

Prosperity Region 9: UPDATES AND EVENTS



New Southeast Michigan Workforce Consortium is Formed

Over the past year, Region 9's workforce organizations, business leaders, and elected officials have been working together to identify ways to better align services and potentially consolidate regional workforce organizations. Partners recognized that greater collaboration on workforce service delivery could make the region more competitive and economically prosperous.

With funding assistance from the U.S. Department of Labor and the State of Michigan, Michigan Works! Agencies developed a regional workforce planning framework and identified strategies for aligning business, jobseeker, marketing/outreach, and pipeline development services. The planning framework will be a model for other regions throughout Michigan and the U.S.

Concurrently, regional partners evaluated the benefits of, and options for, creating a consolidated regional workforce system. Based on the evaluation and discussions among partners, Washtenaw, Livingston, Lenawee, Hillsdale, and Jackson Counties agreed to pursue the development of an interlocal agreement to consolidate workforce programs. Each of the five participating counties has approved the merger, and the Governor's Office is currently reviewing the proposed agreement. If approved, the agreement would establish the new Southeast Michigan Consortium, which will be a single, regional organization providing workforce services to these communities. The consolidation will enable the region to more effectively and efficiently provide services to workers and businesses.

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New report on Transportation, Jobseeking and Economic Development released

A new report, *Connecting to Opportunity: Transportation, Jobseeking, and Economic Development*, was recently released by regional partners the Washtenaw Office of Community and Economic Development, Emma White Research, LLC, and the Michigan Environmental Council.

The report, which was based on literature review, interviews with regional industry leaders and a survey of over 400 Michigan Works! Jobseekers.

It found that transportation is strongly connected to finding and maintaining

employment; a significant share of Michigan Works! support service funding goes to help with transportation needs; additional transportation options (such as transit) are needed; and business leaders see opportunities for engaging on worker transportation issues.

The report is available on the Region 9 website:

<https://sites.google.com/a/pscinc.com/r9-prosperity-initiative/documents>

“Of survey participants, 32% report that public transportation is not available where they live. Of those who do not have access to a vehicle, one in five (21%) does not have public transportation access.”

— *Connecting to Opportunity: Transportation, Jobseeking and Economic Development*, p. 9.

Regional Summit— Save the Date!

Save October 27, 2015 on your calendars for a regional summit to discuss next steps for the Prosperity Initiative.

We will hear from leaders of successful regional economic partnerships, discuss options for a Region 9 council structure, and identify opportunities for future year Prosperity Initiative grant funding.

The Summit will be held at the Michigan League Ballroom at the University of Michigan. Registration and an agenda will be available shortly.

Challenge Grant Funding Available

Region 9's grant application to the State of Michigan included funding to provide challenge grants for regional teams to implement strongly supported and timely strategies included in the Region 9 Five-year Prosperity Strategy.

Challenge grant applications will be accepted until September 1, 2015.

Grant applications must:

- Demonstrate that the project will catalyze/support implementation of one or more prosperity strategies
- Be regionally focused
- Clearly define expected outcomes
- Provide a 1:1 match with local/regional resources
- Be submitted by a nonprofit, public or private educational, or governmental entity

The full text of the challenge grant request for proposals is available on the Region 9 Prosperity Initiative website at:

<https://sites.google.com/a/pscinc.com/r9-prosperity-initiative/documents>.