

## YOUTH TRANSITION PLAN

### I. Local Vision and Goals

A. The youth vision of the Capital Area Michigan Works! Workforce Development Board (WDB) is to ensure that young people within the tri-county region achieve at high levels academically while exploring and preparing for the high-skill jobs within the region as well as the entire State of Michigan. The Educational Advisory Group (EAG), comprised of WDB members, as well as other leaders from the education, business, and the community was charged with the responsibility of designing and implementing the regional tri-county Career Preparation System (CPS). Workforce Investment Act funding will be used in conjunction with CPS funding to operate youth programs with universal goals for both program.

Desiring to gain a better understanding of what happens to graduates once they finished high school and if they were adequately prepared for the post-secondary education and/or training they pursued, the EAG retained Public Policy Associates, Inc., a Lansing-based public policy research, development, and evaluation firm, in the Spring of 1999 to conduct a high school graduate follow-up study to gain insight into how well students in the tri-county region are prepared for life upon graduating from high school. The results of the study shaped our vision and defined our strategic goals for youths.

**Goal One – Take steps to build a stronger connection between high school and postsecondary education and training for all students.**

Graduates recognize that high school plays a pivotal role in preparing them for the future. The consensus was that although schools primarily met some of their career preparation needs, there were areas where quality improvements were necessary. Many of these areas fall within the scope of the career preparation system initiative. By addressing these concerns, schools can build a stronger link between high school preparation and postsecondary education, training, and employment for all students.

**Goal Two – Increase the capacity of guidance counselors and teachers to address career development topics.**

The schools should be prominent in supporting individual decision-making regarding career choices. While some guidance counselors are addressing some of the career-related information needs of students, there is plenty of room for improvement, particularly in the quality of information provided to students about careers and the degree to which students are exposed to an array of career options. This was found to be true for all students, regardless of their postsecondary career path. Both guidance counselors and teachers play important roles in career preparation. The vast majority of students were employed during their senior year in high school, yet most reported little or no connection between their job and their high school preparation or career choices. This represents a tremendous opportunity for teachers to link classroom instruction with

real-life demands of the workplace, including communications skills, problem-solving, teamwork, etc. Closer relationships with the business community also need to be built so that employers can help students develop and refine both job-specific and employability skills.

**Goal Three – Emphasize the development of individual written career plans for all students.** The existence of a written career plan was a key indicator of graduate satisfaction with the quality of career-oriented advice they received from their guidance counselor. In turn, graduates who felt they were provided with high quality career-oriented advice were more satisfied with the preparation they received in high school. The written career plan serves as a tool for raising career awareness and improving career planning and establishes a closer link between high school preparation and future career success.

**Goal Four – Increase emphasis on the development of employer-valued “soft skills” for all students.** Graduates reported being under-prepared in several key areas that employers value. These skill gaps will be addressed by integrating Michigan’s Career and Employability Content Standards throughout the academic curriculum for all students. Setting high academic standards for all students will also be emphasized.

Students in the tri-county region should graduate from high school with a skill that will enable them to make a decent living. They should also

be skilled enough to enter into the entry level jobs that are provided by businesses located within the region.

**B. In five years, we expect that there will be a limited number of service providers operating programs for youths. It is also possible that these providers will be educational institutions that may also operate One-Stop Centers in conjunction with operating programs. They will also have established linkages with post-secondary institutions in the region and will attempt to provide youth desiring to attend college with a more seamless transition from high school to college.**

Youths will receive a myriad of services. Reading and math assessments will be conducted to determine grade equivalents. An interest inventory will be given to determine career areas of interest and youths will research and explore those areas they appear to be suited for. Youths will also conduct a labor market analysis to learn about jobs that are in demand in the tri-county area and the skills that are required to fill the jobs.

Youths will have access to the Michigan Works! Employment Service Centers and will be able to use the services provided by the Centers. They can input their resume on the talent bank, search for jobs that are available, obtain information from the resource room, and access other career-related information.

**C. According to the 1999 Annual Planning Information Report prepared for the Capital Area Michigan Works! area, the youth customers in the area**

that are between the ages of 14-21 who are economically disadvantaged total 11,694. Of that number, 7,014 economically disadvantaged 16-21 year old persons are already in the labor force. The two groups who are experiencing relatively high unemployment are 16-19 year old black and hispanic males. Eligible youths will be 14-21 years of age, low-income individuals, and possess at least one of the designated barriers. Thirty percent of the funds will be used to provide youth activities for out-of-school youths.

