

***Michigan Works!
Service Center
Certification Report***



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INTRODUCTION

The One-Stop Centers are envisioned in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) as the primary vehicle for creating a workforce investment system that is organized around customer needs and demands, rather than around programs and funding sources. This philosophy requires integration of services across agencies and programs, to reduce redundancy, improve customer access, and to improve quality.

The Michigan Works! Service Centers (MWSCs) are the physical locations where collocation of the public and private funded programs contribute to the workforce investment system in the State of Michigan. The MWSCs provide the physical presence of key programs and partners within one convenient location promoting readily available, seamless services to employers, jobseekers, and the general public.

Why certify? Essentially, certification is a guarantee of quality. MWSCs must operate as very high quality service organizations, continuously improving to exceed customer expectations. To ensure the quality of the MWSCs, Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG) issued Policy Issuance 06-01, Change 1, *Certification Criteria for Michigan Works! Service Centers* that provides the baseline for serving customers within the local areas. Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and Local Elected Officials (LEOs) are encouraged to extend beyond the criteria outlined in this policy to better serve employers and jobseekers.

This report is written as part of the biennial certification process of the 86 full service MWSCs that are operating statewide. MWSCs are certified using a process that includes a self-assessment and a Service Center Delivery System narrative provided by each Service Center, and on-site reviews by DLEG staff. This report contains examples of exemplary customer service and innovative ideas in providing services that go beyond required criteria, as identified through the on-site review process that was conducted by DLEG staff from March through June 2007.

The content of this report is based on information and comments from the Service Center Delivery System narratives received, and from reports submitted by DLEG staff that conducted the MWSC reviews. Because the level of detail from these two sources varied greatly, not all MWSCs exhibiting these best practices are listed, although some may have the same or similar practices as those cited in this report. All local areas have developed some unique ways of offering services to customers.

Several factors come to mind when we think of the quality of the MWSCs as part of a whole system, and are the basis for the sections of this report:

- Service Integration in Serving Jobseekers
- Education and Training Services for Jobseekers
- Service Center Configuration
- Resource Rooms

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- Collocation
- Accessibility and Inclusion
- Customer Service and Satisfaction
- Information Technology Systems
- Services to Employers

Similar characteristics of successful MWSCs include:

- A physical layout that is accessible to all customers and organized by function/service rather than by program;
- Resource rooms that are attractively designed and located somewhere near the entry of the MWSC;
- Clear signage directing customers;
- Professional staff to assist customers quickly and efficiently;
- Emphasis on making employer services a priority, and managing the services as a unified activity; and
- Measuring customer satisfaction with the MWSC as a whole.

Feedback from DLEG staff that conducted the on-site reviews as well as anecdotal information from MWAs will be used to improve the certification process in the future.

SERVICE INTEGRATION IN SERVING JOBSEEKERS

The Workforce Investment Act is explicit in its intent to improve the workforce development services provided to customers by streamlining the way in which these services are accessed and delivered. Michigan Works! Agencies are required to provide, or provide access to, specified services through the Michigan Works! Service Centers (MWSCs).

Many services offered by the partners within the Service Centers, such as required core services, share features in common or similar functions, such as the intake function. This results in the opportunity for considerable duplication in the services available through the MWSCs. Eliminating this duplication requires more than a commitment from partners to improve customer services through streamlining. It also requires a level of perseverance and creativity in the manner to which services are delivered.

The approaches listed below develop a common framework for seamless service delivery regardless of funding stream, and encourage a customer-focused perspective in service delivery and design.

South Central Michigan Works! has instituted an “activity-based” model in serving customers. All customers that enter their Service Centers find out what “activities” they qualify for, as opposed to programs. Upon entry to the Service Center, customers complete a ten minute computerized intake form that lists “activities” available at the Service Center. A Career Manager will then determine if a customer is eligible for certain programs by asking a series of questions, and if so, the customer is routed to a specific Career Manager to discuss the “activities” the customer needs to pursue. Customers for whom no programs are applicable continue with self-service options in the Resource Room, and are provided assistance as needed by employment advisors.

