



GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

ADA TOWNSHIP • ALGOMA TOWNSHIP • ALLENDALE TOWNSHIP • ALPINE TOWNSHIP • BELDING • BYRON TOWNSHIP • CALEDONIA TOWNSHIP • CANNON TOWNSHIP • CASCADE TOWNSHIP • CEDAR SPRINGS COOPERSVILLE • COURTLAND TOWNSHIP • EAST GRAND RAPIDS • GAINES TOWNSHIP • GEORGETOWN TOWNSHIP • GRAND RAPIDS • GRAND RAPIDS TOWNSHIP • GRANDVILLE • GREENVILLE • HASTINGS HUDSONVILLE • IONIA • JAMESTOWN TOWNSHIP • KENT COUNTY • KENTWOOD • LOWELL • LOWELL TOWNSHIP • MIDDLEVILLE • OTTAWA COUNTY • PLAINFIELD TOWNSHIP • ROCKFORD SAND LAKE • TALLMADGE TOWNSHIP • WALKER • WAYLAND • WYOMING

November 1, 2015

Regional Prosperity Initiative:

This letter is on behalf of the Region 4 West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance to request Phase III of the Regional Prosperity Initiative Grant Tier I. The Alliance includes the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council, Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, West Michigan Regional Planning Commission, and West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission. Additional coalition members include representation from higher education, adult education, community development, the philanthropic community and economic development. Attached you will find letters of support signed by all of the required partners. The fiduciary for the grant will be the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council. The Metro Council's mission is to advance the current and future well-being of our metropolitan area by bringing together public and private sectors to cooperatively advocate, plan for, and coordinate the provisions of services and investments which have environmental, economic and social impact. As such, its mission correlates perfectly with the intent of the Regional Prosperity Grants.

The Region 4 West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance has been extremely successful over the past two years implementing Phases I and II of the grant. The collaboration and cooperation among the region's entities has been exceptional. The Alliance has been a leader in the Prosperity Initiative and has achieved all of the primary grant objectives.

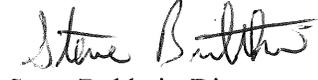
The requested Phase III grant will be used to fund the ongoing effort of the Regional Prosperity Initiative including implementation of the five-year prosperity plan, as well as ongoing monthly meetings, communications, and proof of transparency.

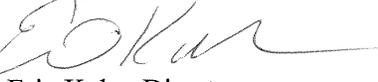
West Michigan is well-known throughout the state for its collaborative nature. It is our hope that this Phase III Tier I grant would be the catalyst for further collaborative activities, as well as serve as a template for other regions.

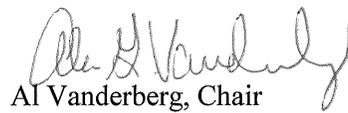
Sincerely,

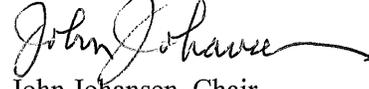
  
John W. Weiss, Executive Director  
GVMC

  
David Bee, Director  
WMRPC

  
Steve Bulthuis, Director  
MACC

  
Erin Kuhn, Director  
WMSRDC

  
Al Vanderberg, Chair  
GVMC

  
John Johansen, Chair  
WMRPC

  
William Vanderbilt, Chair  
MACC

  
Susie Hughes, Chair  
WMSRDC



GRAND VALLEY METROPOLITAN COUNCIL

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**A Resolution In Support of Grand Valley Metropolitan Council's Participation in the Regional Prosperity Alliance Phase III 2016**

WHEREAS, Governor Snyder and the Michigan Legislature have created the Regional Prosperity Initiative, and,

WHEREAS, the Regional Prosperity Initiative is intended to foster greater communication and collaboration among organizations involved in economic development, education, work-force development, regional planning and transportation agencies, local and state government, and private companies, and,

WHEREAS, the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative will serve a 13 county area which includes over 340 local governments, 5 higher education institutions, 3 Work Force Boards, 3 Metropolitan Planning Organizations, 2 Regional Planning Agencies, 3 Rural Transportation Task Forces, as well as many Economic Development, Community Development and Non-Profit organizations, and,

WHEREAS, only the four existing metropolitan planning and regional planning agencies in our 13 country region are qualified to receive funding under the Regional Prosperity Initiative, and

WHEREAS, The Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission and The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission have requested that Grand Valley Metropolitan Council be the applicant and fiduciary agency for the grant on behalf of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance, and,

WHEREAS, The above mentioned partners have completed Phase II of the Regional Prosperity Initiative with exceptional cooperation and collaboration with their efforts recognized statewide.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved that, the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council Board of Directors hereby endorses our participation in the Regional Prosperity Initiative and,

Be It Further Resolved that the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council is honored and pleased to provide leadership in this regional venture by submitting the grant application on behalf of our West Michigan Region.

