



Prosperity Region 8 Regional 2024 – 2027 WIOA Plan

Berrien, Cass, Van Buren Michigan Works! /BCVB Michigan Works!

Michigan Works! Southwest

Berrien, Cass, Van Buren (BCVB) Michigan Works!

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1. Planning

BCVB Michigan Works! provides workforce development services in the counties of Berrien, Cass and Van Buren; and workforce development services in Branch, Calhoun, Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties are provided by Michigan Works! Southwest. For the constructing of this Plan, together these Michigan Works! agencies, covering Prosperity Region 8, utilized 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.

Communication

Identifying opportunities for improvement and innovation are priorities, and to ensure high quality solutions are implemented to serve job seekers and employers in the communities throughout Region 8, the leadership teams of BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest, along with business solutions, planning and program staff across all workforce development programs, communicate regularly.

Local Planning

As a result of two Michigan Works! agencies serving job seekers and employers in Region 8, separate local WIOA plans were written to address the unique needs of each area. The local WIOA plan for the Michigan Works! regional 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 plans 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;
- Alignment of employment, training, and education programs to support building a skilled workforce that meets the needs of economic, education and workforce partners.
- Innovative approach to leveraging apprenticeship programs in non-traditional industries and in-demand jobs; and
- Review and alignment with the State’s WIOA Plan and the State of Michigan’s Workforce Plan.

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.
- Workforce Development Board strategies that will be leveraged 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 solutions 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.
- An assessment of local policy for updates and alignment with the updated Regional and Local WIOA plans.
- 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 short-term and long-term 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 collaboratively by staff in each Michigan Works! area (BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest), who met on a regular basis to discuss, write and finalize the Region 8 plan. Additionally, these staff communicated 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 the preparation 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 the respective local plans, to guide workforce development services throughout Region 8 over the four-year lifecycle of this plan. 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 Solutions 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.

The program 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;
- On-the-ground trends that are being observed with employers and job seekers;
- The strengths and challenges of employers/businesses throughout Region 8;
- Assessment of core industries in the Region and the in-demand jobs to support the employer's workforce needs;
- 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;
- Identification of 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.

As the work in this plan commences, the leadership, planning and program staff from the BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest areas will have routine meetings to ensure alignment with the Regional Plan, as well as seek opportunities for improvement from employers and job seekers. Ongoing communication with education providers, economic development entities and support organizations will occur on a regular schedule as well.

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, including 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.

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 being in close proximity to Chicago has presented opportunities to attract employers and talent to Region 8. The region also includes a mixture of urban and rural areas that are attractive to a variety of industry sectors, which is another geographic advantage. Business Solutions Teams partner with education providers and economic developers to enhance the opportunities for employers and job seekers throughout Region 8.

2. Analysis of regional labor market data and economic conditions

Both Berrien, Cass, Van Buren Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest regularly review and analyze regional labor market data and economic conditions to inform the delivery of workforce development services and aligned focus areas, such as meeting the emerging needs of employers and filling in-demand occupations. As the Michigan Works! Agencies of Region 8, both organizations are aware of the critical need for understanding labor market data and economic conditions, to provide an effective and diverse range of workforce development services for adults and youth residing in Southwest Michigan.

Throughout the term of the Regional WIOA Plan, these Michigan Works! agencies will actively analyze information to align services that support the Michigan Statewide Workforce Plan core pillars, including increasing skill certificates or college degrees, increasing the middle class, and growing the labor force participation rate by 2027.

Population/Demographics

Per the [2024 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 779,862, in 2022, representing a growth of 1,121 (+0.3 percent) since 2012.

- Berrien 152,900
- Branch 44,531
- Calhoun 133,289
- Cass 51,403
- Kalamazoo 261,173
- St. Joseph 60,874
- Van Buren 75,692

Per the [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), race and ethnicity demographics for Region 8 are as follows:

- Two or more races 6.4%
- Some other races 1.7%
- Black/African American 9.0%
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander 0.02%
- Asian 1.7%
- Native American 0.4%
- White 80.4%

Per the [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), the population by age groups is as follows:

- 6.7% ages 15 to 19
- 7.9% ages 20 to 24
- 35.7% ages 25 to 54
- 13.3% ages 55 to 64
- 18.0% ages 65 and older

It should be noted that the residents of Southwest Michigan display a similar age distribution as the state’s population, with roughly one-third of the population between ages 25 - 54.

In reviewing regional labor market data and economic conditions, it is important to look at industry employment for Region 8 by age. With a similar share, on average, of older individuals than that of the statewide population, Southwest Michigan has a slightly higher ratio of employment to population for individuals aged 55+, and slightly lower unemployment rate. Per Lightcast, the four industries with the lowest share of older payrolled workers in Region 8 include:

- Accommodation and Food Services – 11% are age 55 or older
- Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services – 19% are age 55 or older
- Construction – 22% are age 55 or older
- Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services – 22% are age 55 or older

On the other hand, the four industries in Region 8 with the highest share of older payrolled workers include:

- Other Services (except Public Administration) – 32% are age 55 or older
- Real Estate and Rental and Leasing – 31% are age 55 or older
- Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction – 30% are age 55 or older
- Utilities – 29% are age 55 or older

Preparing for the next generation of workers to avoid gaps will be integral to the work of the Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8.

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

Planning for the growth of educational attainment levels in Southwest Michigan, the Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 will continue to work with regional educational partners, to develop training opportunities that meet the needs of employers in high demand industries, as well as the needs of job seekers residing in the area.

Current educational attainment in Region 8 for population aged 18 to 24 years, as reported in the [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), is as follows:

- Less than High School Diploma 11.9% of the population
- High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency) 34.2% of the population
- Some College or Associate’s Degree 44.2% of the population
- Bachelor’s Degree or Higher 9.5% of the population

Current educational attainment in Region 8 for population aged 25 to 65 years, as reported in the [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), is as follows:

- Less than 9th Grade 2.8% of the population
- 9th to 12th Grade, No Diploma 5.6% of the population
- High School Graduate (Includes Equivalency) 29.7% of the population
- Some college, No Degree 23.0% of the population
- Associate’s Degree 9.8% of the population
- Bachelor’s Degree 17.8% of the population
- Graduate or Professional Degree 10.8% of the population

The report also notes that, on average, 29.9% of individuals in the Southwest region held a high school diploma or GED, compared to 28.4% for Michigan. This information is crucial in understanding employment barriers, as they relate to education, within Region 8.

Disability

Per the [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), and according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 13.6% of the total population in Southwest Michigan, during the 2018–2022 U.S. Census Bureau American Community survey period, reported having a disability.

In addition, per the U.S Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2018-2022 5-Year Estimates (S1810), the percent of the population aged 18 to 64 with a disclosed disability, by county, is as follows:

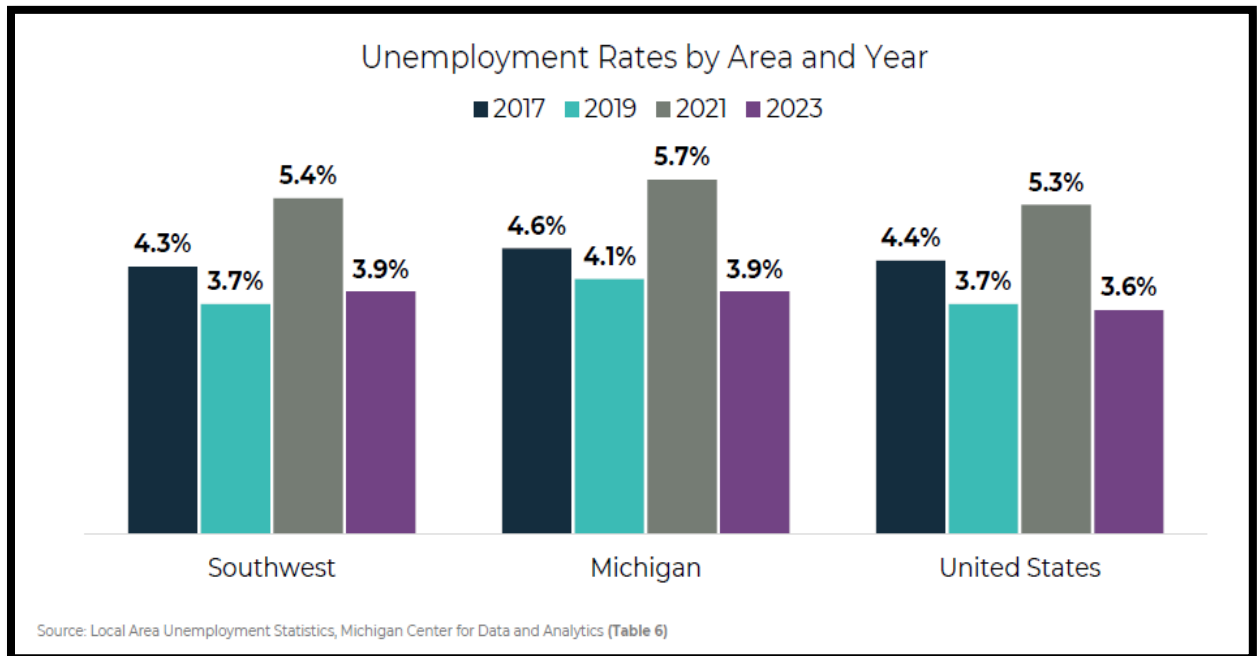
- Berrien 13.7%
- Branch 14.1%
- Calhoun 14.1%
- Cass 16.3%
- Kalamazoo 12.2%
- St. Joseph 16.6%
- Van Buren 13.2%

It should be noted that this information reflects a slight decrease from data reported in the previous WIOA Regional (Region 8) Report. Both Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass, Van Buren and Michigan Works! Southwest actively work with employers and vocational rehabilitation partners, as described throughout this plan, to support barrier removal and provide workforce development services.

