

# STRATEGIC PLAN

**Update**



# INTRODUCTION

---

In August 2020, Michigan Works! Southeast Workforce Development Board (MWSE or the Board) began updating its current strategic plan, which was developed in 2017. At the time of plan creation in 2017, Michigan Works! Southeast was a newly created organization, transitioning into one from a previously separate three Boards. After three years operating to strengthen the organization as one, cohesive regional entity, MWSE felt that now was the time to refresh the strategic plan, taking into consideration the strides that had been made and the new environment in which the Board finds itself.

The strategic planning process was a collaborative process that included meetings and conversations with stakeholders over the course of three months. The Board would like to thank its members, the Southeast Michigan Consortium Board, and staff for their leadership during the planning process. Board members, staff, partners, stakeholders, and customers provided valuable time and input into the creation of this strategic plan. The process would not have been possible without the involvement of these individuals, and their efforts are greatly appreciated. The Board thanks all staff for their ongoing assistance as well as individuals who attended the partner meeting and participated in interviews or surveys to contribute to the strategic planning process. We are thankful for your participation and look forward to continuing the conversation and efforts to strengthen the workforce in our region.

This Strategic Plan begins with an overview of the strategic planning process, detailing the steps and methodology for collecting data that helped shape the direction of the plan, followed by the strategic plan elements. The strategic plan includes the Board's mission, vision, and purpose statements as well as organizational values. The Board's goals and strategies wrap up the plan. Staff and the Board are developing annual action plans to support the goals and strategies.

**Thomas P. Miller  
& Associates**



# PLANNING PROCESS

---

The planning process began in August 2020 with a meeting with the MWSE Workforce Development Board Executive Committee.

Next, the Board established a Steering Committee to lead the strategic planning efforts. The planning process included meetings with the MWSE Leadership Team, MWSE Service Center Managers, Consortium Board, and MWSE partners; individual stakeholder interviews; surveys for jobseekers and employers conducted by The Purpose Partners; and a review of local data.

**Thomas P. Miller  
& Associates**



# STRATEGIC PLAN ELEMENTS

The strategic plan is made up of a series of elements. Each element builds off the previous beginning with the Vision, the broadest and highest level, and concluding with the very specific action plan. The plan is a balance of strategy and implementation. The elements provide direction for the Board as it convenes, deliberates, and implements over the coming years. While the Vision, Mission, Purpose, and Goals typically remain consistent the strategies and actions may be amended or updated through the life of the plan to respond to a changing environment. The following graphic outlines each of the elements of how they relate and influence each other.

## VISION:

Describes how the world would be improved, changed, or different if MWSE is successful.

## MISSION:

Succinctly describes who the Board is and why it exists.

## PURPOSE:

Describes why MWSE does what it does.

## GOALS:

Indicates the strategic focus of the Board over the next 1-3 years

## STRATEGIES:

Provide the Board with guidance for the work that will be done to achieve goals.

## ACTION PLAN:

Provides an implementation roadmap.

# STRATEGIC PLAN ELEMENTS

## DRIVING FORCES

### ACTIONABLE

Overall there was a feeling from stakeholders that the plan needed to be forward-thinking and actionable. Board members, staff, and partners all reinforced the need for a strategic plan to be proactive and forward-thinking rather than reactive. There is also a desire for bold action and a focus on strategy rather than transactions.

### INTENTIONAL

There is also a recognition that the Board needs to be intentional about being part of the solution to address societal issues and inequalities by going to people and removing barriers. Partners and stakeholders want staff to be intentional about directly engaging under-served, marginalized populations, and the organizations currently serving targeted populations. In order to be intentional as an employer and as a service organization, the Board is including Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as an organizational value.

### RESULTS ORIENTED

Stakeholders, particularly board members, recognized the need for the strategic plan to be focused on outcomes – including enumerating why each goal is set and what is expected to come out of the work. The plan should identify areas of community impact and, as referenced above, show that MWSE is part of the solution rather than held up in process or barriers. The Board desired to see metrics that show results and how the work is making a difference.

