



## MICHIGAN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Whereas, the Michigan Workforce Development Board (“MWDB”) is charged with helping the state to align workforce development system in Michigan, including the development and expansion of strategies for meeting the needs of employers, workers, and jobseekers and helping to align the system overall. Further, when exercising its duties, the Board may provide policy advice across workforce areas, including workforce development, community colleges, career and technical education, and workforce elements of economic development;

Whereas, the Board is responsible for the development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system in Michigan, including programs that improve access for all Michigan residents to pathways to quality jobs that allow Michigan residents to support themselves and their families, and to advance in their careers; and

Whereas, Career Navigation can be a valuable tool in helping Michigan residents in accessing employment, and in realizing opportunities to gain skills and credentials to advance in education and careers.

Therefore, the Michigan Workforce Development Board resolves to endorse the following policy design principles as guidance to Michigan agencies, organizations, and institutions pursuing Career Navigation strategies:

**Economic Advancement.** Career Navigation should focus on upward economic mobility for all, by providing the information and connections that Michigan residents need to make choices about their career trajectories. This includes providing information on job demand, occupational wages and benefits, placement rates for certification and credential programs, and career pathway opportunities. For students completing high school, Career Navigation can provide a wider range of options to consider- a spectrum of good opportunities for college *and* career- allowing students to match their interests, and access post secondary pathways they may not have considered- or even known about. And given the rapidly changing labor market and economic transitions, workers no longer stay with one employer- or even in one occupation- over the course of their career. This makes Career Navigation increasingly important as a “lifelong” service, as people move from being students, to workers, and potentially back to being students again (including while working) to gain new credentials, retooling their skills as the market changes.

**Equity & Accessibility.** Career Navigation services should give special consideration to reaching and supporting populations of learners and workers who’ve been historically underserved. This can include providing culturally relevant and language-appropriate tools and staff, ensuring that literacy and basic skills assessment and remediation plans are incorporated into advising, and ensuring accessibility (through technology, facilities, etc.) to individuals with disabilities. Equally important is educating and partnering with other institutions, education providers, and employers who also provide opportunities that support a diverse pool of students and workers.

**Strong Staff & Strong Systems.** Career Navigation should be staffed by professional, well-trained staff, who have the opportunities to build their networks and capacity as programs and services for their clients evolve and change. Ensuring that there is a standardization of knowledge, skills & abilities of

Navigators across all parts of the workforce development and education systems is critical to continuity and quality of services for clients. Integrating Career Navigation services among these systems is also vital to their effectiveness, through organizational partnerships, Navigator peer networks, and aligning and sharing data, assessments, and other tools. This systems alignment among agencies will ensure consistent support along career journeys and at critical transition points for Career Navigation clients. **Incentivize Collaboration.** A critical component of successful Career Navigation services is the seamless flow of client activity across multiple workforce and education opportunities over time. Creating and formalizing partnerships among these agencies should be the foundation of a Career Navigation system. Partnerships can be required elements of grants, including the braiding or leveraging of various resources (public and private). They can also be incentivized through the adoption of career-related metrics across systems, and by co-developing tools and technologies, and utilizing these among all system partners.

**High Tech & High Touch.** In addition to highly qualified Career Navigators being available to clients across the workforce and education continuum, technology should be integrated into their “toolbox” of coaching activities. Because there are an overwhelming number of technology resources available, platforms should be assessed for best fit, be a value add/support to Navigator functions, and curated carefully to avoid duplication and/or connectivity challenges. And clients themselves should have access to similarly curated technology tools, which accommodate various levels of digital literacy and access, and also are supported by Career Navigators in building their technology skills using these platforms.

**Sustainable & Braided Funding.** Long-term, sustainable funding for Career Navigation services and staffing is critical to its success. Clients, employers and workforce and education providers as most effectively served with consistent, high-quality, and up-to-date information. Gaps in funding run the risk of service and system building disruption, which is a primary challenge that the Career Navigation is intended to overcome. One-time influxes of funds may be needed for building infrastructure (technology, staff training events, program design, etc.), however, these should be the exception, not the rule. Incentivizing and removing administrative hurdles to braiding funding across multiple sources can help to archive sustainability objectives, and also reinforces partnership activities, and allows each fundings source to fill its optimal use in such a system.

**Community Responsive.** Some clients coming to Career Navigators for information and resources about jobs and education will doubtless be encountering other areas of their lives with which they could use assistance. This could include clients who have been unemployed for extended periods of time, laid off from industries in decline, or who have been involved in the criminal justice system, for example. They may need assistance with financial coaching, finding affordable housing, or accessing mental health services. Career Navigation service designs should consider the “whole person” in developing partnerships to refer clients to other services in their communities that can provide assistance in these areas.

The MWDB further resolves to share these Career Navigation principles with local, regional, and state agencies and institutions, and support their integration into resource allocation, program design, and policy development.