



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.



Continued on back

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
TOTAL	\$590,276.00	335



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Building the Talent Pipeline in West Michigan

The Construction Careers Council (CCC) is a collaborative of construction employers, educators, workforce development agencies, union representation and association representation working together to meet West Michigan's current and future construction talent needs. We are:

- Employer-led and convened by West Michigan Works!.
- Collaborative in nature.
- Supporting local efforts to connect individuals with employment opportunities in construction.
- Focused on career exploration.
- Providing opportunities for employers to engage in growing the region's talent pool.

STRATEGIES

- **Campaign:** Creating beneficial retention programs and projects to retain talent.
- **Train:** Providing resources for employers looking to upskill new or current employees and create a sustainable talent pipeline for the construction industry in West Michigan.
- **Sustain:** Promoting the construction industry as a sustainable career pathway for all ages.

COUNCIL PARTICIPANTS

Christman Company, Control Solutions Inc., Dan Vos Construction, Eastbrook Homes, EV Construction, Freedom Construction, Kent Companies, Summit Point Roofing, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers – Local 275 (IBEW 275), The Associated Builders and Contractors of West Michigan (ABC), Grand Rapids Community College (GRCC), West Michigan Construction Institute (WMCi) and West Michigan Works!



Construction Traveling Roadshow

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

Careers in Construction Month

As part of Careers in Construction Month, a nationwide campaign through Build Your Future, the Construction Careers Council took the pledge to spread the word about the wide range of construction careers, inspire the next generation of craft professionals, and promote a positive perception of the industry. To that end, the council created a new initiative: the Construction Traveling Roadshow.

Construction Traveling Roadshow

The Construction Careers Council is offering a traveling roadshow for schools interested in construction career exploration. The council constructed a readymade curriculum that is about 45 minutes in length. Students speak directly with industry professionals, do a hands-on activity with our professionals, and take a quiz to find out which career would be a good fit for them based on personal interests! The council believes that this initiative has had a positive impact on those that have participated, and the project will continue to grow in the coming years.

Highlights from year two are:

- ✓ Reached over 600 high school students
- ✓ 17 different employers took part in a roadshow
- ✓ Each employer represented a different trade



Awesome job! It was so well put together and beneficial for our students. Thanks again for your work yesterday, our kids were still talking about it this morning!

- Drew Klopac, Director of Northview Next High School



Participating in the traveling roadshow was an incredibly inspirational and fulfilling experience. It allowed our company to reach almost 75 students in hopes of playing a part in their decision-making process as they branch into the next phase of their lives. Leaving the discussion with a handful of students saying how impacted they felt by what we shared was really a full-circle moment and exactly what we had hoped to accomplish when signing up.

- Brooke Mahlebashian, Summit Point Roofing



Women in Construction Week

The Construction Careers Council celebrated Women in Construction Week by starting a blog titled: The Who Build West Michigan Series. The council wanted women within the industry to be celebrated and acknowledge for the work they have done in a male dominated field! This project is designed to increase career awareness and exploration for the next generation of women workers in the construction industry. To date the council has posted six articles highlighting seven different women within the industry.

The council will continue this project for the foreseeable future. The blogs can be found [here](#).

MiCareerQuest

The Construction Careers Council partook in MiCareerQuest, an in-person career exploration event. Local employers and partners were able to highlight a multitude of different occupations and give students insight into what a day in their industry might look like. Some highlights from the event were:

- **8,000 students**
- **72 West Michigan schools**
- **34 employers and partners**
- **24 hands-on exhibits**
- **72 occupations highlighted**

Training Grants

The Construction Careers Council supports and raises awareness for several grants that provide training funds to construction workers. Funds are available through programs such as Going Pro Talent Fund, incumbent worker training grants and on-the-job training grants. Trainee numbers and grant dollars invested in training for the health care industry are highlighted in the table.

	Total Training Cost	Number of Trainees
Classroom	\$1,456,074.00	1096
New Hires	\$1,139,988.00	570
Apprenticeship	\$2,506,000.00	716
TOTAL	\$5,102,062.00	2,382

Careers in Construction Month

We will be partaking in Careers in Construction Month, an initiative through Build Your Future. This is a nationwide campaign held in October to increase public awareness of construction careers, inspire the next generation and improve the perceptions of construction careers.