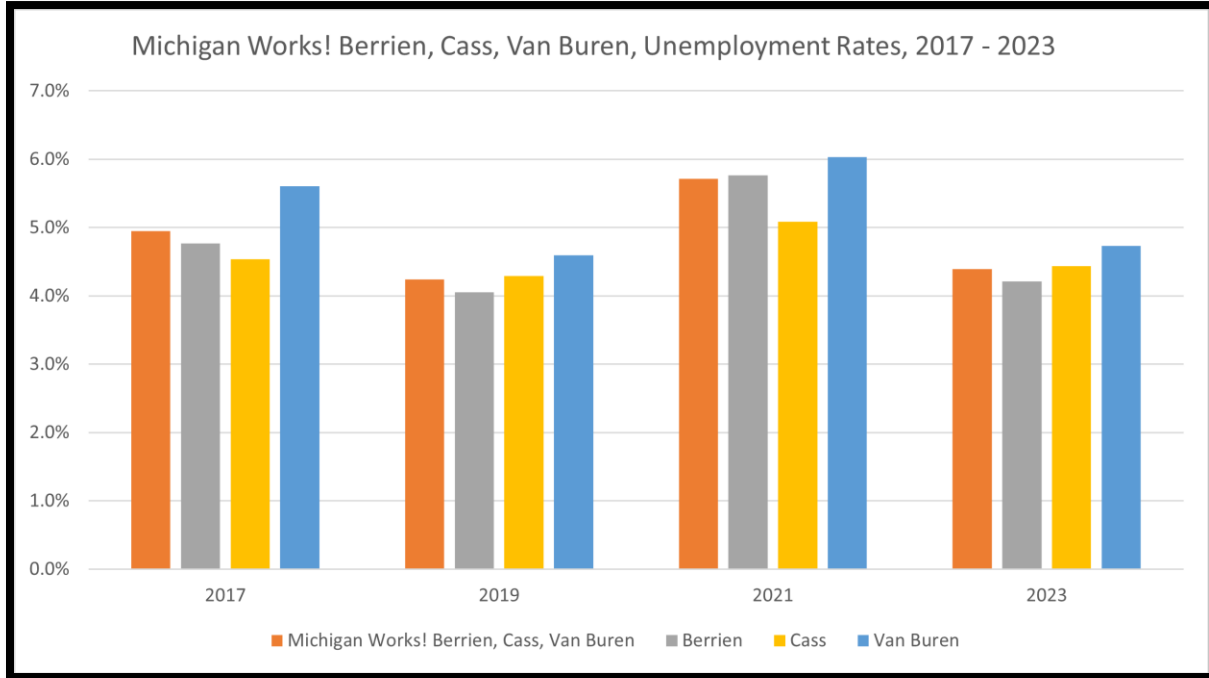
Unemployment

To reflect the workforce during the period of 2017 to 2023, the unemployment rate by year is outlined below. Region 8 unemployment was lower than the state average for individuals in the age ranges of 16-19 years, and 55-64 years, although overall jobless rates were similar to the statewide rate.

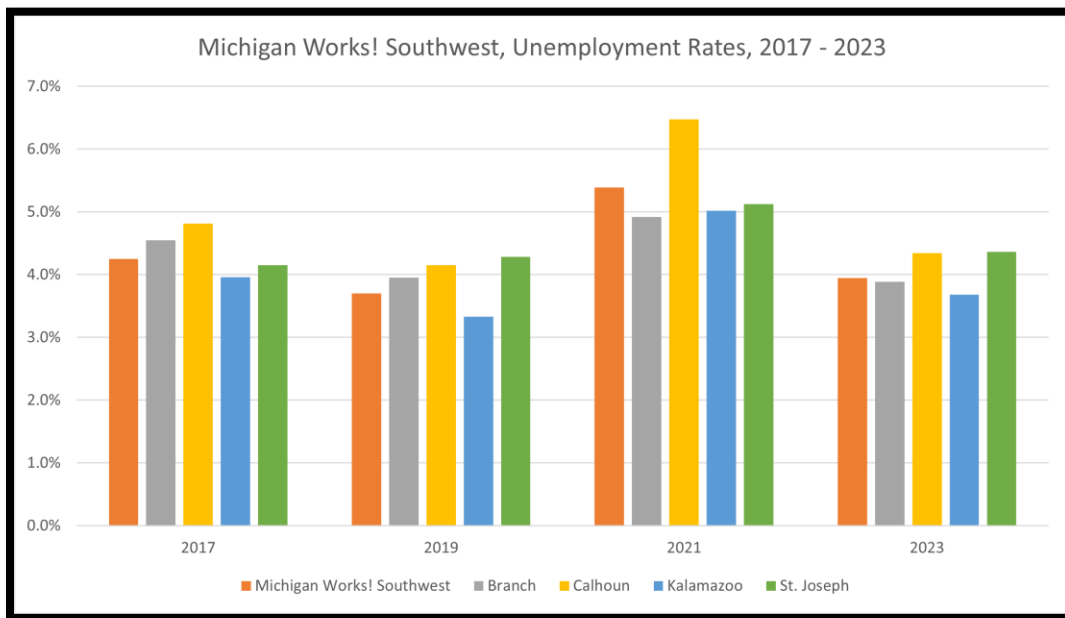
The [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) concludes that Southwest Michigan’s jobless rate was higher in 2021 than it was in the years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic, similar to statewide and national trends, and that since 2019, the number of unemployed individuals increased by nearly 670, equivalent to an increase of about 7.4 percent. Due to economic recovery efforts in Southwest Michigan and throughout the State, these rates of unemployment show a dramatic decrease since last reported in 2012. The report provides the following unemployment rate information from 2017 to 2023:



Further, the Michigan Center for Data and Analytics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics reports the following breakout by county, in Region 8, from 2017 to 2023, highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

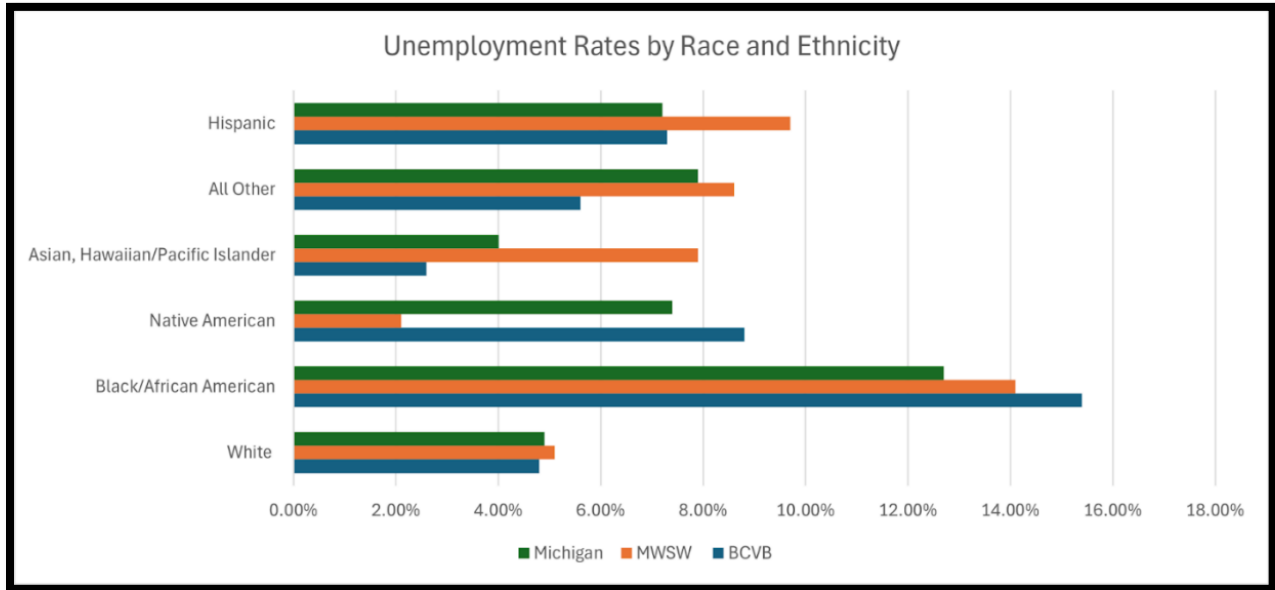


Source: Michigan Center for Data and Analytics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics



Source: Michigan Center for Data and Analytics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

In evaluating the unemployment rate, the [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) also reports that in alignment with the state, the region’s Black/African American residents had the highest unemployment rate.



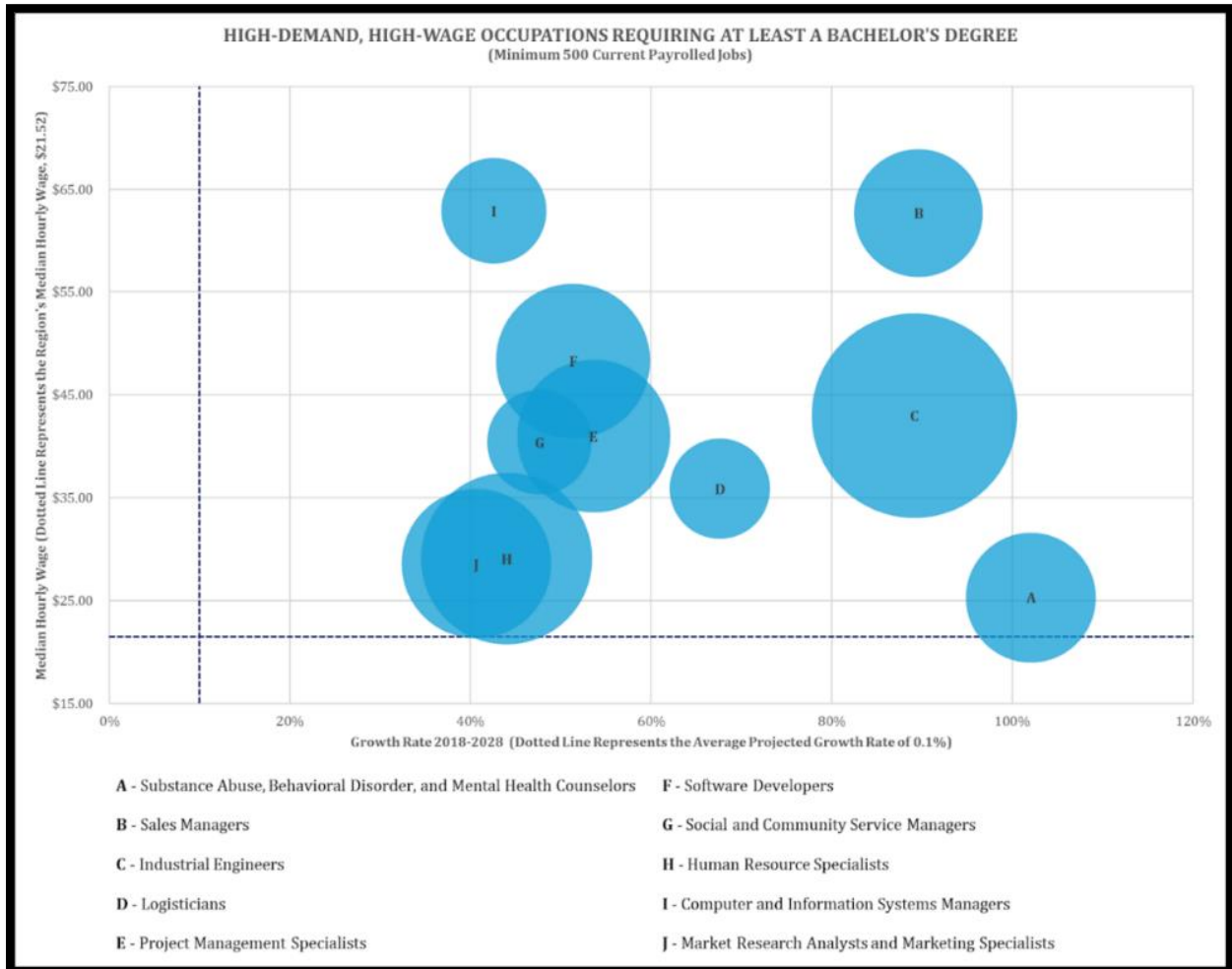
High-Demand, High-Wage Data

Lightcast [(2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>] 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, as well as with an increased focus on apprenticeships across the region and will assist as a tool in guiding conversation.

