

BEYOND TUITION

A Systems Approach to Removing Barriers to Student Success

BY DR. PAUL WATSON
KELLOGG COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Demographics

Founded in 1956, KCC serves 6,540 students annually via campuses in Battle Creek, Albion, Coldwater, Hastings, and in the Fort Custer Industrial Park. The College offers customizable transfer pathways for students in addition to 41 associate degree programs, 30 certificate programs, seven categories of professional certifications and dozens of short-term, non-credit courses.

FALL 2024

enrollment status*

total students	4,681
current returning	2,089
dual enrollment	1,197
first-time	901
prior returning	440
guest	54

gender

female	62.53%
male	37.47%

race

white	66.10%
unreported	18.01%
black/african american	11.37%
asian	2.76%
american indian/ alaska native	1.62%
hawaiian/pacific islander	0.11%

ethnicity

unreported	81.16%
non-hispanic/latino	10.87%
hispanic/latino	7.97%

**Students are defined as current returning if they have enrolled within the previous three semesters. They are prior returning if they have enrolled in the past, but not in the previous three semesters.*

AVERAGE STUDENT **age** 26.14

AVERAGE STUDENT **gpa** 2.65

STUDENT TEACHER **ratio** 10:1

INTENTIONAL CONNECTION

HIGHER LEARNING COMMISSION

CRITERION 3. Teaching and Learning for Student Success

The institution demonstrates responsibility for the quality of its educational programs, learning environments and support services, and it evaluates their effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The rigor and quality of each educational program is consistent regardless of modality, location or other differentiating factors.

3.D. Support for Student Learning and Resources for Teaching: The institution provides student support services that address the needs of its student populations, as well as the teaching resources and infrastructure necessary for student success.

CRITERION 4. Sustainability: Institutional Effectiveness, Resources and Planning

The institution's resources, structures, policies, procedures and planning enable it to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its educational programs, and respond to future challenges and opportunities.

Through institutional planning, resource allocation, collaboration, and sustainability i.e. 4.B. Resource Base and Sustainability & 4.C. Planning for Quality Improvement

STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT

The central premise is simple: Access gets students through the door; removing barriers helps them reach the finish line.

- **How are barriers identified? How can institutional and community resources can be aligned around student needs?**
- **How can we move from a collection of well-intentioned student-support initiatives toward an integrated institutional/regional framework for student success?**
- **How will we assess whether interventions are making a meaningful difference?**



Research Plan

Failure-to-Appear Research
Examined why students applied but did not enroll or attend. 45 phone interviews with KCC applicants identified the core narratives that influenced their decisions.

Failure-to-Return Research
Examined why students enrolled in Fall 2021 but did not return for Spring 2022. 45 phone interviews with former KCC students identified what the College could have done to impact their decisions to leave KCC.

- **Student onboarding process review and "secret shopper" research**
- **Student communication audit**
- **Media preferences study**
- **Deep funnel enrollment conversion analysis**



Results Focus

Student challenges are not isolated circumstances requiring isolated interventions. They are recurring obstacles that call for institutional responses designed to help students remain enrolled, progress toward their goals and complete their education.

- **Credentialing and certification fees**
- **Broadband access**
- **Food insecurity**
- **Beyond Tuition fund**
- **Transportation**



Credentialing

The Challenge

Many students complete rigorous academic programs but face a final barrier: the high cost of credentialing exams. These exams are required for jobs in healthcare, IT, skilled trades, and public safety — and range in cost from $90 to $1,900.

Why It Matters

- Credentials are often required for employment
- Financial aid doesn’t always cover costs
- A credential can increase lifetime earnings



KCC FOUNDATION CREDENTIALING FUND

KCC established a credentialing fund in June 2025

58 students offered credentialing assistance for $15,050

- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Physical Therapist Assistant
- Radiography
- Registered Nurse
- Dental Hygiene
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Early Childhood CDA

2025 DONATIONS:
$26,356

2026 DONATIONS
$62,517





BEAD Broadband Equity Access & Deployment

- **COVID lessons**

- **The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program –** called "BEAD" – is the largest single investment in high-speed internet infrastructure in our nation's history and is administered by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). While BEAD is a national program, each state and territory will be implementing BEAD in their own way within the federal guidelines of the program.

- **The Michigan High-Speed Internet Office (MIHI) was the entity implementing BEAD in Michigan.**



BEAD Broadband Equity Access & Deployment

- In MI, as of 2023, close to 500,000 households are unserved or underserved by high-speed internet infrastructure and another 730,000 households face barriers related to a combination of affordability, adoption, device access and digital literacy. This means approximately 30% of Michigan households do not have an affordable, reliable high-speed internet connection that meets their needs.
- Michigan received $1.559 billion in Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding to close the digital divide.

