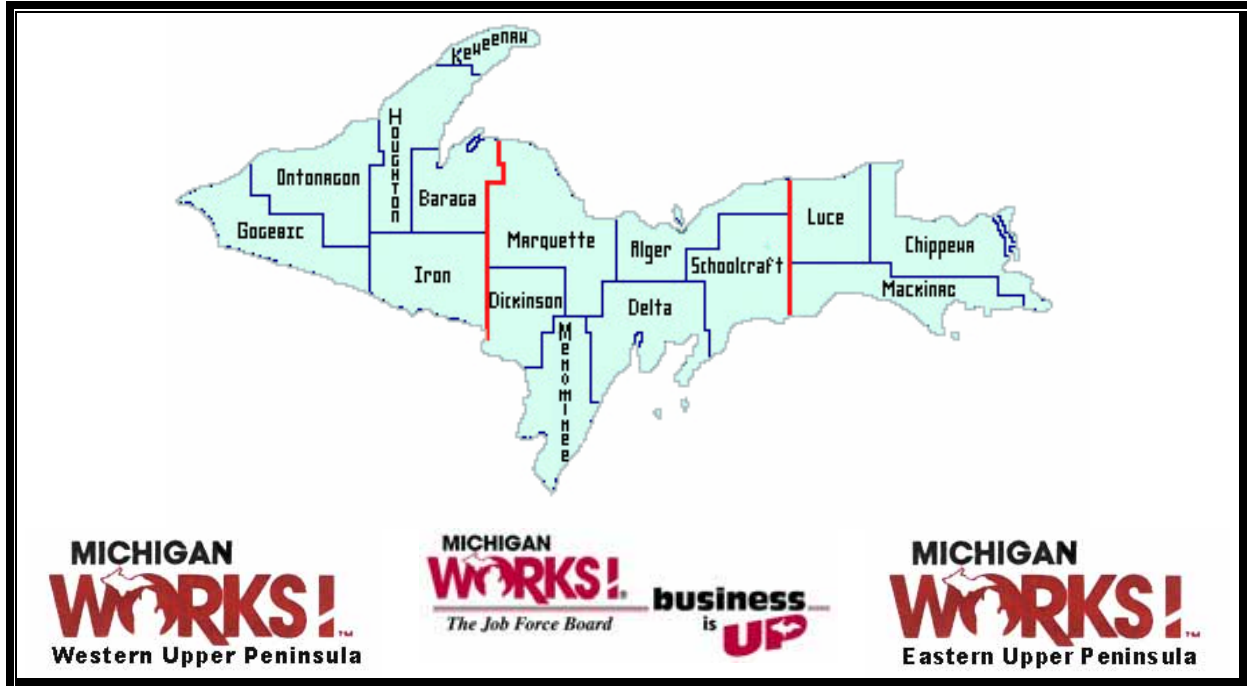


**CREATING THE 21ST CENTURY WORKFORCE:
DEVELOPING ALIGNED AND COORDINATED REGIONAL STRATEGIES
FOR
THE UPPER PENINSULA OF MICHIGAN**



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The three Michigan Works! Workforce Development Boards across the Upper Peninsula of Michigan are engaging and aligning all workforce, economic and community development stockholders to build the competitiveness of our region in the global economy. This initiative brings together all of the resources across a fifteen county region representing Gogebic, Ontonagon, Houghton, Baraga, Iron, Dickinson, Menominee, Delta, Marquette, Alger, Schoolcraft, Luce, Mackinac and Chippewa. This 21st Century Workforce Initiative contains 6-core elements for advancing the economy of the Upper Peninsula.

1. Address business and economic development needs by creating a unified approach to working with business and industry
2. Assess region-wide workforce and business resources to identify and address workforce and industry gaps.
3. Develop a layoff aversion service strategy that is aligned across the region and responsive to the needs of Upper Peninsula Business and Industry
4. Develop a rapid response service strategy that is aligned across the region and responsive to the needs of Upper Peninsula Business and Industry
5. Develop, attract, and retain workforce talent in the Upper Peninsula through partnerships that are aligned to the 21st Century workforce needs of business and industry
6. Implement a joint communication strategy for all Upper Peninsula stockholders