Approved on November 18, 2015 by the Board of Directors of the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council.

John W. Weiss  
Executive Director, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

11/18/17  
Date

Al Vanderberg  
Chair, Grand Valley Metropolitan Council

11/18/17  
Date



November 16, 2015

**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
3000 NORTH STILES ROAD  
P.O. BOX 277  
SCOTTVILLE, MICHIGAN 49454-0277  
231/843-5540

John W. Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metro Council  
678 Front Ave. NE, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Subject: West Michigan Prosperity Alliance

Dear Mr. Weiss:

West Shore Community College supports the idea of thinking globally, planning regionally and acting locally, as presented by the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance.

Based on Governor Snyder and the Michigan Legislature's creation of the *Regional Prosperity Initiative*, West Shore Community College endorses the idea to foster greater communication and collaboration among organizations involved in economic development, education, work-force development, regional planning and transportation agencies, local and state government, and private companies.

West Shore Community College supports the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative, serving a 13 county area which includes over 340 local governments, 5 higher education institutions, 6 Work Force Boards, 3 Metropolitan Planning Organizations, 2 Regional Planning Agencies, 3 Rural Transportation Task Forces, and many Economic Development and non-profit organizations.

West Shore Community College is in support of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance and Grand Valley Metropolitan Council's Collaborative's submittal of the 2016 grant request on Region 4's behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth E. Urban", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kenneth E. Urban, Ed.D.  
President

cc: Gayle L. McCrath



**Muskegon Area First**

380 W. Western Ave, Suite 202  
Muskegon, MI 49440

November 16, 2015

John Weiss  
Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

RE: West Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative Grant Application

Dear Mr. Weiss,

Muskegon Area First Economic Development Corporation is pleased to support the application of the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance for grant funding to continue its economic development efforts throughout Region 4.

In addition, I would like to continue serving on the Steering Committee for the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward L. Garner", followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

Edward L. Garner  
President & CEO



## PADNOS

Recycling the world over, and over®

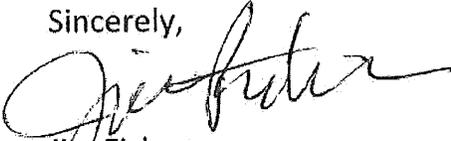
November 16, 2015

West Michigan Prosperity Alliance  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue NW  
Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

To whom it may concern:

PADNOS, a 110 year old scrap metal, paper and plastic recycling company with facilities throughout Northern, Western, and Southwestern Michigan, fully supports the work of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance. We have a long history of collaborating in both our industry and the communities we serve, and we look forward to identifying and finding solutions for any areas that will promote the economic, environmental and social prosperity of our 13 county West Michigan Region.

Sincerely,



Jim Fisher  
Director, PADNOS

West Shore  
Community  
College



November 16, 2015

**OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**  
3000 NORTH STILES ROAD  
P.O. BOX 277  
SCOTTVILLE, MICHIGAN 49454-0277  
231/843-5540

John W. Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metro Council  
678 Front Ave. NE, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Subject: West Michigan Prosperity Alliance

Dear Mr. Weiss:

West Shore Community College supports the idea of thinking globally, planning regionally and acting locally, as presented by the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance.

Based on Governor Snyder and the Michigan Legislature's creation of the *Regional Prosperity Initiative*, West Shore Community College endorses the idea to foster greater communication and collaboration among organizations involved in economic development, education, work-force development, regional planning and transportation agencies, local and state government, and private companies.

West Shore Community College supports the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative, serving a 13 county area which includes over 340 local governments, 5 higher education institutions, 6 Work Force Boards, 3 Metropolitan Planning Organizations, 2 Regional Planning Agencies, 3 Rural Transportation Task Forces, and many Economic Development and non-profit organizations.

