RE-2 Employee Post Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses

Date/Time Stamp

RECEIVED
SECRETARY OF THE SENATE
PUBLIC RECORDS
2026 SEP 24 PM 4:47

Post Travel Filing Instructions: Complete this form within **30 days** of returning from travel. Submit all forms to the Office of Public Records in 144 Hart Building.**This form is a public disclosure. The form and all attachments will be made publicly available.**

Certification:*In compliance with the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel, Senate Rule 35, and the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, I certify that I accepted the following gift of privately sponsored travel:*

Private Sponsor(s):
Jobs for the Future

Travel Dates:
08/25/2026 to 08/27/2026

Name of accompanying family member (if any):

Relationship to Traveler:

Expenses

Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meals Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
$640.00	$238.00	$189.00	$0.00

I also certify that attached to this form are all required documents for post travel disclosure, including:

- **The final Employee Pre-Travel Authorization** (Form RE-1)
- The final **Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form** with all attachments
- The final invitation
- The final approved itinerary

Finally, I certify that all trip information reflected in the attachments above accurately reflects the travel that I accepted. If there were any changes to the trip after I received approval from the Committee, the changes are described in ATTACHMENT 1.

9/24/26
Date

Megan Blanco
Printed Name of Traveler

Megan Blanco
Signature of Traveler

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

I have made a determination that the expenses set out above in connections with travel described in the Employee Pre-Travel Authorization form, are necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses as defined in Rule 35.

9-24-26
Date

Maggie Hassan
Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

ATTACHMENT 1 – CHANGES FROM APPROVED PRE-TRAVEL

Note: Material changes to a trip that occur after the Committee has issued an approval letter may invalidate the Committee's approval. Please contact the Committee with any questions regarding changes to an approved trip.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved travel expenses? (Transportation, Meals, Lodging, Other)?

○ Yes ● No

Expense Change	Revised Amount	Explanation
There were no changes to pre-approved travel expenses.		

Were there any changes to the pre-approved itinerary?

○ Yes ● No

Explanation: There were no changes to the pre-approved itinerary.

Were there any additional changes to the pre-approved trip?

○ Yes ● No

Explanation: There were no additional changes to the pre-approved trip.

Jobs for the Future

Tuesday June 9, 2026

Dear Megan,

On behalf of Jobs for the Future, I'm writing to invite you to an upcoming Congressional Staff Network (CSN) site visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan, from Tuesday, August 25 through Thursday, August 27, 2026.

This site visit will provide Hill staff with an opportunity to explore how Michigan built a highly coordinated workforce and education ecosystem to align resources, better meet labor market demand, and improve outcomes for workers and learners.

Throughout the visit, participants will engage with leaders from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO), West Michigan Works!, community colleges, employers, and other regional leaders. Sessions will examine how workforce, postsecondary, and economic development partners are collaborating to address regional talent needs; the role of Grand Rapids' local workforce board in convening these partners and driving high-quality training and career services; the expansion of sector-based and employer-driven strategies, including apprenticeship pathways; and how the region is balancing support for longstanding industries while diversifying into emerging sectors.

Staff will also have the opportunity to visit a one-stop career center and training sites, hear directly from employers and apprentices, and learn how Michigan is addressing barriers to employment through its innovative Tri-Share Childcare program, integrated service delivery across human services and workforce systems, and other workforce retention strategies. Together, these conversations will offer practical insights into the implementation of federal workforce and education investments on the ground, and opportunities for reform.

Please confirm your participation by Wednesday, July 8. Once you confirm your plans to participate, our team will share further information for the trip, including the agenda and the necessary ethics documentation.

Best,

Taylor Maag
Director, Workforce Policy
Jobs for the Future

RE-1 Employee Pre-Travel Authorization

Date/Time Stamp

Pre-Travel Filing Instructions: Complete and submit this form at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date to the **Select Committee on Ethics in SH-220.** Incomplete and late travel submissions will **not** be considered or approved.

Name of Traveler:
Megan Blanco

Employing Office/Committee:
HASSAN, MAGGIE

Private Sponsor(s):
Jobs for the Future

Destination(s):
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Travel Dates:
08/25/2026 to 08/27/2026
NOTE: If you plan to extend the trip for any reason you **must** notify the Committee.

