

**Prosperity Region 8 Regional WIOA Plan**

**Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass, Van Buren/BCVB MICHIGAN WORKS!**

**Michigan Works! Southwest**

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## 1. Planning

All seven counties in Prosperity Region 8 are represented in the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan through the programs and services provided by BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest. Economic, community, and workforce development services inclusive of Michigan Works! programming in the counties of Berrien, Cass and Van Buren are provided by BCVB Michigan Works! Workforce development services and Michigan Works! programming in Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties are provided by Michigan Works! Southwest.

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest use labor market data and established best practices as the basis for the provision of customer services that align with the needs of both employers and job seekers. The combined efforts of the two Michigan Works! agencies provide aligned customer centric services in a timely manner to both employers and job seekers throughout the region.

### Overview of the Region 8 Planning Process:

#### Communication

Key leadership in Region 8, along with planning and program staff across all workforce development programs, communicate regularly regarding the services available to job seekers and employers in the communities throughout Region 8. Continuous improvement and adapting to change such as the recent challenges presented by COVID-19, are a priority.

#### Local Planning

Due to two Michigan Works! areas being located within Region 8, separate WIOA plans were written for each area to address their unique needs. The local WIOA plan for the Michigan Works! area that covers Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties was developed by BCVB Michigan Works!. The WIOA local plan that covers Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties was developed by Michigan Works! Southwest.

Policy requirements were used as a guide for this process. Strategies within the local plan include:

- Investments in economic, education and workforce training to meet the current and future needs of industry sectors within Region 8;
- Employment driven strategies among all partners within the One-Stop system; and
- Innovation and alignment of employment, training, and education programs to support building a skilled workforce that meets the needs of economic, education and workforce partners.

Required elements of the proposed local plans include:

- An analysis of regional and local labor market data and economic conditions. This includes a description of the strategic vision and goals of the Workforce Development Board in each local area, to prepare an educated and skilled workforce as well as an analysis of expected WIOA performance levels for Titles I, II, III and IV. Baseline measure to be reviewed include:
  - WIOA Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth services

- Measurable Skills Gains
    - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
  - WIOA Title II – Adult Education and Literacy
    - Employment – Second Quarter After Exit
    - Employment – Fourth Quarter After Exit
    - Median Earnings
    - Credential Attainment Rate
    - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
  - WIOA Title III – Wagner-Peyser
    - Effectiveness in Serving Employers
  - WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation
    - Measurable Skill Gains
    - Employment Rate in the Second Quarter after Exit
    - Median Earnings in the Second Quarter after Exit
- Strategies of the Workforce Development Board that will be used to align local resources, required partners, and other entities to provide the services of the core programs that will support achieving the strategic vision and goals.
- Business services strategies that support the facilitation of employer engagement in workforce development programs and continuous improvement of the coordination between the workforce development programs and our economic development partners.
- A description of the one-stop delivery system.
- A description as to how the local area will coordinate WIOA Title I workforce development activities with transportation and other supportive services that support employment and employment retention in the local Michigan Works! areas.
- A description as to how each Workforce Development Board will coordinate workforce development activities, strategies, and services with relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities and avoid duplication of services.
- A description as to how the workforce development activities of WIOA Title I are coordinated with the adult education and literacy activities of WIOA Title II.
- A description of the types of training services available in Region 8.
- A description of the actions of the Workforce Development Board that support becoming or remaining high-performing boards. This includes evaluating the effectiveness of services, accessibility and continuous improvement of their one-stop centers; a description of the roles, responsibilities and contributions of each of the one-stop partners; cost allocation; and the allocation of one-stop infrastructure funding.

### **Regional Planning**

The Regional Plan was developed by staff in each Michigan Works! area (BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest). These staff were responsible for coordinating the writing of the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan as well as communicating with key stakeholders to verify information included within the plan. Open and ongoing communication and partnerships with education and economic development entities throughout the region was an integral part of this process. Upon completion of the proposed Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan, stakeholders were asked to review and provide additional input.

Both Michigan Works! Areas will use the regional plan, as well as their local plan, to guide workforce development services throughout Region 8 over the next four years. The following provided input for the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan:

- Planning, Monitoring, and Policy staff from BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest
- Business Services staff from BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest
- Executive Leadership staff from BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest
- Workforce development program staff, throughout the seven counties within Region 8 that included:
  - WIOA Adult staff,
  - WIOA Dislocated Worker staff,
  - WIOA Youth staff,
  - PATH (TANF) staff, and
  - Employment Services (Wagner-Peyser) staff

Each group of staff throughout Region 8 provided information pertaining to their area of expertise that is reflective of the needs, goals and assets of Region 8. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Available education and training opportunities for the current workforce and those seeking employment throughout Region 8;
- The strengths and challenges of employers/businesses throughout Region 8;
- Models for job seeking and placement to assist individuals who are unemployed and underemployed throughout the region;
- Community organizations with missions and resources that support workforce development, as well as supportive services to support gaining and retaining employment;
- Other supportive services throughout the region that support job seekers in their quest for employment opportunities;
- Current and future growth and development throughout the region; and
- Other resources and tools available to all stakeholders within the region.

The strength and knowledge of key staff, as well as their collaborative efforts to identify the extensive resources available throughout Region 8, were key in the development of the Region 8 WIOA Regional Plan.

As the four years of this plan progress, the leadership, planning and program staff from the BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest areas will continue to have regular communication, as appropriate, and will focus on how to best provide and continuously improve workforce development services throughout the region. This includes ongoing communication with the education and economic development entities throughout Region 8.

## 2. Analysis of regional labor market data and economic conditions

In planning workforce development strategies in Region 8, it is critical to understand the demographics of the current population, along with current and projected employment data.

The Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 regularly review and analyze regional labor market data and economic conditions to guide workforce development services and focus areas, and both organizations are aware that as a result of the pandemic, significant changes will be experienced and the organizations will actively review and strive to effectively respond to the changes.

In planning workforce development strategies in Region 8, it is critical to understand the demographics of the current population, along with current and projected employment data.

### Population/Demographics

Per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), total population for the seven county area, of Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren was 784,570, representing a growth of 4,900 (+0.6 percent) since 2013.

Per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), race demographics for Region 8 are as follows:

- All other races – 5.1%
- Black/African American – 9.3%
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Asian – 1.8%
- Hispanic – 5.8%
- Native American – 0.5%
- White – 83.2%

Per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), the age distribution of work eligible individuals is as follows:

- 14.8% ages 15 to 24,
- 36.3% ages 25 to 54, and
- 30.3% ages 55 and older.

It should be noted that the residents of Southwest Michigan display a similar age distribution as the state's population.

In reviewing this information, for preparation, it is important to look at industry employment by age, for Region 8. Per the Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Workforce Indicators, industries with a lower share of older workers in Region include:

- Accommodation and Food Services – 14% are over the age of 55,
- Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services – 21% are

over the age of 55,

- Educational Services – 19% over the age of 55 and older,
- Finance and Insurance – 22% over the age of 55.

On the other hand, industries in Region 8 with a higher share of older workers include:

- Public Administration – 29% over the age of 55,
- Construction – 24% over the age of 55,
- Wholesale Trade – 29% over the age of 55, and
- Information – 25% over the age of 55.

In planning, the aging of the workforce, preparing for the next generation of workers to avoid gaps, and post-pandemic changes will be integral in the work of the sector strategy consortium groups.

### **Educational Attainment in Region 8 of the Population Ages 25 and older**

The Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 will continue to work with education partners, to develop training opportunities to meet the needs of employers and job seekers in the area. Current educational attainment in Region 8, as reported in the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), is as follows:

• Less than High School Diploma	9.5% of the population
• High School Graduate, GED or Alternative	30.1% of the population
• Some College	23.9% of the population
• Associate Degree	9.7% of the population
• Bachelor’s Degree	16.6% of the population
• Graduate or Professional Degree	10.2% of the population

This information is crucial in understanding the barriers of gaining employment for individuals with lower education levels.

### **Disability**

Per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), according to the U.S. Census Bureau, over 14% of the total population in Southwest Michigan during the 2014–2018 period reported having a disability.

In addition, per the U.S Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate Data Profiles from 2018, the percent of the population ages 18-64 with a disclosed disability, by county, is as follows:

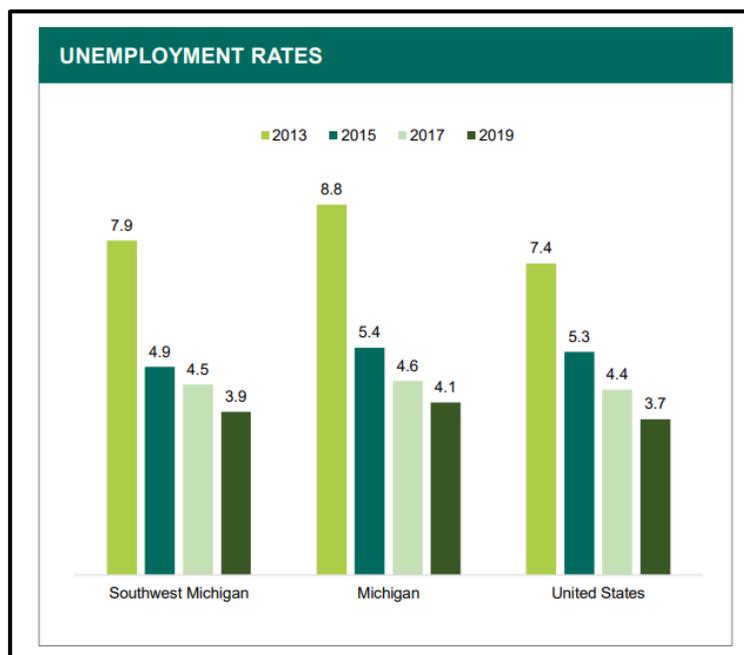
- Berrien: 14.7%
- Branch: 13.6%
- Calhoun: 15.6%
- Cass: 17.8%
- Kalamazoo: 12.9%
- St. Joseph: 14.4%

It should be noted that this information reflects an increase in these numbers, from the previous WIOA Regional (Region 8) Report. Working with employers and vocational rehabilitation partners, including Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, as discussed throughout this plan, remain a priority of the workforce development work being completed throughout Region 8.

**Unemployment**

To reflect the workforce during the time period of 2013 to 2019, the unemployment rate by year is outlined below. The number of unemployed individuals remained relatively steady, as reflected, until the onset of the pandemic (not included in the data below) throughout Region 8. Post-pandemic, it will be important for the Michigan Works! agencies to work strategically, and together, to meet the needs of both the job seekers and the employers in Region 8.

