



Southeast Michigan Prosperity Region 9: Regional Workforce Alignment Plan

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Background

Michigan Works! Agencies (MWAs) in Washtenaw, Livingston, Monroe, and South Central Michigan (Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale) Counties—collectively known as the Southeast Michigan Prosperity Region—have been collaborating and coordinating with each other for several years, including monthly meetings of the MWA directors, grants and projects, outreach efforts, and regional workforce data collection. (Appendix A provides a summary of key efforts the regional MWAs have partnered on over the last several years.)

The partners recognize that greater collaboration on workforce service delivery could make the region more competitive and economically prosperous, while meeting the intent and requirements of both Gov. Rick Snyder’s Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) and the newly enacted Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Governor Snyder and the Michigan Legislature established the RPI in 2014 to encourage local partners to create vibrant regional economies. The RPI is a voluntary program, developed to recognize the fact that many Michigan regions and their myriad of planning and service delivery entities have overlapping responsibilities and lack a shared vision for economic prosperity. The RPI is intended to help regional partners come together to identify a common vision and identify ways to reduce redundancies and gaps in service delivery within their regions.

The WIOA was enacted in July, 2014, and envisions a system where “Workforce Boards and CEOs design and govern the system regionally, aligning workforce policies and services with regional economies and supporting service delivery strategies tailored to these needs” (U.S. Department of Labor 2015, subpart B). WIOA calls for planning regions “to coordinate regional service strategies, regional sector initiatives, the collection and analysis of regional labor market data, administrative costs, transportation, partnership with economic development agencies, and the negotiation of local performance consistent with the regional planning requirements” (U.S. Department of Labor 2015, § 679.210(d)). All local workforce development boards (WDBs) in a region are to help prepare and agree to the regional plan.

With funding assistance from the Department of Labor and the State of Michigan RPI, Maher and Maher and Public Sector Consultants (PSC) assisted the workforce partners in developing and deploying a regional workforce planning framework for the Southeast Michigan region. Exhibit 1 highlights the six steps of the framework for developing the regional workforce plan.

As the framework implementation process moved forward, regional partners agreed to proceed along dual tracks for regional planning—evaluating both options for aligning service delivery and options for consolidation of one or more of the MWAs in the region. MWA

Exhibit 1. Framework for Regional Workforce Planning



Source: Maher and Maher 2015

directors, assisted by Maher and Maher and PSC, used the framework to develop this regional plan for improving service delivery and meeting WIOA requirements.

A separate group of local elected officials and WDB representatives across the region evaluated options for consolidation (see the Step 2: Form Leadership Team chapter for a description of the regional leadership team).¹ Based on encouragement from the state and a better understanding of the value of shared governance, regional partners propose to consolidate South Central, Livingston County and Washtenaw County Michigan Works! Agencies (Monroe will remain part of Southeast Michigan Community Alliance). Legal agreements are being drafted, and will be presented to the elected officials in the counties for final approval in July 2015.

¹ The evaluation of governance models and potential consolidation options was completed under a separate contract, not the technical assistance contract with Maher and Maher and PSC.



Describe the Regional Economy

The first step in developing a framework for regional workforce service planning is to understand and describe the regional economy. Understanding labor sheds, primary industries, jobs and wage data, educational institutions, and business supply chains is essential for leveraging workforce development assets and meeting the regional employer and worker needs (Maher and Maher 2015).

The Regional Economy

As part of the development of the [Region 9 Five-year Prosperity Strategy](#) completed in 2014, regional partners evaluated economic and talent assets and needs in Region 9. The *Strategy* contains a thorough description of the regional economic conditions, and is incorporated in this plan by reference (Region 2 Planning Commission 2015).

Demographics

- The region is home to 990,357 people, representing 10.0 percent of the statewide population. Of the region, 87.7 percent is Caucasian, 4.6 percent African American, 3.8 percent Hispanic, 2 percent Asian, and 1.9 percent other ethnicities (U.S. Census 2013).
- Between 2000 and 2012, the region saw a 6.5 percent growth in its population compared to the rest of Michigan, which remained flat (DTMB 2014).
- The region is made up of both rural and urban communities, and each county has at least one distinct urban center. Washtenaw County is the most populous and is home to the city of Ann Arbor, which is the sixth-largest city in the state.
- Median household income in the region is \$53,588, which is higher than the statewide median income of \$48,411 (U.S. Census Bureau 2013). Washtenaw and Monroe Counties have the highest median income in the region.

