



2024

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



**AGRI
BUSINESS**
TALENT COUNCIL - WEST MICHIGAN

ABOUT THE COUNCIL



MISSION AND VISION

The Agribusiness Talent Council is a collaborative of employers, educators, workforce development and economic development organizations working together to foster a thriving agribusiness sector in West Michigan. Together, we can attract and retain a skilled workforce while promoting the industry.



INDUSTRY IMPACT

West Michigan's agribusiness sector is a powerhouse, producing one-third of Michigan's total agricultural sales and contributing over \$13 billion to the regional economy. The food and agriculture system remains a vital source of employment, accounting for approximately 17.2 percent of the state's total employment, with over 36,400 agribusiness jobs in West Michigan. This industry is comprised of five subsectors: food processing, which represents the largest share of agricultural employment, followed by farming, agricultural wholesale and retail, input supplies and regulation of agricultural marketing and commodities. The sector's strength underscores its critical role in our state's economy and employment landscape.

Agriculture has grown to enable over 250 food and beverage manufacturers in West Michigan to produce of over 300 commodities and provide numerous career opportunities. We are excited that there has been an uptick in career awareness events conducted by other organizations seeking support from West Michigan Works!. The council was able to support four of these, reaching over 200 students. The sooner students begin career exploration the sooner they will learn what they like and dislike and choose a career path that is right for them.

- Carol Distel, Agribusiness Talent Council Lead

OUR STRATEGY

PROMOTE • TRAIN • RECRUIT • CONNECT



PROMOTE THE INDUSTRY

We are focused on promoting agribusiness as a great career pathway for all ages.



TRAIN

We connect businesses with resources to create your own skilled talent by upskilling your current workforce.



RECRUIT & RETAIN TALENT

We create and join projects that pull new talent into agribusiness and keep existing talent long term.



CONNECT TO RESOURCES

We create new, and share existing, beneficial resources for the agribusiness industry.



BE THE CHANGE

SPOTLIGHT ON AG-READERS

This year, we invited MSU Institute for Agricultural Technology students to be volunteer readers as well as our traditional agribusiness employee readers. Volunteers read to K-5 classrooms, shared why they are passionate about their career, and gave each student a magazine to share with their families. Adding college-age readers boosted volunteer numbers, allowing us to expand our efforts to educate our future workforce about careers in agribusiness.

I have already recommended this to our 5th grade teachers who did not participate this year. It was a perfect launch for my career exploration lessons with 5th graders. Thank you for offering this opportunity to younger students.

- Anonymous teacher

44
CLASSROOMS
VISITED

1,343
STUDENTS
ENGAGED

CAREER AG-XPLORATION

Thirteen employers & community partners created hands-on career exploration experiences at this year's Ag-xploration, reaching over 400 adults and 225 students from 24 different schools in Muskegon and Ottawa counties. Families engaged with local employers to learn about traditional agriculture and food processing careers. By continuing with this event, the council is educating local students on in-demand agriculture careers while showcasing local businesses.

By introducing K-5 students to the vast possibilities in agribusiness, we lay the groundwork for exploration in middle school and preparation in high school. Career Ag-xploration not only aligns with the Michigan Career Development Model but also highlights the nature career zone.

- Michelle Kuck, Muskegon Area ISD

13
EXHIBITORS

400+
ADULTS
ENGAGED

225
STUDENTS
ENGAGED



\$895,299
TRAINING
DOLLARS
INVESTED



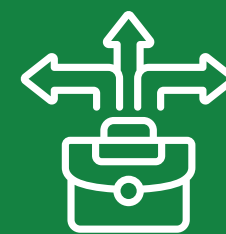
437
PROFESSIONALS
TRAINED



58
ENGAGED
EMPLOYERS



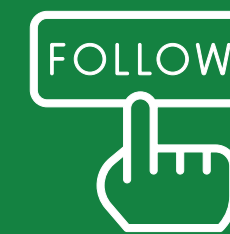
131
PROJECT
VOLUNTEERS



9,894
K-12 STUDENTS
EXPLORED
CAREERS



194
EVENT
ATTENDEES



823
LINKEDIN AND
NEWSLETTER
FOLLOWERS

BE THE DIFFERENCE

CUSTOMIZED JOB FAIRS

The Agribusiness Talent Council hosted family-friendly Career Fair Carnivals in Kent, Ottawa, Montcalm and Muskegon Counties connecting 126 job seekers with 11 employers seeking to fill positions. Additionally, we hosted three Ag-Jobs-4-All job fairs in Kent and Ionia counties attracting 75 job seekers. Ag-Jobs-4-All focuses on providing resources and employment to job seekers, including opportunity populations such as veteran, older, differently abled, or justice involved job seekers.



