MICHIGAN WORKS! ASSOCIATION

IMPACT AWARDS 2025

Celebrating those who are strengthening Michigan's economy by actively creating jobs and developing fresh talent

EVENT AGENDA

11:00 AM **OPENING REMARKS**

Michigan College Access Network (video)

Ryan Hundt
CEO, Michigan Works! Association

Jeran Culina
Manager, Business Leaders United at National Skills Coalition and Michigan Works! Association Board Member

U.S. Senator Gary Peters (video)

Stephanie Beckhorn
Deputy Director, Employment and Training, LEO

Susan Corbin
Director, LEO

11:25 AM **AWARD CEREMONY**

12:55 PM **CLOSING REMARKS**

Jeran Culina

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MICHIGAN COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK

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DART Bank
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Oakland County Michigan Works!
SEMCA Michigan Works!
EdoPlay Discovery Center
Michigan Works! Southwest
West Michigan Works!

BRONZE SPONSORS

GST Michigan Works! (Genesee Shiawassee Thumb)
Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium
Northwest Michigan Works!
Michigan Works! Region 7B
PSC Public Sector Consultants
msufcu MSU Federal Credit Union
Humanetics

MICHIGAN WORKS! ASSOCIATION®

Influencing, educating, and inspiring actions that keep Michigan working!

VOICE

Advancing the interest of the Michigan Works! network through advocacy and participation in the legislative process.

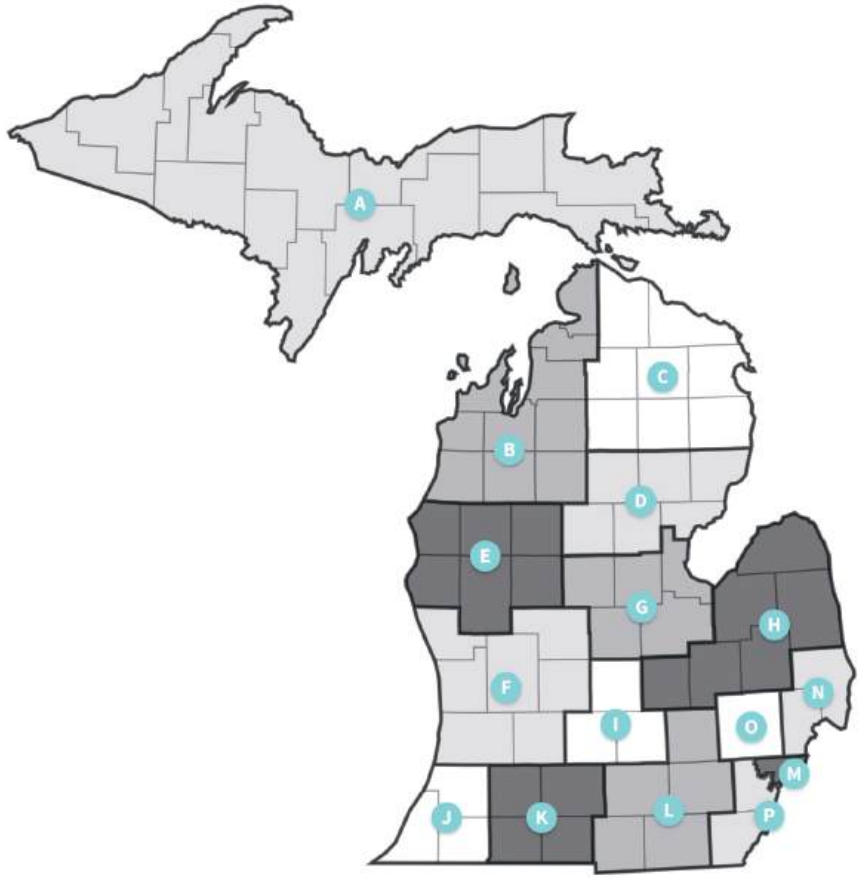
KNOWLEDGE

Sharing research-based best practices, information, and practical details about the Michigan Works! network.

CONNECTION

Providing training and networking opportunities for leaders and members.

THE MICHIGAN WORKS! NETWORK



Sixteen **multi-faceted and diverse Michigan Works! organizations** cover the state with efficient, effective tools capable of **building jobs, leveraging careers and developing core talent**. Michigan Works! is building and leading strong networks that boost community, economic, and talent development.

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Welcome to the 2025 Impact Awards!

Each year, the Michigan Works! network plays a vital role in strengthening Michigan's workforce and economy by connecting job seekers with meaningful employment opportunities and helping businesses find the talent they need to thrive.

Talent development is the cornerstone of Michigan's economic success. By providing career coaching, skills training, and employer support, Michigan Works! helps individuals unlock new opportunities and businesses remain strong in an evolving job market. The collective impact of these efforts is felt in every community, driving growth, innovation, and prosperity across the state.

The Impact Awards celebrate the individuals, businesses, and partners who make this success possible. Their dedication to workforce development is transforming lives and ensuring Michigan remains a leader in talent and opportunity.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our lawmakers and community partners for their ongoing support in building a stronger workforce for Michigan's future.

Congratulations to all the 2025 Impact Award winners—your achievements today lay the foundation for continued success and progress across our state.

Sincerely,

Ryan Hundt
CEO
Michigan Works! Association

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
LANSING

SUSAN CORBIN
DIRECTOR

The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity extends a heartfelt congratulations to Michigan Works! and the well-deserving honorees on the outstanding efforts showcased at this year's annual Impact Awards ceremony. This event serves as a testament to the remarkable achievements of the local Michigan Works! agencies, employers, workers and community partners who continuously prioritize and uplift Michigan's workforce.

Our department's partnership with Michigan Works! has been instrumental in our collective success towards advancing economic opportunity and prosperity for all. Your unwavering dedication to providing Michiganders and businesses with the resources they need to succeed is truly admirable, and we appreciate all that you do to propel our state and communities forward and make Michigan more prosperous for all.

Congratulations once again to each honoree and to the Michigan Works! network on all your hard work. We are immensely grateful for the invaluable contributions you have made to the growth and prosperity of our state, and we are honored to stand alongside you in this important work.