The following illustrations plot those occupations with the highest projected growth rate over the period 2018-2028 and median earnings above the region’s overall median on the basis of their educational requirements. In order to ensure that the data is meaningful for operational planning purposes, only those occupations with sufficiently large current regional employment footprints (i.e. a minimum of 200-500 current payrolled positions) were considered in the analysis.

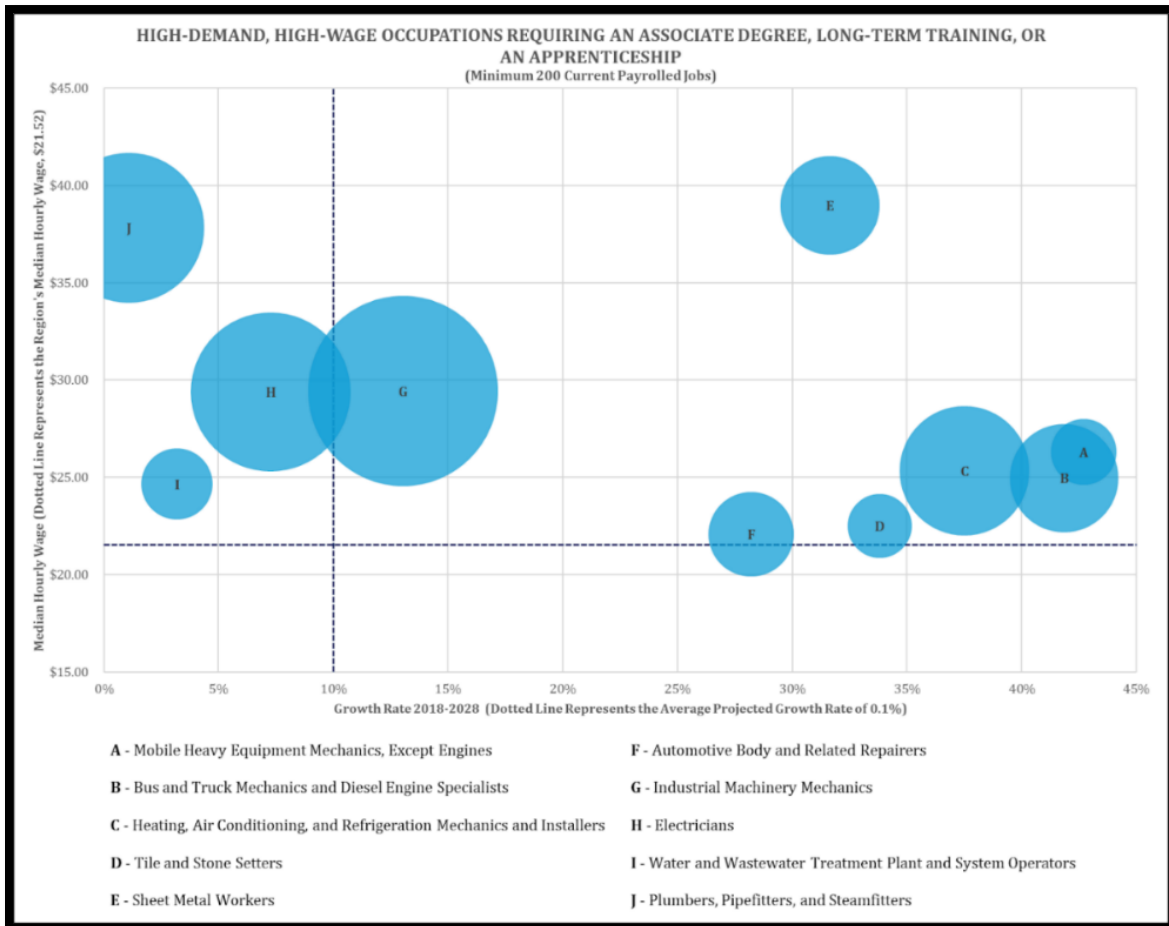
High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring at least a Bachelor’s Degree

Among those occupations requiring at least a bachelor’s degree with median wages about the region’s overall median and with at least 500 current payrolled positions in-region, “Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder, and Mental Health Counselors” are projected to see the highest relative growth rate over the period 2018-2028 (+102%).



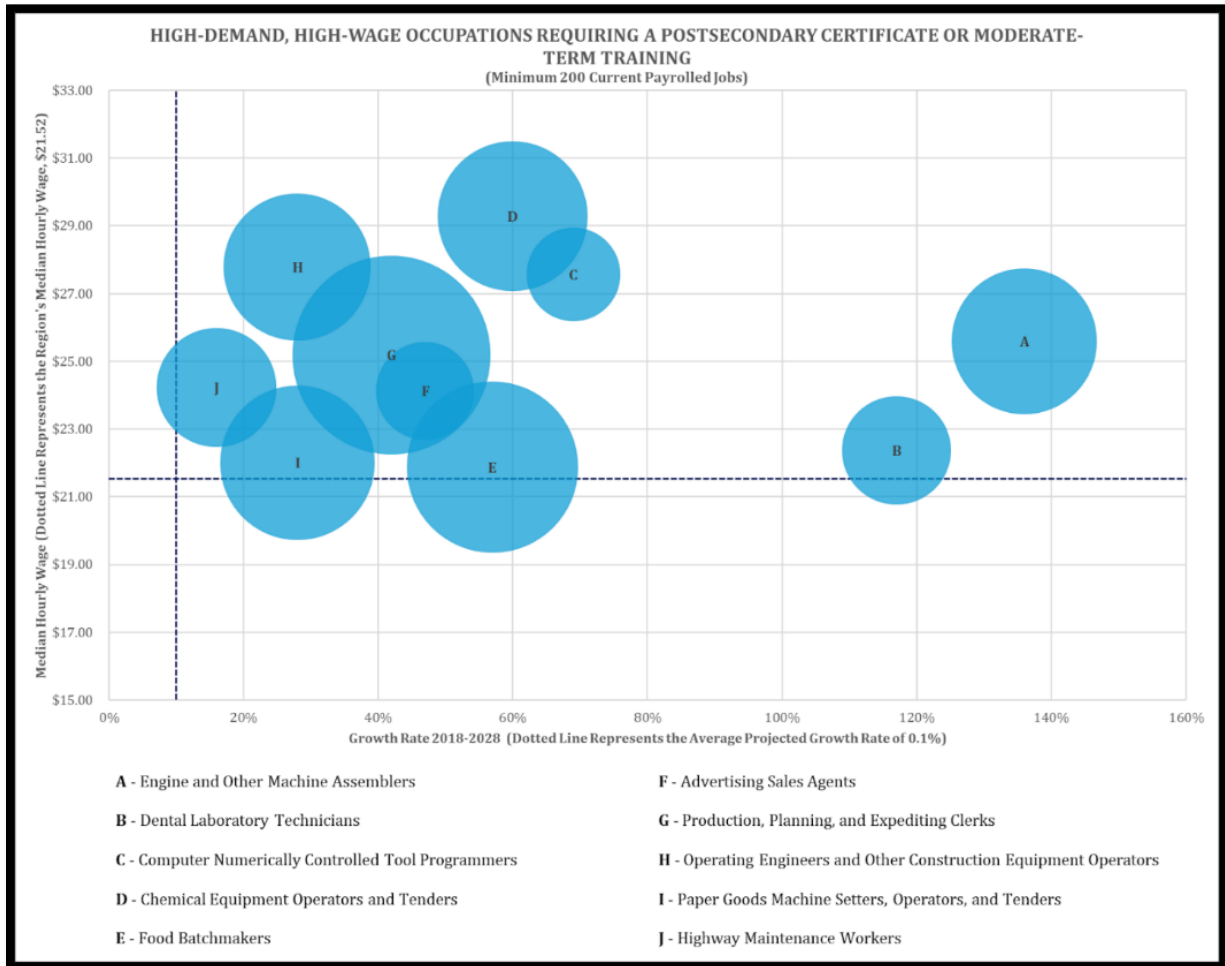
High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring an Associate Degree, long-term training, or an apprenticeship

Among those occupations requiring at least an associate degree, long-term training, or an apprenticeship and with median wages about the region’s overall median and with at least 200 current payrolled positions in-region, “Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines” are projected to see the highest relative growth rate over the period 2018-2028 (+43%).



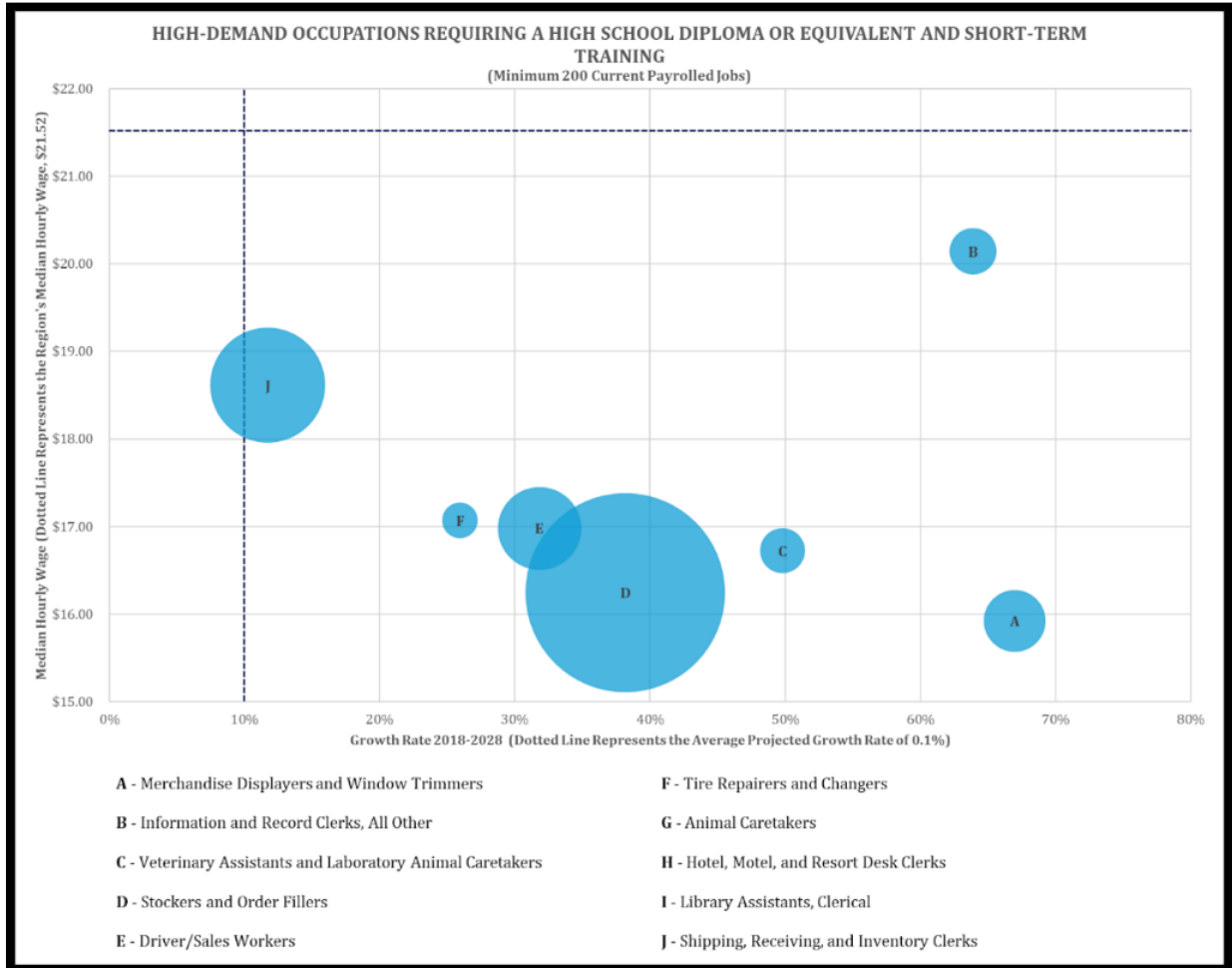
High-demand, high-wage occupations requiring a postsecondary certificate or moderate term training

