment outcomes. West Michigan Works! will collaborate with GRCC with the goal of developing targeted programs and curriculum. This grant will serve 622 participants between May 1, 2024, and April 30, 2028. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Registered Apprenticeships: WMW received a second round of funding from the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) totaling \$373,000 to continue supporting childcare providers in developing registered apprenticeship opportunities for early childhood educators. The grant's performance period has been extended from February 2026 to July 2026 and an additional \$40,000 was awarded to WMW to continue to expand the work of the grant. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

The Michigan Citizen Reentry Initiative (MiCRI): A cooperative grant opportunity with the US Department of Labor and the Department of Justice with a state award of \$7.6 million to launch the new initiative designed to reduce recidivism among justice involved citizens and increase their successful participation in employment and training opportunities. This includes individuals incarcerated in the Federal Correctional Institute (FCI) and Residential Reentry Centers (RRC). WMW will provide services in stage 2 -post release for participants in the RRC and Home Confinement (HC). This grant received a no cost extension through September 30, 2026. ***Enhanced Relationships, Diversity and Inclusion***

Partners for Reentry Opportunities in Workforce Development (PROWD): The PROWD program, funded by the Joint First Step Act, intends to expand on the methodology of the MiCRI program to establish a statewide network of support for Justice-Involved Citizens to provide Stage 1, 2, and 3 pre-employment training services accessible at Residential Reentry Centers (RRCs) and to individuals in home confinement (HC) throughout the state. This grant will serve 250 participants statewide over a 37-month period of performance from September 1, 2024, to September 30, 2027. ***Enhanced Relationships, Diversity and Inclusion***

Michigan Skilled Immigration Integration Program (MISIIP): The Michigan Skilled Immigrant Integration Program is part of a \$1M allocation for the Michigan International Talent Solutions (MITS) initiative as part of an overall \$5M appropriation received by Global Detroit. This program connects professional, college-degreed, internationally-trained job seekers with Michigan-based careers in their profession. Eligible participants will also receive assistance with job search, Networking coaching, Credential evaluation and Professional licensing resources. This program has been extended through September 30, 2026. ***Diversity and Inclusion, Pipeline Development***

Barrier Removal and Employment Success (BRES) Expansion: The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) has awarded a total of \$14.6 million in Barrier Removal and Employment Success grant funds. West Michigan Works! Partnered with seven community-based organizations (CBOs) and received the maximum allocation of \$1 million. These funds will help remove barriers directly related to employment such as childcare, transportation, and housing. The CBOs include Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation, Grand Rapids Women's Resource Center, GoodWill of Greater Grand Rapids, Steepletown Neighborhood Services, The Source, Treetops Collective, and United Way of Montcalm & Ionia. West Michigan Works! (WMW) received a no-cost extension for this grant through September 30, 2026. WMW made the decision not to extend Steepletown and The Women's Resource Center due to separate organizational and programmatic considerations. ***Pipeline Development, Diversity and Inclusion***

MDARD Specialty Crop Grant: West Michigan Works! was awarded a USDA grant for \$83,470 to support specialty crop grower training in agribusiness and career exploration at MiCareerQuest. Eligible training will begin April 2026. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

Going PRO Talent Fund:

Fiscal Year 2025:

- Cycle 1: 322 applications were submitted to the state. 175 were awarded a total of \$11.2M. Training may occur January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025.
- Cycle 2: In total, 222 applications were submitted to the state. 49 were awarded for a total of \$10.8 million. Training may occur July 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.

Fiscal Year 2026:

- Cycle 1: 336 applications were submitted to the state. 108 were awarded a total of \$7.1M. Training may occur January 1, 2026 – December 31, 2026.
- Cycle 2: The employer application period is tentatively scheduled to be open from April 6, 2026 - April 24, 2026. Awarded training may occur July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027.
- Employer Led Collaborative (ELC) Applications: The application period was tentatively scheduled to open March 2026. It is currently on hold until further direction from the state has been received.