Sometimes it's not feasible for an individual to schedule meetings without their children. Many times, individuals walk away from opportunities, training or employment due to these exclusionary requests. West Michigan Works! and their partners have done an amazing job thinking outside the box while being mindful of the holistic needs of the family.

- Monica Robbins, Michigan Rehabilitation Services



15
EMPLOYERS PARTICIPATED

201
JOB SEEKERS ATTENDED

MDARD SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT, & GRANT REQUEST EXPANSION & ENGAGEMENT NETWORK (GREEN)

Farmers face limited access to training grants due to their seasonal workforce. This year, the MDARD grant provided fully reimbursed food safety training to 15 employers who trained 31 employees. Edible Gardens shared that this grant supported their goal of providing food safety training to staff and maintaining high standards in their food supply chain.

GREEN aims to increase utilization of the Going Pro Talent Fund, MDARD, incumbent-worker training and on-the-job training grants. We connected with over 200 employers, shared information on LinkedIn, in our newsletter and with County Farm Bureaus, Commodity Groups, Conservation Districts and more. Based on our outreach, we've seen a significant increase in the number of applications for grants.



We've used MDARD to cover the costs of food safety classes and the Varnum Employer Compliance Guide. The process is straightforward, and we are grateful to the Agribusiness Talent Council for consistently finding ways to support our regional growers.

- Jamie Kober, Riveridge Produce Marketing

437
PROFESSIONALS TRAINED USING
GPTF AND MDARD GRANTS

43%
INCREASE IN UTILIZATION
OF MDARD





COUNCIL MEMBERS

- JESSICA VANDENBOSCH
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
DYKHUIS FARMS
- LIZ WEAVER
GTF TECHNOLOGIES
- STEPHANIE KEMPA
HERBRUCK'S POULTRY RANCH
- BEN ZORN
KOEZE CO.
- TIM VOGELZANG
REVOLUTION FARMS
- JAMIE KOBER
RIVERIDGE PRODUCE MARKETING
- MATT GREEN
SPARTANNASH
- DIANNE COTE
WALTERS GARDENS
- RICH OKONIEWSKI
ALLEGAN ISD
- BRIAN GARDNER
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
- BECKY HUTTENG
OTTAWA COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- AMY LEBEDNICK
WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!

FUNDERS

- MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MDARD)
SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANT
- MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
CAREER EXPLORATION
- AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION
WHITE-REINHARDT GRANT
- GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SCHOOL OF WORKFORCE TRAINING
- WALTERS GARDENS
- RIVERIDGE PRODUCE MARKETING, INC.
- HERBRUCK'S POULTRY RANCH
- DYKHUIS FARMS
- NUTRIEN AG SOLUTIONS
- KOEZE COMPANY
- GREENSTONE FARM CREDIT SERVICES
- SCHREIBER FOODS
- MICHIGAN POTATO INDUSTRY COMMISSION
- DAIRY FARMERS OF AMERICA
- SPARTANNASH



West Michigan Works! is a division of ACSET, an equal opportunity employer/program and a proud partner of the American Job Center network. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. West Michigan Works! is supported by state and federal funds; more details at westmiworks.org/about/.



2024

COMMUNITY
IMPACT REPORT



CONSTRUCTION
CAREERS COUNCIL

ABOUT THE COUNCIL



MISSION AND VISION

Our mission is clear: to build a robust, diverse talent pipeline that meets the evolving needs of our region's construction industry, ensuring its continued growth and success. Through strategic initiatives, we tackle workforce development challenges head-on through our three strategies: campaign, train and sustain.

The Construction Careers Council is forging a bright future for West Michigan's construction industry by cultivating a diverse and qualified workforce. Our council represents various trades, uniting employers, educators, workforce agencies, unions and associations to address current and future talent needs.

INDUSTRY IMPACT

Projections indicate a demand for 16,000 new workers in the construction industry over the next six years. There are critical shortages in 17 of the hottest jobs in West Michigan which include millwrights, mobile heavy equipment mechanics, electricians, civil engineers and woodworking machine operators.



The Construction Careers Council offers opportunities for all ages to explore the vast possibilities in construction through career readiness events, job site tours, classroom visits, industry workshops and more. By bridging the gap between opportunity and possibility, we aim to make a lasting impact on our community, especially for those who have not yet experienced a career in construction.

- Holly Wasielewski, The Christman Company

OUR STRATEGY

CAMPAIGN • SUSTAIN • TRAIN



CAMPAIGN

Implementing initiatives to promote construction careers across all age groups, showcasing opportunities and benefits.



SUSTAIN

Creating projects focused on the individuals in construction and implementing retention strategies to maintain a skilled workforce.



