



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

# Setting the strategic direction of workforce planning for West Michigan

## LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

**Frank Garcia, Chair**  
Ottawa County Commissioner

**Senita Leneer, Vice-Chair**  
City of Grand Rapids Commissioner

Roger Bergman  
Chair, Ottawa County Commissioner

Mark De Young  
Allegan County Commissioner

Ben Geiger  
Barry County Commissioner

Melissa LaGrand  
Kent County Commissioner

Malinda Pego  
Muskegon County Commissioner

Kurt Reppart  
City of Grand Rapids Commissioner

Bob Scolnik  
Chair, Muskegon County Commissioner

Stan Stek  
Vice-Chair, Kent County Commissioner

Jim Storey  
Chair, Allegan County Commissioner

Ron Baker  
Montcalm County Commissioner

Larry Tiejema  
Ionia County Commissioner

Robert Womack  
Kent County Commissioner

## WORKFORCE BOARD

**Mark Bergsma, Chair**  
Berends Hendricks Stuit

**Heather G. Daniel, Vice-Chair**  
Haworth

Jessica Babcock  
Suburban Inns (service ended Oct 2021)

Nora Balgoyen  
ITC Holdings, Inc

Ryan Bennett  
West MI Plumbers and Fitters

Randy Boss  
Ottawa Kent Insurance

Norm Brady  
Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.  
West Michigan Chapter

Kenyatta Brame  
Cascade Engineering

Cindy Brown  
The Right Place

John Buchan  
NN, Inc Mobile Solutions|Autocam

Tonia Castillo  
Ottawa Area ISD

Jordan Clark  
Meijer, Inc.

Mandy Cooper  
Lakeshore Advantage

Cathy Cronick  
Michigan Rehabilitation Services

Paul David  
Fleis & Vandenbrink

Jay Dunwell  
Wolverine Coil Spring

Jim Edmonson (service ended Dec 2021)  
Muskegon Area First

Jim Fisher  
Second Act, LLC

Kristin Garris  
Goodwill Industries of West Michigan

Kiesha Guy  
Goodwill Industries of WM (service ended July 2021)

Jennifer Heinzman  
Barry County Chamber of Commerce & Economic Development

Mike Helsel  
Ventra/Flex-n-gate

Rebecca Herrington  
Perrigo

Jon Hofman  
Holland Board of Public Works

David Kitchen  
West Michigan Electrical JATC

Shana Lewis  
Mercy Health

Scott McLean  
Spectrum Ventures, LLC

Dr. Bill Pink  
Grand Rapids Community College

Valorie Putnam  
Ottawa Area ISD (service ended Oct 2021)

Dan Rinsema-Sybenga  
Muskegon Community College

Michelle Seigo  
Department of Health & Human Services  
Ionia/Montcalm

Samantha Semrau  
Kendrick Plastics

Dave Smith  
The Employers' Association

Dan TenHoopen  
Heart of West Michigan United Way  
Labor Liaison - AFL-CIO

Mark Thomas  
Northview Public Schools

Darryl Todd  
DTE (service ended July 2021)

Patricia VerDuin  
Mija Leadership Coaching (service ended 10/31/21)

Sherry White  
Hines Corp (service ended Oct 2021)

Stacy Young  
Montcalm Community College

**STAFF**  
Jacob Maas, CEO  
Angie Barksdale, COO  
Brenda Isenhardt, CFO (retired July 2021)  
Bob Perkins, CFO

## LETTER FROM THE BOARD

2021 introduced a term we hadn't heard before — The Great Resignation, an informal name for the widespread trend of significant numbers of workers leaving their jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was another year for flexibility and adaptability, but it also required us to dig deep into depleted stores of energy, optimism and resources as we continued to deal with the stress of the pandemic and the realization that we're not at the end of this long, protracted recovery. We are happy to report: West Michigan Works! rose to the challenge.

At the beginning of the year, we launched our first ever unemployment survey. Conducted by the Calvin University Center for Social Research, the study was designed to help workforce development teams and employers better understand the effects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the West Michigan job market and workforce. The survey confirmed what we already knew – it's complicated. There are many factors contributing to today's labor market challenges and there will be no magic pill to ease the pain, but the survey gave us important insights that will inform our work to reengage the region's workforce.

In March, we wrapped up our assistance with individuals who were struggling to access their unemployment benefits. Since Spring 2020, we have been able to assist thousands of individuals across our region. After quickly shifting to virtual programs and workshops, our talent and youth solutions teams are now equipped to offer both in-person and virtual services, meeting job seekers wherever they are on their career journey. West Michigan Works! service centers were redesigned to provide a safe environment for individuals to access services in person.