West Shore Community College is in support of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance and Grand Valley Metropolitan Council's Collaborative's submittal of the 2016 grant request on Region 4's behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth E. Urban", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kenneth E. Urban, Ed.D.  
President

cc: Gayle L. McCrath



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
GRAND REGION

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

KIRK T. STEUDLE  
DIRECTOR

November 16, 2015

Mr. John Weiss  
Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear Mr. Weiss:

On behalf of the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Grand Region Office, I would like to express our support for the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council's (GVMC) collaborative application for the Regional Prosperity Initiative on behalf of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance.

The Regional Prosperity Initiative is intended to foster greater communication and collaboration among organizations involved in economic development, education, work-force development, regional planning and transportation agencies, local and state government, and private companies. The GVMC application has the support of the Macatawa Area Coordinating Council, the West Michigan Regional Planning Commission and the West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, all agencies with contractual and operational relationships with MDOT. The MDOT Grand Region staff will provide any assistance needed to GVMC, and your partner agencies, to make this initiative a success.

Please feel free to contact me if we can be of further help in the application process or during the implementation phase.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger L. Safford".

Roger L. Safford, P.E.  
Region Engineer

BOH:GRAND:RLS:ck

cc: D. Wresinski  
D. McBurrows



community foundation

**Muskegon County**

For good. For ever.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

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*Vice Chair*

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*President/Secretary*

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Kathleen Long

Marvin Nash

Dale K. Nesbary, Ph.D.

Katrina Olson, M.D.

Kay M. Olthoff

Michael S. Soimar

Roger Spoelman

Alan D. Steinman, Ph.D.

John M. Sytsema

Kathi A. Tyler

James L. Waters

Thomas G. Witt

November 11, 2015

Mr. John Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear John:

I am writing to express the continued support of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County for the Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI). The initial work of the RPI has demonstrated the collaborative nature of our region, and we look forward to our work continuing.

We also support the submission of a grant application which will provide funding from the State of Michigan to support our ongoing collaborative efforts.

I will continue to serve on the RPI Steering Committee as a representative of the philanthropic community.

Sincerely,

Bob Chapla  
Vice President, Development





[www.mecostaedc.com](http://www.mecostaedc.com)

**James M. Sandy, President**

246 N. State Street, Big Rapids, MI 49307 ph: (231)592-3403 email: [jsandy@co.mecosta.mi.us](mailto:jsandy@co.mecosta.mi.us)

November 13, 2015

John W. Weiss  
Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Ave. Ste 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

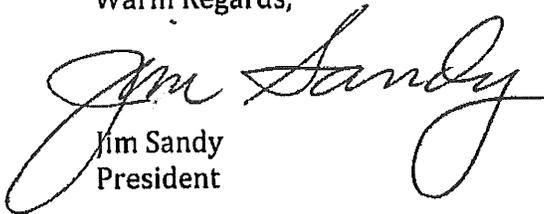
Dear John,

The Mecosta County Development Corporation (MCDC) is pleased to support the efforts of the Regional Prosperity Initiative and congratulates the organization on the accomplishments to date. Attached is a resolution of support recently adopted by the MCDC Executive Committee.

There is plenty of work that remains to be done and we believe the leadership in Region 4 is on the right track and working to improve opportunities for the citizens of the thirteen county area.

Best wishes on future success.

Warm Regards,

  
Jim Sandy  
President



**Macatawa Area  
Coordinating Council**

*A Cooperative Effort Among Units of Government*

Policy Board

- ✦ William Vanderbilt
- ✦ Blaine Koops
- ✦ Hannes Meyers, Jr.
- ✦ Pankaj Rajadhyaksha

Howard Baumann, Jr.  
Joseph Baumann  
Thomas Bird  
Nancy DeBoer  
Ken DeWeerd  
Terry Hofmeyer  
Gerald Hunsburger  
John Kleinheksel  
Kevin Klynstra  
John Lanum  
Al Myaard  
Terry Nienhuis  
Jim Storey  
Russ Te Slaa  
Todd Wolters

November 16, 2015

John Weiss  
Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue NW, Ste. 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear John,

- ✦ Executive Committee

The Macatawa Area Coordinating Council is pleased to provide this letter in support of the application for FY 2016 funding from the Regional Prosperity Initiative. The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (Region 4) has made significant progress helping to promote regional prosperity and collaboration through the resources provided from previous grants. The current application will help us continue our efforts.

Thanks for your leadership on this important initiative. There are still many more positive outcomes to achieve!