### COLLABORATIVE

Strategic partnerships and increasing collaboration was an overwhelming theme among feedback for this plan. Stakeholders identified the need to continue connecting with partners, particularly those who specialize in serving targeted populations, to better expand the reach and impact of MWSE. Partner coordination should result in interconnected systems across the region, leveraging the strengths of each organization. MWSE can play many different roles in these collaborative efforts and should be prepared to lead or support as is needed.

### INNOVATIVE

Stakeholders identified the need to continue to innovate, especially now as the environment is changing and the future of the economy and service delivery remains unknown due to the pandemic and potential aftereffects. There is a need to continue to focus on remote, online, and virtual services, and being as flexible and responsive as possible to adapt to reach customers where they are. Board members and stakeholders also referenced the need to be creative in service delivery and share best practices across communities.

# MISSION, VISION, VALUES & PURPOSE

---

During the planning process, the participants reviewed existing vision and mission statements to determine if they were still appropriate, relevant, and reflective of the organization's future.

**VISION STATEMENT:** It was suggested that the word “all” be added to the vision statement to reinforce the Board's desire to be more inclusive. The revised vision statement is: **Our vision is a community which fosters and sustains a strong, diverse economy where all people can live, work, and prosper.** The vision reinforces the Board's commitment to community, a diverse economy, serving all people, and focusing broader than employment by emphasizing living and prosperity.

**MISSION STATEMENT:** All parties agreed with the current mission statement. The statement is: **Our mission is to develop today's workforce and tomorrow's economy by engaging employers, jobseekers, and partners.** The statement reflects the Board's focus on the region's future and reinforces the commitment to serving jobseekers, employers, and community partners.

**PURPOSE STATEMENT:** The purpose statement adopted by staff in recent years is still relevant and driving why MWSE does the work that it does. The purpose of MWSE is: **Creating connections to a better future.** The purpose statement supports MWSE purpose of connecting individuals and organizations to helpful resources and creating hope for a better future by providing examples of what is possible for job seekers.

**VALUES:** The Board, staff, and stakeholders reviewed and discussed each of MWSE values to ensure they were relevant and reflective of the organization now and for the future. The Board decided to add an additional value, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to the organization's values. Although this has been a focus of the organization and other values overlap, it was important to the Board and staff to really highlight this value. There is a commitment to valuing diversity within the organization with staff but also in serving job seekers, employers, and each community in the region. Similarly, the organization is focused on playing its role in addressing societal structural issues, inequalities, and working to remove barriers with a concentration on equity and inclusion in services and across the communities. MWSE will continue to value Service with Respect by serving all customers with integrity and dignity with respect for cultural diversity, fairness, and differences of opinion.

# MISSION, VISION, VALUES & PURPOSE

The organization continues to value **Partnerships** and knows that strong strategic partnerships with organizations are key to local and regional success. The region is fortunate to have many outstanding community and faith-based organizations doing work related to workforce development. Having a real community impact will rely on coordinating and interconnecting activities with partners.

Likewise serving employers will continue to be important through the value of **Responsiveness to Employer Needs** through a demand-driven system that anticipates and responds to local business needs. MWSE also continues to value **Education** reinforcing the importance of education across the continuum of Pre-K, K-12, postsecondary, and lifelong learning. Partnerships and connection between employers and education is key to developing the region's future workforce.

As an organization, MWSE continues to value **Innovative Leadership, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability**. MWSE is in a time of transition with new leadership that will focus on innovation in funding diversification and service delivery. Quality customer service is essential to the organization. MWSE will evaluate customer satisfaction and experience through the use of Net Promoter Score® (NPS) and utilize the information to drive continuous improvement efforts. The Board will also focus on accountability and performance to capture data and inform decision making. The Board will ensure organizational excellence and compliance with federal and state regulations.

