



# Economic and Workforce Development Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

April 1, 2021

8:30am – 10:00am

Meeting Attendees:	Aaron Estrada, Adriene Pendery, Adrienne Goodstal, Alex Andrews, Andrew Ryskamp, Andrew Sisson, Anna Almanza, Bill Guest, Blythe Kazmierczak, Calvin DeJong, Carra Oteto, Chad Patton, Colene Johnson, Courtney Myers-Keaton, Dan TenHoopen, Daniel VanderMolen, Danielle Seeber, Dick Bulkowski, Emily Madsen, Jayme Vosovic, Jennifer Summers, Johanna Schulte, John Rumery, Juan Rosario, Kaitlynn Demsey, Kenny Lyles, Lisa Venema, Lorena Aguayo-Marquez, Lynne Bosma, Maddie Strom, Maegan Search, Marcelle Marcelletti, Monica Light, Nancy DuBois, Niesa Nelson, Sara Proano-Motta, Sharlene Organ, Steven Assarian, Tawana Brown, Thelma Ensink, Tia Zeien, Wende Randall <i>(List may not be complete- please contact Brianne if you were on the call but are not listed here.)</i>		
Time Convened:	8:33	Time Adjourned:	10:03

<b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b>	
<b>Reflection</b>	
Discussion	
<b>Stimulus Package Funds Overview</b>	
Discussion	
<p>Jayme Vosovic, with Michigan League for Public Policy, overviewed funding coming to Michigan from the America Rescue Plan (ARPA) Act which was recently passed by the federal legislature. Overall, around \$10 billion dollars will be coming into the State of Michigan to cover costs related to COVID-19 and to aid impacted industries. Kent County is estimated to receive \$127 million, and the City of Grand Rapids is estimated to receive \$94 million. Most funds are available to cover costs through December of 2024.</p>	
<u>Childcare</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funds will be available to support childcare operations (personnel, facilities, PPE, etc.)</li> <li>- Child Care and Development Block Grants will expand eligibility to all essential workers regardless of income</li> </ul>	
<u>Education</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Emergency relief for higher ed is included in the bill in addition to K-12 school funding.</li> <li>- One-time Head Start grants are included in the bill</li> <li>- For school districts, 20% of funds must support/address learning loss.</li> </ul>	
<u>Health Care</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The bill increases health insurance subsidies and extends eligibility to individuals receiving unemployment benefits in 2021. <i>Awareness and outreach around this new benefit is needed.</i></li> <li>- Optional Medicaid expansion to cover all costs related to COVID-19, has to be approved by the state legislature.</li> <li>- Funds also strengthen home and community care for those with long term needs</li> </ul>	



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- Optional Medicaid expansion to expand coverage to one year after the end of pregnancy, has to be approved by the state legislature.
- The bill also includes funding for community mental health and substance abuse services
- Funds for vaccines, testing, and tracing are also included

### Tax & Cash Benefits

- Economic Impact Payments
- Child Tax Credit has been expanded for this year only
- Earned Income Tax Credit increased substantially and eligibility increased.
- Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit increased.
- Tax credits are for tax year 2021 only. *It will be important to ensure that folks who do not typically file returns do so to access these benefits.*

### Unemployment

- The bill extends the \$300/week pandemic assistance until September 6, 2021

### Transportation

- Funds for urban and rural transit are available through September 2024

An interactive sheet on the ARPA and what it means for Michigan is on the MLPP website: [The American Rescue Plan Act: What does it mean for Michigan? – MLPP](#). MLPP focuses on advocacy around budget priorities to ensure that funds are distributed equitably.

MLPP Budget Priorities: <https://mlpp.org/budget-priorities/>

### Nonprofits

Dan TenHooen with Heart of West Michigan United Way overviewed a few portions of the ARPA specific to nonprofits:

- The universal itemized deduction has temporarily increased for nonprofits. Some legislators are looking to implement this permanently
- The Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP) received an increase in funding

### CERA Funds

Courtney Myers-Keaton, with the Coalition to End Homelessness, overviewed the COVID Emergency Rental Assistance (CERA) funds are available through an appropriation to the state in December. Kent County receiving around \$39 million for rental assistance to households who have fallen behind on rent due to the pandemic. It is estimated that this will serve 5000-6000 households. The funds can also be used to support utilities, including internet. Households up to 80% of area median income (AMI) qualify and can receive up to 12 months of assistance with option to re-apply for up to an additional 3 months. A social security number is not required to receive these funds.

Kent County Community Action and Salvation Army are each setting up new departments of case workers to administer these funds. Case workers will also be available at the Hispanic Center and the SOURCE. Either landlord or tenant can initiate the application process. An online application portal will be launched by MSHDA on April 7<sup>th</sup>. In the interim, applications can be emailed to [kent.rent@usc.salvationarmy.org](mailto:kent.rent@usc.salvationarmy.org). Folks can get help with the application process by calling the



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Housing Assessment Program (HAP) at 616-454-5840. Any community agency is able to assist households with completing a paper or online application. Applications will be available in Spanish but have not been made available by MSHDA yet.

