

NEWS RELEASE

Oakland County Michigan Works! Agency to Consolidate Two Offices to Improve Services for Area Businesses and Job Seekers

WATERFORD, Mich. – Jan. 26, 2018 – A \$12.7 million reduction in federal and state funding in the past five years – coupled with projected future budget reductions – prompted the Oakland County Michigan Works! Agency to consolidate two of its eight service centers.

The decision to close the Ferndale Service Center and consolidate it with the Oak Park Service Center was based on a recommendation from the Oakland County Michigan Works! Task Force. The task force evaluated operations, performance indicators, demographics and population data and proposed recommendations to improve overall efficiency and operations at the county's eight centers. The closure is expected to take place within the next nine months. The Ferndale Service Center is operated in partnership between Oakland County Michigan Works! and the Ferndale School District.

"Since 2011, the Oakland County Michigan Works! Agency has faced \$12.7 million in reductions to our formula allocation of federal workforce funds," said Jennifer Llewellyn, manager of Oakland County Workforce Development. "Unfortunately, we are a victim of our own success. As Oakland County's economy continues to grow and add jobs, our portion of workforce funds decreases. While we still have high demand for services from our businesses and many job seekers, the resources have become more limited. We remain committed to finding new, innovative strategies and technologies to deliver our services to businesses and residents."

Llewellyn said the decision to close the center was based on budget and not a reflection on the center employees.

"We appreciate the hard work and dedication of the entire Ferndale staff and will be working with them to secure new positions within the Oakland County Michigan Works! network and the Ferndale School District," Llewellyn said. "We expect the transition of services to the Oak Park office will be seamless and accessible to both businesses and job seekers."

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Oakland County has more service centers than any other county in the state. The task force was comprised of workforce development and business professionals and managed by EdEn Inc., a Rochester-based economic and workforce development consulting firm. It concluded after an extensive review there was a significant overlap of services in southeast Oakland County and that with persistent budget cuts, the current system could not be sustained with reduced funding.

The task force recommended the remaining seven Michigan Works! offices in Oakland County – Highland, Novi, Pontiac, Southfield, Troy and Waterford, as well as Oak Park – should rely more on technology to provide expanded services to clientele, which could include delivering more services virtually and social media, Llewellyn said.

Oakland County Michigan Works! helps more than 45,000 job seekers prepare for careers and conduct job searches each year. The Agency also provides services to businesses, including talent recruiting and retaining support, training support and labor market information. The agency has an administrative staff of four full-time staff, with a Michigan Works! service staff of approximately 103 people.

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