

MiCareerCompass Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is entered into on **DATE** (herein referred to as the “Effective Date”) by and between TalentFirst, located at 833 Kenmoor Ave SE, Suite B, Grand Rapids, MI 49546 (hereinafter referred to as “TalentFirst”), and **PARTNER**, located at **ADDRESS** (hereinafter referred to as “Partner”).

Parties may be referenced individually as “Party” and collectively as the “Parties.”

PURPOSE

The purpose of this MOU is to establish a structured and mutually beneficial partnership among the Parties to support and implement the pilot phase of MiCareerCompass. The Parties agree to work collaboratively to achieve individual and shared objectives while aligning efforts to create a dynamic, inclusive, scalable, and sustainable talent ecosystem in West Michigan.

The Parties agree to leverage their collective strengths to achieve shared goals, which include:

- a. **Generate more skilled talent:** Increase the number of graduates with postsecondary credentials in West Michigan to meet the high demand for skilled workers.
- b. **Leverage existing dollars:** Offer equitable access to education and training by leveraging existing federal, state, local, and philanthropic resources to address direct and indirect costs of credential attainment.
- c. **Increase efficiency of talent creation:** Reduce the time and cost required for individuals to obtain credentials, making education more accessible and aligned with employer needs.

To accomplish these goals, the Parties may engage in the following activities:

- a. **Establish a regional opportunity marketplace:** Establish MiCareerCompass to serve as the regional opportunity marketplace that helps individuals discover, access, and complete skills-based pathways into high-potential jobs requiring a postsecondary credential.
- b. **Develop skill-centric, accelerated pathways:** Co-develop stackable credentialing programs aligned to employer demand to provide even greater on and off ramps for students and workers to transition between education and employment opportunities.
- c. **Leverage existing resources:** Braid local, state, federal and employer funding sources to reduce, eliminate, or defer the individual’s costs to obtain a credential leading to a high-potential career.
- d. **Provide wraparound supports:** Ensure all participants have access to the highest-need supportive services required to obtain a credential and maintain employment, including career coaching and resource navigation.
- e. **Link on-the-job learning to credentials:** Award learners as many credits as possible for prior learning to accelerate their progress toward credential attainment.
- f. **Develop a business model:** Develop a business model to sustain the project post-pilot — including a value proposition, annual investment amount, and estimated return on investment for employers and postsecondary institutions.

This MOU is intended to outline the structure of the collaboration and does not impose any legal or financial obligations upon the Parties.

DURATION OF MOU

This MOU is effective as of the date of signature and remains in effect until September 1, 2026, unless terminated or amended by mutual agreement of all parties.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To achieve Parties' mutual desires, each party agrees to fulfill the roles and responsibilities described below.

The Partner agrees to participate in the MiCareerCompass initiative in one or more of the following capacities (check all that apply):

- Education Partner
- Employer Partner
- Community Partner

The specific responsibilities aligned with each selected role are outlined below.

TalentFirst

- a. **Project Management and Coordination:** Provide backbone support, including managing timelines, convening stakeholders, developing agreements, and ensuring alignment of efforts.
- b. **Platform Development:** Lead the evaluation, selection, configuration, implementation, and continual monitoring and iteration of a regional opportunity marketplace platform.
- c. **Pathway Design:** Collaborate with employer and education partners to co-develop skill-centric, stackable pathways aligned with priority occupations.
- d. **Marketing and Recruitment:** Develop and disseminate marketing materials, coordinate marketing campaigns to drive adoption among participants, and recruit additional partners.
- e. **Impact Measurement and Transparency:** Establish and manage a data-driven accountability system to evaluate the success of MiCareerCompass, ensuring results are regularly shared with all partners.
- f. **Continuous Learning and Improvement:** Establish feedback mechanisms and continuous evaluation processes to assess and enhance the impact of MiCareerCompass, ensuring it adapts to evolving workforce demands and the changing needs of learners.
- g. **Sustainability Planning:** Develop a business model for sustaining MiCareerCompass beyond the pilot phase.

West Michigan Works!

