

Purpose

Michigan companies are facing a serious pipeline problem. Too few students and jobseekers are completing degrees and certifications in the fields that need workers, leaving businesses high and dry in their search for qualified talent. Companies that are able to connect to students while they are still in school have a greater chance of growing their workforce building their future pipeline of workers that are skilled in the way they need them to be. MI Bright Future (MIBF) makes that connection possible.

MI Bright Future's collaboration between students, educators, and employers aims to introduce young jobseekers to the region's growing occupations by connecting on an easy-to-use online platform. This platform includes e-mentoring, message boards, and company profiles that help inform students, parents, and educators on current and projected employer needs. Companies can, in turn, nourish their talent pipeline by interacting with students throughout the career decision-making process, making their future workforce aware of the training needed for particular occupations and introducing them to the many opportunities in Michigan. These activities contribute to a seamless, healthy career pathways system for students and jobseekers which will enable companies to find the talent they need both now and in the future.

MI Bright future aims to address the long-term workforce needs in Michigan, particularly in high-demand occupations by supporting the development of an informed, educated, skilled, and experienced talent pipeline. The vision MI Bright Future seeks to achieve is one of a robust engagement system between employers, schools, young people and their primary influencers and supporters with a focus on career-related learning and experiences. Currently, MI Bright Future is piloting in Livingston County. Grant funds will support positive implementation and determination of best practices to be shared with the rest of the region. MI Bright Future is scalable and can grow to cover the other counties in the region after the initial, successful pilot. Livingston County Michigan Works! will also be piloting this program with adult job-seekers, serving as an initial pilot to determine success for the rest of the region.

Prosperity goals/objectives

Goal: *All stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, counselors, service providers, and employers, are aware of and exposed to high-demand and other occupations in the region, as well as the most important foundational and technical skills and credentials needed to find gainful employment.*

Objectives: *Regional stakeholders will collaborate to develop and implement a comprehensive career awareness campaign; developing (or expanding) experiential learning opportunities that increase the knowledge of all stakeholders regarding career options.*

Providing more contextual learning and real work applications for students, including internships, apprenticeships and expanded use of the ccInspire tool has been identified by the Region 9 group as a strategy to achieve this goal. ccInspire is an enhancement to the technology Career Cruising, a software that many schools in the region are already using to develop Educational Development Plans or EDPs, which are required by the Michigan Department of Education to help students plan their career paths. MIBF is the project group that supports implementation, integration, and expansion of the ccInspire technology in this region. The MI Bright Future partnership has been in existence since April 2014 and consists of a passionate group of intermediate school districts, post-secondary education, workforce partners and employer partners who are committed to driving students, parents, and educators to using the tool and all of its benefits.

MIBF assists in achieving the goal of a career-aware and prepared community in three main areas: (1) increasing employer engagement with the K-12 school system, (2) helping students/jobseekers (and their parents/guardians) to make educated career choices, and (3) planning for post-secondary educational attainment; while increasing regional collaboration among school districts and other stakeholders to support career exploration advancements.

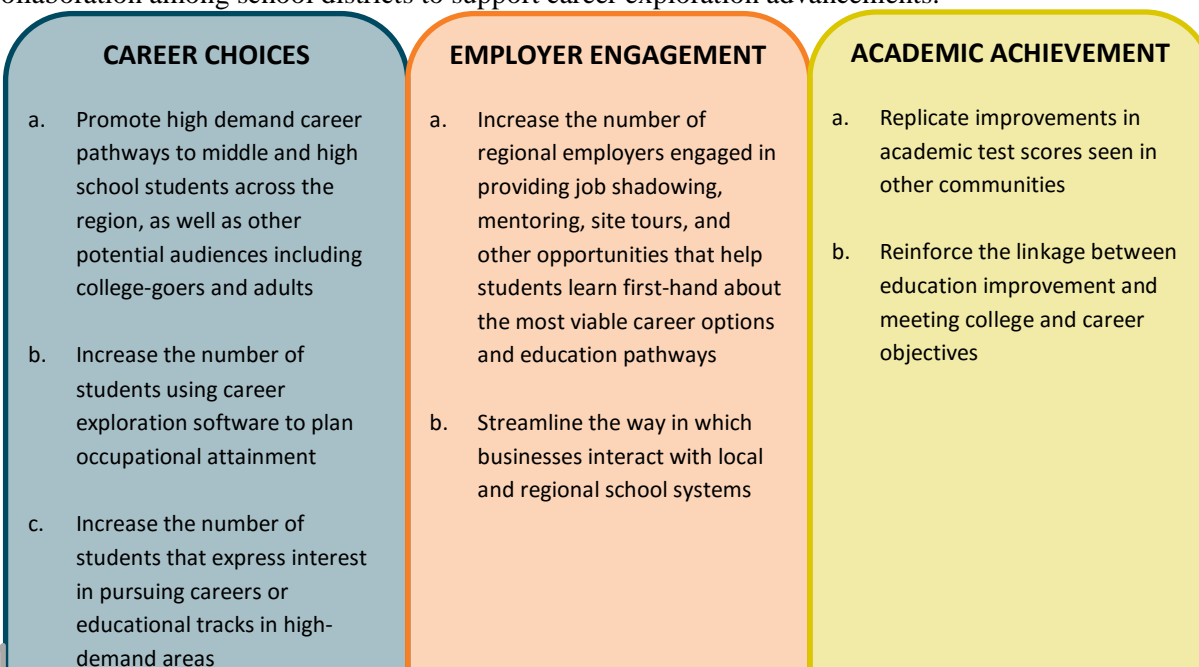
MIBF reflects a common regional approach to employer engagement with K-12 education through its regional collaboration. By sharing an online database across county lines of employers who

