

MARCH 2010 PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE REPORT
DISCUSSION ITEMS

The Planning & Development Committee will meet at 12:00 p.m. on Friday, March 12th, at the Calhoun ISD. The committee will consider the following discussion items. Board members may request copies of the documents and back-up information.

WorkKeys Update

SUMMARY: Barry, Branch and Calhoun Counties continue to administer WorkKeys assessments and offer KeyTrain remediation software to customers. WorkKeys and KeyTrain data from January follows.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: The National Career Readiness Certificate Kick-off event took place on February 23, from 12:00-1:30 p.m., at the Branch Area Careers Center.

Approximately 60 individuals, including employers and educators were in attendance at this event. The purpose of the event was to inform individuals about WorkKeys, hear from employers who have utilized the WorkKeys assessments and National Career Readiness Certificates and discuss how to implement the National Career Readiness Certificate in Branch County. Lisa Larson gave a presentation about the National Career Readiness Certificate, Mike Hoffner (BACC) talked about WorkKeys from an employer's perspective, Jim Bentley (WorkKeys Profiler and President of Bentley HR Development in Coldwater) spoke from an employer's perspective, and a representative from Work One (Indiana's agency similar to Michigan Works!) spoke about her profiling experience with one of the companies in Indiana. A follow-up meeting will be held on March 16, 2010.

WorkKeys is a job skills assessment system measuring "real world" skills that employers believe are critical to job success. Three of the twelve WorkKeys assessments can earn an individual a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). These three WorkKeys assessments are Applied Math, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. Depending on the score or level that the individual obtains on the assessment, they can earn a bronze, silver, gold or platinum NCRC.

In the case where an individual needs to increase their skill level, KeyTrain is available to help them improve their skills. KeyTrain is a web-based tutorial.

Analysis of Data

Data for the WorkKeys assessments, the National Career Readiness Certificates earned and KeyTrain usage are below.

Exhibit D-1

In the month of January 2010, 45% of the individuals that took the three WorkKeys assessments earned a Silver National Career Readiness Certificate. A Silver certificate signifies a score of at least a level 4 in each of the core areas and indicates that an individual has the necessary skills for 65% of the jobs in the WorkKeys database.

A request was made at the Planning and Development Committee meeting in January to compare the certificate levels with whether the individual has their high school diploma/GED. This information is not current tracked; however, the high school diploma/GED information is included in the demographic information on the answer sheet. Tracking this additional information would involve creating a database to record names of individuals and educational status because the assessments with the demographic information are sent to ACT before we receive the National Career Readiness Certificates. The CISD WFD team will recommend to the Planning & Development Committee that we collect this data from contractors for one month only due the extra time commitment.

The committee also wondered why the KeyTrain numbers were so low in Albion. WFD staff checked with all four service centers to inquire about this. Branch and Calhoun counties reported that the JET program primarily uses KeyTrain. In Barry County, they promote KeyTrain in their No Worker Left Behind orientations as a way to prepare for the GED and the Compass College Entrance exam as well as a way to improve scores on the Work Keys assessments. This is also communicated in the resource room in Barry County. JET participants also use KeyTrain in Barry County. Individuals in No Worker Left Behind orientations in Branch and Calhoun counties are also informed of KeyTrain.

CISD WFD staff will ensure that the general public utilizing the resource rooms receive more information on KeyTrain through flyers and Michigan Works! staff communicating this information to customers when they are describing the services that Michigan Works! offers. WFD staff will also ensure that contract staff administering WorkKeys tests informs test-takers about the availability of KeyTrain if they would like to improve in these WorkKeys skill areas.

January 2010 – Barry ISD, HRDI Branch & Calhoun, and JET Sites

Contractor/ County	Individuals Assessed	Below Bronze	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Platinum
Barry ISD/ Barry	12	2	1	8	1	0
HRDI/ Branch	8	0	2	3	3	0
HRDI/ Albion	0	0	0	0	0	0
HRDI/ Battle Creek	5	0	0	4	1	0
JET/ Barry	13	2	5	4	2	0
JET/ Branch	27	3	10	12	2	0
JET/ Albion	15	4	4	6	1	0
JET/ Battle Creek	72	14	19	32	7	0
Total Assessed	152	25	41	69	17	0

KeyTrain Progress Report

Hastings Service Center

From: 1/1/2010 through 1/31/2010

For Organization: Hastings Service Center

In the following courses:

Reading for Information

Applied Mathematics

Locating Information

Total number of students	93
Number of new students	15
Number of students active during this period	5
Total hours worked	19.4
Pretests completed *	5
Hours spent on pretests	1.1
Level Lessons passed *	5
Hours spent on passed lessons	10.1
Lessons in progress *	7
Hours spent on lessons in progress	7.7

KeyTrain Progress Report

Albion Service Center

From: 1/1/2010 through 1/31/2010

For Organization: Albion Service Center

In the following courses:

Reading for Information

Applied Mathematics

Total number of students	79
Number of new students	7
Number of students active during this period	7
Total hours worked	17.8
Pretests completed *	8
Hours spent on pretests	2.8
Level Lessons passed *	0
Hours spent on passed lessons	0.0
Lessons in progress *	7
Hours spent on lessons in progress	14.7

KeyTrain Progress Report

Coldwater Service Center

From: 1/1/2010 through 1/31/2010

For Organization: Coldwater Service Center

In the following courses:

Reading for Information

Applied Mathematics

Locating Information

Total number of students	184
Number of new students	3
Number of students active during this period	9
Total hours worked	50.9
Pretests completed *	8
Hours spent on pretests	3.3
Level Lessons passed *	15
Hours spent on passed lessons	6.8
Lessons in progress *	18
Hours spent on lessons in progress	40.7

KeyTrain Progress Report

Battle Creek Service Center

From: 1/1/2010 through 1/31/2010

For Organization: Battle Creek Service Center

In the following courses:

Reading for Information

Applied Mathematics

Locating Information

Total number of students	553
Number of new students	29
Number of students active during this period	34
Total hours worked	104.3
Pretests completed *	33
Hours spent on pretests	13.4
Level Lessons passed *	35
Hours spent on passed lessons	46.3
Lessons in progress *	40
Hours spent on lessons in progress	42.6

Albion Forum

SUMMARY: The Albion Area Community Adjustment Committee met on March 2 and planned a forum/breakfast for April 27, from 8:30-10:00 a.m., to be held at the KCC Eastern Academic Center in Albion. This forum is called the Michigan Works!/Albion Community Involvement Forum. Community members and employers will be invited to hear panel speakers, including Kate Segal (confirmed), the Mayor of Albion, Albion City Recreation Department and a representative from education.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: In August of 2002, a group of concerned agency representatives and elected officials formed the "Harvard Adjustment Committee" to address the needs of the 500 workers displaced as a result of the closing of Harvard Industries. The committee accomplished a great deal, including capturing a grant totaling \$180,000 from the (then-named) Michigan Department of Career Development to expand staffing and training resources in Albion. In addition, the staff was able to support numerous job seeking skills workshops to assist the dislocated workers in becoming reemployed. At the time of the closing, Michigan Works! provided many of these individuals with various services including training and job development services.

In 2003, the committee decided to expand its scope to the Albion area workforce and employers. The current mission statement of this committee is to develop strategies for providing information and a full range of employment and training services to assist Albion area workers to achieve economic success. The committee is in the process of discussing the direction of the committee and, as a result of this discussion, planned the forum for April. This committee will meet again on March 23 to further plan this event.

Elevate America Voucher Distribution Update

SUMMARY: The State of Michigan has received 71,000 vouchers from Microsoft for the Elevate America program, which will be distributed through the twenty-five local Michigan Works! Agencies. Elevate America is an initiative by Microsoft Corporation to assist thousands of workers nationwide with improving their technical skills and certifications. The vouchers available through the Elevate America program allow workers to access specialized e-learning programs relevant to Microsoft's various programs and platforms including, but not limited to, Outlook, Word, Excel, Access, and Microsoft Exchange Server. Michigan launched the Elevate America program on January 11, 2010; it runs through April 11, 2010.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: As presented at the January meeting, the intent of these vouchers is to be available to the general public. Therefore, vouchers are being distributed through Employment Services at each Service Center location. Additionally, the Business Service Team is working with area businesses to raise awareness of the initiative and assist employers with distribution to employees of companies to whom the vouchers may be useful.

Information regarding the initiative has been distributed to each county's multi-purpose collaborative body (Barry County Resource Network, Family Service Network (Branch) and The Coordinating Council (Calhoun), all libraries throughout the MWA, the Non-Profit Alliance, Michigan Works! Partners and various other organizations. Information is also being added to the Michpartners.org website and an ad is being run in all of the local papers to assist with marketing.

The chart on the following page indicates the types of vouchers, their allocation throughout the MWA and voucher distribution by service center through February 28, 2010.

