



**WHY KALAMAZOO:
A Locational-Opportunities Analysis
for Customer Care Centers**

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KALAMAZOO

A Community That Rings True As a Customer Care Center Location

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Companies searching for a site to locate a customer care center need look no further than the Kalamazoo Region of West Michigan. Companies are attracted to the area for a number of reasons, but particularly for our strong supply of skilled workers; excellent quality of life; and for the extensive support services offered to local businesses.

Business and community leaders, as well as city and county governments, continue to work together to ensure that the Kalamazoo Region remains a prime location for customer care centers. The region is already home to a number of them, including State Farm Insurance, National City Bank, Alta Resources and IndyMac Bank.

A track record of success, coupled with a pro-business attitude make the Kalamazoo Region a prime location for customer care center operations. In addition to the region's aforementioned strengths, the Kalamazoo Region of Michigan offers the following advantages:

- ◆ **Workforce:** More than 58,000 available workers at all levels of skill, experience, education and pay range. There are also several options locally for workforce selection and training.
- ◆ **Education:** The only community in the nation to offer all graduates of Kalamazoo Public Schools up to 100% of their college tuition just for completing high school. Additionally, the education-oriented region boasts more than 220,000 college students at nearly 50 colleges and universities all within a 75 mile radius.
- ◆ **Location:** Ideally situated midway between Detroit and Chicago—and just a 30 minute drive from the sandy beaches of Lake Michigan, the Kalamazoo Region has well over 1 million square feet of existing sites and build-to-suit sites available to meet your individual needs.
- ◆ **Diverse mix of local industries:** Home to a strong financial community, a successful and growing life science cluster, a healthy manufacturing and logistics industry and a variety of companies recognized both nationally and internationally
- ◆ **Community Support:** The Kalamazoo Region has a history of developing innovative ways to support its business community. The area's public and private sectors consistently work together, often crossing city and county borders to find new ways to help companies exceed their goals.

Clearly, the Kalamazoo Region gives companies looking for a site to locate a sophisticated administrative office many reasons to say, "Yes!"

WORKFORCE TRAINING

Attracting and retaining talented employees who can help companies keep up with the ever-changing demands of the global marketplace is a tough challenge for employers, but the resources available in the Kalamazoo Region make it easy. The area boasts several workforce training programs that allow local firms to keep their employees at the forefront of new information, methods, skills and techniques.

The Michigan Technical Education Center (M-TEC)

M-TEC at Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC) works with companies and universities to provide training programs that help build a stronger workforce for the community. In addition to several established training programs ranging from manufacturing to information systems technology, the center can help companies create customized training solutions to meet unique requirements.

Michigan Works!

The program connects people who need jobs with companies who need to fill jobs throughout the state. Funded by state and federal governments through the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth, Michigan Works! is a free service to both employers and job seekers.

Kalamazoo County Service Center

Employment services are available locally at Kalamazoo County's Service Center. Here, job seekers and employers can access a wide range of employment and training services through the Michigan Talent Bank, an Internet-based labor exchange. They also receive assistance with recruitment events, interviewing, employee training, workshops, screening applicants, collecting applications and space for small job fairs.

Education for Employment

Selected as one of five exemplary school-to-work transition programs in the nation, and personally recognized in 1994 by President Clinton, Kalamazoo County's Education for Employment program provides today's students with the skills, abilities and knowledge needed to succeed in today's workforce.

Through cooperative efforts with area school systems, Kalamazoo Valley Community College and business and industry, Education for Employment offers courses for middle school and high school students that combine academic classes with hands-on learning and workplace training. These courses allow students to gain the workplace skills and attitudes needed to succeed in today's ever-evolving workplace before graduating from high school.

Michigan's Economic Development Job Training Program

This state program is a major feature of the state's economic development efforts, seeking to ensure that Michigan has the training resources to retain and attract smart businesses and skilled people.

EDUCATION

Kalamazoo area high schools are committed to preparing young men and women to excel as members of the region's workforce through top-notch K-12 education, several institutions of higher education and an array of training programs. Area high schools graduate 82 percent of their students and more than 88 percent of Kalamazoo residents over 25 years of age have a high school education or greater.