The past year provided opportunities to advocate for legislation affecting workforce services. In September, the governor signed a budget that included record funding for the Going PRO Talent Fund. Our business solutions staff submitted a record number of applications on behalf of West Michigan employers. The workforce system also fought hard to bring back the mandatory meeting between unemployment claimants and Michigan Works! Agencies. For many, this automatic connection is the only opportunity to learn about our

services and is a critical step to meeting employers' talent needs. We are grateful to our legislators for their willingness to listen and respond.

2021 saw the formation of our fifth industry talent council, the Construction Careers Council. These councils provided much-needed opportunities for employers to collaborate on a wide range of talent issues. Our apprenticeship programs continued to grow; we added two new positions to coordinate and expand our apprenticeship offerings.

We are pleased to share this report containing a summary of our primary activities and some of our major accomplishments in the 2021 program year (ending September 30). We acknowledge that the accomplishments cited are not ours alone – we share our successes with our partners and thank them for their continued support.

Sincerely,

Mark Bergsma, Workforce Board Chair  
Frank Garcia, Chief Elected Official  
Jacob Maas, Chief Executive Officer



# About West Michigan Works!

West Michigan Works! is committed to creating a **diverse and qualified** workforce for West Michigan.

West Michigan Works! is one of sixteen agencies within Michigan's workforce development system. Having created the first integrated system in the country, Michigan has long been a leader among the nation's workforce systems.

### PRINCIPLES

We rely on labor market data and input from employers and industry talent councils to identify common skill gaps, training needs and industry trends. Regional collaboration and problem-solving address talent, curriculum and advocacy issues on a broader level, resulting in a larger skilled labor pool and increased job placements.

### DEMOGRAPHICS

West Michigan Works! serves employers and job seekers in Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Montcalm, Muskegon and Ottawa counties. The region has a population base of 1.5 million and includes the city of Grand Rapids, the second largest city in the state. It is home to several economic development agencies and a strong network of educational institutions: seven ISDs, three community colleges and 11 colleges and universities.

# Financial Summary

West Michigan Works! (WMW!) operated 59 programs under 80 grants during the year ending September 30, 2021. Each grant dictated the population to be served, how the funding could be used and the time frame in which the funding needed to be spent.

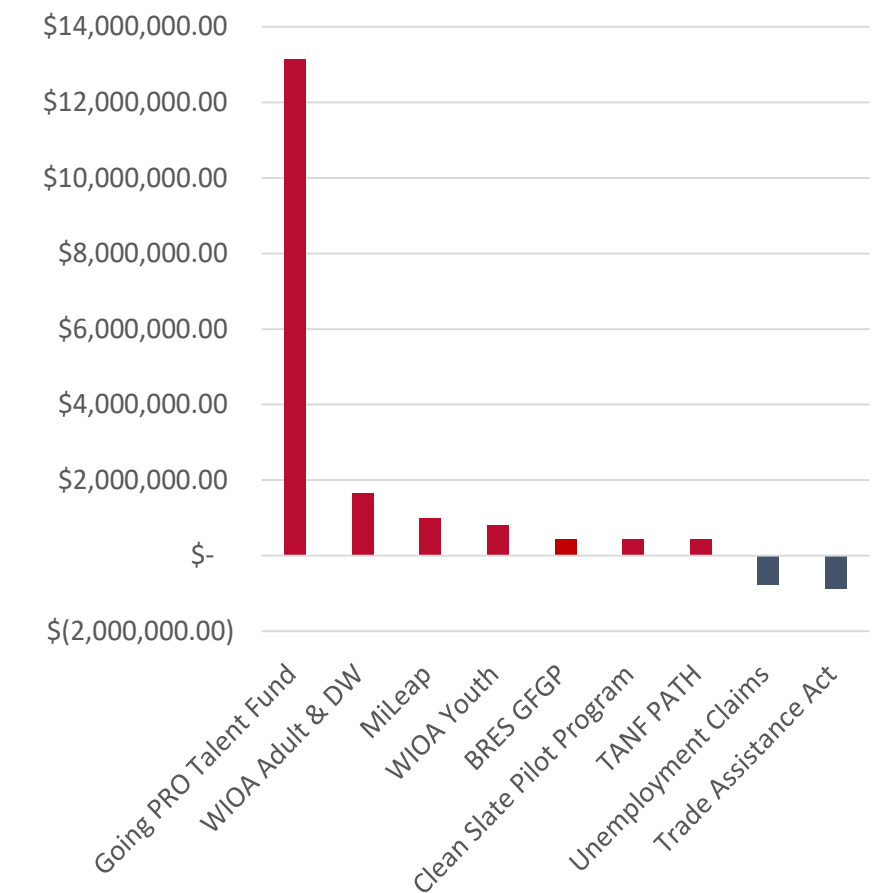
WMW! was awarded \$38,515,525 during the year ending September 30, 2021, an increase of \$17,313,997 over the previous year. During this time period we utilized \$25,561,538 of new and carried over awards.