Together we will make Michigan the best state to live, work and raise a family for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Susan

Susan Corbin
Director
Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity

CAPITAL AREA MICHIGAN WORKS!

AWARD WINNER:
Toryalai Walizada

In 2023, Mr. Toryalai Walizada was granted the opportunity of a lifetime—winning the Diversity Visa Lottery. In April 2024, he arrived in Michigan with hopes of building a new life for himself and his family. However, as a new arrival under the DV lottery program, he was not eligible for government benefits until he received his green card. With four children to support—while enduring the heartbreaking loss of four other children to the blood disorder Thalassemia in Afghanistan—he faced immediate challenges in securing basic needs and employment.

A community member referred Mr. Walizada to Capital Area Michigan Works!, where he connected with the New Americans Navigator (NAN). Recognizing his urgent needs, the NAN provided immediate assistance by referring him to a local food pantry and introducing him to the Afghan Community of Michigan (ACM) for additional support. Understanding that stable employment was critical, the NAN helped him craft a professional resume and guided him through the job application process. In August 2024, his efforts paid off when he was hired as a Warehouse Team Member at Meijer Warehouse #85.

Determined to succeed, Mr. Walizada initially commuted to work by bicycle. However, as Michigan's colder months set in, this mode of transportation became unreliable, causing him to miss work or arrive late—putting his job at risk. Once again, he turned to the New Americans Navigator, who stepped in to find a sustainable solution. Through the Barrier Removal Employment Services (BRES) grant, the NAN successfully secured funding to purchase a vehicle, providing Mr. Walizada with reliable transportation to and from work.

Today, Mr. Walizada remains employed, financially independent and able to support his family without relying on government or community assistance. His journey is a testament to the power of targeted support, community collaboration and the life-changing impact of programs like the New Americans Navigator and the Barrier Removal Employment Services grant. His story is not just one of resilience but also a shining example of how strategic workforce assistance can empower New Americans to thrive in their new homes.

"As a father of four, starting life in a new country was hard, especially because I could not get help from the government due to my DV Lottery visa status. I am very thankful to Michigan Works!. They helped me find a job, and when I needed reliable transportation to get to work, they bought a car for me. Now I make good money, can take care of my family, and we are happy."

—

Toryalai Walizada »»

POST YOUR CONGRATS TO @CAMWJOBS, USE #MIWORKSIMPACT

DETROIT EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS CORPORATION

AWARD WINNER:
Tiara Fullilove

A 38-year-old Detroit native, Tiara's story of resilience is deeply rooted in her community and personal drive. Reading about electric vehicle (EV) training opportunities in the Detroit News sparked her interest in the growing green energy sector. Registering with Detroit at Work, she demonstrated her determination by excelling on her tests and overcoming delays in her cohort placement. Her persistence paid off, as Michael Lewis, a key figure in the program, honored his commitment to include her in the next group—a moment of trust that solidified Tiara's resolve.

Tiara's journey with ChargerHelp! began with a spark of recognition and empowerment. Seeing Kameale Terry, a Black woman who defied odds to build a successful business in a male-dominated industry, ignited a fire in Tiara. She saw not only a role model but a tangible pathway to break barriers and make an impact. The allure of the electric vehicle industry, a cutting-edge frontier of innovation, only added to her enthusiasm.

Tiara’s EV training journey was immersive and transformative. Through intensive study, hands-on classroom sessions, and mock demonstrations of Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment (EVSE) infrastructure, she built a solid foundation in this emerging industry.

While the transition to a new field initially brought nerves, the supportive environment at Newlab at Michigan Central, a resource for new business startups, with its diverse participants and culture of collaboration, made her feel at home.

The emerging electric vehicle industry is bustling with innovation and promise within the mobility space. Detroiters, such as Tiara Fullilove, were the first to have a chance to secure EVSE certifications in the world. ChargerHelp! made the barriers to entry in this field accessible by not placing stringent requirements for the program. If participants cannot meet specific requirements, then Detroit at Work provides assistance to help out. Tiara will one day pioneer the EV industry, as she has been one of the first to attain certification in this field. Her two children are her motivation and why she strives so hard to set the tone of reaching goals.

"I've found my footing in the EV industry and realize my limitless potential in it. Not only did ChargerHelp! give me the chance to advance my career, but also the chance to carve out entrepreneurial ventures in this innovative space."

Tiara Fullilove »»

POST YOUR CONGRATS TO @DETROITATWORK, USE #MIWORKSIMPACT

GREAT LAKES BAY MICHIGAN WORKS!

AWARD WINNER:

Kimberly Zehnder, Owner & Administrator
EduPlay Discovery Center

Kimberly Zehnder's impact story truly began in the year 2000 when she was a recipient of services through Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! (GLBMW!). Kimberly was a single working mother attending college. GLBMW! supported her education and provided supportive services. After Kimberly earned her degree in business administration, she established a successful career in pharmaceutical sales.

Kimberly went on to marry and have more children. She found great joy in volunteering at her oldest daughter's school. When her daughter's preschool teacher told her that she would be a great preschool teacher, it sparked interest in Kimberly to make a career change. Kimberly toured over 100 childcare centers. From this research, Kimberly went back to school to re-career in child development. In 2013, Kimberly obtained a license to provide childcare out of her home in Frankenmuth and EduPlay Discovery Center was officially established.

The childcare license allowed Kimberly to care for six children. Due to demand, she quickly expanded by obtaining a group license to care for more children and started hiring staff. While operating over three years out of their house, EduPlay established a very large waiting list. Kimberly created another business plan to build a new center. A location was purchased in the heart of Frankenmuth.

The new EduPlay Discovery Center opened in January 2018 with space and licensing to care for over 100 children. It features ample indoor and outdoor space for learning through discovery, play and exploration in an engaging environment. Kimberly continued to fill the ongoing need for childcare in Saginaw County by purchasing property in Saginaw's Buena Vista Township where a second EduPlay Discovery Center opened in December 2023. Today 50 children are enrolled at that center. EduPlay staffs 43 employees in total between the two locations.

Taking advantage of the Going PRO Talent Fund award and apprenticeship programs are instrumental in the development of childcare professionals working at EduPlay.