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties.

This bipartisan staff site visit will inform my work as a Policy Advisor handling education and workforce issues. Specifically, it will help me to learn about how federal workforce and education policies and Congressionally funded programs are being implemented, their effectiveness, and what challenges or areas for improvement there are to implementation.

Do you have an accompanying family member or spouse on this trip?
No

Name and Relationship to Traveler:
N/A

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

07/27/26
Date

Megan Blanco
Signature of Employee

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER
(President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms, Secretary for the Majority, Secretary for the Minority, and Chaplain)

I Senator Hassan
(Print Senator's/Officer's Name)

hereby authorize Megan Blanco
(Print Traveler's Name)

an employee under my direct supervision, to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses for travel to the event described above. I have determined that this travel is in connection with his or her duties as a Senate employee or an officeholder, and will not create the appearance that he or she is using public office for private gain.

I have also determined that the attendance of the employee's spouse or child is appropriate to assist in the representation of the Senate.

☐ (signify "yes" by checking box)

07/27/26
Date

Maggie Hassan
Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

Jobs for the Future: JFF Congressional Staff Network Site Visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan

Megan Blanco

Title:
Policy Advisor

Employing Office/Committee:
HASSAN, MAGGIE

Duty Station:
WASHINGTON,DC

Destination(s):

Grand Rapids, Michigan

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties:

This bipartisan staff site visit will inform my work as a Policy Advisor handling education and workforce issues. Specifically, it will help me to learn about how federal workforce and education policies and Congressionally funded programs are being implemented, their effectiveness, and what challenges or areas for improvement there are to implementation.

Name of accompanying family member (if any):
Not Entered

Name and Relationship to Traveler:
None

Organization Information

Organization Name
Jobs for the Future

Is your organization classified as a §501(c)(3)?
(●) Yes ( ) No

§501(c)(3) Organization Type
Private Foundation

Address
50 Milk Street, 17th Floor

Address 2 (Optional)

City, State Zip
Boston, Massachusetts 02109 United States

Phone Number
2145143431

Organization URL
jff.org

History of Congressional Travel

Jobs for the Future (JFF) has sponsored site visits and other educational activities for Congressional staff for over 17 years. Examples of this work include 3-4 DC-based forums per year, and approximately two site visits per year where senior Congressional staff see high-quality workforce programs first-hand and learn from experts, practitioners, and program participants about the impact of federal policy on the ground. Previous site visits have included travel to: Bridgeport, CT; Cincinnati, OH; Madison, WI; Philadelphia, PA; Detroit, MI; Wichita, KS; Nashville, TN; Seattle, WA; Eastern KY; Fredericksburg, VA; Memphis, TN; Denver, CO; Shenandoah Valley, VA; Boston, MA; Chicago, IL; Wilmington, DE; Austin, TX; Asheville, NC; Las Vegas, NV; Cleveland, OH; and New Orleans, LA. The purpose of these trips, and of the Congressional Staff Network, is to provide in-depth learning opportunities for staff on workforce, education, and economic security issues.

Educational Activities

JFF works with partners around the country to design and drive the adoption of education and career pathways that lead to upward economic mobility, especially for individuals who face systemic barriers to advancement. JFF improves pathways from high school to postsecondary education to family-supporting careers through relevant technical assistance, research, policy development, communications, and by hosting events, including national conferences.

Lobbyist and Foreign Agent Registration Information

Lobbyist Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not a federally registered lobbyist and does not retain or employ a federally registered lobbyists.*

Foreign Agent Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not an agent of a foreign principal and do not retain or employ an agent of a foreign principal.*

Foreign Government Involvement

Foreign Agent Registration Status:

- ☑ I certify that the sponsor is not a foreign government.
- ☑ I certify that the sponsor is not an entity that is owned or operated by a foreign government.
- ☑ I certify that the sponsor does not receive funding from a foreign government.

Comments

Signature Page

The signature page is below.

Purpose and Details

Provide a brief description of the trip.

