

# TALENT TALK

June 2025 | Volume 8, Issue 4



GST MICHIGAN  
GENESEE  
SHIAWASSEE  
THUMB **WORKS!**™

Advancing Employers | Enhancing Talent



# REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

**41.1K**  
Job Postings

**694**  
Occupations

**6K**  
Employers

**3.6K**  
Locations

**70%**  
Employed at  
Exit of Training

Real-Time Intelligence Report - Online Job Ads 07/01/2024 - 3/31/2025

# Active Job Ads

Occupation	# Active Job Ads
Registered Nurses	3,498
Retail Salespersons	1,828
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,610
Medical and Health Services Managers	1,008
Social and Human Service Assistants	866
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	840
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	798
Stockers and Order Fillers	783
Fast Food and Counter Workers	755
Nursing Assistants	608
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	599
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	579
Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	545
Secretaries and Admin. Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	509
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	501
Physical Therapists	501
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	468
Human Resources Specialists	393
Sales Representatives of Services	393
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	387
Production Workers, All Other	382
Teaching Assistants, Preschool, Elementary, Middle, and Secondary School	374
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	371
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	370
Customer Service Representatives	358
Speech-Language Pathologists	350
Medical Assistants	338
Pharmacy Technicians	335
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	324
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	311
Food Preparation Workers	302
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	289

**10,276**  
Page Likes

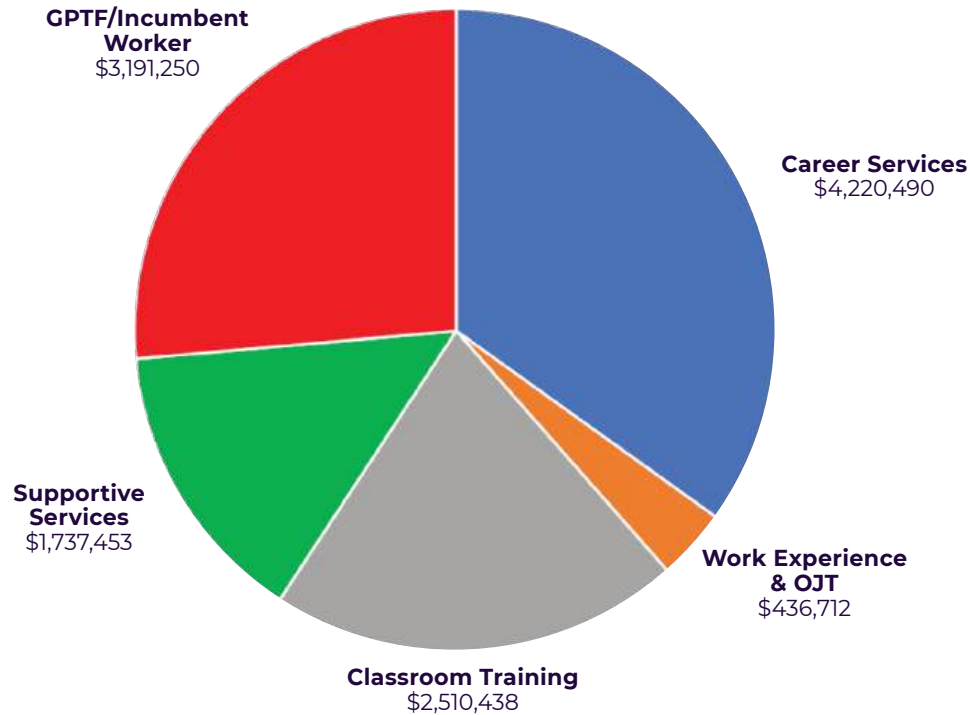
**694**  
Followers

**611**  
Followers

# DATA ANALYSIS

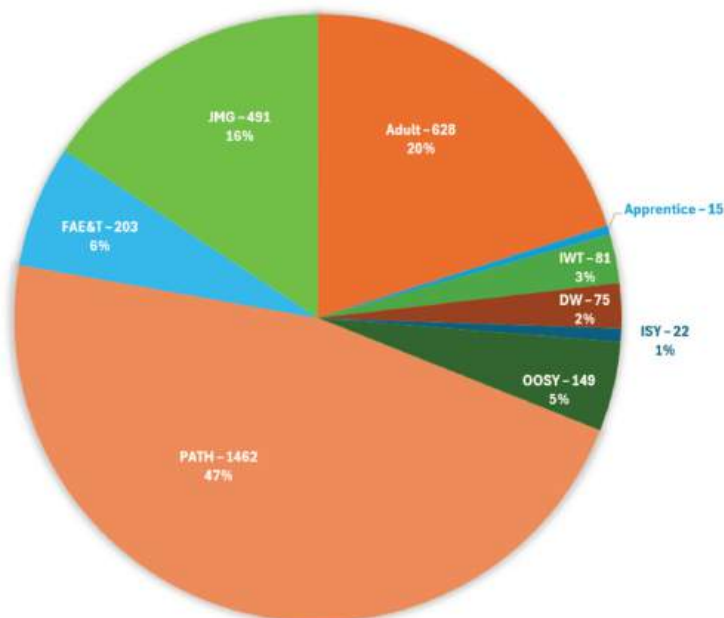
## Career Services & Participant Payments