"My journey with Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! has come full circle over nearly 25 years. I was once the recipient of their services to help gain my degree in business while being a single mother. Now I am a business owner and support nearly 40 teachers that are also giving their time and hearts to building our communities' littlest learners."

Kimberly Zehnder »»
Owner & Administrator, EduPlay

POST YOUR CONGRATS TO @GLBMIWORKS, USE #MIWORKSIMPACT

GST MICHIGAN WORKS!

AWARD WINNER:

Zachery Hansen
Fessler & Bowman

Zachery Hansen was born in Grand Blanc, MI, where he spent most of his childhood before his family began moving from place to place. During this time, he attended several high schools, struggling to find stability in his education. When COVID-19 hit, Zach dropped out altogether and entered the workforce, putting his education on hold.

After a year and a half, he decided to return to school and earn his high school diploma. Determined to build a better future, he enrolled in Flint Genesee Job Corps, drawn to the program by his passion for construction. There, he completed high school while training in bricklaying, gaining the hands-on skills needed to start a career in the trade.

The Young Professionals program through GST Michigan Works! allowed Zachery to utilize cutting-edge tools, such as virtual reality (VR) technology and online learning, which were part of a Pre-Employment Pilot Program (PEP) offered through an enterprise known as Transfr. He was able to become knowledgeable in the areas of construction labor by completing lessons, simulations, and knowledge checks significantly enhancing his carpentry and construction skills.

GST Michigan Works! provided Zachery with support through the WIOA Youth and Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) programs that included not only the VR training to enhance his skills, but also work attire, boots, and tools. The virtual training program was paired with work experience at Fessler & Bowman to put to work what he learned in class. While at the company, Zachery was an outstanding participant, which ultimately led to the company hiring him full-time. On August 28, 2024, Zachery celebrated a crucial milestone — Signing Day—officially becoming an apprentice in his union and a laborer earning a great hourly wage with the opportunity to fulfill his career goal.

Fessler & Bowman is an excellent employer in the region, going above and beyond to help people become successful. They offer their employees endless training opportunities and have developed a culture that allows them to remain the best in the business!

"Working for Fessler & Bowman has been a great experience. It aligns with my career goals and gives me the opportunity to build a better future. This job has allowed me to buy a car and will help me move into an apartment, marking an important step toward my future."

—

Zachery Hansen »»
Fessler & Bowman

POST YOUR CONGRATS TO @GSTMIWORKS, USE #MIWORKSIMPACT

MACOMB/ST. CLAIR MICHIGAN WORKS!

AWARD WINNER:

Natasa Trpceski
Quality Care Rehabilitation & Autism Center

For more than 22 years, Quality Care Rehabilitation & Autism Center has delivered exceptional rehabilitation and therapy services across Macomb County. As a longstanding healthcare provider, the organization understands that investing in talent is key to delivering top-tier care and sustaining long-term success.

Quality Care has consistently demonstrated its commitment to workforce development, forging strategic partnerships with Macomb Community College and Macomb/St. Clair Michigan Works! to proactively address healthcare workforce challenges and ensure a pipeline of skilled professionals. These partnerships have enabled the company to not only fill critical roles but also improve employee retention and strengthen organizational performance.

A cornerstone of this approach has been the company's forward-thinking embrace of registered apprenticeship programs. Under the leadership of long-time team member Natasa Trpceski, Quality Care registered Macomb County's first Behavioral Health Technician apprenticeship and went on to develop four additional programs tailored to meet evolving business needs. These initiatives have upskilled 26 employees in high-demand roles, allowing Quality Care to build talent from within while keeping pace with the industry's growth.

Natasa's work in researching, launching, and aligning apprenticeship programs with federal and educational standards has been a major asset to the organization. Her coordination with the U.S. Department of Labor, Macomb Community College, and Michigan Works! ensured that every program met rigorous compliance requirements — a key factor in securing long-term viability and funding opportunities.

Thanks to this focus on internal talent development, Quality Care has seen measurable benefits, including improved employee performance, increased job satisfaction, and a stronger reputation as an employer of choice in the healthcare sector.

In 2024, the company took another bold step forward with the launch of Michigan's first Health Information Management Business Analytics (HIMBA) apprenticeship program — a strategic move to address the growing importance of data-driven decision-making in healthcare. Natasa became the program's first apprentice, demonstrating Quality Care's culture of continuous improvement and leadership by example.

By aligning its workforce strategy with its business goals, Quality Care Rehabilitation & Autism Center continues to lead the way in healthcare innovation — not only delivering quality care to patients but also fostering a resilient, future-ready workforce.

"The partnership between Macomb Community College and Quality Care Rehab & Autism Center is a model for how educational institutions and employers can work together to create opportunities for individuals in high-demand health care fields while addressing workforce needs."

—

Amy J Jury
Health Apprenticeship Navigator

NATASA TRPCESKI

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MICHIGAN WORKS! BERRIEN, CASS, VAN BUREN

AWARD WINNER:

Moniica Woods
Corewell Health South

Corewell Health South, located in Berrien County, Michigan, is a leading healthcare provider committed to delivering high-quality medical services to the community. With state-of-the-art facilities and a patient-centered approach, the health system continues to prioritize innovation, wellness, and improved health outcomes for individuals and families in the region.

Most recently, Corewell Health South opened a community health center on Main Street in Benton Harbor, providing essential nutritional services and serving as a valuable resource for the broader community.

A shining example of its work is the innovative public-private partnership between Michigan Works! BCVB and Corewell Health South. Known as "the career academy," this initiative is designed to enhance local workforce sustainability by improving talent attraction, retention, and career advancement within the healthcare system. Focused on building a diverse and skilled workforce, the academy provides clear pathways for promotion and long-term growth while serving as a model for other employers to implement workforce development strategies that foster collaboration, inclusivity, and economic progress across the region.

Through this collaboration, several cohorts of Surgical Technologists, Medical Assistants, and Registered Nurses are receiving upskilling opportunities via local community colleges while working at Corewell Health South. One inspiring participant in the program is Moniica Woods, whose journey through the Surgical Technologist apprenticeship exemplifies resilience and dedication.