Sincerely,

Steve Bulthuis  
Executive Director  
Macatawa Area Coordinating Council



Kent School Services Network

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**KSSN Board**

Wayman Britt  
*Co-President*

Teresa Weatherall Neal  
*Co-President*

Nancy Marshall  
*Secretary*

Ron Koehler  
*Treasurer*

Bill Fetterhoff

Jane Gietzen

Scott Gilman

Sharon Loughridge

Julie Ridenour

Diana Sieger

Mike Zoerhoff

Mr. John Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue, suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear John:

I am writing to express Kent School Services Network's continued support for the Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI). The initial work of the RPI has demonstrated the collaborative nature of our region, and we look forward to the work continuing.

We also support the submission of a grant application which will provide funding from the State of Michigan to support our ongoing collaborative efforts.

Warmly,

Carol Paine-McGovern  
Executive Director

# HOLLAND/ZEELAND MODEL COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

11/10/15

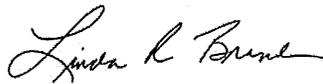
John W. Weiss  
Regional Prosperity Initiative  
Region 4 Chairperson

Dear John,

This letter confirms that as the Executive Director of the Holland/Zeeland Model Community Initiatives, we have been involved in the Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) process and will continue to participate and support the team's efforts during 2016. The Holland/Zeeland Model Community Initiatives is a group of 15 community leaders who have come together to support processes that fuel business growth, talent development and improved governance.

We appreciate the work of all those in our region who are contributing time and talent to this effort.

Please contact me with any questions.



Linda R, Brand  
Executive Director  
Holland/Zeeland Model Community Initiatives  
616-836-1570  
[lrbrand@me.com](mailto:lrbrand@me.com)

cc: Jim Brooks

# Allegan Adult Education



Allegan Public Schools

550 Fifth St \* Allegan, MI 49010

Brenda Nyhof, Director

Adult Education

bnyhof@alleganps.org 269-673-5431 ext. 3022

November 6, 2015

Mr. John Weiss  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Ave. NW Ste. 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Mr. Weiss,

Allegan Adult Education (AAE) is pleased to begin its affiliation with the Regional Prosperity Alliance (RPI) for the upcoming program year. Through the leadership provided by the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC), The RPI has been an effective and responsive implementation of Governor Snyder's vision for regional prosperity initiatives.

AAE is fully supportive of the efforts of the RPI to integrate the adult education services of West Michigan improve the region's economic and quality of life vitality.

The role that the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council has played in interpreting the vision of regional prosperity has been vital to the successes we have seen to date. GVMC staff have proven to be adept at creating relationships that work and remaining sensitive to the "turf" issues such a monumental change will necessarily create.

Please let me know of ways I can be of future service to the goals and implementation of the RPI.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Nyhof". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brenda Nyhof, Director  
Allegan Adult Education

the  
**CHAMBER**

5300 West U.S. 10  
LUDINGTON, MI 49431  
231.845.0324  
WWW.LUDINGTON.ORG

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LUDINGTON & SCOTTVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

November 9, 2015

Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
c/o John Weiss  
678 Front Ave. NW Ste. 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

To whom it may concern:

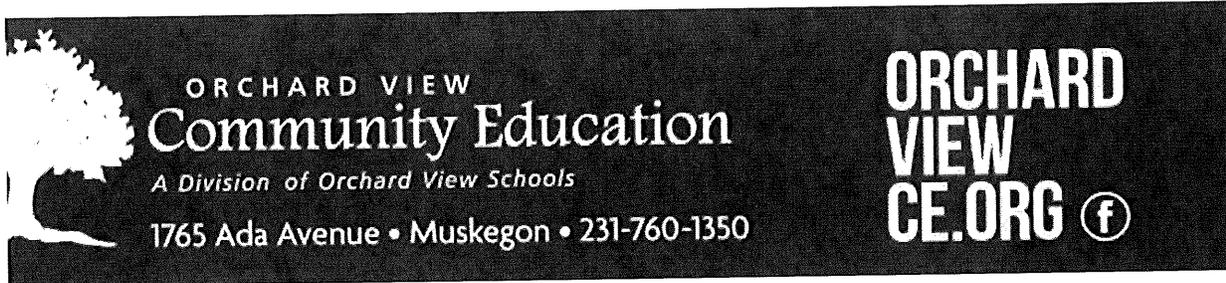
On behalf of the Mason County Growth Alliance and the Ludington & Scottville Area Chamber of Commerce I am writing to express support of the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance and Grand Valley Metropolitan Council's submittal of the 2016 grant request for Region 4.