- a. **Jobseeker Support and Career Navigation:** Provide career and training services to eligible participants referred from MiCareerCompass, helping remove employment barriers and ensuring access to information on career pathways and job opportunities.
- b. **Referral Network:** Connect eligible participants with available training opportunities, support services, and job vacancies listed on MiCareerCompass, leveraging partnerships with community based organizations, education and employer partners.
- c. **Training Fund Guidance:** Support eligible jobseekers and employers in accessing state and federal training funds (e.g., WIOA, Going PRO, State Apprenticeship Expansion) to remove financial barriers, promote skill development, and strengthen the workforce.

- d. **Labor Market Insights:** Partner with TalentFirst to review in-demand occupations and skill gaps, ensuring training programs align with employer needs and support jobseekers in high demand career pathways.
- e. **Data and Reporting:** Support outcome tracking by providing TalentFirst with monthly reports on MiCareerCompass referrals, including participant details, services received, and training funds accessed, ensuring transparency and collaboration.

Education Partners

- a. **Content and Course Accuracy:** Maintain accurate course catalogues on the platform to ensure learning resources remain current and relevant.
- b. **Prior Learning Credits:** Ensure credits are awarded for prior learning and on-the-job experiences to accelerate credential attainment.
- c. **Enrollment and Scheduling Flexibility:** Ensure enrollment timelines, course schedules, and delivery modes remain flexible to meet the needs of adult learners.
- d. **Pathway Design:** Collaborate with TalentFirst and employer partners to co-develop skill-centric, stackable pathways aligned with priority occupations.
- e. **Data and Reporting:** Provide monthly reports to TalentFirst for any learners referred from MiCareerCompass, including Name, Email, Program Name, Program Duration, Enrollment Date, and Enrollment Status (Enrolled, Completed, Disenrolled).
- f. **Transfer Articulation:** Collaboratively establish and maintain comprehensive articulation agreements to ensure the seamless transfer of credits across partner institutions and programs, reducing barriers to transfer and promoting timely completion of credentials.

Employer Partners

- a. **Demand Forecasting:** Provide information on current and project job openings, including skill requirements, to inform program design and ensure that education and training programs remain aligned with current and future workforce needs.
- b. **Job Vacancy Accuracy:** Maintain accurate job vacancies on the platform to ensure employment opportunities remain up-to-date and relevant.
- c. **Pathway Design:** Collaborate with TalentFirst and education partners to co-develop skill-centric, stackable pathways aligned with priority occupations.
- d. **Leverage Platform for Recruitment:** Utilize the platform to identify, engage, and recruit qualified candidates for open positions — including actively searching candidate profiles, reviewing credentials and skills, and connecting with individuals who align with organizational talent needs.
- e. **Intent to Interview:** Participants who complete aligned education/training programs and possess basic qualifications for featured roles are prioritized to receive an interview with Talent Acquisition staff.
- f. **Data and Reporting:** Provide monthly reports to TalentFirst for any applicants referred from MiCareerCompass, including Name, Email, Job Title, Hiring Status (Applied, Interviewing, Offer Extended, Hired, Not Selected), and Starting Wage (if applicable).
 - o If the participant is engaged in work-based learning, the report should also include: the type of WBL experience (e.g., internship, apprenticeship, on-the-job training), the current status of the WBL (e.g., In Progress, Completed, Converted to Employment), and post-training wage (if applicable).

Community Partners

- a. **Service and Resource Accuracy:** Ensure services and resources are listed accurately on the platform and remain up-to-date and relevant.
- b. **Referrals:** Direct clients to the platform using provided referral links and marketing materials.
- c. **Wraparound Supports:** Ensure all participants have access to the highest-need supportive services required to obtain a credential and maintain employment, including career coaching and resource navigation, if applicable.
- d. **Platform Utilization:** Use the platform's Staff Portal to guide clients through their journeys, record outcomes, provide personalized support, and facilitate seamless referrals across community partners.

Parties agree to uphold their roles and responsibilities in a committed, good-faith manner.

SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING

In addition to developing a comprehensive business model, the Parties will explore a multi-faceted approach to securing long-term financial sustainability. This approach will include:

- **Fee-for-Service Models:** Implementing revenue-generating services that provide value to employers, educational institutions, and community partners, such as specialized training programs, certification opportunities, and customized workforce development solutions.
- **Philanthropic Investment:** Identifying and cultivating relationships with local, regional, and national philanthropic organizations that are committed to workforce development, education, and economic empowerment. This includes seeking grants, endowments, and corporate sponsorships to support the ongoing costs of MiCareerCompass.
- **Government Funding:** Leveraging federal, state, and local government funding opportunities, such as workforce development grants, educational subsidies, and employment-related incentives, to defray operational costs and support specific initiatives tied to long-term goals.
- **Partnership Contributions:** Engaging all Parties in the funding model by identifying potential shared financial responsibilities or resource contributions (e.g., in-kind support, administrative services) that will ensure sustainability without relying solely on external sources.

The sustainability plan will also prioritize diversifying funding sources to minimize risk and maximize the program's impact. Regular reviews of the financial model will be conducted to adapt to emerging trends in the workforce development landscape and ensure financial resilience.

A robust governance structure will be developed to guide the Parties' activities beyond the pilot phase and ensure the long-term success of MiCareerCompass.

DATA SHARING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

All Parties agree to uphold the highest standards of data privacy and security in accordance with applicable federal and state laws, including FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) and any other relevant regulations. To protect sensitive participant information, Parties will:

- **Data Protection:** Follow data protection protocols outlined by TalentFirst for all data storage and transmission, ensuring that participant data remains secure.
- **Access Controls:** Establish clear access controls to ensure that only authorized personnel have access to personally identifiable information (PII), with regular audits to monitor

compliance.

- **Data Minimization:** Collect only the data necessary for the functioning of MiCareerCompass and ensure that it is stored for no longer than required, in accordance with data retention policies.
- **Confidentiality Agreements:** All individuals and organizations with access to participant data will be required to sign confidentiality agreements outlining their responsibility to protect data privacy.
- **Participant Consent:** Implement an opt-in electronic signature process during the sign-up phase of MiCareerCompass, ensuring explicit permission is obtained from individuals before collecting, sharing, or using their data.

To ensure accountability to the partnership's goals, the Parties will develop and track a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) that will be regularly shared among stakeholders. These metrics will serve as the foundation for ongoing evaluation and help guide the refinement of program activities. Performance monitoring will include:

- **Educational Attainment Metrics:** Tracking the number of participants who enroll in, complete, and earn credentials from education or training programs, as well as those who transition into further education or career advancement. This data will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of educational pathways in preparing participants for success.
- **Employment Outcomes:** Collecting data on participant job placement rates, including job retention, and wages post-placement. These outcomes will be critical for assessing how well MiCareerCompass meets the needs of both employers and job seekers.
- **Employer Satisfaction:** Conducting regular surveys and collecting feedback from employer partners to assess their satisfaction with the talent pipeline and the quality of candidates provided. This feedback will help refine the alignment between educational pathways and employer requirements.
- **Learner Engagement:** Measuring participant engagement with the platform, including usage frequency, progression through pathways, and utilization of support services. High engagement levels will be a key indicator of the platform's value to learners.

The data collected will be compiled into regular reports, which will be shared with all Parties to ensure transparency and accountability. These reports will be used to evaluate the partnership's overall success and to make data-informed decisions about adjustments to strategies, funding allocation, and operational improvements.

AMENDMENTS

The terms of this MOU may be amended upon written approval by both [all] original parties and their designated representatives.

TERM AND TERMINATION

This agreement becomes effective on the date it is signed by both [all] parties. It remains in force unless explicitly terminated, in writing, by either party or parties.

Any Party may terminate this MOU by means of signing a termination addendum upon 30 days' written notice to the other parties.

The undersigned Parties acknowledge and agree to this MOU:

SIGNATURE

For *TalentFirst*

Name

Signature

Date

For *PARTNER*

Name

Signature

Date