Balancing job training and evening classes, Moniica rose to the challenge, even assisting in emergency surgeries when needed. Her positive attitude and persistence, despite obstacles and uncertainties, highlight her determination to succeed. Moniica sought guidance from Michigan Works! whenever challenges arose, ensuring she stayed on track to achieve her goals.

Moniica is enrolled in the Health Science bachelor's program at Western Governors University, where she plans to earn a master's degree and become a Physician Assistant, further demonstrating her commitment to personal growth and community impact. Her story of tenacity, leadership, and service makes her an inspiring role model for others.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this positive and inspiring experience. I believe the Certified Surgical Technologist program is very beneficial and strongly "needed" for any Surgical Tech that wants to pursue their certification in the state of Michigan. I've learned so many things throughout this program, and I hope the CST apprentice program continues to grow, inspire, and encourage others to pursue their certification."

—

Moniica Woods »»
Surgical Technologist

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MICHIGAN WORKS! NORTHEAST CONSORTIUM

AWARD WINNER:

Chelsea Bolinger
New Life Pregnancy Resource Center

Chelsea is a young mother of three, a daughter, a sister, and an extraordinary, hard-working woman.

When she started participating in the Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope. (PATH) program, Chelsea had working experience in housekeeping, food service, and childcare. Ironically, childcare was her main barrier to employment as her significant other at the time was out of the picture and she had no other social support.

Chelsea wanted to do better for her children and sought the help of the Michigan Works! Northeast Consortium and the state department of health and human services. During the first few weeks of participation, Chelsea was assigned to the Job Search Job Readiness activity, which afforded her the opportunity to seek employment while receiving cash assistance.

However, because of her criminal history due to addiction, she struggled greatly to find an employer who was willing to work with her. She continued to apply for similar jobs she'd held in the past, afraid to branch out and risk the unknown. Soon, however, Chelsea was assigned to participate in the Work Experience Activity which allowed her to gain new skills and experiences at the New Life Pregnancy Center of Gaylord.

At the Center, Chelsea assisted with sorting donated items, cleaned and sanitized work areas, and provided clerical assistance as needed. Week after week, Chelsea continued to volunteer as she felt a sense of belonging, value, and appreciation. The staff there welcomed her with open arms and without hesitation or judgment. In fact, they were so impressed by Chelsea's commitment that the Center requested a funding adjustment from its board to employ Chelsea.

It was in March of 2024 that Chelsea became a full-time employee.

“If it wasn’t for Michigan Works!’ help, we wouldn’t be where we are now. We wouldn’t have what we have today.”

—

Chelsea Bolinger »»
New Life Pregnancy Resource Center

POST YOUR CONGRATS TO @WORKSMICHIGAN, USE #MIWORKSIMPACT

MICHIGAN WORKS! REGION 7B

AWARD WINNER:

Kabinetree Koncepts

Founded two decades ago as a local, women-owned business in Houghton Lake, Kabinetree Koncepts has become a trusted source for premier flooring, cabinetry, countertops, and plumbing fixtures, all backed by a team that sees each project as an opportunity to elevate the spaces Michiganders call home.

The company's relationship with Michigan Works! Region 7B, which began in 2015, has helped to strengthen their commitment to hiring local talent and developing their employees' skills. Through the Going PRO Talent Fund, as well as On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, Kabinetree Koncepts has embraced continuous learning and development as a best practice for their business. This training has helped multiple employees to gain invaluable skills and further their careers. Most recently, Michigan Works! Region 7B was able to provide financial assistance through the Incumbent Worker Training program to upskill two current employees.

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted many small businesses, but Kabinetree Koncept's dedication to their community and team never wavered. Support from Michigan Works! Region 7B, Roscommon County Economic Development Committee (EDC), and the Going PRO Talent Fund helped them navigate through uncertainty.

Kabinetree Koncepts does a great job of showing Michigan Works! demand-driven model in action. Whenever they have had a need, they have contacted Business Solutions Professional Brenda Bachelder, and she has been able to find a way to meet that need for them.

Kabinetree Koncepts stands as an example of what's possible when a local business invests in people and the community it serves. Michigan Works! Region 7B is happy to support Kabinetree Koncepts as they continue to grow, inspire, and contribute to Michigan's economy.

"Michigan Works! Region 7B has been a huge resource over the years, helping my business succeed through the programs and services they offer. I try to share the great resources available through Michigan Works! with other businesses in the area."

—

Koreen Pray »»
Owner, Kabinetree Koncepts

POST YOUR CONGRATS TO @MIWORKSR7B, USE #MIWORKSIMPACT

MICHIGAN WORKS! SOUTHEAST

AWARD WINNER:

Phillip Wenzel
Beauchamp Water Treatment Solutions

Beauchamp Water Treatment Solutions, a family-owned business established in 1976 by the Beauchamp family in Livingston County, has expanded its services to several additional counties over the years. Committed to promoting community health and safety, Beauchamp strives to make a positive impact through active community involvement. The company proudly participates in numerous local chambers of commerce and was honored with the Community Champion Award by the Hartland Chamber. In 2023, one of its employees was recognized as the Chamber Ambassador of the Year.

As a valued employer and partner of Michigan Works! Southeast, Beauchamp Water Treatment Solutions supports the community by hosting participants in its Paid Work Experience program. The company also prioritizes team development through initiatives such as On the Job Training (OJT) and the Michigan Statewide Targeted Apprenticeship Inclusion and Readiness System (MiSTAIRS) apprenticeship grant, ensuring its staff receives continuous training and growth opportunities.

Phil came to Michigan Works! Southeast after experiencing long-term unemployment and relying on friends and family for support. Interested in a career in sales and maintenance but lacking experience, Phil faced challenges finding employment.

After receiving career counseling, he was introduced to an On the Job Training opportunity with Beauchamp Water Treatment Solutions. Through the OJT program, Phil quickly excelled and became a key employee, benefiting from the supportive services provided to help him succeed in his new role.

Phil now brings home $23 an hour—and the pride that comes with a job well done. And Beauchamp Water Treatment Solutions has had six OJT participants this past year with two more getting ready to start, one Paid Work Experience and two MiSTAIRS apprentices.