### SIGNIFICANT INCREASES/DECREASES IN FUNDING

The Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) was awarded during the year ending September 30, 2021. These funds were not available in the previous year due to redirection of funds to COVID-19 relief.

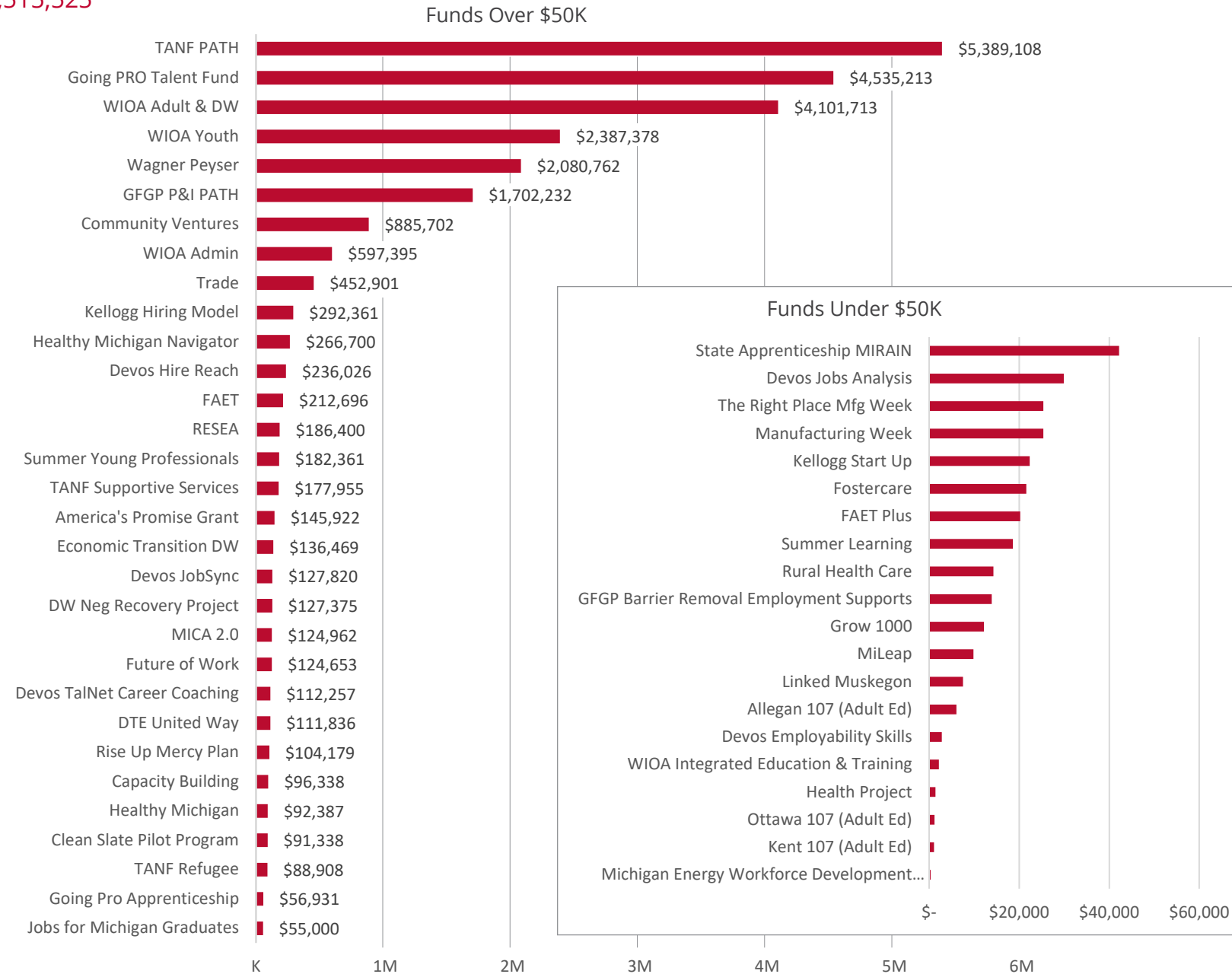
MiLeap (Michigan Learning & Education Advancement Program), BRES (Barrier Removal Employment Supports) GFGP (General Fund General Purpose) and Clean Slate Pilot Program are new this year. WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, and PATH saw significant increases in funding. Unemployment Insurance Claims, awarded in support of last year's efforts assisting claimants, was not awarded this year.