Every county will have access to these funds. Folks can reach out to HARA (Housing Assessment and Referral Agency) for different counties to learn more about the process. The ARPA bill will also include additional funding, but the amount for Kent County has not been announced yet.

### Food Assistance

Anna Almanza from the Food Bank Council provided an overview of changes to the Food Assistance Program (aka SNAP) over the past year:

- Work requirements are not in place to be eligible for SNAP. This will continue for 1 month after the federal emergency declaration ends.
- Households who do not currently receive the maximum amount of SNAP benefits have had their amount increased. Federal and state emergency declarations must be in place for this program to continue.
- 15% increase for benefits for all SNAP households through September 2021. On average, additional SNAP funds provide \$24 in additional benefits per household.
- P-EBT: benefits for school aged children who typically receive free or reduced meals. These are currently being issued for the current school year, retroactive to September. Benefits are issued based on learning modality (virtual, hybrid, or in-person). Through ARPA, P-EBT can continue throughout time of the emergency declaration and summer months following a school year.
- SNAP Outreach Hotline: available at 1-888-544-8773
- SNAP – Consolidated Appropriations Act in December increased access for college students. Press release: [https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73970\\_71692\\_71696-555830--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73970_71692_71696-555830--,00.html). Food Bank Council will be sharing flyer and hosting a webinar around this soon.
- Online purchasing is offered in MI (currently through Walmart, Amazon, and Aldi). The ARPA includes additional funding to expand the online purchasing program
- Seniors – ARPA provided additional funding for CSFP and other programs focused on seniors
- Ag provisions: APRA provides \$3.6B to purchase commodities. In the process of determining what this may look like.
- The ARPA includes funds for WIC enhancements including increasing the benefit

The group was asked to share suggestions for funding priorities at a state and local level. ENTF will be using these to inform advocacy efforts. Suggestions:

- Some of that broadband infrastructure funding should go to providing free universal high speed internet city-wide.
- Public transportation access county-wide for all work shifts, accessible to rural communities, and stops along the businesses by the airport.

As these funds roll out, advocacy and outreach will be important at a state and local level to ensure that funds are distributed equitably and to those most in need. Also, advocacy can focus on releasing



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all funds from federal allocations to the state-level since funds are required to be spent by a specific time or must be returned.

### Action Team Overview

#### Discussion

Last month, the subcommittee spent time in action teams discussing plans for 2021 and developing talking points to share with folks who may be new to the action team space. Each action team created a slide to share their talking points with the larger group

#### Measuring Systems Success –

This team conducts research with support from Emily, Data Analyst, to better understand needs and track system progress. The group meets the second Mondays of each month at 2:00pm. Contact Emily Madsen ([emadsen@hwmuw.org](mailto:emadsen@hwmuw.org)) if you would like calendar invites or have any questions.

#### Community Engagement –

This group is working towards developing stronger partnerships between both organizations in ENTf and within the broader economic development space. The teams meets the third Wednesday of each month from 1:00pm. Connect with Brienne ([brobach@hwmuw.org](mailto:brobach@hwmuw.org)) to receive meeting invites.

#### System Navigators –

The team hosts quarterly navigator convenings (training and networking opportunities for navigators) and are hoping to do a navigator training sometime this year. In addition, they are working on creating a document to inform the community of best practices and exploring how to expand technology to continue momentum and to measure success and outcomes. They meet after the subcommittee meetings each month. Connect with Lynne ([lbosma@goodwillgr.org](mailto:lbosma@goodwillgr.org)) for meeting information

#### Equity –

This group looks ways to support and increase equity conversations at an individual, organizational, and community level. They meet following the full subcommittee meeting each month, connect with Daniel VanderMolen ([dvandermolen@firststepskent.org](mailto:dvandermolen@firststepskent.org)) for invites.

#### Policy –

Focus on providing training and education for effective advocacy for state and local priorities.

### Community Partner Updates

#### Discussion

MLPP – Join them on Fridays at 11am on Facebook for the “Yays and Nays” of the week from the state legislature.

United Way – ALICE Data was released recently. Event Kent County data on 4/23 at 8:30am: [The Latest on ALICE Registration, Fri, Apr 23, 2021 at 8:30 AM | Eventbrite](#)

West Michigan Works! – second chance job fair on April 28<sup>th</sup>. Exciting things coming around Clean Slate and online trainings soon on their website!



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JobStart needs more participants as our work contracts are significantly increasing. They will soon be recruiting again for the Early Childhood Educator apprenticeship training.

Anyone working with people aged 15-24 who want a summer job in Grand Rapids direct them to sign up for GRow1000 program <https://www.grandrapidsmi.gov/Government/Programs-and-Initiatives/GRow1000/Youth-Applicants>