

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT**  
**COMPREHENSIVE 5-Year LOCAL PLAN**

**Policy Issuance: 07-16**

**July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2008**

**OTTAWA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**I. Market Analysis**

*A. Identify the workforce investment needs of businesses, job seekers, and workers, and high-demand or emerging industries for the Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) area through Program Year (PY) 2008 and describe key trends expected to shape the economic environment during the same time period. Needs should be driven by past operational experience and from the annual planning information reports.*

- 1. Identify the overall availability of current and projected employment opportunities by occupation. The economic trend information presents a snapshot of recent economic activity and labor market trends for the most watched labor statistics, including labor force, employment, unemployment and industry job growth. Population: In 2005, the population of Ottawa County MWA was measured at 255,406, representing 2.5% of total statewide population. Between 2000 and 2005, the population in the Ottawa County MAS increased by 7.2 percent. Over the same period, the population in the state of Michigan increased by 1.8 percent. Population gains in the Ottawa County MWA were mostly attributed to natural increase (births exceeding deaths), while in-migrations accounted for some of the population change. Labor Force & Employment: Between 2002 and 2006, expansion in the region's labor force was substantially faster than the statewide trend. In the MWA, total employment grew by 7.2 percent since 2002. During this period, the Ottawa County MWA outperformed both the state and the nation as labor force rose by 6.9 percent and total employment climbed by 7.2 percent. Unemployment: Over the last year, the number of*

unemployed individuals increased at a greater rate in the MWA than statewide. Between 2005 and 2006, unemployment was up 4.8 percent compared to an increase of 0.6 percent statewide. The Ottawa County MWA reported an annual average jobless rate of 5.1 percent in 2006, lower than the 6.8 percent recorded statewide. Job losses in manufacturing and retail trade contributed to the unemployment situation in the Ottawa County MWA. Availability & Education: Data from Michigan's Talent Bank reveals that 11,041 individuals were available and seeking work in the Ottawa County MWA in the Third Quarter 2006. According to the Michigan Department of Education, the number of high school graduates in the region increased by 0.6 percent in the most recent school year. Statewide, high school and community college graduates inched upward by 0.2 percent. The number of persons graduating from area high schools is an indicator of potential new entrants to the labor force. According to census data, Ottawa County MWA is outperforming the state in terms of persons age 25 or more with a Bachelor's degree or higher. Ottawa County MWA posts 26 percent while statewide the average is 21.8 percent. Industry Jobs: Payroll jobs expanded by 2.3 percent between 2003 and 2006 in the Ottawa County MWA with the majority of job gains concentrated in professional and business services, wholesale trade, leisure and hospitality, and natural resources and construction. Smaller employment gains were recorded in financial activities, government, and educational and health services. Between 2003 and 2006, job losses were recorded in other services, retail trade and manufacturing. Total industry employment in the Ottawa County MWA increased by 2,600 or 2.3 percent between 2005 and 2006. Over the last year, employment advances were in retail trade, professional and business services, educational and health services and natural resources and construction. Wages: Between 2004 and 2005, the average weekly wage in the Ottawa County MWA rose by 2.2 percent. The \$697 average weekly wage in the area is 11.9 percent below the statewide average weekly wage.

**Ottawa County MWA Occupational Employment:** Forecasts of future trends in job growth by occupation provide information on jobs with the highest expected growth rates, occupations that produce the highest numbers of regional jobs and the number of annual openings expected by occupation. **Occupational Groups (2002 through 2012):** Jobs in the area are expected to increase by 77,420 or 14.8 percent. Above average employment growth rates in the region are projected in several occupational groups including, health care, professional, construction and repair, management and service.

The increase in health care opportunities, registered nurses, home health aids, nursing aides, orderlies and attendants, and medical assistants reflects the anticipated need for additional health services by an aging population.

Transportation, production, administrative support and farm occupations will record below average rates of job growth, but they will generate job openings due to the need to replace existing workers. No occupational categories are expected to decline over the decade.

**High Growth Rates (2002 through 2012):** Home health aides are expected to show the highest growth rate in the Grand Rapids region with a projected increase of 53.3 percent. Two other health care occupations recorded high growth rates including medical assistants and dental assistants. Several diverse occupations display very high growth rates including computer systems analysts, receptionists, and computer support specialists.

**Numerical Growth (2002 through 2012):** Several occupations are expected to add a large number of jobs. These occupations are generally large, and as a result, produce a significant number of job openings. Leading the list and expected to add the most jobs over this period is janitors. This occupation is projected to add approximately 2,645 jobs by 2012. Following janitors are, food preparation workers, customer services representatives, and truck drivers. Other occupations expected to create many jobs represent an assortment of positions, ranging from high skill positions such as registered

nurses to moderate skill jobs such as retail salespersons, waiters and waitresses, office clerks, sales representatives, wholesale, and cashiers.

