



Champion Spotlight: DUNCAN AVIATION

“Duncan Aviation prides itself on being closely connected to the communities where our team members live, work, and play. We support these communities in an effort to strengthen a social fabric that will provide a healthy, safe, and productive environment for us all. Our partnership with Pulse, WE Upjohn Institute, and BCU has allowed us to leverage our collective connections and expertise as we seek to bolster and grow our childcare resources in Southwest Michigan. We need other local and regional businesses to join us in this effort and in the other workforce challenges that we face such as housing, transportation, training, etc.”

In 2022 Pulse @ the WE Upjohn Institute initiated its efforts to engage corporate leaders more deeply around addressing the childcare crisis facing our local community. By highlighting that NOT addressing this crisis was costing them through lost revenues now from lower output; extra costs to rehire quits and cover absenteeism; extra costs to manage disrupted workers; and lost revenues in the future from lower output – champions were identified who were willing to dig in to identify possible solutions that reflected their level of commitment. Pulse created the [Pulse RoadMap](#) to provide business leaders with the tools they’d need to do so.

Duncan Aviation immediately stepped to the plate. They partnered with Pulse and Battle Creek Unlimited to survey their employees, identified strategies that aligned with their values and resources, and got to work.

Their efforts to date have included the creation of Team Member Choice Benefits; investing in the Employer Resource Network that brings a Success Coach to employees to help them navigate barriers they may be experiencing that impact their ability to maintain employment; co-signed on advocacy communication to State Legislators; sponsored a local childcare access fair that brought the necessary tools to the community expand capacity; and are currently exploring other opportunities to increase access to existing area childcare providers and potentially partner with these providers through mutually beneficial strategies.

They also acknowledged the impact this crisis is potentially having on their team members. Impact that may include lost earnings from increased absenteeism, lower productivity, and less experience; extra costs of job search for alternative work and childcare arrangements; and lost earnings in the future from lower productivity, less work experience and lower skills upgrading.

When our relationship around childcare first began, Duncan Aviation thought that the solution was to open a center (possibly with other like-minded businesses), but have since learned that a multi-pronged approach was best. They also learned there was a lot they were already doing to support their employees with young families. Explicitly naming those things and reframing them so that they were more obvious was key.

Change happens when we all step up, understand our role, assess our level of risk and investment and move from a place that aligns with our values. Duncan Aviation has done just that and we’re excited to see what’s next.