are willing to connect with students and jobseekers in some way, it is possible to build the capacity of the region as a whole to offer enriched learning activities that have profound effects on future career choices and career readiness to its students. Further, employers are able to use the system to communicate directly with students, parents, and educators about the skills (foundational and technical) that are needed to get and keep a job in their particular industry. Employers are able to communicate this vital information in a more streamlined and effective way through MIBF—reaching thousands of stakeholders through one system that can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection. This information is shared with the stakeholders in the MI Bright Future workforce development and educational partnership who can then help students and jobseekers to use this information to make more informed career choices and pathway decisions. The option for constant communication with employers through the system also keeps the feedback loop open for continuous improvement of not only this program, but also of curriculum and classroom activities.

MIBF provides a platform where a comprehensive career awareness campaign is possible; an avenue where high-demand careers and educational pathways can be easily promoted to stakeholders. MIBF through ccInspire exposes students to careers first-hand by providing an environment where they can search for work-based learning opportunities offered by employers in their area. MIBF goes beyond just access to ccInspire. MIBF is a resource hub that includes the use of multiple strategies to drive community usage of the tool including integrating with the Career Jump Start program; developing and disseminating consistent messaging about careers and education across the region; educating teachers and counseling staff through a published monthly newsletter focused on high demand occupational pathways, post-secondary programs and in-person workshops and trainings; identifying strategies to further engage parents in the career planning process (and change industry perceptions as needed); supporting employer recruitment, registration, and usage; working with and encouraging employers to offer additional career development opportunities; and managing fundraising and sponsorship to sustain the program/ccInspire technology purchase. MIBF leverages partnerships with dedicated employers who identify skill gaps and opportunities fueling the content used in awareness and outreach efforts. A newly developed Student Advisory Council comprised of student leaders across the region will also work in collaboration with the Employer Advisory Council to mold MIBF’s design and offerings from the student perspective.

Expected outcomes

The funding request will support the MI Bright Future project, which aims to affect outcomes in three main areas-- career choices, employer engagement, and educational attainment—while increasing collaboration among school districts to support career exploration advancements.



Increase collaboration between regional school districts

Metrics:

In addition to the measurement of attitudes and usage of various stakeholder groups the following will be analyzed:

- Number of schools adopting the software
- Number of employer profiles (companies)
- Number of company discussion boards
- Number of Career Coaches (for particular occupations)
- Number of work based learning opportunities offered by employer partners
- Type of work-based learning opportunities offered
- Frequency of student logins per month, by grade level
- Number of discussions per week
- Number of discussion board followers per company
- Employer profile hits
- Number of student participation in work-based learning opportunities
- Student career choices based on results of interests and ability instruments
- Alignment of employers in the system to high-demand careers available locally.

Long-term effects that may manifest over a long period of program implementation may include decreased dropout rates, improved student retention; improved attitudes about Career & Technical Education among the public; and increased student enrollment in certificates/degrees in high-demand fields; and increased STEM education interest and participation. These effects have been documented in other places in the nation.

Scope of work

The scope of work for the Region 9 prosperity grant includes two main areas of assistance in the deployment, implementation, and continued use of the MI Bright Future program in Livingston County and Region 9: User's group development and intern support.

Region 9 Users Group: A group of educational staff members representing all participating schools) who come together to learn about the tool, engage in discussions around driving student usage to the tool, discuss issues, and suggest potential improvements and expansion efforts.

