LEO Launches Digital Hub to Help Michigan Workers Displaced by COVID-19 Crisis Boost Skills

New website helps Michigan workers easily connect to online certification and degree programs including free training and work readiness tools

July 28, 2020

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The Coronavirus crisis has created record unemployment across the country and a complicated employment landscape in Michigan. Now more than ever, Michigan workers who possess advanced skills will be better positioned to get and keep higher-paying and more stable jobs.

To that end, the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO) has developed a digital hub to connect residents with online learning opportunities and other training resources. Whether one is looking to return to work, explore in-demand careers, learn new skills, or take the first step toward a degree or certificate, the hub has information to help Michigan workers expand their opportunities in an evolving economy.

The digital hub, **Michigan.gov/SkillstoWork** features a range of online learning and career exploration options – including free opportunities – for Michigan residents to consider while navigating the Covid-19 economy in the coming weeks and months, when in-person learning opportunities may be limited. The virtual resource is a collaborative effort between LEO, the Michigan Community College Association (MCCA), Michigan Works! Agencies and others aimed at increasing opportunities for all Michiganders to explore online degree and certificate programs that will lead to expanded employment opportunities and bigger paychecks.

“With the economic disruption caused by COVID-19, it’s more important than ever that we help Michiganders improve their skills, explore in-demand career opportunities and jumpstart educational opportunities,” said LEO Director Jeff Donofrio. “These online resources continue to expand opportunities for residents to connect with and succeed in high-demand, high-wage careers of the future.”

The hub supports Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s goal to increase the number of working-age Michiganders with a skill certificate or college degree from the recently released level, 48.9%, to 60% by 2030. The aim of the Sixty by Thirty initiative is to make Michigan a more competitive

state and help Michiganders gain access to greater education, training and income growth opportunities.

“The new website connects Michiganders to online programs offered by Michigan’s 28 community colleges,” Michael Hansen, MCCA President said. “As we navigate the challenges presented by the Coronavirus pandemic, Michigan’s business leaders and employers statewide are asking: ‘How do we get people back to work?’ This new information hub is a tremendous start toward solving that challenge.”

In addition, the site provides a new Return-to-Work Playbook that assists those preparing to enter the workforce, finding their next job or discovering another one in a national economy that has seen the highest unemployment rates in 100 years To help workers adjust to changing employer needs and work environments, the Playbook outlines available career and job-readiness resources, including step-by-step instructions for developing resumes, preparing for interviews, exploring new career paths and finding free or inexpensive job training opportunities.

It also provides industry or occupational-specific resources for in-demand careers and additional resources to assist specific individuals including veterans, individuals with disabilities, migrant and seasonal farm workers and adult learners.

“The resources we’ve gathered in the Return-to-Work Playbook will help residents who are looking to improve their job eligibility in a variety of high-demand fields,” said LEO Employment and Training Deputy Director Stephanie Beckhorn.

“This tool will help position Michigan workers for success – from job search preparation to training assistance – thanks to resources from our partners at the Michigan Works! Agencies and those we in LEO offer,” Beckhorn said.

Other available resources at **Michigan.gov/SkillsToWork** include career exploration, job search assistance and professional development opportunities.

For the latest information on the COVID-19 outbreak, visit **Michigan.gov/Coronavirus** and **CDC.gov/Coronavirus**.

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