The Council pledged to showcase the range of successful construction career paths while improving perceptions of construction in 2022. The council has approved the following projects to promote careers in construction:

- **Traveling Roadshow:** A career exploration event with a hands-on demonstration from participating employers
- **Before the Jobsite Workshops:** Helping students prepare for applying and interviewing for jobs.
- **Inclusion Week:** Bringing awareness and celebrate those of diverse backgrounds in the construction industry.

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“The Construction Careers Council continues to make strides towards creating a more diverse and qualified construction workforce. In our second full year since its inception our council continues to grow both in popularity and in membership. This year we were able to bring on five new council members, continue our traveling roadshow success, start the Women Who Build West Michigan blog series, take the lead on MiCareerQuest, take part in Career Days and approve three new projects. I am confident that the groundwork our council has laid will lead to a stronger workforce within the construction industry here in West Michigan. I am very excited to see what the future holds for the industry and our council!

*- Mac Dodds, industry council lead
Construction Careers Council*

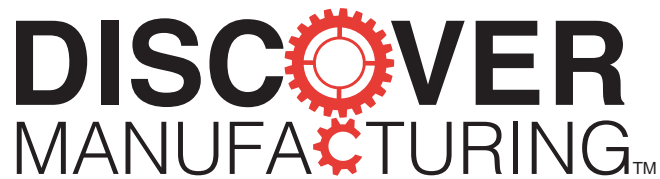


West Michigan Works! is a division of ACSET, an equal opportunity employer/program and a proud partner of the American Job Center network. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. West Michigan Works! is supported by state and federal funds; more details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



2023 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT





Inspiring and expanding manufacturing talent in West Michigan

Discover Manufacturing is a regional talent council collaboration between manufacturers, education, economic development and workforce development, convened by West Michigan Works! and recognized as a critical resource to our region's manufacturers in supporting their long-term talent needs.

Our project-based initiatives take a three-pronged approach:

- Promote manufacturing careers.
- Develop training opportunities.
- Share best practices across our region.

ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED ON OUR BOARD

West Michigan Works!, The Right Place, Gentex, Miller Knoll, Wolverine Coil Spring, Scherdel Sales, Bradford White, Kent ISD and Muskegon Community College

Discover Manufacturing's leadership team is comprised of additional 32 members representing 22 employers.

MEMBERS

Over **280 companies/organizations** involved in project-based initiatives.

Over **600 companies/organizations** within our network.

Today's
manufacturing
jobs are high-tech,
high-skilled &
high-demand.

INITIATIVES

Discover Manufacturing Scholarship Project

Scholarships are available to students pursuing training in skilled trades or a four-year degree and are renewable for a second year, allowing the Discover Manufacturing leadership team to track student progress in obtaining their certifications.

The selection committee scored and evaluated applications that include an essay "Why manufacturing is the right career path for me and how I plan to make a difference in a manufacturing environment."

Four scholarship renewals and five new scholarships totalling \$9k were awarded this year to deserving students.

Highlight: Landen Wybenga, 2022 scholarship recipient

Landen Wybenga is a recent graduate of Comstock Park High School and Kent Career Technical Center pursuing a degree in Welding Engineering at Ferris.

When asked what sparked his interest in a manufacturing career, Landen told the team about attending MiCareerQuest as an eighth-grade student and having the opportunity to try welding for the very first time with Laura Preuss and DeWys Manufacturing. He was hooked and decided to incorporate welding into his studies at KCTC.

Not only had MICQ sparked the interest of Landen but all five of the award recipients this year indicated they had participated in Discover Manufacturing Week and MICQ events. All five new recipients were working in manufacturing, pursuing additional degrees and certifications, and four new recipients were already employed by Discover Manufacturing team members.



Discover Manufacturing Week

Manufacturing Week is a national initiative to expose students to careers in advanced manufacturing.

In its eighth year, the 2022 event returned to fully in-person after a three-year disruption.

- ✓ **114** manufacturers
- ✓ **56** schools
- ✓ **9,989** students representing **11** counties
- ✓ **74%** growth of students impacted from previous year.
- ✓ **81%** increase in manufacturer participation over the previous year.

Adopt-a-School

In partnership with Talent 2025, this initiative was designed to connect manufacturers with local schools to build long-term engagement and increase awareness of manufacturing career opportunities. Resources for employers are available on the DM website.

Plans in 2023 include registration options for adopt a school and SME Prime Initiatives in conjunction with the Michigan Manufacturer's Association on Discover Manufacturing Website.

Earn and Learn Website Directory

The Earn and Learn Directory was designed as a resource for students, parents and educators to explore manufacturing opportunities and connect them with potential resources to further a student's education.