The Job Force has a similar approach to serving job seekers. Job Seeker Cohort Groups align job seekers to services not based on categorical funding sources, but through a strategic approach that takes into consideration the collective likeness of their needs. Job seekers entering the Service Centers are given a quick assessment for the purpose of triaging them into the appropriate services that best meet their employment needs. The Cohort Groups are Career Exploration, Career Advancement, Employment Express, and Career Maintenance. The use of Cohort Groups targets the right services at the right time and fosters the elimination of duplication.

The **Thumb Area Michigan Works!** is home of the Tool Chest Voucher Service System that allows customers to choose the services they want within defined categories. This approach also aligns job seekers to services not based on categorical funding sources.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING SERVICES FOR JOBSEEKERS

The intent of the Workforce Investment Act is to help all members of the workforce access the assistance with the training they need to manage their careers, and connect business to the workers they will need. An important component of delivering quality services to jobseekers is providing customers with comprehensive access to training and education services. Local areas that maximize the training services that are accessible through partnerships with education institutions and training providers are successful in satisfying their jobseeker customers, and also their local employers by providing a qualified, trained workforce.

The **Houghton Michigan Works! Service Center** in the **Western Upper Peninsula (U.P.)** offers Certified Nursing Assistant training at its Health Career Center located adjacent to the Service Center. Conference room facilities at other Service Centers in the area have also been improved to accommodate Certified Nursing Assistant training.

General Education Development (GED) instruction is held in the **Western U.P.** at the **Ironwood Michigan Works! Service Center**.

Apprenticeships in approximately fifty occupations are offered in the Oakland County area and available through the nine **Oakland County Michigan Works! Service Centers**.

The MWSCs located in **Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties** have implemented an approach to assess, explore and improve the suitability of jobseekers for direct care in the health care industry, specifically for Certified Nurses Aides. This process, referred to as a “*Reality Check*,” provides individuals interested in this area of training with an advance experience of the specific responsibilities, functions and duties associated with this career and career ladder. This has proved to be invaluable in determining if a jobseeker has the aptitude for work in the health care industry.

KAL-TEC is a community-based initiative offering a broad range of education and training opportunities to adults in Kalamazoo County and is located at the **Kalamazoo Michigan Works! Service Center** in **Northwest**. KAL-TEC offers a wide variety of courses that was developed in response to needs identified by area businesses as well as expressed desires of workers and jobseekers. Anyone can take courses through KAL-TEC, however scholarships may be available for residents or those who work in Kalamazoo County. In addition, businesses sending employees to KAL-TEC classes will receive 50% reimbursement.

SERVICE CENTER CONFIGURATION

Many of the customer service improvements envisioned for the workforce system by the WIA are achieved only to the extent that partners in service delivery systems successfully integrate their services and functions. Necessary groundwork for a successful integrated service delivery system includes the configuration of the service center facility. This includes a physical layout that is accessible to all customers and organized by function and/or service rather than by program or partners, a receptionist/greeter to direct customers as appropriate, a common reception area, and resource room. A cafeteria, childcare facilities, clothes closet, and other special features are encouraged to support a customer friendly system.

93% of the MWSCs that were visited are configured by function rather than by program.

100% of the MWSCs visited had a receptionist/greeter to direct customers.

The **Thumb Area Michigan Works! Service Center** design is innovative in that the Case Manager cubicles face the Resource Room. This design provides continuous assistance to customers accessing information in the Resource Room.

Excellent signage was noted throughout each of the Service Centers located in **Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA)** and the **Washtenaw Michigan Works! Service Center**.

The **Leonard Street Michigan Works! Service Center** located in Grand Rapids and part of **Area Community Service Employment and Training Council (ASCET)**, provides a large, friendly reception area with a professional greeter and other staff to assist customers.