The Congressional Staff Network (CSN) convenes a bipartisan, bicameral group of senior Congressional staff to focus on policy issues at the core of economic mobility: K-12 education, postsecondary education, workforce development, and human services. The purpose of this trip is to educate staff about evidence-based approaches to education and workforce development that prepare learners, workers, and jobseekers for high-wage careers, while supporting regional economic growth and resilience. Participants will see program models designed to promote economic advancement, align training with labor market demand, and help Michiganders adapt to economic transitions (e.g., automation, renewable energy). They will engage with stakeholders involved in developing and implementing these efforts, including public workforce and education system leaders, regional employers, and community-based organizations.

Explain how the purpose of the trip relates to your organization's mission.

JFF's mission is to drive transformation of the U.S. education and workforce systems to achieve economic advancement for all. Specifically, JFF aims to eliminate barriers to economic mobility by making our education and workforce systems more effective, better connected, and easier to navigate. JFF's mission connects directly to the purpose of this trip: highlighting innovative, evidence-based programs and policies that drive upward mobility.

Is your organization the only sponsor for this trip?

- [x] Yes
- [ ] No

Grantmaking Organizations (Optional)

1. Gates Foundation
2. Lumina Foundation

With or Without Regard for Congressional Participation

The trip is arranged or organized specifically with regard to congressional participation.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Involvement in Planning, Organizing, Requesting or Arranging

- [x] The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested, or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal, other than de minimis involvement.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Financing

- [x] The trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.
- [x] No funds or in-kind contributions were earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Accompaniment

Complete if all sponsors are §501(c)(3) organizations

- [x] The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- [ ] The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **one** overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip
- [ ] The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **two** overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Complete if any of the sponsors is not a §501(c)(3) organizations.

- [ ] The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip
- [ ] The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **one** overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip
- [ ] The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and **two** overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Certification of No Recreational Activity and No Alcohol

- Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for recreational activities.
- Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for alcohol, except as permitted by the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel.

Invitees

Members and staff from the House of Representatives **will** receive invitations.

The list of invitees is below.

Travel Details

Trip Start Date/Time:
08/25/2026 @ 11:20 AM

Trip End Date/Time:
08/27/2026 @ 05:15 PM

Will the traveler be accompanied by a family member for whom the sponsor will pay travel expenses?

○ Yes ● No

Itinerary

The itinerary is below.

Transportation (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $640.00 | Accompanying Family Member: $0.00)

Transportation Type	Class	Amount
Airfare	Coach	$430.00
Note Round trip, economy class airfare from Washington, DC area (BWI Thurgood Marshall airport) to Grand Rapids, Michigan (Gerald R Ford airport, GRR).		
Ground Transportation	Coach	$210.00
Note On the ground transportation in Michigan via chartered shuttle bus.		

Lodging (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $238.00)

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country	Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem
08/25/2026	08/27/2026	Canopy by Hilton Grand Rapids Downtown	Grand Rapids	Michigan	United States	2	$119.00	No

Meals (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $189.00)

Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidentals	Total	City	State	Country	Cost Exceeds Per Diem
08/25/2026	$0.00	$22.00	$38.00	$0.00	**$60.00**	Grand Rapids	Michigan	United States	No
08/26/2026	$19.00	$20.00	$41.00	$0.00	**$80.00**	Grand Rapids	Michigan	United States	No
08/27/2026	$22.00	$27.00	$0.00	$0.00	**$49.00**	Grand Rapids	Michigan	United States	No

Reasonable Miscellaneous Expenses (Per Member/Officer/Employee: $0.00)

Expense Type	Amount	Notes
There are no miscellaneous expenses.		

Additional Attachments

Document Name
There are no additional attachments.