TRAIN

Developing programs for skill enhancement of current workers and introductory training for newcomers interested in construction.



BE THE CHANGE

MICAREERQUEST

At MiCareerQuest this year, 36 construction employers wowed 6th-8th graders with their collaboration and interactive activities. Exhibits featuring project management team competitions, welding, electrical and many more offered a glimpse into exciting career possibilities and inspired the next generation of professionals.

Employers did a wonderful job explaining every question I had. It was interesting to see the different jobs I didn't know about. I also liked interacting with everything, it helped me decide what I want to pursue. Overall, I had a blast, it was fun and engaging.

- Student interested in Architecture and Engineering



21
OCCUPATIONS HIGHLIGHTED

36
EMPLOYERS ENGAGED

157
VOLUNTEERS

TRAVELING ROAD SHOW

The Traveling Roadshow career exploration event connected students with local employers, providing hands-on learning opportunities about different trades and occupations in construction. Employers found sharing details about their career inspirational, and students left the event feeling motivated -- having gained valuable insight to help them make informed decisions about their future.

Reaching 455 students last year, the Traveling Road Show is the foundation of the new Construction Field Days. This new, multifaceted event will showcase construction careers to students while aligning with our council strategy to inspire and attract students to the industry.

- Jason Khoury, Construction Industry Talent Council Lead



455
STUDENTS ENGAGED

10
EMPLOYERS ENGAGED

10
SCHOOLS VISITED



\$3,140,922
TRAINING DOLLARS INVESTED



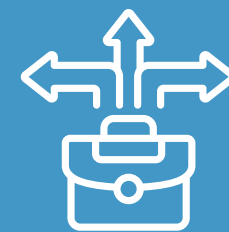
1,264
PROFESSIONALS TRAINED



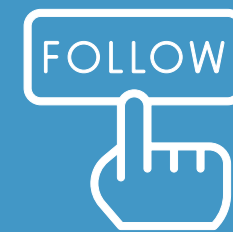
425
ENGAGED EMPLOYERS



194
PROJECT VOLUNTEERS



8,375
K-12 STUDENTS EXPLORED CAREERS



832
LINKEDIN AND NEWSLETTER FOLLOWERS



BE THE DIFFERENCE

WOMEN WHO BUILD WEST MICHIGAN

We continue to celebrate Women in Construction week by recognizing women in West Michigan nominated by their employers for their exceptional work and unique contributions to the industry. Nominees are also featured in our Women Who Build West Michigan blog created to inspire younger generations by sharing personal experiences, challenges and triumphs of women in the industry.



I have never felt prouder to be a part of this community. The importance of sharing women's experiences and our dedication to our work is crucial. The council is working hard to open doors, and introduce careers to future workers. This industry is more than physical labor, there are so many opportunities.

- Olivia Windemuller, Soils & Structures



COUNCIL MEMBERS

- HOLLY WASIELEWSKI
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
CHRISTMAN COMPANY
- MEG MATHIS
DAN VOS CONSTRUCTION
COMPANY
- NICK ELZINGA
CONTROL SOLUTIONS
- RACHEL AUSTIN
BARTON MALOW
COMPANY
- MINDY CURTISS
KENT COMPANIES
- WALTER CHRISTOPHERSEN
IBEW 275
- LINDSAY KRONEMEYER
ASSOCIATED BUILDERS
AND CONTRACTORS, INC.
WESTERN MICHIGAN
CHAPTER
- AMY LEBEDNICK
WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!
- SHAYNA CARLSON
OTTAWA AREA CAREERLINE
TECH CENTER
- TODD TOMEK
FLEIS & VANDENBRINK
- JULIE PARKS
GRAND RAPIDS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

FUNDERS

- MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
- WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!
- GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE SCHOOL OF WORKFORCE TRAINING
- HEALTH EQUITY COUNCIL- KENT COUNTY HEALTH CONNECT



18
NOMINEES
RECOGNIZED

12
EMPLOYER
NOMINATIONS



CONSTRUCTION

CAREERS COUNCIL

West
MICHIGAN
WORKS!

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2024

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

DISCOVER
MANUFACTURING™

ABOUT THE COUNCIL



MISSION AND VISION

Discover Manufacturing is a regional network of hundreds of manufacturers dedicated to addressing both the current and future talent needs of West Michigan's manufacturing industry. In collaboration with partners in education, workforce development and economic development, we are focused on training the current workforce, promoting the industry to future generations, and sharing opportunities and best practices within the sector.

INDUSTRY IMPACT

Michigan's manufacturing sector leads the state's economy with \$124.1 billion in output and employs nearly 586,900 people. Projected to grow by 6.1% by 2030, it offers competitive salaries, with an average of \$71,700, surpassing statewide averages.