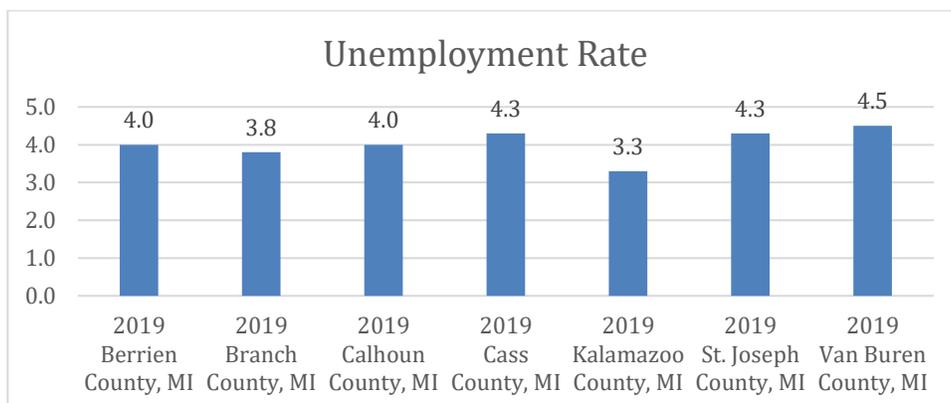
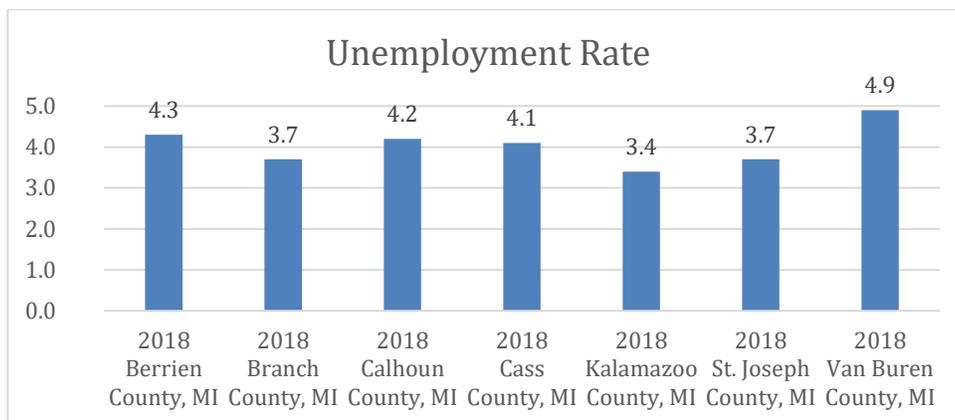
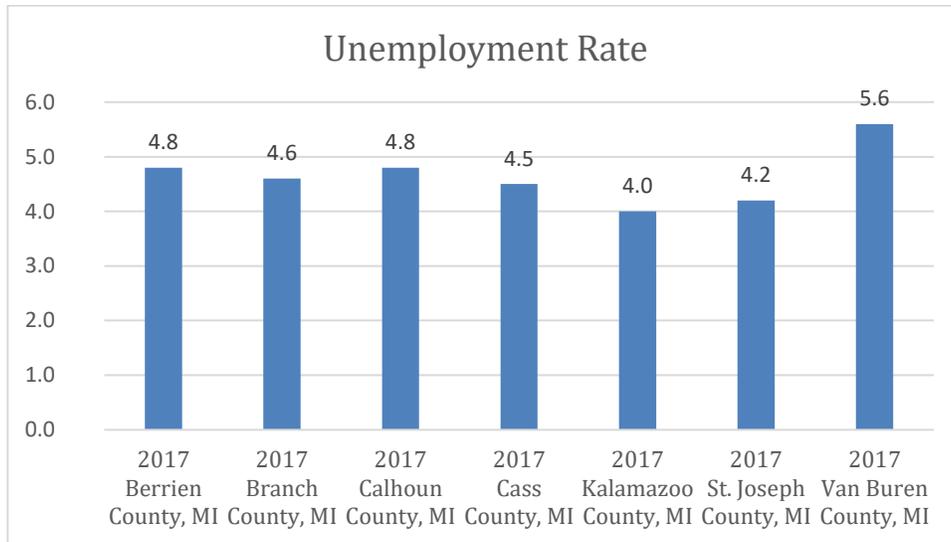
The [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), provides the following unemployment rate information from 2013 to 2019. The report also concludes that Employment improved by 25,400 (+7.6 percent) over the 2013 to 2019 time period, while the number of unemployed residents dropped by 14,450.



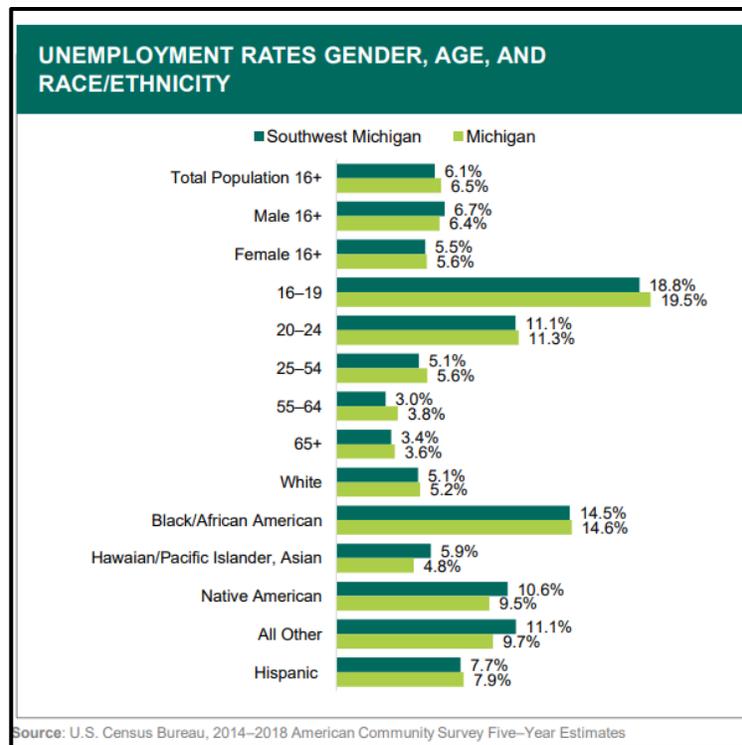
Further, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics reports the following breakout by county, in Region 8, from 2017, 2018, and 2019.

Unemployment

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



In evaluating the unemployment rate, the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) also reports that minority groups experienced higher unemployment rates than whites, during the 2014-2018 period. This information, along with unemployment rates by gender and age in Region 8 is reported below.



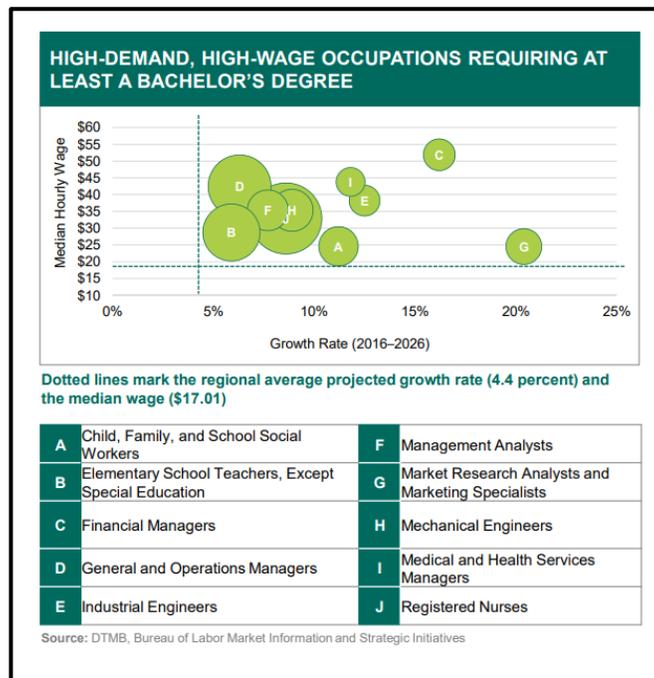
## Equity

The Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 are committed to equity in every aspect of our work, including a dedication to working with diverse communities and individuals to best meet the needs of the communities in the region. With a focus on serving the most disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups in our region in an effective manner, Berrien Cass Van Buren (BCVB) Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest strive to incorporate equity principles and practices in our services and programs and hold ourselves accountable for creating a rich culture of diversity and inclusion throughout the region.

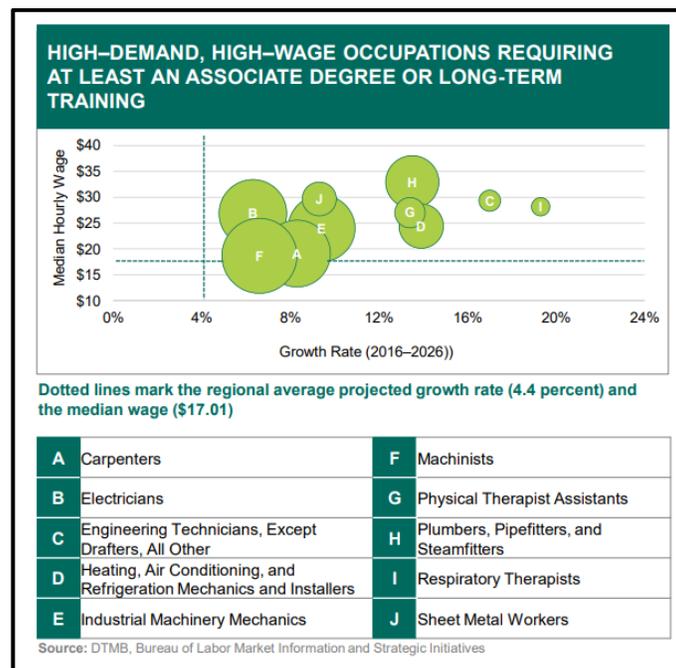
## High-Demand, High-Wage Data

The [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) provides the following data regarding high-demand, high wage occupation by education level, for Region 8. This analysis is critical in the work being done in collaboration with educational institutions, training providers, and employers throughout the seven counties, and will assist as a tool in guiding conversation.