"Our partnership with Michigan Works! has been an invaluable tool in supporting our employees, customers, and community. From providing on the job training to the implementation of a complete Apprenticeship Program, Michigan Works! has been crucial in our Growth Roadmap."

—

Brian Purdy, COO
Beauchamp Water Treatment Solutions

PHILLIP WENZEL

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MICHIGAN WORKS! SOUTHWEST

AWARD WINNER:

Ariel Martinez Ochoa
Evergreen Senior Care and Rehab Center

Ariel Martinez Ochoa moved to the United States from Cuba in pursuit of a better quality of life and better career prospects. After settling in the U.S., Ariel obtained employment but still aspired to obtain a career in healthcare.

To help overcome the obstacles Ariel faced to becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), he was referred to Michigan Works! Southwest's (MWSW) Neighborhood Employment HUBs. MWSW was able to identify and braid a variety of fund sources to assist Ariel in obtaining his CNA certification and accessing additional supportive services.

Through a partnership between MWSW's Hubs and Kellogg Community College's (KCC) Act, Ariel successfully completed a seven-week CNA and life skills training. While in training, Ariel met regularly with MWSW Business Solutions Career Coach, Julie Klein, to receive coaching and address barrier removal, including gas cards, food cards, and a weekly training stipend, through the financial support of Michigan's Barrier Removal and Employment Success (BRES) program and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

At the end of the CNA training, MWSW partnered with local employers, to host a meet and greet, and through this opportunity, Evergreen Senior Care and Rehab Center interviewed and hired Ariel in December 2023 as a patient care assistant making $16.50 per hour.

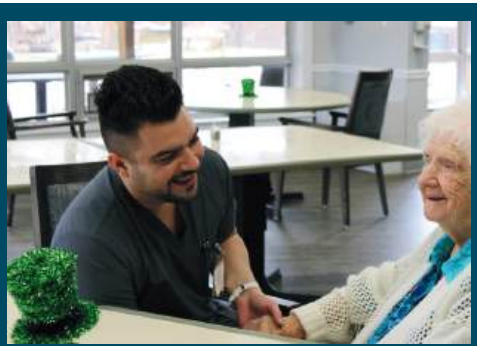
After passing the State of Michigan's CNA certification, Ariel was promoted to his desired occupation of CNA, and received a wage increase to $19.50 per hour. Although Ariel had completed his CNA certification, he had bigger dreams. Due to the location of Evergreen, Ariel was eligible for support through the Michigan Rural Enhanced Access to Careers in Healthcare (MiREACH) grant, which provided him the opportunity to receive additional paid healthcare training to become a Medical Assistant.

In December 2024, Ariel completed his Medical Assistant training with a 4.0 GPA. Ariel's success is a powerful example of how strategic partnerships, community support, and personal dedication can lead to meaningful change. Ariel's journey from a determined job seeker to a successful healthcare professional is one of resilience, thanks to the workforce development programs that empowered him to make his dream career become a reality.

"I am extremely grateful for the educational assistance, career coaching, and guidance I've received through Michigan Works! Southwest."

—

Ariel Martinez Ochoa »»
Evergreen Senior Care and Rehab Center



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MICHIGAN WORKS! WEST CENTRAL

AWARD WINNER:

Osceola County Sheriff’s Department

The mission of the Osceola County Sheriff's Department is to provide comprehensive law enforcement, corrections, and court services to ensure the community remains a safe and secure place to live, work, and visit. The department fulfills its mission through a variety of programs, including road, snowmobile, marine, and ORV patrols; D.A.R.E. programming; gun permitting and registration; fingerprinting; and accident and complaint reporting, among other services.

A demand-driven workforce model, which prioritizes the needs of employers through workforce development initiatives, played a critical role in addressing staffing challenges within the Osceola County Sheriff's Department. The employer-led collaborative for the public safety industry directly impacted staffing levels by providing essential training and support.

Michigan Works! West Central supported the Osceola County Sheriff's Department by funding road patrol training at nearby police academies for 16 individuals, including seven sponsored by the department. Additionally, Michigan Works! West Central assisted with candidate screening and completion of necessary paperwork, streamlining the process for both the department and trainees.

Beyond funding for training, Michigan Works! West Central provided critical support services such as gas cards, funding for textbooks, and uniforms to ensure trainees had the resources needed to succeed.

Since the program's inception, 18 individuals have completed road patrol training, including seven sponsored by the Osceola County Sheriff's Department. Furthermore, seven individuals from four different regional agencies have successfully completed paramedic training through the program, further strengthening public safety services in the region.

"Without the funding (from Michigan Works! West Central), the county couldn't have taken on that financial responsibility. I really think that this has just been a huge benefit for our staff. This partnership has been amazing."

—

Sheriff Mark Cool »»
Osceola County Sheriff's Department

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NORTHWEST MICHIGAN WORKS!

AWARD WINNER:

Serena Kozora
Whistle Stop Learning Center

Whistle Stop Learning Center, located in Thompsonville, Michigan, serves a small community of about 450 residents. Founded by Ashley Lindstrom, a Benzie County native, the center was born out of Ashley's personal experience with the challenges of finding affordable, high-quality childcare in the area.

After purchasing and renovating a commercial building, the center opened in October 2022 and now serves 50 children daily with a staff of 17, including six U.S. Department of Labor registered apprentices. Whistle Stop is more than a childcare center; it is a hub for family-friendly activities, including annual Thanksgiving potlucks, Easter egg hunts, and the Thompsonville Summerfest. The center also hosts a 24/7 self-serve food pantry that supports up to 50 families weekly.

Northwest Michigan Works! played a crucial role in the success of Whistle Stop by providing funding through the Going PRO Talent Fund, Early Childhood Investment Corporation Scale-Up Apprenticeship grant, and the Michigan Registered Apprenticeship Innovation Network. Together, they developed an Early Childhood Professional registered apprenticeship program, offering specialized training and resources for staff.

Serena Kozora, an early childhood professional from Traverse City, embodies the program's success. Her participation in the apprenticeship program, supported by Northwest Michigan Works!, enhanced her skills and solidified her role as a leader. Serena received vital support services, including a laptop, printer, fuel assistance, and rain gear, enabling her to thrive in her role caring for 13 children.