Service Centers located in the **City of Detroit** and **SEMCA** have extended hours one day per week.

The **Monroe Michigan Works! Service Center**, part of **SEMCA**, has a food pantry for customers as well as hygiene products available.

Interview clothing is available for customers through “*Dress for Success*” at the **Michigan Works! Career Alliance Service Center** in Genesee County.

In **Berrien/Cass/Van Buren** at the **Michigan Works! Benton Harbor Service Center**, on-site day care for youth under the age of ten is available to jobseekers with no available daycare provider when searching for employment.

RESOURCE ROOMS

Certain services available through the MWSCs are made universally, without regard to income or eligibility. These services are ordinarily generic in nature, usually self-accessed and are intended to provide a range of resources that have widespread applicability and benefit.

Resource Rooms are important components of the MWSCs because they are the primary means through which many universal services are made available, and are the most visible symbol on service integration. Resource Rooms should be the focal point of the Service Center, visible upon entry and easily accessed and used by customers. If the resources made available through Resource Rooms are robust and if their configuration is conducive, all customers of the local Michigan Works! system can use and benefit from them.

Staffed, quality Resource Rooms are an integral component of certified MWSCs. Service Centers located in the **Northwest, Northeast, and Oakland County** offer good examples of important characteristics of successfully functional Resource Rooms.

At both the **Alpena Michigan Works! Service Center** in **Northeast** and **Traverse City Michigan Works! Service Center** in **Northwest**, the Resource Room is clearly marked and visible upon entry to the facility, with clear signage posted above available resources. Examples of categories include *Veteran's Resources, Education and Training, College Information, Job Search, and Community Resources*. Materials are available in multiple formats to accommodate different learning styles. For example, job vacancy postings are available online and current vacancies are posted on a board located in the Resource Room. In the **Traverse City MWSC**, the bookmarks on the Resource Room computers were extensive and well organized, with categories listed under "Favorites" such as *Human Resource Directories* and *Labor Market Information*.

The **Southfield Michigan Works! Service Center** located in **Oakland County** also has large, clear signs posted outside the Resource Room. Shelves located within the Resource Room have posted signs of the specific topics and/or type of materials, such as *Resume Writing* or *Interviewing*. Related resources are color coded of easy identification. Signs, instructions, and use policies are posted for PCs, fax machine, and other available equipment for customer use.

The Resource Rooms located in the Service Centers cited above have a professional look and feel, with trained, qualified staff in the area to provide customer assistance as needed.

In addition, all eight Resource Rooms located within the Service Centers of the **Northeast Michigan Consortium** were standardized, housing identical resources available to customers, with variances only with specific local information.

COLLOCATION

Collocation focuses on the physical presence of multiple key programs and partners within one convenient location promoting readily available, seamless services to employers and jobseekers.

100% of the MWSCs visited have additional local partners beyond what is required by WIA housed within their Service Center.

Capital Area Michigan Works! has 28 partners collocated within their Service Center located in Lansing, however, this is not visible to the general public when entering the facility. This seamless delivery system promotes the Service Center as a single integrated service system and unique entity, rather than a place to access individual programs.

Livingston County, Berrien/Cass/Van Buren, Eastern Upper Peninsula, Career Alliance, and Region 7B have their administrative offices collocated within a Service Center facility. This arrangement offers increased opportunities for communication to evaluate the local system and Service Center operations.

Livingston County Michigan Works! Service Center is collocated within the Livingston Regional Michigan Technical Education Center (MTEC).

