

1. Brownfield Redevelopment

Investing in a designated brownfield site qualifies the developer to recoup eligible environmental expenses and/or a 10% single business tax credit, worth up to \$2M, for the investment in building demolition, renovation or improvements, and machinery and equipment. In addition, cleanup costs are now 50% lower for industrial and commercial properties. Buyers and lenders are protected from liability under Michigan law.

2. Business Support

The State of Michigan, Berrien County Community Development Department, North Berrien Community Development, Cornerstone Alliance, and Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance form an Economic Development team that meets with companies each year, or more often if the company requires additional support, particularly in their first years. The purpose of these visits is to provide assistance, share new tools and incentives, and gather information to effectively improve the business climate on a continual basis.

3. Community Development Block Grants

These grants are typically tied to infrastructure projects, such as water and sewer extensions, and require a local match from either an employer or the municipality. Generally, eligible projects can receive up to \$10,000 per job created, providing there is a 25% local match for roadways and infrastructure. The Berrien County Community Development Department will write the grant on behalf of the company and provide project administration support.

4. Industrial Development Revenue Bonds

Interest income, earned on issued bonds to finance a project for a private company with demonstrated public purpose, is exempt from federal and state income taxes, thereby reducing the cost of capital to an average 75% - 85% of prime. The Berrien County

Community Development Department handles the details of securing and administering the bond on behalf of the company.

5. Job Training Grants

Qualifying companies meeting salary and job creation criteria and providing a 25% match can be awarded job training grants worth an average of \$500 per existing employee and \$1,000 per new employee. These grants are customized based on individual company requirements resulting in a specifically trained workforce. Southwest Michigan has an annual budget dedicated to this program and a dedicated Grant Specialist who will work with interested companies on the application and award process.

6. Regulatory and Licensing Assistance

The Berrien County Community Development Department, North Berrien Community Development, Cornerstone Alliance, Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation have liaisons and ombudsmen to assist companies in regulatory and licensing issues. All offices also provide support and assistance in doing research and completing paperwork on a company's behalf.

7. Renaissance Zones

Watervliet City and Township, City of Benton Harbor, Benton Charter Township and the City of Buchanan have several Renaissance Zones where companies or residents do not pay any Single Business Tax, Personal Income Tax, State Education Tax, Real or Personal Property Tax, local Income Tax or Utility Users Tax. Some zones are active until 2012 and some are active until 2017, at which time the tax abatement mechanism will provide additional tax protection to new and growing companies.

8. Revolving Loan Fund

The Berrien County Economic Development Corporation revolving loan fund promotes the growth of investing companies who need a financial partner with their bank to complete financing for projects. The interest rate is Prime and loan amount and terms are determined based on the needs of the company. Turnaround time on these loans is typically 30 days or more.

9. Tax Abatement

Property tax incentives are available to eligible businesses to renovate, expand or build manufacturing plants. Abatements reduce real and personal property taxes by 50% for up to 12 years. The Berrien County Community Development Department takes care of all details on behalf of the business and works with the local unit of government and the State of Michigan to ensure that the company receives their Exemption Certification.

10. Workforce Development

The Community Development team works with Michigan Works to meet workforce needs of companies through several customized programs:

- Extended HR functions, including taking resumes and applications, prescreening and interviewing.
- **BEST** Program – the **B**usiness **E**nhancement through **S**ervices and **T**raining program works with employers to meet workforce challenges head on through a fact-finding and customization process for each company.
- **WISE** Program – the **W**orkforce **I**nformation **S**haring **E**xchange program collects workforce data such as compensation and benefits, workforce gap analysis and best practices.



For further details on these and any other incentives, please contact:

Berrien County Community Development Department
Daniel Fette, Director
701 Main Street
St. Joseph, MI 49085
Phone: (269) 983-7111 ext. 8617
Fax: (269) 982-8611

North Berrien Community Development
Chana Kniebes, Coordinator
P.O. Box 1028
Coloma, MI 49038
Phone: (269) 468-4430
Fax: (269) 468-7088

Cornerstone Alliance
Wendy Dant-Chesser, President
P.O. Box 428
Benton Harbor, MI 49023
Phone: (269) 925-6100
Fax: (269) 925-4471

Southwestern Michigan Economic Growth Alliance (SMEGA)
Shelley Klug, Executive Director
1950 Industrial Drive
Niles, MI 49120
Phone: (269) 683-1833
Fax: (269) 683-7515

Ten Reasons to do Business in Michigan's Great Southwest!