July 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025



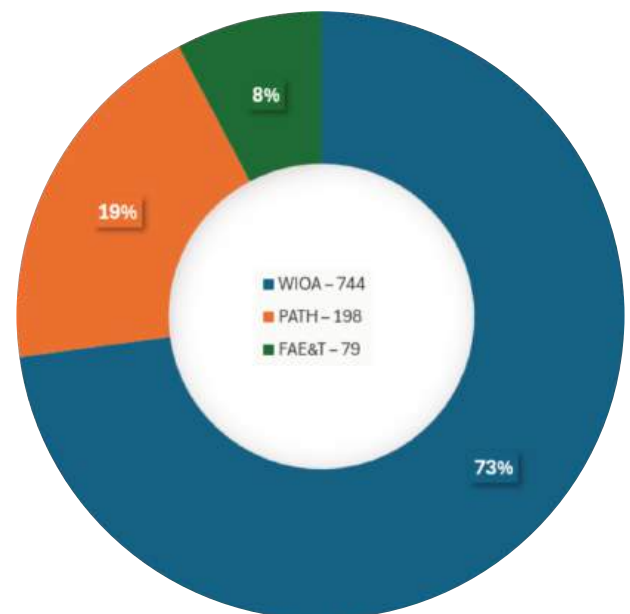
## New Enrollments

July 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025



## Entered Training

July 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025



# EMPLOYEE SUCCESS STORIES

## CLIMBING THE LADDER

**Genesee Co.** - Jacob always knew he wanted a career where he could make a real difference. With a growing interest in law enforcement and a drive to advance, he turned to GST Michigan Works! for support in taking the next step.

Working with career coaches, Jacob identified the skills and knowledge needed to transition into a patrol officer role. He had a clear goal: to attend the Law Enforcement Regional Training Academy (LERTA) at Mott Community College, a program designed to meet the employment standards for officers in Michigan.

Thanks to funding through GST Michigan Works!, Jacob was enrolled in LERTA, with tuition, uniforms, and required gear fully covered. He described the training as “challenging but fun” and successfully completed the program in December 2023. By February 2024, Jacob was officially hired as a Patrol Officer with Genesee County.

Now, more than a year later, Jacob continues to serve the community, helping keep roads safe and lawfully patrolled. Looking ahead, he aspires to become a detective and is grateful for the opportunities made possible through GST Michigan Works!

Jacob's story is a powerful reminder that with the right support and determination, career advancement is always within reach.



## FROM GED TO WELDING SUCCESS

**Lapeer Co.** - When Anthony first connected with GST Michigan Works! through the Family Literacy Center (FLC), he was focused on one crucial goal: earning his GED. At the time, he had also been laid off and was eager to find a new path forward, one that would lead to long-term stability and meaningful employment.

As he worked on his GED with support from the FLC, Anthony also began exploring options for career training. With prior experience in the welding industry as a Die Tech, he knew he enjoyed that kind of hands-on, skilled work. He just needed the right opportunity and the proper credentials to make his comeback.

After earning his GED, Anthony didn't waste any time. With guidance from GST Michigan Works!, he enrolled at the Sanilac Career Center to pursue his Welding Certificate. Thanks to his previous experience and strong work ethic, Anthony made rapid progress through the program. GST Michigan Works! was able to support him in earning certifications in TIG, MIG, and ARC welding, helping him become a well-rounded and in-demand candidate.

In October 2024, Anthony was hired full-time by Romeo Rim. The position started at \$5 more per hour than his previous job. He's not only enjoying his new role but also looking toward the future. His supervisors have discussed additional training opportunities within the company, which could lead to even higher wages and growth in the business.

# FROM STUDENT TO CHILD CARE WORKER

**Sanilac Co.** - Erica first connected with GST Michigan Works! through the Family Literacy program to work toward completing her GED. She remained dedicated and determined throughout the process, meeting all requirements and successfully earning her GED.

While she was completing her education, Erica was invited to participate in the Young Professionals program. Knowing that she had always dreamed of working with children, GST Michigan Works! arranged an interview for her at Auntie Em's Daycare. Erica was hired immediately, and she has been a valued team member ever since. The children adore her, Erica found her calling, and her employment in this field helps to answer the need for additional childcare availability across the region!

Through the support of GST Michigan Works! programs, Erica not only achieved her educational goals but also completed her work experience successfully creating a positive impact for both herself, her employer, and the parents of the little ones now in her care.



## PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF

**Shiawassee Co.** - Craig came to GST Michigan Works! after being laid off from Dart, where he had built a long and dedicated career as a Lead Saw Operator. Having worked there since 1980, the transition was understandably challenging, especially as he faced added barriers to employment, including concerns related to his age and entering the job market after so many years with one employer.

To help make ends meet while receiving unemployment benefits, Craig took on a part-time position, though it paid significantly less than what he had earned in the past. Regardless, he remained determined and proactive in his search for full-time work, despite experiencing repeated disappointments when he wasn't selected for roles he had hoped for.

Eventually, a promising opportunity came along. After speaking with a hiring manager, Craig felt confident about the fit. He was excited to receive an offer letter for a position at a newly built facility in Saginaw County. The role included plans for training abroad, which was a unique and exciting prospect. Unfortunately, the training dates continued to be delayed, creating further uncertainty. Even during this period of waiting, Craig didn't lose focus and continued his job search.

That persistence paid off. Craig discovered a Saw Operator II opportunity much closer to home and applied. Soon after, he received a call from Bekum America Corporation, who recognized the value of his extensive experience. After weighing his options, Craig accepted their offer.

He began his new full-time position on February 3, 2025, with an increased hourly wage and a renewed sense of purpose. Craig is excited to be back doing the work he enjoys, grateful for the fresh start after a year of determination and resilience.



## HARD WORK PAYS OFF



**Tuscola Co.** - Derrick, a dedicated single parent, had spent over two decades working as a contracted concrete finisher. The work was physically demanding, and the employment opportunities were inconsistent, making it difficult for him to plan for the future. Despite his experience, Derrick knew

he needed to make a career change to find steady work, something that would provide stability and the possibility of retirement.

In his search for a better future, Derrick turned to GST Michigan Works! for support in obtaining his Commercial Driver's License (CDL). He hoped this would open the door to more reliable and fulfilling work.