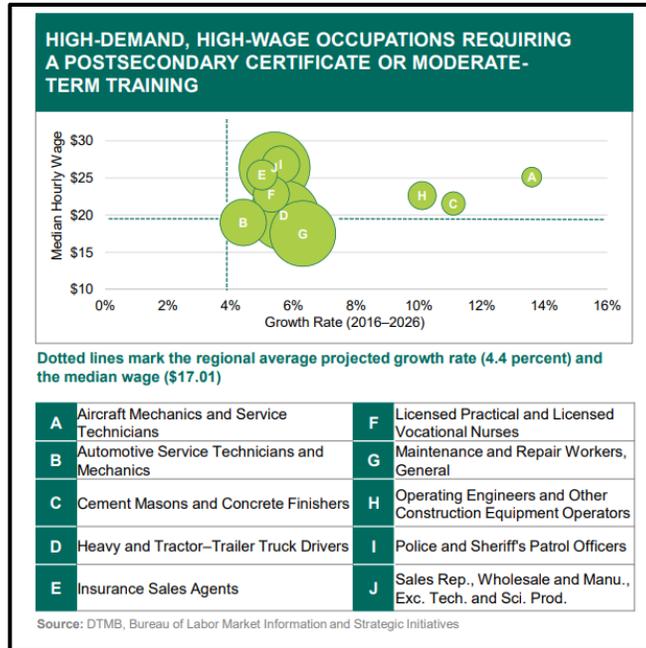
**High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring at least a Bachelor's Degree:**



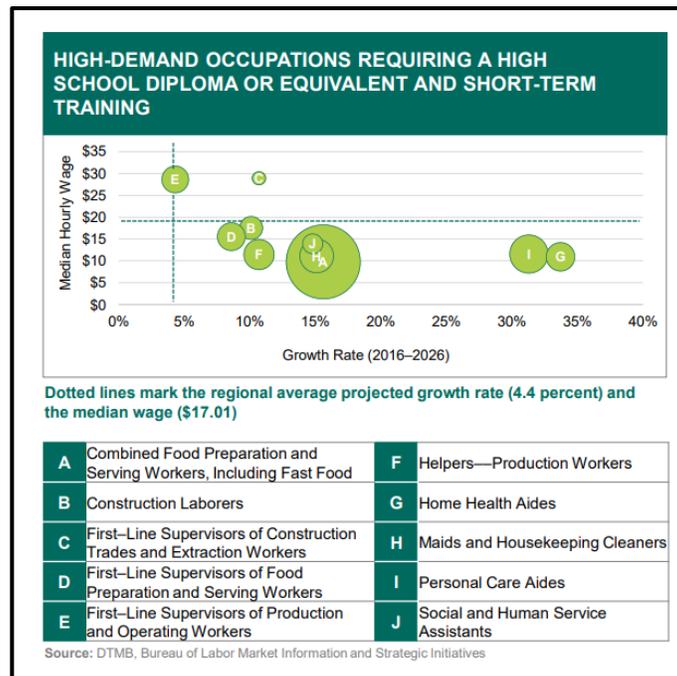
**High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring at least an Associate Degree:**



**High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring a postsecondary certificate or moderate term training:**



**High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring a postsecondary certificate or moderate term training:**



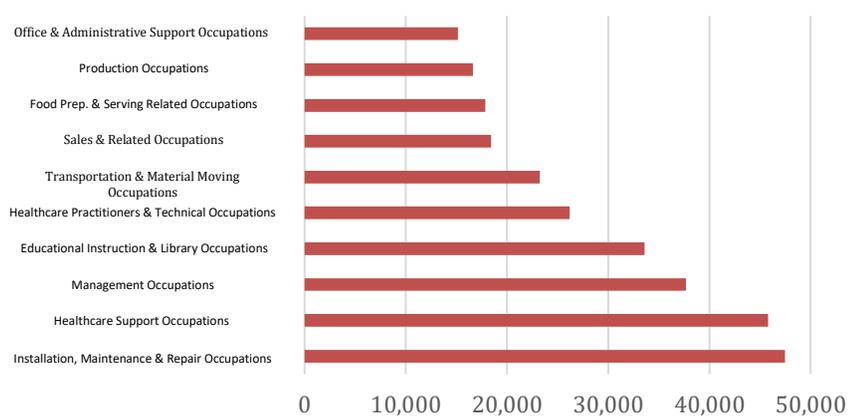
## Largest Occupations

The following occupation data is available for Region 8, from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, LAUS, and reflects the top occupations of 2018 and 2019, as reflected by the number of jobs.

### 2019 Average Wage



### 2019 Number of Jobs

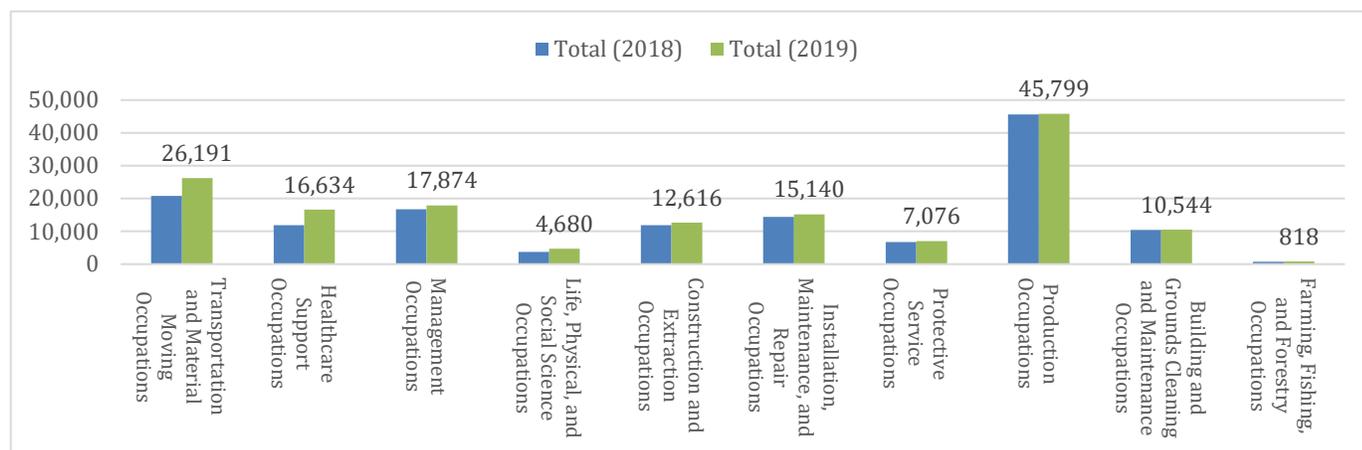


This information is also reflected in the table below.

Occupation	2018 Jobs	2019 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2018-2019)	% Change	2019 Average Wage
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	52,089	47,477	-4,612	-9%	\$18.34
Production Occupations	45,620	45,799	179	0%	\$18.93
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	37,798	37,680	-119	0%	\$12.22
Sales and Related Occupations	34,712	33,606	-1,106	-3%	\$19.06
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	20,802	26,191	5,389	26%	\$16.49
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	23,973	23,231	-742	-3%	\$39.99
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	18,519	18,438	-80	0%	\$26.62
Management Occupations	16,757	17,874	1,117	7%	\$50.13
Healthcare Support Occupations	11,923	16,634	4,711	40%	\$14.88
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	14,403	15,140	736	5%	\$23.22

## Growth

In Region 8, DTMB, Occupational Employment Statistics (this information is inclusive of the Benton Harbor, Kalamazoo, and Battle Creek Economic Forecast Regions) projected growth of 4,367 over the time period of 2017-2018 with a +1.3% projected change in employment over the same time period. As discussed throughout the regional plan, Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 are working with economic development and training institutions to meet the needs of occupations that have demonstrated high growth, outlined below. The Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 will continually analyze data available regarding growth occupations, as an increase in automation continues and the pandemic changes the industries and employers in the region.

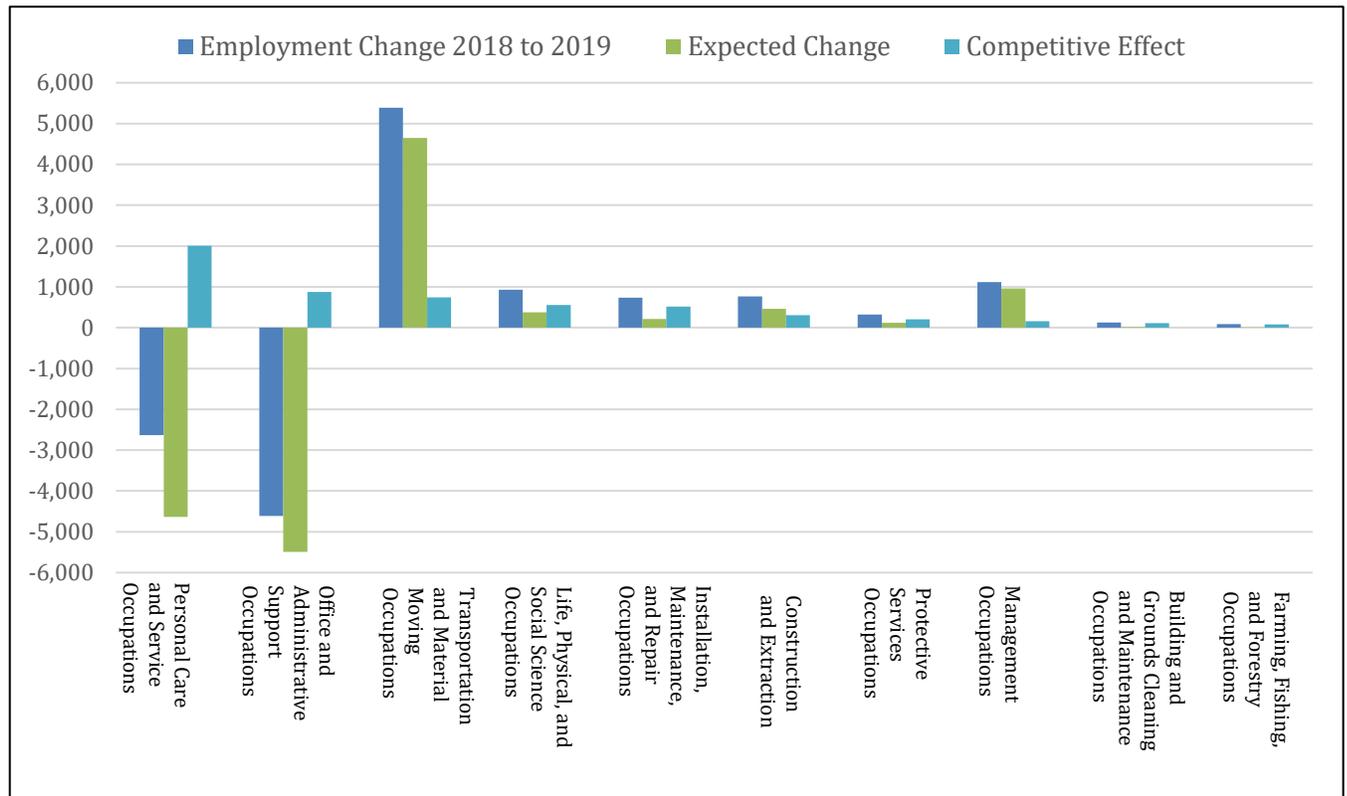


Occupation growth is also reflected in the data provided by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, LAUS, Upjohn Institute and outlined below.