Northwest Michigan Works! provided intermediary services to help Whistle Stop manage its apprenticeship program, offering on-site orientations, administrative support, and 90-day check-ins. Mentor stipends encouraged experienced staff to support new apprentices, fostering a skilled workforce in an area deemed a 'childcare desert.'

By addressing local needs, providing essential resources, and fostering professional growth, they have created a sustainable solution that benefits children, families, and the community of Thompsonville.

“Northwest Michigan Works! is a blessing, and I say that with full honesty. The support I was given during the registered apprenticeship for my CDA was truly the most amazing thing. We wouldn't have been able to succeed if it wasn't for Northwest Michigan Works!.“

—

Serena Kozora »»
Whistle Stop Learning Center

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OAKLAND COUNTY MICHIGAN WORKS!

AWARD WINNER:

Christopher Bradbury
Humanetics

Humanetics, headquartered in Farmington Hills, Michigan, is a global leader in the design and manufacturing of test dummies, virtual simulation software, integrated crash test systems, precision sensors, specialized fiber optics, and laser-based material engineering. With 1,000 employees across 26 facilities worldwide, Humanetics serves the automotive, aerospace, military, and other industries.

Since 2016, Humanetics has partnered with the Southfield office of Oakland County Michigan Works! to expand its local presence, attract talent, and develop its workforce through registered apprenticeships and training programs.

Humanetics, with support from Oakland County Michigan Works!, launched two U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Programs in electronics technician and CNC machinist fields. These programs train 2-3 apprentices annually, providing them with industry-recognized credentials. Apprentices, including Christopher Bradbury who joined Humanetics in October 2023 and entered the apprenticeship program in January 2024, benefit from supportive services such as transportation assistance and career development resources.

Humanetics leveraged the Going PRO Talent Fund to upskill its workforce, securing $150,000 over two years. In FY23, $47,000 funded training for 22 employees, while $103,000 in FY24 supported training for 54 employees. Post-training, employees received an average 9% pay increase. Humanetics has hosted high school tours during Oakland County Manufacturing Day since 2022, exposing approximately 60 students to advanced manufacturing careers. In 2023, the company collaborated with Oakland Schools on the "Design Thinking" program, enhancing problem-solving skills in education.

Humanetics exemplifies the successful integration of workforce development initiatives through strategic partnerships, demonstrating a commitment to employee growth, industry innovation, and community involvement. With Oakland County Michigan Works!' support, Humanetics continues to lead in advanced manufacturing while fostering talent development and economic growth in Michigan.

"It's been an honor and privilege working with Humanetics! I have found leadership within Humanetics HR department to be forward thinking, committed to the community, and ready to prepare, empower, and engage the next generation of workers. Overall, Humanetics has been a stellar employer partner of Oakland County Michigan Works! and the Southfield team, and I am excited by their dedication to workforce development."

—

Dawn Davis
Oakland County Michigan Works!

CHRISTOPHER BRADBURY

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SEMCA MICHIGAN WORKS!

AWARD WINNER:

Mohamamd Mahdi Alizada
Webasto

Webasto, a global leader in roof, heating, and cooling systems for vehicles, as well as battery systems for electric mobility, was founded in Germany in 1901 and expanded to the United States in 1974. The company established its Auburn Hills headquarters in 2021 and opened two additional Michigan plants in Plymouth in 2020 and New Hudson in 2021, employing over 800 people statewide. In 2024, Webasto USA was named a "Top Employer" for the second consecutive year, recognized for its leadership, business strategy, work environment, and employee development.

Michigan Works! played a key role in connecting Afghan refugees with employment opportunities at Webasto's Plymouth plant, successfully placing over 20 individuals in various roles. The company's inclusive work environment, with leaders fluent in multiple languages, provided essential support to refugees as they transitioned into their new jobs.

One notable success story is Mohamamd Mahdi Alizada, who fled Afghanistan and lived in Indonesia for seven years, working in the restaurant industry as a janitor and waiter. With the support of his career coach, Mohamamd Mahdi secured an interview at Webasto and was hired as a full-time Production Operator with a starting wage of $18.45 per hour.

Initially facing transportation challenges, Mohamamd Mahdi benefited from a carpooling system coordinated by Webasto and Michigan Works!, ensuring reliable travel to and from work. Further support was provided to help him obtain a vehicle for long-term transportation. Mohamamd Mahdi's hard work and dedication earned him a promise of promotion after one year, exemplifying the success of workforce development partnerships and inclusive hiring practices at Webasto.

"We have successfully placed over 20 Afghan refugees at Webasto's Plymouth location in various roles. Hiring clients with language barriers has been seamless, as the company has leaders in higher positions who speak the same language, providing essential support to refugees in performing their tasks."

Ghani Mirwais
Webasto HR

MOHAMAMD MAHDI ALIZADA

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UPPER PENINSULA MICHIGAN WORKS!

AWARD WINNER:

Emma Arbelius
Kall Morris Inc.

Kall Morris Inc. (KMI) was founded in 2019 by Northern Michigan University alumni Adam Kall, Austin Morris, and Troy Morris with the vision of advancing sustainable orbital operations while fostering local talent in the Upper Peninsula. Headquartered in Marquette, Michigan, KMI creates opportunities for young professionals in a region where such careers have historically required relocation.

KMI is committed to supporting its rural community by engaging students, veterans, and professionals through education and workforce development initiatives. They work closely with NMU, Michigan Technological University, and Lake Superior State University to create career pathways to the space industry for local students. Over 80% of KMI's engineering team hails from these institutions, reinforcing the company's mission to develop and retain aerospace talent in the region.

Beyond direct hiring, KMI's leadership and employees invest time and resources into STEM outreach, partnering with local organizations such as Junior Achievement of Upper Peninsula and Innovate Marquette SmartZone, and supporting career fairs, student internships, and educational events such as Mind Trekkers and YooperCon.

KMI's impact is already measurable with 67% of their current employees from or based in Marquette. They have employed multiple Michigan collegiate interns—two from Upper Peninsula universities—most of whom transitioned into full-time positions. One of those interns, Emma Arbelius, has played an important role in KMI's ongoing projects, further exemplifying the company's dedication to cultivating local talent. They have also supported three Department of Defense SkillBridge interns who assist military service members as they transition to civilian careers.