A full list of grant recipients statewide is available online at

Michigan.gov/TalentFund. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE): West Michigan Works! is one of five organizations selected to receive State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) grant funding from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). Awarded organizations had to demonstrate prior success with grant programs, a proven track record of performance, effective utilization of grant funds, and the expertise to monitor progress and meet performance targets. WMW will receive \$212,360 to support 32 registered apprentices in non-infrastructure occupations. The SAE grant program is designed to assist organizations that currently sponsor or partner with sponsors of Registered Apprenticeship Programs. The grant period ends March 31, 2026. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

Regional Innovation Project (RIP) Grant: West Michigan Works! was awarded a joint Regional Innovation Project (RIP) grant in partnership with Capital Area Michigan Works!, Detroit Employment Solutions Corporation, and Oakland County Michigan Works! through the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. This initiative will enhance and expand immersive, employer-led career navigation events in manufacturing, healthcare, and technology across all four regions. These events are designed to expose students and jobseekers to high-demand career pathways and increase awareness of postsecondary training aligned with employer needs. The total grant award is \$450,000, with \$120,000 allocated to West Michigan Works!, which will also serve as the fiscal agent for the project and support regional implementation. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

Industry Talent Councils

There are various ways to stay connected to the innovative work taking place under each of the West Michigan Works! Industry Talent Councils (ITC). Each council has expanded its outreach through dedicated LinkedIn accounts and bimonthly newsletters. The increased online presence enables each ITC to provide employers and partners in their respective industries with pertinent information such as workforce trends, council initiatives, and opportunities to participate in future projects. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development***

Multi-Industry Talent Council Initiatives:

Lunch & Learn Series: The Industry Talent Councils continue to jointly fund a quarterly Lunch & Learn series connecting employers with inclusive hiring strategies and job seeker support services provided by West Michigan Works! and its community partners. The next session will take place on April 14 at the WMW Grand Rapids Northwest Service Center and will focus on childcare solutions, a key barrier identified by employers to hiring and retaining working caregivers. Registration is available [here](#).

MiCareerQuest: Industry Talent Council Leads and Business Solutions Representatives have completed exhibitor recruitment for MiCareerQuest 2026. Registration closed on March 20, with 112 business and education exhibits confirmed. Sponsorship commitments are due May 1. Interested [sponsors](#) are encouraged to contact Chad Patton for additional information.

Career Exploration Events: The Industry Talent Councils have launched a new regional career exploration website designed for students and parents to easily access career related events by industry and location. Community partners and regional stakeholders can contribute by adding events, training programs, and business listings, helping to support year-round career exploration. Explore the site [here](#).

Agribusiness Talent Council of West Michigan (ATC)

Mission: The Agribusiness Talent Council is an employer-led collaborative that seeks to expand the talent pool by promoting care pathways and opportunities in West Michigan agribusiness industry.

The Spotlight on Ag Readers (SOAR) program concluded successfully, reaching 1,869 students in 2026, representing a 46.9% increase over 2025 participation. Feedback from educators, volunteers, and students has been overwhelmingly positive.

The ATC Scholarship program has closed, with 27 applications received, including representation from every county in the region. The selection committee is currently reviewing applications, with awardees to be announced at the end of April and formally recognized at the June 10 council meeting.

Planning is underway for STEAM Along the Lakeshore, taking place May 2 in downtown Muskegon. The event is expected to attract over 700 students and families, with agribusiness exhibits hosted in Hackley Park from 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

Construction Careers Council (CCC)

Mission: The Construction Careers Council creates a bright future for West Michigan's construction industry by building a diverse and qualified workforce.

The council continues to build momentum through its Construction Career Pathways (CCP) initiative, which recently concluded another successful cycle. This year, five employers participated, engaging 96 students through classroom presentations that provided direct interaction with industry professionals and increased awareness of careers in the skilled trades and construction management.