It contains a listing of West Michigan manufacturers with a formal tuition reimbursement program and features links to the company's website. The directory key also highlights companies with Apprenticeship, Internship, Job Shadow, Mentorships, Scholarships and Summer Employment Opportunities.

2022 Going PRO Talent Fund

- ✓ **127** applications
- ✓ **\$11,680,354** awarded
- ✓ **2,937** new hires
- ✓ **619** new apprentices
- ✓ **2,644** classroom trainings

Grant Expansion through WMW!

2022 incumbent worker training:

- ✓ **\$96,956** awarded
- ✓ **118** certifications for upgraded manufacturing skills

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Discover Manufacturing convenes regional manufacturing, education and business partners committed to the goal of promoting the industry and addressing the talent shortage in West Michigan. Our project-based initiatives are designed to positively impact our talent pool and provide the career pathways to highly-skilled and high-demand manufacturing jobs.

We give our manufacturers a way to actively participate and make a difference. Our manufacturers need to have a unified voice when creating pathways and promoting the occupations in our industry.

- Jerry Hill
Discover Manufacturing Lead



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wmihealth  careers

2023 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT





Building a pipeline of qualified health care talent for West Michigan

The West Michigan Health Careers Council is an employer-led, collaborative council of employers, educators, workforce development and economic development organizations working together to meet West Michigan's health care talent needs.

The WMHCC:

- Is employer-led and convened by West Michigan Works!.
- Is collaborative in nature.
- Supports local efforts to connect individuals with employment opportunities in health care.
- Creates new programming when needed.
- Provides opportunities for employers to engage in growing the region's talent pool.

STRATEGIES

Outreach & Promote: We work with employers and community partners to encourage careers in the health care industry.

Education & Training: We provide opportunities for individuals to learn about and enter the industry as well as work effectively in the field.

Funding & Resources: We connect employers to funding opportunities and resources that support West Michigan's health care talent needs.

Retention: We create solutions to help health care employees stay within the industry or at their organization.

COUNCIL PARTICIPANTS

Corewell Health, Trinity Health, Holland Home, University of Michigan Health West, Hope Network, Pine Rest, Cherry Health, Kent Intermediate School District, Grand Rapids Community College, Metrics Reporting and West Michigan Works!

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

Health Careers Expo

In partnership with the Kent ISD Workforce Development Department, the West Michigan Health Careers Council held a health careers expo in April of 2023. Employers had the opportunity to share information with students, and their parents, on the wide variety of careers available in health care. Particular emphasis was put on entry level careers and investments that employers make in their employees to help them advance up career pathways. Additionally, Kent ISD provided interactive career awareness and exploration activities for students to learn about the wide variety of jobs available in health care.

Twenty-six representatives from 11 health care employers were present to speak to interested attendees. The council is excited to take the lessons learned from this pilot and to hold this event again in the future, both with Kent county and the other counties in our region.

"I loved how the event was set up and I feel it can only get better in the near future. I liked the energy that we put out there and definitely have gained more ideas that can assist our organization in the future."

- Participating Employer



Highlight: Irene Roede,
Medical Assistant Apprentice
with Mercy Health

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I have worked at Mercy Health as a business office coordinator but have always had an interest in the clinical side of things. I was always asking the nurses about this and that and googling things about their role. So, I was super excited to hear about the [medical assistant registered apprenticeship] program and that there was a path I could take that seemed attainable. I like the busy-ness, more interaction with patients and the gratification of knowing you are helping someone along the way! The opportunities feel endless as there are so many different avenues that I can go into now. I am absorbing it all and learning all I can.



MiCareerQuest

MiCareerQuest is a unique career exploration experience that offers West Michigan middle and high school students the opportunity to learn about careers in our region's high-demand industries through interactive experiences with local employers.

- ✓ **7,981 students from 72 schools attended**
- ✓ **27 health sciences exhibits showcasing 59 different occupations**
- ✓ **14 organizations, including 73% of council member organizations**



A huge thank you to council members Grand Rapids Community College, Kent ISD, Corewell Health, Mary Free Bed, University of Michigan Health – West, and Trinity Health for helping to sponsor the event and make it sustainable for the future.

Health Care Credential Directory

The West Michigan Health Careers Council supported the creation of a health care credential directory. This directory is a comprehensive list of health care training and education programs available in our region. Information such as length of training, cost, class locations, prerequisites, and much more is available. The directory is housed online on the council website for easy access. The directory currently has information completed for 25 programs with many ideas to improve ease of use and number of programs in the pipeline.