Exhibit D-1

COUNTY	VOUCHER TYPE							
	Basic E-Learning		Office 2003 Exams		Office 2007 Exams		For IT Professionals	
ES Contract	Total Allocated	Distributed Through 2/28/10	Total Allocated	Distributed Through 2/28/10	Total Allocated	Distributed Through 2/28/10	Total Allocated	Distributed Through 2/28/10
Barry ISD	144	15	72	0	72	0	37	3
Branch - KCC	145	16	73	3	73	16	37	2
Calhoun - KCC	434	8	217	7	217	14	112	4
TOTAL	723	39	362	10	362	30	186	9
Percent of Total		5%		3%		8%		5%

Examples of successes with voucher distribution include:

- Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) has requested vouchers to assist their students with upgrading their technical skills – it is projected that they will use approximately 80 vouchers in March and may request more in April if there are still vouchers available.
- Calhoun Intermediate School District’s Department of Technology (CDOT) has requested vouchers to upgrade the skills of their IT Professionals – requests were made in March, and therefore, are not reflected in the table above.
- Contractors have been doing supplemental marketing to entities such as service clubs, local schools, chambers of commerce, etc.

Reemployment Services Grant Update

SUMMARY: At the July meeting the Board approved \$197,450 in funding for the Reemployment Service (RES) Grant. The intent of this funding is to provide workshops geared toward “white collar” workers, to obtain and implement Employability Skills curriculum, to hire staff who will provide these workshops to the general public, and provide some infrastructure support (such as computers and furniture) to support the project. This exhibit is being provided as a status update.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

The Reemployment Services to be provided with this funding include:

- Procurement of Work Readiness curriculum (that will meet State requirements for NCRC Work Readiness Skills endorsement) and “train-the-trainer” training to Michigan Works! sub-contract staff regarding said training delivery.

Nine sub-contract staff members have completed Train-the-trainer sessions and are able to conduct training for customers and, as necessary, train other staff members. The Michigan Works! CISD Team is working with the Partner Agencies to coordinate training amongst the various programs. Now that all trainers have been trained, staff will be meeting with the trainers and program managers to outline how the training will be delivered throughout the MWA and develop a training schedule.

- Provision of other workshops as outlined below:
 - “What Color is Your Collar” – assessment workshop
 - Strengths based exercises/exploration
 - Skills workshops for those transitioning from employment to training
 - Job networking receptions/instructions in the use of virtual networking
 - “Training Clubs” – similar to job clubs for those who have entered training.

Kellogg Community College (KCC) began workshops in Battle Creek in early January; Barry ISD began workshops at the end of January. KCC plans to begin offering workshops on a regular basis in Branch County at the beginning of April (once the newest trainer is trained). To date, a total of 2.5 full time equivalents (FTEs) have been hired MWA-wide to provide these workshops.

In Calhoun County, 47 people have participated in these workshops, seven (7) of whom have gained employment since workshop completion. In Barry County 43 people have participated in the workshops. Workshop schedules are posted on the michpartners.org website. These workshops are enjoying great attendance and are well-regarded by those who have participated. The following are quotes from program participants:

- *“...keeps your mind clear and positive on your job search. Instead of worrying how I’ll pay my bills, I started focusing on my job search, and three companies contacted me in one day!”*
- *“Attending these workshops went well beyond my expectations as they gave me more insight into what it takes to job search in today’s tough job market”*

Exhibit D-1

- *“...gave me something to look forward to everyday and I learned so much. I had been looking for work for over a year, it wasn't until I took this class that I actually started making progress.”*

- Informational sessions regarding services available through this and other programs including No Worker Left Behind.
Information regarding No Worker Left Behind services are being incorporated into the workshops and presented accordingly. Additionally, Employment Service and Intensive & Training contract staff work together to present this information in other formats, as well (i.e. in NWLB information sessions).

- Individualized service plan development with staff; WorkKeys testing, referrals to “green jobs” and other jobs created by the Recovery Act, and information regarding training and other services.
These services, which are provided regularly, continue to be offered to members of the general public.

- Additional staff (temporary), equipment, supplies (i.e. assessments, computers, computer infrastructure; furniture, etc.) to increase the capacity to accommodate these additional services.
As noted above, staff has been hired both at Barry ISD and by KCC to build the capacity necessary to deliver the content of both the “white collar” workshops and the Employability Skills trainings (to date, 2.5 FTEs). Materials necessary for the completion of the workshops have been purchased. A new computer lab was installed in the Battle Creek Service Center to accommodate the increased demand for computers and classroom space.

The next regular meeting of the Planning and Development committee is scheduled for Friday, March 12, 2010, at 12 noon at the Calhoun ISD.