Through GST Michigan Works!, Derrick received assistance with essential steps such as his MDOT physical, drug screening, and CDL training. Additionally, he was provided with leads for heavy equipment operator positions, which aligned with his long-term career goals.

Though Derrick had always found school challenging, he pushed forward and completed the classroom training with flying colors, earning a perfect score. His commitment paid off, and on March 3, 2025, he began full-time employment with HBL Enterprise.

Thanks to his new skills and the support he received from GST Michigan Works!, Derrick's wages immediately increased significantly, marking a dramatic improvement in his financial security. The opportunity provided him with not just a paycheck, but the stability he had been seeking for his family and his future.

**Reflecting on his journey, Derrick shared,**

GST Michigan Works! not only helped me by covering the cost of my CDL, **but they also helped me build my confidence.** That confidence made it possible for me to get through training faster than I ever thought I could. I am so thankful for their services and career coaches."

## FINDING A NEW PATH

**Genesee Co.** - When Nacoryiez first entered the PATH program, she had her guard up. She was hesitant to chase her dreams—ready to settle, but deep down, she knew she couldn't continue down the path she was on and still provide the life her children deserved. So, she put aside her pride, ignored what others might say about needing help, and chose a new direction.

Her background was rooted in manufacturing and customer service roles, but Nacoryiez shared that her true passion has always been assisting the elderly and individuals with disabilities.

She enrolled in the PATH program, facing several immediate barriers: childcare, personal challenges, transportation, work clothing, and job search skills. Meeting weekly with her Career Coach, Nacoryiez began building a personalized action plan to reach her goal of working in direct care.

The first step was securing reliable childcare and creating a polished resume. She also took full advantage of the resources available to her, working hard to overcome many roadblocks to her success. Through supportive services, she received assistance with vehicle registration, work clothing, and mileage reimbursement—critical tools that helped her obtain and maintain employment.

Within a couple of months, Nacoryiez began working at Flatrock Inc. as a Direct Care Worker. Thanks to her dedication and drive, she has already been promoted to a lead role and continues to work full-time, with a bright future ahead.

*"Without the PATH program, I honestly don't know where I would have been because I did not see the light at the end of the tunnel. I continuously thought of myself failing my children, who needed me the most. But now I spread the word of the work GST Michigan Works! does and has done for me,"* Nacoryiez shared.

Her journey is a reminder that it's never too late to change direction—and that being a parent and pursuing your passion can go hand in hand.

**Never limit yourself.** You can be a mom and pursue your dream simultaneously."  
- Nacoryiez



# ROAD TO ADVANCEMENT: HUNTER'S JOURNEY TO CDL CLASS A

**Huron Co.** - Hunter had always been passionate about mechanics. However, he felt a yearning for more...more responsibility, more skills, and ultimately, a more lucrative salary. That's when he decided to pursue a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Class A to boost his employability within his company.

On January 16, 2024, Hunter took the first step in his transformative journey by attending a Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) orientation. This session opened his eyes to the opportunities available for skill enhancement and training, setting him on the path to achieving his goal. With renewed determination, he signed up for a training program scheduled from January 24 to March 9, where he would learn everything necessary to obtain his CDL Class A.

The training was intense, filled with hands-on learning and rigorous instruction at Thumb CDL, LLC, but with the support of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

(WIOA) program helping to cover costs of tuition, drug test fees, skills tests, and the necessary temporary permit, Hunter felt equipped to tackle the challenges ahead.

By March 13, 2024, he cleared all the necessary testing, successfully earning his CDL Class A license. This new qualification not only represented a personal accomplishment but also promised new opportunities within his workplace.

His employer appreciated his initiative and the new skills he brought to the table. As a result, he got a raise of \$3.00 more per hour, significantly boosting his income. As if that wasn't enough, a check-in with Hunter nearly a year later found that another promotion came his way, increasing his hourly wage by an additional \$4.00 per hour.

Reflecting on his journey, Hunter expressed, ***"I was able to update my skills and continue working with my current employer, unlocking more opportunities to make a higher wage. The support I received through the WIOA program was invaluable, helping me achieve my goals and take my career to the next level."***

Hunter's story is one of resilience, ambition, and success—showcasing how a single decision to invest in oneself can lead to profound professional growth and financial stability.



## HELP AND ENCOURAGEMENT *WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST*

**Lapeer Co.** - Johnnie came through as a PATH referral the first week of February 2025. She had primarily worked in the food service industry. Still, between difficulties with reliable transportation and parenting responsibilities, it was hard for her to find work, get to work, and secure employment that would help her family move forward financially. GST Michigan Works! PATH program provided Johnnie with the support she needed at just the right time. GSTMW! was able to assist her with car repairs, ensuring she had safe and reliable transportation, and partnered with DHHS to help Johnnie find daycare.

She had worked in the food service industry before, holding positions that were often part-time and offered limited benefits. Once reliable transportation was available, she was able to work for a company that offered a better working environment and benefits. Johnnie also met with Family Literacy to prepare for obtaining her GED. She was offered a job at Kroger, which was a \$13.50 increase from her wages in the food service industry. In her

first week on the job, a mystery shopper visited the store, and she excelled at every evaluation point.

Johnnie continues to be gainfully employed, independent of PATH program participation, and making it on her own. It was a pleasure working with Johnnie and providing her with supplemental support to help her move forward in her career, as well as connecting her with the Family Literacy Center to assist her with her educational goals.



*"I'm doing great now and have more hours at Kroger. I feel so much better."*

**Johnnie shared when updating her Career Coach.**

## UNSEEN HEROES *OF HEALTHCARE*

**Sanilac Co.** - In October of 2024, Bodhi visited the GST Michigan Works! Sanilac County office seeking assistance in earning a Sterile Processing Technician certification. While exploring local career opportunities, he discovered an opening at McLaren Hospital in Port Huron for a Sterile Processing Technician—a role offering a higher salary and benefits such as health insurance and retirement, compared to his current job in the restaurant industry. Additionally, the position allowed him to work behind the scenes in the healthcare field, aligning with his career interests.

