SEMCA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Wednesday March 18, 2026
SEMCA, 25363 Eureka Road, Taylor, MI 48180
MINUTES

Members Present
Charlie Mahoney-Chair
Molly Luempert-Coy
Peter Kelly
Ledgra Johnson
David Lawrence
Naheed Huq
Chris LaJoy
Ashleigh Glass-Cooper
Rhonda Turner

Alternates Present
Alvin Milhouse
Collin Keehn

Members Absent
Mark DePaoli/Jeff Morris
Ann Thompson
Lee Graham
Christina Pizzo/Astacia Hahn
Donna Moser
Laura Pipis
Malin Wagner (Vice Chair)

Staff Present
Gregory Pitoniak
Tamara Lamper-Norrix
Kate Brady-Medley
Bill Hellar
Colleen Mallory
Dan Martinez
J.V. de la Fuente
Deborah Taylor
Charmarrah Bantom

Guests
Crystal Nowka-Wayne RESA

Call to Order

Mahoney called the meeting to order at 2:06pm. The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call
Roll call was taken, and a quorum was present. Newest member of the Board is Peter Kelly of First Merchant's Bank. He has been appointed to the vacated position left by Jay Steffensky.

Public Comment
No public comment was made.

Approval of Agenda of March 18, 2026
MOTION-LUEMPERT-COY, SUPPORT-JOHNSON, approve the March 18, 2026 Agenda as presented. All voting aye, motion carried.

Approval of Minutes of November 19, 2025

MOTION-KEEHN, SUPPORT-LUEMPERT-COY, approved the Minutes of November 19, 2025 as presented. All voting aye, motion carried.

Foster Care Summer Youth Contractor

Brady-Medley provided a brief update on the Foster Care Summer Youth Program previously administered by ETDI. Following the organization's closure, an RFP was issued to identify a new contractor. Three proposals were received, with EDSI and SER Metro scoring close and prompting interviews. Based on their experience in Detroit and demonstrated capacity, the team recommends SER Metro as best qualified to meet the program requirements.

MOTION-LUEMPERT-COY, SUPPORT-LAJOY, to approve SER Metro as the Foster Care Summer Youth Program Contractor for a six-month contract, with the option to renew for up to three years. All voting aye, motion carried.

USDOL New Policies: Workforce Pell and AI Literacy

Brady-Medley outlined the new USDOL Workforce Pell Grant Expansion, which will fund short-term (8–14 week) training to eligible participants in career-focused, high-skill, high-wage, high-demand fields through Title IV–eligible institutions. The program includes support for Registered Apprenticeships, particularly Related Technical Instruction (RTI), and is complimentary to existing funding, which will reduce costs for employers and participants. The process will be hosted through the State of Michigan in determining which training providers will be eligible. The process developed will include our State Workforce Board, LEO, and other state bodies to be part of approving and vetting those contractors and making sure the training meets the criteria and is in-demand by employers. With an accelerated rollout for Fall 2026, Michigan is well-positioned to benefit given its strong apprenticeship and credential attainment performance. Public comments are due by April 8, 2026.

Hellar provided background on a second new USDOL policy, Artificial Intelligence (AI) Literacy Framework, which offers voluntary guidance rather than regulation. The framework is intended to establish a national foundation for designing and delivering AI literacy programs across workforce and education systems. It outlines five foundational content areas and seven key delivery principles. MWA has reviewed these materials and developed summaries highlighting why the framework matters, the role of workforce boards, connections to state priorities, and recommended next steps. One identified next step is conducting a staff survey to assess AI skill comfort levels. While SEMCA has not implemented the survey, an AI overview has been provided for staff. Brady-Medley inquired if any board members were surveyed on their use of AI as an employer and what they predict are key AI training needs. This data could strengthen partnerships with post-secondary and training providers by identifying opportunities to integrate AI related skills in educational programs. Hellar,

Johnson, Keehn, and Glass-Cooper shared and overall, the discussion emphasized both the growing importance of AI literacy and the need for responsible, informed adoption across workforce and education sectors.

CEAC Recommendations

Brady-Medley provided an update from the CEAC meeting on March 5, 2026. The CTE Perkins Application Executive Summaries for Regions 29 and 30, Wayne and Monroe counties, were reviewed extensively and included needs assessments data, scoring and justification for new programming. The CEAC is recommending WDB receive and file in support of the applications.

The PY 25-26 Q2 Performance Metrics Report was also reviewed by the CEAC and provided to the WDB for review. The metrics provided are outcomes for apprenticeships, Manufacturing Day, JMG, talent tours and college access.

MOTION-GLASS-COOPER, SUPPORT-JOHNSON, to receive and file the recommendations of the CEAC for the CTE Perkins Applications for Regions 29 and 30 and the PY 25-26 Q2 Performance Metrics Report as presented. All voting aye, motion carried.

