



# 2023 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT





## Growing a Stronger West Michigan Workforce

The Agribusiness Talent Council (ATC) is a collaborative of employers, educators, workforce development and economic development organizations working together to foster a thriving agribusiness sector in West Michigan by attracting and retaining a skilled workforce while promoting the industry as a whole. The ATC is:

- Employer-led and convened by West Michigan Works!.
- Leveraging stakeholder engagement to strengthen and expand the talent pool.
- Responsive to the industry's needs, creating new programs when necessary.

### STRATEGIES

- **Promote the Industry:** Highlighting fulfilling agribusiness career pathways for people of all ages.
- **Recruiting and Retaining Talent:** Initiatives to attract new talent to the agribusiness industry. Develop strategies to retain existing talent within the sector for the long term.
- **Training:** Facilitate connections between businesses and resources to upskill the current workforce and create skilled talent within the industry.
- **Connect to Resources:** Identify and share valuable resources that benefit the agribusiness workforce.

### COUNCIL PARTICIPANTS

Dykhuis Farms, GTF Technologies, Herbruck's Poultry Ranch, Koeze Co., Revolution Farms, Riveridge Produce Marketing, SpartanNash, Walters Gardens, Allegan ISD, Michigan State University, Ottawa County Economic Development and West Michigan Works!

### ANNUAL SPONSORS

Grand Rapids Community College Workforce Training, SpartanNash, Dykhuis Farms, Herbruck's Poultry Ranch, Dairy Farmers of America, Michigan Potato Industry Commission, Riveridge Produce Marketing, Greenstone Farm Credit Services, Nutrien Ag Solutions and Koeze Co.

## The importance of the ATC

Studies show this high-demand sector directly employs 105,000 people and generates \$4 billion in labor revenue in our region. The ATC is dedicated to promoting agribusiness careers and strengthening the talent pipeline now and for the future, underscoring our commitment to the economic vitality of West Michigan. Through collaboration, resource utilization and proactive initiatives, the ATC is making a tangible difference in the lives of individuals, employers and the overall growth of the agribusiness industry in our region. Together, we are shaping a prosperous future for our farms, food processors and the entire community.



*This industry acts as a powerful engine that fuels our entire economy, benefiting both rural and urban communities. It creates numerous high wage job opportunities across West Michigan and ensures a dependable food supply for workers in all sectors. When agribusiness flourishes, it paves the way for the overall success and well-being of our entire region.*

*~ Karrie Brown, Industry Council Lead*



## Career AG-xploration

- Muskegon County event held at Muskegon Farmers Market – **13 employers** engaged **350 students** and their families in hands-on career activities.
- Submitted request for grant to fund expansion to four additional counties for 2023-24 school year.

## Agribusiness Spotlight Week

- Spotlight on Ag Readers, 20 industry professionals read agriculture books to 26 classrooms. **562 students** learned about ag careers and took resources home to share with their families.
- WZZM interview showcasing in-demand careers in the industry.
- Activity at GVSU challenging **37 Science Olympiad** participants to think about STEM tied to agribusiness.
- **45 GVSU** Environmental and Sustainability Studies students learned of agribusiness internships at the Sustainability Showcase.

## MiCareerQuest

- **18 employers** interacted with **7,981 middle and high school students**.
- More than **50 industry occupations** were showcased.



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## ATC Quarterly Project Timeline FY 2022-2023



### Ag-Jobs-4-All

- **5 community organizations** partnered for a webinar to share resources with over **35 employers** about hiring opportunity populations.
- **15 employers** have participated in three industry specific in person hiring events

### The Foods That Built West Michigan

- **12 agribusiness** operations spotlighted in blogpost to share best practices and information about workforce needs in the industry. Posts archived on ATC website, shared on LinkedIn and monthly newsletter.

### Grant Expansion Series

- Presentations made at 3 conferences to introduce more than **100 industry employers** to available training grants.

### MDARD Specialty Crop Block Grant

- **Five employer** applications approved for training seven individuals so far.
- **15 nominations** for growers to spotlight in videos. Three growers selected and filming will result in five videos showcasing a variety of industry careers.

### Grant Expansion

Active promotion of Going Pro Talent Fund, Incumbent Worker Training Grant and On-The-Job Training, led to over **280% increase** in industry apprenticeships supported by training grants.

| Type of Training | Investment          | # Trainees |
|------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Classroom        | \$194,276.00        | 136        |
| New Hire         | \$336,500.00        | 182        |
| Apprenticeship   | \$59,500.00         | 17         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>\$590,276.00</b> | <b>335</b> |