Michigan Rehabilitation Services has offices collocated within MWSCs located in **Berrien/Cass/Van Buren, Career Alliance, the City of Detroit, The Job Force, Macomb/St. Clair, Northeast, Northwest, Ottawa County, Saginaw/Midland/Bay, South Central, SEMCA, and West Central.**

Additional examples of on-site location of additional services and programs that go beyond the required partners that supports a customer friendly system include Choices West Counseling Services located in the **Mason County Workforce Service Center** in **West Central**, Gogebic Community College located in the **Houghton Service Center** in the **Western U. P.**, and Lansing Community College and Capital Area Credit Union located at the **Capital Area Michigan Works!** Service Center in Lansing.

ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION

Part of operating a universally accessible system requires meeting the diverse customer needs that exist within the local service delivery area. To accomplish this, customers need to become partners. Service delivery systems must form and sustain these partnerships to assist in meeting the needs of diverse cultures. Services and facilities must be designed in an anticipatory way so that they meet a broad range of needs.

To ensure a universally accessible and inclusive system, each local service area is encouraged to embrace the overall philosophy of Michigan's One-Stop Inclusion Workgroup Final Report.

Service Centers located in the **Kalamazoo-St. Joseph Michigan Works!** area utilize the Workforce System Program Inclusion Assessment Tool that is provided in Michigan's One-Stop Inclusion Workgroup Final Report, and several MWSCs located in **Oakland County** conduct an annual Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Self-Assessment.

The **North Oakland MWSC** located in **Oxford** and the **Goodwill Industries MWSC** located in **Muskegon County** have both been certified by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), a private, non-profit organization that promotes quality rehabilitation services. CARF accredits only those organizations that meet the rigorous standards established by CARF.

Each of the Service Centers located in **Barry, Branch, and Calhoun Counties** have all documents and accessibility monitored internally by an Inclusion Committee.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SATISFACTION

Two very important concepts related to quality are customer satisfaction and continuous improvement. Organizations that have focused on continuously improving in ways that expressly satisfy their customers have experienced marked improvements in the quality of their products and services, and subsequently, better business results.

Jobseekers and employers must not experience frustration or dead-ends when they come to a MWSC for information, services, or products to help them achieve their education, career, or workforce development needs.

An effective continuous improvement plan will make excellent use of customer feedback and staff ideas to adjust service delivery quickly and effectively.

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100% of the Service Centers visited have some sort of customer satisfaction survey or continuous improvement plan in place.

The **Calhoun Intermediate School District** has a Continuous Improvement Committee, made up of a team of Service Center partners, which analyzes the services and programs offered to make improvements at Service Centers in **Barry, Branch, and Calhoun Counties**.

The **Central Area Partnership Consortium** holds quarterly partner meetings with all Service Center partners. Topics covered during the meetings vary, including but not limited to customer service and quality improvement, information on new programs and initiatives, and technical issues relating to programs. The Consortium has found these meetings to be an effective way to share information with all the Service Center partners, promoting a local team effort, rather than just individual organizations housed within the same building.

In a similar fashion, **Career Alliance** holds monthly Tenant Council meetings that promote rapport between partners and facilitates the exchange of program ideas and information.

Service Centers in **SEMCA** hold monthly meetings with all service providers to address customer satisfaction, enabling all system partners to benefit from the discussions, and to provide consistency within all of the Service Centers.

Providers at the **Livingston County Michigan Works! Service Center** meet periodically to address issues related to one-stop operations. These meetings provide a forum to encourage communication and collaboration with all one-stop partners.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

Effective investment in and deployment of technology is an important element in building a strong one-stop center. Using technology effectively can provide the necessary information to successfully serve customers, and make improvements as needed.

The **Job Force Board** has several innovative information technology systems in place, and uses the data derived from these systems to drive strategies for service delivery.

The Membership Application Database (MADb) tracks jobseekers assessing core services related to WIA, as well as jobseekers participating in categorical programs. Examples of information collected include member registrations, services assessed within the MWSCs, referrals to job opportunities, assessment tests taken and scores received,

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and outcome information including employer, occupation, wage, and post placement information. The MADb system is linked to the GoldMine business database, allowing for accurate tracking of referrals and placements to specific businesses.