I am honored to serve on the Steering Committee and to participate in the successful collaborative efforts of our region.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Maclean  
President/CEO



November 6, 2015

Mr. John Weiss  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Ave. NW Ste. 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Mr. Weiss,

Orchard View Community Education (OVCE) is pleased to continue its affiliation with the Regional Prosperity Alliance (RPI) for the upcoming program year. Through the leadership provided by the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council (GVMC), The RPI has been an effective and responsive implementation of Governor Snyder's vision for regional prosperity initiatives.

OVCE is fully supportive of the efforts of the RPI to integrate the adult education services of West Michigan into the fabric that will improve the region's economic and quality of life vitality. I stand ready to discover ways we can even more fully involve the dedicated educators that serve our region in the adult education field.

The role that the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council has played in interpreting the vision of regional prosperity has been vital to the successes we have seen to date. GVMC staff have proven to be adept at creating relationships that work and remaining sensitive to the "turf" issues such a monumental change will necessarily create.

Please let me know of ways I can be of future service to the goals and implementation of the RPI.

Sincerely,

Doug Wood, Director  
Orchard View Community Education

*Orchard View Community Education –  
1765 Ada Street, Muskegon, MI 49442 – 231.760.1350*



LARRY EMIG  
Chairperson, Local Elected Officials  
WILLIAM STANEK  
Chairperson, Workforce Development Board  
PAUL J. GRIFFITH  
Executive Director

November 6, 2015

John W. Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue NW, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Subject: Regional Prosperity Initiative

Dear Mr. Weiss:

This letter is written in support of the collaborative grant application from the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance for the Regional Prosperity Initiative.

It has been truly remarkable to see the new partnerships and collaboration forged among Steering Committee members. In particular, it's very exciting to see the types of projects that received funding and are moving forward, such as the Port of Muskegon Regional Logistics Hub and Connect Michigan, which we have been very involved with in our local communities.

Serving the rural counties of Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana and Osceola, Michigan Works! West Central has always been committed to improving regional employment conditions and enhancing the economic development of our region. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul J. Griffith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "P" and "G".

Paul J. Griffith  
Executive Director

Our Mission: "To continually improve a Workforce Development System that produces a workforce with the required skills to attract, retain and expand business and enhance our regional economy."

Some Programs Funded by the State of Michigan Workforce Development Agency/Equal Opportunity Employers/Programs  
MI Relay Center • 800 649.3777 (Voice and TTY)

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

www.michworks.org

231.796.4891 • Fax: 231.796.8316

Big Rapids, Michigan 49307

14330 Northland Drive



November 3, 2015

John W. Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metro Council  
678 Front Ave. NE, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear Mr. Weiss,

I am writing on behalf of Grand Valley State University in support of the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council's grant application for the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance.

Over the last year, the leadership Grand Valley Metropolitan Council has provided has been impressive. It is no small task to convene representatives from a 13 county area from various sectors, including workforce development, government, education and private industry. The conversations have been collaborative and relevant, resulting in a coordinated approach to building and sustaining the vitality of West Michigan.

Although much has been accomplished, there is great opportunity to build upon the existing and expanded collaborations that have been developed over the past year. Continued funding will allow us to further develop strategies and leverage resources, to the benefit of our communities.

Sincerely,

Simone Jonaitis, PhD  
Executive Director  
Center for Adult & Continuing Studies  
Grand Valley State University



904 Oak Drive  
Greenville, MI  
48838  
P: 616.754.9315  
TTY: 711  
F: 616.754.9310  
[www.eightcap.org](http://www.eightcap.org)

November 4, 2015

Mr. John Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Ave. NW, Ste. 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Mr. Weiss:

On behalf of EightCAP, I would like to thank you and the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance for the opportunity to be a part of the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance Steering Team. Please accept this letter as our organization's support for the 2016 Region 4 Regional Prosperity Initiative Application. EightCAP looks forward to being a part of the planning initiatives and projects that are embodied in this application.

Thanks again. If EightCAP can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,

Daniel Petersen  
President



# Muskegon Community College

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November 3, 2015

John W. Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metro Council  
678 Front Ave. NE, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear Mr. Weiss,

I'm writing on behalf of Muskegon Community College in support of Grand Valley Metropolitan Council's grant application for a third year of funding for the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance.

The college has been an active partner in the Regional Prosperity Initiative project for West Michigan that got underway over the last year. Dan Rinsema-Sybenga, our Dean of Workforce and Talent Development serves on the steering committee and the college was honored to host the steering committee in the past.