Among those occupations requiring at least a postsecondary certificate or moderate term training and with median wages about the region’s overall median and with at least 200 current payrolled positions in-region, “Engine and Other Machine Assemblers” are projected to see the highest relative growth rate over the period 2018-2028 (+136%).



High-demand occupations requiring a high school diploma or equivalent and short-term training

Among those occupations requiring a high school diploma or equivalent and short-term training and with at least 200 current payrolled positions in-region, “Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers” are projected to see the highest relative growth rate over the period 2018-2028 (+67%). Note, however, that median wages for all ten occupations are well below the region’s overall median wage, emphasizing the importance of upskilling.



Occupation Growth

Occupation growth for Region 8 is reflected by job change, provided by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Lightcast, and outlined below.

Description	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2022 - 2023 Change	2022 - 2023 % Change
Management Occupations	19,114	19,255	141	1%
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	14,600	14,281	-319	-2%
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	4,872	4,806	-66	-1%
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	7,278	7,421	142	2%
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	2,783	2,922	139	5%
Community and Social Service Occupations	6,314	6,680	367	6%
Legal Occupations	1,087	1,060	-26	-2%
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	15,526	16,138	612	4%
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	3,628	3,754	126	3%
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	18,089	18,445	355	2%
Healthcare Support Occupations	14,352	14,424	73	1%
Protective Service Occupations	5,167	5,105	-62	-1%
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	27,775	28,230	455	2%
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	9,620	9,999	379	4%
Personal Care and Service Occupations	6,855	6,961	106	2%
Sales and Related Occupations	25,030	24,936	-94	0%
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	34,235	33,115	-1,120	-3%
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	3,883	4,088	205	5%

Description	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2022 - 2023 Change	2022 - 2023 % Change
Construction and Extraction Occupations	10,072	10,038	-34	0%
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	12,754	12,923	169	1%
Production Occupations	41,291	42,863	1,572	4%
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	26,076	25,878	-198	-1%
Total, All Occupational Groups	310,401	313,325	2,924	1%

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Most Competitive Occupations

The following table provides an overview of the region's job composition on the basis of shift share using data from Lightcast (2024) (*Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>). Shift share is an indicator that shows which occupational types are competitive in the region and is comprised of four components:

- Occupational mix effect - the expected change in regional jobs based on national growth/decline in the industries that employ them.
- National growth effect - the expected change in regional jobs based on based on the growth of the overall U.S. economy.
- Expected change - the sum of the occupational mix effect and the national growth effect, this represents the expected change in regional jobs in a vacuum.
- Competitive effect - jobs added or lost beyond the expected change as a result of the region's unique characteristics.

Occupations with a positive competitive effect value are outperforming their national average and represent those jobs for which the region is currently a talent hub. Occupations with a negative competitive effect value are those that are underperforming their national average and represent those job types that are less suited for the regional economy as it currently stands.

Description	2022 - 2023 Change	Occ. Mix Effect	Nat'l Growth Effect	Expected Change	Competitive Effect
Management Occupations	141	609	306	915	-774
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	-319	165	233	399	-717
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	-66	7	78	85	-151
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	142	-22	116	94	48
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	139	74	45	119	21
Community and Social Service Occupations	367	82	101	183	184
Legal Occupations	-26	0	17	17	-44
Educational Instruction and Library Occupations	612	130	248	379	233
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	126	-47	58	11	115
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	355	135	289	425	-69
Healthcare Support Occupations	73	268	230	497	-424
Protective Service Occupations	-62	-32	83	51	-112
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	455	698	444	1,142	-687
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	379	-24	154	130	249
Personal Care and Service Occupations	106	191	110	301	-195
Sales and Related Occupations	-94	-211	400	189	-283
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	-1,120	-1,067	548	-520	-600
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	205	-162	62	-100	305
Construction and Extraction Occupations	-34	-9	161	152	-186

Description	2022 - 2023 Change	Occ. Mix Effect	Nat'l Growth Effect	Expected Change	Competitive Effect
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	169	13	204	217	-48
Production Occupations	1,572	-871	660	-211	1,783
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	-198	-352	417	65	-263
Total, All Occupational Groups	2,924	-424	4,964	4,540	-1,616

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Industries in Region 8

In order to effectively serve employers and job seekers in Region 8, an analysis of industry growth and decline was reviewed. Per Data source: Lightcast (2024) (Data Set 2024.2, accessed June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.) the following information was determined, regarding existing in-demand sectors.

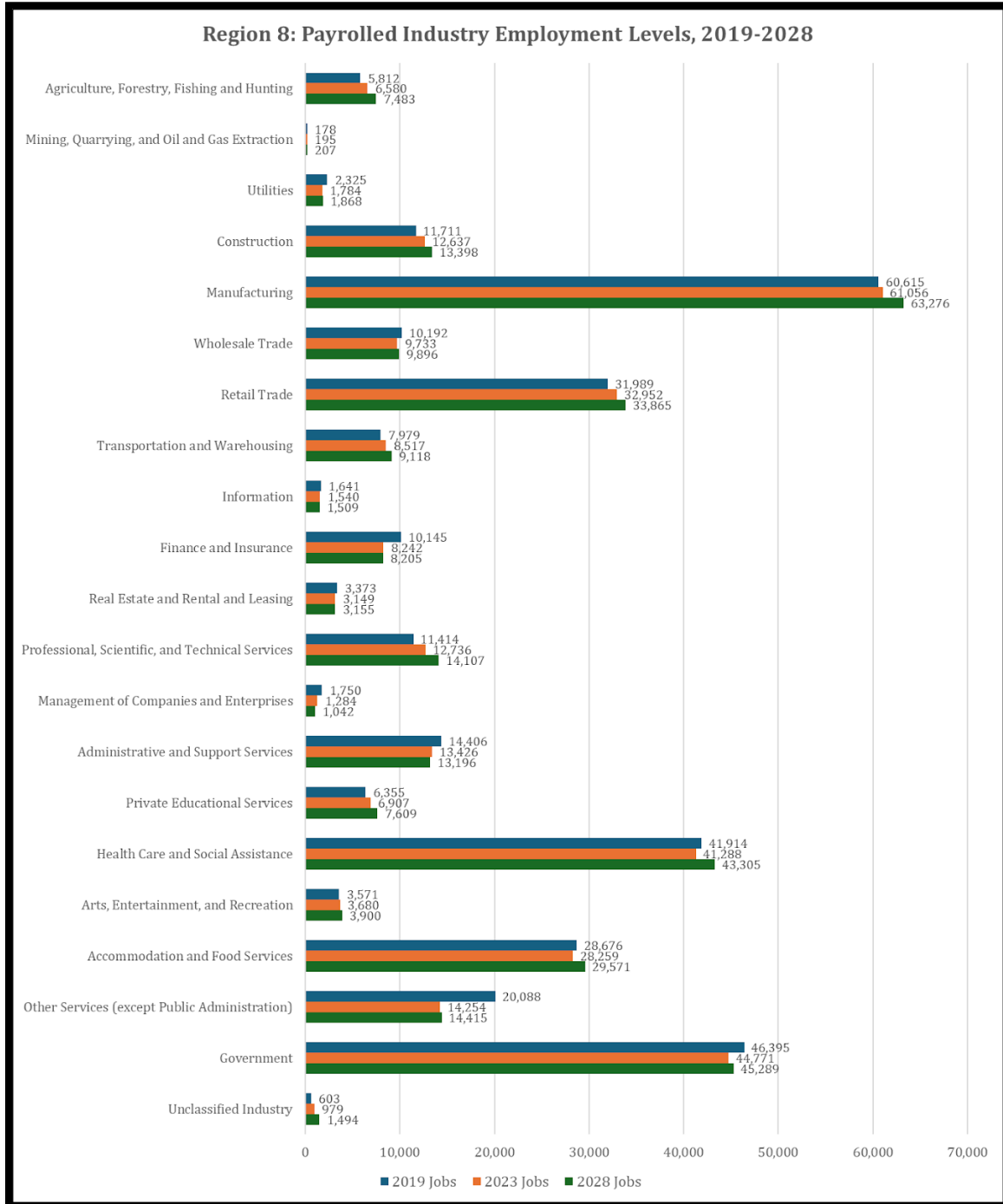
Industry	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2022-2023)	% Change	2023 Earnings Per Worker
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	6,223	6,580	357	6%	\$48,058
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	181	195	14	8%	\$107,096
Utilities	2,206	1,784	-423	-19%	\$179,569
Construction	12,470	12,637	166	1%	\$83,099
Manufacturing	59,407	61,056	1,648	3%	\$95,734
Wholesale Trade	9,555	9,733	178	2%	\$81,288
Retail Trade	32,841	32,952	111	0%	\$42,574
Transportation and Warehousing	8,763	8,517	-246	-3%	\$74,514
Information	1,478	1,540	62	4%	\$88,297
Finance and Insurance	8,876	8,242	-634	-7%	\$94,270

Industry	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	Change in Jobs (2022-2023)	% Change	2023 Earnings Per Worker
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,577	3,149	-428	-12%	\$62,696
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	12,572	12,736	164	1%	\$98,665
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,664	1,284	-380	-23%	\$173,092
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	13,625	13,426	-199	-1%	\$54,890
Private Educational Services	6,617	6,907	290	4%	\$44,511
Health Care and Social Assistance	41,233	41,288	55	0%	\$74,241
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,444	3,680	236	7%	\$30,129
Accommodation and Food Services	27,181	28,259	1,077	4%	\$24,828
Other Services (except Public Administration)	14,126	14,254	128	1%	\$41,547
Government	44,176	44,771	595	1%	\$76,923
Unclassified Industry	836	979	143	17%	\$48,671
Total, All Industries	311,053	313,967	2,915	1%	\$69,996

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Industry Change

In attempt to reflect the high growth industries, as well as declining industries, in Region 8, information regarding a change in jobs between 2019 and 2028, per Data source: Lightcast (2024) (Data Set 2024.2, accessed June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>), are highlighted below. These outcomes vary significantly in comparison to the previous Regional (Region 8) WIOA Plan, in response to the pandemic.