Workforce

- The regional labor force is estimated at 479,979, with approximately 7 percent unemployed last year (slightly less than the state average jobless rate of 7.1 percent) (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 2014).
- Almost two-thirds of the workforce both live and work within Region 9. Those who commute into the region largely come from Oakland, Wayne, and Lucas (Ohio) Counties (DTMB 2014). The majority of those who commute out of Region 9 work in those counties as well. However, commuting patterns vary widely in the region. Monroe and Livingston Counties are primarily commuting communities, as roughly 70 percent of the workforce in those counties commute outside of their county, and about half commute outside of Region 9. By contrast, more than 60

percent of the workforce of Hillsdale and Washtenaw Counties, and about 50 percent of the workforce in Jackson and Lenawee Counties both live and work in those counties.

- Employment in the region has been trending upward since 2011, and the region is projected to see 7.3 percent growth in employment between 2008 and 2018 (DTMB 2014).

Industry

Region 9 stakeholders have identified three priority industry clusters: health care, information technology, and advanced manufacturing. The Workforce Intelligence Network (WIN) tracks and evaluates employment and industry data for the region, and has noted that these three industry clusters are all expecting significant talent shortages in the coming years because of overall declining labor force in the state and insufficient training and education of the workforce.

- The **health care industry**, with almost 50,000 employees in 2014, is Region 9's largest employment cluster and already strongly established. Employment in the health care industry has steadily increased over the last decade, and showed no significant dropoff during the recent recession. Registered nurses, nursing assistants, and practitioners have continued to be highly demanded positions over the last several years (WIN 2014).
- **Advanced manufacturing** is also a well-established industry in the region. Almost 30,000 people are employed in the advanced manufacturing industry in the region, which includes occupational clusters for skilled trades and technicians as well as engineers and designers. Demand for skilled trade labor in advanced manufacturing is higher in Southeast Michigan, including Region 9, than almost anywhere else in the United States, and is expected to grow over the next five years (WIN 2014).
- **Information technology** is a growing industry in Region 9. The industry, which employed 11,773 people in 2014, has been increasing at a rapid rate over the last five years, and is expected to continue growing (WIN 2014). Primary occupations in this field include entry-level, technical, and professional positions related to development, design, and management of hardware, software, and multimedia applications as well as integration of information technology systems. Software application developers have been the most highly demanded workers in this field over the last several years.

The highest paying jobs in the region are those that require the most education and/or training, such as technical and management occupations. Salaries in the health care field are among the highest-paying jobs in Region 9 (DTMB 2014).

Much of the data above comes from regional data collected and analyzed by the WIN. The latest WIN report on the region, [Real-time Quarterly Workforce Indicators Q1 2015](#), provides more detail on the specific employment trends in the region (WIN 2015).



Leadership Team

The second step in creating a regional workforce plan is ensuring a strong leadership team that will serve as a foundation for diversifying, growing, and sustaining the workforce system (and output) needed to support a competitive regional economy. The core leadership team should be broad and represent the regional workforce and industry assets identified in Step 1. It should also be deep and include leaders from various levels of the representative organizations (Maher and Maher 2015).

Region 9 Workforce Planning Leadership Team

Region 9 partners representing workforce, economic development, adult education, higher education, and business have been working together over the last year through the RPI to identify key talent issues and opportunities in the region. The RPI partners created the Region 9 *Five-year Prosperity Strategy*, which includes six goals related to talent, education, and workforce development in the region.

As part of that effort, a core leadership team was formed to specifically address regional services and governance planning around workforce development in Region 9. This core leadership team worked on two parallel tracks, with one group focused on shared governance and one focused on shared services, as shown in Exhibit 2.