After reaching out to McLaren Hospital about the position, Bodhi learned that certification was required. The hospital recommended Michigan Healthcare Academy in Mount Clemens for training. Bodhi returned to GST Michigan Works! in Sandusky to explore tuition assistance options and was determined eligible for support. With the necessary paperwork completed, he enrolled in the next available in-person class, starting in January 2025.



Following the successful completion of his training, the academy provided Bodhi with a letter of recommendation to McLaren Hospital. Shortly afterward, he was invited to interview and was informed he was their preferred candidate. Bodhi began his new role on April 7 and is thrilled with his decision to join McLaren Hospital.

Bodhi's story illustrates the success that can occur when determination meets the financial assistance necessary to make a career change. Bodhi took the initiative and researched the preferred training provider of the employer he had his sights set on working for and nothing slowed him down. With the support and financial assistance of his Career Coach at GST Michigan Works!, he achieved the successful outcome he hoped for!

# STRIKING OUT AND SWITCHING GEARS



**Shiawassee Co.** - Joseph graduated from Wichita State University with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and a master's degree in general business, however he was unable to complete an internship. It was extremely difficult to find full-time employment in his field without hands-on experience.

When Joseph sought assistance from GST Michigan Works!, he was substitute teaching and doing DoorDash to

make ends meet. After several appointments and discussions about his goals, an opportunity for a mechanical engineering position was shared by a GST Michigan Works! Business Services Professional. Joseph was encouraged to apply, but he was initially hesitant, thinking his lack of experience would disqualify him. However, after being urged to apply, Toledo Commutator interviewed him and saw that he was a great fit for the role they were looking to fill.

Given his need for additional training relative to the position, GST Michigan Works! arranged an On-the-Job Training (OJT) program for him, starting on October 28, 2024. Joseph successfully completed the OJT on December 10, 2024, and has happily remained employed with Toledo Commutator.

After struggling to make ends meet, Joseph now has full-time employment and benefits in his field of study at Toledo Commutator. His new role comes with a significant wage increase compared to his previous income, marking a major step forward in his career. Six months after starting his OJT, Joseph is still thriving in his position and has expressed deep appreciation for the coaching and guidance he received to help him transition into this new career.

## FINDING A NEW ROAD TO SUCCESS

**Sanilac Co.** - Douglas first visited GST Michigan Works! in November of 2024 to file for unemployment after Cygnus Home Services/Schwan's, where he had worked since 2001, closed its doors. While at GST Michigan Works!, Douglas shared his goal of earning a CDL-A license to begin a new chapter in his career.

Through enrollment in the Dislocated Worker program, Douglas received funding support and began training at Thumb CDL. He excelled, completing his CDL-A training in a record six weeks' time!

Within a month of finishing his training, Douglas was hired full-time at Veriha Trucking, with benefits included. Today, Douglas is happily traveling the country, building a successful and rewarding new career in trucking.



# FROM SETBACK TO TRIUMPH



**Tuscola Co.** - Mary was laid off from her previous job and came to GST Michigan Works! seeking unemployment assistance. During her visit, she also expressed a desire to pursue her Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certification. However, Mary faced a challenge: she had a learning disability that made school particularly difficult for her.

Despite the hurdles, Mary was determined to succeed, and with support, she excelled in her studies.

GST Michigan Works! provided valuable assistance, covering her tuition, as well as providing scrubs and shoes for her training. Most importantly, Mary received constant encouragement, which gave her the confidence she needed to push through the tough moments.

Her hard work paid off when she earned her CNA certification and secured a full-time position at the Tuscola Medical Care Facility. Today, Mary is thriving in her new career and making a meaningful difference in the lives of those she cares for.



## FROM HVAC TO HAULING ACROSS AMERICA

**Genesee Co.** - William came to GST Michigan Works! after being laid off from his job as an HVAC Technician. He needed assistance filing for unemployment and registering for work. Over the course of his 20 weeks of benefits, we worked closely with him on a bi-weekly basis, getting to know not just his work history but also his future goals.

As our professional relationship grew, William began to share his excitement about a new opportunity. He had been doing ride-alongs with a friend in the car hauling industry and was intrigued by the idea of making a career shift. One afternoon, he came in eager to discuss a promising opportunity to start driving on his own. The only thing standing in his way: he needed a CDL-A license.

He was quickly paired with a Career Coach, and together they moved fast to enroll him in the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. With this funding, GST Michigan Works! covered the cost of his CDL-A training at 160 Driving

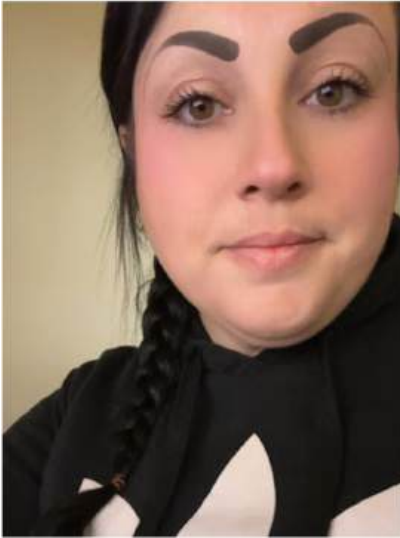
Academy, as well as his required DOT physical. William completed the program and earned his certificate.

He began working as planned for a car-hauling and flatbed delivery company based in Saginaw. While he loved the work, he realized the company wasn't the right long-term fit. After connecting with friends in the industry and reflecting on his future, William returned to GST Michigan Works! to share a bold new vision: he was ready to become his own boss.

William has since begun building his own car hauling business, transporting vehicles for individuals and companies across the U.S. He already has contacts lined up, eager for him to handle their vehicle logistics for both personal and commercial needs.