The **Job Force Board** also utilizes a kiosk registration technology that serves as a real-time data collection system for Service Center management, helping the Service Centers to improve the accuracy, efficiency, and quality of service delivery. In addition, jobseekers receive a bar-code membership keychain tag that is used by Service Center staff to input and track all specific services the jobseekers receives.

Similar to the bar-code membership keychain tag used by the Job Force Board is a “swipe card” given to jobseekers at **South Central Michigan Works!** during the registration process. The swipe card is scanned into a database that is used to account for all activities in which a customer participates.

The **Waterford Service Center** in **Oakland County** has an excellent website with links to State of Michigan websites, partners, and many available services in the area. Examples of information available on the website include employment resources, area employer websites, career resources, resources for employers and youth, community services, apprenticeship information, and local area school districts.

SERVICES FOR EMPLOYERS

Many partners in one-stop delivery systems provide services to employers. Services related to unemployment programs, assistance with lay-offs, tax credits and labor exchange services are obvious examples of these services. In addition, most all partners in local workforce development systems view employers as customers to whom they wish to “sell” products. These products are frequently individual job seekers who are part of a particular partner’s target service population and who are deemed ready for employment.

The success of local workforce development systems is ultimately tied to the extent that employers use and are satisfied with these systems. Local systems that establish themselves as valuable partners with business will be able to provide their jobseeker customers with greater access to a pool of quality jobs and employment opportunities. These opportunities will enable job seekers to obtain jobs that allow them to be productive and self-sufficient, while at the same time employers will have greater access to the skilled labor pool they need to remain competitive.

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The following best practices reflect responsive and coordinated services to employers:

The Job Force Board has created a generic, online application system that businesses may use when hiring employees through their Service Centers. Input from local businesses was sought in the development of the application system through employer focus groups. Job seekers fill out applications and submit them online at the Service Centers. The applications are then transmitted directly to the corresponding Service Center's account representative, who then forwards them to the employer. If the employer requests assistance in pre-screening the applications, the account representative will do so. The use of this online application system saves employers time and recruiting costs.

The **Job Force Board** utilizes a business customer relationship management system called GoldMine that serves as a database that record and tracks all interactions the Service Center account representatives make with businesses.

Service Centers located in **Northwest, Macomb/St. Clair, Saginaw/Midland/Bay, Livingston County,** and **The Job Force** all contain Business Resource Centers, which can be partially funded by the Small Business Administration. These Business Resource Centers contain a variety of information to help individuals who want to start their own business, and also available assistance to small business owners, including but not limited to: computers, fax, telephone, electronic and hard copy resource materials, and workshops.

The Highland Park Service Center in **Oakland County** and **Capital Area Michigan Works!** hosts Employer of the Day, where local employers sign up to accept application for available positions and conduct interviews at the Service Centers.

South Central Michigan Works! has developed the Business Enhancement through Solutions and Training (BEST) process that focuses on serving businesses through a "demand-driven" workforce development system, linking education, economic development, and workforce development. Utilizing a team approach, BEST is designed to address three areas of need in a business by following a defined process of fact-finding, solution design, and solution implementation.

Livingston County Michigan Works! has established a Partners Group to better coordinate services to employers. All workforce development agencies, economic development agencies, and schools are invited to attend monthly meetings. The group is developing common marketing strategies, creating a centralized employer database, and sharing information about the variety of services available to employers.

The **Thumb Area Michigan Works!** offers an Explor-Card to businesses that contains an exclusive listing of Employment Building Opportunities available only to the Explor-Card holders. Also available to employers through the Service Center is the Thumb Area Techno-Industrial Training System, a consortium approach to provide Thumb Area manufacturers access to training through a single point of contact.

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This report is available online at www.michigan.gov/cleg .

Further information on the Michigan Works! Service Centers can be found on the Michigan Works! Association website: www.michiganworks.org