Exhibit 2. Workforce Leadership Team

Governance Team	Michael Bosanac	Administrator	Monroe County
	Mary Jo Callan	Director	Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development
	Rick Currie	Workforce Development Council Chair	Livingston County Michigan Works!
	Sean Duval	Workforce Board Chair	Washtenaw County Michigan Works!
	Carol Griffith	Commissioner	Livingston County Board of Commissioners
	Marcus James	Workforce Board Vice Chair	South Central Michigan Works!
	Charlie Mahoney	Workforce Board Chair	Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA)
	Lynn Matzen	Workforce Board Chair	South Central Michigan Works!
	Scott Menzel	Superintendent	Washtenaw County Intermediate School District
	Belinda Peters	Administrator	Livingston County
	Matt Sandstrom	Workforce Board Member	Washtenaw County Michigan

			Works!
	Cletus Smith	Workforce Board Member	Lenawee County Board of Commissioners
	Conan Smith	Commissioner	Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners
	Steven Williams	Commissioner	Livingston County Board of Commissioners
	Leann Wilt	Workforce Board Member	South Central Michigan Works!
Services Team	Sarah Hartzler	President	South Central Michigan Works!
	Shamar Herron	Workforce Development Manager	Washtenaw County Michigan Works!
	Greg Pitoniak	Chief Executive Officer	SEMCA
	Bill Sleight	Director	Livingston County Michigan Works!



Shared Vision and Identity

The draft regulations for WIOA require that a regional workforce plan describe the regional boards' "strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency" (U.S. Department of Labor 2015, §679.560(5)). A vision should be aspirational, and paint a picture of how the region's talent development system will look, function, and feel for its employer and job seeker clients (Maher and Maher 2015).

A Vision for the Region 9 Workforce System

In the Region 9 *Five-year Prosperity Strategy*, stakeholders laid out a broad vision and goals for economic prosperity in the region, including having a high-quality workforce system. As part of its deliberations, the workforce leadership team identified how the workforce system would support and advance that broader prosperity vision.

Specifically, the group agreed that when the identified goals and strategies of this workforce plan and the Regional *Prosperity Strategy* have been achieved, the region will have a workforce system that:

- Conveniently, easily, and regularly gets information on industry talent needs from a sustained, committed partnership with employers
- Is viewed not just as a group of unemployment agencies, but as critical liaisons between businesses and job seekers for meeting talent pipeline and skills training needs (including providing consulting services to business beyond traditional labor matching)
- Ensures a consistent approach to service delivery across the region
- Utilizes a 21st century regional data system that allows for efficient workforce-related information across the region and is integrated with the *MI Talent Connect* system



Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

“A SWOT analysis is used to identify the internal and external factors either favorable or unfavorable, to transforming the workforce system. Inputs to the analysis should include the critical regional data developed in Step #1 and, at least as important, the on-the-ground knowledge, information, understanding and guidance provided by the regional partners who constitute the leadership or planning team” (Maher and Maher 2015, p. 12).

Overview of the Current Region 9 Workforce System

The current workforce system in Region 9 consists of four separate MWAs, each of who operate similar job seeker and business programs and services, but are structured and managed in different ways. Exhibit 3 provides a brief overview of the four existing MWAs.

Exhibit 3. Overview of Existing MWA Structure and Management

Livingston County Michigan Works!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.8 million annual budget • Minimal in-house county staff (4.5 full-time equivalents [FTE]) and contracts with four outside organizations for service delivery • 1 one-stop-shop service center
South Central Michigan Works!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$8.45 million annual budget • In-house service delivery (38 staff members) • Three one-stop-shop service centers
Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA) (Monroe County structure only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.6 million annual budget (for Monroe County) • SEMCA is the fiduciary and administrator (with staff overseeing Monroe and Wayne County programs), and contract Monroe County to provide service delivery • 1 one-stop-shop service center
Washtenaw County Michigan Works!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$5.2 million annual budget • Minimal in-house county staff (five people) and contract with eight outside organizations for service delivery • 1 one-stop-shop service center

Each of the agencies works with businesses in their service area to:

- Understand their workforce needs and help them find employees to meet those needs
- Provide job seeker training and services (including wraparound care such as childcare and transportation)
- Offer youth training programs

- Develop and deploy marketing materials about its services and programs

The four service providers differ in how they offer programs and services, and each has its own areas of priority. In addition, the agencies work with their economic development partners and local colleges to connect new (or potentially new) industries with available talent, participate in broader talent development efforts in the region (such as industry surveys), and shape college career program offerings.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

The leadership team discussed and identified the region’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOTs) in terms of achieving the vision and desired identity of the Region 9 workforce system. The purpose of the SWOT analysis was to identify key areas of strength or opportunity that could be leveraged and built upon, and understand weaknesses and threats that affect the region’s ability to achieve its vision for the workforce system.

