



Serving Barry, Branch, and Calhoun Counties

An advertisement with a black background. On the right is a close-up, black and white photograph of an elderly Black woman with glasses, smiling. On the left, white text reads: "WORKED 20 YEARS. NEVER PUNCHED IN LATE. NEEDS A JOB". Below this is the Michigan Works! logo, the MI Opportunity Partnership logo with the tagline "WORKING FOR JOBS TODAY!", and the phone number "1-800-285-WORKS".

**WORKED 20 YEARS.
NEVER PUNCHED IN LATE.
NEEDS A JOB**

**MICHIGAN
WORKS!** MI Opportunity Partnership
WORKING FOR JOBS TODAY! 1-800-285-WORKS

Michigan Works! Programs are equal opportunity affirmative programs. Qualified jobs and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request. Michigan Works! Center 4000 Park Dr., Detroit, MI 48202. Supported by the State of Michigan.

2006-2007 Annual Report

Mission Statement

The Barry/Branch/Calhoun Workforce Development Board will lead a responsible and integrated customer driven partnership that delivers comprehensive services for business and job-seeking customers and fosters economic growth.

From the Workforce Development Board Chairperson....



It is with pleasure that I present the 2006-2007 Annual Report for the Barry/Branch/Calhoun Workforce Development Board, Chief Executive Officer's Board and the Calhoun ISD Michigan Works! Team.

Another year of high unemployment in Michigan kept our Michigan Works! Service Centers busy serving both job seekers and employers. It is indeed ironic that our region established a record number of job seeker visits (over 400,000), and at the same time worked with a large number of employers with job openings that could not be filled immediately with qualified job seekers.

Solutions to this dilemma were implemented by Michigan Works! through a combination of "No Worker Left Behind" training for job seekers to gain the necessary job specific skills and the "Business Solutions" approach to assisting employers in the design of training programs to develop those job specific skills in the job seekers. In addition, the MWA increased the amount of funding available to employers for "incumbent worker" training by 25% by shifting the performance incentive grant into the budget for incumbent worker training.

It is clear that there is a mismatch between the skills many of the unemployed and under-employed in our MWA and the skills needs for the jobs in this new economy. The only way to close this gap is to remain focused on training and retraining our job seekers in the occupations in demand. To that end, the Workforce Development and Chief Executive Officer's Boards remain committed to the delivery of effective and efficient services to the job seekers and businesses of Barry/Branch/Calhoun counties. We collectively extend our appreciation to the Michigan Works! Team and the partner agency staff who work so hard to make our commitment a reality. It is apparent that our staff and contractors are invested personally, as well as intellectually, with our mission. This intellectual capital makes our achievements satisfying and precisely suited to our region.

***Barry/Branch/Calhoun Workforce Development Board
Calhoun Intermediate School District Workforce Development
17111 G Drive North, Marshall, MI 49068
(800) 285-WORKS (9675)
(269) 789-2446
www.michpartners.org***

Barry/Branch/Calhoun WIA Youth Council Members Develop Leadership Skills and Learn to Work as a Team

W.I.A. youth participants had the opportunity to create a youth council in Barry, Branch, and Calhoun counties. The number of participants in each of the youth councils ranged from five to ten participants. A variety of exciting activities took place in each county.

Youth Council Activities

- Formed an executive board
- Drew up by-laws
- Brainstormed about future projects
- Advertised for yearbooks
- Designed t-shirts for the summer youth program
- Marketed the youth council to recruit more participants
- Identified community service projects
- Created a newsletter
- Developed “Interview Tips” to be incorporated into the youth program
- Conducted a Leadership activity that included youth facilitating 5 groups of 45 students each. Youth Council members taught soft skills, interviewing skills, and discussed dressing for success
- Participated in work experience and job shadow projects
- Created a photo presentation representing summer program activities



*Back Row: Branch County Case Managers Kimberly Feltner and Amanda Morgan
Front Row: Youth members Sara Bowling, Casey Cosier, and Ashley Cornish*

Future activities include “class shadowing” (a high school student shadowing a college student for a day), food and/or clothing drives for families during the holidays, gathering input on how to improve youth programs, and continuing to discuss activities that youth feel are most beneficial.