PRIVATELY SPONSORED TRAVEL

SPONSOR SIGNATURE PAGE

I hereby certify that the information submitted in connection with the trip listed below is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Trip Name: JFF Congressional Staff Network Site Visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan

Travel Date(s): August 25 - 27, 2026

Travel Destination(s): Grand Rapids, Michigan

Sponsor: Jobs for the Future

Maria Flynn — *(printed name of sponsor representative)*

President & CEO — *(title)*

Maria K. Flynn — *(signature of sponsor representative)*

7/14/2026 — *(date)*

Grantmaking Organization Certification Form

Instructions: If a sponsor receives funds from a grantmaking organization, the sponsor must disclose this on the *Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form*, and the grantmaking organization must complete the *Grantmaking Organization Certification Form.* The completed *Grantmaking Organization Certification Form* must be submitted to the Senate Select Committee on Ethics by the trip sponsor at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date.

Grantmaking Organization: Gates Foundation

Private Sponsor: Jobs for the Future

Trip Name: JFF Congressional Staff Network Site Visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan

Travel Date(s): August 25-27, 2026

Destination(s): Grand Rapids, MI

In compliance with the *Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel*, I certify the following:

- ☑ The grantmaking organization is a § 501(c)(3) organization.
- ☑ The grantmaking organization is not a lobbyist, lobbying firm, or foreign agent, nor an entity that retains or employs a lobbyist or foreign agent.
- ☑ The grantmaking organization provides funds under an established grant program, or in a manner that is otherwise consistent with the mission and practices of the organization.
- ☑ The grantmaking organization is not involved, directly or indirectly, in organizing and conducting the trip. This includes selecting participants for a trip.
- ☑ The grantmaking organization does not directly pay or reimburse travel expenses for any Senate Member, officer, or employee.

Kathryn Young	Interim Deputy Director
(Printed name of grantmaking organization representative)	*(Title)*
Kathryn Young Digitally signed by Kathryn Young Date: 2026.07.07 13:46:31 -04'00'	07/07/2026
(Signature of grantmaking organization representative)	*(Date)*

Docusign Envelope ID: DC18A666-CA23-8CF6-8157-C729F9CBBC1E

Grantmaking Organization Certification Form

Instructions: If a sponsor receives funds from a grantmaking organization, the sponsor must disclose this on the *Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form*, and the grantmaking organization must complete the *Grantmaking Organization Certification Form.* The completed *Grantmaking Organization Certification Form* must be submitted to the Senate Select Committee on Ethics by the trip sponsor at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date.

Grantmaking Organization: Lumina Foundation

Private Sponsor: Jobs for the Future

Trip Name: JFF Congressional Staff Network Site Visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan

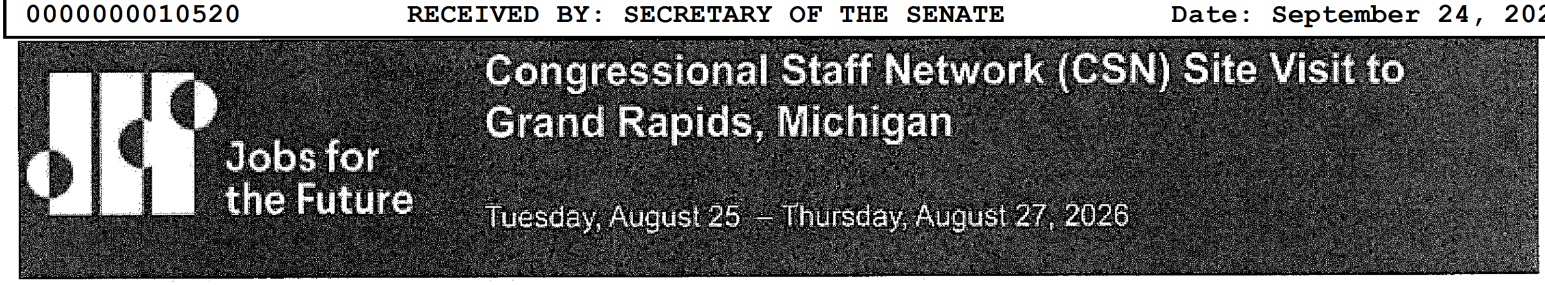
Travel Date(s): August 25-27, 2026

Destination(s): Grand Rapids, MI

In compliance with the *Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel*, I certify the following:

- ☑ The grantmaking organization is a § 501(c)(3) organization.
- ☑ The grantmaking organization is not a lobbyist, lobbying firm, or foreign agent, nor an entity that retains or employs a lobbyist or foreign agent.
- ☑ The grantmaking organization provides funds under an established grant program, or in a manner that is otherwise consistent with the mission and practices of the organization.
- ☑ The grantmaking organization is not involved, directly or indirectly, in organizing and conducting the trip. This includes selecting participants for a trip.
- ☑ The grantmaking organization does not directly pay or reimburse travel expenses for any Senate Member, officer, or employee.