OUR STRATEGY

TRAIN • PROMOTE • COMMUNICATE



DEVELOP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Informing curriculum development and spearheading initiatives that provide ongoing training for incumbent workers and introductory training for new manufacturers.



PROMOTE MANUFACTURING CAREERS

Executing initiatives to promote advanced manufacturing careers to students and young adults showcasing career paths and growth.



SHARE BEST PRACTICES ACROSS WEST MICHIGAN

Creating initiatives aimed at informing our membership of the best practical strategies to attract and maintain a skilled workforce.



Discover Manufacturing gives our manufacturers a unified voice, and the ability to actively participate in activities that make a difference. Our project-based initiatives are designed to positively impact our talent pool and provide the career pathways to in-demand manufacturing jobs requiring high skill levels.

- Jerry Hill, Discover Manufacturing Industry Talent Council Lead

BE THE CHANGE



DM WEEK

Last year 15,169 students toured 98 manufacturing facilities during Discover Manufacturing Week, this is 44.5% more than the year prior. We are hearing positive feedback from educators, and with increased demand from schools we are projected to grow another 10% -- allowing even more students to explore the diverse career paths in manufacturing across West Michigan.

Enterprise Tool and Die did an incredible job with our students. The various stations and continual movement kept them engaged. At each station students were able to participate in hands-on activities and see real people at work. We even had a few students say they want to work there in the future and asked about next steps.

- Emily Herro, Grandville Middle School

98 MANUFACTURERS **15,179** STUDENTS **68,528** ENCOUNTERS



CAREER FAIR CARNIVALS

The four Discover Manufacturing and Agribusiness Talent Council Career Fair Carnivals in June stand as an example of how thoughtful planning, strategic partnerships and innovative event design can significantly impact outreach. The successful family-friendly carnivals included employers with immediate job openings, and were held in Muskegon, Montcalm, Kent and Ottawa Counties. The events also enhanced the visibility of careers in manufacturing and food processing.



The Career Fair Carnivals provide job seekers and their families a fun and engaging way to be informed decision-makers about their careers. Discover Manufacturing was excited to collaborate with the Agribusiness Talent Council to connect eager candidates with the exciting, well-paid opportunities awaiting them in the industry!

- Steve Heethuis, Praeco Skills, LLC



37 EMPLOYERS ATTENDED **126** JOB SEEKERS SERVED **71%** EXPECTED HIRES



\$16,252,662
TRAINING DOLLARS INVESTED



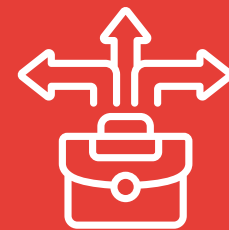
7,518
PROFESSIONALS TRAINED



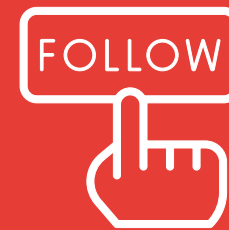
372
ENGAGED EMPLOYERS



748
PROJECT VOLUNTEERS



22,529
K-12 STUDENTS EXPLORED CAREERS



1,051
LINKEDIN AND NEWSLETTER FOLLOWERS



BE THE DIFFERENCE

DM SCHOLARSHIPS

Discover Manufacturing will award up to \$12,000 in scholarships in 2025. The council has awarded over \$40,000 in scholarships since 2018 to exceptional industry professionals and students planning to use their skills and education to pursue a rewarding career in advanced manufacturing.

I'm a maintenance mechanic working nights and going to school in the morning for a degree in industrial maintenance. I hope to look back at all these sleepless nights and hard mornings with a feeling of pride and confidence as I take that walk on graduation day. Thanks to scholarships and grant funding I can pursue this path with a little less financial burden. Not only have I obtained a certificate in welding through my knowledge gained on this path, but I will receive a nice pay increase upon completion as well.