According to the *Framework for Planning Under WIOA*:

Strengths are the system’s relative competitive advantages (e.g., excellent staff capacity or physical infrastructure to provide a certain type of service), and are often internal in nature; weaknesses are the system’s relative competitive disadvantages (e.g., career and technical education programs that are outdated/not aligned to current workforce needs), also often internal in nature; opportunities are the organization’s chances or occasions for improvement or progress (e.g., opportunities for expanded partnerships with the K–12 education system), and are often external in nature; and threats are the organization’s chances or occasions for negative impacts or decline (e.g., an increasing population of area residents lacking high school diplomas or otherwise not college-ready), also often external in nature (Maher and Maher 2015, p. 13).

Exhibit 4 describes key SWOTs identified by the leadership team.

Exhibit 4. Summary of Key Regional Workforce SWOTs

Strengths	Some MWAs in the region have highly skilled participants/job seekers, which makes meeting industry needs easier.
	The regional workforce system is strengthened by its participation in the unified, statewide Michigan Works! Association.
	Regional partners have already have established the WIN, which supports data-driven decision making, employer engagement, and regional initiatives.
	The region is poised to successfully implement WIOA—in part due to the strong labor market analysis provided through WIN and the Michigan Works! Association.
Weaknesses	The system serves a relatively small pool of middle-skill job seekers and a large pool of people who are not job ready.
	The quality of infrastructure differs across the four MWAs.
	Differences in the structure and operation of the four MWAs create challenges for engaging and motivating staff to shift to a regional mindset.
Opportunities	Coordination could allow for regional flexibility that takes advantage of each MWA’s strengths when designing and delivering services.

	There is an opportunity to more efficiently use funding through group purchasing and sharing of resources.
	Partnering with intermediate school districts, community colleges, and other education partners would promote middle skill attainment
	Engaging with the K–12 system would support career counseling in schools.
	Work-based learning (including internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training) could be expanded.
	Shared data could develop and sustain initiatives that work.
Threats	Details about how to implement key provisions of WIOA are still unknown.
	WIOA prescribes new system functions, such as research and facilitation, but there is not more funding to support those functions.
	The state has more power under WIOA in terms of allocation decisions, and this could result in loss of funding for the region.
	A decrease in foot traffic in the workforce centers makes it harder to reach job seeker clients in a meaningful way.
	High cost of living in the region and disparate quality of schools makes it challenging to have well-trained and job-prepared talent.



Recommended Workforce System Collaboration and Alignment Strategies

WIOA requires that regional workforce plans include strategies for collaboration and system alignment. According to the Framework for Planning under WIOA (Maher and Maher 2015), strategies should:

- *Be transformational in nature –focused on outcomes that will alter the way workforce-related organizations work, including vertical and/or horizontal integration activities.*
- *Align to the future vision of the regional workforce system–activities should have a reasonable chance of advancing the regional economy and workforce system in the direction of the vision.*
- *Align and leverage resources–strategies demonstrate agreement among stakeholder organizations to commit their individual resources and jointly seek outside resources to support a common vision*
- *Be comprehensive–the plan will demonstrate a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to meeting project objectives*
- *Offer enough information to introduce accountability for implementing agreed-upon strategies and achieving goals –the plan will be specific enough to allow the regional partners to measure success over time, and adaptively manage actions and resources.*

Priority Areas of Service Alignment within the Region

Using the data on the region’s workforce and industry needs, the vision articulated for the regional workforce system, and the identified SWOTs, the leadership team identified four primary areas of potential service alignment:

- Business services
- Job seeker services
- Marketing/outreach
- Pipeline development

While there are many ways regional partners could align and consolidate services, the leadership team believes these four areas offer the best opportunities to build on the existing momentum of regional collaboration, and move toward the shared vision for the regional workforce system.