Additional data sourced from Lightcast (Data Set 2024.2, accessed June 11, 2024) shows trends from the previous five-year period, inclusive of post-pandemic shifts, as well as projected future state data for the subsequent five years that covers the Regional 8 plan period.

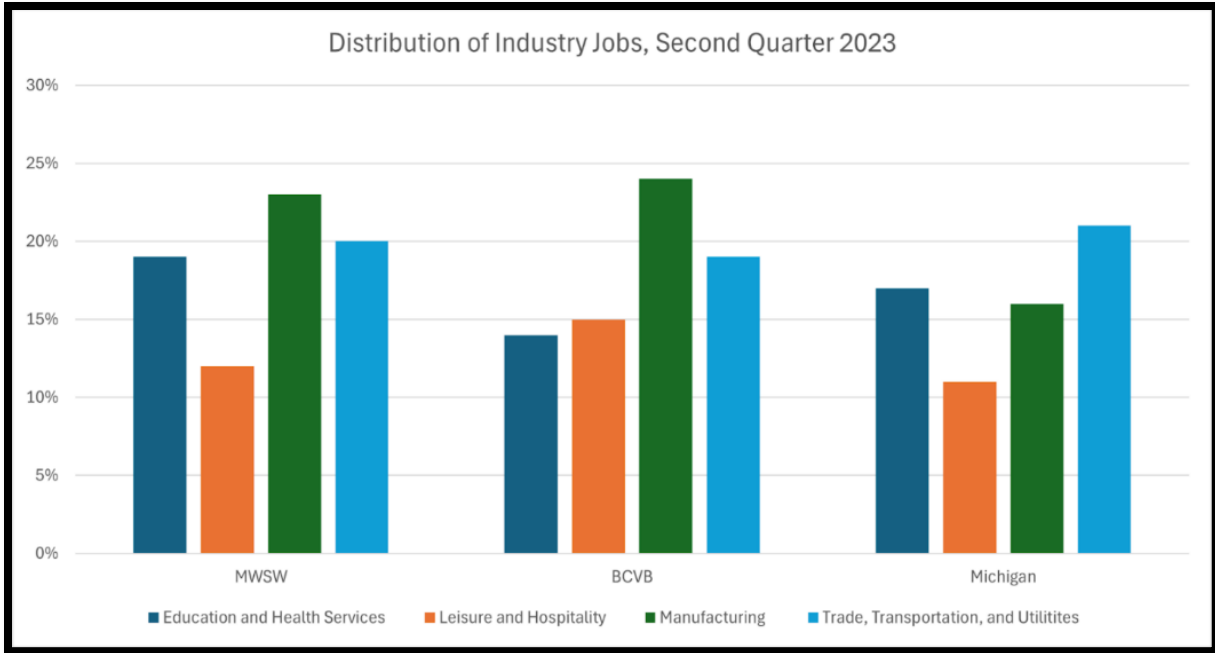
Industry	2019 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	Change in Jobs 2019-2023	% Change	Change in Jobs 2023-2028	% Change	2023 Earnings Per Worker
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	5,812	6,580	7,483	768	13%	904	14%	\$48,058
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	178	195	207	17	10%	12	6%	\$107,096
Utilities	2,325	1,784	1,868	-541	-23%	85	5%	\$179,569
Construction	11,711	12,637	13,398	925	8%	762	6%	\$83,099
Manufacturing	60,615	61,056	63,276	441	1%	2,220	4%	\$95,734
Wholesale Trade	10,192	9,733	9,896	-459	-5%	163	2%	\$81,288
Retail Trade	31,989	32,952	33,865	963	3%	913	3%	\$42,574
Transportation and Warehousing	7,979	8,517	9,118	538	7%	601	7%	\$74,514
Information	1,641	1,540	1,509	-101	-6%	-32	-2%	\$88,297
Finance and Insurance	10,145	8,242	8,205	-1,904	-19%	-37	0%	\$94,270
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	3,373	3,149	3,155	-223	-7%	6	0%	\$62,696
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	11,414	12,736	14,107	1,322	12%	1,372	11%	\$98,665
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,750	1,284	1,042	-466	-27%	-242	-19%	\$173,092

Industry	2019 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2028 Jobs	Change in Jobs 2019-2023	% Change	Change in Jobs 2023-2028	% Change	2023 Earnings Per Worker
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	14,406	13,426	13,196	-980	-7%	-230	-2%	\$54,890
Private Educational Services	6,355	6,907	7,609	552	9%	702	10%	\$44,511
Health Care and Social Assistance	41,914	41,288	43,305	-626	-1%	2,017	5%	\$74,241
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3,571	3,680	3,900	109	3%	220	6%	\$30,129
Accommodation and Food Services	28,676	28,259	29,571	-418	-1%	1,313	5%	\$24,828
Other Services (except Public Administration)	20,088	14,254	14,415	-5,834	-29%	161	1%	\$41,547
Government	46,395	44,771	45,289	-1,624	-4%	518	1%	\$76,923
Unclassified Industry	603	979	1,494	376	62%	516	53%	\$48,671
Total, All Industries	321,132	313,967	325,910	-7,165	-2%	11,943	4%	\$69,996

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Industry Specific Data for Region 8

Per the [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), the top two industries of Region 8 include Manufacturing and Trade, Transportation and Utilities, with Manufacturing accounting for nearly one-quarter of the jobs in Southwest Michigan, remaining the largest industry since last reporting. This report also concludes that as of the second quarter of 2023, Leisure and Hospitality is the third largest industry for Michigan Works! BCVB. For Michigan Works! Southwest, the third largest industry is Education and Health Services. Additional industries of the top ten for the Region included Professional and Business Services, Financial Activities, Construction, Natural Resources and Mining, and Information.



Industry Data: Manufacturing

Remaining the largest industry since previous Region 8 planning, additional information by county regarding manufacturing in Region 8 is provided from Lightcast, below:

County Name	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2022-2023 Change	% Change
Berrien County, MI	12,424	12,565	141	1.1%
Branch County, MI	3,100	3,342	242	7.8%
Calhoun County, MI	10,319	10,371	51	0.5%
Cass County, MI	2,134	1,998	-136	-6.4%
Kalamazoo County, MI	20,783	21,595	812	3.9%
St. Joseph County, MI	7,583	7,731	148	2.0%
Van Buren County, MI	3,065	3,454	390	12.7%
Total, Region 8	59,407	61,056	1,648	2.8%

Lightcast. (2024). Data Set 2024.2. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

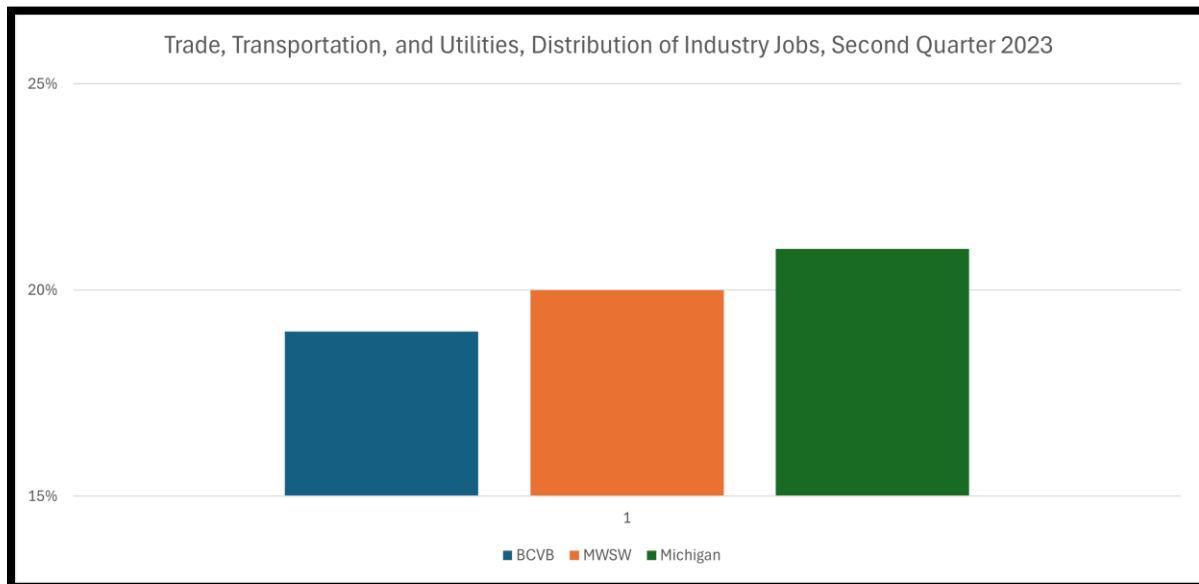
Manufacturing Average Earnings Per Job:

County Name	2023 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$97,705
Branch County	\$71,977
Calhoun County	\$86,068
Cass County	\$67,754
Kalamazoo County	\$115,381
St. Joseph County	\$77,960
Van Buren County	\$73,710
	Average: \$95,734

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Industry Data: Trade, Transportation, and Utilities

As noted above, per the [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), the Trade, Transportation and Utilities Industry in Second Quarter 2023 accounts for nearly 20% of all jobs in Southwest Michigan Region 8.



Additional information regarding the Trade, Transportation and Utilities industry in Region 8 is provided from Lightcast below.