William says the support he received from GST Michigan Works! was invaluable, empowering him to take control of his future, follow his passion, and truly reach for the stars.

## MOVING UP IN THE MEDICAL FIELD



**Sanilac Co.** - Laura was a single mother who had been working as a home health aide at a residential AFC home since 2017. She found her work deeply rewarding, as she enjoyed caring for others. However, after several years in the role, Laura began considering a career

change—one that would allow her to stay within the medical field and continue helping people in a meaningful way.

Through her research, Laura discovered that becoming a medical assistant would align perfectly with her goals. Knowing certification was required, she contacted the Tuscola Technology Center to gather information about their training program. The next challenge was finding a way to pay for her education. As a single mom, Laura needed financial assistance to make her career transition possible.

In July 2024, Laura met with a Career Coach at GST Michigan Works! in Sandusky. During their meeting, she was approved for grant funding that would fully cover the cost of her Clinical Medical Assistant training. Relieved and excited, Laura enrolled in classes in August 2024.

Throughout her training, Laura remained in regular contact with her Career Coach, sharing updates and celebrating milestones. She often expressed how much she enjoyed the program, particularly the hands-on training, which quickly became her favorite part. Her hard work and dedication paid off in January of 2025 when she proudly earned her Clinical Medical Assistant certification.

Big changes continued for Laura. At the end of February, she moved from Decker to Davison and immediately began her job search. Within just one week of relocating, Laura secured a full-time position at Mid-Michigan Gastroenterology in Flint as a medical assistant. Today, she is thriving in her new role, continuing to fulfill her passion for helping others in a career she loves.

## CAREGIVER TO CERTIFIED MEDICAL ASSISTANT

**Huron Co.** - Jessica had always known she wanted to help people. As a part-time caregiver, she found fulfillment in her work, but she knew it wasn't enough to help support her family long-term. She dreamed of building a full-time career in the medical field, where she could make a bigger impact on people's lives and have financial stability to give her family a better future.

On February 2, 2024, Jessica took the first step towards making that dream a reality. She reached out to GST Michigan Works!, eager to find the support she needed to transition into a more stable and rewarding career. With her sights set on becoming a Certified Medical Assistant (CMA), Jessica knew this was her chance to gain the skills required to thrive in the healthcare industry.

In February of 2024, Jessica enrolled in a three-month CMA training course with support through WIOA. Every day, she balanced her studies with the responsibilities of her part-time caregiver job, all while keeping her family's needs in mind. The training was rigorous, but Jessica was determined. She had always loved helping others, and this was her opportunity to make a more substantial impact on the healthcare field.

On May 14, 2024, Jessica's hard work paid off. She completed her CMA program and passed her National Healthcare Association (NHA) test on the very same day. It was a moment of great accomplishment for Jessica, knowing that she had successfully earned the certificate that would open the door to a brighter, more secure future.

GST Michigan Works! didn't just help Jessica with the training itself. In addition to financial aid to cover tuition, Jessica was equipped with all the necessary support, including scrubs, shoes, a stethoscope, and even mileage for travel to her training. This allowed her to focus entirely on her studies without worrying about the financial burden of additional costs.

Just a few weeks after receiving her certificate, Jessica's dream began to take shape when she was offered a full-time position as a Certified Medical Assistant at Deckerville Healthcare Clinic. With her new position, she is now making \$6.15 more per hour. This was the opportunity she had worked so hard for, and it was everything she had hoped for—a chance to help people while building a stable career in the medical field.

# NEW BEGINNINGS

**Sanilac Co.** - Keegan moved to the Sandusky area in August of 2024 from Lake Orion, seeking new opportunities with family members. Despite his efforts, he struggled to find work. With a background in construction and landscaping, Keegan was eager to continue his career in the same field, but he was finding it challenging to secure full-time employment in Sanilac County.

Some of Keegan's family members suggested he visit GST Michigan Works! to learn more about job search resources and employment opportunities. He took their advice and met with a Career Coach, sharing his situation and his interest in obtaining a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to improve his job prospects. The Career Coach helped Keegan become eligible for WIOA training, which was a game-changer for him.

Just two weeks after his initial meeting, Keegan began training at Thumb CDL in Deckerville. He excelled in the

program and successfully earned his CDL. After completing his training, Keegan kept in touch with his Career Coach, who provided support with resume building and job search assistance. Within just one month of earning his CDL, Keegan landed a full-time position at Kappen Tree Service as a Woodsman/Driver. This new role allows Keegan to utilize his CDL and enjoy an outdoor work environment.



## WIOA OSY & JMG TALENT TOUR CONNECTS YOUTH WITH CAREER POSSIBILITIES

**Shiawassee Co.** - On March 5th, through participation in both the WIOA Out-of-School Youth (OSY) program and JMG, one youth had the opportunity to take part in a personalized Talent Tour focused on welding. The visit took place at Universal Handling Equipment in Owosso, where he got a firsthand look at the world of manufacturing.

Unlike many who have grown up around the industry, this youth had never been exposed to manufacturing before. However, with welding as a potential career path, he was eager to explore what the field had to offer. The tour provided an in-depth look at the company's welding and metal preparation areas, allowing him to observe the manufacturing process in action.

Led by the company's operations manager, the tour offered valuable insights into the industry. Although the youth did not interact directly with employees due to their active work, the operations manager answered his questions, explaining the skills required for the job, the importance of passing a weld test, and how training programs can help build a strong foundation. The discussion also covered how gaining

experience in this role could serve as a stepping stone in opportunities with other companies in the manufacturing industry.

To further support the youth's career exploration, the staff members overseeing both WIOA OSY and JMG prepared labor market information on welding and the broader manufacturing industry. This included details on wages, job outlook, required education, and local training programs.