As KMI continues to grow, they remain committed to expanding opportunities for the Marquette community, including facilitating a fundraiser for the Marquette Shiras Planetarium to ensure future generations have access to educational resources that inspire curiosity about space. They expect to double in size by the end of 2025 by hiring local talent or occasionally bringing back talent to the UP. Through their mission, outreach, and workforce development efforts, KMI is not just advancing aerospace technology but proving that cutting-edge innovation can thrive in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

"I was excited to be interning at Kall Morris Inc. last summer. This experience has helped me gain valuable skills and insights into the industry. I appreciate all the support from MI Works, which has been crucial for my growth and career aspirations."

—

Emma Arbelius »»
Accountant/Bookkeeper Intern

POST YOUR CONGRATS TO @UPMICHIGANWORKS, USE #MIWORKSIMPACT

WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!

AWARD WINNER:

Shelondrea Johnson
Hackley Community Care

Shelondrea Johnson's more than 10-year career in health care has given her experience in geriatrics, autism care, and mental health. Currently, she works as an Integrated Health Services Phone Specialist at Hackley Community Care, where her commitment to helping others shines through.

Her upbringing -- living with an ailing mother and later being raised by her supportive grandparents -- has instilled in her purpose and resilience. Shelondrea is a single mother facing the grief of losing of a child due to complications at birth, her grandparents and, more recently, her mother. Despite this, she is determined to support her two children.

Her passion for helping others fueled her ambition to further her health care career, particularly in supporting individuals with disabilities. Shelondrea was recently in a car accident that resulted in financial, medical and transportation challenges. At the same time, she needed to recertify her Medical Assistant license.

Knowing she needed help, Shelondrea reached out to West Michigan Works! (WMW!) Retention Solutions Network (RSN).

As a member of RSN, Hackley Community Care provides timely, personalized success coaching support to staff overcoming difficulties that could keep them from maintaining employment. This support helped Shelondrea once again prove her ability to overcome the hardest obstacles. Her coach helped her secure WMW! resources for transportation, training to recertify her Medical Assistant license and financial planning. Plus, she connected to community resources for school supplies and a mentorship program for her oldest daughter.

Shelondrea's story is one of strength and perseverance, and WMW! proudly supports her ongoing journey. We recognize Hackley Community Care for empowering their staff to overcome barriers, support their families and deliver quality health care.

"My RSN career coach is there for whatever I need whenever I need it, and that allows me to handle other important things like taking care of my children."

Shelondrea Johnson »»
Hackley Community Care

POST YOUR CONGRATS USING #MIWORKSIMPACT

Michigan College Access Network
is proud to sponsor the
2025 Michigan Works! Association Impact Awards.

Congratulations to this year's winners and thank you for helping to build an educated workforce that is ready to meet Michigan's talent needs.

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Our network is dedicated to improving college and career access and success.

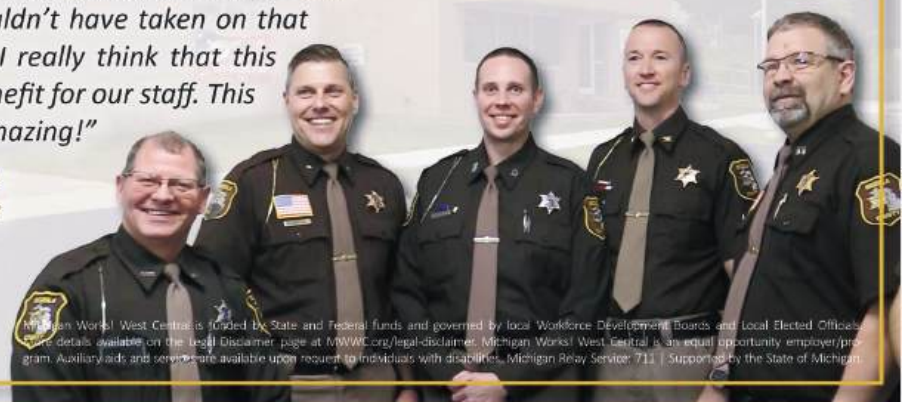
Learn more at
micollegeaccess.org

CONGRATULATIONS!

Michigan Works! West Central congratulates the Osceola County Sheriff's Department on its 2025 Impact Award!

"Without the funding (from Michigan Works! West Central), the county couldn't have taken on that financial responsibility. I really think that this has just been a huge benefit for our staff. This partnership has been amazing!"

– MARK COOL
OSCEOLA COUNTY SHERIFF



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OSCEOLA COUNTY

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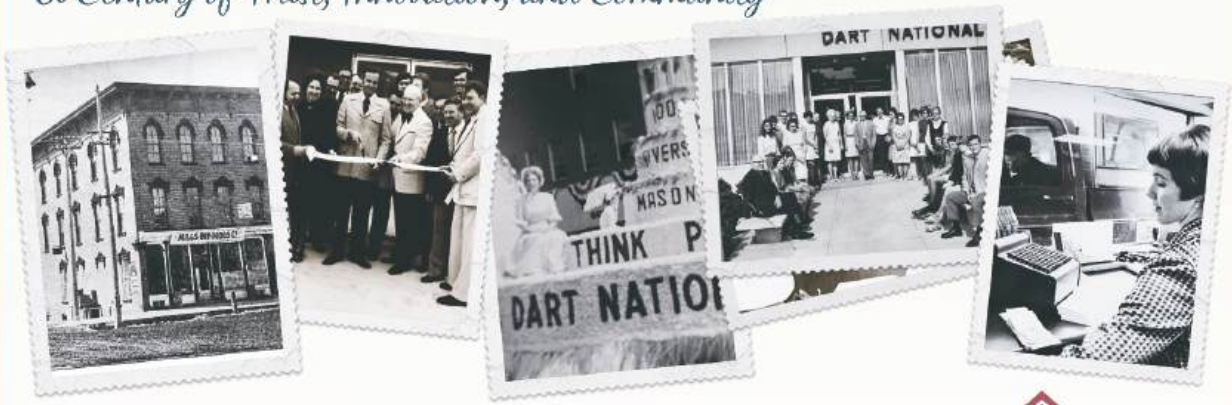

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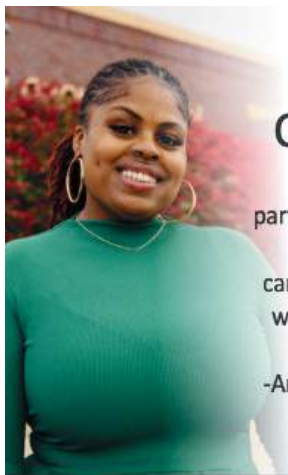

West MICHIGAN WORKS!