The Regional Prosperity Initiative is intended to foster greater communication and collaboration among organizations involved in economic development, education, work-force development, regional planning and transportation agencies, local and state government, and private companies.

Having been part of the process over the last two years we can definitely say that these goals are being accomplished in West Michigan and that communication and regionalization has made great strides under the Regional Prosperity Initiative. The plan that the region has worked on resulted in many project submissions that would be helpful for the future of the West Michigan Region. The funding and furtherance of the project selected in the region has been a good step forward.

Therefore, we continue to support the Regional Prosperity Initiative, and with this letter confirm our support of the Grand Valley Metro Council applying for further funding for this project. As an institution of higher education, we believe we can benefit by collaborating with our partners and other organizations in the region to better serve our constituents, which the Regional Prosperity Initiative is addressing.

Sincerely,

Dr. Dale Nesbary  
President, Muskegon Community College



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Barry  
Community  
Foundation

For Good. For Barry County. Forever.

---

231 S. Broadway, Hastings, MI 49058

February 26, 2015

John W. Weiss  
Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Ave. Ste 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear John,

In January 2015, I was approached to join the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance. It took me about a nanosecond to agree to be part of this amazing collaboration of economic development, transportation and regional planning, workforce development, foundations, education, and the private sector.

It is important to the Board of the Barry Community Foundation to serve its constituents by sitting at the table with such a robust group of regional leaders. Understanding this is the next step in our mission which is to serve our community residents with access to the best of the best, my board is very pleased with the service area that this opens up our foundation to: an area with 1.5 million residents, 130 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline and extends 75 miles into the heart of Michigan.

The Barry Community Foundation believes that our work with the WMPA will help us to identify cooperative programs and projects that we may be able to bring to our residents as we strive to make our little corner of Michigan to be the best small county in America. We know that it will undoubtedly have a positive economic impact across all of West Michigan. We support this work without hesitation.

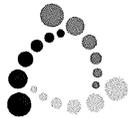
Sincerely,

Bonnie S. Gettys  
President/CEO

*Vision: A trusted resource for positive change.*

Phone: 269-945-0526 Fax: 269-945-0826 E-mail: [info@barrycf.org](mailto:info@barrycf.org)

License to solicit: MICS 11648



## **GRAND RAPIDS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

November 3, 2015

Mr. John Weiss  
Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Ave. NE, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear Mr. Weiss:

On behalf of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce, I write to support the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council's application for the Regional Prosperity Initiative on behalf of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance.

Collaboration, cooperation and public-private partnerships are hallmarks of the West Michigan community. To move our region forward, we need a comprehensive economic development strategy. This can only be realized when leaders in the business development, talent development and infrastructure development communities unite in a common vision and strategy. The West Michigan Prosperity Alliance has made great strides in this effort and there is more to be done.

This effort is no small undertaking and it is already paying dividends. Approval of this application will advance the workforce and economic development efforts already underway in West Michigan to help employers meet our talent needs.

The Chamber is committed to this work in collaboration with our other community partners and we offer our strong support for Grand Valley Metro Council's application.

Sincerely,

Andy Johnston  
Vice President, Government Affairs



October 13, 2015

Mr. John Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue, NW, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear John,

It is with regret that I personally must step down from the Regional Prosperity Initiative Steering Committee as I have taken a new position with GVSU effective next week. Dave Hatfield has been named as the Interim President of the Barry County Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Alliance effective October 12, 2015.

Mr. Hatfield has been a member and is the current Chairman of the BCEDA Board of Directors and has provided great leadership and support as Barry County aligned with Region 4. Mr. Hatfield makes an excellent replacement for me and is well prepared to fully represent BCEDA and our business community.

The Barry County Economic Development has appreciated the opportunity to have a voice on the steering committee representing economic development in a rural community and appreciates the opportunity to continue in this capacity. Our commitment to the Regional Prosperity Initiative remains strong and we fully support Region's 4 application to the State to continue participation in the program.

It is with full endorsement that I recommend Dave Hatfield to represent Barry County Economic Development Alliance on the Region 4 RPI Steering Committee.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Byrnes".