Michigan Works! Staff Rated as “10” by the Mystery Shopper

The Barry/Branch/Calhoun Workforce Development Board honored five local Michigan Works! employees with the “Excellence in Customer Service Award” in 2007. Laura Miller and Debbie Smith, Kellogg Community College Employment Service staff of the Coldwater Michigan Works! Service Center, Marsha Grafft and Suzan Moore, Kellogg Community College Employment Service staff of the Battle Creek Michigan Works! Service Center, and Emily Gingrich, Barry Intermediate School District Service staff of the Hastings Michigan Works! Service Center, were recognized for their achievements in customer service by Dr. Lynne Haley, chairperson of the Workforce Board.

According to Haley, the awards are based on achieving perfect scores in the “Mystery Shopper” reports issued by the Michigan Department of Labor and

Economic Growth (DLEG).

“The Albion, Battle Creek, Coldwater and Hastings Michigan Works! Service Centers are evaluated on a quarterly basis by mystery shoppers and are scored in the areas of courtesy, helpfulness, knowledge, and professionalism, explained Haley. Each area is scored in a range of 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest score. Overall satisfaction is determined by averaging all four areas. The Workforce Board is extremely pleased to learn of the excellent customer service provided to local employers and job seekers.”

The interviewers made consistent comments that the interviews with Michigan Works! staff went great and they would recommend the center to others. They also said that the staff was professional, friendly, and focused.

**Michigan Works!
Workforce Development Summary
Program Year 2006-2007**

Program	Allocations/ Expenditures
WIA Adult Services 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$827,078 / \$756,200
WIA Dislocated Services 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$1,219,874 / \$1,059,689
WIA Incumbent Workers Grant 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$75,827 / \$74,208
WIA One-Stop Operations Grant 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$108,265 / \$99,492
WIA Incentive Grant 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$23,170 / \$23,170
WIA Youth Services 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$765,598 / \$644,250
WIA Dislocated Worker Scholarship Grant 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$48,608 / \$42,980
WIA Administrative Cost Pool 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$319,210 / \$248,774
Wagner/Peyser Employment Services 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$413,324 / \$360,971
National Emergency Grant (NEG) Base Alignment Contract 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$93,500 / \$69,613
Food Assistance Employment & Training 10/1/06-9/30/07	\$94,960 / \$93,707
Work First Program 10/1/06-9/30/07	\$3,581,712 / \$3,428,730
Trade Act Funds (TAA/NAFTA) 10/1/06-9/30/07	\$606,564 / \$573,553
Michigan Works! Capacity Building Grant 7/1/06-6/30/07	\$72,000 / \$72,000
Strategic Planning Initiative 4/21/00-6/30/06	\$60,796 / \$2,000
Total	\$8,310,486 / \$7,549,337

Number of Customer Visits-2007	
Service Center Location	Number of Customer Visits
Albion Michigan Works! Service Center	57,930
Battle Creek Michigan Works! Service Center	171,429
Coldwater Michigan Works! Service Center	157,141
Hastings Michigan Works! Service Center	14,547
Total Customer Visits	401,047

Performance Standards

Workforce Investment Act (W.I.A.)	Planned Performance	Actual Performance	Percentage of Standard
Adult Program			
Entered Employment Rate	85%	93.8%	110%
Six Month Retention Rate	80%	79.1%	99%
Earnings in 6 Months	\$10,000	\$11,805	118%
Credential/Diploma Rate	81%	89.2%	110%
Dislocated Workers			
Entered Employment	90%	95.1%	106%
Six Month Retention Rate	88%	92.1%	105%
Earnings in 6 Months	\$13,500	\$14,817	110%
Credential/Diploma Rate	81%	93.1%	115%
Youth Program-Older Youth			
Entered Employment	80%	66.7%	83%
Six Month Retention Rate	82%	75%	91%
Earnings Change in 6 Months	\$2,700	\$4,764	176%
Credential/Diploma Rate	70%	69.2%	99%
Youth Program-Younger Youth			
Retention Rate	71%	79.6%	112%
Diploma Rate	79%	93.3%	118%
Skill Attainment	92%	96.2%	105%

Work First/JET	State Average	Actual Performance	Ranking in State
Employment rate	38.1%	37.1%	13th of 25
Cost per employment	\$1,953	\$1,187	2nd of 25
Welfare case closures due to income	21.8%	23.3%	14th of 25

Director Caruso Visits the MPRI Transitional Employment Program



Michigan Department of Corrections Director, Patricia Caruso (3rd from left) looks on as an MPRI participant demonstrates the job duties he performs in the Transitional Employment Program.