Congratulations!

"Hackley Community Care's partnership with RSN is a powerful example of how collaboration can address workforce challenges while empowering employees to overcome barriers."
-Angie Barksdale, Chief Operating Officer, West Michigan Works!

2025 Impact Awards Winner

Shelondrea Johnson,
Integrated Health Services
Phone Specialist

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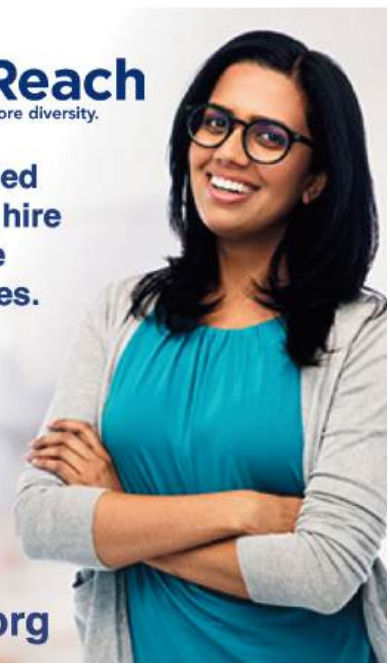

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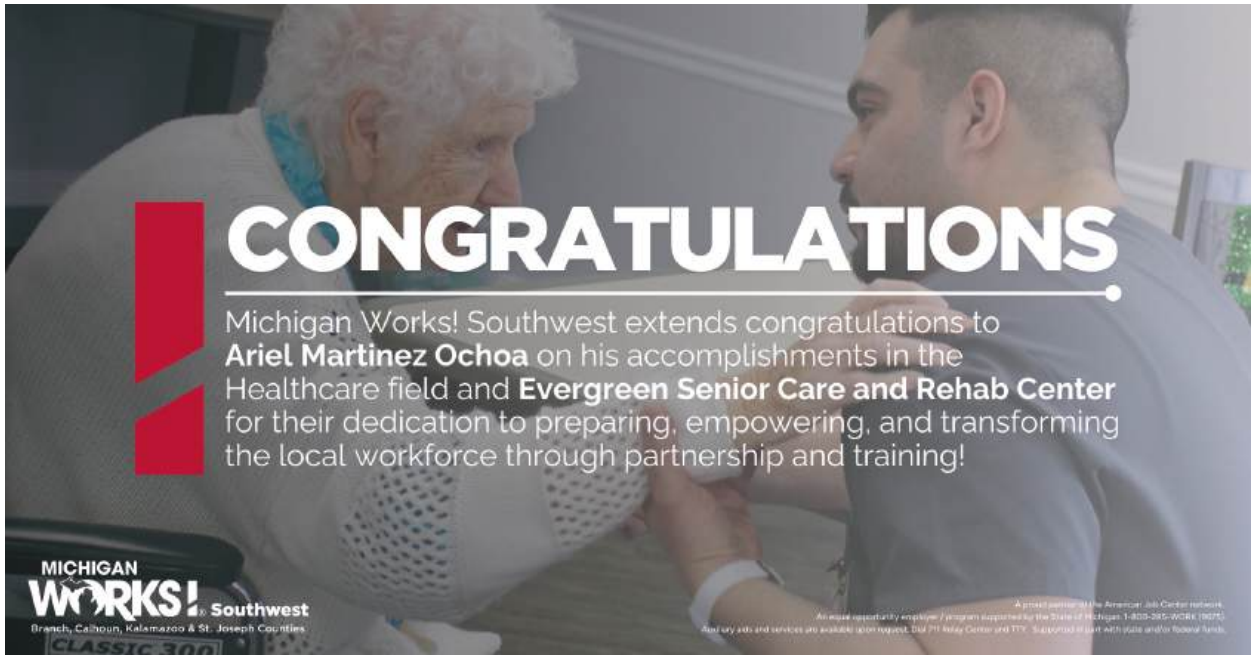

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SEMCA
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SEMCA Michigan Works! proudly celebrates **Mohamamd Mahdi Alizada**, who transformed his life from refugee to full-time Production Operator at Webasto. With support from his career coach, he secured stable employment and quickly stood out for his dedication. We thank **Webasto** for its inclusive hiring and strong partnership in creating opportunities for Afghan refugees.

800.285.WORKS | SEMCAMiWorks.org

Congratulations

to the team at Quality Care Rehab & Autism Center for their commitment to creating career opportunities through a successful registered apprenticeship program!

Quality Care Rehab & Autism Center

MICHIGAN WORKS! MACOMB/ST. CLAIR

Humanetics apprentice Christopher Bradbury (left) and mentor Gordon Lomerson

HUMANETICS

CONGRATULATIONS

Humanetics and Apprentice Christopher Bradbury

Celebrating our collaborative relationship to build a talented workforce!

Humanetics, a global leader in the design and manufacture of test dummies, simulation software and crash test sensors and systems, and Oakland County Michigan Works! have enjoyed a growing relationship since 2016. This includes securing Going PRO Talent Fund awards to provide short-term training and launching Registered Apprenticeship Programs for CNC machinists and electronics technicians. Christopher joined Humanetics in 2023 and started his electronics technician apprenticeship last year.

- Oakland County Manufacturing Day Tour Host
- Multi-Year Going PRO Talent Fund Award Recipient
- USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Programs

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About Michigan Works! Association

We envision a Michigan where collaborative workforce development is an integral part of our state's economic prosperity. The Michigan Works! Association will execute this vision by serving as the leading voice in workforce development advocacy, policy, education, and investments.

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