Occupation	2018 Jobs	2019 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2018-2019)	% Change	2019 Average Wage
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	20,802	26,191	5,389	26%	\$16.49
Healthcare and Support Occupations	11,923	16,634	4,711	40%	\$14.88
Management Occupations	16,757	17,874	1,117	7%	\$50.13
Life, Physical, Social Science Occupations	3,749	4,680	931	25%	\$29.07
Construction and Extraction Occupations	11,852	12,616	764	6%	\$25.14
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	14,403	15,140	736	5%	\$23.22
Protective Service Occupations	6,751	7,076	326	5%	\$21.57
Production Occupations	45,620	45,799	179	0%	\$18.93
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	10,415	10,544	129	1%	\$14.38
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	733	818	85	12%	\$15.59

### Most Competitive Occupations

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Occupational Employment Statistics, LAUS, provides the following expected change and competitive effect for the region, in which the competitive effect indicates how much of the job change within a given region is the result of some unique competitive advantage of the region because the growth cannot be explained by national trends in that industry or the economy as whole.

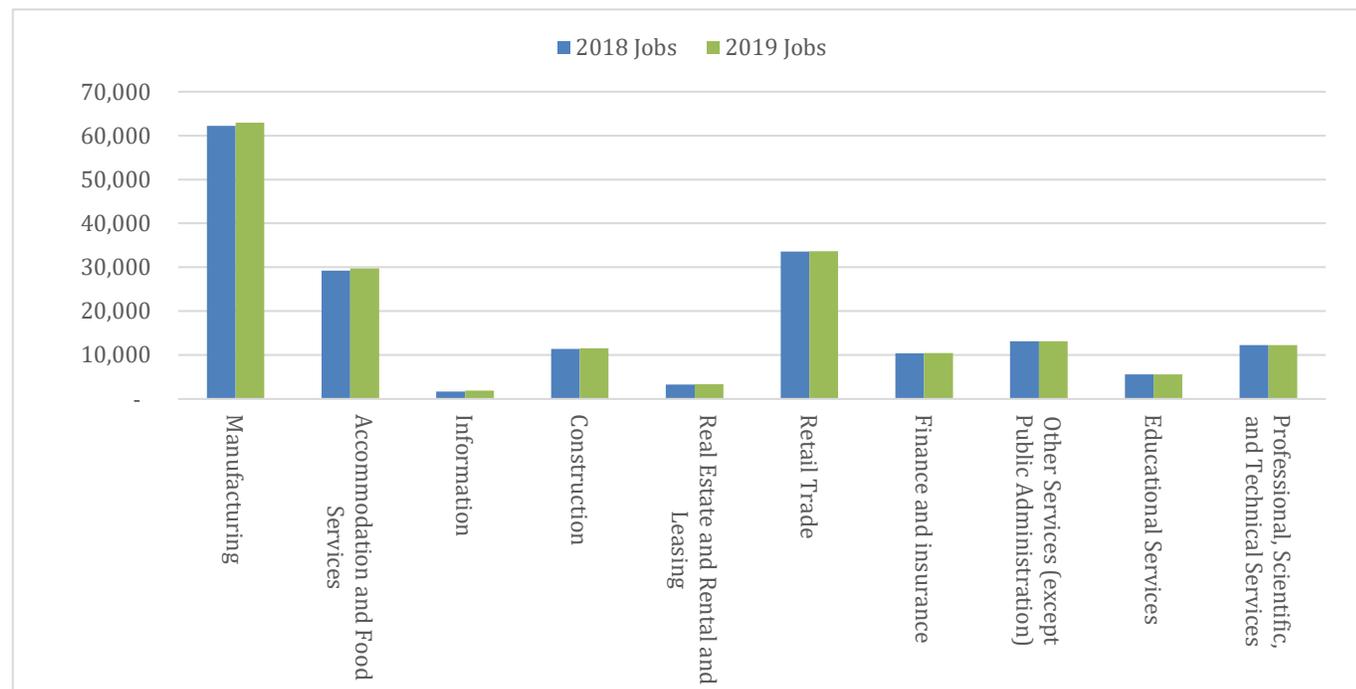


This information is also reflected in the chart below, and in addition to the competitive effect, the occupation-mix effect highlighted reflects the number of jobs expected to be added (or lost) within an occupation in the region, based on the occupation's national growth/decline, and the national growth effect explains how much of the regional industry's growth is explained by the overall health of the national economy.

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Employment Change 2018 - 2019</b>	<b>Occupational Mix Effect</b>	<b>National Growth Effect</b>	<b>Expected Change</b>	<b>Competitive Effect</b>
Personal Care and Service Occupations	-2,633	-4,811	174	-4,637	2,004
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	-4,612	-6,261	771	-5,490	878
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	5,389	4,338	308	4,645	744
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	931	319	55	374	557
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	736	3	213	216	520
Construction and Extraction	764	285	175	460	304
Protective Service Occupations	326	21	100	121	205
Management Occupations	1,117	714	248	962	155
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	129	-137	154	17	112
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	85	-4	11	7	78

### Fastest Growing Industries

The high growth industries in Region 8, as presented by a change in jobs, per Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019), are as follows:

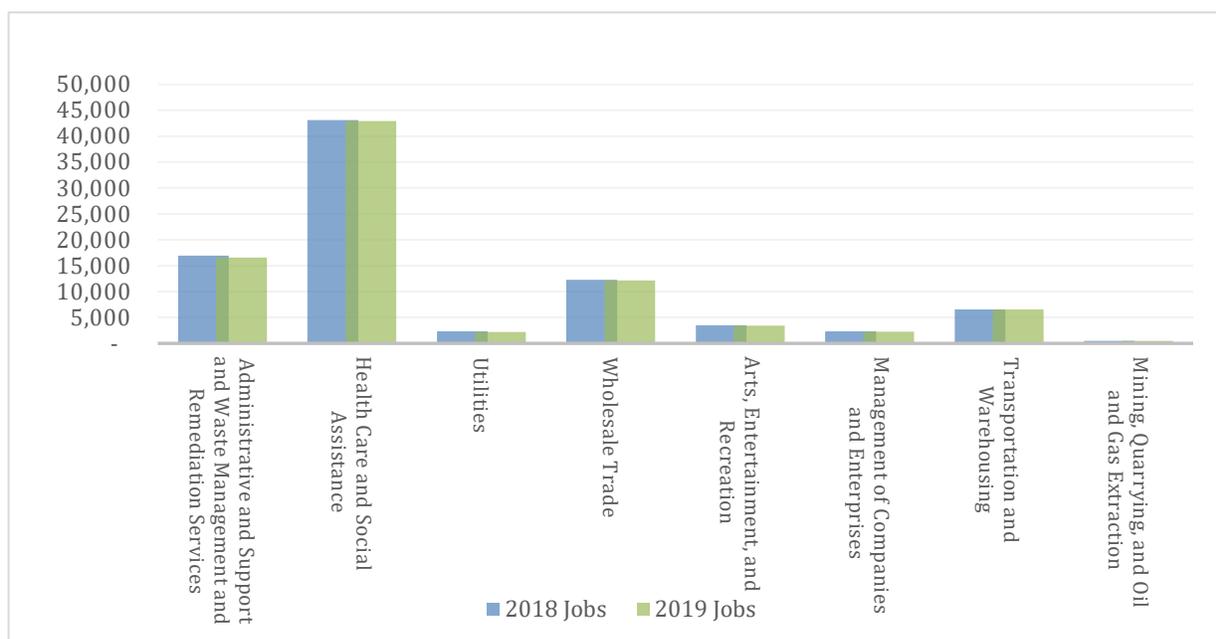


This information is also reflected in the table below.

Industry	2018 Jobs	2019 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2018-2019)	% Change	2018 Earnings Per Worker
Manufacturing	62,190	62,940	750	1.2%	\$64,319
Accommodation and Food Services	29,240	29,710	470	1.6%	\$19,836
Information	1,710	1,910	200	11.7%	\$81,871
Construction	11,390	11,540	150	1.3%	\$56,190
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,250	3,340	90	2.8%	\$40,000
Retail Trade	33,550	33,630	80	0.2%	\$29,806
Finance and Insurance	10,380	10,450	70	0.7%	\$73,218
Other Services (except Public Administration)	13,110	13,130	20	0.2%	\$35,088
Educational Services	5,610	5,620	10	0.2%	\$42,781
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	12,250	12,250	0	0.0%	\$64,490

## Slowest Growing Industries

In contrast, the declining industries in Region 8, as presented by a change in jobs, per Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019), are as follows:



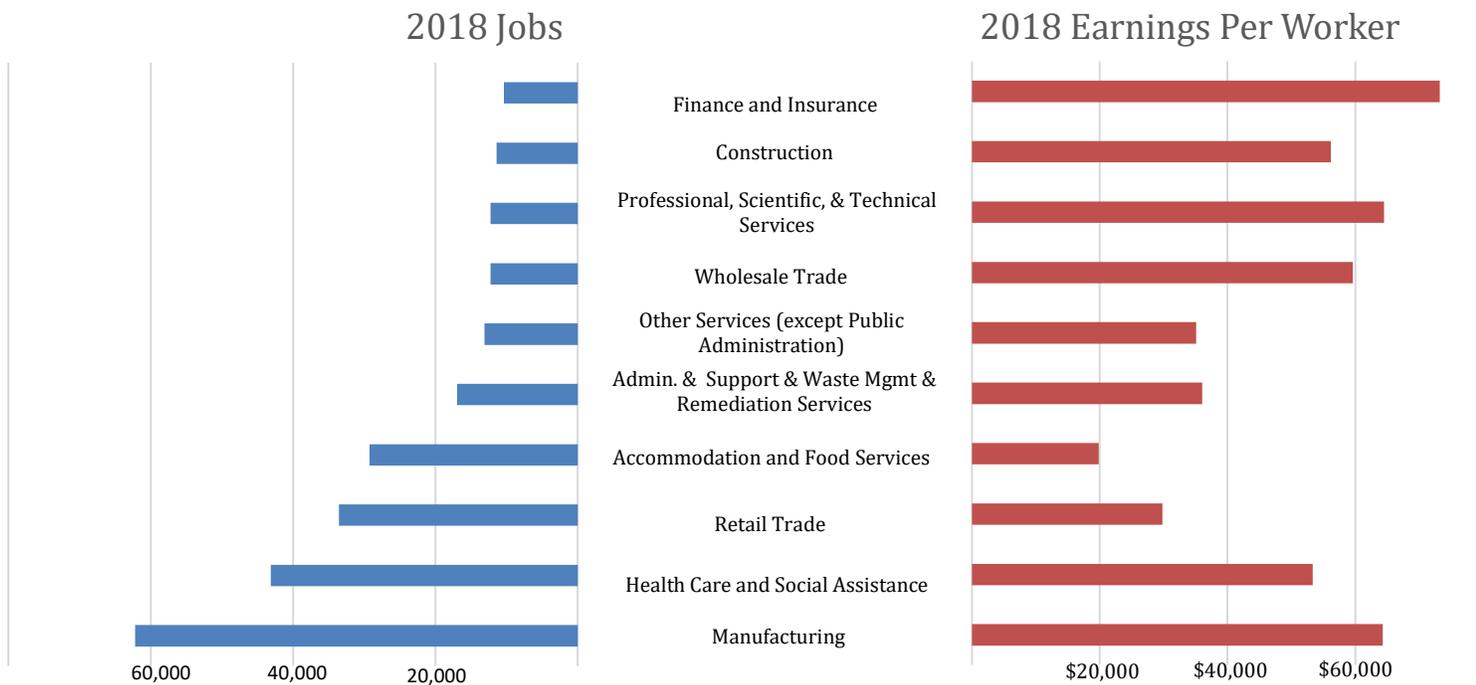
This information is also reflected in the chart below.

Industry	2018 Jobs	2019 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2018-2019)	% Change	2018 Earnings Per Worker
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	16,930	16,580	-350	-2.1%	\$36,031
Health Care and Social Assistance	43,120	42,950	-170	-0.4%	\$53,340
Utilities	2,300	2,220	-80	-3.5%	\$100,000
Wholesale Trade	12,250	12,170	-80	-0.7%	\$59,592
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,480	3,410	-70	-2.0%	\$23,276
Management of Companies and Enterprises	2,330	2,260	-70	-3.0%	\$133,047
Transportation and Warehousing	6,590	6,550	-40	-0.6%	\$62,215
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	480	460	-20	-4.2%	\$54,167

### Industries in Region 8

In order to effectively serve employers and job seekers in Region 8, in creation of this plan, an analysis of industry growth and decline was reviewed. Per Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019) the following information was determined, regarding existing in-demand sectors.

#### Largest Industries



This information is also reflected in the table below.

<b>Industry</b>	<b>2018 Jobs</b>	<b>2019 Jobs</b>	<b>Change in Jobs (2018-2019)</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>2018 Earnings Per Worker</b>
Manufacturing	62,190	62,940	750	1.2%	\$64,319
Health Care and Social Assistance	43,120	42,950	-170	-0.4%	\$53,340
Retail Trade	33,550	33,630	80	0.2%	\$19,806
Accommodation and Food Services	29,240	29,710	470	1.6%	\$19,836
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	16,930	16,580	-350	-2.1%	\$36,031
Other Services (except Public Administration)	13,110	13,130	20	0.2%	\$35,088
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	12,250	12,250	0	0.0%	\$64,490
Wholesale Trade	12,250	12,170	-80	-0.7%	\$59,592
Construction	11,390	11,540	150	1.3%	\$56,190
Finance and Insurance	10,380	10,450	70	0.7%	\$73,218

## Industry Specific Data for Region 8 Industry

### Data: Manufacturing

Per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), manufacturing remains the region's largest industry, with a share of total private payroll jobs at 2.3% in the region, which is over six percentage points above the statewide average. The manufacturing industry sector in Michigan's Prosperity Region 8 is robust, accounting for 62,940 jobs (or 17.2% of all 364,872 jobs in the region).

The manufacturing industry sector in Prosperity Region 8 has seen significant growth since 2013, adding 6,600 jobs, per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), and as of 2018, the number of manufacturing establishments in the region totaled 1,107.

The overall occupational employment in Southwest Michigan is projected to expand by 4.4 percent (+14,790) between 2016 and 2026. This is slower than the seven percent statewide projected growth rate. Included in this growth, per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), is the projection that the distribution of jobs by broad occupational groups will grow to 11.5% in production by 2026 and showcases the importance of Manufacturing in Region.

Additional information regarding the manufacturing industry in Region 8 is provided from Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019) below.

County Name	2015 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2015 - 2019 Change	2015 - 2019 % Change
Kalamazoo County, MI	18,800	20,450	1,650	8.8%
Berrien County, MI	13,090	13,510	420	3.2%
Calhoun County, MI	11,970	12,080	110	0.9%
St. Joseph County, MI	9,180	9,380	200	2.2%
Van Buren County, MI	2,450	2,520	70	2.9%
Cass County, MI	2,400	2,590	190	7.9%
Branch County, MI	2,510	2,410	-100	-4.0%
<b>Region 8</b>	<b>60,400</b>	<b>62,940</b>	<b>2,540</b>	<b>4.2%</b>

**Manufacturing Average Hourly Earnings:**

<b>County Name</b>	<b>2018 Earnings Per Worker</b>
Berrien County	\$75,782
Branch County	\$50,509
Calhoun County	\$60,994
Cass County	\$43,767
Kalamazoo County	\$81,101
St. Joseph County	\$52,664
Van Buren County	\$50,197
Source: Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019)	<b>Average: \$59,288</b>

**Industry Data: Healthcare**

The healthcare industry sector in Michigan's Prosperity Region 8 is also a significant portion of the region's economy, employing 42,950 people (11.8% of all 264,872 jobs in the region).

Per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), regional employment in the Healthcare industry leads the region in projected percent growth by broad occupational group with an increase of 9.8% (totaling an increase of approximately 3,000 jobs) however this is well below the state average (17%) and healthcare only ranks 7th in projected annual openings between now and 2026.

As of 2018, the number of healthcare establishments in the region totaled 1,331.

Additional information regarding the healthcare industry in Region 8 is provided from Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019) below.

County Name	2015 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2015 - 2019 Change	2015 - 2019 % Change
Kalamazoo County, MI	17,950	19,000	1050	5.8%
Berrien County, MI	7,710	8,070	360	4.7%
Calhoun County, MI	9,490	9,750	260	2.7%
St. Joseph County, MI	1,980	2,060	80	4.0%
Van Buren County, MI	1,960	2,220	260	13.3%
Cass County, MI	760	750	-10	-1.3%
Branch County, MI	1,040	1,100	60	5.8%
<b>Region 8</b>	<b>40,890</b>	<b>42,950</b>	<b>2,060</b>	<b>5.0%</b>

**Healthcare Average Hourly Earnings:**

<b>County Name</b>	<b>2018 Earnings Per Worker</b>
Berrien County	\$66,482
Branch County	\$33,750
Calhoun County	\$57,884
Cass County	\$44,748
Kalamazoo County	\$57,428
St. Joseph County	\$43,005
Van Buren County	\$30,576
Source: Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019)	<b>Average: \$47,696</b>

### Industry Data: Information Technology/Information Security/Telecommunications

The information technology/information security/telecommunications industry cluster in Michigan's Region 8 is a focus area for the Michigan Works! agencies, and a continued analysis of the increase in automation is also a focus.

However, it should be noted that per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) the distribution of industry jobs in Quarter Two of 2019 shows information at .6% regionally (state average 1.5%) and a recorded job loss from 2013-2019 of 13.5% (one of only three industries to record job loss).

Despite a perception of technology and information-related industries as having workforces that trend younger, 25% of this industry cluster's workforce (2,392 workers out of 9,636) is years of age 55 or older, making this a key factor for continued analysis. While this is likely indicative of the advanced levels of education required for those employed within this industry cluster, these indicators spell out current and upcoming worker and talent shortages that will require innovative talent pipeline strategies throughout Region 8.

Additional information regarding information technology in Region 8 is provided from Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019) below.

County Name	2015 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2015 - 2019 Change	2015 - 2019 % Change
Kalamazoo County, MI	840	710	-130	-15.5%
Berrien County, MI	500	500	0	0.0%
Calhoun County, MI	310	350	40	12.9%
St. Joseph County, MI	70	90	20	28.6%
Van Buren County, MI	110	90	-20	-18.2%
Cass County, MI	10	10	0	0.0%
Branch County, MI	150	160	10	6.7%

Region 8

County Name	2015 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2015 - 2019 Change	2015 - 2019 % Change
<b>Region 8</b>	<b>1,990</b>	<b>1,910</b>	<b>-80</b>	<b>-4.0%</b>

**Information Technology/Information Security/Telecommunications Average Hourly Earnings:**

County Name	2018 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$32,601
Branch County	\$41,548
Calhoun County	\$32,206
Cass County	\$52,057
Kalamazoo County	\$47,672
St. Joseph County	\$45,928
Van Buren County	\$28,236
Source: Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019)	<b>Average: \$40,035</b>

### Industry Data: Accommodation and Food Service

Per Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019), the accommodation and food service industry in Michigan's Region 8 currently employs 29,710 and is significant contributor to regional employment, with hospitality-related occupations comprising 11.2% of the 264,872 jobs in the region.

Per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), Prosperity Region 8 has experienced growth in the hospitality industry since 2013, adding 3000 jobs (a 10% growth rate). In addition, per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), occupations in Service are expected to continue to be the largest occupational group regionally with 18% of the total jobs in 2026 due to a projected percent growth of 9.4% and 9,815 annual openings between 2016 and 2026. The Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 are anticipating the pandemic will have an effect on this projection, as although some hotels and restaurants have opened, it is at reduced capacity. Plus, many small businesses, in food service, have already announced permanent closures throughout the seven counties.

Only 13.5% of workers in this industry are over the age of 55.

Additional information regarding the accommodation and food service industry in Region 8 is provided from Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019) below.