County Name	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2022-2023 Change	% Change
Berrien County, MI	10,564	10,693	129	1.2%
Branch County, MI	3,892	3,846	-46	-1.2%
Calhoun County, MI	8,789	8,983	194	2.2%
Cass County, MI	1,328	1,397	70	5.3%
Kalamazoo County, MI	21,540	21,201	-339	-1.6%
St. Joseph County, MI	3,577	3,508	-69	-1.9%
Van Buren County, MI	3,675	3,357	-318	-8.7%
Total, Region 8	53,365	52,985	-380	-0.7%

Lightcast. (2024). Data Set 2024.2. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Trade, Transportation, and Utilities Average Earnings Per Job:

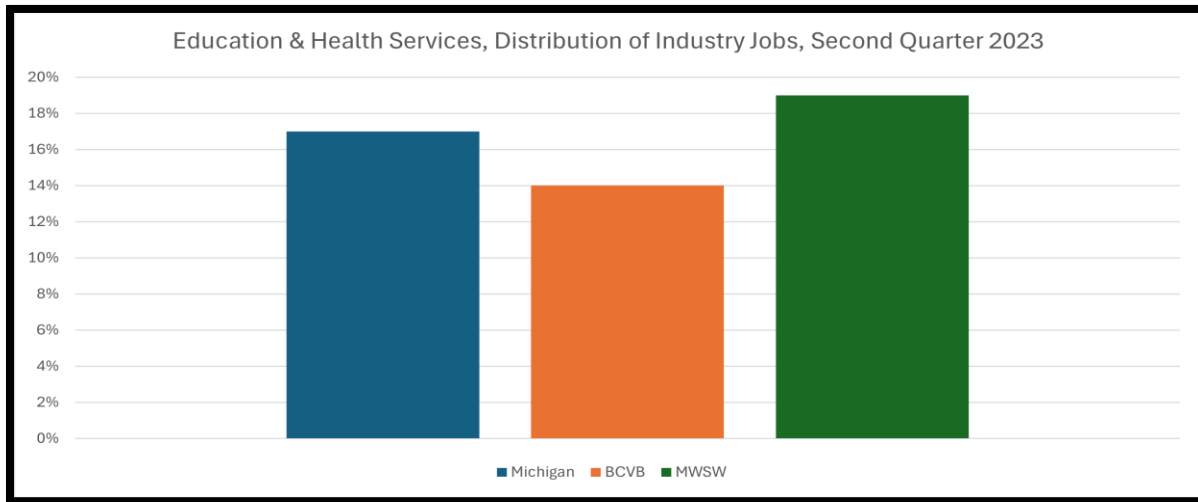
County Name	2023 Earnings Per Worker
Berrien County	\$64,397
Branch County	\$63,123
Calhoun County	\$61,959
Cass County	\$68,050
Kalamazoo County	\$58,826
St. Joseph County	\$47,865
Van Buren County	\$44,938
	Average: \$59,431

Lightcast. (2024). Data Set 2024.2. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Industry Data: Healthcare

As previously reported in the 2020-2023 Region 8 plan, long term projections of the Healthcare industry were expected to experience the most growth for both the Southwest Region and all of Michigan. The Southwest region was projected to grow by 0.1 percent in total jobs by 2028. While some of the region’s occupational groups will experience loss, Healthcare was projected to grow by 5.3 percent (1,600 jobs).

Per the [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#), Education and Health Services accounted for 14 - 19% of the jobs in Southwest Michigan, being the third largest industry for Michigan Works! Southwest, and fourth largest industry for Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass, VanBuren, trending in alignment with the state of Michigan.



Additional information regarding the healthcare industry in Region 8 is provided from Lightcast below.

County Name	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2022 - 2023 Change	% Change
Berrien County, MI	7,600	7,665	65	0.9%
Branch County, MI	857	862	4	0.5%
Calhoun County, MI	7,836	8,107	271	3.5%
Cass County, MI	515	470	-45	-8.7%
Kalamazoo County, MI	20,573	20,367	-206	-1.0%
St. Joseph County, MI	2,508	2,393	-115	-4.6%
Van Buren County, MI	1,344	1,424	80	5.9%
Region 8	41,233	41,288	55	0.1%

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Healthcare Average Earnings Per Job:

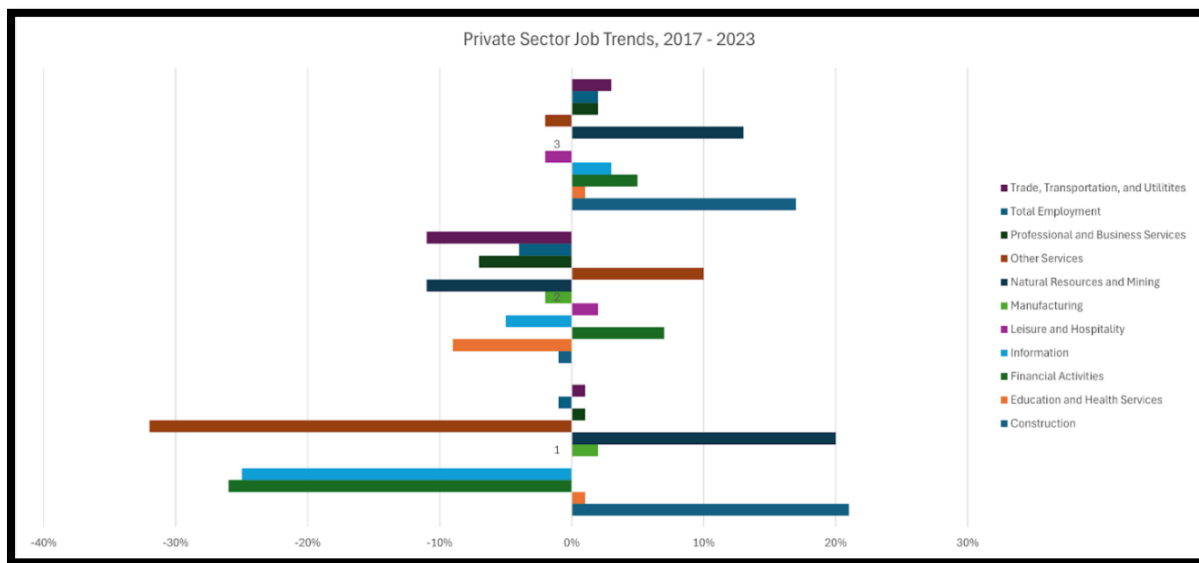
County Name	2023 Earnings Per Job
Berrien County	\$70,615
Branch County	\$47,744
Calhoun County	\$69,938
Cass County	\$83,584
Kalamazoo County	\$83,432
St. Joseph County	\$43,155
Van Buren County	\$51,981
	Average: \$74,241

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Industry Data: Information Technology/Information Security/Telecommunications

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

Per the [2024 Annual Planning Information and Workforce Analysis Report](#) employment trends have varied greatly across all industry sectors, with notable decline in the information industry. Across industries, employment trends have varied greatly, as experienced across the areas served by BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works Southwest, as reflected in the chart below.



Despite a perception of technology and information-related industries as having workforces that trend younger, 27% of this industry cluster’s workforce is 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 across Region 8.

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works Southwest have been and will continue to work with employers in this industry to identify workforce needs. Training providers and apprenticeship programs are being considered to attract a younger workforce to the industry.

Additional information regarding the information sector in Region 8 is provided from Lightcast below.

County Name	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2022 - 2023 Change	% Change
Berrien County, MI	407	389	-18	-4.5%
Branch County, MI	88	101	13	14.4%
Calhoun County, MI	163	173	10	6.0%
Cass County, MI	19	19	0	-1.3%
Kalamazoo County, MI	611	674	63	10.3%
St. Joseph County, MI	50	49	-1	-1.2%
Van Buren County, MI	139	135	-4	-2.8%
Region 8	1,478	1,540	62	4.2%

Lightcast. (2024). Data Set 2024.2. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Information Sector Average Earnings Per Job:

County Name	2023 Earnings Per Job
Berrien County	\$66,117
Branch County	\$64,964
Calhoun County	\$56,809
Cass County	\$180,003
Kalamazoo County	\$91,743
St. Joseph County	\$64,510
Van Buren County	\$188,081
	Average: \$88,297

Lightcast. (2024). Data Set 2024.2. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Industry Data: Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting

In 2023, the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting industry in Michigan’s Region 8 employed 6,580 people, which is a 357 increase from previous year. Van Buren County has the most significant growth of 170 people, while Calhoun County has a job loss of 11 from the year prior.

County Name	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2022 - 2023 Change	% Change
Berrien County, MI	1,292	1,388	96	7.4%
Branch County, MI	281	286	5	1.7%
Calhoun County, MI	727	716	-11	-1.6%
Cass County, MI	262	259	-2	-0.8%
Kalamazoo County, MI	1,569	1,602	33	2.1%
St. Joseph County, MI	807	874	67	8.3%
Van Buren County, MI	1,285	1,455	170	13.2%
Region 8	6,223	6,580	357	5.7%

Lightcast. (2024). Data Set 2024.2. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

The average earnings per job was recorded as \$48,058 in 2023. St. Joseph County had the highest average wage of \$60,673, while Berrien County has the lowest average wage of \$40,075.

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting Sector Average Earnings Per Job:

County Name	2023 Earnings Per Job
Berrien County	\$40,075
Branch County	\$56,164
Calhoun County	\$48,508
Cass County	\$49,415
Kalamazoo County	\$50,160
St. Joseph County	\$60,673
Van Buren County	\$43,720
	Average: \$48,058

Lightcast. (2024). Data Set 2024.2. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Other Industries

Per previous Region 8 planning, service, including accommodation and food service, was projected to hold the largest distribution of jobs by 2028 in Southwest Michigan, exactly 2.0 percentage points greater than the statewide average. For 2022 – 2023, Region 8 saw an overall increase of jobs, totaling 4.0%.

Additional information regarding the accommodation and food service industry in Region 8 is provided from Lightcast below.

County Name	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2022 - 2023 Change	% Change
Berrien County, MI	6,231	6,534	303	4.9%
Branch County, MI	1,719	1,686	-33	-1.9%
Calhoun County, MI	3,855	3,905	50	1.3%
Cass County, MI	939	1,031	92	9.8%
Kalamazoo County, MI	10,778	11,351	573	5.3%
St. Joseph County, MI	1,521	1,559	38	2.5%
Van Buren County, MI	2,138	2,192	54	2.5%
Region 8	27,181	28,259	1,077	4.0%

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Accommodation and Food Service Average Earnings Per Job:

County Name	2023 Earnings Per Job
Berrien County	\$25,723
Branch County	\$21,706
Calhoun County	\$26,265
Cass County	\$21,048
Kalamazoo County	\$25,041
St. Joseph County	\$21,600
Van Buren County	\$24,965
	Average: \$24,828

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Additionally, as reported in previous Region 8 planning, the only two industry sectors to show growth were Construction (2,000 jobs) and Education and Health Services (1,200 jobs). The construction industry’s workforce is aging rapidly, with 23% 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 Lightcast below.