The outlined components of the 21st Century Strategy are consistent with the aligned Strategic Goals endorsed by the three Upper Peninsula Michigan Works! Workforce Development Boards. These goals are:

1. Workforce Improvement for Economic Development

Goal: To build regional competitiveness through collaborative partnerships

2. Resource Supply and Demand Management

Goal: Manage human resources to meet industry demand

3. Skills Development for Business and Industry

Goal: Build and prepare a skilled and competitive workforce for Upper Peninsula business and industry

These activities supporting the 21st Century Workforce Initiative and the Strategic Goals of the Michigan Works! Workforce Development Boards involve the active participation of region's Workforce Development Boards, Economic Development Organizations, Education, Community Development, private sector and local governmental organizations.

1. Address business and economic development needs by creating a unified approach to working with business and industry.

This section will present early identified gaps, initiatives and opportunities for improvement, in addressing business and economic development needs through a unified approach.

Strategies/Activities

❑ Enhanced Implementation of UP Business Barometer / Synchronist Business Information System™

Background:

The Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance (UPEDA) formed in 1999, comprised of economic developers, business, utilities, government and workforce investment boards. As a part of the formation, a strategic plan was developed which identified three core areas of activity for the UPEDA: attraction, economic gardening, and a coordinated business retention program. Following an exhaustive review of business retention tools available, the UPEDA with Central and Eastern Michigan Works! Workforce Development Boards, purchased the Synchronist

Business Information System™ and branded the initiative locally – The U.P. Business Barometer (UPBB).

Since inception, the participating economic developers and Michigan Works! Workforce Investment Boards have gathered more than 500 business retention interviews. These interviews have focused primarily on manufacturing, extraction,

finance, and some service and retail related businesses. *The foundation of the U.P. Business Barometer was to identify business growth opportunities, barriers to growth, workforce needs and businesses at risk of downsizing or closure. The intent was to have an aligned and coordinated approach to business account management that would support, MEDC, UPEDA, Workforce Investment Boards, Michigan Works! Service Centers and education partners with valuable information for economic and workforce planning. The UP Business Barometer will further enhance layoff aversion services through the capturing and reporting of industry trends regarding retention and training needs.*

Under the 21st Century planning initiative, the three WIBS will pursue with UPEDA a more unified and aligned approach to working with business and industry across the Upper Peninsula. This will encompass the strategies and resulting activities.

1. Identification and procurement of needed Synchronist™ licenses;

Activities: *The procurement of the licenses will be completed by the Job Force Board with guidance from the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance and the Eastern Western U.P. Workforce Investment Boards.*

Outcome: *The procurement of the Synchronist™ Licenses will position all partners with the tools necessary to provide trends and analysis reports to appropriate stakeholders.*

Update: *The procurement of the Synchronist™ Licenses was completed on October 27, 2007.*

2. Training for economic developers and partners – providing information about economic development and workforce development services, for appropriate referrals;

Activities: *Identification of organizations in need of training will be identified and the training will be completed by the Job Force Board Business Consultant team who are authorized Synchronist™ trainers.*

Outcome: *Trained economic development partners across the region is critical to the full implementation of the U. P. Business Barometer. This*

training will be ongoing to ensure new stakeholders are trained and operating the UP Business Barometer reporting and supporting the Business Retention Committee of the UPEDA.

Update: *All stakeholders have been trained with only new stakeholders in need of training.*

3. Implementation of the new Convention-Retail-Tourism-Services Synchronist Business Information System™ tool, to support non-base industries, such as: tourism services, government, healthcare, and gaming.

Activities: *These non-base industries make-up a substantial portion of Upper Peninsula jobs requiring implementation across the region, especially in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. The Job Force Board will procure the Convention-Retail-Tourism Services Information System with the guidance of the UPEDA and Eastern and Western Upper Peninsula WIBs.*

Outcome: *Trained economic development partners across the region is critical to the full implementation of the U. P. Business Barometer. This training will be ongoing to ensure new stakeholders are trained and operating the UP Business Barometer reporting and supporting the Business Retention Committee of the UPEDA.*

Update: *The procurement was completed October 2006. All stakeholders have been trained with new stakeholders being trained on an ongoing basis.*

4. Implementation of UP Business Barometer

Activities: *The Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance and the three Workforce Development Boards will implement the UP Business Barometer including the targeting of the Regional Skills Alliance industry membership as priority industries.*

Outcome: *The implementation of the UP Business Barometer will result in the development of aligned reporting mechanisms and report generation that can be analyzed and used by appropriate stakeholders.*

Update: *Implementation is underway in counties across the Upper Peninsula. The Business Retention Committee of the UPEDA and the three WIBS are developing aligned reporting mechanisms and responses to trends that will be implemented through 2007 and 2008.*

5. Integration of the assistance tracking module, which will allow for communication to system partners following a retention visit.