**GOALS AND STRATEGIES:** Following the acceptance of the vision, mission, and values, the Board, staff, and stakeholders discussed objectives and goals. The Board prioritized five goals for the organization. **The goals focus on Collaboration, Employer Partnerships, Outreach and Recruitment, Resource Diversification, and Board Development.**

# GOALS

## COLLABORATION

Align and effectively partner with economic development, education, labor, and community organizations to build and maintain a regional talent pool.

- Increase communication and collaboration among workforce partners
- Enhance relationships with organizations in each county to move from transactional relationships to strategic partnerships
- Improve the alignment and coordination across partner programs of the MWSE Service Centers

## EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

Cultivate Employer Partnerships by proActive Outreach and Quality, Data-Driven Services to ensure the workforce are fully competent and career ready.

- Share and validate labor market information with employers to understand their current and future workforce needs
- Intentionally engage with employers to address emerging technology and sectors
- Coordinate activities with K-12 and post-secondary education and training partners to ensure jobseekers are prepared for available careers

## OUTREACH & RECRUITMENT

Intentionally communicate services and value to our communities resulting in further engagement and employment of under-served and marginalized populations.

- Implement innovative initiatives to reach and serve under-served and marginalized populations
- Innovate service delivery through flexible and remote/virtual services
- Expand career exploration and planning resources, employment opportunities and work experiences available for youth

## RESOURCE DIVERSIFICATION

Diversify, leverage, and align resources to meet regional talent needs and priorities.

- Research national best practice examples in workforce board funding diversification
- Develop a position paper and funding action plan to align funding opportunities to Board priorities
- Actively seek and pursue alternate funding sources for workforce development activities in the region

## BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Foster Board development to identify and advocate for improvements that could lessen barriers for job seekers, business growth, and employment.

- Educate and position board members to be ambassadors of the system
- Create an effective and fully engaged board by restructuring meetings, agendas, and committees



# GOALS

Goal 1. **Collaboration:** Align and effectively partner with economic development, education, labor, and community organizations to build and maintain a regional talent pool.

- Increase communication and collaboration among workforce partners
- Enhance relationships with organizations in each county to move from transactional relationships to strategic partnerships
- Improve the alignment and coordination across partner programs of the MWSE Service Centers

With this goal, MWSE will increase engagement and collaboration with workforce partners to better support businesses and jobseekers. The Board's mission is to develop today's workforce and tomorrow's economy by engaging employers, jobseekers, and partners. Partnerships is also one of the organization's values. The engagement of partners is key to the Board's mission and values. Stakeholders noted how resource-rich the region is with community organizations, education institutions, and government/public entities. Many of the organizations are working together, but there is an opportunity for a higher level of engagement and more coordination to interconnect systems. The Board reinforced the importance of communication, alignment, and coordination with partners across the region. Additionally, the community partners could rally together to address jobseeker barriers as well as regional issues around substance use, childcare, housing, and transportation through a stronger collective voice.

**Outcomes:** Increased partnerships and collaboration will result in a greater reach of MWSE's message. Partnerships may allow MWSE to reach populations that would not otherwise know of its services, increasing recruitment and enrollment efforts. Collaborative initiatives may also assist MWSE with stretching its resources further by allowing each partner to bring its strengths to the table, creating efficiencies in the talent ecosystem. This increased collaboration may be measured by:

- Increased participation in partner meetings
- Increased referrals to and from partner organization
- Increased number of collaborative initiatives and co-sponsored events

# GOALS

Goal 2. **Employer Partnerships**: Cultivate employer partnerships by pro-active outreach and quality, data-driven services to ensure the workforce are fully competent and career ready.

