

**Resolution Updating and Adopting the Fiscal Year 2026 Consolidated Annual Work Program and Fiscal Year 2026 Work Program Budget – STAFF REPORT**

LAKE ERIE WEST REGIONAL COUNCIL  
GOVERNING BOARD MEETING  
MARCH 13, 2026

The Water Workforce Coalition is a network of utility, education, and community partners formed by Lake Erie West Regional Council in 2022 to recruit, train, and employ the water sector workers of the future. Lake Erie West received a \$494,874 grant through the U.S. EPA Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Program to convene partners and develop a program that resulted in the following.

- Development of a 16-week training program at Owens Community College. 64 participants completed the program.
- Provided participants weekly on-the-job training opportunities in the region's water and wastewater facilities
- Developed recruitment and marketing mechanisms to bring new workers into water utility careers
- Developed lines of communication between water utilities and potential employees
- Improved pass rates for Class 1 OEPA Operator Exams
- Developed mechanisms to share the region's operator job openings
- Filled 26 operator vacancies in the Lake Erie West and Great Lakes Regions

Grant Funding for the program concluded on February 28, 2026, and Lake Erie West is working with the Coalition to plan the program's next steps. Priorities identified by the Coalition include on-going work to be completed in two phases. Phase 1 (April – June 2026) will include planning for the long-term goals and sustainability of the program. This work is estimated to require approximately 160 hours of staff time (\$6,574 labor cost). The associated amendment to the FY26 Annual Work Program was approved by the Water Quality Council on February 9, 2026, and is presented to the Lake Erie West Regional Council Governing Board for approval.

**A RESOLUTION  
UPDATING AND ADOPTING THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 CONSOLIDATED ANNUAL WORK  
PROGRAM AND FISCAL YEAR 2026 WORK PROGRAM BUDGET**

**WHEREAS**, Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (now known as Lake Erie West Regional Council) is a voluntary association of local governments in northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan, organized on May 31, 1968, and established under Chapter 167 of the Ohio Revised Code and the Michigan Public Act No. 7 (EX-SESS), and has carried out comprehensive metropolitan and regional planning since that date; and

**WHEREAS**, the Lake Erie West Bylaws require the Governing Board to annually adopt a work program and budget; and

**WHEREAS**, the Consolidated Annual Work Program for Fiscal Year 2026 and Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2026 was adopted by the Governing Board on May 9, 2025, by approval of Resolution No. 2025-13; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency grant funding for work under the Fiscal Year 2026 Water Quality Annual Work Program, section 51510, Water Workforce Development, concluded on February 28, 2026, and amended work for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2026 will be completed using Lake Erie West local funds; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed updates to FY 2026 Water Quality Annual Work Program, section 51510, Water Workforce Development, was approved by the Water Quality Council on February 9, 2026.

**WHEREAS**, updates to the Fiscal Year 2026 Water Quality Annual Work Program, section 51510, Water Workforce Development, requires an update to the previously approved Fiscal Year 2026 Consolidated Annual Work Program and Fiscal Year 2026 Annual Budget.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the updates to Consolidated Annual Work Program for Fiscal Year 2026 and Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2026, as proposed is hereby adopted for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.

Yeas \_\_\_\_\_, Nays \_\_\_\_\_, Abstentions \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Adoption: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
George Sarantou, Chair  
Lake Erie West Regional Council

Attest:

I, Sandy Spang, Lake Erie West Regional Council Executive Director, do hereby certify that this is a true and accurate copy of Resolution No. 2026-08, adopted on \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sandy Spang, Executive Director