- Ryan Wheeler, Bay Valley Foods

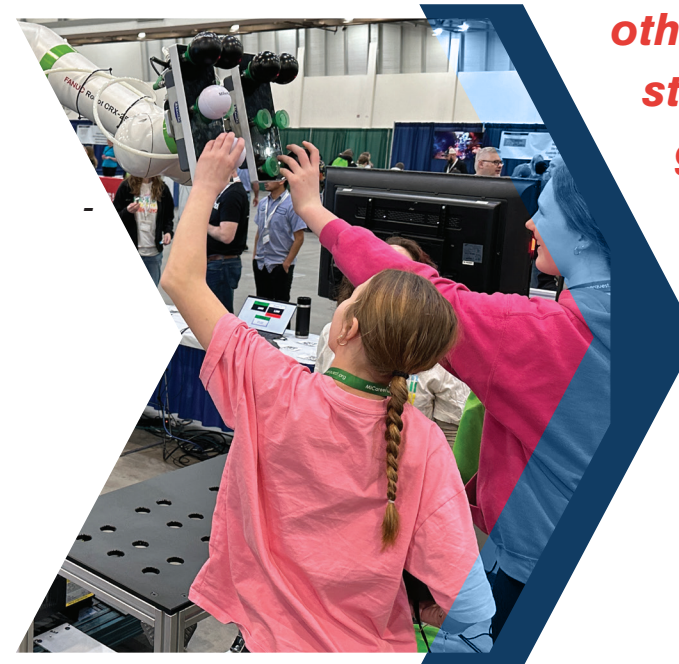


MICAREERQUEST

Six years after exploring the manufacturing sector at MiCareerQuest as a student, Kelly Kroll had come full circle. Her journey from a curious student to a dedicated HR professional at Bradford White Corporation exemplifies the power of career exploration and the impact of community engagement. Kelly's story is a testament to the importance of events like MiCareerQuest and the difference they can make in shaping the futures of young individuals.

Never in a million years did I think I would wind up in manufacturing, but now as a member of the Bradford White HR team for the last three years, I am grateful for the opportunities and the exposure I received from this event. It was great to be on the other side of the table speaking with students and educators about the great careers in manufacturing.

Kelly Kroll, Bradford White Corporation



37
MANUFACTURING EXHIBITS

186
VOLUNTEERS

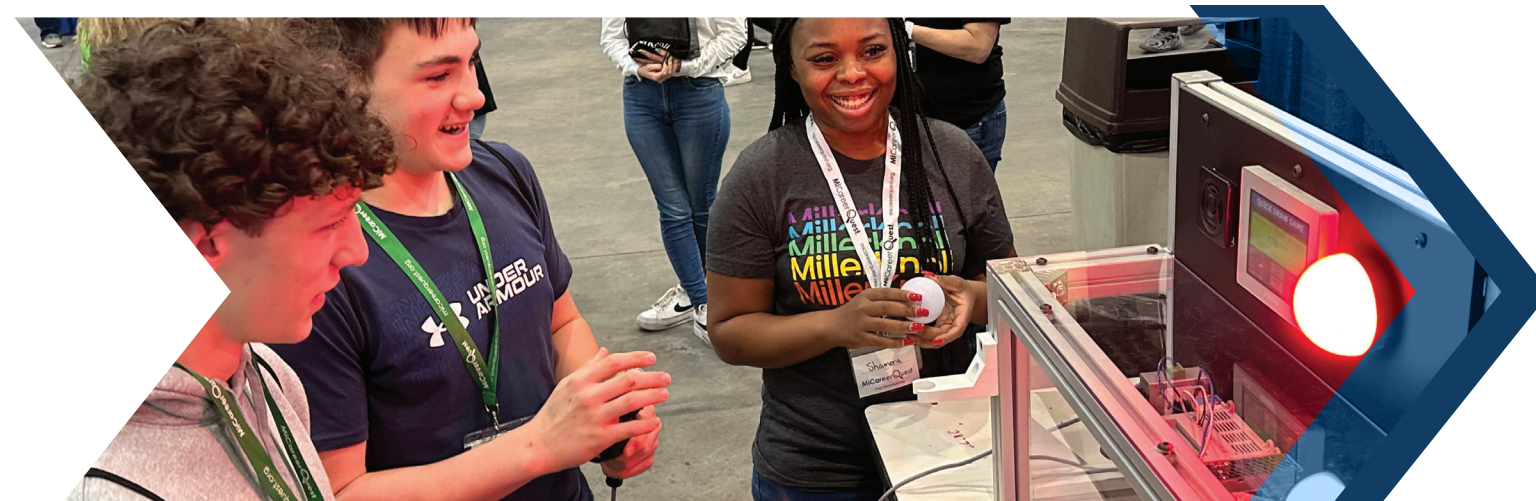
78
OCCUPATIONS
SHOWCASED



13
STUDENTS AWARDED

50+
APPLICANTS

\$13,000
AWARDED





COUNCIL MEMBERS

- STEVE HEETHUIS
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
PRAECO SKILLS
- KATE BAUMGARDNER
BRADFORD WHITE
- JAY DUNWELL
WOLVERINE COIL SPRING
- KRISTEN TJALSMA
MILLER KNOLL
- KACEY REGAN
DeWys MANUFACTURING
- SARAH GARDNER
NN MOBILE INC
- SANDER SCHOOF
SCHERDEL SALES AND TECHNOLOGY
- RYAN GRAHAM
KENT ISD
- STEPHANIE BRIGGS
MUSKEGON COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- VICTOR JOAQUIN
THE RIGHT PLACE
- AMY LEBEDNICK
WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!