Michelle Asha Cooper	Vice President, Public Policy & Ex
(Printed name of grantmaking organization representative)	*(Title)*
DocuSigned by: Michelle Asha Cooper 1EECB5201DD441D...	7/2/2026 | 12:01 PM EDT
(Signature of grantmaking organization representative)	*(Date)*



SENATE STAFF INVITEES

Congressional Staff Network Site Visit to Grand Rapids, MI

Amanda Beaumont
Professional Staff Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Amanda_Beaumont@appro.senate.gov

Megan Blanco
Education and Workforce Policy Adviser
Office of Sen. Maggie Hassan
megan_blanco@hassan.senate.gov

Jose Garcia
Education Policy Adviser
Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions (HELP) Committee
jose_garcia@help.senate.gov

Rylan Gray
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rylan_gray@schiff.senate.gov

Jackson Hern
Education Policy Aide
Senate HELP Committee
Jackson_Hern@help.senate.gov

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Michael Waske
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Sabrina Wilhelm
Legislative Correspondent
Office of Sen. Marsha Blackburn
sabrina_wilhelm@blackburn.senate.gov

Jobs for the Future

Congressional Staff Network (CSN) Site Visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan

Tuesday, August 25 – Thursday, August 27, 2026

AGENDA

Congressional Staff Network Site Visit to Grand Rapids, MI

Tuesday, August 25 – Thursday, August 27, 2026

Tuesday August 25, 2026

11:20 – 1:00 PM **Flight: BWI to GRR**

Southwest Airlines Flight # WN 4076

THURGOOD MARSHALL AIRPORT

7050 Friendship Rd
Baltimore, MD 21240

1:00 – 2:15 PM **Travel to West Michigan Works!**

2:15 – 3:30 PM **Lunch & Panel: Understanding Michigan's Integrated Service Delivery Model & Key Programs**

GRAND RAPIDS SE SERVICE CENTER

121 Martin Luther King Jr St SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Speakers will welcome staffers to Michigan and provide an overview of major themes for the visit: the role and impact of high-performing workforce systems, what it means to center a system on demand-driven training, and the integration of workforce and human services programs. State leaders will also share key context for understanding the unique structure and functions of Michigan's workforce system. The state has centralized workforce programs within one agency and system, which administers all core WIOA titles alongside the Perkins V postsecondary program, the employment and training components of the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), among other key federal workforce programs. Speakers will break down how this state-level coordination translates to more effective, comprehensive service delivery on the ground.

- **Stephanie Beckhorn**, Deputy Director, Employment and Training, Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO)
- **Ryan Hundt**, Chief Executive Officer, Michigan Works! Association
- **Jacob Maas** Chief Executive Officer, West Michigan Works! (WMW)
- **Susannah Rodrigue**, Senior Manager, JFF *(moderator)*

Jobs for the Future

Congressional Staff Network (CSN) Site Visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan

Tuesday, August 25 – Thursday, August 27, 2026

3:30 – 4:30 PM

One-stop Tour: The Public Workforce System in Action

GRAND RAPIDS SE SERVICE CENTER

121 Martin Luther King Jr St SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

During this walking tour of the Grand Rapids Southeast Service Center (a one-stop career center), staff will learn about key programs like Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) and how Michigan's workforce system engages WIOA core partners. Participants will have a chance to meet with one-stop center staff, learn more about their roles, and discuss what they're seeing on the ground in terms of caseloads, common barriers to employment, and effective service delivery strategies.