- Share and validate labor market information with employers to understand their current and future workforce needs
- Intentionally engage with employers to address emerging technology and sectors
- Coordinate activities with K-12 and post-secondary education and training partners to ensure jobseekers are prepared for available careers

Through this goal, MWSE will focus on understanding the workforce demand of the region to prepare individuals for current and future opportunities. Employers participating in The Purpose Partners employer survey noted issues in attracting qualified talent, getting applicants to respond to job postings, limited supply of people learning the trades, lack of quality applicants, and employee retention. Employer partnerships are key to the Board's mission, vision, and values. MWSE must engage employers and understand their current and anticipated needs to develop the workforce for today and the future. A skilled workforce is essential to creating and sustaining the vision of a strong and diverse economy. To promote a demand-driven system that anticipates and responds to employer needs, MWSE must review available labor market information and validate with local employers to prepare the workforce. Once validated, information must be shared with education partners to ensure students develop the skills needed for available and future careers. Partners suggested a focus on start-ups as they often have a keen understanding of the skills needed for the future. Partners also suggested the consideration of establishing sector partnerships that would bring together business, education, workforce development, and other partners.

Board members, staff, and stakeholders reinforced the need for MWSE to be agile and able to quickly pivot to respond and address employer needs. Also to be forward-thinking and consider the opportunities and changes coming through Industry 4.0 and increasing automation. Similarly, there is a desire for the Board to connect to other industries. Consideration should be given to expanding employer or business services to include consulting services, small business development, reskilling support, financial planning, and similar services.

**Outcomes:** By cultivating more and stronger partnerships with employers, MWSE will not only provide better business services but also collect critical first-hand labor market information that will benefit jobseekers and lead to more efficiently making connections to fill jobs that are a good fit for all parties. Stronger information from and partnerships with local employers will also provide better access to quality information to share with local education institutions for purposes of career exploration. The success of this goal may be measured by:

- Increased employment retention
- Increased number of employer customers
- Increased career exploration efforts within local K-12 and post-secondary education institutions

# GOALS

Goal 3. **Outreach and Recruitment:** Intentionally communicate services and value to our communities resulting in further engagement and employment of under-served and marginalized populations.

- Implement innovative initiatives to reach and serve under-served and marginalized populations
- Innovate service delivery through flexible and remote/virtual services
- Expand career exploration and planning resources, employment opportunities, and work experiences available for youth

The overall intent of this goal is to increase the local talent pool through a communication strategy, and the development and implementation of targeted outreach to engage under-represented populations. Increasing the talent pool by reaching disengaged and marginalized individuals and making services accessible will be essential in producing the workforce necessary for economic growth. The jobseeker survey conducted by The Purpose Partners reinforced many issues faced by jobseekers. Jobseekers identified issues due to COVID-19 (concerned about risk, medical concerns, child care, and homeschooling challenges) as well as challenges because of prior records, being an older worker, or a lack of work experience. Outreach and innovative service delivery can address these issues and challenges. Key to the Board's vision is a community where all people can live, work, and prosper which is supported by the mission of engaging jobseekers to develop the workforce. The Board values diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as service with respect. Throughout the planning process, the Board, staff, and partners all shared the importance of reaching under-served and marginalized populations and the need to be innovative in how we reach and serve these jobseekers.

Partners reinforced the need to remove barriers and leverage tools to make services more accessible to all populations. Additionally, it will be important to upskill and reskill the talent so they are competitive in the marketplace. Also, key for the region is exposing youth and young adults to the opportunities existing in the region by sharing career pathways that explain the available careers, education, training, and skill requirements, and pay ranges. This will require close work with the education partners across the region to ensure youth receive career exploration early and often.

**Outcomes:** Increased outreach and recruitment efforts are critical to ensuring that those who most need the services of MWSE are able to hear of their availability and know-how to access them. The efforts toward this goal will aim to get more customers in the door to increase the size and diversity of the talent pool, as well as ensure equal access for all those who need services.