D. Capital Area Michigan Works! will use a request for proposal (RFP) process that begins with a newspaper advertisement and ends with the start of the new program year. In addition, the RFP will be available for download from our website. The advertisement will provide information about the type of program(s) being sought, funding availability, and a training session on preparation of the proposal. A bidders list will be maintained of past proposers and anyone interested in receiving notification of upcoming proposal releases. Notification will be sent to those on the bidders list approximately one week prior to the training session. During the training session, the proposal packet will be reviewed and a question and answer period will follow. The proposals will be due approximately one month from the review session. Bidders will be required to provide a Pre-Bid notice that informs Capital Area Michigan Works! of their intent to bid as well as identify potential conflicts of interest by members of the Workforce Development

**Board (WDB) and/or Administrative Board. Review subcommittees will then be formed.**

**WDB subcommittees and staff review proposals and direct bidders to address proposal questions. After the first subcommittee meeting, staff evaluates or ranks proposals using an evaluation criterion spreadsheet developed from the bids of all current proposers and information on past performance and efficiency. A proposal presentation session will be held to provide WDB members with an opportunity to hear the responses to committee-prepared questions or other issues. The WDB subcommittees will meet again and receive the staff funding recommendations on the RFPs and develop their funding recommendations. These subcommittee funding recommendations are presented to the full WDB for its funding recommendations. Then, the Administrative Board receives the WDB and staff recommendations and accepts or rejects them. After the WDB and Administrative Board achieve concurrence, contracts are prepared and signed. Information on successful program bidders and contract amounts will be posted on our website. Contracts will also be available for review at the Administrative Office during office hours.**

**E. The sixth youth eligibility criterion would allow an individual to be an eligible youth if that person doesn't possess an Educational Development Plan (EDP), that contains relative information on a career(s) that is (are) of interest to the individual, classes needed to succeed in the career, wage and**

labor market information on the listed career, and a parent-signature on the document attesting that it has been read and approved by the parent.

F. The Capital Area Michigan Works! tri-county area currently has four One-Stop Employment Service Centers in operation. Two of the Centers are located within and operated by Intermediate School Districts (ISDs). Both ISDs operate job-training programs; therefore, youth have access to all of the resources available at the Center. We anticipate requiring all youth providers to arrange for their clients to visit a Center to learn about the services that are available. We also anticipate that youths will be included in the recruiting pool conducted by employers during the "Employer of the Day" events.

## II. Strategies for Improvement

A. At this point in time, it is anticipated that the Workforce Development Board will be the Youth Council. The EAG has agreed to play a key role in the development of programs to improve educational outcomes and will be relied upon for input on programs dedicated to increasing skills and cultivating knowledge for students in the region. There is parent and student representation on the EAG so their input will be critical to the development of meaningful and worthwhile projects.

B. There is no Job Corp Center in the tri-county region and to our knowledge, no youth opportunity grant has been written. Youths that are recognized as having significant barriers to employment will receive a

comprehensive assessment which will list the barriers and also list a plan of action to remove the barriers. As the barriers are removed, the assessment form will be updated to reflect progress and to capture additional barriers that may surface as a result of participation in the program. Youths enrolled by one agency that may need services not provided by that agency will be referred to an agency that provides the needed service. We expect to serve youths using the holistic approach and will expect that any provider serving this population will have or initiate contacts with staff at welfare agencies, post-secondary institutions, community-based organizations, and any other youth-related programs and agencies. A youth should be able to receive a myriad of services through that one provider, whether the provider offers the service or the service is received through a referral system. Networks should be formed among providers and linkages should be shared to ensure that any assistance that is deemed needed will be available for the youths. Many of these interagency linkages are already in place. Youths with special needs will be accommodated.

C. In order to meet the Act's provisions regarding youth program design, the request for proposal will require potential youth service providers to address how their programs will provide for the following: preparation for postsecondary educational opportunities; strong linkages between academic and occupational learning; preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities; effective linkages with intermediaries with strong employer

connections; alternative secondary school services; summer employment opportunities; paid and unpaid work experiences; occupational skill training; leadership development opportunities; comprehensive guidance and counseling; supportive services; and follow-up services. Program providers must have the following program components available to youths: (1) tutoring, study skill training, and instruction leading to secondary school completion; (2) alternative secondary school offerings; (3) summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning; (4) paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing; (5) occupational skill training; (6) leadership development opportunities which includes activities such as positive social behavior and soft skills, decision-making, teamwork; (7) supportive services; (8) adult mentoring for at least 12 months; (9) follow-up services; and (10) comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referrals to other counseling services. If there are components that a provider cannot provide, they will be expected to secure the service for the youths through another provider.

All providers will be required to operate a summer component that has an academic or occupational learning component in conjunction with work experience. Since all youths will be required to have a parent-endorsed EDP, information for most of the categories listed above should be included within the EDP document.

## **Review, Comment, and Publication Documentation**

On or before December 18, 1999, the availability of the plan for review will be published in the Lansing State Journal. In addition, the plan will be accessible from our website ([www.michworks-ltc.com](http://www.michworks-ltc.com)). Members of the local board and the public will be encouraged to review the plan and submit comments. The complete plan and comments on the plan will be maintained at the Administrative Office of Capital Area Michigan Works!. Comments expressing disagreement with the plan will be submitted with the plan to the Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD).

Copies of the complete plan are obtainable by calling (517) 487-0106, x. 117. The plan will be made available in alternative formats, such as large print, audio tape, etc. when requested.