2. *The job skills necessary to obtain such opportunities.* Ottawa County MWA will use the chart provided in the Annual Planning Information Report (2007) produced by Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives. The chart provides information on the skill requirements of jobs, which is increasing critical to a rapidly changing workplace. The chart utilizes O\*NET, the Occupational Information Network, and provides a mechanism to ensure that occupational training programs incorporate skills needed in the workplace. The chart contains the ten high growth occupations and the top skills in importance necessary to meet and fulfill the job requirements. The Ottawa County MWA will use the same format to expand the list as needed. Under the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Regional Planning Initiative, the Ottawa County MWA is working with ACSET and Muskegon/Oceana Consortium to develop a regional list using data and information that the three MWAs can use to support No Worker Left Behind criteria.

## **II Michigan Works! System**

A. *Provide a description of each Michigan Works! Service Center(s) and plans for expansion and continuous improvement.*

Workforce Investment Act services will be delivered from the Michigan Works! Service Centers, JOB CONNECTIONS South and JOB CONNECTIONS North. JOB CONNECTIONS South is located at 121 Clover St., in Holland, which is the county's largest metropolitan area. The site offers sufficient parking and is served by the Holland area's public transportation system. The building has 22,000 square feet and features five (5) classrooms, four private interview rooms for staff and employers, a resource center, and individual offices for fifty-four (54) employees. The resource area includes a "bank" of twelve computers designated for Michigan Talent Bank

access. There are five conference rooms for orientations and training programs, including one room with 16 computers that serves as overflow for the Michigan Talent Bank system and for GED/ESL instruction. Outdoor signage includes the name JOB CONNECTIONS, a Michigan Works! Service Center, with MW logo. Window lettering includes a list of partnering agencies including Employment Service Agency, Veteran, and the Agricultural Services Workers. Other permanent partners located at the South Service Center are: Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth\Rehabilitation Services, JET, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult, Dislocated, and Youth services, Trade Adjustment Act services and Telamon Corporation.

A second Service Center in northwest Ottawa County (JOB CONNECTIONS North) is located at 1830 172<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite G, in Grand Haven in a strip mall adjacent to a major grocery store. There is a large classroom for group activities, three private offices, and a public area with six internet-connected computers for Talent Bank registration, job searching and/or word processing. In addition to the Employment Service staff, other Service Center partners meet customers at the Service Center on a regularly scheduled basis. JET and DLEG/Rehabilitation Services orientations will be held at the site.

All areas of both Michigan Works! Service Centers are accessible to persons with disabilities. The South Service Center provides an Internet-connected workstation with large monitor, roller-ball mouse, adjustable work surface and other special features to assist users with disabilities.

The local board will ensure continuous improvement of eligible providers of services by regular monitoring of the WIA and ES Service Providers and through Customer Satisfaction Surveys. The on-site MWA Program Supervisor is available to answer questions and assist all customers and partners in providing consistent quality service.

The Workforce Development Board will ensure that providers meet the employment needs of local employers and participants through bi-monthly review of the use of the Service Center, the progress of program participants, and the employment and unemployment levels in

the area.

Through WIA and the Michigan Works! Service System partners, services will be coordinated to avoid duplication of programs and services. Monthly partner meetings keep staff informed of services and allow free discussion of concerns. The Michigan Works! Program Supervisor coordinates these meetings and keeps Service Center partners informed of changes in program design. On-going staff development training is coordinated through the Michigan Works! Program Supervisor and includes customer service, diversity, and other related topics identified by the management team. Outreach into the community will take place through individual partners who promote the entire MW Service Center system, through Job Fairs, partner advisory boards, and other situations that may arise. Michigan Works! is a member of all the Chambers of Commerce in Ottawa County and uses this forum to promote all activities of the WDB and Service Center partners.

Ottawa County Michigan Works! Agency is in compliance with the Michigan Works! System governance and Minimum Standards as required in Policy Issuance 06-01, Change 1 issued on May 9, 2007..

*B. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) - Provide a MOU between the WDB and each required one-stop partner.*

MOU's through June 30, 2009 are complete and copies will be forwarded to Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth.