County Name	2015 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2015 - 2019 Change	2015 - 2019 % Change
Kalamazoo County, MI	11,630	12,480	850	7.3%
Berrien County, MI	6,500	6,870	370	5.7%
Calhoun County, MI	4,190	3,900	-290	-6.9%
St. Joseph County, MI	1,340	1,610	270	20.1%
Van Buren County, MI	2,050	2,250	200	9.8%

Region 8

County Name	2015 Jobs	2019 Jobs	2015 - 2019 Change	2015 - 2019 % Change
Cass County, MI	910	1,030	120	13.2%
Branch County, MI	1,430	1,570	140	9.8%
<b>Region 8</b>	<b>28,050</b>	<b>29,710</b>	<b>1,660</b>	<b>5.9%</b>

**Accommodation and Food Service Average Hourly Earnings:**

County Name	2018 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$16,907
Branch County	\$14,853
Calhoun County	\$16,665
Cass County	\$13,723
Kalamazoo County	\$16,609
St. Joseph County	\$14,372
Van Buren County	\$15,388
Source: Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019)	<b>Average: \$15,502</b>

### **Industry Data: Construction**

Per Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019), the construction industry in Michigan's Region 8 employs 11,540 people and represents 4.4% of the 264,872 jobs in the region.

While distribution of industry jobs for second quarter 2019 was reported at 4.4% regionally, private sector job trends from 2013-2019 showed an increase of 33.7%, the second largest percent in the region. Construction and Repair is expected to continue seeing significant growth with a projected percent growth of 7.6% between 2016-2026 and an estimated 2,645 annual openings, adding 1,762 jobs (a 14% growth rate).

Per the [2020 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), regionally, occupations categorized as high-demand, high-wage occupation that requires a post-secondary certificate or moderate-term training, are concentrated in the Construction industry, a fact that aligns with regional education attainment levels of 33.9% of individuals possessing some college or associate's degree. Additionally, First-Line Supervisors of Construction Trades and Extraction Workers are identified as one of the highest paid positions regionally that is high-demand and requiring a high school diploma or equivalent. As of 2018, 29.9% of individuals living in Region 8 possess an educational attainment level of high school diploma or equivalent.

The construction industry's workforce is also aging rapidly, with 24% of the workforce being 55 years of age or older. This indicator continues to highlight the fact that near future talent shortages will require innovative talent pipeline strategies throughout Region 8.

Additional information regarding the construction industry in Region 8 is provided from Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019) below.

County Name	2013 Jobs	2017 Jobs	2013 - 2017 Change	2013 - 2017 % Change
Kalamazoo County, MI	4,720	5,230	510	10.8%
Berrien County, MI	1,750	2,080	330	18.9%
Calhoun County, MI	1,610	1,540	-70	-4.3%
St. Joseph County, MI	510	580	70	13.7%
Van Buren County, MI	730	1,210	480	65.8%
Cass County, MI	280	330	50	17.9%
Branch County, MI	490	570	80	16.3%
<b>Region 8</b>	<b>10,090</b>	<b>11,540</b>	<b>1,450</b>	<b>14.4%</b>

**Construction Average Hourly Earnings:**

County Name	2018 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$56,174
Branch County	\$41,732
Calhoun County	\$59,878

Cass County	\$43,870
Kalamazoo County	\$58,794
St. Joseph County	\$52,523
Van Buren County	\$44,671
Source: Moody's Analytics & Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (2019)	<b>Average: \$51,092</b>

## Skills

The occupations described above all require a solid foundation in basic skills, such as reading, communication, math, and cognitive abilities that influence the acquisition and application of knowledge in problem solving. Most require active learning and critical thinking skills. In addition, these occupations require workers to possess technical skills and knowledge related to their specific occupational discipline and to master certain tools and technologies to achieve particular certifications.

Soft skills are overwhelmingly the most highly sought after “skill” by employers in Region 8. Employers struggle to find employees with the required technical skills as well with soft skills, including attendance, work ethic, problem solving, time management and teamwork.

## Opportunities for the Current and Future Workforce

**Age:** As highlighted throughout the data presented above, the current workforce continues to register a high number of older employees (jobs held by workers ages 55+) in Region 8. This may make the Region susceptible to potential talent shortfalls, especially if there are not enough skilled workers able to replace existing workers upon retirement or other exits from the labor market.

**Individuals with Barriers:** Individuals with barriers to employment are a focus for the MWAs in Region 8 as we continue to focus on assisting individuals with barriers to obtaining and retaining meaningful employment including transportation, both within county lines, as well as across county lines; childcare and access to childcare, specifically on shifts other than first shift; and housing. Affordable housing throughout the region remains an issue for individuals and their families.

To address these issues, Berrien Cass Van Buren Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest have utilized local Workforce Development Boards and community collaborations and partnerships throughout the Region and State to focus on working with partners in developing innovative and practical solutions to address issue related to housing, transportation and childcare which will ultimately result in better opportunities for individuals to obtain meaningful and sustainable employment.

**Post Pandemic:** As a region and a state, it will be critical to adapt to employer and job seeker needs, as the pandemic subsides. To assist in guiding recovery efforts, the Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 have already begun surveying employers on their response to the pandemic.

Additionally, ongoing monitoring of the unemployment rate will be crucial to identifying and addressing regional workforce needs related to the pandemic. It is important to note that the unemployment rate does not include marginally attached workers and individuals working part-time but wanting full-time work, presenting an opportunity to Berrien Cass Van Buren Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest to work with this population.

This will also include the ongoing evaluation of future and current talent shortages. BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest will actively evaluate jobs available and the skills, training, and education necessary to fill them.

To address the challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the partners in Region 8 are working collaboratively with employers, economic development, training providers, and other partners, to explore and employ, as appropriate, several strategies to achieve recovery for employers and job seekers.

### **Workforce Development Activities in the Region**

Workforce Development activities in Region 8 are discussed throughout the remainder of this Plan.

**Strengths:** Specifically, this Plan highlights a variety of innovative approaches to workforce development activities that the Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 have implemented in conjunction with training institutions, employers and community partners to address the needs of employers and job seekers, including employer consortiums, customized training opportunities and implementation of sector strategies. These activities are implemented to address the needs of individuals with barriers to employment as well as to meet the employment needs of employers in the region.

In addition, as discussed throughout this Plan, the Michigan Works! Business Services Teams in Region 8 utilizes the Business Solutions Model to deliver a coordinated, systematic, team approach to business outreach and engagement, resulting in quality employer relationships.

**Weaknesses:** There remains opportunity throughout Region 8 to expand the work of employer consortium groups through the development and implementation of additional employer consortiums.

The pandemic also presents an opportunity to enhance virtual workforce development services such as career exploration events and opportunities. Creating meaningful relationships between employers and youth through the exposure to careers in a virtual setting is one area of focus.

### **3. Regional Service Strategies**

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest have continued to refine systems and define best practices through effective communication across all levels of the organizations, information gathering, and data sharing in order to effectively meet the needs of job seekers and employers in Region 8, and, together, will continue to explore new opportunities, as appropriate.

## **Geography**

Region 8 is located in the southwest corner of Michigan. The geographic advantages of the region include the sharing of a border with Indiana, as well as a major interstate highway that connects Detroit and Chicago. The region includes a mixture of urban and rural areas that are attractive to a variety of industry sectors, another geographic advantage. Business Services Teams partner with economic developers to enhance the opportunities for employers and job seekers throughout Region 8.

## **Business Services Teams**

The Business Services model is used across Region 8 to engage employers in the region. Through regular collaboration, the business services lead staff for the region work hand-in-hand with community stakeholders to meet the needs of both employers and job seekers. By leveraging these and other partnerships developed to support and build connections between business, workforce development, educators and economic developers in Region 8, Certified Business Solutions Professionals (CBSPs) across the area help businesses in Region 8 be successful and meet their demands for a skilled workforce by assisting in developing and implementing attraction and retention strategies that expand local business.

To ensure a unified approach to enhancing workforce development across the area Michigan Works! Agencies, a demand-driven approach is utilized which places business as the primary customer.

This focus on employers as a primary customer does not minimize the Region 8 Business Services Teams' commitment to excellent customer service for job seekers, but instead allows BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest to assist both the supply and demand side of workforce development by addressing increasing numbers of jobs for Region 8 job seekers while assuring that the needs of local business are being met. Additionally, by utilizing industry consortiums and local labor market data, the Business Services Teams are able to provide job seekers with the appropriate training and targeted job placement strategies to help families maintain financial self-sufficiency.

The establishing of a robust Business Services Team (BST) has been a key strategy in implementing the demand-driven model across Region 8. The BST concept has three key features:

- A focus on business as the driver and primary customer,
- A team of workforce development professionals specifically trained for and committed to developing relationships with businesses and
- An understanding of the value of strategic collaborations with regional economic development and education partners to provide business solutions and the role of BST in these partnerships

The BST concept also calls for a coordinated, systematic, team approach to business outreach and

engagement.

Regionally the work of the Business Services Teams includes, but is not limited to:

- Outreach and recruitment assistance,
- Application screening;
- Job postings on Pure Michigan Talent Connect (PMTTC);
- Facilitation and support of local and regional hiring events and job fairs for all job seekers;
- Attraction and retention assistance in partnership with economic development Partners;
- Training and funding opportunities for new and incumbent workers, including connecting the unemployed with work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities throughout Region 8;
- Work with educators and employers to understand and improve opportunities for hard-to-serve populations, including individuals with disabilities, veterans, youth;
- Facilitating connections between employers and education institutions;
- Utilizing a multi-generational approach to address the ever-changing Workforce; and
- Support of industry specific consortia work throughout Region 8.

To support the work of the Business Services Teams throughout Region 8, business services staff engage with a variety of key partners including the following:

- Education and training providers,
- Vocational rehabilitation partners,
- Veteran Services partners,
- Economic development organizations,
- Area Chambers of Commerce,
- Local units of government,
- Organized labor unions,
- Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity, State of Michigan,
- Other state agencies, including Department of Agriculture, Department of Corrections, and LARA, and
- BSPs from other Michigan Works! areas outside of Region 8.

Additionally, Pure Michigan Talent Connect is utilized by all program staff as well as the Business Services Team to assist employers and job seekers. Talent Connect provides strategic tools via a web-based portal, allowing employers to identify and develop their talent base while also giving job seekers the opportunity to create a personalized plan to assist them more effectively in navigating their career decisions.