Training Grants

The West Michigan Health Careers Council supports and raises awareness for several training grants that provide training funds to health care workers. Some examples of these training funds are through programs such as: Going Pro Talent Fund, Incumbent Worker Training Grants, and On-The-Job Training Grants.

	Total Training Cost	Number of Trainees
Classroom	\$128,153.50	133
New Hires	\$1,892,000.00	946
Apprenticeship	\$220,500.00	63
TOTAL	\$2,240,653.50	1,142

“

West Michigan Health Careers Council allows us to partner with others in a similar industry, share our experiences and challenges, hear best practices that others have developed, and identify ways we can influence the labor market through partnerships with community organizations.

- Michael Hill, Council Member
Hope Network



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Fueling the IT Industry in West Michigan

West Michigan Tech Talent engages employers of IT professionals with best practices, resources, and a community to grow, develop, recruit and retain a diverse and inclusive world class IT workforce in West Michigan.

WMTT IS:

- Employer-led and convened by West Michigan Works!.
- Working as a region to expand the IT talent pool.
- Creating a network of IT employers focused on talent initiatives.
- Connecting IT employers to resources to upskill their talent.
- Building an inclusive, engaged tech community that supports and mentors career exploration.

STRATEGIES

- **Grow:** Reaching out to students K-16 to promote IT careers, ensuring that under-represented groups have equitable access.
- **Develop:** Upskilling our current workforce and adult career changers.
- **Recruit & Retain:** Partner with organizers of conferences, meetups and local tech events to sponsor and promote their efforts to build a vibrant and inclusive tech community.

PARTNERS

100+ companies/organizations within our network

COUNCIL SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations have supported the work of WMTT through board membership and funding. All funding goes directly to support local projects.

US Foods, Gordon Food Service, Grand Valley State University, National Nail, Open Systems Technologies, Lakeshore Advantage, Randstad Technologies, SpartanNash, Corewell Health, Tech Defenders, The Right Place, and West Michigan Works!, BizStream, Insperity, Mentavi Health, Spartan Innovations and LaFleur Marketing.

STRATEGIES IN ACTION

MI Code Experience

WMTT organizes local participation in this global initiative to bring introductory coding to elementary students in our region.

Through Hour of Code Experience, WMTT engaged:

- ▶ **77 classrooms**
- ▶ **2150 students**
- ▶ **58 tech mentors**

MiCareerQuest

We returned to an in-person experience after 3-years of virtual events. Through the work of our employer network, we engaged with:

- ▶ **8500 Students**
- ▶ **12 employer and partner exhibits**



TeacherCon 2022

Since 2017, the MiSTEM Network has supported over 600 middle & high school educators in Michigan to implement computer science courses. In 2022 we had over 135 educators come to Grand Rapids to dedicate 3-5 days of their summer to learn more about computer science. WMTT provided speakers and events for teachers to interact with tech professionals to learn more about the importance of CS education in high schools.

- 135 teachers
- 8 tech volunteers
- Participated in three events



Training

In 2015, tech employers utilized just over \$5000 of training funds available for the seven-county West Michigan Works! region.

In 2022 we had over \$500,000 training dollars invested in I.T, with over 280 trainees. In 2022 we also started the process to design and launch a new Cybersecurity Apprenticeship program along side a team of six employers.

Meetups & Conferences

We believe that building a strong and engaged tech community through hosting and supporting tech events is a strategic foundation to attract and retain talent. In the past year we:

- Were annual sponsors of GRWebDev and SoftwareGR- two of the largest meetup groups in West Michigan
- Hosted four Happy Hours and Networking events attended by 210 industry professionals from over 130 unique employers.
- Organized and hosted Tech Trends, attended by 92 unique employers with attendance of over 140 unique employers.
- Sponsored Beer City Code, attended by over 130 industry professionals.



GOALS FOR 2023-24

We remain focused on our mission to grow, develop, recruit and retain a diverse and inclusive world class IT workforce in West Michigan. In 2023 we will:

- Explore partnerships and initiatives to support tech communities and organizations that are focused on developing an inclusive and diverse tech workforce
- Work closely with The Right Place as they roll out and implement their tech strategy.
- Support our K-12 partners, especially MI-STEM Network, intermediate school districts and Grand Rapids Public Schools, with career exploration, teacher seminars, and innovative and inspiring approaches to STEM education.
- Continue to organize and support a wide range of tech events in West Michigan to help employers connect with talent and job seekers to build their networks.



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