



Economic Development Support for Kent County Businesses

Supporting Healthcare in West Michigan

- **Business Connections:** We're making connections between our healthcare systems and local manufacturers for critical supply chain needs. If your company is interested in supplying medical supplies, contact Eric Icard at: icarde@rightplace.org or (616) 350-3982.
- **Health/Business Collaborations:** We are co-facilitating, along with Norm Beauchamp and Michigan State University, a [coalition of healthcare and business leaders](#) to provide products, services, and support our healthcare system needs during this rapidly unfolding crisis.

West Michigan Business Support

- **Local Business Focus:** Our staff have all been redirected to focus exclusively on supporting and retaining West Michigan businesses. A full list of our team, with their contact information, can be found [here](#).
- **COVID-19 News Updates:** As the stream of resources, information, and news flow from federal, state, and local channels, we have created a dedicated business resource stream [on our website](#).
- **Reopening Playbooks:** Our team is curating a library of restart playbooks across all industries in West Michigan to support a safe reopening of business. These playbooks are available on [The Right Place website](#) and the [Covidwm.org website](#).
- **Acquiring & Manufacturing PPE:** Our team has created [a directory](#) of West Michigan Manufacturers who are producing commonly used PPE. As businesses reopen, they can use this directory to source critically needed PPE. We have [also posted specifications](#) for how manufacturers can produce in-demand PPE.
- **Small Business Relief Grants:** 195 small businesses in West Michigan negatively impacted by Executive Orders due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be receiving grant support from the Michigan Small Business Relief Program, made possible by the MEDC. MEDC allocated the 11-county West Michigan region \$1,000,000 in grant funding to be administered by The Right Place, Inc. The demand was staggering with over 3,300 applications received, requesting over \$71 million in both grant and loan funding.
- **Federal, State, and Local Coordination:** Our team is coordinating with resources at all levels of government to review policies, executive orders, and other legislative actions in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. If you have specific questions, please reach out to Brad Comment at: commentb@rightplace.org or (616) 240-7211.

- **Financial Support and Connections:** We are coordinating with local banks to identify emergency contact resources for businesses experiencing financial challenges. Reach out to Therese Thill for more information at: thillt@rightplace.org or (616) 238-3196.
- **Local Partner Collaboration:** We are collaborating with other area economic development partners to coordinate efforts. We developed and launched a community-wide website to bring you the latest information and resources on COVID-19: www.COVIDwm.org
- **Talent Support:** Our team is providing talent resources and strategies for employers. Contact Cindy Brown for more information at: brownc@rightplace.org or (616) 818-9080.
- **PPE Directory:** The Right Place, Inc. has developed and launched the [West Michigan PPE Supplier Directory](#). This directory features West Michigan manufacturers who are producing high-demand PPE supplies, along with contact information to procure the supplies.

Kent County Core Industries – By the Numbers

** Core Industries is defined as industry sectors in The Right Place 2020-2022 Strategic Plan, including: Manufacturing, Food Processing, Technology, and Health Sciences.*

Companies:

15,480 ... 17% of all businesses in the county

Jobs/Employment:

122,549 ... 28% of all jobs in the county

Gross Domestic Product:

\$14,246,083 ... 33% of the county's total GDP

Kent County Business Assists:

1,716 Assists logged since March 18th.

WHY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTERS.

Today, more than ever, economic development organizations are playing a strategic role in shaping the economic future of communities.



WHAT IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT?

Economic development is the strategy and process of improving the economic well-being and quality of life in a community. At its heart, economic development is about building prosperous regional economies that drive long-term growth opportunities for its citizens.

WHY IS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPORTANT?

For any community to prosper, its citizens must have employment opportunities, and its government must be able to generate revenue to provide services. This is accomplished by economic development organizations working with both existing businesses on growth plans and attracting new businesses to the area.

The result of this work is the retention and creation of jobs, increase in local investment, diversification of the local economy, and increase of the local tax base to support the community.

These are just a few of the ways in which economic development is critical to a region:

BUSINESS RETENTION:

Businesses feel engaged and connected to the community and, in turn, are more likely to stay, investing in the local economy.

BUSINESS ATTRACTION:

Economic development ensures that growing businesses around the world discover West Michigan as a growth location for their companies.

JOB CREATION:

No other regional organization works directly with businesses to retain existing jobs and spur the creation of new jobs in the community.

TALENT ATTRACTION:

Economic development success builds strong communities that are magnets for skilled talent.

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION:

A diversified economic base expands the local economy and reduces a community's vulnerability to fluctuations of a single business sector.

COMPETITIVENESS:

Economic developers work to keep their communities and regions globally competitive by bringing new resources and opportunities to area businesses.

INCREASED TAX BASE:

The long-term additional revenue stimulated by economic development maintains, and improves local infrastructure, such as roads, parks, libraries, and emergency services.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY:

A stronger economic base means public services are less dependent on state and federal resources, which can vary with each election cycle.

QUALITY OF LIFE:

More local tax dollars and jobs raise the economic tide for the entire community, including the overall standard of living of the residents.

WHY THE RIGHT PLACE?

The Right Place is West Michigan's leading economic development organization. The organization offers confidential and comprehensive business services to growing companies. The Right Place serves both current and prospective companies, connecting them to the resources they need to grow in West Michigan. Their work has resulted in billions of new capital investment, thousands of new and retained jobs, since their start in 1985.