Special guest speaker, Michigan Department of Corrections Director, Patricia Caruso, addressed guests which included local officials, police, and MPRI steering team members at the Calhoun County Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative (MPRI) Luncheon that was held in Battle Creek. Later that afternoon, she visited the Transitional Employment Program, operated by Goodwill Industries of Central Michigan's Heartland from 2006-07.

Director Caruso stated that ReEntry is about *keeping* people out of prison and about public safety. Currently, 95% of the people who go to prison come back into the community and 45% of those people return to prison. The goal of this state initiative is to reduce this recidivism rate and the amount of money that is being spent on prisoners which is currently \$30,000 per person, by providing immediate support to parolees once they return to the community. She feels this is a very positive step that Michigan

is taking.

Employment, housing and transportation are priorities for Barry, Branch, and Calhoun Counties. **Employment** is one of the key factors to remaining out of prison. Employment barriers are being addressed by developing customized training agreements that meet employer needs, developing temporary transitional employment programs to help parolees gain experience, utilizing career assessments by identifying assets, and designing a marketing plan to promote the hiring of parolees. **Housing** is another barrier that parolees face when they return to the community. The MPRI program is working with landlords to have affordable housing/apartments available upon a parolee's release. MPRI will also utilize funds for rent, for a graduated period of time. **Transportation** has also been a barrier in the Barry, Branch, Calhoun area. Transportation services such as bus tokens, gas cards and taxi service are provided to MPRI participants. A long term solution is to work with the Battle Creek Transit Authority and other service agencies to expand the service areas and times of operation for the transit system.

Sara Wallace is the Barry/Branch/Calhoun MPRI Community Coordinator. The MPRI Community Resource Advocate is Tammy Burbey. Tammy assists with supportive services such as transportation and housing as well as searching for employment. Currently the Foundation for Behavioral Resources (FBR) provides career assessment services, Human Resource Development Inc. (HRDI) and FBR provide workforce development services and K-PEP provides life skills training. The MPRI program was implemented in Calhoun County in October of 2006 and in Barry and Branch Counties in October of 2007. Please contact Sara Wallace, Barry/Branch/Calhoun County MPRI Community Coordinator, at (269) 441-1469 or wallacs@michigan.gov if you have additional questions.

Job Seeker and Employer Services

The Barry/Branch/Calhoun Michigan Works! Service Centers had over 400,000 customer visits last year! Workshops are offered on a weekly basis and include resume creation and assistance, interviewing tips, computer literacy, and keyboarding. Job seekers also have the opportunity to utilize Interview USA which is virtual video interview system that allows individuals to record interviews that can be emailed, along with their resumes to participating employers. This system can also be used for practicing interview techniques. Job seekers can identify their career interests by completing the O*NET Interest Inventory on-line. Customers are also assisted with locating information on GED

preparation and Labor Market Information. The Michigan Talent Bank is available to post resumes and search for jobs throughout the state of Michigan. Referrals to partner agencies include Michigan Rehabilitation Services, Veteran Services, Trade Adjustment Assistance (able to assist individuals who have become unemployed as a result of increased imports from, or shifts in production to, foreign countries), and Michigan HRDI (for training opportunities).

Employer services include applicant screening, resume searches, job postings, and interview meeting space. The Michigan Talent Bank is available to employers for resume searches and job postings.

Work First Implements Changes

The program that was formerly known as Work First has taken on many changes in the last year. One of the biggest changes is the name of the program. It is now Jobs, Education, and Training (JET). The focus has shifted to education and training instead of just finding “work first.”

Another big change in the program is the enforcement of federal participation rates. The primary focus and measure of success is to meet the federal work participation rates to avoid financial penalties in the range of \$100 million per year for the state of Michigan. Federal requirements for participation in work-related activities are 50% for all single parent families and 90% for two parent families.

The JET program design includes increased emphasis on strategies to engage participants in work-related activities that meet the federal participation requirements for work related activities.

Occupational training is one of the main focus areas to help participants meet federal participation requirements. In FY07, 207 participants enrolled in training with the majority entering the health care field. Many individuals also worked on earning their GED or increasing their levels in math, reading and writing. Sixteen people obtained their GED and 81 completed at least one of the GED tests. Many other individuals have raised their skill level and will take their GED at a later date.

Establishing new unpaid work experience sites has also helped increase participation rates. In Branch



JET participants work in the PLATO computer lab in preparation for their GED.