Note: *We would later learn that our county had the highest number of BEAD-funded locations of any county in Michigan. We were excited about the opportunity to bring high-speed internet to these previously unserved and underserved locations.*



BEAD Broadband Equity Access & Deployment

THE WORK

Calhoun County Broadband Task Force: focuses on countywide broadband planning and implementation support. Its work includes conducting a community needs assessment, hosting public focus groups, completing a feasibility study, researching and pursuing grant opportunities, and participating in state and federal broadband mapping challenges. The Task Force also tracks broadband build activity, shares information related to the State's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) planning process, engages with Internet Service Providers (ISP), and works to ensure that high-speed internet access is expanded throughout Calhoun County.



BEAD Broadband Equity Access & Deployment

THE RESULT

- Ten internet service providers (ISP) received preliminary awards in a "Benefit of the Bargain" to expand high-speed internet to all 13,260 eligible Calhoun County locations.

- The Benefit of the Bargain award criteria was based on the lowest cost option. The good news is the majority of the eligible locations will receive fiber! The less favorable news is that Low-Earth-Orbit (LEO) satellite service is filling the gaps.

BREAKDOWN:

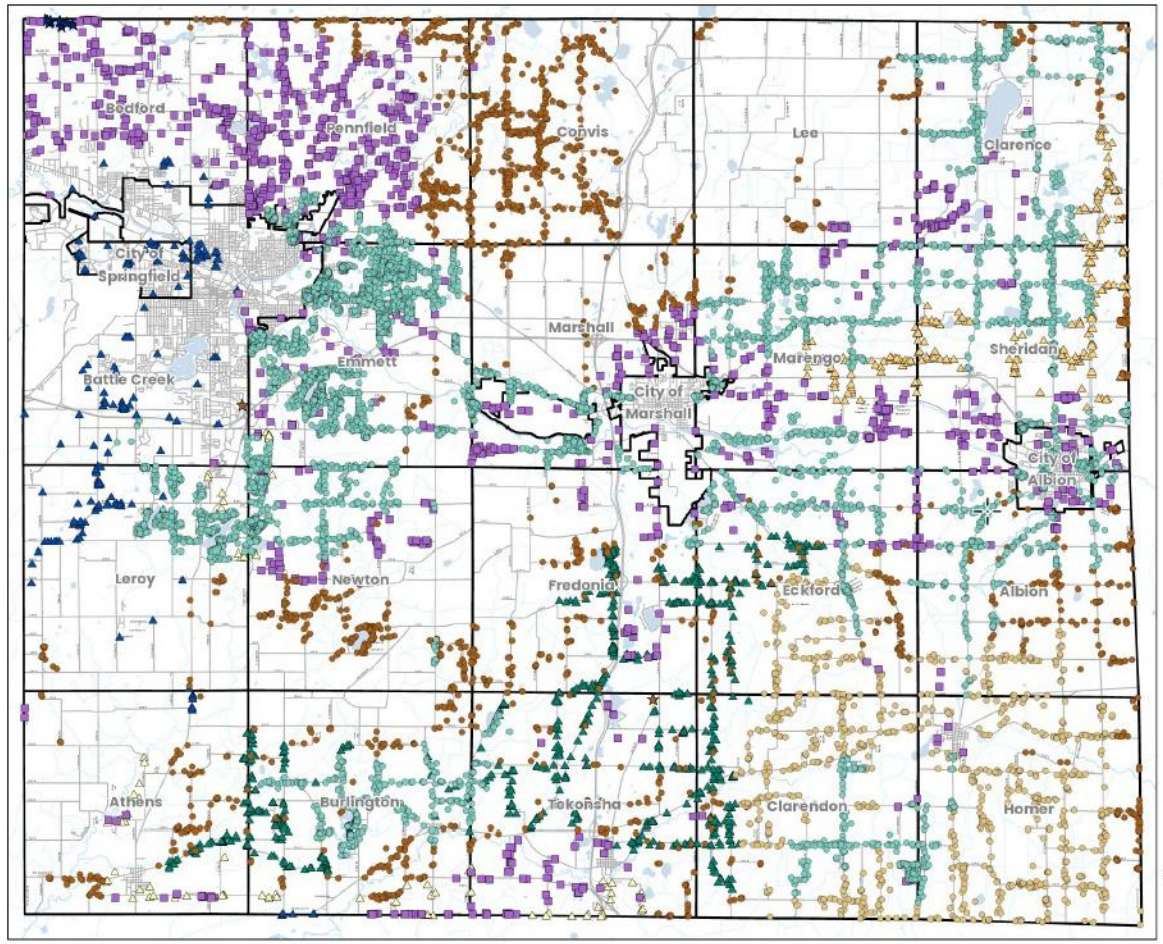
FIBER-TO-THE-PREMISE WILL REACH 11,977 LOCATIONS.