- **Venessa Amon**, Assistant Manager, WMW
- **Tawana Brown**, Talent Solutions Manager, WMW
- **Dan Langworthy**, Assistant Manager, WMW
- **Juan Rosario,** Talent Solutions Manager, WMW
- **Justin Schnurer**, Talent Development Instructor, WMW

4:30 – 5:30 PM

WIOA & Beyond: Service Delivery through West Michigan Works!

GRAND RAPIDS SE SERVICE CENTER

121 Martin Luther King Jr St SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49507

Leaders from West Michigan Works! will debrief the tour with their one-stop center staff, who will expand on how the region is integrating services to ensure eligible Michiganders have easier access to benefits and training services.

- **Angie Barksdale**, Chief Operating Officer, WMW
- **Tasha Evans**, Director of Talent Solutions, WMW
- **Amy Lebednick**, Business Solutions Director, WMW
- **Chad Patton**, Director of Development and Innovation, WMW

5:30 – 6:00 PM

Travel to Dinner

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Introduction to West Michigan, its Labor Market, and Local Implementation

FOUNDERS BREWERY

235 Cesar E. Chavez Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Leaders from West Michigan Works! will share how that state-level vision and structure translates to operation on the ground, highlighting the key functions and partners of a local workforce board. Speakers will also help orient staffers to the Western MI region, providing context around key economic and demographic trends: growth industries, average wage vs. cost of living, the "supply" of trained workers versus current and projected hiring demand, labor force participation rates, and the rate of youth disconnection (i.e., youth ages 16-24 who are disconnected from both school and work).

- **Angie Barksdale**, Chief Operating Officer, WMW
- **TaRita Johnson,** Senior Vice President of Talent and Diversity, The Right Place
- **Taylor Maag**, Director, Workforce Policy, JFF *(moderator)*

➢ **Randy Thelen,** President and CEO, The Right Place

8:00 – 8:30 PM **Travel to Hotel**

8:30 PM **Check in to Hotel**

CANOPY BY HILTON GRAND RAPIDS DOWNTOWN

131 Ionia Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Wednesday August 26, 2026

8:15 – 8:45 AM **Travel to Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC)**

8:45 – 9:30 AM **Welcome from GRCC: The Role of the Community College in Driving Regional Economic Opportunity**

GRCC APPLIED TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Secchia Piazza
151 Fountain Street NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

GRCC leadership will provide a brief overview of GRCC and critical workforce development efforts happening at the college - touching on statewide initiatives like Michigan Reconnect and locally-driven programs like the FutureTech Program, which braids U.S. DOL Strengthening Community Colleges Training Grant (SCCTG-4) together with U.S. NSF funds.

➢ **Kathryn Rogalski**, President, Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC)
➢ **John VanElst**, Dean of the School of Workforce Training, GRCC
➢ **Kristi Haik,** Dean of the School of STEM, GRCC

9:30 – 9:45 AM **Break**

9:45 – 11:00 AM **The Importance of Cross-Sector Partnership in Western Michigan**

GRCC APPLIED TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Secchia Piazza
151 Fountain Street NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

This session will highlight how local partners coordinate across sectors, and the role that WMW plays in convening stakeholders, providing critical talent recruitment and outreach capacity, and enabling training program access and completion via supportive services. Speakers will dive into how WMW's industry councils and sector-based talent development strategies operate, and highlight flagship activities like the region-wide MiCareerQuest career exploration initiative.

➢ **Angie Barksdale**, Chief Operating Officer, WMW
➢ **TaRita Johnson**, Senior Vice President of Talent and Diversity,

Jobs for the Future

Congressional Staff Network (CSN) Site Visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan

Tuesday, August 25 – Thursday, August 27, 2026

The Right Place
- **Taylor Maag**, Director, Workforce Policy, JFF *(moderator)*
- **Kathryn Rogalski**, President, Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC)
- **Joe Lienesch**, Director of Career & Technical Education, Kent ISD

11:00 – 12:00 PM

Tour: GRCC Applied Technology Center

GRCC APPLIED TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Secchia Piazza
151 Fountain Street NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

John VanElst will lead staff on a tour of GRCC's Applied Technology Center, where students receive hands-on training to prepare for careers in industrial maintenance, mechatronics, HVACR, and other in-demand occupations.