- Identify educational practitioners in Livingston County that will interact with the MI Bright Future program
- Design half days of MI Bright Future program review and professional development activities focused on career and college awareness and readiness for education staff including:
 - o Training on student-access portal
 - o Training on administrative portal
 - o Q&A and discussion to ensure buy-in from staff members
 - o Agenda time to identify any issues in implementation with the program/system and think critically about solutions
 - o Presentations of localized high-demand career information, including occupation titles, wages, and educational tracks

- Presentations from local employers who can communicate the need for the qualified talent and underline how education plays a role
- Company tours
- Activities and information on how to integrate MIBF into the classroom
- Benefits of using the tool as an educational staff member
- Summarize and report outcomes in an *Educator's Guide to using MI Bright Future* in schools
- Develop a series of best practices sharing forums to advise the prosperity region on expansion and program development.
- Develop an article or series of articles to be featured in Region 9 prosperity newsletters around MI Bright Future best practices and features

Intern support: Coordinating staff are key to the success of MIBF, including intern support. By providing another staff person to focus on community deployment, coordination of necessary activities will be more smooth and scalable. Additionally, MI Bright Future will be used to find and recruit the intern. Intern duties will include:

- Assistance with onboarding and training for system administrators and other assigned staff
- Assistance with marketing, including acquiring or printing materials and collateral for participants
- Assistance with employer registration process, including follow-up phone calls and profile monitoring
- Administrative duties including data entry and reporting
- Design and coordinate promotional events for parents and community members
- Assist with coordination of work based learning activities and faculty training sessions
- Additional implementation support as identified by schools

Deliverables:

- Formation of a MI Bright Future Educational Users Group to both improve implementation of the program and encourage participation and buy-in from educational practitioners.
- Year-end report on educator experience using MI Bright Future with students, providing best practices and recommendations for future deployments in the region. The report will be presented to the TDCC and the Workforce Boards. The TDCC membership includes all of the ISD superintendents in Region 9.
- Best practices sharing forums to support expansion throughout the prosperity region.
- Localized marketing materials produced with intern support.
- Articles to be shared regionally via the Region 9 Newsletters.
- Development of at least one parent-focused engagement event to be replicated around the region.

Budget

The total funding request from R9 RPI is \$10,250 to support substitute stipends, intern salary, and meeting supplies. Substitute stipends will be paid to schools so they are able to cover teacher absences for participation in the Educational User's Group. Teachers are critical to the success and student-use of this program, but their time is limited due to budget constraints and the need to be in the classroom. These stipends alleviate those barriers to teacher participation in the development and implementation of the program and will allow for rich discussions around best practices for implementation in other R9 counties. Intern support will give administrators in the county hands-on experience in using the system to locate and hire the intern. The intern's role will be critical in ensuring smooth registration and

coordination between employers

The Detroit Regional Chamber, Livingston County Michigan Works! and the Workforce Intelligence Network for Southeast Michigan provide matching funds to operate the fundamental aspects of this program including purchase of the ccInspire technology, staff time and project management, the Career Cruising base software platform for Livingston County Michigan Works!, and in-kind support.

Region 9 RPI Budget						
PROJECT NAME: MI Bright Future						
Description	Cost per unit	Fringe	Total Cost	Match	Source	
PERSONNEL						
Substitute stipends	\$50/meeting		\$ 5,250			
Intern salary-- 9 months, 15 hours/week + 7% FICA	\$10/hour, 420 hours	\$ 294	\$ 4,494			
SUPPLIES						
Users group in-service refreshments (3 activities)	\$150/activity		\$ 300			
Printing and supplies for in-services			\$ 206			
OTHER						
ccInspire Technology			\$ 5,244	\$ 5,244	Livingston County Michigan Works!	
Marketing and promotions			\$ 5,000	\$ 5,000	Livingston County Michigan Works!	
Staff time and coordination			\$ 10,000	\$ 10,000	Livingston County Michigan Works!	
Intern in Livingston Coordinator @ LESA			\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000	Livingston County Michigan Works!	
			TOTAL COST	MATCH		
			\$ 80,494	\$ 70,244		
			R9 RPI REQUEST:			\$ 10,250

Timeline

Milestone	Activity	Target completion month
<i>Users Group</i>		
Create Educational Users Group	Identify participating staff	November 2015
	Schedule dates and location	November 2015
	Advisory council determines agenda/activities	December 2015
	Invitations sent	December 2015
	First group held	January 2016
	Second group held	March 2016
	Third group held	June 2016
Educator's Guide to MI Bright Future report	Discuss content with group	June 2016
	Determine best practices to include	July 2016
	Write report	August 2016
	Produce for the region	September 2016
<i>Intern</i>		

Intern support	Post opportunity on MI Bright Future	November 2015
	Advertise opportunity	November 2015
	Identify interviewees	November 2015
	Interview	December 2015
	Begin work	January 2016