### **III Local Performance Measures**

*Performance Measures are included in the individual Workforce Investment Act plans for Adults, Dislocated Workers (including the local Displaced Homemaker Program), and both In-school and Out-of-school youth.*

Adult Performance measures: Entered Employment 87%, Employment Retention Rate 84%, Average Earnings \$8,500 and Employment credential Rate 75%

Dislocated Worker measures: Entered Employment 93%, Employment Retention Rate 90%,

Average Earnings \$12,500 and Employment Credential Rate 83%

Customer Satisfaction measures: Participant 91% and Employer 86%

#### **IV Adult and Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities**

*Provide a description and assessment of the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local area, including Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) system and the procedures for ensuring that exceptions to the use of ITAs, if any, are justified under the consumers' choice requirements..*

Customers to Michigan Works will participate in an information session conducted jointly by staff from the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program. The information session includes an overview of the services available and outlines the process for customers who express an interest in pursuing training under the No Worker Left Behind policy. The information session also describes the process for customers who express an interest in pursuing employment.

Individuals who choose to pursue employment follow the WIA model of each person receiving Core Services followed by Intensive Services for those who are eligible and in need of such. If employment barriers continue after Core and Intensive Services are provided, case managers will complete the assessment process to determine the need and practicality for an Individual Training Account (ITA). Individuals wishing to pursue training under NWLB will complete an assessment process and be enrolled into an appropriate training program. The tuition element of NWLB will include up to two years of tuition and fees to complete a certificate or degree at any Michigan community college, college or university, or other approved training program. Qualifying participants must pursue a degree or other occupational certificate in a high-demand occupation, emerging industry, or in an entrepreneurship program. Qualifying individuals will be required to take a skills assessment test, administered by the MWA; and eligibility determination for various NWLB funding streams. The MWA will then help the individual identify an appropriate education/training program, and refer the individual to the training provider for determination of a financial aid package. Where appropriate, the MWA will co-enroll NWLB participants in all appropriate federal programs to ensure they benefit from case

management/support services.

The primary focus of the NWLB is on the attainment of certificates or degrees valued in the labor market and leading to employment in high-demand occupations, emerging industries, or entrepreneurial endeavors. However, NWLB will help individuals with more advanced training needs stay in Michigan and transition to productive new careers. The assessment consists of the following Work Keys® tests: reading for information, applied mathematics, and locating information. Individuals must achieve at least a level three on each of these assessments before enrolling into an ITA. The Work Keys assessments are administered weekly and individuals who score below level three can participate in remediation modules using Key Train® provided at the Michigan Works Service Center. A learning coach is available at posted times for individuals needing assistance. Exception to the use of ITAs, driven by customer choice requirements, will be on a case-by-case basis with approval from the WIA supervisor AND the Michigan Works! Program Supervisor assigned to JOB CONNECTIONS.

In accordance with BWP PI 04-04, issued September 7, 2004, a copy of the local adult and dislocated worker supportive services policy is attached.

Wagner-Peyser funded services will be delivered at no cost to employers and job seekers with Veterans receiving priority for labor exchange services. The SUBCONTRACTOR(s) will refer all Veterans to the Veterans Representative who will give first priority to disabled veterans and then to other veterans for all WIA services.

### **1. Labor Exchange:**

The WIA and ES SUBCONTRACTORS will use the Internet as the basis for the Electronic Labor Exchange, which is a self-directed system for job seekers and employers. The ES and WIA SUBCONTRACTOR(s) will monitor the use of the Internet and provide technical assistance as necessary which may occur in a computerized self-directed system. Technical support will be provided as needed by the Subcontractor.

The primary point of access for the ELECTRONIC LABOR EXCHANGE will be at JOB

CONNECTIONS North and JOB CONNECTIONS South, the Michigan Works! Service Centers. Basic Labor Exchange will consist of three tiers of service offered to the general public, including employers and job seekers. These are:

1. Self Service: The selected subcontractor will provide access to the Michigan Talent Bank for local job seekers and employers. Unemployment Claimants may enter their resume at the Michigan Works! Service Centers or show ES staff at the Service Centers that they have successfully met the “Register for Work” requirement. It is intended that all other job seekers who have computer capability will enter their own resumes on the Michigan Talent Bank system either at their home computer, library, or at the Michigan Works! Service Centers. Employers will post their job orders on Michigan’s Talent Bank from any location, including either of the Service Centers.
2. Facilitated (staff-assisted) self-service: For those job seekers and employers who are unable to participate in the Michigan Talent Bank labor exchange system due to a lack of computer familiarity, literacy, disability, lack of access to the system, limited English, or some other barrier, facilitated access will be offered.
3. Mediated services: For those needing more intensive staff assistance to obtain jobs, assistance will be provided by ES and/or WIA. The Employment Service Agency requires that at least one mediated job search assistance and one job screening/referral activity be provided in at least one location of the MWA on a “reasonable” schedule. Ottawa County is providing resume assistance and job search assistance to job seekers on an as-needed basis. Employers will be provided mediated services when the demands for employees exceeds their ability to locate employees using the self-serve system alone and for job development activities in which a contact is made to solicit an interview on behalf of a specific job seeker for a specific job when no job order already exists in the Job Bank.