- **John VanElst**, Dean of the School of Workforce Training, GRCC

12:00 – 1:30 PM

Lunch & Session: Apprenticeship Pathways

GRCC APPLIED TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Secchia Piazza
151 Fountain Street NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

This session will dive into how community colleges and workforce boards partner to design and deliver Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs), including division of roles and responsibilities such as providing Related Technical Instruction versus holding apprenticeship standards. Speakers will highlight WMW's partnership with GRCC, including the first medical assistant RAP registered with U.S. DOL in 2014 which now operates in partnership with three local community colleges. Staff will also have an opportunity to hear from current apprentices about their experience.

- **Jan Harrington Davis**, Senior Vice President, Talent Acquisition, Corewell Health
- **Joel Elsenborek,** Project Manager, Business Solutions, WMW
- **Stephanie Kempa**, Chief Human Resources Officer, Herbruck's Poultry Ranch, Inc.
- **Taylor Maag**, Director, Workforce Policy, JFF *(moderator)*
- **Jina Rockwell**, President, Rockwell Earthworks LLC
- **John VanElst**, Dean of the School of Workforce Training, GRCC
- ***Current Program Apprentices***

1:30 – 2:00 PM

Travel to Wolverine Coil Spring

2:00 – 3:30 PM

Employer Site Visit & Session: Small Business and Advanced Manufacturing

WOLVERINE COIL SPRING

818 Front Ave NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Staff will have a chance to tour Wolverine Coil Spring, a small family-owned manufacturer located on the Grand River in Grand Rapids, and learn more about advanced manufacturing in western Michigan. Leaders from Wolverine Coil Spring will show staff their

Jobs for the Future

Congressional Staff Network (CSN) Site Visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan

Tuesday, August 25 – Thursday, August 27, 2026

facilities and speak to their partnership with public sector entities like WMW to advance career exposure for secondary students and their workforce development efforts including job fairs/shadows, apprenticeships, and internships.

- **Jay Dunwell,** President, Wolverine Coil Spring

3:30 – 5:00 PM

Walking Session: Grand River Restoration in Western MI and How It's Driving Regional Economic Development

RIVERWALK AH NAB AWEN PARK

290 Michigan St NW
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

After the employer site visit, leaders from Downtown Grand Rapids, Inc. (DGRI) will lead a walking session along the Grand River. The DGRI team will share insights on the state's Grand River restoration initiative, how the project serves as a proof point for a promising economic developing strategy, and other workforce implications for the region.

- **Mark Miller,** Director of Planning and Design, DGRI
- **James Peacock III**, Economic Opportunity Program Manager, DGRI

5:00 – 6:00 PM

Talent Development Efforts in the Hospitality & Tourism Sector

EXPERIENCE GRAND RAPIDS

171 Monroe Ave NW
#545
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

This session will highlight workforce development efforts in western Michigan's hospitality and tourism industries, including how Experience Grand Rapids partners with WMW's Explore Hospitality Industry Council to coordinate career exposure, recruitment, and training activities.

- **Qi'Shaun Coyle**, Workforce Development Manager, Experience Grand Rapids
- **Gemhyl Kelley**, Program Engagement Manager, Experience Grand Rapids
- **Brittany Gray**, Industry Council Lead, WMW
- **Doug Small**, President, Experience Grand Rapids

6:00 – 6:15 PM

Travel to Dinner

6:00 – 8:00 PM

Informal Dinner & Discussion

LUNA

64 Ionia Ave SW #100
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Over dinner, Hill staff will sit down with practitioners to reflect further on the implications of the day's sessions for federal policy. Specifically, conversations will focus on strategies to expand apprenticeship opportunities, expand the workforce system's capacity to support small- and mid-size employer talent needs, and equip community colleges to serve as engines of regional economic prosperity.