SIGNIFICANT INCREASES/DECREASES IN AWARDS BY PROGRAM (+/- \$400,000)



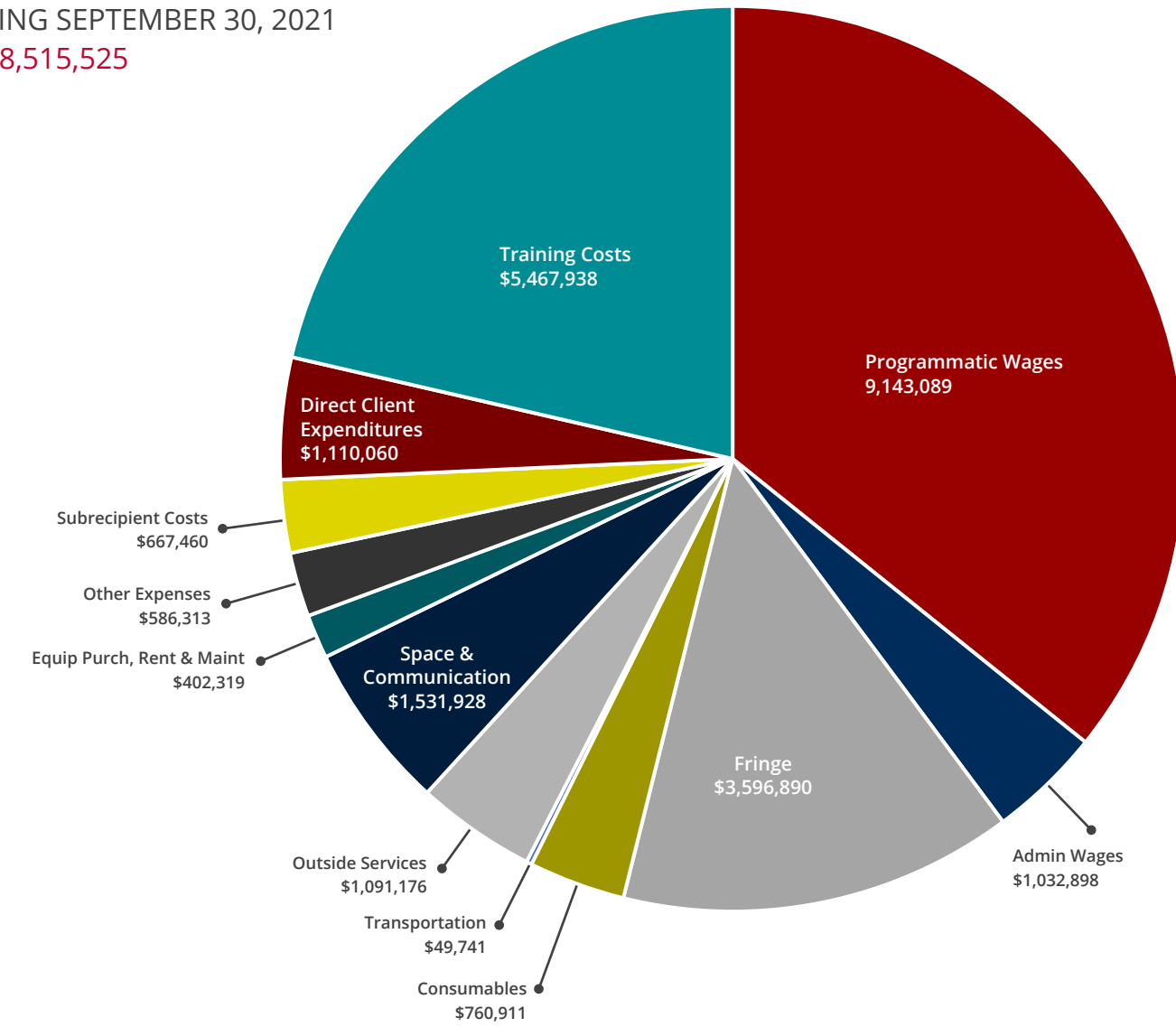
EARNED INCOME BY PROGRAM FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

TOTAL: \$38,515,525



EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY FOR THE YEAR ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, 2021

TOTAL: \$38,515,525



# 2021 at a glance

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the way we interact with and serve our community. It has challenged us all to do things in a new way, to have new ideas about how things can be done. West Michigan Works! responded to employer and job seeker needs with a mix of virtual and in-person services.