Activities: *Training for assigned stakeholders on the assistance tracking module.*

Outcome: *Training on the assistance tracking module will equip stakeholders with a communication tool to align activities among organizations.*

Update: *The UPEDA Business Retention Committee is meeting in August 2007 to determine training date and location for a UP Wide Training.*

Michigan Regional Skills Alliances

Background:

The Upper Peninsula currently boasts six MiRSA's covering utilities, construction trades, manufacturing, healthcare, tourism and forestry. These RSA's include both high-wage and high-growth occupations as well as traditional base industries which will struggle to replace an aging workforce. The aligned strategy of all three workforce boards is to provide support and training to ensure the success of the Regional Skills Alliances.

This regional planning initiative will call upon the mandated partners as well as partners from business and industry, which includes current, potential, and future Michigan Regional Skills Alliance employers. These businesses will help to ensure that a demand driven philosophy is a driving factor in the development of this regional planning process.

The alignment of Regional Skills Alliances with Economic Development Initiatives will ensure the objective of a unified approach to working with business and industry across the Upper Peninsula will be met. This alignment will include:

1. Identify all business/industry partners and members of RSAs are provided to UPEDA and Michigan Work! Service Center Systems

Activities: *The Conveners of each RSA will be contacted for the provision of the membership listing beginning with the Upper Peninsula Healthcare Roundtable and the Upper Peninsula Regional Industrial Manufacturing RSA. The Construction Industry will follow.*

Outcome: *Memberships of the RSAs have been completed. The Michigan Works! Business Development Consultant has been trained in the UP Business Barometer. All high demand sectors of healthcare, manufacturing, construction and tourism will have the UP Business Barometer surveys completed through 2008.*

Update: *All members of the RSAs have been contacted and the U.P Business Barometer interviews will begin the first week of August 2007 with the healthcare industry.*

2. Distribute first U.P. Business Barometer report to RSAs

Activities: *Complete targeted sectors for the UP Business Barometer and develop a regional report to the RSA membership.*

Outcome: *The UP Business Barometer Report will provide RSA membership with a analysis of industry trends and needs.*

Update: *The UP Business Barometer interviews with RSA members is being initiated the first week of August 2007.*

3. Establish routine distribution of U.P. Business Barometer reports to RSAs

Activities: *The UPEDA Business Retention Committee and the three Workforce Boards will develop the reporting templates that can be distributed on a routine basis to appropriate stakeholders.*

Outcome: *U.P. Business Barometer reports will be available through the UPEDA website and the websites of the three Workforce Boards.*

Update: *The UPEDA Business Retention Committee comprised of a cross section of stakeholders has been developed. The three workforce*

boards are participating with this committee. Next scheduled meeting is in August 2007.

□ Joint Visits by MEDC, Workforce and Economic Development Partners

Background:

The Upper Peninsula currently is aligning business visits with the MEDC Account Manager. These visits include representatives of local economic development companies, Michigan Works! Service Center System and Education where indicated.

The joint visits will further create a unified local approach to working with business and industry by:

- Developing routine schedules of joint visits among partners
- Develop matrix of all available workforce, economic, education services to provide a one stop resource system for business and industry
- Develop aligned and integrated resource publications for business and industry

1. **Implement aligned approach with MEDA Business Account Manager, Economic Development Practitioners; Small Business Development and Technology Development Center and Michigan Works! Service Centers.**

Activity 1: *Routine joint visits by Workforce Investment Board Business Development Consultants and MEDA Business Account Manager will occur across the region.*

Outcome: *Joint visits will identify business needs that can be responded to in a timely manner. As a result of this activity, a local manufacturer was identified to have a need to increase the capacity of its incumbent workforce. Training curriculum was identified and training was provided. This occurred in a timely manner and provided the opportunity for the company to increase its competitiveness and continue to expand.*