Education Level	Kalamazoo Region Average	National Average
High school graduates	82%	80%
Two-year college graduates	80%	76%
Four-year college graduate	21%	17%
PhD Graduates	14%	8.5%

Source: Sperling's Best Places

The Kalamazoo Promise

Each and every Kalamazoo Public School graduate residing in the district and attending Kalamazoo Public Schools for four years or more is given up to 100% funding for college tuition and mandatory fees, depending on his or her length of attendance. The funds can be used at any public university or community college in the State of Michigan. These funds, donated by a group of anonymous citizens interested in economic strength and quality of life in the City of Kalamazoo, are guaranteed indefinitely. Learn more about the Kalamazoo Promise at www.kalamazoopublicschools.com.

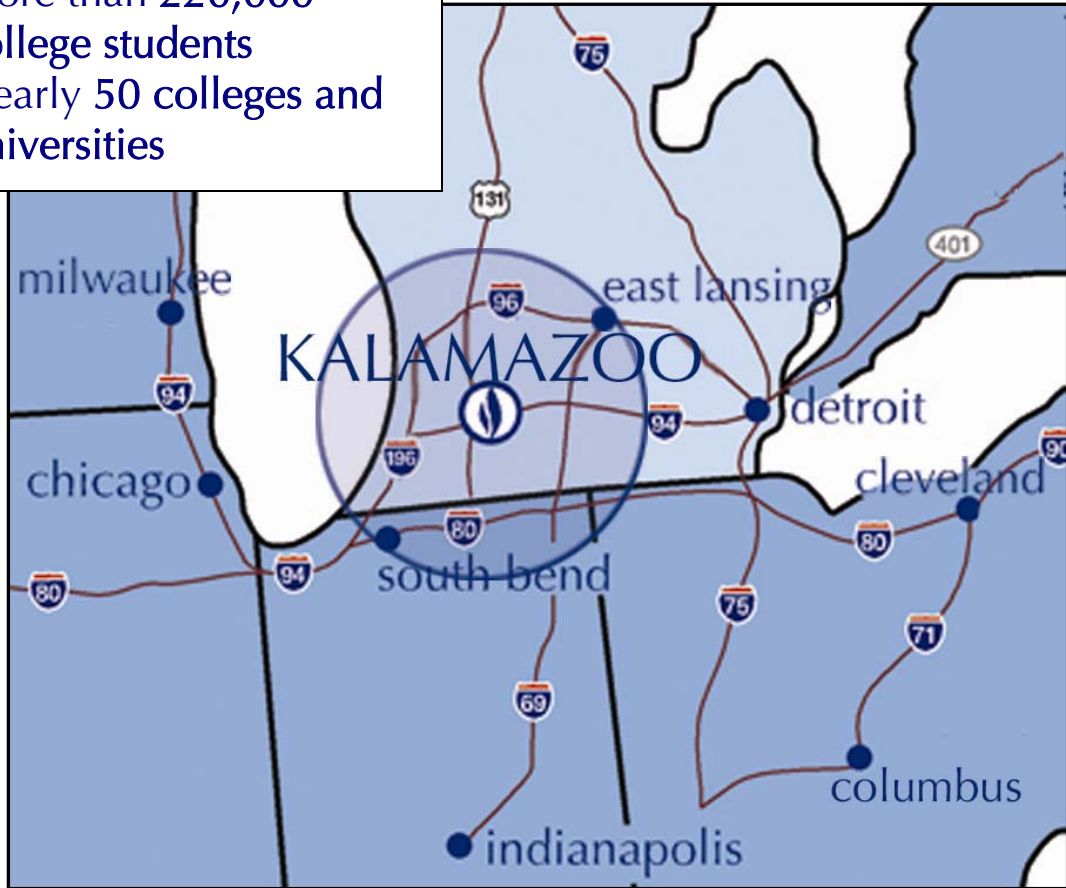
A College Town

The City of Kalamazoo is home to Western Michigan University (WMU), Kalamazoo College and Kalamazoo Valley Community College (KVCC). With 28,000 students, WMU is listed among U.S. News and World Report's Top 100 public universities in the nation. A fixture in Kalamazoo since 1833, Kalamazoo College is the oldest private college in Michigan and even though the school caps its enrollment at 1,500, it attracts scholars from 41 states and 22 countries around the globe. In 2002 a U.S. News and World Report article ranked Kalamazoo College and its Center for International Programs number one in the nation for study abroad. A leader in quickly responding to market needs with unique educational initiatives, KVCC has nearly 11,000 students enrolled in certificate or associate of applied science degree programs in more than 45 areas of study.

Additionally, there are nearly 50 colleges and universities within a 75 mile radius of Kalamazoo, with a total of more than 220,000 college students in the region:

Within a 75 mile radius of
Kalamazoo:

- ◆ More than 220,000
college students
- ◆ Nearly 50 colleges and
universities



LOCAL INDUSTRY

In all, more than 400 firms manufacture a wide range of products, including pharmaceuticals, industrial robots, paper, chemicals, medical equipment and plastics. Major companies known nationally and internationally, such as Pfizer, Stryker Corporation, Eaton Corporation, Borroughs Manufacturing, International Paper and Dana Corporation call Kalamazoo home.

Kalamazoo County, Michigan—Largest Private Employers

Pfizer, Inc.	Pharmaceuticals
Bronson Healthcare Group	General medical and surgical care
National City Bank	Banking
Borgess Health Alliance	General medical and surgical care
Stryker Corporation	Medical device
Meijer's Inc.	Retail/grocery
Summit Polymers Inc.	Plastic injection products