## 50,215

Job Seekers Served

## 3,067

Employers Served

## 8,080

Jobs Filled

## \$418 Million

Wages Earned\*

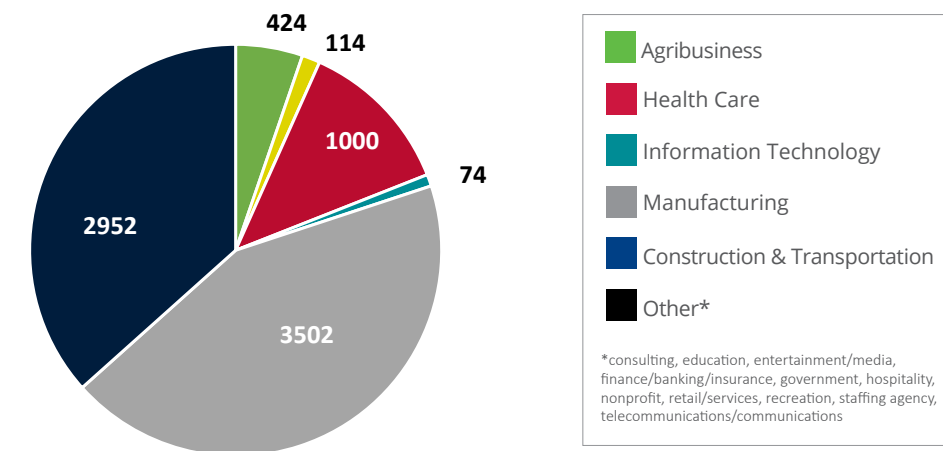
\*Total wages earned by individuals going through the West Michigan Works! system.

Source: State of Michigan Workforce Development, Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity

### TRAINING COMPLETED BY INDUSTRY

	New Hire	Classroom	Apprenticeship	Credentials Earned
Agribusiness	0	0	0	0
Construction	55	127	1	109
Health Care	8	202	0	93
Information Technology	31	7	0	4
Manufacturing	177	15	0	5
Other	179	32	2	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>226</b>

### JOBS FILLED BY INDUSTRY



■ Agribusiness  
■ Health Care  
■ Information Technology  
■ Manufacturing  
■ Construction & Transportation  
■ Other\*  
\*consulting, education, entertainment/media, finance/banking/insurance, government, hospitality, nonprofit, retail/services, recreation, staffing agency, telecommunications/communications

### CAREER AWARENESS EVENTS

#### ■ MICAREERQUEST (virtual)

11,099 Students Registered      89 Schools      72 Employers      60 Exhibits      126 Occupations

#### ■ DISCOVER MANUFACTURING WEEK (virtual and in-person)

5,453 Students      63 Schools      63 Manufacturers

#### ■ TALENT TOURS

4,110 Students      85 Teachers      10 Events      159 Employers

### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIPS

West Michigan Works! currently holds the sponsorship for 22 U.S. Department of Labor registered apprenticeship programs.

	Adv Manufacturing	Construction	Health Care	IT
Active Apprentices	58	14	33	1
Completed Apprenticeships	40	20	131	4
Employers	43	10	8	6