Update: *Routine schedule visits are occurring as a standard operating procedure.*

Activity 2: *Align the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center with Michigan Works! Service Centers across the region.*

Outcome: *Michigan Works! The Job Force Board is the host site to the Michigan Small Business and Technology Development Center Region 1. As the host site, efforts to integrate small business and entrepreneurial development with workforce development will enhance service delivery across the Upper Peninsula.*

Updates: *18 Workforce and Economic Development Practitioners have been trained as Intake Counselors for the MI SBTDC. Participating organizations were: Eastern and Central Michigan Works! Service Centers, Lake Superior Community Partnership, Schoolcraft County Economic Development Organization; Keweenaw Bay Indian Council and the Munising Area Partnership. 6 Michigan Works! Service Centers in the Central U.P. and 1 Eastern U.P. Michigan Works! Service Centers have trained intake consultants. The MI-SBTDC is expanding its Business Resource Centers to all Michigan Works! Service Centers in the Central Upper Peninsula. These centers house resources to assist interested entrepreneurs in researching foundation information critical to the development of a business plan.*

2. Assess region-wide workforce and business resources to identify and address workforce and industry gaps.

This section will present current and future activities that support the assessment of the status of our regional workforce and economy.

Strategies/Activities

□ Wage and Benefit Survey

Background:

In 2005, the Keweenaw Economic Development Alliance with the Western Upper Peninsula Michigan Works! started a comprehensive wage and benefit survey for Keweenaw, Houghton, and Baraga counties. This survey aligns to the standard occupation codes used in regional, state and federal labor market information and O*NET information. This study allows localized labor market and benefits data to supplement government produced LMI. This has been an invaluable tool for economic development retention and attraction, and for existing employers – as it allows them to ensure that their wages and benefits are in alignment with the marketplace to reduce and manage turnover.

This regional planning initiative calls for the implementation of this same survey tool through the twelve counties covered under this regional planning process. This narrative contains a letter signed by all three Michigan Works! agency directors that this will be a common project covering the 12-counties of Michigan's Upper Peninsula in need of the wage and benefit survey.

Activities: Procurement for the development and implementation of a wage benefit survey will be completed by the Workforce Investment Board with guidance from the UPEDA.

Outcome: Distribution of the results of the Wage and Benefit Survey to engaged stockholders will assist in business attraction, expansion and retention efforts across the region.. Each respondent received a narrative and benefits results and a

personalized salary report that includes what they submitted for salary information to easily compare to the other averages.

Update: The Upper Peninsula Wage Benefit Survey has been completed. Results of the survey are included in **ATTACHMENT V**.

- Provide key real time labor market, workforce and economic development information on a routine basis

Background:

The three Upper Peninsula Workforce Development Boards, in partnership with local and regional economic development organizations, set forth strategic activities that build the competitiveness of its business community. Access to clear and timely labor market information and economic forecasting data is a critical component to having a workforce that has the required knowledge, skills and abilities to compete in the 21st Century global market and workplace.

Having current and relevant labor market information will position the region to partner effectively with economic development to recruit new business investment to the region. Having localized labor market information has helped all three-MWA's to successfully partner with economic development to attract and retain businesses.

Activities to support the assessment and status of the regional workforce and economy will include:

Activity 1: *Partnership with the State of Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth Labor Market Information Analyst for ongoing labor market information reports to community stockholders.*

Outcome: *Routine dissemination of labor market information to K-16, Economic Development, Workforce and Community Development Organizations will increase the effectiveness of Career Preparation of emerging, current and future workers, enhanced business demand driven training curriculum, and identified strengths and gaps for more effective attraction, retention and expansion services.*

Update: *Labor market information is being shared among stakeholders, including presentations by the DLEG LMI Analyst to industry and education groups. Links to the State of Michigan LMI website is being promoted through various regional websites of workforce and economic development organizations. LMI data is also available in the Michigan Works! Service Centers.*

Activity 2: *Augmenting State of Michigan LMI with local data to provide economic and workforce development labor market information that will bring county, regional and state industry, occupation and demographic data in one location with easy reporting formats*