The 2026 Women Who Build West Michigan initiative, aligned with national Women in Construction Week, has experienced significant growth, receiving 23 nominations, up from seven in the previous year. The initiative continues to elevate women across the construction industry and has generated strong engagement and positive feedback from participants and their organizations. Selected honorees will be featured in a blog and newsletter series over the next year, highlighting diverse career pathways and leadership experiences across the industry.

The council is currently in the process of selecting a union trades representative to fill an open member seat, ensuring balanced representation across labor and employer partners.

Discover Manufacturing (DM)

Mission: We exist to inspire and expand manufacturing talent in West Michigan.

The Discover Manufacturing Scholarship Program continues to be a key investment in the future workforce. The 2026 cycle closed on March 15, with 34 applications received (28 eligible) and \$13,000 in scholarships to be awarded. Awardees will be announced in June.

The council's three strategy workgroups continue to make strong progress. The Train team is currently advancing an Employer Led Collaborative (ELC) application, which will support long-term talent development efforts.

Planning is also underway for the 2026 Discover Manufacturing Week project, positioning the council for another impactful year of student engagement.

Explore Hospitality (ExH):

Mission: We elevate one of West Michigan's leading employment sectors by developing careers, cultivating talent, and promoting a thriving, dynamic hospitality industry.

The Explore Hospitality Council continues to expand partnerships, launch workforce initiatives, and engage in regional career exploration efforts.

The council published its first newsletter and [blog](#) in February, with the next edition scheduled for April.

The ExH strategy workgroups are actively planning initiatives for the industry. The Elevate workgroup is leading MiCareerQuest efforts, with eight exhibitors representing all five hospitality sectors. The council also continues participation in regional events aligned with this strategy including, Barry County Career Fest, Kent ISD mock interviews, JA Girls' Dream Fair, and a Promise Zone roundtable discussion. Additionally, a new collaboration with Experience Grand Rapids, [Craft Your Career](#), was launched in March to promote hospitality career pathways. The Train Workgroup continues development of an Event Management Apprenticeship Program, currently building competencies in partnership with the apprenticeship team. The Retain Workgroup is advancing a hospitality-focused Lunch & Learn series, with planning underway for topics, venues, and speakers. Two council seats remain open, and recruitment efforts are underway to expand representation.

[West Michigan Health Careers Council \(WMHCC\)](#)

Mission: The purpose of WMHCC is to provide an employer-led collaborative council of healthcare employers, educators, workforce development, and economic development organizations working together to meet West Michigan's healthcare talent needs.

The council continues to implement its strategic plan and recently advanced several key initiatives.

The Health Career Expo 2026 (Future Rounds) built on last year's success with enhanced, hands-on experiences. The event engaged more than 40 students and family members, many of whom participated for over an hour. Expansion to three additional counties in 2027 is being explored.

Planning continues for Michigan HOSA expansion across all seven counties.

Partnerships with GRAAHI, GRCC, and Trinity Health are progressing toward the development of a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Registered Apprenticeship, creating more equitable pathways into healthcare careers.

An application has been received from Meijer Pharmacy to fill the employer vacancy, with a vote scheduled at the upcoming April meeting.

[West Michigan Tech Talent \(WMTT\)](#)

Mission: West Michigan Tech Talent looks to engage employers of Information Technology professionals with best practices, resources and a community to grow, develop, recruit and retain a diverse and inclusive world class IT workforce in West Michigan.

The council recently approved three new members and now consists of 13 total members across employer, education, economic development, and workforce representation.

Tech Trends is coming up on Thursday, May 7th from 5-8pm at Midtown GR in Studio Park. This annual premier tech event will feature a discussion with Keith Brophy, CEO of Mentavi Health, and Dre Wallace, CEO of Opnr. The council expects roughly 175 attendees from a wide range of tech backgrounds. A portion of ticket sales will go towards supporting STEM Greenhouse, a local nonprofit committed to growing STEM proficiency in vulnerable children to cultivate education and career success. There are currently 25 people who signed up for Tech Trends.

