

Agreement to Participate in the Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network Study

You are being asked to take part in a study of the services provided by the Southwest Michigan Employer Resource Network (SWMERN), including the services provided by the success coach at your employer. This form describes the study and explains what it means for you to be in it. We hope you agree to participate.

What is the SWMERN study?

The goal of the study is to learn about the ways in which the SWMERN program (which provides the success coach you are meeting with) helps job seekers and employees find and retain employment. SWMERN is a network of employers, including your current employer. The SWMERN expansion is partially funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. The study is being run by a company called Social Policy Research Associates (SPR).

What information will the study team collect?

This study is very important for understanding how programs like SWMERN help job seekers like you. To learn about the program, the study team at SPR will collect the following information on you for up to 3 years.

- **Background information.** SPR will collect information about your age, ethnicity, and employment history that you provided to the success coach.
- **SWMERN Program Information.** SPR will collect information from records on your participation in the program, including number of times you meet with the success coach and the types of services you are referred to. SPR might also ask you to participate in an interview or focus group (which would take no more than an hour and in which you would not be required to participate).
- **Survey information.** We ask that you complete a short survey after your first meeting with your success coach and short follow-up surveys every year until December 2018. The surveys will ask you about your satisfaction with the success coach, the types of services you received, and information about your work history, such as your wage, the number of jobs you have held in the past twelve months, any raises or promotions you may have received, etc. You will not be required to submit the survey.

How will the study team use my information?

The study team at SPR will use your information for research purposes only. SWMERN and the success coaches will not share your name or contact information directly with the study team. All of your information that is shared will be kept private and confidential; it will be viewed only by the study team. **Your name or other identifying information will never appear in any public report or document and your responses will not be shared with the success coach.**

Study team staff is trained to protect your information and have signed a confidentiality pledge. Any documents that include your information will be stored according to SPR's strict information protection practices, which include locking up paper documents and encrypting electronic files. After the study is complete, all individual-level information will be destroyed.

Do I have to be in the study?

No. The decision to be in the study is your choice.

What does signing this form mean?

- I have read this form, I have been told about the study, and I agree to be in the SWMERN study.
- By being in the study, I do not give up any legal rights.
- I can drop out of the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.
- SPR will follow strict rules to protect my information. My name will never appear in any public document.
- SPR will get information about me from the success coach, but they will not know my name or contact information.

If you have questions about the SWMERN program, please speak with the success coach. If you have questions about the study, please contact Ron D'Amico at 510-763-1499 (ext. 628). To withdraw from the study, please write to Ron D'Amico, Social Policy Research Associates, 1333 Broadway, Suite 310, Oakland, CA 94612.