Outcome: *Increased awareness of LMI data that is supplemented by various LMI data will be provided all community stakeholders.*

Update: *UPEDA and the Workforce Investment Boards will be determining the reporting formats that can be posted on websites of all involved stakeholders, including data from the Wage and Benefit Survey, the State LMI, UP Business Barometer and EMSI Economic Modeling.*

Activity 3: *Partnership with the Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance for the generation of U.P. Business Barometer Reports to relevant community stockholders*

Outcome: *Enhanced data regarding industry trends will increase the effectiveness of attraction, retention and expansion services.*

Update: *The UPEDA Business Retention Committee comprised of a cross section of stakeholders has been developed. The three workforce boards are participating with this committee. Next scheduled meeting is in August 2007.*

Activity 4: *Partnership with Upper Peninsula Economic Development Alliance, U.P. Superintendents Roundtable, Post Secondary Education Institutions for the generation of an Economic Opportunity Report for the Upper Peninsula*

Outcome: *The generation of an Economic Opportunity Report for the Upper Peninsula that will set forth goals and benchmarks for the region, will aid in the development of its economic viability.*

Update: *Procurement procedures are in place to begin the solicitation of a vendor for the provision of an Economic Opportunity Report for the Upper Peninsula. This has been endorsed the UPEDA which will provide guidance and direction for this project which is slated to begin October 1, 2007.*

Activity 5: *Asset Mapping to develop plans for the maximization of all available community resources.*

Outcome: *Identification of regional assets for the prioritization of strategic activities will increase the economic competitiveness of the Upper Peninsula.*

Update: *Asset mapping will be an integrated process that will include all community stakeholders scheduled for October of 2007.*

3 & 4. Develop a layoff aversion and rapid response service strategy that is aligned across the region and responsive to the needs of Upper Peninsula Business and Industry

This section will present current and future activities that support the promotion of aligned layoff aversion and rapid response services strategies across the region.

Strategies/Activities

□ Layoff Aversion Strategies

Aligned stakeholders will work to better coordinate layoff aversion activities to help to promote a healthy and sustainable economy.

Background:

By focusing workforce services on the needs of the local and regional business community, the three boards can pro-actively work to assist businesses to become sustainable and retain and grow their existing workforce as well as to ensure all layoff aversion activities are aligned and coordinated across the region.

Activity 1: Use the U.P. Business Barometer as an early warning system to alert regional stockholders of potential issues that may trigger layoffs or closures

Outcome: Routine reporting and communication strategies among stakeholders will generate timely responses to industries at risk.

Update: Currently, the UPEDA Business Retention Committee is outlining the objectives of the communication sharing goal with their next meeting scheduled for August of 2007.

Activity 2: Develop matrix of all available layoff aversion services to provide a one stop resource system for business and industry

Outcome: A matrix of layoff aversion services shall be published and distributed to all stakeholders and will be part of the Routine reporting and communication strategies among stakeholders will generate timely responses to industries at risk.

Update: Currently, the UPEDA Business Retention Committee is outlining the objectives of the communication.

The first lay off aversion community resource forum was held in Delta County in April of 2007. The event was open to economic development practitioners, units of government and business organizations. Participating organizations at the first forum were MEDC, Northern Initiatives, Michigan SBTDC and the Job Force Board. The foundation of this layoff aversion strategy is a collaborative effort of pooling the talent of workforce development, economic development, and business professionals to share knowledge, expertise and to develop and implement a regional action plan for layoff aversion. The goal of the forums is to provide information about available opportunities and resources that are designed to save jobs and avoid resulting hardships imposed on individuals and communities when a plant or business closes. As well, layoff aversion services are a key component in business retention services aimed at increasing the competitiveness of business and industry.

These forums are scheduled to continue around the Upper Peninsula on an ongoing basis.

Activity 3: *Develop aligned and integrated resource publications for business and industry*

Outcome: *On line access to business resource publications will be available through the UPEDA Website and the Job Force Board website for access by business, education, economic development, units of government and other interested community stakeholders.*

Update: The UPEDA Business Retention Committee is outlining the objectives of the communication.