## **2. UI Work Test:**

Two requirements of Michigan’s UI work test will be met:

- ES Registration of UI Claimants: The Unemployment Insurance Agency will require UI

claimants to complete an ES registration at locations designated in the MWA's approved ES Plan through the use of Michigan Talent Bank. Such registration may be completed remotely. The UIA will provide claimants with forms instructing them to register for work and listing the locations where they may register for work. MWA service providers will apply a unique stamp, initial each claimant's verification card, and electronically log the name and social security number of each claimant after he or she has completed the ES registration program. The Employment Service Agency (ESA) will ensure that the UIA receives a timely certification that the claimant has completed the required ES registration. The UIA will then authorize payment of the claim, if all other requirements are met.

- Reporting Claimant Non-Compliance: ES SUBCONTRACTOR will report claimant non-compliance with the "Available and seeking work" requirement and reporting to UIA any specific evidence of a claimant's unavailability for or lack of seeking work that comes to their attention electronically via the Michigan Talent Bank.

### **3. Clearing Labor Between States**

Ottawa County Michigan Works! will participate in the Michigan component of the national labor exchange system by providing access to the Michigan Talent Bank and by receiving and forwarding certain interstate and intrastate job orders designed for processing by ES staff.

### **4. Administer Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program:**

TAA services will be provided by Employment Service staff who will participate in Rapid Response organized by the Bureau of Workforce Programs. Employment Services will be responsible for all Trade Act services including recruitment, enrollment in services, and documentation of activities. Staff will coordinate dual enrollment, when appropriate, with the WIA services. TAA Re-employment services are as follows:

- Employment Registration;
- Employment Counseling;
- Vocational Testing;
- Job Development;

- Supportive Services;
- On-the-Job Training;
- Classroom Training;
- Self-Directed Job Search;
- Job Search Allowances; and,
- Relocation Allowances.

All services will be provided using specific procedures as described in the TAA Manual.

#### **5. Operate the Local Component of the ES Complaint System:**

In cooperation with the Michigan Works! Complaint Officer, the Workforce Investment Act staff and the Employment Services staff will

- have a system(s) in place to receive complaints from job seeker and employer customers;
- have available clear directions for customer complaint procedures;
- notify MWA of any and all complaints and grievances;
- maintain a log of complaints and resolutions per Employment Service requirements. (ES Manual, Section 075).

#### **6. Operate the Local Component of the Federal Bonding Program**

The ES provider will assist job seekers and employers in instances where employment is conditioned on the job applicant maintaining a fidelity bond. Instructions for the Federal Bonding Program are found in the Employment Service Manual Section 112. ES will ensure that fidelity bonds are provided only when a bona fide offer of employment exists.

### **V Rapid Response Activities**

*Provide a description of how the local board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local area with statewide rapid response activities.*

Rapid Response meetings are triggered by a Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN), news releases, and through a network of local contacts such as the UIA, state and local economic development officials, and Account Management Teams. In accordance with 20 CFR 665.300, rapid response activities encompass activities necessary to plan and deliver

services to enable dislocated workers to transition to new employment as quickly as possible following either a permanent closure or mass layoff. ES and WIA staff will participate in joint meetings with the representative from the Workforce Transition Unit (WTU) located within the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth/Bureau of Workforce Programs (DLEG/BWP), and a MWA staff person in the event of a substantial lay off or company closing. The purpose of the Rapid Response meeting is to share information and notify the employer of services available to them and their work force. Follow-up meetings will be arranged as necessary. As part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Regional Planning Initiative, a Regional Rapid Response process that integrates with the state's Rapid Response efforts is underway.

## **VI Funding**

*A. Describe the criteria to be used to determine whether funds allocated for adult employment and training activities under WIA are limited, and the process by which any priority for service will be applied.*

The Ottawa County Workforce Development Board has determined that funds allocated for adult employment and training activities under WIA are limited. Ottawa County will focus efforts on reemployment activities, career development, On-the-Job Training programs, and training. Priority to recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and long-term unemployed for *intensive and training services* will continue.