Reviewing this information helped him connect what he observed during the tour with real-world career opportunities, giving him a clearer understanding of the path ahead.

# SKILLED TRADES PROVIDE STABILITY: CLIFFORD'S JOURNEY TO SUCCESS

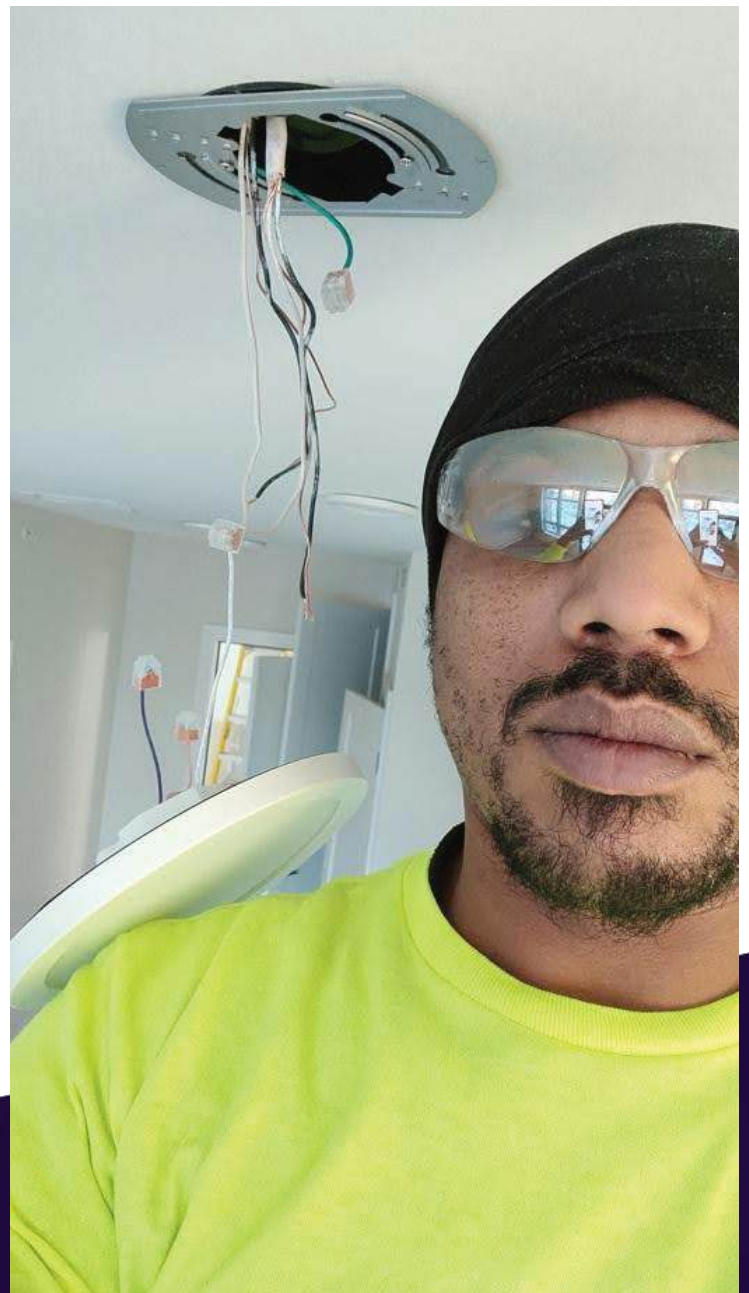
**Genesee Co.** - Clifford's story is one of resilience and determination. In 2018, he completed the Michigan Apprentice Readiness Program at GST Michigan Works!, launching his career as a Millwright Apprentice. Unfortunately, Clifford was involved in a motorcycle accident that left him with injuries that required significant time to recover from. During this recovery period, he lost his position. Later that year, Clifford secured a welding job and, despite many ongoing challenges, including single parenthood, transportation issues, and financial hardship, he stayed committed to building a better future.

Seven years later, Clifford was in another accident, totaling his vehicle. Unable to afford a new one, he was faced with the daunting prospect of being unable to commute to work. With bills piling up and the pressure mounting, Clifford had no choice but to apply for Family Independence Program (FIP) benefits and enroll in the PATH program.

Despite these struggles, Clifford's resolve never wavered. He knew exactly what he needed to do to turn his life around. With the support of his career coach, Clifford showed unwavering determination to get back on his feet. He remained focused on his goals, never losing sight of the future he wanted to build for himself and his daughter.

In February 2025, Clifford secured a position with Tradesmen International as an apprentice electrician, earning 25% more than at his last job.

He now provides a stable and comfortable life for his family, showing that any obstacle can be overcome with determination, hard work, and the right support. Clifford's success story is a powerful reminder that setbacks are just temporary, and perseverance in the face of adversity leads to **a brighter future!**



Clifford shared,

*If it wasn't for the PATH program, I'm not sure where I would be right now. **PATH helped me with transportation, tools, everything I needed to move forward.***

## JOSHUA'S PATH TO EMPLOYMENT WITH MICHIGAN PAVERS & WALLS



**Genesee Co.** - Joshua walked into the Flint Service Center seeking a fresh start and a new career opportunity. Having recently relocated back to Flint to be closer to family, Joshua was ready to take on a new challenge in the construction industry. With a solid background as a union carpenter in New Jersey, Joshua's skills and work ethic were evident, but he was looking for the right opportunity to restart his career in Michigan.

As a Business Solutions Professional at GST Michigan Works!, Erich immediately recognized Joshua's potential and the value he could bring to a local employer. After reviewing his resume, he knew he had the perfect connection to help him get started. Michigan Pavers and Walls, a reputable company in the Flint area, was hiring Laborers and Bricklayers with an excellent starting wage. Erich reached out to his business contact at Michigan Pavers and Walls and shared Joshua's resume with her.