Activity 4: *Promote incumbent worker training as a means of layoff aversion and business enhancement*

Outcome: *Increasing the skill capacity of incumbent workers will enhance business competitiveness and will ensure that no worker is left behind.*

Update: To date the following IC worker trainings:

of businesses: 15
of workers: 158

Areas of Training: Harness Wiring Training; ISO; CNA (Green house) and safety training; and food service training for healthcare; Hydraulics; HR Management; Blueprint, Safety; Welding; windows based manufacturing training

Activity 5: *Participate in the Business Solutions Professional Training*

Outcome: *Increasing the skill level of workforce and economic development professionals in the areas of business solutions will increase the overall competitive capacity of business and industry.*

Update: *5 HR Specialists have attended the Business Solutions Professional Training. In January of 2008, additional Upper Peninsula MI-SBTDC, economic and workforce development professionals will enter into the BSP training.*

Aligned and responsive Rapid Response Service Strategies

Background:

The Upper Peninsula Michigan Works! Workforce Development Boards have a major focus on Business Community Development and is responsive to community crises affecting our economic and workforce quality. It is critical that the Michigan Works! Service Center system and partners respond in a timely and comprehensive manner after any dislocation that affects business across the region. The more quickly response activities begin, the more likely the intervention will be effective. Early intervention activities can lead to an improved relationship between business and its workforce during a very difficult time of transition.

This alignment will coordinate Rapid Response activities across the region and better plan and prepare for rapid response. This understanding will build systems to ensure that the reciprocal effect of a layoff or closure will be minimized on other businesses around the region. **Attachment VIII:** Manual

Activities to the aligned and responsive Rapid Response services are:

Activity 1: *Development of an Upper Peninsula-wide Rapid Response Manual*

Outcome: *A single Upper Peninsula-wide Rapid Response Manual will ensure a consistent approach to business and impacted workers across the region.*

Update: *The Rapid Response Manual has been completed and agreed upon by the three workforce investment boards.*

Activity 2: *Identify all rapid response resources, methods, and activities used by each of the workforce development boards*

Outcome: *Collection integration of best practices among the three workforce investment boards will ensure a comprehensive and consistent approach to business and impacted workers across the region.*

Update: *The Rapid Response Manual has been completed and agreed upon by the three workforce investment boards.*

Activity 3: *Align the rapid response activities of each workforce development board*

Outcome: *Aligned and consistent provision of services to businesses and impacted workers will assist in enhancing the competitiveness of business and their workers.*

Update: *Each Workforce Investment Board has adopted the Rapid Response Manual.*

Activity 4: *Determine and align peer organizations needed to be included to provide worker training and other rapid response services*

Outcome: *Inclusion of community stakeholders into the Rapid Response Manual will provide enhanced value added services.*

Update: *The Rapid Response Manual has identified key community stakeholders to include in Rapid Response events.*

Activity 5: *Determine what workforce data is currently collected and how it used and aligned to State reporting requirements*

Outcome: *Collection of common key data elements during the rapid response activities will ensure consistent data and increased opportunity for key information sharing with all community partners.*

Update: Worker Survey data elements are in place under the Upper Peninsula Rapid Response Manual.

Activity 6: Determine how each MWA can share data that will assist dislocated workers back into employment WITHIN the U.P.

Outcome: Aligned community protocols and sharing of workforce information is critical for the re-employment or skill enhancement of impacted workers.

Update: A strategic planning session for the building of aligned information sharing will be occurring in September of 2007.

5. Develop, attract, and retain workforce talent in the Upper Peninsula through partnerships that are aligned to the 21st Century workforce needs of business and industry.

This section will present early identified gaps, initiatives and opportunities for improvement, in developing, attracting and retaining workforce talent.

Strategies/Activities

- ❑ Align strategic workforce development plans among U.P. workforce development boards

Background:

All three Workforce Development Boards engage in an ongoing strategic planning process to identify strategies, actions and measurements that will create and maintain a healthy and growing economy, equipped with a local workforce that has the knowledge and skills needed by businesses in a technological and competitive marketplace. The Strategic Goals endorsed by the three Upper Peninsula Michigan Works! Workforce Development Boards are:

1. Workforce Improvement for Economic Development

Goal: To build regional competitiveness through collaborative partnerships

2. Resource Supply and Demand Management

Goal: Manage human resources to meet industry demand

3. Skills Development for Business and Industry

Goal: Build and prepare a skilled and competitive workforce for Central Upper Peninsula business and industry

These activities supporting the 21st Century Workforce Initiative and the Strategic Goals of the Michigan Works! Workforce Boards involve the active participation of region's Workforce Development Boards, Economic Development Organizations, Education, Community Development, private sector, Michigan Works! Service Center system and local governmental organizations.

