

Curriculum Vitae

Robert A. Straits

Director, Kalamazoo-St. Joseph Michigan Works Service Delivery Area
Administrator

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April 2011

FIELDS OF SPECIALIZATION

Employment and training programs

ACADEMIC DEGREES

M.A., Counseling and Personnel, Western Michigan University, 1974

B.S., Sociology and Business Administration, Southern Utah University, 1969

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

1990- Administrator, W.E. Upjohn Institute

1974- Director, Kalamazoo-St. Joseph Michigan Works Service Delivery Area
Director, Employment Management Services Division, W.E. Upjohn Institute

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Executive Committee member, Governor's Council of Labor and Economic Growth

Chairman, Michigan Works! Directors' Council

Michigan representative, Great Lakes Employment and Training Association Board

Michigan Economic Development Advisory Council

Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Steering Committee
Department of Corrections Prisoner Employability Board

Governor's Task Force on Youth Employment

Secretary, Michigan Works Association Board

CURRENT AND RECENT PROJECTS

- 9/1/2010– **On-The-Job-Training, National Emergency Grant.**
The basic philosophy for On-the-Job Training (OJT) National Emergency Grants (NEG) is that for many occupations, trainees learn best by doing work in an actual work situation, using employers' procedures and equipment according to the employers' requirements. OJT is a training option meant to be conducted in the highest skill occupations in high demand occupations, and result in unsubsidized employment for participants. The Institute administers this project for a 10-county region in southwestern Michigan.
- 3/5/2008– **Road Construction Apprenticeship Readiness Training (RCAR).**
The purpose of RCAR pilot program is to provide apprenticeship readiness training for women, minorities, and economically disadvantaged persons in the road construction trades. The primary objective is to create a pool of candidates from under-represented populations with proven readiness to enter apprenticeships. The RCAR program provides recruitment, assessment, apprenticeship readiness training, basic skill remediation, stipends, drug screening, and other supportive services to meet the road construction workforce training needs of Michigan.
- 4/1/2007–9/30/2010 **[SCOPE: Securing Children's Opportunities, Possibilities and Empowerment Program.](#)**
The SCOPE program, a pilot program in collaboration with the Michigan Prisoner Re-entry Initiative, brought together existing community services in Kalamazoo County, Michigan, to serve youth, ages 6–15 with incarcerated parents. Children of incarcerated parents are 70% more likely than other children to become involved with the criminal justice system.
- 6/1/2006–9/30/2006 **[Creating the 21st-Century Workforce.](#)**
This project created a uniform approach to working with employers by assessing the local workforce and economy. Researchers developed a coordinated, regionally led rapid response process to address plant closings and mass lay-offs by incorporating a lay-off aversion component with the intent of minimizing plant closings and lay-offs. The project also focused on developing, attracting, and retaining talent to build and support the 21st Century economy. A communications strategy targeted at partners, employers, and the general public was developed and implemented. (with George Erickcek)
- 10/1/2005– **[Michigan Prisoner Reentry Pilot.](#)**
The Institute acted as the administrative agent for the Kalamazoo effort under the Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (MPRI). The Institute participated in a broad community coalition to address the critical reentry issues of housing, employment, and access to programs, services, and supports for returning ex-offenders. A service center specific to offenders created transitional employment opportunities for returning offenders.
- 9/1/2005–9/30/2006 **[Health Care Apprenticeships in Michigan.](#)**
This project established the foundation upon which the Registered Apprenticeship Model and career lattice for healthcare workers was implemented in Michigan. The project followed the Council of Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) contract with the U.S. Department of Labor.

- 11/17/04– **Jobs, Education, Training (JET) for Welfare Recipients.**
The objective of this project is to increase labor force attachment for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) eligible individuals. The project is designed to be “demand” driven focusing on emerging economic development and workforce development needs. The program is intended to provide the services needed to empower individuals and families to be sustaining long term.
- 4/22/1998– **Workforce Investment Act Kalamazoo and St. Joseph Counties.**
The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) provides workforce investment services and activities through a statewide and local One-Stop Career Center system that have at their core the goal of (1) enhanced employment, retention, and earnings of individuals; (2) increased occupational skills attainment; and (3) improved national economic growth through better productivity and competitiveness.

PUBLICATIONS

[Job Training Policy in the United States.](#)

Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2004
(edited with Christopher J. O’Leary and Stephen A. Wandner)

[“Public Job Training: Experience and Prospects.”](#)

In Job Training Policy in the United States, edited by Christopher J. O’Leary, Robert A. Straits, and Stephen A. Wandner. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2004, pp. 289–310 (with Christopher J. O’Leary and Stephen A. Wandner)

[“U.S. Job Training: Types, Participants, and History.”](#)

In Job Training Policy in the United States, edited by Christopher J. O’Leary, Robert A. Straits, and Stephen A. Wandner. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, 2004, pp. 1–20 (with Christopher J. O’Leary and Stephen A. Wandner)

[“Intergovernmental Relations in Employment Policy: The United States Experience.”](#)

In Federalism and Labour Market Policy: Comparing Different Governance and Employment Strategies, edited by Alain Noël. Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004, pp. 25–82 (with Christopher J. O’Leary)

[“The U.S.: Decentralisation from the Bottom Up.”](#)

In Managing Desentralisation: A New Role for Labour Market Policy. Paris, France: OECD, 2003, pp. 77–85

[“Issues Raised by Welfare Reform in the United States.”](#)

In The Local Dimension of Welfare-To-Work: An International Survey. Paris, France: OECD Publications, 1999, pp. 177–196

Kalamazoo County Displaced Worker Program, Evaluation Component.

Letter and report sent to the Michigan Employment Security Commission, Displaced Worker Program. Undertaken by a consortium of the Greater Kalamazoo United Way, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Kalamazoo County Chamber of Commerce, the Private Industry Council, and the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, November 16, 1983 (with Wayne R. Wendling)

PRESENTATIONS

Workfare in the United States.

Presented by Randall Eberts at the Reform of Employment Services Quorum (RESQ) Network Meeting held in Amsterdam on December 13, 2007 (with Christopher J. O'Leary)

Evolution of Decentralization, De-categorization, and Accountability: U.S. Employment Policy.

Presented at the conference of the Reform of Employment Services Quorum (RESQ) held in Aalborg, Denmark on April 26-27, 2007

United States Employment Policy 1973-2003: View of Decentralization from the Bottom Up.

Presented at The Kalamazoo/St. Joseph Workforce Development Board Annual Planning Meeting, January 8, 2004

Issues Raised by Welfare Reform in the United States.

Presented at the International Conference on the Local Dimension of Welfare to Work held in Sheffield, United Kingdom on November 18-19, 1998

BUSINESS OUTLOOK IN WEST MICHIGAN

"Summer Job Programs for Youths."

Business Outlook for West Michigan 4(3) (Spring 1988): 1-3

"Youth Employment and Training Services in Kalamazoo County."

Business Conditions in the Kalamazoo Area 22(3) (October 1979): 21-25

"The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act: CETA."

Business Conditions in the Kalamazoo Area 21(3) (October 1978): 21-24

UPJOHN INSTITUTE WORKING PAPERS

[Intergovernmental Relations in Employment Policy: The United States Experience.](#)

Upjohn Institute Working Paper No. 00-60 (with Christopher J. O'Leary)

EMPLOYMENT RESEARCH ARTICLES

["Reconsidering Job Training and the Workforce Investment Act."](#)

Employment Research 12(2) (April 2005): 1-4 (with Christopher J. O'Leary and Stephen A. Wandner)