LOW-EARTH-ORBIT (LEO) SATELLITE WILL SERVE THE REMAINING 1,283 LOCATIONS (~9.5%)



BEAD AWARDS

Broadband Equity Access & Deployment



Calhoun County

BEAD FUNDED

BROADBAND SERVICE LOCATIONS

BY PROJECT SUBGRANTEE

- 123NET - Fiber (8,135)
- MEC - Fiber (1,748)
- Space Exploration Technologies -Satellite (1,269)
- DMCI Broadband - Fiber (894)
- Spectrum - Fiber (647)
- Comcast - Fiber (234)
- Strategic Management – Fiber (175)
- Frontier North - Fiber (96)
- Barry County Services - Fiber (8)
- Amazon - Satellite (2)

N W E S

0 0.75 1.5 3 4.5 6
Miles

Map Created by: Calhoun County GIS (Sept 2025)
315 W Green St, Marshall MI 49068 | 269-781-0749

Source(s): State of Michigan 2023; Calhoun County GIS, Federal Communications Commission 2024



BEAD Broadband Equity Access & Deployment

CONNECTED

Shifting focus to digital resources and skills training

The Calhoun County Broadband Task Force Digital Connections Subcommittee and community partners continue to make progress in supporting local residents

- National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) named Calhoun County as a 2025 Digital Inclusion Trailblazer.
- The Trailblazer program identifies seven categories of current best practices. Each applicant's materials are verified for accuracy, assessed for community impact, and posted in an interactive map and searchable database on NDIA's website.

FOOD INSECURITY

KCC has built a network of food insecurity resources designed to make healthy food accessible to students with minimal barriers.

Fresh Food Distribution 2021-2023

400–500 boxes of fresh food distributed per semester

Fresh produce, baked goods and protein provided through KCC's partnership with the South Michigan Food Bank.

Bruin Baskets

9 locations across the KCC service area

Free, grab-and-go food with no registration or intake process through KCC's partnership with Marshall Community Credit Union.

Food Wars

10,000+ items collected in 2025

More than double the 4,650 items collected in 2024, helping stock the food pantry and Bruin Baskets through the winter.



BRUIN basket
KELLOGG COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MCCU





KCC Food Pantry Visits

2024: 504 *(household size 1555)*
2025: 997 *(household size 3324)*
2026 thru August: 829+ *(household size 2816+)*

BEYOND TUITION FUND

The Beyond Tuition fund offers emergency assistance for students experiencing unexpected barriers to their academic success.

Common uses are utility assistance, car repair and housing assistance.

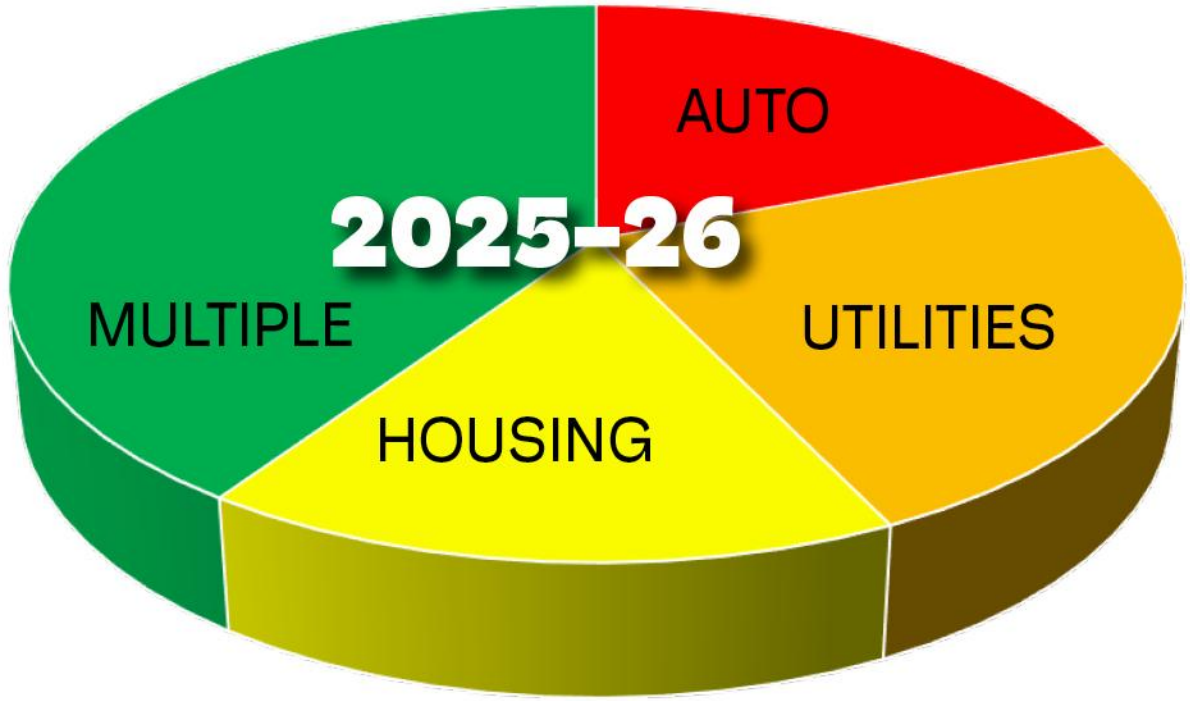
Updated requirements:

- Complete 6 credit hours *(formerly 12)*
- Assistance up to 1K *(formerly one-time only)*
- Assistance with non-emergency expenses *(formerly required a shut off/eviction notice)*
- Must have a 2.0 GPA

Fiscal 2023-24
25 STUDENTS AWARDED
$16,960

Fiscal 2024-25
32 STUDENTS AWARDED
$24,947

Fiscal 2025-26
42 STUDENTS AWARDED
$32,804





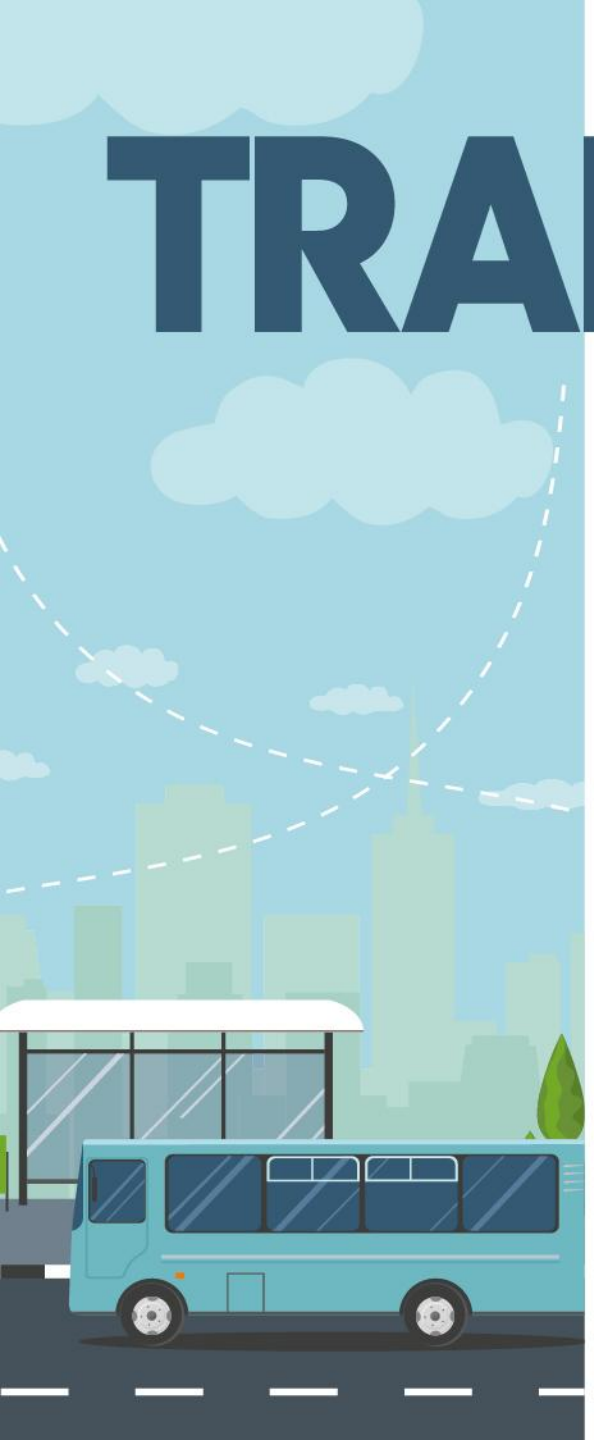
TRANSPORTATION

LIMITED ACCESS TO RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION CAN BE A BARRIER TO SUCCESS.