## **Jobs for Michigan Graduates**

Under the leadership of Youth Solutions, in partnership with BCVB Michigan Works!, Michigan Works! Southwest actively participates in Jobs for Michigan Graduates (JMG) programming, as an affiliate to assist in raising the high school graduation rate across the region, as well as the state, by expanding mentoring, job readiness, leadership development, and other academic support for students either at risk of dropping out or those who have already dropped out. Michigan Works! Southwest actively partners with Youth Solutions in their mission to equip young people with the skills to overcome barriers and succeed in education, employment, and life.

## **Veterans Services**

### **Veterans Career Advisors**

Veterans Career Advisors are State of Michigan employees who provide intensive, individualized services to meet the employment needs of eligible veterans and spouses with significant barriers to employment.

Services are provided by these employment service professionals to assist eligible veterans and spouses reduce and/or eliminate barriers to employment. Services include, but are not limited to:

- Comprehensive assessment interviews
- Career guidance services
- Individual Employment Plans (IEPs)
- Staff-assisted job search activities
- Provision of Labor Market Information (LMI)
- Basic staff-assisted career services

Per LEO, the responsibilities of the Veterans Career Advisors include case management, outreach services to veterans, and group job counseling, which differs from licensed counseling. Veterans Career Advisors seek to establish a strong rapport and relationship with the veterans they serve, to provide the best services possible to help them reach their employment goals.

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest comply with the Jobs for Veterans Act by giving veterans and eligible spouses priority of service status for all programs and services.

### **Veteran Engagement Team of Southwest Michigan**

The Veteran Engagement Team of Southwest Michigan (VETSWM) formerly known as Region 8 Veteran Community Action Team (R8VCAT) includes representatives from federal, state, local and faith-based organizations that support veterans in the communities where they live and work. The Veterans Engagement Team focuses on identifying solutions for gaps in veteran services, reducing duplication of efforts and simplifying connections with local resources. This community-based system of care allows networks of service providers to employ best practices, share information and tools and connect more quickly with veterans. BCVB

Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to develop this partnership and assist in this collaborative approach to assisting veterans in Southwest Michigan.

### **Offender Success**

The mission of Offender Success, funded through the Michigan Department of Corrections, is to enhance public safety by reducing offender recidivism through a seamless plan of services and supervision, delivered through state and local collaboration. The plan developed with each returning citizen begins at the time of his or her entry into the prison system through parole and reintegration into the community. Positive reentry of individuals in Region 8 will rely on cross-county collaboration and leveraging of resources to guarantee employment placement and successful transition back into the communities throughout the region.

Offender Success is operated by BCVB Michigan Works! in Region 8. In partnership, Michigan Works! Southwest staff attend the Transition Team meetings in Kalamazoo and Calhoun counties to provide job leads, workshop schedules, and information on other workforce development resources provided in the Michigan Works! Southwest area.

### **Other Regional Partnerships**

By developing positive and cooperative relationships with state agencies, at the local level, such as the Unemployment Insurance Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan Rehabilitative Services, the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, the Department of Education, and others, BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest strive to serve business customers and job seekers through unduplicated, coordinated services. BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest work collaboratively with the following agencies throughout Region 8 with a goal of inclusion and universal access:

- **Disability Network of Southwest Michigan** is an organization dedicated to educating and connecting people with disabilities to resources while advocating for social change. The vision of the organization is a community that values disability as human diversity, free of attitudinal barriers, where all people benefit with full access and inclusion. They educate and connect people with disabilities to resources while advocating social change. Their goal is to help foster a community where people with disabilities are able to participate fully in everyday life with equal opportunities and self-determination. They also assist organizations, businesses, and government agencies to understand their rights and responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). They provide workshops and onsite training, technical assistance and support in learning to be welcoming of people with disabilities as customers, clients, patrons, volunteers, or employees. Their goal as a disability rights advocate is to protect the civil and human rights of individuals with disabilities, and make sure that the laws put in place to protect them are vigorously enforced.
- **Michigan Rehabilitation Services** is a statewide agency that works with individuals and employers to achieve quality employment outcomes and independence for individuals with disabilities. The organization provides vocational counseling, including assessment; job training; supportive services; job placement; restoration after injury or

loss; employer supports; and accommodations to address barriers to employment.

- **Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP)** is an organization committed to providing opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired to achieve employability and/or function independently in society. In addition, the BSBP Training Centers (one of which is located in Kalamazoo County) provides training and services to blind and visually impaired residents of the state of Michigan and elsewhere. The Training Center staff believe in the capabilities of individuals who are blind to participate in every activity of daily living.
- **Job Accommodation Network** is an organization that provides free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and the Americans with Disabilities Act legislation to individuals and employers.
- **AARP** is the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). As the nation's oldest program to help low-income, unemployed individuals aged 55+ find work, AARP matches eligible older job seekers with local nonprofits and public agencies so they can increase skills and build self-confidence, while earning a modest income. Based on their employment interests and goals, participants may also receive supportive services and skills training through an educational institution.
- **VET Employment/Education Committee** of the Veteran Engagement Team of Southwest Michigan, highlighted above, also provides resources throughout the region.

#### 4. Sector Initiatives

##### Regional Priorities and Collaboration

In Region 8, an industry cluster approach is utilized to guide collaborations and priorities. Per the State of Michigan, “a cluster is a geographic concentration of related employers, industry suppliers, and support institutions in a product or service field. For the purposes of workforce development, Michigan's clusters are broad industry sectors. There is growing evidence that industry clusters are an effective organizing framework for positively impacting economic and workforce development activities.” In alignment with this definition, the State of Michigan has implemented the Michigan Industry Cluster Approach (MICA) throughout the workforce system and has identified Agriculture, Energy, Health Care, Information Technology & Media, and Manufacturing as five priority clusters.

##### Current Sector Based Partnerships and Business Involvement

Currently, robust consortium groups in Manufacturing and Healthcare exist in Region 8. Throughout the region, these existing consortium groups are active in the following ways:

- Engagement in employer group and individual employer Going PRO Talent Fund applications;
- Participation in joint career fairs and other events to assist job seekers and employers;
- Collective identification of needs and challenges of their specific industry;
- Developing and enhancing connections between job seekers with employers; and
- General information and resource sharing.

Members of the consortium group are reflective of Region 8, and include partners in:

- Education and training,

- Economic development,
- Community resources,
- Workforce development and
- Employers.

Maintaining strong employer involvement in the consortiums is critical to the groups continuing to serve as change agents throughout the region and, as such, has been the foundation on which the groups were built. The diverse and strategic membership of each consortium provides expertise and understanding of the specific industries, guiding each consortia's collective efforts.

### **Southwest Michigan Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium**

The Southwest Michigan Advanced Manufacturing Career Consortium uses a locally developed, innovative and integrated model to attract, screen, and train qualified candidates for current and future advanced manufacturing career opportunities. Local manufacturers and service providers have been meeting since 2011. The group of over 180 manufacturing companies and community organizations convenes quarterly to discuss and develop innovative and integrated strategies to address this crucial issue, including on-the-job training, apprenticeships, career advancement, and payment of education.

The consortium meets to engage in dynamic conversations to identify issues they, as employers, collectively face, share best practices, pool resources, create unified messaging to promote manufacturing and the skilled trades, and develop a stronger combined voice, representative of the manufacturing sector as a whole.

Listed below are some of the innovative approaches in conjunction with training institutions that have been implemented to address the needs:

- Glen Oaks Community College (GOCC) Business and Industry Training;
- Kellogg Community College (KCC) Regional Manufacturing Technology Center (RMTC);
- Kellogg iACT programs;
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) CNC Operator Academy; and
- KVCC Mechatronic Technician Academy.

### **Southwest Michigan Healthcare Consortium**

The Southwest Healthcare Consortium, an employer-led collaborative, which began meeting in 2012, is a partnership and collaboration between healthcare providers, workforce development, education, and economic development throughout the counties of Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, Calhoun, and Branch. The Consortium is inclusive of representatives from a variety of healthcare providers, including hospitals and acute care facilities, long-term care facilities, short-term care facilities, assisted living, and in-home care providers.

The focus of the Southwest Michigan Healthcare Consortium is to develop healthcare industry-based partnerships that promote the economic health and welfare of the areas' businesses and workers.

While developing strategies to support the local healthcare ecosystem, the consortium also works to identify and help resolve issues that are important to the strength of area healthcare businesses and support the long-term health and growth of existing and future companies. This four-county group promotes regional activities to address healthcare worker shortages, skill shortages, training mismatches, and employee recruitment, retention, and organizational design issues that are common across this geographic area.

Today, the Consortium is made up of staff with a high degree of decision-making power or influence within their healthcare-based company, and the employer partners are critical to the success of the Consortium and the targeted outcomes. The employers set the agenda for quarterly meetings, during which employers participate in industry specific conversations and share their ideas, challenges, and solutions to assist each other in addressing the current challenges facing the healthcare industry while creating an extensive network for the identified employers and partners.

Members of the Southwest Michigan Healthcare Consortium support one another and the local economy through:

- Sharing best practices in a forum that includes healthcare employers and partners representing workforce development, education, and economic development;
- Planning and holding career fairs to assist with meeting current employer needs;
- Developing and maintaining a database of current healthcare providers within the Michigan Works! Southwest area; and
- Conducting periodic needs surveys and sharing the results.

The group continues to grow throughout the region while streamlining their work and enhancing the industry throughout Region 8.

### **Regional Career Fairs**

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest will strive to work with employers throughout Region 8 on the planning, implementation and facilitation of career fairs across the region, as appropriate, as has been done in the past.

A nontraditional career fair model, which includes pre-event preparation sessions for job seekers, has been utilized in the past in order to assist in preparing the best possible job seekers for the employers. These preparation events include, but not limited to:

- Resume review by Michigan Works! staff or employer representatives for job seeker planning to attend the career fair,
- Mock interviews facilitated by Michigan Works! staff or employers prior to the event,
- Employability skill building workshop opportunities, and
- Employer panel information sharing/question and answer opportunities.

This nontraditional career fair model will be explored for implementation in the upcoming years.

Opportunities for regional virtual career fairs will also be explored in the near future to address the needs of job seekers and employers across the area, in a safe and effective manner.

## **Employer Surveys**

An additional regional strategy to focus on gathering information from employers and sharing the gathered information with employers will be a focus through the implementation of this plan. This was recently piloted through gathering COVID-19 response information from employers, and as a result of the success, future survey tools are being explored.

