

West Michigan Workforce Innovations Lab



Under the leadership of the West Michigan Strategic Alliance, a regional leadership organization covering seven counties, West Michigan will develop and manage an innovations lab designed to advance and spawn a wide range of innovations in the regional workforce education system. These include four categories of innovations:

1. **Market Intelligence** – Initiatives will be designed to better understand the detailed structure of regional employment clusters and the emerging requirements for the innovation economy. These include: an analysis of the skill development needs of West Michigan’s emerging life sciences, alternative energy and sustainable manufacturing sectors; analysis of the evolution of the global supply chains in the region’s industries and how it affects skill development demand; development of a strategy for attracting and retaining knowledge workers through new workplace designs and a system for regional outreach and engagement.
2. **The Innovation Institute** – It will bring together all of West Michigan’s initiatives focused on building awareness and knowledge about innovation, implementing innovation systems in regional companies, and developing innovation skills in West Michigan’s current and emerging workforce. Initiatives under the Innovation Institute include development of a comprehensive innovations skills curriculum, launch of an industrial Design Council, development of an Innovation Forum, and development of a regional infrastructure for intellectual property commercialization.
3. **Workforce System Transformation** – Initiatives designed to restructure key elements of West Michigan’s workforce investment and education system for emerging, existing and transitional workers include: 1) performance-based credentialing; 2) development of a model Global School; 3) accelerated engineering program; 4) implementation of a manufacturing skills standards systems; 5) development of an employer-owned manufacturing skill development cooperative; 6) a regional model for entry-level employment retention and advancement for disadvantaged populations; and 7) a regional model for skill development for the health care sector.
4. **Enterprise Development** – Initiatives will be designed to stimulate entrepreneurship and new business creation in key sectors of the innovation economy. West Michigan will launch a regional model of the successful Entrepreneurial League System.

West Michigan’s partnership members represent both sectoral and geographic diversity. They include Grand Valley State and Michigan State universities; regional economic development partnerships, workforce investment boards, and manufacturing councils; The Right Place, Inc.; Grand Rapids Community College; Kent Intermediate School District; Van Andel Institute; The Delta Strategy; W.K. Kellogg Foundation; and West Michigan Science and Technology Initiative.