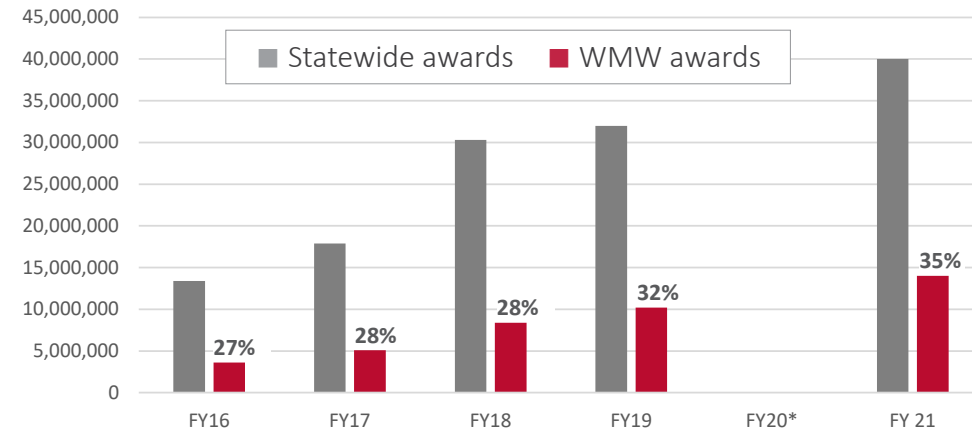
Discover Manufacturing Tour: Artiflex



Discover Manufacturing Tour: Wolverine Coil Spring Co.

# 2021 at a glance (continued)

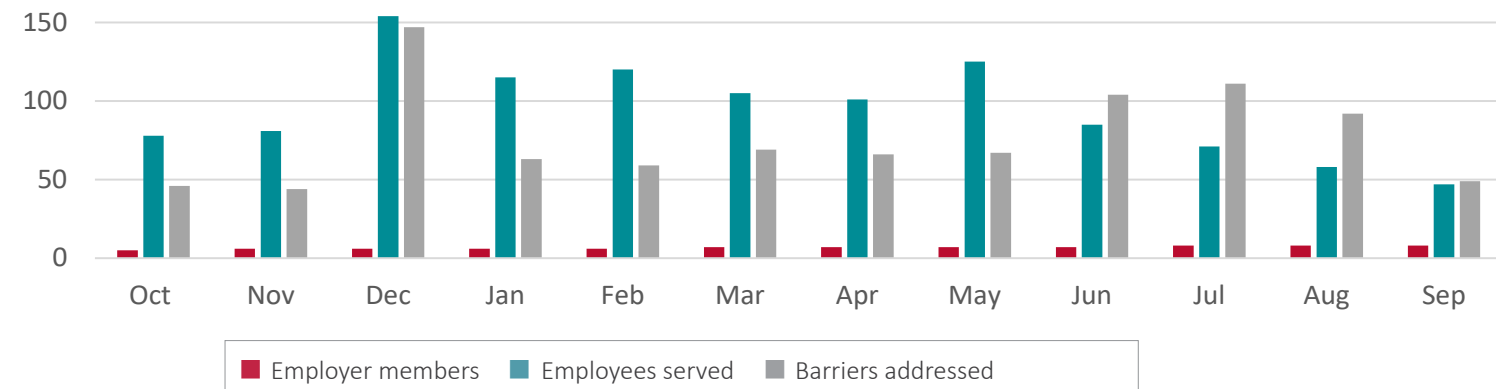
## GOING PRO TALENT FUND



For FY 2022, West Michigan Works! submitted 379 applications on behalf of its employers with requests totaling \$18.7 million.

\*Going PRO Talent Fund was not included in the state's 2020 budget; funds were needed for pandemic relief.

## RETENTION SOLUTIONS



## Regional collaboration is essential to addressing current & future talent needs.

West Michigan's high-demand industries — advanced manufacturing, agribusiness, construction, health care and information technology — continued to experience growth and higher than usual turnover and unmet demand for labor in 2021. The following employer-led industry talent councils worked with key workforce and education/training partners to address talent shortages, increase worker retention and engage youth. Here are a few highlights from 2021:

### DISCOVER MANUFACTURING™

- Discover Manufacturing hosted virtual and in-person events for Discover Manufacturing Week with 5,453 registered students, 63 manufacturers, 63 schools.
- The council awarded five \$500 scholarships to high school students pursuing post secondary training in a manufacturing-related career.
- The Adopt-a-School initiative, a partnership project with Talent 2025 to involve manufacturers in local schools, adopted eleven schools.



- The Construction Career Council, established in May 2021, created its mission statement, strategies, and brand.
- The council funded field leadership training for 16 individuals.

### wmihealthcareers

- The West Michigan Health Careers Council offered three free sessions of implicit bias training to health care workers in the region. Over 50 individuals from 27 health care organizations participated.
- The council funded community health worker training for 13 individuals.



- The Agribusiness Talent Council held an agribusiness job fair in partnership with Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. 36 job seekers attended.
- The council provided customized leadership training for 18 first-line supervisors.