Tech Trails, WMTT's annual series of networking hikes, is back. Our first hike will take place on Wednesday, April 22nd at Blandford Nature Center from 4:30-5:30pm. This special Earth Day hike will be led by Bill Smith, former CEO and owner of Compucraft Technologies. There are currently 18 people who signed up for this event. WMTT's second Tech Trails hike will take place on Tuesday, June 9th at Outdoor Discovery Center in Holland from 4:30-5:30pm. The council is hoping to get more hikes on the calendar for August and October, knowing that September is reserved for the Tech Week hike.

The council also approved a project focused on increasing IT employer engagement with Going PRO Talent Fund. This project will include two lunch and learns for businesses to attend that line up with both cycles of Going Pro.

Programs

West Michigan Works! Registered Apprenticeship Programs (WMW RAP):

West Michigan Works! currently administers 63 U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Registered Apprenticeship programs, serving 408 active apprentices across 130 participating employers. West Michigan Works! continues to engage regional employers in exploring registered apprenticeships as a solution to workforce challenges. In the last quarter, the apprenticeship team received 16 referrals from interested employers, 18 meetings were held to explore registered apprenticeship, and 2 new programs were registered with the USDOL.

The apprenticeship team continues efforts to promote Pre-Apprenticeship Programs in alignment with the Michigan SAE Team's pilot program, Michigan Apprenticeship Readiness Certificate (MARC). West Michigan Works!, in partnership with Kent ISD, has established 4 pre-apprenticeship programs under the MARC pilot program. Ongoing conversations with Ottawa Area ISD, and Allegan Area ESA have resulted in additional commitment/planning meetings with interested employers within the region.

West Michigan Works! continues to expand registered apprenticeship opportunities across the region through targeted promotion, intermediary consulting, and workforce development training. During the reporting period, the Apprenticeship Team conducted outreach and engagement activities by presenting to 4 employer members on the Explore Hospitality Industry Talent Council's Train Sub-Committee, and 12 employer members of the Retention Solutions Network, a West Michigan Works resource that offers customized, timely, in-person support and training to keep employees on the job and business thriving. Additional outreach activities included presentations at the Talent First Career Readiness

Conference, KCTC Path to Pro Skilled Trades Open House, and participation in the Allegan Area ESA Advanced Manufacturing Advisory Board meeting. Exploration meetings were held with Davenport University and the Deans of Grand Rapids Community College to discuss pathways from pre-apprenticeship to apprenticeship to degree attainment. Collaboration with other Michigan Works! regional offices continues as well, including collective meetings with Berrien, Cass, VanBuren Michigan Works, West Central Michigan Works, and Michigan Works Southwest.

Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development, Diversity and Inclusion

Ascend Youth Programming: The Ascend team provides programming for eligible out-of-school youth ages 16 to 24. The Ascend program will once again utilize Young Professionals (WIOA State Activities) and Young Professionals Plus (State Policy GF/GP) funding to Provide the Summer Career Readiness Program. Applications are open as of April 6. The program will run for 7 weeks and provide 1 week of WorkREADY employability skills training followed by a 6-week work experience with local employers. This program pays a \$15/hour wage for youth ages 16-24.

Additionally, the Ascend program will be hosting Consumer's Energy's 2026 Summer Youth Energy Academy in Kent County. This program, which is owned by Consumer's Energy, will be hosted at the Grand Rapids Northwest Service Center with Ascend as the coordinating partner. Youth who are not accepted into the program will have an opportunity to join the Summer Career Readiness Program.