*On August 30, 2007 Ottawa County Michigan Works! Agency was granted a waiver to use up to 10 percent of the PY 2007 Youth funds allocated under Section 128(b) of the WIA, to operate an Incumbent Worker program as described under 134(a)(3)(A)(iv)(I) and consistent with 20 CFR Sections 665.210 and 665.220. Ottawa County Michigan Works will utilize up to 10 percent of PY 2007 Youth funds as Incumbent Worker funds to train and upgrade the skills of existing, incumbent workers through one of three ways: (1) Mini grants for customized training at an individual company; (2) Off-the-shelf training or tuition programs at area colleges or training institutions, or (3) Cooperative training among two or more employers.*

*The funds will be awarded through the RFP process and will require dollar for dollar*

*matching funds from the employer. Ottawa County Michigan Works! Agency will target these funds to specific employers or industries that are experiencing a decline and have the potential to undergo layoffs, or are experiencing a skills gap that impacts their ability to compete, retain workers, and expand.*

*B. Describe the competitive process to be used to award grants and contracts for activities carried out under local workforce investment systems, including the process to be used to procure training services that are made as exception to the ITA process (WIA Section 134 (d)(4)(G).*

Awards of grants and contracts for adult activities under Title I of WIA will be through a competitive process. The availability of grants and contracts will be published to our bidders list, prior program providers, and other community resources who may have an interest in delivering adult services. A Task Committee of the Workforce Development Board will review all proposals and choose the appropriate provider/s based on response to the Request for Proposal, cost categories, prior history delivering services to adults, and ability to provide quality services. Multiple providers may be chosen to deliver the core, intensive, or training services.

Ottawa County MWA shall maintain a written procurement system, which shall apply in the selection of service providers and vendors for all procurement utilizing BWP funds. All procurement utilizing BWP funding sources will follow the guidelines set forth in Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG)/BWP Policy Issuance 04-03, "Procurement Policy" issued March 1, 2004.

*C. Describe how Wagner-Peyser Employment Service and TAA service providers will be funded.*

1. Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Section 7(a) Funds:

The ESA will allocate a portion of its annual Wagner-Peyser Employment Service Section 7(a) appropriation to WDBs according to the following allocation formula:

- 50 percent based on a WDB area's share of the state's average civilian labor force during the previous year; and
- 50 percent based on a WDB area's share of the state's average number of

unemployed persons during the previous year.

For purposes of this plan, continuation funding with no economic increase should be assumed. In accordance with Section 432 of Public Act 306 of 1998, administrative costs of each local WDB is limited to 15 percent of its allocation.

2. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Reform Act of 2002:

The WIA Dislocated Workerprovider will be responsible for the TAA program. Documentation will be maintained by the WDB in accordance with the TAA Manual. DLEG-Office of Financial Services will provide TAA funds to WDBs on a fiscal year basis. TAA funding will be redistributed, as necessary, on a monthly basis in accordance with BWP PI 05-17, and subsequent changes. WDBs will also receive a 10 percent administrative cost reimbursement at the end of each quarter based on TAA training dollars spent during the quarter. One hundred percent of the administrative cost reimbursement will be given to the subcontractor. .

3. Direct State Agency Payroll for State Employees and Their Support.

Locally-based ES employees will remain on the state payroll and, unless they are under contract with the MWA to provide services, the cost of their direct support will be reimbursed by the state in accordance with the local MOU. Relocation of locally-based ES employees to newly designated office locations is subject to prior ES approval.

**VIII Review, Comment, and Publication Documentation**

*MWAs are required to publish plans in accordance with Section 118(c) of the act. In lieu of submitting documentation, MWAs will maintain documentation on file for monitoring by DLEG.*

- A. The proposed plan will be published; and
  - 1. Such plans will be made available for review and comment to:
    - Members of the local board and members of the public including representatives of business and labor organizations; and
    - The public through such means as public hearings and local news media.
  - 2. The local board will submit any comments that express disagreement with the

plan to DLEG along with the plan.

The local board will make information about the plan available to the public on a regular basis through open meetings. Complete copies of the plan can be obtained from:

Ottawa County Michigan Works!

12251 James St., Suite 300

Holland, MI 49424

In accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, this plan can be made available in alternate formats by calling Voice Phone 616/393-5697. Michigan Relay Center callers use 711 or 1-800-649-3777 (TTY).

## **I. Local Vision and Goals**

### *A. Describe your broad strategic, economic, and workforce development goals for youth.*

The goal of the Ottawa County Workforce Development Board Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services for youth is that all youth acquire the academic, occupational and employability skills necessary to succeed in today's rapidly changing, technologic economy. Changes in the economic condition of Ottawa County have not affected these primary goals for youth. When the labor supply was in short supply, employers were eager to hire workers, including youth without skills and experience. Employers can now be more selective as skilled workers with experience have entered the labor force.