County Name	2022 Jobs	2023 Jobs	2022 - 2023 Change	% Change
Berrien County, MI	2,139	2,059	-80	-3.7%
Branch County, MI	416	458	43	10.3%
Calhoun County, MI	1,791	1,847	57	3.2%
Cass County, MI	362	368	6	1.8%
Kalamazoo County, MI	6,443	6,517	74	1.1%
St. Joseph County, MI	644	745	101	15.6%
Van Buren County, MI	676	642	-34	-5.0%
Region 8	12,470	12,637	166	1.3%

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

Construction Average Earnings Per Job:

County Name	2023 Earnings Per Job
Berrien County	\$79,007
Branch County	\$59,972
Calhoun County	\$82,891
Cass County	\$65,420
Kalamazoo County	\$89,190
St. Joseph County	\$78,582
Van Buren County	\$66,896
	Average: \$83,099

Lightcast. (2024). *Data Set 2024.2*. Retrieved June 11, 2024, from <https://lightcast.io/>.

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 as those with soft skills, such as attendance, work ethic, problem solving, time management and teamwork.

Post-Secondary Education

Both MWAs of Region 8 fully support the current and future workforce educational success, including the attainment of a postsecondary degree or credential, in alignment with the Governor’s 60% by 2030 goal. BCVB Michigan Works! and MWSW will seek opportunities that allow residents of Southwest Michigan greater access to education, including outreach to connect young adults to programs such as Michigan’s Reconnect which offers tuition assistance through the State of Michigan.

Another option for post-secondary skill development, registered apprenticeship, is already actively promoted throughout Region 8. BCVB and MWSW Apprenticeship Success Coordinators (ASCs) assist employers in the establishment of apprenticeship programs, provide support for new and existing employees interested in training that includes both paid on-the-job training (OJT) with Related Training Instruction (RTI/classroom instruction). Additionally, ASCs bridge the gap between educational/training institutions and employers, through communication with the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Office of Apprenticeship. During the term of this plan, the Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 will continue to strategically assist employers, through the promotion and coordination of available funding, the RA model to expand opportunities in our state, as well as champion efforts to reach rural and underserved populations, to promote inclusion and close equity gaps.

English Language Learners

As described throughout the Region 8 WIOA Regional and WIOA Local Plans for BCVB Michigan Works! And MWSW, the Michigan Works! Agencies continue the critical work of adapting employer and job seeker needs, including the needs of English Language Learners (those whose primary language is not English, or whose community speaks a dominant language other than English) within Region 8. Ongoing support of the career development needs of English Language Learners specifically for in-demand industries and occupations, is a priority of Region 8. The Business Solutions teams of both Michigan Works! Agencies work diligently to engage employers in the hiring and promotion of the population of English Language Learners throughout Southwest Michigan.

Assisting with the integration of English Language Learners into the workforce, while working collaboratively with businesses to meet current and future talent needs, and exploring opportunities with economic development and training partners to achieve this successful integration will take precedence during the term of this plan.

Individuals with Barriers

Individuals with barriers to employment continue to be a focus for the MWAs in Region 8 as there is continued 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 issues related to housing, transportation and childcare which will ultimately result in better opportunities for individuals to obtain meaningful and sustainable employment.

ALICE Population

Serving the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) population in Region 8 requires a comprehensive approach tailored to the unique challenges and needs of this demographic. Access to training and education, along with barrier removal, is critical to support the ALICE population to secure a wage that supports economic self-sufficiency. Addressing the needs of the ALICE population in Region 8 requires a multi-faceted approach that combines immediate support with long-term solutions. By focusing on employment and barrier removal, such as housing, healthcare, education, food security, and transportation, we create a supportive environment that enables families to thrive. Collaboration between government agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, and the community will support these efforts.

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. In alignment with the State Workforce Plan, this Region 8 plan is responsive to the needs of business, focusing on the education and credential attainment of the future workforce, as well as the re-skilling of the current workforce. These activities are implemented in ways that address the needs of individuals with barriers to employment and retention, as well as meeting the employment needs of employers in the region.

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

Weaknesses

There remains opportunity throughout Region 8 to expand the work of existing employer consortium groups, as well as the development and implementation of additional employer consortiums.

With the increasing demands for an IT workforce, BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest are partnering with employers to identify non-traditional apprenticeship programs to fill the workforce needs in the IT industry. Strengthening the work of the Advanced IT Solutions Consortium, focused on the rapidly evolving Electric Vehicle (EV) industry, will be essential over the next four years. BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest will discuss the needs of the EV industry with employers, to increase collaboration and diversification into this sector. This will lead to a better workforce pipeline for employers in Region 8.

3. Regional Service Strategies

Numerous regional service strategies have been established, and will continue to be enhanced, through the use of a coordinated regional data analysis and ongoing collaboration.

Equity

The Michigan Works! Agencies in Region 8 are committed to equity in every aspect of our work, holding strict diversity, equity, and inclusion policies, and implementing equitable service delivery practices, to ensure that all individuals are provided access to high quality services. To help decrease and eliminate barrier to individuals most in need of workforce programs, the Michigan Works! Agencies deliver services virtually, as appropriate. Further, to eliminate barriers to accessibility, WIOA and other programs are made available within organizations located in underserved communities. With a focus on serving the most disadvantaged and disenfranchised groups in Region 8, both BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest hold ourselves accountable for creating a culture that results in high quality service delivery to all communities and community members.

Business Solutions Teams

The Certified Business Solutions Professional (CBSP) approach is used across Southwest Michigan to engage employers throughout Region 8. The Business Solutions lead staff in the region work hand-in-hand with community stakeholders, including area business networks, educational and training partners, and economic development organizations, to meet the current and future needs of both employers and job seekers. By leveraging these partnerships to support and build connections between business, workforce development, educators and economic developers in

Region 8, CBSPs assist in the success of local employers utilizing a demand-driven approach with solutions that fit the specific needs of the workforce and expand local employment opportunities.

With a vision for dedicating focus on the growth and sustainability of businesses in Region 8, the Business Solutions Teams are fully equipped with the understanding of supply and demand, as it applies to local industries, strengthening the abilities of BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest to provide excellent customer service for job seekers. Armed with the critical knowledge of labor market data, CBSPs provide strategic support to the training and hiring of local employers, addressing the quantity of available positions to the number of work eligible individuals, while assuring that the needs of local business are being met. Additionally, by utilizing local industry consortiums and local labor market data, the Business Solutions Teams are able to provide job seekers with access to training and targeted job placement strategies that assist local families in achieving and maintaining financial self-sufficiency, growing the middle class. The establishment of robust Business Solutions Teams (BST) has been a key strategy in implementing the demand-driven model across Region 8. The BST concept has three key features:

1. A focus on business as the driver and primary customer;
2. A team of workforce development professionals specifically trained for and committed to developing relationships with businesses; and
3. 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 Solutions 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, and youth;
- Facilitating connections between employers and education institutions;
- Utilizing a multi-generational approach, including addressing talent gaps between generations, to address the ever-changing workforce;
- Using data to inform decision making;
- Serving the needs of the ALICE population;
- Providing career exploration events for students and job seekers;
- Assisting employers with the development and growth of apprenticeship programs; and
- Support of industry specific consortia work throughout Region 8.

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

- Education and training providers,
- Vocational rehabilitation partners,
- Veteran Services partners,
- Economic development organizations,
- Business management consultants,
- Area Chambers of Commerce,
- Community-based organizations,
- 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, Department of Education,
- United States Department of Labor, 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 Solutions 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.

Entrepreneurship

Enhanced through the strong relationships between the Business Solutions Team and area employers, the Michigan Works! Agencies of Region 8 provides resources to aspiring entrepreneurs, including workshops and referrals to partner agencies to assist in business start up and training, business plan writing, and access to capital and financial preparation.

Youth Services

Region 8 has a comprehensive outreach and recruitment process designed to engage eligible in school youth 14 through 21 years old, and out of school youth 16 through 24 years of age, with individualized service strategies unique to the differing needs of youth/young adults. WIOA Youth Services provide services to all communities across the region. To ensure that potential customers will be aware of the breadth of services available to them, a multi-faceted, flexible, and customized outreach and recruitment process supports WIOA Youth activities, ensuring that both BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest maintains a youth-friendly intake environment, welcoming and easy to access, and provides potential participants with flexible times and locations for intakes. Utilizing an easy to navigate enrollment process and supporting WIOA Youth services through the leveraging additional funding sources, is a priority in Region 8.

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, supporting the State of Michigan's 60% by 2030 goal. JMG programs strive for this goal 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. BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest actively partner with Youth Solutions in their mission to equip young people with the skills to overcome barriers and succeed in education, employment, and life.

Youth Outreach and Recruitment

Comprehensive outreach and recruitment processes have been designed to engage eligible and suitable youth from all communities across the region for WIOA Youth Services. In order to ensure that potential customers will be aware of the breadth of services available to them, a multi-faceted, flexible, and customized outreach and recruitment process has been designed to support both in-school and out-of-school activities; and those individuals will have every opportunity to connect with services.

Outreach and recruitment opportunities are facilitated through:

- maintaining a youth-friendly intake environment;
- maintaining welcoming and easy to access facilities;
- providing potential participants with flexible times and locations for intakes;
- utilizing an easy to navigate and streamlined enrollment procedure, and
- personalizing and customizing the recruitment process.

Veterans Services

There are a variety of services provided by the employment service professionals to assist eligible veterans and spouses to 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), and
- Basic staff-assisted career 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.

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 complies 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 exit from the prison system and reintegration into the community through the use of parole and Offender Success services. 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 Offender Success Transition Team meetings in Kalamazoo County to provide job leads, workshop schedules, and information on other workforce development resources provided in the Michigan Works! Southwest area.

Other Regional Partnerships

Through intentional efforts, positive and cooperative relationships with state agencies, at the local level, including the Unemployment Insurance Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, the Department of Education, and others, have resulted in business customers and job seekers receiving unduplicated, coordinated services. BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest work collaboratively with the numerous agencies throughout Region 8 with a goal of inclusion and universal access.

These agencies include:

- **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 fully accessible community where disability is valued as human diversity. Their mission is to advance justice, access, and inclusion for the Disability Community. 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.

- The **Migrant Seasonal Farmworker program** is a federal initiative in the United States designed to support migrant and seasonal agricultural workers. The program aims to address the unique challenges faced by these workers, including employment, education, health, and housing. Specifically, the objectives of the MSFW program are as follows:
 - Provide job placement, training, and career development opportunities to improve the employment prospects of migrant and seasonal farm workers;
 - Offer educational programs and vocational training to enhance skills and increase job opportunities;
 - Address health concerns and ensure safe working conditions for farm workers. Support access to decent and affordable housing; and
 - Provide legal assistance and advocacy to protect workers' rights.