- West Michigan Tech Talent (WMTT) held an ITs Happening event; six employers and 37 tech professionals registered to attend.
- The council provided an Hour of Code experience for over 2,400 youth.

# 2021 Talent Survey

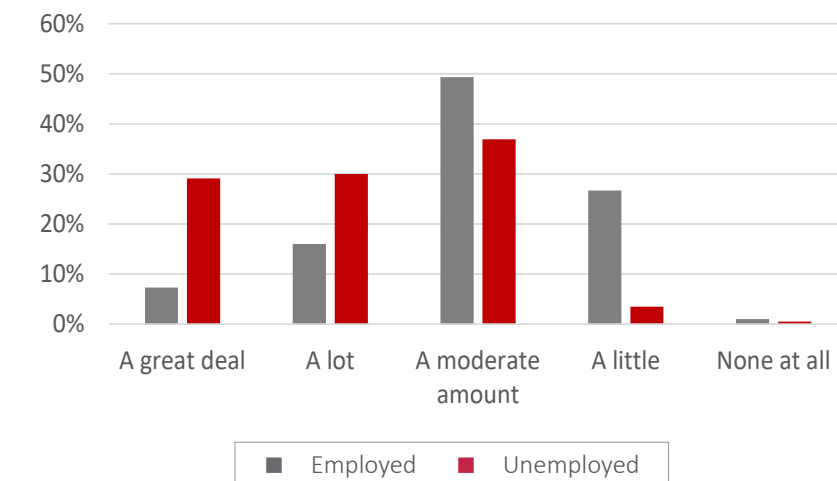
West Michigan Works! contracted the Center for Social Research at Calvin University to conduct a survey to help workforce development teams and employers better understand the current state of the job market and workforce pool in Michigan. The results provided valuable information about how we — workforce agencies, employers, community partners — can best prepare individuals to return to work.

The survey was distributed to 10,000 individuals, 806 responses were received. Here are some of the key findings from the survey.



**JOB SEEKERS ARE ACTIVELY LOOKING FOR WORK, WITH LITTLE SUCCESS.**

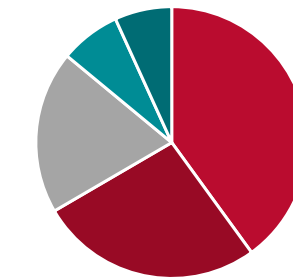
*How much effort are you able to dedicate toward finding work?*



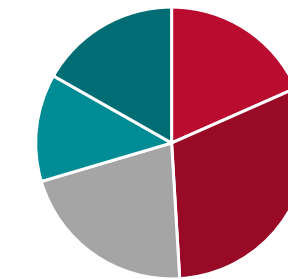
**GAPS IN EXPECTATIONS FOR WAGES AND EXPERIENCE POSE THE BIGGEST BARRIERS. AMONG RESPONDANTS WITH CHILDREN, CHILDCARE AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES WERE IDENTIFIED AS BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT.**

*To what extent do you agree that each of the following is a barrier to finding work?*

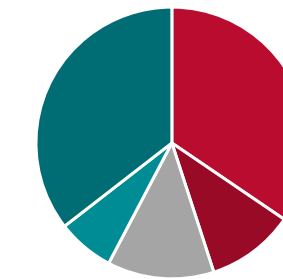
Potential wages aren't enough.



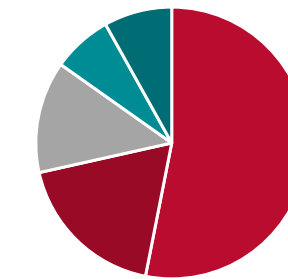
My skills don't meet available jobs.



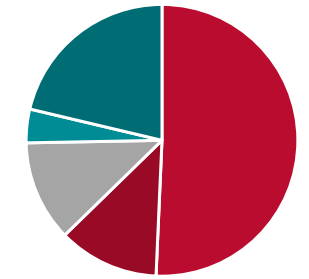
Difficult to pay for childcare.\*



Difficult to find childcare.\*



I have to provide transportation for my children to and from school.\*



\*These statements were shown only to respondents who indicated they have children.

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Neither agree nor disagree ■ Somewhat disagree ■ Strongly disagree



**OLDER WORKERS (55+) ARE HAVING THE MOST DIFFICULTY FINDING WORK.**

Almost half of survey respondents indicated they were 55 years or older. Many of these respondents indicated frustration that despite their experience and qualifications, they were being overlooked for positions that suited them. Lower potential wages and benefits were of great concern to this age group.