MDOT and County supported/funded study by Foursquare ITP

The Calhoun County Countywide Transit Study is an initiative to identify how public transportation can best serve residents throughout Calhoun County. The study established goals for countywide public transportation as well as a transit service plan, financial plan, and roadmap for implementation. Countywide transit service in Calhoun County would significantly expand accessibility to life's opportunities for residents.

Creation of a Transit Authority (TACC) would provide for operational efficiencies, enhanced collaboration among current providers and identify a sustainable and dedicated funding source



TRANSPORTATION

Creation of a Transit Authority (TACC)

- **Bylaws**
- **Location**
- **Funding**
- **Staffing Acquisition & Management**

Equitable access to opportunities throughout the County

Reliable, professional,and **quality-oriented** service delivery

Technology-enabled mobility options (including fare payment and trip booking)

Coordinated regional **connectivity**

Expanded mobility options, services and hours



TRANSPORTATION

Transit Authority (TACC)

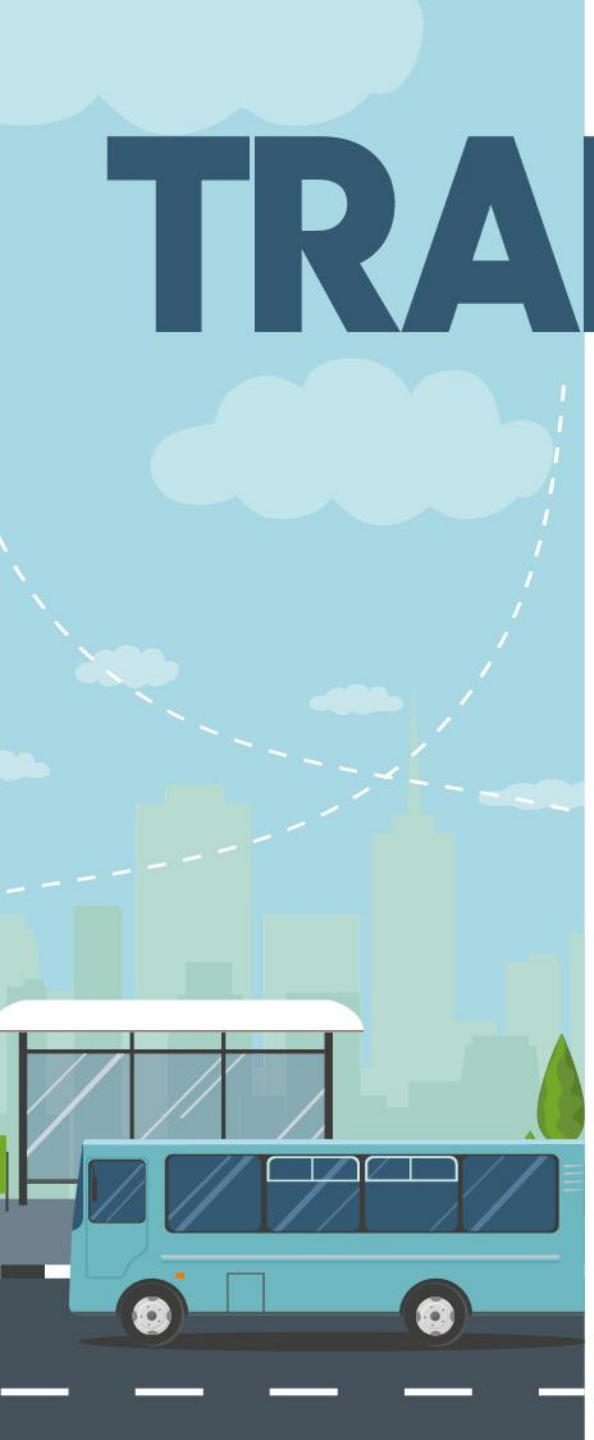
Operating Expenses	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Rural Demand Response Cost	$4,258,551.48	$4,386,308.02	$4,517,897.27	$4,653,434.18	$4,793,037.21
Urban Demand Response Cost	$3,991,268.54	$4,111,006.60	$4,234,336.79	$4,361,366.90	$4,492,207.90
Urban Fixed Route Cost	$2,590,097.74	$2,667,800.67	$2,747,834.69	$2,830,269.73	$2,915,177.83
Capital Outlay	$ 350,000	$ 350,000	$ 350,000	$ 350,000	$ 350,000
Total System Expenses	**$ 11,189,918**	**$ 11,515,115**	**$ 11,850,069**	**$ 12,195,071**	**$ 12,550,423**
Revenues					
Fare Revenue	$ 783,294	$ 806,058	$ 829,505	$ 853,655	$ 878,530
Federal 5311	$ 711,149	$ 732,535	$ 754,563	$ 777,252	$ 800,622
Federal 5307	$ 2,077,919	$ 2,119,477	$ 2,161,866	$ 2,205,104	$ 2,249,206
State LBO	$ 2,908,642	$ 2,992,957	$ 3,079,800	$ 3,169,249	$ 3,261,381
Specialized Services	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	$ 25,000	$ 25,000
Interest, advertising, and misc. revenu	$ 111,899	$ 115,151	$ 118,501	$ 121,951	$ 125,504
Total System Revenues	**$ 6,617,903**	**$ 6,791,178**	**$ 6,969,235**	**$ 7,152,211**	**$ 7,340,243**
Gap (Total Expenses minus Revenues from Fed/State/Other Sources)					
Average gap 2023-2026	$ 4,572,015	$ 4,723,937	$ 4,880,833	$ 5,042,860	$ 5,210,180
Average gap (plus 3% contingency)	$ 4,709,175	$ 4,865,655	$ 5,027,258	$ 5,194,146	$ 5,366,486