- **Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)** is a statewide network of vocational rehabilitation (VR) professionals developing creative, customized solutions that meet the needs of individuals and business. The organizations' vocational rehabilitation services for eligible individuals with disabilities, consistent with their unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, help them to prepare for and engage in employment and achieve economic self-sufficiency. Using a dual customer approach, the subject matter experts of Business Relations Consultants, Rehabilitation Specialists and Occupational Therapists of the MRS's Business Services Division serve individuals along with the business customer. Their mission is to develop customized workforce solutions for businesses and individuals with disabilities, envisioning a diverse and inclusive workforce that unites businesses and individuals with disabilities toward a common good.

- **Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP)** is an organization committed to providing opportunities for individuals who are blind or visually impaired to achieve employment, and/or achieve maximum and meaningful independence in life through comprehensive rehabilitative services. In addition, the BSBP Training Centers (one of which is located in Kalamazoo County) provides training and services that empower residents of the State of Michigan experiencing vision loss or impairment to achieve their individual goals. BSBP provides vocational skills training to aid in finding a job and training in daily living skills for State of Michigan residents living without vision.
- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)** is an organization that provides free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and the Americans with Disabilities Act legislation to individuals and employers. JAN provides individualized consultation to assist employers and their representatives seeking guidance on practical ways to engage in the interactive process, provide job accommodation solutions, and comply with Title I of the ADA; individuals with health conditions and disabilities seeking information about job accommodation solutions, employment rights under the ADA, and self-employment and entrepreneurship opportunities; and family members and rehabilitation, medical, educational, and other professionals in their effort to support successful employment outcomes for individuals with health conditions and disabilities.
- **AARP** is an organization that operates the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). As the nation's oldest program to help low-income, unemployed individuals aged 50+ 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.

Sector Strategies

Current Sector Based Partnerships and Business Involvement

In Region 8, a sector strategies approach is utilized to guide collaborations and priorities, and the focus areas of manufacturing, healthcare, accommodation/food service, construction, and agriculture, as identified above are in alignment with the State of Michigan, key industry sectors of agriculture, construction, energy, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, mobility, and hospitality and outdoor recreation.

Currently, robust consortium groups in Manufacturing, Electric Vehicle/Information Technology, 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;
- Sharing of training needs; and
- General information and resource sharing.

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

- Education and training,
- Economic development,
- Community resources,
- Workforce development,
- State Representatives and
- Employers.

A critical step in the success of these consortiums includes maintaining strong employer engagement, as businesses of these groups continue to serve as change agents throughout the region and, as such, has been the foundation on which the groups were built. Convening regularly, for the purpose of gathering and disseminating information among sector partners and community stakeholders, has proven successful in the development of training activities, including the development of industry-recognized credentials, and holding solutions for training skills gaps that are identified by employers. The diverse and strategic membership of each consortium provides expertise and understanding of the specific industries, guiding each consortia's collective efforts.

Region 8 Manufacturing Consortiums and Organizations

The Manufacturing Growth Alliance, Battle Creek Advanced Manufacturing Consortium and the Kalamazoo Advanced Manufacturing Consortium use locally developed, innovative and integrated model to attract, screen, and train qualified candidates for current and future advanced manufacturing career opportunities.

Collectively, 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 Community College iACT programs;
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) CNC Operator Academy;
- KVCC Mechatronic Technician Academy;
- Lake Michigan College, various apprenticeship programs;
- Southwestern Michigan College, various apprenticeship programs;
- Michigan Manufacturing Technical Corporation (MMTC) Supervisor Training Programs and Manufacturing Training Programs; and
- Society of Manufacturing Engineers (Tooling U) Certified Manufacturing Associates (CMfgA) Program.

Kalamazoo and Battle Creek Advanced Manufacturing Consortiums

Local manufacturers and service providers have been meeting since 2011 in Kalamazoo and since 2011 in Battle Creek. The groups, with an average of 35 manufacturing companies and community organizations, convene 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 that they collectively face as employers, 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.

Manufacturing Growth Alliance

Manufacturing Growth Alliance (MGA), established in 2019, is a membership-based organization that helps over 2,500 Michigan manufacturers build smart, lead strong, and establish a pathway for future growth. MGA actively connects with manufacturers in Region 8 to understand trends, workforce challenges and needs of manufacturers. One focus area of MGA is supporting small manufacturers with technological advancements to remain globally competitive. Advancement in industry 4.0 technologies is essential to the survival of small manufacturing facilities in Region 8.

Southwest Michigan Healthcare Consortium

The Southwest Michigan 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.

Advanced IT Solutions Consortium

In 2023, The development of this consortium was spearheaded by employers representing the IT industry sector, committed to resolving talent gaps by applying supply-chain management principles to industry processes, to attract, develop and retain qualified talent for the IT industry, now and in the foreseeable future. Ensuring proper representation of Southwest Michigan information technology employers, of varying size and scope, and community partners of Region 8, has been a priority from its inception. Actively engaging employers and community partners during the development, to guide the agenda of Consortium meetings, has supported the progress towards workforce training goals.

The core focus of the Advanced IT Solutions Consortium is to support the local information technology ecosystem, including an enhanced focus on the rapidly evolving support for the production of electric vehicles. Industry employers, in partnership with local education and training providers, align existing, and develop new, training curriculums for the recruitment and/or upskilling information technology occupations, including the current and future electric vehicle industry workforce, supporting Michigan's 60% by 2030 goal.

The exploration of existing and enhancement of future career pathways, outlining advancement of high wage, in demand electrical occupations, within consortium companies, is also a part of the exploration of this consortium. With a focus on increasing and maintaining employer engagement, CBSP strategies are used when building relationships with employers, which includes operating a demand driven approach. Utilizing data to make informed decisions is critical to the continuance of this consortia, creating more local efforts to meet the region's needs.

Career Pathways

Career pathways are a strategic approach to workforce development that benefits individuals, employers, and the broader economy. They provide a roadmap for career advancement, ensure the

development of relevant skills, and foster collaboration between employers and training providers, ultimately leading to a more robust and dynamic workforce.

CEAC

The Career and Educational Advisory Council (CEAC) serves as the regional equivalent of educational advisory groups, required by Public Act 491 of 2006 to serve in an advisory capacity to the local WDB on educational issues. With a mission to create and support a talent preparation and development system that will provide all students, youth to the adult learner, with the necessary academic, technical, and work behavior skills that will meet business and industry needs to maintain and enhance the economy of the region, to achieve its primary purpose, the CEAC is specifically responsible to coordinate with other educational entities, in guiding career development programs and career pathways (such as high schools, community colleges, career and technical education, adult education, workforce development programs, Michigan Works! agencies, Offender Success programs, corrections education, veterans' programs, and college access networks) in support of the WDB's mission and strategic workforce development plans. With the guidance and assistance of the Career Educational Advisory Council (CEAC), Michigan Works! agencies in Region 8 will continue to keep career pathways at the forefront with educators for all age groups.

Job Quality

Both Michigan Works! Agencies of Region 8 are dedicated to the job quality principles, as described in TEGL 07-22. Good jobs are the foundation of an equitable economy that lifts workers and families, in alignment with the state's workforce plan of increasing the middle class. Prioritizing equitable recruitment and hiring, job security and working conditions, and increased wages, with skills and career advancement, are in alignment of the goals of the Business Solutions teams, in collaboration with are companies of open occupations.

Regional Career Fairs

BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest strive to work with employers throughout Region 8 on the planning, implementation and facilitation of virtual and in person 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.

Employer Surveys

An additional regional strategy to focus on gathering information from employers and sharing the gathered information with employers will be a focus throughout the implementation of this plan. Recently, a collaborative survey was conducted by the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, Michigan Works! Southwest, Southwest Michigan First, and Michigan Works! Berrien, Cass, Van Buren to capture valuable information from local employers to better address regional challenges and opportunities. Together, the partners present the data to legislators that represent Southwest Michigan.

This survey examined issues related to employee attraction and retention such as wages, benefits, recruitment incentives like hiring bonuses, the changing structure of work, and workplace practices. It also examined alternative ways companies are trying to meet labor demand. The data focused on manufacturing and health-care establishments in Michigan's Prosperity Region 8: Van Buren, Kalamazoo, Calhoun, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Branch Counties. The results and additional information [can be found here](#).

4. 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 for the associated funding stream.

5. Transportation and Supportive Service Coordination

As with all continuous improvement processes, there is an 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 of breaking down county line restrictions and barriers of service area alignment by county. These efforts will continue to be prioritized throughout the life of this plan 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 to 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:
 - Kalamazoo Metro Link (flexible on-demand Rideshare for Greater Kalamazoo)
 - Exploration of Other 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
- Advocacy Groups
- American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
- Area Agency on Aging and Commission on Aging
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- Burma Center
- Business Resource Networks
- Branch County Community Network
- Centro De Ayuda
- Centro Vida
- Childcare Resources

- Community Action Agency
- Community Foundations
- 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
- Human Resource organizations
- Job Accommodation Network
- Kalamazoo Probation and Parole Enhancement (KPEP)
- Kalamazoo RESA Career Development
- Keystone Place
- Legal Aid
- Literacy organizations
- Meals on Wheels
- Mental health & counseling agencies
- Michigan United
- Neighborhood programs
- Peer Support Groups
- Region 8 Literacy Hub
- 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 Solutions

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.

6. 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, to assist prospective employers, 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 remains 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 industries 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
- 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

In support of, and in alignment with, sixty by 30 and Reconnect efforts, 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
- Heritage Southwest Intermediate School District
- Kalamazoo Regional Educational Services Agency
- Kalamazoo Valley Community College
- Kellogg Community College
- Lake Michigan College
- Michigan Career Technical Institute
- Michigan Reconnect Program
- Saint Joseph County Intermediate School District
- Sixty by 30 Initiative
- 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 continue to 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 training 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.

The use of apprenticeship programs in collaboration with employers and training providers has been a primary focus across the region. 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 includes both classroom studies with extensive on-the-job training under the supervision of a professional. The region's Business Solutions staff and the Apprenticeship Success Coordinators will continue to 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 apprenticeship opportunities 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 shares this vision. These organizations maximize Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) benefits for Region 8 by working together to meet the needs of the region's employers. The GPTF focuses on assisting companies in meeting 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 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:

- 124 awards for fiscal year 2022 totaling \$4,083,656
- 85 awards for fiscal year 2023 totaling \$4,763,010
- 75 awards for fiscal year 2024 totaling \$5,270,096

In addition to supporting individual employer GPTF applications, BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest have strong Employer Led Collaboratives where groups of businesses, led by a champion employer, come together to solve a common or share workforce training problems.

In support of the progress and expansion of businesses in Southwest Michigan, BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest will continue to work collaboratively to assist employers in achieving this opportunity.

7. Regional Performance Goals

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 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 strives to meet all local area negotiated performance measures and are currently navigating performance outcomes in response to the pandemic. In August of 2024, BCVB Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! Southwest anticipate the opportunity to negotiate performance measures for PY2024, 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 2024 State of Michigan Combined State Plan.