In addition to change in economic conditions, a significant change in Ottawa County affecting youth is the reduction in adult education funding. Many youth sought services through adult education programming to complete their GED after leaving traditional high schools. For youth who have become participants in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs, lack of educational opportunities has become a barrier to providing necessary services to youth. The local school districts continue to evaluate alternative education programs; however, few are designing programs for the future. It is anticipated that WIA youth will continue to have opportunities to complete secondary education.

Since new GED tests were initiated in 2002, youth are finding it more difficult to complete a GED quickly. WIA staff will be encouraging youth to enroll in alternative education or to stay enrolled long enough to complete a GED. In order that all youth become successful, cooperation and coordination of services and instruction will be imperative. WIA will assist with these coordination efforts for youth participants through program design and coordination with schools, employers, and organizations serving youth.

In addition to basic skills, area workers (including youth) need language skills, mentorship to increase job retention, and information to assist with planning for future advancement/career development.

Ottawa County goals for youth participants are:

- All youth will have an Educational Development Plan (EDP) that outlines career goals and objectives. The EDP may be developed in-school or out-of-school and will be reviewed regularly during program participation.
- All youth will be assessed for aptitude and career interest.
- Youth will receive case management assistance during the EDP planning and implementation process.
- Youth will have opportunities for job shadowing, paid and/or unpaid work experience aligned to Career Pathways, leadership development, community service, mentoring, supportive services, and other community resources and skills needed to succeed in Michigan's economy.
- Youth will receive tutoring, study skills training, and dropout prevention strategies.
- Youth will have opportunities for post-secondary training and occupational skill training.
- Youth will receive adult mentoring during participation in the program and during follow-up.
- Youth will have access to comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.
- Youth will have opportunities to complete a high school diploma or GED, if necessary.

*B. Describe your youth vision and how the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) workforce investment system will help to attain these goals.*

The goals of the youth services are tied directly to the expressed needs of Ottawa County employers who are looking for people with the workplace attitudes necessary for success. The WIA Youth Goals revolve around guiding youth to learn through work experience, participation in WIA services, and through mentoring from WIA staff, current employees, or community members that teach the employability skills necessary to succeed in the workforce. Job search instruction and career planning will be offered for older in-school youth and for out-of-school youth. For many, this is the extent of services that will be needed. Employers are willing to provide occupation-specific training to their employees if they are confident the investment in the worker will have long-range benefits to the company.

One strategic goal of the WDB, to build collaboration between business and education, will be provided to youth through on-the-job experiences, or through internships and in apprenticeships in the public or private sector, including in sheltered workshops. Employers will be encouraged to link newly hired youth with “seasoned” workers to assist the youth in adjusting to a work schedule and to increase the prospects for retention. These activities also address the WDB’s strategic goal of increasing opportunities for a workforce diverse in age, ability, ethnicity, and culture.

Secondly, to reinforce “soft skills”, a youth mentoring program will be promoted through organizations that serve at-risk youth (Boys & Girls Club, Junior Achievement, 4-H, etc.).

A third goal for youth is to provide additional opportunities for ESL and GED instruction that will increase the likelihood of adequate language and basic skills. This will be accomplished through Michigan Works! partners, providers of alternative education or community education programs.

WIA Youth Services will be a partner at Ottawa County's Michigan Works! Service Centers (JOB CONNECTIONS North & South). This provides seamless services to all customers accessing the centers and the services. (See I.F for a list of partners.)

WIA services for youth will begin by providing basic program information, including ways to apply, to potential youth customers. The WIA Youth Provider will recruit through individual school districts, advertising, and referrals from community programs working with youth to enroll appropriate in-school and out-of-school youth. When eligibility is determined, youth begin the assessment process to determine the appropriate mix of services to help them succeed. The EDP is written and the mix of services outlined. All youth will be assigned to a case manager who will follow the youth through to completion of their plan.

The mix of services from which the youth may choose will include:

- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
- Alternative secondary school offerings;
- Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning;
- Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing, preferably in the selected Career Pathway;
- Occupational skill training;
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include such activities as positive social behavior and soft skills, decision making, team work, and other activities;
- Supportive services;
- Adult mentoring for a duration of at least twelve (12) months, that may occur

both during and after program participation;

- Follow-up services; and/or
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.

In five years, services for youth will be further streamlined by increased collaboration between the JOB CONNECTIONS' partners and through increased connections with schools that are constantly developing Career Preparation Programs. The services available at the MW Service Centers will become more and more known over time.

Youth Programs will be enhanced and expanded through this continuing collaboration and through the development of additional partnerships such as through mentoring, through the Education Advisory Group, and through the Patrick A. Thompson Michigan Technical Education Center (MTEC) opened in September 2000.