FUNDERS

- MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
- WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!
- THE RIGHT PLACE MANUFACTURERS COUNCIL
- DISCOVER MANUFACTURING EARN AND LEARN DIRECTORY MEMBERS



DISCOVER
MANUFACTURING™



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2024

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



west michigan
health careers

ABOUT THE COUNCIL



MISSION AND VISION

The West Michigan Health Careers Council is an employer-led, collaborative council of employers, educators and workforce development organizations that work together to meet West Michigan's health care talent needs. Our initiatives strengthen the West Michigan health care industry by identifying, developing and promoting health care career opportunities. We believe that working together to identify and meet the short and long-term needs of the industry will support creating a workforce with the skills to keep health care organizations thriving in West Michigan.

INDUSTRY IMPACT

Forty of the 100 hottest jobs in West Michigan relate to health care. Additionally, health care is Michigan's largest employment sector, accounting for over 650,000 individuals. Our coordinated effort to attract, develop and retain talent is vital to long-term organizational sustainability.



OUR STRATEGY

PROMOTE • TRAIN • FUND • RETAIN



OUTREACH & PROMOTE

Promoting healthcare careers through education and advocacy.



EDUCATION & TRAINING

Providing opportunities for individuals to enter the industry and thrive in their careers.



FUNDING & RESOURCES

Connecting employers to funding opportunities and resources.



RETENTION

Creating solutions to help workers stay within the industry.



The council gives health care employers a space to work collaboratively for the greater good of the industry. Members share best practices, create meaningful initiatives that address industry pain points, and create a better environment for health care workers. Participation on the council creates a synergistic effect for its members, resulting in increased positive impact on their communities compared to what can be done by any individual employer alone.

- Charlotte Byndas, Corewell Health

BE THE CHANGE

HEALTH CARE CAREER FAIR CARNIVAL

After seeing the success of last year's innovative West Michigan Health Care Careers event, two other councils held four career fair carnivals this year. WMHCC expanded our reach this summer to host two Health Care Career Fair Carnivals, one in Muskegon County and one in Kent County. Combined, over 375 individuals attended and 77 job seekers were expected to be hired.

“We liked that it was family-friendly and engaging, and located where people could walk or take the bus.”

- Liliana Flores, Kent County Human Resources

375
ATTENDED

77
EXPECTED
HIRES

26
EMPLOYERS
PARTICIPATED

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING OUTPATIENT MEDICAL OFFICE VISIT SIMULATION

Forty-one 11th grade students broke into teams and scheduled, examined, diagnosed and treated volunteer patients in a month-long simulation of an outpatient medical office visit. Medical professionals advised the students and provided critiques on final projects through grand rounds-style presentations. Student and medical professional feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with each interested in being involved in future projects.

“I thought the project was a great experience and I would love to do it again. I loved being able to contact the actual doctors and how they were involved. It gave me understanding of the work they do.”

- Student Participant, Muskegon Area Career Tech Center

41
STUDENTS
ENGAGED

2
CLASSES

4
MEDICAL
PROFESSIONALS



\$3,279,454
TRAINING
DOLLARS
INVESTED



1,584
PROFESSIONALS
TRAINED



70+
ENGAGED
EMPLOYERS



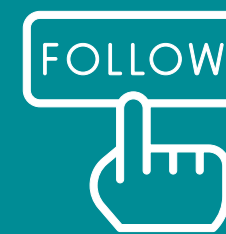
378
PROJECT
VOLUNTEERS



9,515
K-12 STUDENTS
EXPLORED
CAREERS



375
EVENT
ATTENDEES



574
LINKEDIN AND
NEWSLETTER
FOLLOWERS



BE THE DIFFERENCE

MICAREERQUEST

Health exhibits included surgical robots, ambulances, human organs and a mammography bus at MiCareerQuest, where over 160 exhibitors from 19 unique health care employers showcased 69 health care occupations to nearly 8,000 students. Each year, MiCareerQuest offers middle and high school students across seven counties the opportunity to learn about careers in five high-demand industries through interactive experiences.



«*Since exhibiting at MiCareerQuest, we have been invited to some local school hiring events. We actually were able to hire a student from one of these events! They are still working with us and doing great!*»

- Alex Kelly, Sunset Senior Communities

19
EMPLOYERS
PARTICIPATED

69
OCCUPATIONS
HIGHLIGHTED

160
EXHIBITORS



WORK-BASED LEARNING TRAUMATIC INJURY SIMULATION

High school students and teachers had the opportunity to participate in a simulation of a traumatic injury from onset to full recovery, with each step of the recovery as a station that students rotate too. At each station, participants learned about a different area of medicine and available occupations. Afterwards, participants had the chance to have lunch with staff and ask follow-up questions.