MPI Research	Toxicology contract research
Eaton Corporation-TCOA	Global engineering, truck components
Target Regional Distribution	Retail distribution center
MSU-Kalamazoo Center for Medical Studies	General medical and surgical care
SBC	Telephone communications
State Farm Auto Claims Center	Insurance claims processing
Parker Hydraulics Systems Division	Aerospace aircraft parts
American Greetings—Designware	Paper party goods
Benteler Automotive	Automotive supplier
Flowserve Corporation	Gaskets and seals
Checker Motor Corporation	Automotive stamping plant
Kalamazoo Gazette	Newspaper
Graphic Packaging Corporation	Paper mill/folding paperboard
MANN+HUMMEL	Plastic injection products
Dana Corporation	Global engineering, truck components
Eimo Inc.	Plastic injection products
Bowers Manufacturing	Aluminum products
Borroughs Corporation	Office furniture
International Paper	Paper products

Site Availability

The Kalamazoo Region has a very robust telecommunications infrastructure to support customer care centers. However, details are extremely site specific. There are many site options from which to choose, and Southwest Michigan First offers site selection assistance and support throughout the process. You may review featured sites from across the Kalamazoo Region at www.southwestmichiganfirst.com.

SUMMARY

Kalamazoo is a model of education, recreation, culture and community collaboration. Ideally situated midway between Detroit and Chicago—and just a 30 minute drive from the sandy beaches of Lake Michigan—the Kalamazoo area offers great schools, nationally recognized institutions of higher learning, two renowned healthcare systems and a cost of living remarkably low for a city of its size and caliber.

Clearly, Kalamazoo is easy to get to, but convenience is only one factor in the region's fantastic quality of life. The cost of living in Kalamazoo is well below the national average and healthcare costs—even though the care here is among the best in the world—is 10 percent lower than the national average.

The Kalamazoo Promise, an extraordinary free tuition program unequalled for its vision and scope anywhere in the United States, fuels an already excellent public school system and nationally prominent colleges and universities. (See details about The Kalamazoo Promise in the Workforce Training section.)

With so much to offer businesses and families, alike, the Kalamazoo Region of Michigan truly is a great place to live AND work.

For More Information

This document is intended as a broad overview highlighting factors of interest to those evaluating sites for administrative offices. To learn more about our history, personality and remarkable quality of life, we urge you to visit www.southwestmichiganfirst.com.