County, individuals participated in a community garden. Participants planted their own garden with at least one row of each garden donated to the food bank. They were able to take home fresh produce and learned about gardening. One of the most valuable skills taught was the value of giving back to the community.

The JET program will continue to focus on federal participation requirements by working with the Regional Manufacturing Technology Center on increased training opportunities, using Work Keys assessment information to engage participants in the use of GED preparation software or community based programming, and working with the employers in the local industrial park to increase job retention.

Business Services Team Creates Opportunities



The Business Services Team (BST) has spent the past year developing relationships with employers that have resulted in training of new and existing employees and enhanced employee recruitment.

A local auto parts supplier has benefitted from customized training that was provided by the Regional Manufacturing Technology Center and funded by Michigan Works!. This company has been successful in hiring

30 new welders with a specific skill set since this training has taken place.

Other companies have also been assisted by the BST in recruiting line workers as well as plant managers and engineers. Over 375 people were tested for Post Cereals. Four local manufacturers have signed hiring agreements with the BST and there are six more companies in the works.

The Business Services Team is now working with a local manufacturing plant that will have a substantial number of employees leaving the company in the next several years. As workers retire they will be taking knowledge with them. New employees are to be trained by Michigan Works! through the use of a customized training program on the existing machinery. This is a more cost effective alternative than replacing all of the machinery with new equipment. This project is currently being worked on and is not completed.

The team is also meeting with a manufacturing company who would like to expand their plant.

Local Woman Honored at Michigan State Capitol

Michigan Works! Association honored Rose Snitgen of Hastings, Mich. for obtaining gainful employment through a Michigan Works! Agency at the 2008 Alumni Celebration, held at the Michigan State Capitol.

Snitgen was among the 25 graduates of the Michigan Works! System who were presented with an Outstanding Alumni of The Year Award by district legislators Senator Patricia Birkholtz, Representative Brian Calley, and Representative Mike Nofs.

Each year, the Michigan Works! Association hosts this celebration to highlight the success stories of the Michigan Works! System. In light of Michigan's economic transition, this celebration features individuals who, with assistance from Michigan Works!, have sought gainful employment through education or new training in high-demand occupations and emerging fields.

Unsatisfied with where her career was taking her, Snitgen wanted to make a change. She faced many barriers because her work experience was both temporary and in a field unrelated to her desired career path. Snitgen visited the Hastings Michigan Works! Service Center in order to clarify her professional goals.

With assistance from Michigan Works!, she began the Certified Nurse Aide training program offered by Walker Medical Instructional Services in Grand Rapids.

After completing her training, Snitgen accepted a fulltime position at DaVita Dialysis Medical in Ionia. The training allowed Snitgen to transition from unfulfilling temporary employment to a truly rewarding full-time position.

Snitgen has found a personally and professionally rewarding new work life.

"This is what I want to be," said Snitgen. "The word 'Da-Vita' means he or she gives life, and that is what I do everyday. Michigan Works! gave me an education, license, and ultimately a chance in the medical field, all before my 50th birthday."



Valerie Eavey, Programs Coordinator, Barry ISD/ Michigan Works!; Dr. Lynne Haley, Chairperson of the Barry/ Branch/Calhoun Workforce Development Board; Elaine Furu-Baker, Calhoun ISD/Michigan Works! WFD Director; Representative Brian Calley; Senator Patricia Birkholtz; Rose Snitgen; and Brandy Lydy, Case Manager, Barry ISD/Michigan

Barry/Branch/Calhoun Workforce Development Board Honors Michigan Works! Team with Certificates of Appreciation

The Michigan Works! Workforce Development Team was recognized with certificates of appreciation for their individual contributions to the Barry/Branch/Calhoun Workforce Development Board. The following Michigan Works!/CISD staff were recognized: Elaine Furu-Baker, Workforce Development Director; Christel Owen, Finance Coordinator; M.J. Bruns, Planning Manager; George Bauer, Business/ Industry Service Coordinator; Lisa Larson, Education & Training Coordinator; Lindy Bishop, Contract Compliance & MIS Monitor; and Joan Bujdos, Administrative Assistant. CISD staff members Mary Ellen Currie, Interim Superintendent, and Becky Rocho, Assistant Superintendent, General

Services/Legislation, were also recognized with certificates for their support and commitment to the Workforce Development Board.



Michigan Works! Team members were recognized with certificates of appreciation at the January 15 Workforce Development Board meeting.