### **5. Administrative Cost Requirements**

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works Southwest leadership teams analyze performance and administrative requirements of regional funds to ensure that all distributions comply with state policy on an annual basis and upon receiving regionally allocated funds from the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity. Upon completion of this analysis, administrative cost arrangements for the region are determined by the leadership teams of both organizations for the specific year or funding stream. As appropriate, a MOU or agreement, will be completed, agreed upon and signed by the directors of both Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8, clearly stating the cost sharing requirements for that year or that funding stream.

### **6. Transportation and Supportive Service Coordination**

As with all continuous improvement processes, there is opportunity to improve and enhance transportation and supportive services throughout Region 8. Michigan Works! Southwest and BCVB MICHIGAN WORKS! are committed to working on the potential breaking down of county line restrictions and barriers of service area alignment by county. These efforts will continue to be prioritized throughout the life of this plan in order to meet the needs of employers and job seekers.

#### **Transportation**

With the guidance and assistance of Michigan Works! Southwest and BCVB Michigan Works!, public transportation throughout the area has begun the work on ways to break down the geographic barriers of county lines. Trial projects for transporting job seekers and incumbent workers across county lines through meeting points at county lines to job search and maintain employment, have been completed and continue to be used.

Michigan Works! Southwest and BCVB Michigan Works! will continue to work with existing community and private transportation partners to explore additional options of cross regional transportation. The current list of partners and strategies includes:

- Transportation Partners:
  - Battle Creek Area Transit
  - Berrien County Public Transportation
  - Branch Area Transit Authority, Inc.
  - Cass County Transit
  - Kalamazoo Metro Transit

- Marshall Albion Transit Authority
- Private for-profit and non-profit transportation providers
- Saint Joseph County Transit Authority
- Van Buren Public Transit
- Strategic Partners:
  - Michigan Great Southwest
  - Southwest Michigan Planning Commission
  - Strategic Leadership Council
- Strategy:
  - Exploration of Ride Share Apps

### **Supportive Services**

Federal and state policy guidelines often restrict the use of supportive services; thus, in order to improve and promote the coordination of supportive service delivery in Region 8, it is imperative that administrative and subrecipient/service provider staff continuously analyze supportive services to enhance and improve the coordination across the geographic area in order to best serve individuals seeking employment and/or employment retention. Staff have strong relationships with many of the service providers and will strive to enhance not only the existing relationships, but will work to build new ones, through active communication and participation in county-wide networks to assist in guiding, as well as leading, future coordination of transportation and supportive service delivery across the region.

Potential partners could include, but are not limited to:

- 211
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Area Agency on Aging and Commission on Aging
- Burma Center
- Branch County Community Network
- Centro De Ayuda
- Centro Vida
- Childcare Resources
- Community Action Agency
- The Coordinating Council of Calhoun County
- County Land Banks
- Disability Network of Southwestern Michigan
- Employer Resource Networks®
- Food Pantries
- Free Stores
- Goodwill Industries of Central Michigan's Heartland
- Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan
- Habitat for Humanity
- Healthcare and Dental Agencies that provide services for the uninsured

- Housing Resources, Inc. and other agencies that assist with housing needs
- Keystone Place
- Legal Aid
- Literacy organizations
- Meals on Wheels
- Mental health & counseling agencies
- Michigan United
- Neighborhood programs
- Salvation Army
- Senior Services
- Southwest Michigan Community Development Corporation
- St. Joseph County Human Services Commission
- Telamon
- United Way organizations within the area
- Veterans Services and other organizations that serve veterans
- Voces of Battle Creek
- Youth Opportunities Unlimited

Staff from both BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest are active within their respective counties, as well as across the region, with support service providers and transportation entities to assist in guiding, as well as leading, future coordination of transportation and supportive service delivery across the region.

## **7. Collaboration**

Due to the demand-driven model, as discussed, requiring the workforce development system to place business as the primary customer, BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest strive to be one stop shops within their given counties, as well as in the region as a whole, to assist prospective employer, clients and existing customers with business development services through an integrated business retention and attraction program. In order to be successful, it is critical that a coordinated partnership with economic development services and providers within the region remain a priority.

### **Partnerships**

Both Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 have established relationships with local area community colleges, economic development organizations, planning commissions as well as the MEDC and LEO, and strive to enhance service delivery.

In order to ensure regional collaboration and success of employers and industry in Region 8, partner meetings to discuss best practices, current projects and review available resources are held regularly in the form of project specific meetings or through the work of the industry specific consortiums active in Region 8.

## Economic Development

Current economic development organizations engaged in regional planning, include:

- Southwest Michigan First
  - Southwest Michigan First covers Region 8 in its' entirety. The organization and their team are passionate about creating jobs and cultivating a strong economy in Southwest Michigan. Per their website, Southwest Michigan First was created for one singular purpose: To assist companies in growing jobs. Southwest Michigan First focuses their activities on services and collaborations that promote business growth, including but not limited to, business-to-business marketing, supply chain recruitment, workforce development, capital acquisition, site selection, consulting services, brand development, and efficient government.
  - Michigan Works! Agencies throughout Region 8 are actively involved in the regional planning meetings, spearheaded by Southwest Michigan First, and plan to continue to do so as the region prioritizes economic development in all counties.

In addition to collaborating with Southwest Michigan First, partnerships have also been developed with the following economic development organizations:

- Albion Economic Development Corporation,
- Battle Creek Unlimited,
- Branch County Economic Growth Alliance,
- Cornerstone Alliance,
- Marshall Area Economic Development Alliance,
- Southwest Michigan Economic Growth Alliance, and
- Market Van Buren.

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) is also a critical partner in Region 8 in offering business assistance services and capital programs for business attraction and acceleration.

## Training and Education

Education and training providers currently involved with economic development that assist with regional planning include, but are not limited to:

- Berrien Regional Educational Services Agency
- Branch County Intermediate School District
- Calhoun County Intermediate School District
- Cornerstone University
- Davenport University
- Glen Oaks Community College
- Kalamazoo Regional Educational Services Agency

- Kalamazoo Valley Community College
- Kellogg Community College
- Lake Michigan College
- Lewis Cass Intermediate School District
- Michigan Career Technical Institute
- Procurement Technical Assistance Center
- Saint Joseph County Intermediate School District
- Southwestern Michigan College
- The Center/MMTC
- Van Buren Intermediate School District
- Western Michigan University
- Other:
  - CTE Programs throughout the region
  - Early Middle College programs throughout the region

In addition, Michigan Training Connect, housed within the Pure Michigan Talent Connect system, will be used throughout Region 8 to provide job seekers with the tools they need to select a training program to become employed in a high demand job industry.

Information gained from employers, in partnership with the identified economic developers, industry consortiums, and training institutions will remain a critical tool in creating and implementing needed trainings based on the demands of the industries in Region 8.

## **Employers**

There are hundreds of businesses currently involved with BCVB Michigan Works!, Michigan Works! Southwest, the identified economic development organizations and the identified training organizations, including numerous businesses from emerging sectors/industries.

One primary focus in working across the region with employers and training institutions will be the use of apprenticeships. Apprenticeship programs combine classroom experience with hands on training, providing the opportunity for individuals to earn a paycheck and receive debt free education while learning the skills they need to be successful in a career. An Apprenticeship combines classroom studies with extensive on-the-job training under the supervision of a professional. The region's Business Services staff and the Apprenticeship Success Coordinators will collaborate, as appropriate and connect businesses to a pathway of 'growing their own' talent through a USDOL Registered Apprenticeship. Region 8 staff will also focus on nontraditional apprenticeships to meet employer needs, as appropriate.

## **Going PRO Talent Fund**

The State sees collaboration between Michigan Works! Agencies, economic development and education as essential in achieving demand-driven training that addresses talent shortages. BCVB

Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest share this vision and work together to coordinate and maximize Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) benefits for Region 8 by working together to meet the needs of our employers. The GPTF focuses on assisting companies in meeting their talent challenges through the provision of competitive awards for employer responsive training that enhances talent, productivity, and employment retention while increasing the quality and competitiveness of Michigan's businesses.

As both of these Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 spearhead the GPTF every year, collaboration amongst the two organizations, training institutions across the region and regional economic development partners is critical to the success of this opportunity for employers in Southwest Michigan.

Per the GPTF Dashboard, employers in Region 8 were awarded:

- 15 awards for fiscal year 2016 totaling \$678,263,
- 41 awards for fiscal year 2017 totaling \$886,091, and
- 80 awards for fiscal year 2018 totaling \$3,057,311
- 102 awards for fiscal year 2019 totaling \$4,319,879

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest plan to continue to work collaboratively to assist Southwest Michigan employers in achieving this opportunity.

## **Other**

The Southwest Michigan Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) provides services in all seven counties in Region 8 and assists businesses who wish to sell products and services to the federal, state, and local governments. PTAC services are offered at no charge and include the following:

- **Training Events:** PTAC hosts training seminars and networking events to assist businesses in Region 8 in learning more about government procurement topics.
- **Bid Match:** A customized search is created for each client to identify federal, state, and local government bid opportunities. Over 2,000 websites are explored each day.
- **Custom Market Research:** PTAC researches what, when, how, quantity, and frequency of government buys of the client's products/services. Competitor's government history is also researched. A custom marketing strategy is designed to meet the needs of each client.
- **Government Registrations:** Assistance is offered to complete the federal government's System for Award Management (SAM) and other registrations.
- **Subcontracting Assistance:** PTAC helps clients identify subcontracting opportunities with government prime contractors.

## **8. Regional Performance Goals**

Per the WIOA Unified State Plan, "the WIOA performance measures serve as indicators to track progress toward meeting the state's goals and vision for the workforce investment system. The state uses the performance accountability system to assess the effectiveness of local areas in achieving continuous improvement of workforce investment activities in order to optimize the return on

investment of WIOA funds.”

Both WIOA and Wagner-Peyser performance data is tracked in the One Stop Management Information System (OSMIS). The State Plan also describes that reports detailing performance on all performance measures are published quarterly for all local areas. These reports allow the state and local areas to monitor performance outcomes in order to establish trends and identify measures requiring corrective action, as well as track WIOA performance measures which serve as indicators to track progress toward meeting the state’s goal and vision for the workforce investment system. Both BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest monitor local performance for the individual area, as outlined in the individual local plans.

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest worked to meet the local area negotiated performance measures for PY2016, and all subsequent years, and is currently anticipating the opportunity to negotiate performance measures for PY2020, with the State of Michigan. If necessary, leadership staff across the two Michigan Works! agencies will analyze performance requirements and collectively negotiate to reach agreement on local levels of performance for the performance accountability measures outlined in the WIOA Section 116, including meeting the measures identified in the State of Michigan Unified Plan.