Recommended Regional Strategies

Business Services

Business services are one of the primary services provided by regional workforce agencies. Business services includes outreach to, and engagement with, employers to understand their talent needs, help them understand opportunities for providing work-based learning, assist them in searching for qualified job candidates, and assess employee training needs.

The current MWAs employ (or contract with) business service representatives (BSRs) who are responsible for working directly with employers on these services, staying abreast of regional employment data and trends, and understanding how the current pool of job seekers meets business needs, if at all.

The workforce leadership team identified five regional alignment strategies that could improve business services delivery. The strategies are described below, and Exhibit 5 summarizes the strategies and potential timelines.

- Utilize a common database** of employers (such as Salesforce or G*STARS) that is accessible by workforce service providers across the region and enables all staff and contractors to coordinate client management, share data on employers, and develop regional reports. A committee of technical and BSR staff from the MWAs will meet to discuss and agree upon database needs, costs to develop and implement a common database, and proposed timeline. The committee will make recommendations to the WDBs regarding the approach for developing and using a common database across the region.
- Establish a regional business services representative team** that will meet monthly. A regional manager who is responsible for providing consistent regional BSR training will oversee the team, ensuring coordination among BSRs (particularly with businesses/clients that have overlapping jurisdictions), and facilitating the sharing of information and approaches among BSRs throughout the region.
- Develop a common business needs assessment tool** that can be used by BSRs across the region to more efficiently and consistently assess and share the needs of regional employers. Local workforce boards (or advisory groups) could still include needs assessment elements that are specific to their geography, but the common assessment tool would align the bulk of the assessment questions in order to facilitate sharing of information and more fluid matching of job seekers and employers across the region.
- Continue to jointly support WIN’s collection and analysis of regional labor and industry data and convening of industry clusters.** Regional workforce partners have been collaboratively funding WIN’s efforts for the last several years. The analytics developed through this process have helped

Exhibit 5. Summary of Proposed Business Services Alignment Strategies

Establish common database (Q4 2015 to Q1 2016)

- Technical and BSR team evaluate options
- Database selected and implemented

Regional BSR team (Q4 2015 to ongoing)

- WDBs appoint regional BSR team coordinator
- Monthly meetings of the team to share information, best practices

Create common business needs assessment (Q1 2016 to Q2 2016)

- Team integrates and develops common assessment tool
- Common tool deployed throughout the region

Support for WIN data and industry clusters (Q3 2015 to ongoing)

- WDBs provide ongoing financial support for WIN data and cluster activities
- MWA staff and WDB board participate

the region identify and support the needs of regional businesses, particularly in the three industry cluster areas of health care, information technology, and advanced manufacturing.

WIN has also convened and facilitated industry clusters groups (health care, information technology, and advanced manufacturing). Southeast Michigan workforce partners will continue to support WIN's efforts to convene these groups periodically and ensure that the region's education and workforce systems are meeting the current and future talent needs of these priority industries. Workforce management and representatives of each WDB will participate in industry cluster events, provide data on regional workforce characteristics and trends, and share information from the clusters with staff and WDB leadership.

- **Establish a regionally consistent approach for providing employer-based training**, such as on the job training, incumbent workers, or the development of customized training programs. Each of the current MWAs approaches employer-based training differently, and there are efficiencies (in program management and marketing) for aligning the approach for working with businesses on these services. MWA directors/managers will work with BSR staff representatives from across the region to identify and assess current employer-based training programs, and make recommendations to the WDBs for deploying one to three of the same employer-based training programs throughout the region.

Job Seeker Services

The current MWAs provide a variety of job seeker services. There is a one-stop service center in each of the six counties in Region 9, which allow job seekers (and employers) to access all of the local Michigan Works! services, such as use of resource rooms and technology, training programs, skills assessment, and assistance with preparing a resume or application (as well as many other services). South Central Michigan Works! also operates a mobile one-stop service center that travels to different locations throughout its territory. The MWAs also host networking events, provide youth talent tours, facilitate job clubs, and provide support services such as childcare and transportation for job seekers.