$12M Operating Expenses

$7M Braided Revenues

2.66 Millage Request



TRANSPORTATION

TRANSIT & EDUCATION

Businesses want to relocate where education is thriving and accessible.

- Students need reliable transportation to get to class.
- Participate in enrichment activities before/after class.
- Earn degrees/certifications at local higher-education institutions.
- Gain meaningful employment and eventually give back to the community.



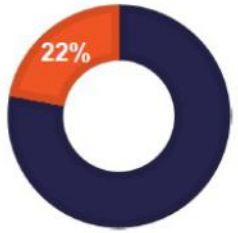


THE PILOT

BCGo was created to demonstrate the feasibility of countywide on-demand public transportation.

By providing transportation to areas previously un(der)served, BCGo has successfully expanded access to education, employment, healthcare and social activities for the residents of Calhoun County.

- 5,800+ users
- 150,000+ trip requests
- 33,000+ trips completed
- 37% shared ride



DEMAND FAR EXCEEDED CAPACITY.

THERE'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO FILL THIS GAP.

RIDE CALHOUN



718 SQ MILE SERVICE ZONE

DOOR-TO-DOOR SERVICE

2 VEHICLES

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

12 MONTH MICROTRANSIT FEASIBILITY PILOT

COORDINATED MOBILITY PROJECT



SERVICE AREAS: BATTLE CREEK, MARSHALL, ALBION



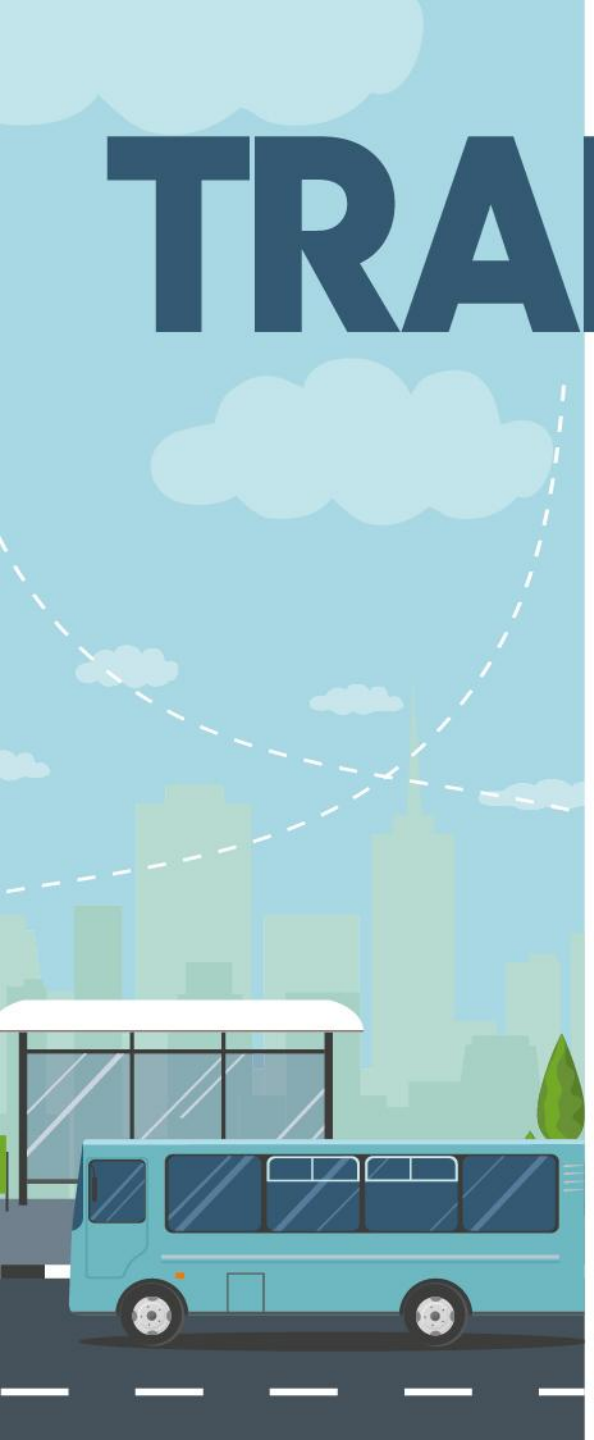
MAX

MOVE

FLEX







TRANSPORTATION

TRANSIT & EDUCATION

Transportation Directly to User

- Scholarship created in 2026
- Direct to user via app



METRICS *that matter*

SATISFACTORY Academic Progress



SAP REPORT

	26/SP	25/SP	24/SP
Satisfactory	1416	1344	1157
Warn	232	259	74
Max Warn	500	492	N/A
Suspension*	261	229	121
Max Suspension*	195	244	172
Probation	87	39	72
TOTAL Evaluated	2691	2607	1596
Success Rate	83.05%	82%	82%
Suspension	17%	18%	18%

SAP REPORT

METRICS *that matter*

RECONNECT for KCC adult students vs. statewide

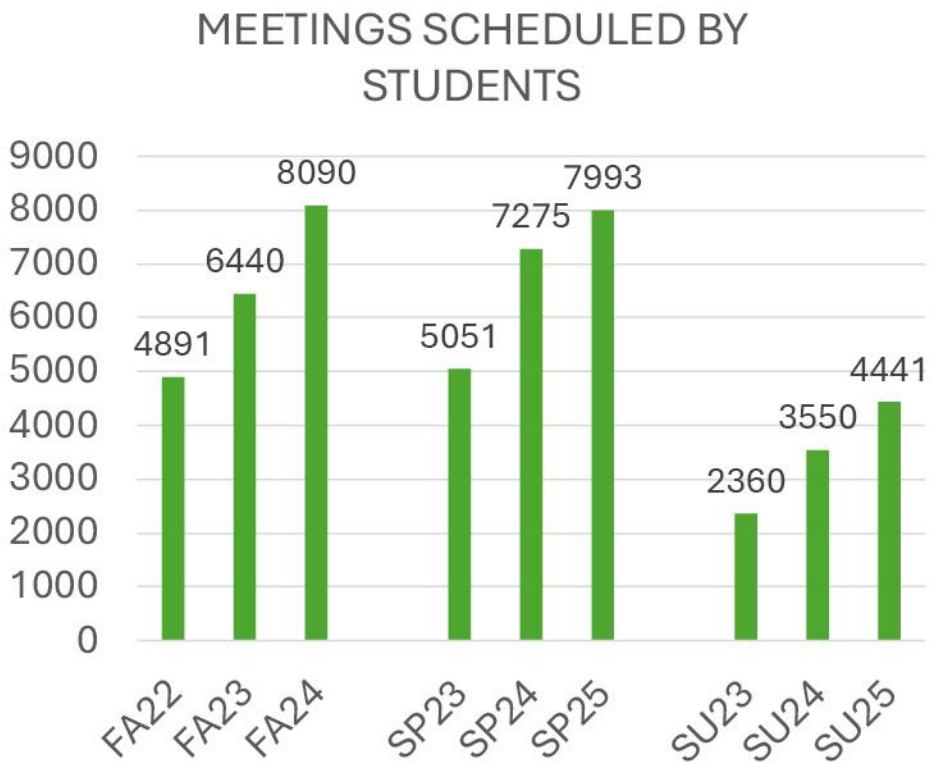
KCC	2023/24 cohort	2024/25 cohort	2025/26 cohort
Cohort	2260	2084	
Persisted during Y1	1215 (54.5%)	1170 (57.1%)	
Retention to Y2	1050 (47.2%)	1045 (47.9%)	
Earned a certificate (to date)			
Earned an associate (to date)			
Target for certificates earned in 4 years			
Target for associate earned in 4 years			