## 2021 Employer of the Year

West Michigan Works! recognizes Dykhuis Farms as its 2021 Employer of the Year for its commitment to workforce strategies that increase the skills, wages, and retention of current employees and builds a workforce for the future.

One of Dykhuis Farms' core values includes providing opportunities for their employees to learn, grow, and take on responsibility.

They are currently implementing a leadership training program for all supervisors within the organization to grow stronger leaders and to support career growth and retention. They were unable to submit for a training grant due to time and staffing demands, so they are prioritizing Dykhuis dollars to fund the training. This speaks to their strong commitment to growing and supporting their employees.

Despite the recruitment challenges of the current labor market, Dykhuis is committed to hiring local employees and providing on-the-job training to create

their own skilled workforce. In September 2021 Dykhuis requested a labor market analysis from WMW! to better understand how wages might be affecting their recruitment efforts.

Dykhuis provides a wide range of career opportunities to grow within the organization. Team members have started as part-time animal caretakers and grown through career coaching to serve as assistant farm manager. They are committed to growing their talent through training and promotion from within.



CNA program graduates

## 2021 Partner of the Year

West Michigan Works! recognizes Plainwell Adult Education as their 2021 Partner of the Year for being innovative, creative, and relentless in providing quality adult education services to residents of Barry County.

Plainwell Adult Education has been a strong partner of West Michigan Works! for many years. In recent years, the partnership has expanded to include the Community Action Agency of South Central Michigan (CAASCM). The services this partnership is able to provide to the Barry County community is invaluable and includes:

- GED and high school completion instructional services.
- On-site instructional services to Barry County jail inmates.

- Expanded, high-quality, onsite adult education instruction in the Barry County West Michigan Works! service center.

The effect these services have on the community is profound. In addition to adult education instruction, the partnership is able to provide community resources through CAASCM, impacting not only individuals, but whole families. We are proud to partner with Plainwell Adult Education and CAASCM and are grateful for their commitment to Barry County communities.



# Impact Awards

The City of Grand Rapids, Desiree Foster, HR Director  
 Doug and Maria DeVos Foundation  
 W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The City of Grand Rapids was in search of a new hiring system that would provide equal access to opportunity in employment, while reducing barriers that are often typical in a hiring process. With a strong commitment to fairness and diversity in selection, the city joined HireReach.

Many organizations face challenges transitioning to a competency-based hiring approach and the city was no exception. They needed to work alongside eight unions and a civil service commission, navigate the requirements of various labor agreements, and manage the challenges inherent in organizational change.

Through participation in HireReach, the City of Grand Rapids was able to successfully revamp their hiring process, transitioning from a complex, labor-intensive, ineffective process to a modern, stream-lined, science-based approach. This new hiring process has allowed the city to look at candidates holistically and as a result, candidates who might have been passed over with the previous hiring process are now being realized for their ability to do the job. The City of Grand Rapids is making better hiring decisions and providing employment opportunities for a broader, more diverse group of candidates.



## West Michigan Works! Service Centers

**Allegan County**  
 3255 122nd Ave  
 Allegan, MI 49010  
 (269) 686-5079

**Kent County**  
 121 Franklin SE  
 Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
 (616) 336-4040

215 Straight Ave NW  
 Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
 (616) 336-4460

10075 Northland Dr NE  
 Rockford, MI 49341  
 (616) 228-6724

**Barry County**  
 130 E State St  
 Hastings, MI 49058  
 (616) 649-9850

**Ionia County**  
 301 W Main St  
 Ionia, MI 48846  
 (616) 389-8525

**Montcalm County**  
 114 S Greenville W Dr  
 Greenville, MI 48838  
 (616) 754-3611

**Muskegon County**  
 316 Morris Ave  
 Muskegon, MI 49440  
 (231) 724-6381

**Ottawa County**  
 121 Clover St  
 Holland, MI 49423  
 (616) 396-2154



 [westmiworks.org](http://westmiworks.org)

 [facebook.com/westmiworks](https://facebook.com/westmiworks)

 [West Michigan Works! Business Solutions](https://www.linkedin.com/company/west-michigan-works)

West Michigan Works! is a division of ACSET, an equal opportunity employer/program and a proud partner of the American Job Center network. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. West Michigan Works! is supported by state and federal funds; more details at [westmiworks.org/about/](http://westmiworks.org/about/).

The Michigan Works! Impact Awards honor those who have built economic results by creating jobs and developing fresh talent in their communities.



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