There is little coordination of job seeker services between the four existing MWAs. In order to better support the vision for the regional workforce system, Southeast Michigan Region 9 WDBs will pursue the following three strategies (summarized in Exhibit 6).

- **Establish common job seeker assessment tools** to ensure consistency and data sharing across the region. The directors will create a committee of staff to evaluate job seeker assessment tool options (looking at models from other Michigan regions and states) and make a recommendation to the WDBs for adoption of three to four acceptable

Exhibit 6. Summary of Proposed Job Seeker Alignment Strategies

Establish common job seeker assessment tools (Q4 2015 to Q1 2016)

- Committee evaluates options
- Recommendations to WDBs for three to four acceptable tools

Joint online training and testing system (Q1 2016 to Q2 2016)

- Committee appointed and reviews current offerings
- Make recommendations to WDB for developing new or modifying existing online tools
- Develop necessary curriculum

Common job description and training program for all frontline staff (Q4 2015 to Q2 2016)

- Directors develop common case manager job description
- Directors identify common training/certification needs for frontline staff
- Implement identified training program changes

assessment tools to be used in the region.

- **Create (where necessary) and provide a common Web-based online learning and testing system** that by regional workforce partners and job seekers can use. The MWA directors will appoint a committee made up technical and curriculum experts from across the region to review current online learning options available in Southeast Michigan Region 9 and online learning tools available in other regions which might be applicable to the region. The committee will summarize existing offerings and gaps, and make recommendations to the WDBs regarding the best approach for developing or modifying existing online learning and testing modules. The committee will recommend next steps for developing necessary curriculum, including resources required.
- **Develop a common job description for case managers and a training and certification program for all regional “front-line” staff** (e.g., staff who works directly with job seeker and business clients). Workforce directors and one-stop service center managers will work together to develop a region-wide, common job description for case managers that spells out job responsibilities, desired skills, and ongoing professional development requirements. The team of directors and managers will provide the common job description to the regional WDBs for agreement and approval.

In addition, the directors/managers team will identify common job skills training needs for frontline staff, review training programs from other regions, and make recommendations to the WDBs for a common, regular training and job coaching program that will be required for all frontline staff.

Marketing Services

The current MWAs have done some limited shared marketing of services across the region, but each maintains its own identity, produces its own materials (including social media materials), and has its own independent marketing and communications plan. Because there is significant crossover in the types of services and clients each serves, there is a strong opportunity for shared marketing services. In order to better align their marketing services, MWAs will (as summarized in Exhibit 7):

- **Develop a regional communications plan** that identifies target audiences, key messages, regular communications channels (such as press, social media, events), and standard communications processes. The communications plan will direct the day-to-day work of MWAs in the region as they communicate about their programs, and it will identify opportunities for shared communications across the region (e.g., advertising, regional events).
- **Create a common information packet that will be provided to job seekers at all one-stop service centers (and other**

Exhibit 7. Summary of Proposed Marketing Alignment Strategies

Develop regional communications plan (Q4 2015)

- Directors and staff meet to identify audiences, messages, communication channels
- Plan implemented and updated annually

Create common information packet for job seekers (Q1 2015)

- Directors and staff determine packet elements
- New materials designed to reflect common branding

Create common workforce system website for the region (Q1 2016 to Q2 2016)

- Evaluate options for development and ongoing management
- Make recommendations to WDB
- Develop and implement new region-wide website

venues). The information packet will provide a single, branded message about services offered, handouts, and other information pertinent to job seekers. MWAs in the region will share the cost of developing and creating the information packet.

- **Create a common workforce system website for the region.** Using the regional communications plan as a guide, staff will evaluate and develop options for creation and ongoing management of a central workforce website for the region. The website will use the same common branding developed for the job seeker information packages and provide links to local workforce development agencies and service centers.