Jobs for the Future

Congressional Staff Network (CSN) Site Visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan

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- **Angie Barksdale**, Chief Operating Officer, WMW
- **TaRita Johnson**, Senior Vice President of Talent and Diversity, The Right Place
- **Jacob Maas** Chief Executive Officer, WMW
- **John VanElst**, Dean of the School of Workforce Training, GRCC

8:15 – 8:30 PM **Travel to Hotel**

CANOPY BY HILTON GRAND RAPIDS

131 Ionia Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Thursday August 27, 2026

8:20 AM **Meet in Lobby, Check-out**

CANOPY BY HILTON GRAND RAPIDS

131 Ionia Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

8:20 – 8:45 AM **Travel to Kent ISD Conference Center**

8:45 – 10:15 AM **Breakfast & Session: Career Exploration/K-12 Career Pathways**

KENT ISD CONFERENCE CENTER

2930 Knapp St NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Staff will arrive at Kent ISD to learn about how the regional high school is working on key career exposure, work readiness, and experiential learning activities. Discussion will center on what high-quality career exploration looks like, including the district's CareerPrep 2030 vision to expand Career and Technical Education (CTE) and work-based learning access and the role of the MEERA Lab. Speakers will also highlight Kent ISD and WMW's partnership to pilot a pre-apprenticeship in automotive tech with Fox Motor, and engagement with key regional employers.

- **Ryan Graham,** Director of Workforce Development, Kent ISD
- **Joe Lienesch**, Director of Career & Technical Education, Kent ISD
- **Craig Weigel,** Principal, Kent Career Tech Center
- ***Kent ISD Students***

10:15 - 10:45 AM **Tour of Kent ISD's MEERA Lab**

KENT ISD MEERA REGIONAL TRAINING CENTER

2930 Knapp St NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Staff will tour Kent ISD's Manufacturing and Engineering Education Reimagined for All (MEERA) Lab, a K-12 manufacturing education program designed to inspire and train the next generation of

Jobs for the Future

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manufacturing workforce, starting in grades 6-8. By working with students, parents, schools, and local employers, MEERA is creating a pipeline for in-demand workers and addressing the growing skills gap. MEERA also has a Regional Teacher Training Center at Kent ISD, where teachers from Kent, Ottawa and Muskegon Counties are being trained to bring this opportunity to west Michigan students.

- **Jennifer Soukhome,** MEERA Teacher Trainer, Kent ISD
- **Cary Stamas**, Director of Career Readiness, Kent ISD

11:30 – 12:00 PM **Travel to Rapid Central Station**

12:00 – 1:30 PM **Lunch & Session: Child Care as a Critical Workforce Strategy**

RAPID CENTRAL STATION

250 Grandville Ave SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

This panel discussion will highlight West Michigan's approach to child care as core economic infrastructure. Specifically, speakers will share lessons from developing solutions to three different aspects of the childcare crisis: the MI Tri-Share Child Care Program, a public-private cost-sharing model that launched as a pilot in Grand Rapids and has since been scaled both statewide and across the country; the Central Station Early Childhood Center, one of the first childcare centers co-located in a transit hub in the nation, which opened recently after from years of committed, cross-sector collaboration to overcome regulatory hurdles; and WMW's experience developing and launching an Early Childhood Professional apprenticeship pathway.

- **Jeanette Hoyer,** President and CEO, Goodwill Industries of West Michigan, Inc.
- **Scott Lewis,** President and CEO, YMCA of Greater Grand Rapids
- **Susannah Rodrigue**, Senior Manager, JFF *(moderator)*
- **Kelly Tang**, Project Manager, WMW
- **Zachary Verhulst,** Founder and CEO, Pure Architects

1:30 – 2:00 PM **Travel to Airport: Wrap Up & Reflection**

EN ROUTE TO AIRPORT

Informal discussion with staff about key takeaways from the trip – reflecting on learnings and ways that federal policymakers can assist states and localities to improve systems alignment, programming, and worker and learner outcomes.

- **Taylor Maag**, Director, Workforce Policy, JFF

2:00 – 3:30 PM **Flight Check in**

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Jobs for the Future

Congressional Staff Network (CSN) Site Visit to Grand Rapids, Michigan

Tuesday, August 25 – Thursday, August 27, 2026

3:30 – 5:15 PM **Flight: GRR to BWI**

Southwest Airlines Flight # WN 590

GERALD R. FORD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

5500 44th St SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49512