«*This project was a great opportunity for students and teachers to interact with medical*

professionals on-site at a local hospital. Attendees were exposed to over 50 careers in the health sciences industry through hands on experiences with real medical equipment.»

- Trevor Mier, Industry Council Lead, West Michigan Works!



137
STUDENTS

19
TEACHERS

60
MEDICAL STAFF





COUNCIL MEMBERS

- CHARLOTTE BYNDAS
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
COREWELL HEALTH
- TONYA SPENCER
CHERRY HEALTH
- DOUG HIMMELEIN
HOLLAND HOME
- MICHAEL HILL
HOPE NETWORK
- BILL GUEST
METRICS REPORTING
- AMY PIERCE-DANDERS
PINE REST
- KELLY ELKINS
TRINITY HEALTH
- STEVE SMITH
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
HEALTH – WEST
- BRENDA HENNINK
AQUINAS COLLEGE
- LISA RADAK
GRAND RAPIDS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- RYAN GRAHAM
KENT ISD
- AMY LEBEDNICK
WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!

FUNDERS

- BAKER COLLEGE
- COREWELL HEALTH
- GRAND RAPIDS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- HOLLAND HOME
- HOPE NETWORK
- MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT
OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY, WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT
- KENT ISD
- MOKA
- NETWORK180
- PINE REST
- TRINITY HEALTH
- UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
HEALTH – WEST
- WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!



west michigan
health careers



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2024

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



WEST MICHIGAN
TECH TALENT

ABOUT THE COUNCIL



MISSION AND VISION

West Michigan Tech Talent connects local employers, educators, community organizations and workforce experts who are invested in creating a strong tech workforce. By sharing best practices, leveraging resources and collaborating on innovative solutions, we are addressing the tech talent gap.



INDUSTRY IMPACT

West Michigan Tech Talent is recognized as a critical resource to our region's employers, students and I.T. professionals in supporting their career needs. Our council includes leaders from the tech industry, economic and workforce development, intermediate school districts and higher education all working together to identify short and long-term opportunities. We leverage our shared expertise to develop actionable projects to cultivate the future IT workforce, and ensure the current, workforce has the skills to keep our industry thriving in West Michigan.

2024 was a banner year for WMTT. We connected hundreds of IT professionals through networking and educational events, taught employers how to hire Visa candidates and provided youth with IT career opportunities. We also supported talent recruitment through partnerships with GRWebDev, Beer City Code, SoftwareGR and Code on Wheels.

- Rob Geer, Randstad Digital Americas

OUR STRATEGY

GROW • DEVELOP • RECRUIT • RETAIN



GROW

Providing students, families and educators with opportunities to engage with computing and technology careers.



DEVELOP

Helping employers upskill the current workforce to meet our region's talent demands. By connecting employers to training and funding opportunities, we make developing West Michigan's workforce accessible and affordable.



RECRUIT & RETAIN

Building a welcoming tech community through sponsorship and leadership of local meetups, conferences and events. We connect local employers with organizations that actively recruit top talent from outside areas to West Michigan.



BE THE CHANGE

{MI}CODE EXPERIENCE

{MI}Code Experience is an annual event that introduces third through fifth-grade students to coding and computer science career paths. Learning to code can help these students become the next generation of problem-solvers, creators and innovators!

This incredibly valuable experience allowed our students to practice coding and learn about future careers in this field. The 3rd grade teachers that participated in the {MI}Code Experience absolutely loved it and shared that they felt it was very beneficial for them and the students.

- Michelle Kuck, Muskegon Area ISD

71
CLASSROOMS

1,757
STUDENTS
ENGAGED

58
VOLUNTEERS

DEMYSTIFYING THE VISA PROCESS SERIES

This event empowered business owners, hiring managers and recruiters with the knowledge and tools to attract and retain top tech talent. Presenters shared insights into how to tap into this talented pool, including the basics of how to hire an international student as an intern or employee. Most importantly, this event served as a catalyst to create a series of events led by Global Detroit to continue the discussion.

The panel of experts provided industry partners and employers a unique opportunity to learn how and why to hire from the growing population of highly skilled international students at GVSU's Padnos College of Engineering and College of Computing, and the greater West Michigan area.