*C. Describe who are the youth customers of the workforce investment system in your area.*

In-School youth customers will be those meeting the income guidelines (using the Lower Living Standard Income Levels as approved by the Ottawa County WDB), having one or more of the six specified barriers to employment, and demonstrating a need for services based on school performance, involvement with school counselors and/or truant officers, those with little or no work experience, and those coming from single parent homes or from families receiving aid from the Department of Human Services. Other In-School-Youth will be those with disabilities that are barriers to employment opportunities. Out-of-School (minimum 30% of funds) youth will be low income youth, those who have not completed a diploma or GED, those with little or no work experience, those who have failed in previous employment (fired, frequently changing jobs, etc.), those who have had contact with the juvenile justice system, and those with disabilities that are barriers to

employment. These participants may also be pregnant or parenting youth. Many youth customers will be those who have attended alternative high schools and who have had limited opportunity for career exploration activities, job shadowing, work experience, or vocational education.

Up to five percent of youth participants served by the youth program may be individuals who do not meet the income criterion for eligible youth, but fall within one or more of the following categories:

- School dropout;
- Basic skills deficient, as defined in WIA Section 101(4);
- Are one or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the individual's age;
- Pregnant or parenting;
- Possess one or more disabilities, including learning disabilities;
- Homeless or runaway;
- Offender; or
- Face serious barriers to employment as identified by the Local Board. (See I.E)

*D. Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used at the local level to award grants and contracts for youth activities under Title I of WIA, including how potential bidders are being made aware of the availability of grants and contracts.*

Awards of grants and contracts for youth activities under Title I of WIA will be through a competitive process. The availability of grants and contracts will be published to the Ottawa County Michigan Works! bidders' list, prior youth program providers, and through public media. The task group from the Education Advisory Group of the Workforce Development Board will review all proposals and choose the appropriate

provider/s based on response to the Request for Proposal, cost categories, prior history delivering services to youth, and ability to provide quality services. Multiple providers may be chosen to deliver the variety of services to both in-school and out-of-school youth.

Ottawa County MWA shall maintain a written procurement system that shall apply in the selection of service providers and vendors for all procurement utilizing BWP funds. All procurement utilizing BWP funding sources will follow the guidelines set forth in BWP PI 04-03, "Procurement Policy", issued March 1, 2004.

The state has delegated responsibility to local boards to provide the definition regarding the sixth youth eligibility criterion at Section 101(13)(C)(vi).

The definition of an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment is the in-school or out-of-school youth participant with prior failure in the labor force or educational activity. Failure in academics is defined as a GPA less than 2.0 in secondary or post-secondary training, or quitting education prior to completion of a recognized credential. Failure in employment is defined as being fired from one or more places of employment (for any reason, including attendance), and employment of less than 6 months with one employer.

*E. Describe the current status of the one-stop service center, including all existing youth activities and how they have been included in the development of the one-stop integrated service delivery system.*

Ottawa County has the unique privilege of operating a Michigan Works! Service Center (JOB CONNECTIONS South, located in Holland) that is the permanent, full-time home to seven programs, most of which include services to youth customers. These are: Employment Services, WIA, DLEG/Rehabilitation Services, Veteran's Employment Counselor, Agricultural Service Worker, JET, and Telamon Corporation. A Program Supervisor from the MWA serves as the co-manager of the Service Center. The MW

Service Center (JOB CONNECTIONS North) is open full-time in Grand Haven with services scheduled on an itinerant basis. (Employment Services are available full-time.) JET provides orientation and job development services at both JOB CONNECTIONS locations. Employers utilize the Michigan Works! Service Centers through Michigan's Talent Bank (MTB) and the Resource Room. They serve on the advisory boards of community organizations, including Kandu Industries, the current WIA Youth and Work First Service Provider, and Zeeland Public Schools, the Employment Service provider.

DLEG/Rehabilitation Services has multiple contacts with the employer community. Youth have access to these employers through the service center.

Job and skill requirements are reflected in job orders placed on the Michigan Talent Bank, through the Career Portal, Career Cruising, O\*Net, and other computer-based programs, and through the working knowledge of Service Center staff.

Local labor market information is available through Employment Services, thru websites, thru Service Center partners, and directly from the ESA Labor Market Analyst.

English as a Second Language (ESL), GED, and Basic Skill classes at both JOB CONNECTIONS locations provide older youth the opportunity to improve educational and employment options. Michigan Rehabilitation Services provides services to youth and accepts referrals from the other partners.

Job Fairs are provided at JOB CONNECTIONS South and at other settings throughout the county as frequently as possible based on employer needs. Michigan Works! participates fully in these activities.