Valerie Byrnes  
President

phone:  
269.945.2454

fax:  
269.945.3839

221 W. State Street  
Hastings, MI 49058

miBARRY.com

IT'S IN OUR NATURE

**Area Community Services  
Employment & Training Council (ACSET)  
SERVICES • JOBS • TALENT**

1550 Leonard NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
ph: (616) 336-4100 | fax: (616) 336-4118  
online: westmiworks.org | communityactionkent.org

John Weiss  
Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metro Council  
678 Front Ave. Ste 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear Mr. Weiss,

It has been my pleasure to serve as Vice-Chair for the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance (Region 4). As a member of the Steering Committee over the last year we have prepared the 5-year plan which will identify efforts that will improve the economic competitiveness of the region and we have funded a number of initiatives that will have a positive impact on the entire West Michigan region.

The initiative has allowed greater regional collaboration among the many organizations that impact economic development efforts. This initial planning effort set the stage for an even bigger impact in the future, especially involving private sector interests who need to embrace and support the value of this type of initiative as essential to their economic success.

Please accept this letter as affirmation that West Michigan Works! is in support of the third round of grant applications. We have accomplished a lot since initially sitting down and the continuation of the initiative will continue to benefit the whole region.

If there is anything else you need, please don't hesitate in reaching out.

Sincerely,

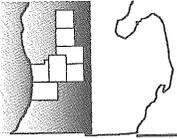
**JACOB MAAS**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
Area Community Services Employment & Training Council (ACSET)  
1550 Leonard NE | Grand Rapids, MI 49505  
(616) 336-4128



West Michigan Works! and Community Action of Kent County are divisions of ACSET.

ACSET is an Equal Opportunity Employer/Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.  
Michigan Relay Center 1-800-649-3777.

**WMRPC**



**WEST MICHIGAN REGIONAL  
PLANNING COMMISSION**

1345 Monroe Avenue NW ♦ Suite 255 ♦ Grand Rapids, MI 49505 ♦ (616) 774-8400 ♦ [www.wmrpc.org](http://www.wmrpc.org)

October 9, 2015

Mr. John W. Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504

Subject: Letter of Support for Regional Prosperity Initiative

Dear Mr. Weiss,

The West Michigan Regional Planning Commission (WMRPC) supports the ongoing Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI) and plans to fully participate in the 2016 program year. The WMRPC also supports the Grand Valley Metropolitan Council as the grant administrator for the 2016 program year.

I will continue serving on the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance (WMPA) Steering Committee. I look forward to another productive year of working with the Steering Committee.

Please let me know if there is anything the WMRPC can do to assist in the 2016 application to the Regional Prosperity Initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Bee".

Dave Bee, AICP  
Director

**OUR MISSION STATEMENT**

*To assist planning efforts in community and economic development, provide a regional forum for sharing information and ideas, and promote cooperative solutions to regional issues.*

Steven C. Ender, Ed.D., President

October 9, 2016

Mr. John W. Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Ave., Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear Mr. Weiss:

This letter is to express support for Dr. Bill Pink's continued service on the Regional Prosperity Alliance Steering Committee representing Region 4 in West Michigan.

We look forward to Grand Rapids Community College's continued presence on this important committee through Dr. Pink's service.

Sincerely,



Steven C. Ender, Ed.D.  
President



201 W. Washington Ave. Loft 410  
Zeeland, Michigan 49464

Mr. John Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metro Council  
678 Front Ave. NW, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

October 9, 2015

Dear Mr. Weiss,

Lakeshore Advantage presents this letter of endorsement in full support of your application to obtain grant funding from the State of Michigan's Regional Prosperity Initiative (RPI). The goal to establish stronger local and regional collaboration is essential in supporting economic investment. At the same time, it leads to greater quality of place while increasing business and talent attraction.

As a member of Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Collaborative Development Council, our organization is related to one of the five target groups identified by the RPI as a required participant. We will continue to be actively engaged in this effort and hope the state fully funds the 2016 application.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Owens, President  
Lakeshore Advantage



October 7, 2015

Mr. John Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue NE, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Re: 2016 Regional Prosperity Initiative

Dear John,

The Right Place, Inc. supports the preparation and submission of an application for grant funding to the State of Michigan to continue this regional collaborative during 2016.

The grant funding, if approved, will be used to improve the economy of West Michigan through strategies and projects involving infrastructure, workforce and talent development and economic development and will complement the work of The Right Place.

Rick Chapla, V.P of Strategic Initiatives will continue to serve on the Steering Committee as our representative to continue the momentum of the initiative into 2016.