The success of MWSE's outreach and recruitment may be measured by:

- Increased number of participants within targeted populations
- Increased Net Promoter Score®
- Increased partnerships with organizations serving members of targeted populations

# GOALS

Goal 4. **Resource Diversification:** Resource Diversification: Diversify, leverage, and align resources to meet regional talent needs and priorities.

- Research national best practice examples in workforce board funding diversification
- Develop a position paper and funding action plan to align funding opportunities to Board priorities
- Actively seek and pursue alternate funding sources for workforce development activities in the region

The objective of this goal is to increase and diversify resources to allow the region to meet local workforce challenges. MWSE relies heavily on federal funding specifically funds from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The funding is prescriptive with specific eligibility requirements and can vary from year to year depending on formula allocations. In order to have more flexibility and maximum impact to meet community needs. MWSE must develop a plan for diversifying funding and bringing in new funding streams in order to increase services for individuals and employers and address local needs. Having a strategy for funding ensures MWSE is ready to pursue funding when opportunities arise and have an action plan for utilizing additional resources.

**Outcomes:** Resource diversification is key to being able to provide as much service as possible to a wide range of customers. Bringing in additional funds allows the Board to pursue creative solutions that may not be supported by WIOA funding. Braiding and blending funds with partners also allows MWSE to stretch its resources further than funding things alone. Success toward this goal may be measured by:

- Decrease in percent of total MWSE funds coming from WIOA
- Increase in number of co-funded initiatives with partners

# GOALS

Goal 5. **Board Development:** Foster board development to identify and advocate for improvements that could lessen barriers for jobseekers, business growth, and employment.

- Educate and position board members to be ambassadors of the system
- Create an effective and fully engaged board by restructuring meetings, agendas, and committees

To successfully implement the Board's strategic plan and maintain momentum throughout the plan period, there must be a focus on engagement, a commitment to progress tracking, and an ability to update strategies and make course corrections when necessary. The Board's values of Innovative Leadership, Continuous Improvement, and Accountability directly relate to Board Development. It is essential that the Board focuses on innovation as well as continuous improvement efforts to ensure organizational excellence.

The Board's implementation structure is critical to ensuring that actions remain relevant and are truly making an impact on the Board's goals. In support of implementation, MWSE established an internal goal of Board Development. Through this goal, board members will continue to grow in their roles as board members, increase engagement and leadership with strategic initiatives for the region.

**Outcomes:** Board development is key to making sure members are prepared to be ambassadors of MWSE, providing a voice for workforce development issues within the region within their networks. The more engaged board members are in the community and outside of board meetings, the more MWSE has a voice and is established as the authority on workforce development. Success for this goal may be measured by:

- Increased board member participation in meetings
- Increased board member participation in committees
- Expanded network of board member ambassadors



## MISSION

Develop today's workforce and tomorrow's economy by engaging employers, jobseekers, and partners.

## VISION

A community which fosters and sustains a strong, diverse economy where all people can live, work, and prosper.

## PURPOSE

Creating connections to a better future!

# STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

We value diversity, equity, and inclusion within our organization and among our services, customers, and partners.

## PARTNERSHIPS

We convene partners strategically to better meet needs, leverage resources, and more efficiently deliver workforce services to the community.

## RESPONSIVENESS TO EMPLOYER NEEDS

We promote a demand-driven system that anticipates and responds to employer needs.

## SERVICE WITH RESPECT

We serve all jobseekers with integrity and dignity by delivering services with respect for cultural diversity, fairness, and differences of opinion.

## EDUCATION

We value the importance of the education continuum of Pre-K, K-12, post-secondary, and lifelong learning, leading to the development of a sustainable workforce.

## INNOVATIVE LEADERSHIP

We foster innovation to maximize the economic impact of workforce funding and resources.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We evaluate services and programs based on meeting or exceeding customer satisfaction, tracking performance to core metrics, and implementing continuous improvement processes to ensure a sound return-on-investment of taxpayer dollars.

# VALUES