Pitoniak noted he should have done this earlier and asked that the board introduce themselves for our newest member Peter Kelly.

CEO Report

Pitoniak provided his CEO report starting with highlights from SEMCA's 30th Anniversary Celebration. He thanked Tim Johnston and his team, staff, board members, partners, and corporate sponsors for the success of the event. SEMCA had approximately 300 attendees, 25 sponsors, 11 presented tributes, our speakers CEO Evans of Wayne County and LEO Director Corbin, and a video from Senator Peters. Pitoniak acknowledged the reflections and congratulations shared during registration, noting that the key themes were collaboration, partnership, and support. He also highlighted the tribute from Shamar Herron of MWSE. The 2025 Annual Report was completed ahead of schedule to allow for distribution to attendees. The SEMCA video will be posted on the website soon, along with photos and additional congratulatory messages from our partners.

The USDOL in Washington, DC reached out to SEMCA to participate in its National Apprenticeship Week webinar, seeking a highly active and accomplished local workforce board in this space and thought of SEMCA. Jenn Tucker of SEMCA and Alysha Albrecht of WIN participated as panelists. Tucker provided the board with an overview and key statistics. The panel discussed best practices as well as the future of apprenticeships. The webinar attracted 3,000 registrants, with 1,800 attending live. It is an honor for SEMCA to be recognized as a leader in apprenticeships.

State Update

- Revenue forecasting for the current fiscal year shows a $900 million deficit. A revised forecast is expected in May will determine whether budget cuts are required or if the state will draw from its rainy-day reserve. MWA continues to monitor developments.
- The Governor's FY2027 budget recommendations include: $25 million for the new Medicaid Work Participation Requirements (WPR) program launching January 2027; continued funding for Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) at current levels; and most surprising no funding for Going Pro Talent Fund (GPTF) despite consistent support over the past seven years. The GPTF recommendation appears tied to frustration with the legislative process. Previously, the Republican House wanted to eliminate the program before agreeing to **$33 million**, which was still a **$22 million reduction** from prior levels. Many stakeholders believe the current proposal is intended to induce stronger advocacy from the business community.
- Board members Glass-Cooper and Haidous and SEMCA's Brady-Medley and Pitoniak participated in Advocacy Day, meeting with 14 legislators or their staff to advocate for full GPTF funding and other Workforce program priorities. Glass-Cooper noted that many legislators were surprised by the elimination, but we will have to wait and see if the House and Senate prioritize it in their budgets. Pitoniak thanked Glass-Cooper for her idea to include employee testimonials from GPTF funded training in our legislative packets. Brady-Medley noted the impact these testimonials had during the visits. Huq asked whether funding could be restored later if removed. Pitoniak emphasized this is only one phase of the budget process but cautioned that if ultimately eliminated it would make reinstatement unlikely, especially with a new incoming governor who may not prioritize the program.
- The Governor and LEO allocated $280,000 in additional WIOA training funds to MWAs SEMCA, Oakland and Macomb. Funds must be fully expended by May 31, 2026.

Federal Update

- Funding for SEMCA remains stable, and recent short-term or partial federal shutdowns have not impacted operations.
- FY2027 Federal Budget Outlook: House Appropriations recommendations expected by late March, followed by the Senate. The President's budget is anticipated in late March or April. We run the risk of another government shutdown if not passed by October 1, 2026. Final passage is unlikely before mid-term elections, and it is believed they will pass a continuing resolution.
- Congressman Walberg plans to introduce a WIOA Reauthorization Bill and we hope WIOA CDL Trainings will have a broader definition of eligibility for training related expenditures.

- The Departments of Labor and Education issued a Dear Colleague letter outlining the transition of DOE programs into the DOL system for the DOE programs and future grant opportunities. MWA is monitoring these changes.
- In regard to the new Medicaid Work Participation Requirements (WPR) program, Hellar will participate in a work group to help define Michigan's WPR program structure. Bantom will serve on a work group focused on FAE&T requirements.
- SEMCA met with Roger Curtis of Youth Solutions, our JMG funding partner. He has expressed his satisfaction with our program outcomes and identified a potential foundation to support expanded JMG funding.

WayneLINC funding is reaching an end with all funds to be spent by September 30, 2026. A phased staff reduction is underway for SEMCA and its partners/subrecipients. Program services will conclude by April 30, 2026. Final reporting and closeout activities will be completed by June 30, 2026.