STATEWIDE	2023/24 cohort	2024/25 cohort	2025/26 cohort
Cohort	72,505	73,035	
Persisted during Y1	36,930 (50.8%)	35,594 (51.3%)	
Retention to Y2	35,800 (49.1%)	35,109 (47.6%)	
Earned a certificate (to date)			
Earned an associate (to date)			
Target for certificates earned in 4 years			
Target for associate earned in 4 years			

MICHIGAN RECONNECT

METRICS *that matter*

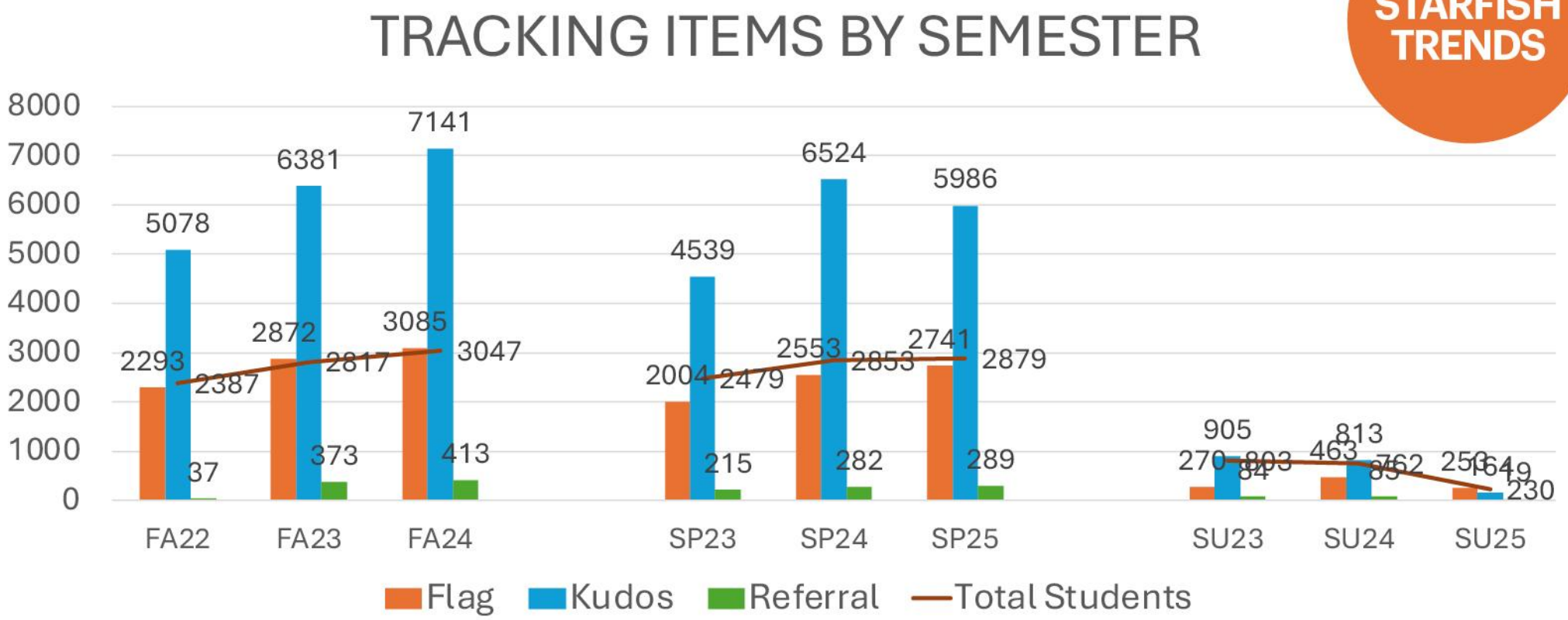
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



- Academic Advising
- Academic Testing
- Athletics
- Career Services
- Disability Services
- Center for Student Success
- Instructor/Course-related
- Librarian Assistance
- RMTC
- Perkins Special Populations
- Placement Testing
- Student Life
- Special Events
- Study Tables
- TRIO SSS
- The Hub - Admissions
- The Hub - Financial Aid
- Tutoring, 17 course-based types
- Zen Den

METRICS *that matter*

STARFISH TRENDS





Questions?

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