Activities supporting building and maintaining a competitive workforce are:

Activity #1: *Develop forums for employers and community leaders to strategize on building competitiveness*

Outcome: *All Upper Peninsula community stakeholders will be engaged in community forums that will lead to a comprehensive and aligned strategic plan to increase the competitive advantage of the region.*

Update: *In September of 2006, the first Upper Great Lakes Economic Summit was held in Marquette County. This summit resulted in communities adopting the 21st Century Planning initiative and the beginning of collaborative partnerships among economic development, education, workforce and community development. The second annual Upper Great Lakes Economic Summit is scheduled for September 27, 2007 in Marquette, Michigan.*

Activity #3: *Assign and align all community stockholders to support and implement strategies to address all identified gaps*

Outcome: *Aligned activities of all community stockholders will increase the economic competitiveness of the Upper Peninsula.*

Update: *Members of the UPEDA have been given specific tasks as outlined by the UP Business Barometer and will be working on a variety of activities throughout the year.*

Activity #4 *Align and integrate responses to business and industry needs among U.P. MWA Service Centers*

Outcome: *The alignment and integration of partners' response time to business and industry needs will increase the competitiveness of the Upper Peninsula Workforce.*

Update: *Human Resource Specialists across the region will be attending the Business Solutions Professional training in January of 2008.*

Activity #5 *Coordinate the use of 21st Century Scholarship funds for dislocated workers throughout the U.P.*

Outcome: *Training of dislocated workers into high growth occupations will result in enhanced skill levels of the Upper Peninsula workforce.*

Update: *20 dislocated workers have participated in the 21st Century scholarship program across the region.*

Activity #6: *Research the U of M Skills Information Model and incorporate it where applicable*

Outcome: *Critical data elements to support the identification of assets will enhance the competitive advantage of the region.*

Update: *The use U of M Skills Information Model will be incorporated into the 2007-2008 Economic Impact Study process.*

6. Implement a joint communication strategy for all Upper Peninsula and State of Michigan stockholders regarding activities and achievements of the 21st Century Workforce Initiative

This section will present identified communication mechanisms to promote and educate the region and state stockholders.

Strategies/Activities

Background:

Each of the MWA's will work together where appropriate and independently to coordinate communications efforts with stockholders, business & industry, job seekers, and the general public. These communications will be aligned with business driven workforce services to strengthen the economy of the Upper Peninsula. For example, incumbent worker training has been identified by one partner as a critical area to conduct coordinated marketing and outreach efforts. The region will also incorporate the development of a comprehensive communication plan that also coordinates with state communication activities.

Activities to support an aligned communication structure are:

- Development of a formal communication plan for partners and public communications
- Preparation template for "Keeping You Connected" that can be electronically distributed across the Upper Peninsula
- Preparation of periodic press releases for newspapers, U.P. Business Today, Business is Updates and Websites
- Preparation and presentation updates via radio and television spots
- Regular and ongoing community forums to communicate progress

Outcomes: *An informed community will continue to influence the activities of the 21st Century plan through ongoing communications regarding best practices and project milestones and benchmarks.*

Updates: *The following activities will be occurring across the region for Program Year 2007.*

- *Ongoing public services announcements*
- *Radio talk shows*
- *Keeping you Connected Updates*
- *Articles in UP Business Today*
- *Articles in the Business is Update*
- *Channel Six TV Invest in the UP Initiative*

Technical Assistance Needs

A priority task the applicants would like to accomplish – is to examine the economic dynamics of this 15-county region. This analysis needs to identify where we currently stand economically and define the future opportunities for the region. This task will help to support the 21st Century Workforce Initiative to Assess/Update the Status of the Local Workforce and Economy.

The three boards are able to bring locally produced labor market information, environmental scan information, and data from the existing business retention partnership. However, the MWA's request the assistance from the state in understanding this data and supplementing it with additional labor market and economic data.