- Rachel Salinas, Grand Valley State University

4
EVENTS HELD

60+
PROFESSIONALS
ENGAGED



\$429,971
TRAINING
DOLLARS
INVESTED



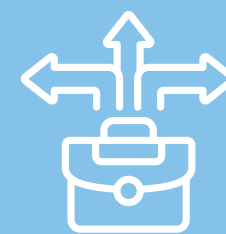
241
PROFESSIONALS
TRAINED



100+
ENGAGED
EMPLOYERS



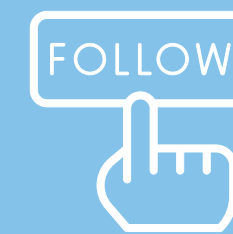
60
PROJECT
VOLUNTEERS



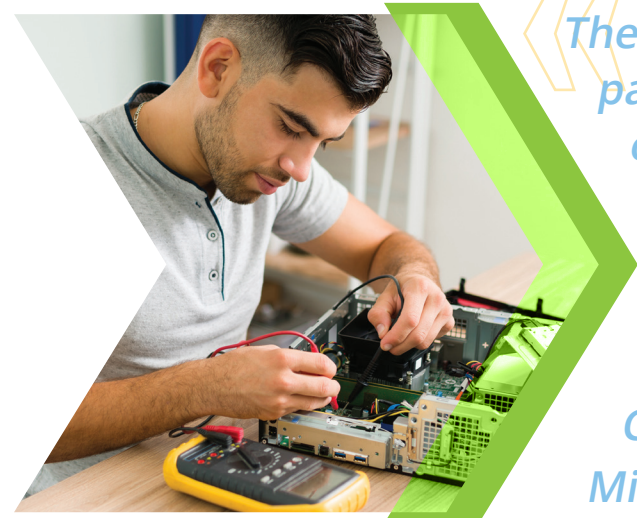
9,702
K-12 STUDENTS
EXPLORED
CAREERS



766
EVENT
ATTENDEES



3,200+
LINKEDIN AND
NEWSLETTER
FOLLOWERS



BE THE DIFFERENCE

MAKING CONNECTIONS

The council hosted several new and annual networking events this year, including an inaugural West Michigan Tech Trails series, a rooftop happy hour at Spartan Innovations, a Tech Week GR coffee shop discussion on DEI, a local brewery event on the future of tech and coffee and conversations at PeopleIT. Just this year, these events have built connections and community among more than 500 professionals.

« Thank you to West Michigan Tech Talent for always working hard behind the scenes to bring such great events to the West Michigan area! »

- Kim Peters, Feyen Zylstra

500+
ATTENDEES



TEACHERCON 2023

WMTT has supported TeacherCon from its inception by recruiting industry professionals to speak at events, arranging company tours and hosting special receptions. Since 2017, Grand Valley State University has supported over 700 middle & high school educators in Michigan to implement computer science courses within the school district in partnership with the MiSTEM Network. Each participating instructor commits to implementing computer science learning into their courses at the start of the academic year.

« Having WMTT part of TeacherCon elevates our event and provides another layer of learning for our educators. The teachers were quite excited to hear from CS professionals in West Michigan and learn what they do in relation to Computer Science. »

- Larry Wyn,
Grand Valley State University



9
PROFESSIONALS
RECRUITED

140
TEACHERS

COUNCIL MEMBERS



- ROB GEER
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
RANDSTAD DIGITAL
- SARA SCHMIDT
US FOODS
- BRIAN ANDERSON
AUGUSTO
- STEVE BAAR
NATIONAL NAIL
- CINDY BROWN
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
- LISA FRICANO
GORDON FOOD SERVICE
- TARITA JOHNSON
THE RIGHT PLACE
- AMY LEBEDNICK
WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!
- GREG SNOW
COREWELL HEALTH
- GARRY VONMYHR
TECH DEFENDERS
- ELIZABETH WILSON
VERVINT
- ROBERT WRIGHT
SPARTANNASH

FUNDERS

- COREWELL HEALTH
- GORDON FOOD SERVICE
- SPARTANNASH
- VERVINT
- GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
- TECH DEFENDERS
- THE RIGHT PLACE
- NATIONAL NAIL
- AUGUSTO
- RANDSTAD DIGITAL
- MENTAVI HEALTH
- INSPERITY
- BIZSTREAM
- SPARTAN INNOVATIONS
- MICROSOFT TEALS
- LAST MILE CAFE
- MACATAWA TECHNOLOGIES
- COMPUCRAFT TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS
- MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY FOUNDATION
- GLOBAL DETROIT
- TANIUM
- FUSIONARY
- IMLAW
- BRAVO LT
- PEOPLEIT
- LAKESHORE ADVANTAGE



West Michigan Works! is a division of ACSET, an equal opportunity employer/program and a proud partner of the American Job Center network. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. West Michigan Works! is supported by state and federal funds; more details at westmiworks.org/about/.