Best regards,



Birgit M. Klohs  
President & CEO



October 7, 2015

Mr. John W. Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metro Council  
678 Front Ave, NE, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear Mr. Weiss,

TALENT 2024 is proud to support the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance's prosperity plan – a strong addition to the region's network of initiatives to create a vibrant regional economy.

The Regional Prosperity Initiative serves to increase alignment, create collaborative relationships, and establish communication within organizations involved in economic and workforce development, higher and adult education, transportation agencies, local and state government, and private and non-profit companies. All of this is essential if West Michigan and the State of Michigan will be equipped to attract and retain talent that is crucial for remaining globally competitive.

TALENT 2025 is a collation of more than 95 CEOs from 13 West Michigan counties with a mission to act as a catalyst to ensure an ongoing supply of world-class talent in West Michigan. Our vision is to gain top-20 global recognition for West Michigan's workforce by 2025. Our regional goal is to create a culture of continual learning and skill development among individuals and employers across the region.

For these reasons, we believe supporting this initiative allows our region to become more responsive to the needs business and supports the region's economic growth by ensuring our finite resources are used wisely to enrich our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin Stotts', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin Stotts  
President

**ZEELAND ADULT EDUCATION**

**115 Clover St., Suite 200**

**Holland, MI 49423**

**616-494-3416**

**moconnor@zps.org**

October 6, 2015

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in support of the continuation of the Michigan Regional Prosperity Initiative (MRPI) in which I will continue to participate as a member representing adult education in Region #4 which consists of 13 counties. This very important endeavor is key in developing educational and economic development partnerships which are vital in our region.

Since July, 2014, the Section 107 Adult Education state funding and the delivery of services has been legislated to operate on a regional basis with the Kent Intermediate School District serving as the fiscal agent for the 13 county region. The Zeeland Adult Education Program which I operate encompasses all of the school districts in Ottawa County as well as Fennville Adult Education in Allegan County. It also includes the Allegan County Correctional Facility and the Ottawa County Correctional Facility. It is imperative that the MRPI be funded for another year so that we may continue to form partnerships which support our regional plan which will result in a much more streamlined approach to life-long learning opportunities to meet the needs of residents and employers.

As a member of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance Steering Committee, I must applaud Mr. John Weiss, Chair, of the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance for his leadership role in this process and recommend that he continue to serve in his role as Chair in leading the committee forward to accomplish its second year goals.

Sincerely,

Mike O'Connor, Director  
Zeeland Adult Education Consortium  
Superintendent, Glenn Public School

**WMSRDC**  
WEST MICHIGAN SHORELINE  
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

October 6, 2015

Mr. John W. Weiss, Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metro Council  
678 Front Ave. NE, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear Mr. Weiss,

The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission, as an active partner in the West Michigan Regional Prosperity Alliance (Region 4), supports the grant application of the Grand Valley Metro Council for a third year of funding through the State of Michigan's Regional Prosperity Initiative.

The level of communication, cooperation, and partnership gained in Region 4 over the past two years as a result of the Regional Prosperity Initiative, development of the Regional Prosperity Plan, and funding of priority projects is unprecedented. The West Michigan Shoreline Regional Development Commission looks forward to continuing our participation and partnership with Region 4 in the upcoming year.

Sincerely,



Erin Kuhn  
Executive Director



12251 James St., Ste. 300  
Holland, MI 49424

T 616.393.4433  
F 616.393.5612

[www.miottawa.org/caa](http://www.miottawa.org/caa)

November 16, 2015

Mr. John Weiss  
Executive Director  
Grand Valley Metropolitan Council  
678 Front Avenue, Suite 200  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Dear John,

On behalf of the Ottawa County Community Action Agency Advisory Board, I am submitting this letter in support of the 2016 Regional Prosperity application for the Region 4, West Michigan Prosperity Alliance.

As outlined in the application West Michigan has much strength, but also faces critical challenges related to talent development, infrastructure, diversity, transportation, educational preparation and more effective collaboration, to mention just a few.

With that in mind, the Ottawa County Community Action Agency Advisory Board strongly endorses the West Michigan Prosperity Alliance application for 2016. The plan outlined in the application will build on the good work begun in earlier years.

Ottawa County Community Action Agency looks forward to working with the prosperity alliance to help bring the plan to fruition.

Sincerely,

*Peter Armstrong*

Peter Armstrong  
Chair  
Ottawa County Community Action Agency  
Advisory Board

William L. Raymond  
Executive Director  
Ottawa County Community Action Agency