She was impressed with Joshua's background and quickly scheduled an interview. It wasn't long before Joshua was offered a position and accepted the opportunity. Just ten days after walking into GST Michigan Works!, Joshua started his new job.

GST Michigan Works! is proud of the strong partnerships and the valuable business relationships that benefit both job seekers and local employers. By understanding the needs of both parties, we can connect a qualified candidate with great job opportunities.

Joshua is thrilled about his new job and excited for the future. He's eager to get started and is confident that this new role will help him continue building his career in the construction industry.

At GST Michigan Works!, we are committed to helping individuals like Joshua find meaningful employment while supporting businesses in their search for qualified candidates. Together, we're building stronger communities, one person at a time.



## CAREER FOCUSED

**Sanilac Co.** - Emma is a 2024 graduate of Peck High School. Throughout her teenage years, she held a few part-time jobs in the fast-food industry. After graduating in May of 2024, Emma decided it was time to focus on building a career. She had always been interested in the medical field, but she found her interests centered more on the administrative side.

Being fresh out of high school, Emma needed guidance to make her first adult career move. Although she wanted to attend training at the Sanilac Career Center, the tuition cost was a concern. After speaking with them about her concerns, they suggested that Emma reach out to GST Michigan Works! to inquire about grant funding.

Emma scheduled an appointment with a Career Coach and was able to qualify for WIOA funding. Once she met the eligibility requirements, Emma enrolled in the online Administrative Medical Assistant training. Through hard work and dedication, Emma completed the training and earned her certification in just four months.

Since then, Emma has secured full-time employment as a Medical Administrative Assistant at McKenzie Rural Health Clinic. She is excited to begin her young adult life with the career she has worked hard to achieve.

# MOVING UP IN THE MEDICAL FIELD



**Huron Co.** - Shannon has worked at Scheurer Health as a full-time housekeeper since August of 2017. Though she loved her job and her work family, she felt it was time to try a new career. She missed working directly with patients and felt she could handle more responsibility. Becoming a Medical Assistant seemed like the perfect choice. She applied for the 10-month Medical Assistant Program through Mid-Michigan College and started in the Fall of 2024. Her training was locally provided at the Huron Area Technical Center.

Shannon was referred to GST Michigan Works! through her employer, Scheurer Hospital, because of the Rural Healthcare (Sector Strategy) Employer Led Collaborative (SSEL) grant. This grant allows incumbent workers to be enrolled in training to upskill in the healthcare field for in-demand occupations in the region. She not only received sponsorship through the SSEL grant but also the Michigan ReConnect grant.

Throughout her training, she continued to work full-time. It was hard, but Shannon persevered! She completed all classroom time and 160 hours of externship time, passing the class on August 9th, 2024. By the end of that month, she passed the National Certified Medical Assistant certification exam. She could not be prouder of what she had accomplished!

***"It's a great program that a lot of people may not think of! I had no idea how I was going to pay for everything, but knew I wanted a new career. GST Michigan Works! helped me manage the stress by paying the bill I owed to the college and helped me by having someone to talk to who cared for me and had my best interest at heart. Thank you for the support and for helping me through it."***

Shannon started her new position at Meijer Fast Care – Scheurer Health, 40 hours per week, making almost \$5 more per hour than her previous position in housekeeping. She is excited for this new chapter of her career.

***I am so happy to stay and be Scheurer!!"***



# A PASSION FOR CARE LEADS TO **CAREER GROWTH**



Practical Nurse (LPN).

**Sanilac Co.** - Since 2016, Leslie has worked as a nurse aide at an assisted living facility, a role she has truly enjoyed because of her passion for caring for others. Over time, however, Leslie began thinking about advancing her career in the medical field by transitioning from a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) to a Licensed

about financial grants available through GST Michigan Works! and decided to meet with a Career Coach to explore her options. After their meeting, Leslie found she was eligible for training assistance. The assistance she received provided funding to help cover tuition, books, and her state licensing fee.

Leslie completed her training in just three semesters and earned her LPN credential. Shortly after finishing her program, she achieved her goal of advancing within her current workplace and received a \$5.00 per hour wage increase in recognition of her new qualifications!



## FROM CASHIER TO **PHARMACY TECHNICIAN**

**Huron Co.** - For as long as Shelby could remember, becoming a Pharmacy Technician was her dream. But life always seemed to get in the way—until June 2024, when she discovered an online Pharmacy Tech program through GST Michigan Works!, Degree Forward, and Stepful. The flexible, self-paced format allowed her to finally pursue her goal without disrupting her life.

The program included two weekly Zoom classes, group projects, and Saturday homework deadlines. With support from Angel at GST Michigan Works! and Laura at Degree Forward, Shelby enrolled and began in July 2024.

In August, just as her coursework picked up, Shelby landed a customer service/pharmacy cashier job at Walgreens—her first step into the field. She balanced work and school, and by October, graduated in the top 10% of her class.

Determined to succeed, Shelby scheduled her state exam for November. Though she didn't pass on the first try, she doubled down on studying while gaining hands-on experience at Walgreens. In December, just before retaking the exam, she was offered a Pharmacy Tech position—which she accepted immediately. She passed the exam later that month and officially became a certified Pharmacy Technician.

***“Looking back, I'm incredibly grateful for the support I***

***received from Angel, Laura, and my team at Walgreens,”*** Shelby said. ***“The journey wasn't always easy, but it proved that perseverance, timing, and the right support can help you achieve your dreams.”***

Shelby also completed her externship at Walgreens, allowing her to earn income while fulfilling school requirements. She started as a Pharmacy Cashier in August of 2024, transitioning to a Pharmacy Tech Intern in December, and finished the Walgreens orientation and training by March of 2025.

Recently, Shelby shared with her Career Coach that her colleagues had nominated her “Employee of the Month”—an achievement that reflects how far she's come.