Pipeline Development, Diversity and Inclusion

MiCareerQuest: MiCareerQuest is a Career Exploration Experience for middle and high school students. We are just over a month away from the event on May 20. Additionally, there are still opportunities to volunteer and/or attend a VIP tour. You can sign up to volunteer [here](#). You can also sign up for a VIP tour [here](#). ***Pipeline Development***

Elevate: Elevate is an expansion to Rise Up, a model of outside-in recruitment and inside-up career development that began in partnership with West Michigan Works!, The Source, and Trinity Health. Elevate uses Career Coaching, Resource Navigation, and employer coordination to reduce the friction of hiring and promotion. The Elevate team has been hard at work finding opportunities to engage with CBO partners; the Career Navigation workshop was provided internally for review in March and is now being deployed in partner locations around Kent County. ***Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development, Diversity and Inclusion***

Retention Solutions Network: Retention Solutions Network (RSN) is a fee-based business resource network focused on navigating resources and providing support services to member employees, thus helping them to stay in their job and advance within their business. Retention Solutions Network added U of M Health West as a member. We are also engaged in gathering employer testimonials as well as making enhancements to service delivery. ***Enhanced Relationships, Diversity and Inclusion***

Gain Employment. Maintain Support (GEMS) formally known as Learn, Earn and Provide (LEAP) Pilot: GEMS launched in Muskegon as a pilot program at the end of January of 2022. It is a program aimed to assist non-custodial parents in obtaining and maintaining employment and gets back on track with child support payments. This program is in close partnership with Friend of the Court and includes both voluntary referrals and mandated participation in Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Montcalm, Muskegon and Ottawa counties. *Pipeline Development, Diversity and Inclusion*

Initiatives

Career Readiness Conference: The Career Readiness Conference is a one-day convening designed to bring business, education, workforce development, and economic development professionals together to share best practices related to K-12 student career readiness. Led by Talent First, this year's event was held at GVSU's Allendale campus and attracted more than 250 attendees, with expanded participation beyond manufacturing and construction to include health care, information technology, and agribusiness sectors. WMW! staff served on the planning committee alongside regional ISDs, workforce partners, and industry stakeholders, contributing to conference structure and session design, and presented in three sessions focused on apprenticeship readiness, work-based learning requirements, and the Career Exploration Events website. *Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development*

West Michigan Education-to-Employment Partnership (E2P): E2P is a Talent First initiative that brings together employers, education and training providers, and community-based organizations to help individuals who are un- or underemployed access skills-based pathways into high-demand jobs requiring postsecondary training. E2P aims to develop a regional opportunity marketplace that offers shared coaching, resources, and wraparound support to generate more talent, increase the efficiency of credential attainment, and retain graduates in West Michigan. West Michigan Works! supports the collaborations and actively participates in this initiative but is not a sponsor of the platform. *Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development*

Section 107a: This grant opportunity stems from the State School Aid Act (Public Act 320 of 2023), which earmarks \$15 million for innovative adult education programs aimed at boosting enrollment, retention, and completion, especially among individuals without a high school credential or with limited English proficiency. The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Workforce Development (LEO WD) is administering the program in partnership with Talent First to support the development and implementation of innovative, regionally unique initiatives. As part of a West Michigan Adult Education consortium, West Michigan Works! actively participates in micro credential planning and the development of key project deliverables, with all micro credentials vetted through industry councils. *Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development*



Earn-to-Learn Partnership: West Michigan Works! (WMW), West Michigan CDL (WMCDL), and Earn to Learn collaborate to reduce financial barriers and support job seekers pursuing education and training. Through this partnership, eligible job seekers complete financial literacy education and save toward their training costs, with savings matched at an 8:1 ratio through a combined match from Earn to Learn and WMW. This coordinated model strengthens financial capability, supports credential attainment, and expands access to in demand career pathways.

Enhanced Relationships, Pipeline Development

West Michigan Works! Workshops – How AI Can Help You Get the Job: West Michigan Works!' Talent Development Team recently added the workshop "How AI Can Help You Get the Job" to their free workshop offerings. This is one step helping jobseekers get comfortable with using AI and also use it as a way to assist them in their job search and application. *Pipeline Development*