Programs Update

- Hellar reviewed the overview page only of the 2026 Dashboard Report which was available as a handout. The MIS team is currently completing modifications to provide an expanded view of the SEMCA program data and a fuller picture of the impact that we have in our communities. The new version will be provided at the May meeting.
- De la Fuente provided updates on the GEM programs. First, the Michigan Central WIOA grant received by SEMCA is a short-term project that must be completed by May. The team is working with EDSI and Highland Park AJC to identify 30 candidates to move through the system and co-enroll in both GEM and WIOA training programs. SEMCA is also working with training providers, Empower, Global IT, and Computer Networking to generate reverse referrals and identify additional candidates. Second, there is just over one year remaining on the GEM grant, and the team is preparing budget modifications for approval by the EDA. This includes reallocating $600,000 from completed deliverables with remaining funds. Most of this reallocation will support job procurement, job seeker training, and employer services through the Mobility Talent Resource Network. The revised budget will be submitted to the EDA within the next week.
- Taylor provided the Youth update and directed the board to the handout highlighting the WDIV series Trade Up, a program that promotes skilled trades. Recently, SEMCA and our Construction Craft Laborer Pre-Apprenticeship partner, Detroit Home Builders, LLC., were interviewed by WDIV Channel 4 News anchor Kimberly Gill onsite at one of the homes students are currently renovating. AnThony Legins (President/Owner), Danielle Funderberg (Workforce Training Coordinator–Youth), and Nakieta Hall (apprentice) shared key program information, along with personal testimonials about their experiences and the program's

impact on their professional growth and future aspirations. Taylor also thanked board member and partner Johnson from Henry Ford College for their continued support. The Wayne County College Access Adult Education Ambassadors Training Program is expanding this summer to provide additional support to graduates as they transition to college, skilled trades, or employment opportunities. Additionally, Taylor highlighted several upcoming events, including the You're in Demand Level Up events at Ecorse High School and Robichaud High School, the 11th Annual Manufacturing Day, and MiCareerQuest. Glass-Cooper encouraged board members to invite their legislators to attend these events.

- Mallory reported that Southgate AJC has officially closed, and a new location is now open at 2121 Biddle Street in Wyandotte. The One-Stop Operator Request for Proposal (RFP) for the upcoming three-year cycle has been posted on the website, with all proposals due by April 6, 2026. Contractor recommendations will be presented to the board for approval at the May meeting. The GPTF Cycle II application process opened on April 6. Mallory encouraged board members to direct any interested companies to the businessservices.org email address for more information. SEMCA has applied for a new Statewide Apprenticeship Expansion Program grant, requesting $528,000 to support training reimbursements for 80 new apprentices. Award announcements are expected on March 24. Tucker also highlighted the upcoming Race to Talent event, sponsored by SEMCA in collaboration with Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works. The board received a handout with details for the March 25 event. National Apprenticeship Week will take place from April 27 through May 1. Additional information on planned events will be shared with the board. Finally, SEMCA is developing an Apprenticeship Guide inspired by Oakland County Michigan Works' model. The guide is expected to be published by the end of June and will serve as a resource for local school counselors, case managers, and AJC staff.
- Bantom reported that PATH has received the remaining balance of its federal allocation, and all current subrecipients are now fully funded for the program year. The PATH and FAE&T Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the upcoming three-year cycle have been posted on the website, with all proposals due by March 27, 2026. Contractor recommendations will be presented to the board for approval at the May meeting. Additionally, the FAE&T program waiver has expired, requiring a significant number of participants to immediately meet work participation requirements. This change resulted in a surge in activity at our American Job Centers (AJCs), with 599 participants in December, 157 in January, and 450 in February. To better manage this increase, a general customer hotline was implemented to provide information and address questions. With DHHS operating a universal case system, the hotline is expected to reduce unnecessary in-person visits and help ease the call volume currently impacting subrecipients.

- Martinez noted that the BRES program was eliminated in the most recent budget but was extended in September 2025 using ARPA funds. The program will continue through June 30, 2026.
- WIN has several grants winding down, which may result in staff layoffs. ABA monitoring is taking place this week, and SEMCA has significantly exceeded its goals under this grant. WIN is celebrating their 15th year Anniversary this year and planning their celebration event.

New/Old Business

National Association of Workforce Board (NAWB) Annual Conference is next week in Las Vegas. Pitoniak and a dozen national workforce directors will participate in a roundtable discussion with USDOL Assistant Secretary Henry Mack. A critical part of the NAWB Conference was meeting with legislators in Washington DC after the conference, but it does appear that they have recruited the Washington Workforce Development elite to participate in Las Vegas. Pitoniak noted MWA will likely schedule a trip to Washington DC to visit members of the Michigan Congressional delegation this year.

Next meeting is May 20, 2026, at 2pm here at SEMCA.

Adjourn

MOTION-GLASS-COOPER, SUPPORT-LAJOY to adjourn meeting. Meeting adjourned at 3:43pm. All voting aye, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Adopted at Meeting on 5/20/2026

Tamara Lamper-Norrix
Executive Assistant