



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kelsey May

CONTACT: Eric K. Foster
616.558.3276
ericfoster@progress-strategies.com

Michigan Works! Muskegon-Oceana and Progress Strategies+ partner up for diversity training and cultural competency readiness: April 2015

Eric K. Foster, Principal and President of *Progress Strategies+* and Ronald Jimmerson, taught a series of three diversity, inclusion, equity and cultural competency training sessions for participants in the Muskegon-Oceana location of Michigan Works! MichiganWorks! Muskegon-Oceana, a *Progress Strategies+* client, founded in 1987 helps place unemployed Michigan residents in secure jobs, ranging from Dow Chemical plants to public schools. Michigan Works! also helps provide access to higher education and job training programs. Four million people give credit to Michigan Works! every year as a crucial part of their career preparation and job searches. Find out more at michiganworks.org.

The extent to which Foster prepared 52 employees in their abilities to understand cultural competency, learn how to connect with their job-seeker clients of different backgrounds and use strategies to address cultural miscommunication is demonstrated by the passion shared by Michigan Works! Muskegon-Oceana employees: "Thank you! I know that I can use this information and tools now to move forward into adaptation and then integration. My mind has been opened—I am now more aware (of cultural differences)."

The *Progress Strategies+ Unity of Purpose: Facilitating Intercultural and Inclusion Development* training program is created exclusively for Michigan Works! Muskegon-Oceana. Another benefit of the training is that cultural assumptions and stereotypes were changed. We are all guilty of possessing faulty mindsets, but Foster encourages acceptance and encouragement to learn of cultural differences in place of implicit bias and intolerance. One participant voiced his support: "I learned that everyone is different and has different cultures, but understanding that and learning from our differences can only be beneficial and make us grow in our work and business."

Foster encourages his clients to work together because relational bonds are what strengthen a group of people. He stands in opposition of many societal trends which seek to divide people economically and professionally.

##