## **II. Strategies for Improvement**

*A. Describe how the local board and youth council will develop and manage effective youth programs.*

The Education Advisory Group as part of the WDB will develop and provide oversight for an effective youth program. Through contract awards, the best providers

will be chosen. MWA staff and the EAG will monitor the contract/s and provide staff development activities to ensure quality programs.

*B. Describe the strategy for providing comprehensive services to eligible youth, including any coordination with foster care, education, welfare, and other relevant resources. Include requirements and activities to assist youth who have special needs or barriers to employment, including those who are pregnant, parenting, or have disabilities. Describe how coordination with the Job Corps, youth opportunity grants, and other youth programs will occur.*

The strategy for providing comprehensive services to eligible youth is to develop links to other providers of services to youth depending on the youth program activity. There will be strong co-ordination with education through the provision of the EDP, with alternative education providers, and through the juvenile justice system. For mentoring services, links will be developed with youth services such as 4-H, Boys & Girls Club, and Junior Achievement. Those with special needs will have services coordinated with special programs such as DLEG/Rehabilitation Services or the alternative education programs in the county. A Job Corp representative uses a private interview room at JOB CONNECTIONS South to interview potential Job Corp participants. Ottawa County MWA maintains multiple links with area programs and these relationships will ensure a smooth transition to WIA Youth Services.

*C. Describe how your local area will meet the Act's provisions regarding youth program design.*

Preparation for post secondary educational opportunities will be accomplished through assessment and the EDP. Youth will be encouraged and directed to completion of a high school diploma or GED. Post secondary training information, including Financial Aid information, will be provided. Tutoring will increase academic achievement to prepare students for post secondary opportunities.

- Linkages between academic and occupational learning will take place through Career Preparation activities, job shadowing, and paid or unpaid work experiences.
- Students will receive employability skills training to prepare them for the world of work. Job development, work experience, academic and vocational training will lead to unsubsidized employment. Females will be encouraged to consider non-traditional occupations.
- Linkages with strong employer connections will be through the Youth Council of the WDB, the Educational Advisory Group of the WDB, JOB CONNECTIONS' Partners, Career Preparation coordinators, community resources serving youth, DLEG/Michigan Rehabilitation Services, school counselors, and the juvenile justice system.
- WIA will work closely with the school districts which offer alternative education programs for junior and/or senior high school students to enroll and serve this population of youth. Typically these students need specialized instruction, tutoring, basic skills training, and strong connections between school and work. They will benefit greatly from work experiences related to their career goals.
- Paid and unpaid work experiences will be developed for the greatest number of youth, recognizing the multiple benefits of such. Youth learn work maturity, work skills, the connection between school and work, and the opportunity to earn money during these experiences.
- Occupational skill training will be provided at institutions in West Michigan that deliver instruction for high-growth occupations in Ottawa County and the surrounding areas. The opening of the Patrick A. Thompson Michigan Technical Education Center (MTEC) is a tremendous asset to Ottawa County since it provides the types of instruction in demand for high wage, high skill jobs (Strategic Plan Goal #2). MTEC is close to students in the western and southern portions of the county. Students in the northern and

eastern ends of the county have access to Community College programs that offer excellent vocational programs.

- Youth will be encouraged to develop leadership skills through group activities, through their work experience, or through community service.
- The Youth Service Provider will possess the knowledge and skills needed to deliver comprehensive guidance and counseling to all youth participants.
- Supportive Services, primarily through child-care and mileage assistance, will be available to those most in need for the successful completion of program participation. Supportive Services will depend on available resources. All youth will be referred to appropriate providers of supportive service needs.
- Follow-up services will be provided for up to one year following completion of youth activities. The WIA Service Provider will maintain contact with the youth participants to ensure long-term success.

**III. Review, Comment, and Publication Documentation**

*MWAs are required to publish plans in accordance with Section 118(c) of the act. In lieu of submitting documentation, MWAs will maintain documentation on file for monitoring by DLEG.*

- B. The proposed plan will be published; and
  - 1. Such plans will be made available for review and comment to:
    - Members of the local board and members of the public including representatives of business and labor organizations; and
    - The public through such means as public hearings and local new media.
  - 2. The local board will submit any comments that express disagreement with the plan to DLEG along with the plan.

The local board will make information about the plan available to the public on a regular basis through open meetings. Complete copies of the plan can be obtained from:

Ottawa County Michigan Works!

12251 James St., Suite 300

Holland, MI 49424

In accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990, this plan can be made available in alternate formats by calling Voice Phone 616/393-5697 or 1-800-649-3777 TTY.