Talent Pipeline Development

Through the RPI, regional workforce partners have been working with economic development, education (secondary and higher education), and business organizations to identify goals and strategies for expanding and improving the talent pipeline in the region. The *Five-year Prosperity Strategy* identifies six talent-related goals and objectives, and numerous strategies for achieving those goals. In order to support those efforts, WDBs in Region 9 will:

- **Establish and implement the MI Bright Future Program throughout the region.** MI Bright Future is an online resource aimed at connecting students with in-demand industries and employers. The program—a collaboration of regional intermediary school districts, postsecondary education institutions, and workforce partners—uses a web-based software called Career Cruising Inspire (cclnspire). A majority of Michigan schools already utilize the software to give middle school and high school students an online portal for learning about companies in the region and work-based learning opportunities, such as job shadowing, internships, and company tours. The program is already being piloted in Livingston County, and the Southeast Michigan Region 9 MWAs will work together to incorporate the program throughout the region in the next two years.
- **Create a regional College Access Network (CAN) group,** made up of the three existing local CAN groups in Region 9 (Jackson County Cradle to Career, Monroe County College Access Network and Washtenaw Futures), that meets at least twice a year to share best practices and tools, and cooperates on joint outreach and marketing where applicable.
- **Establish common work experience programs across the region,** such as talent tours, internships, and job shadowing. Currently, each MWA has

Exhibit 8. Summary of Proposed Talent Pipeline Development Alignment Strategies

Adopt MI Bright Future program throughout the region (Q1 2016 and ongoing)

- Evaluate Livingston County's current pilot program experience
- Get estimates for regional expansion
- Implement program in all schools with existing cclnspire

Create regional College Access Network group (Q4 2015 and ongoing)

- Existing local CAN groups in region meet twice a year

Establish common work experience programs (Q1 2016 to Q2 2016)

- Directors and staff evaluate current experiential work programs (e.g., talent tours, internships, on-the-job training)
- Make recommendations for common programming to the WDBs

Engage in new TDCC for Southeast Michigan (Q3 2015 and ongoing)

- WDBs appoint TDCC members
- Participate in TDCC activities

their own programs and areas of emphasis, so there is no common offering to businesses and no economies of scale in promoting and managing these programs. MWAs will evaluate experiential work programs, including conducting interviews with job seekers and businesses to get their input on successes and challenges, and make recommendations to the WDBs for how to align or consolidate work experience programs across the region.

- **Engage in the newly developed Talent District Career Council for Southeast Michigan Region 9.** As directed by the State of Michigan, each prosperity region will have a TDCC, which will serve as the equivalent to existing educational advisory groups. The TDCC members will be appointed by the WDBs, and will be made up of local workforce development board members and representatives of employers, labor representatives, local school districts, postsecondary institutions, intermediate school districts, career and technical educators, parents of public school students, and academic educators.



Leveraging Resources and Implementing Strategies

“Having created a shared understanding of the region’s workforce investment needs, a shared vision of how the regional workforce investment system can be designed to meet those needs, and agreement on the key strategies to realize this vision (steps 1-5), it is clear that workforce areas within a region must determine the most efficient and effective arrangement for organizing and delivering services, and codify those agreements” (Maher and Maher 2015).

Next Steps for Implementing Strategies

The region is in the process of consolidating the South Central, Washtenaw, and Livingston Counties’ Michigan Works! Agencies. At this point, SEMCA will continue to administer and operate Monroe County’s Michigan Works! program, through a contract with the county.

The result of this consolidation effort will be a new Michigan Public Act 7 agreement among the five counties that establishes a regional Consortium Board and Workforce Development Board. The newly created regional WDB, in coordination with the SEMCA Board, will oversee the implementation of this regional workforce service plan, including the appointment of committees and working teams who will make recommendations about (and in some cases produce) new products and services, such as databases, training programs, marketing materials, and employee materials.

While the consolidation of three of the four Michigan Works! Agencies may help simplify the implementation of some of the recommendations in this plan, there will still be challenges from an administrative and leadership perspective as the organizations transition over the next few years to a new model.

Because the consolidation effort is still not finalized, there are remaining funding and management questions. Therefore, it is unclear how specific funding resources will be allocated to implementing the proposed strategies in this plan. However, workforce system partners are committed to more efficient and effective delivery of workforce services and have prioritized strategies that they believe are critical for achieving the vision and that able to be implemented under a new workforce governance system.

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