***“Taking the leap in July 2024 was the best decision I've ever made,”*** Shelby said. ***“No matter the setbacks or challenges, it's worth it to never give up on your goals.”***

# RESEA ORIENTATION IMPACT



**Lapeer Co.** - Rodolfo was one of our customers referred to participate in the Re-employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program as a temporary worker. For the past two years, he has been selected to attend RESEA orientation, where he was informed about our services, including job search assistance and the opportunity to continue his education, which would open doors to a better future.

This year, upon attending the RESEA session, Rodolfo decided to take advantage of the opportunity to build his skills. He decided that when he returned to work in the spring season, he would present his commercial driver's license, making his employer proud and potentially earning a better salary.

Rodolfo completed CDL-A training and felt confident that he could perform well. He shared this news with his employer, but unfortunately, he did not receive the expected response. Disappointed, Rodolfo decided to seek new opportunities. Within less than a month, he received a new job offer for a full-time position with a competitive salary. This brought him great joy since he would earn twice as much as he had over the last ten years, and the new company was very close to home.

Rodolfo is very grateful to GST Michigan Works! for the excellent opportunity and support he has received to build a better future.

# PERFECT TIMING

**Sanilac Co.** - While attending LPN training at SC4, Mason discovered GST Michigan Works! scholarships that she might qualify for, which sparked her interest. In her final semester, balancing part-time work as a CNA and focusing on her studies, Mason faced several financial challenges, including NCLEX test fees, mileage costs, and necessary truck repairs. After filling out a request form on the GST Michigan Works! website, Career Coach Cindy quickly reached out to determine if Mason qualified for funding.

With financial assistance confirmed, Mason received support to cover gas mileage and NCLEX fees. Additionally, GST Michigan Works! helped Mason get her truck repaired, enabling her to continue her studies without further setbacks. She graduated with honors, earning Cum Laude status and joining the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

Mason's employer, Medilodge of Yale, offered great encouragement throughout her clinicals and training. After passing the NCLEX, Mason was hired as a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). Her new role brought a significant wage increase, more than doubling her previous hourly rate as a CNA!



# REGINA'S JOURNEY IN SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY

**Sanilac Co.** - Regina's path to becoming a skilled surgical technologist showcases her dedication, resilience, and commitment to patient care. She began her training on June 24, 2024, with Aspire Rural Health Systems, embracing the challenges of the one-year program with enthusiasm and determination. Supported by GST Michigan Works!, Regina gained access to valuable resources that empowered her to excel and even complete the program ahead of schedule. During her training, she displayed an exceptional ability to collaborate with surgical teams, ensuring that every procedure she assisted with was conducted smoothly and efficiently.

Reflecting on her experience, Regina shared, "Every day in the operating room taught me something new. It was not just about mastering technical skills, but also about connecting with patients and making sure they felt safe during their most vulnerable moments." She often credits her mentor, Cathy, for guiding her through intricate procedures and providing invaluable wisdom. ***"Cathy believed in me even when I doubted myself. Her encouragement gave me the confidence to perform at my best."***

Regina's journey exemplifies the significant impact of mentorship and hands-on training in the healthcare field. With her newfound skills and knowledge, she is now ready

to embrace her role as a surgical technologist, eager to make a meaningful difference in the lives of her patients and contribute to the success of her surgical team.

Organizations like GST Michigan Works! play a crucial role in establishing and supporting registered apprenticeship programs, especially in fields like surgical technology. Their involvement not only provides essential resources and funding but also fosters partnerships between training institutions and healthcare facilities. The apprenticeship programs approved by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) offer structured training that combines on-the-job learning with classroom education, equipping aspiring surgical technologists with the skills and experience necessary for their careers.

Without the backing of GST Michigan Works! and similar organizations, many students would lack access to these valuable training opportunities, which would ultimately affect workforce readiness in the healthcare sector. The existence of these programs reflects a commitment to building a skilled labor force, allowing individuals like Regina and her peers to thrive and effectively contribute to patient care and surgical outcomes. Their success stories highlight the importance of collaboration between educational institutions and workforce development entities in creating pathways to rewarding careers.



# FROM STRUGGLE TO SCRUBS: MADELINE'S PATH TO RN

**Huron Co.** - Madeline had always dreamed of becoming a registered nurse, and after years of hard work and dedication, she graduated from Delta College with an associate in applied science in nursing. But just as she was about to step into her career, a hurdle stood in her way: the financial burden of obtaining her RN license. The cost of the NCLEX registration fee, the exam itself, and the travel expenses to take the test felt overwhelming, and she wasn't sure how to move forward.

In September 2024, Madeline walked into the GST Michigan Works! office, determined to overcome these financial challenges. She knew her dream was within reach, but she needed assistance to make it possible. During her orientation, Madeline shared her story. GST Michigan Works! immediately stepped in to provide the financial support she required, covering the NCLEX registration fee, the exam costs, and the mileage for her travel to the testing site.

With this support, Madeline felt a huge sense of relief. No longer burdened by financial stress, she could now focus entirely on preparing for her exam.

Just a few months later, in November 2024, her hard work paid off. Madeline landed a full-time job as a Registered Nurse at My Michigan Health, where she began working 36 hours a week at a very competitive hourly rate. By February 2025, she had already earned a \$4/hr. raise!

On January 17, 2025, Madeline received exciting news: she had officially obtained her RN license. The moment marked the culmination of years of effort, persistence, and sacrifice. Not only had she passed the NCLEX, but she was also stepping into a career that would offer her the stability and confidence she had worked so hard to achieve.

**"I was struggling to afford my NCLEX exam, and it was much easier to pay with the help from GST Michigan Works! Everyone at GST Michigan Works! was so helpful,"** Madeline shared. **"It took away a lot of stress knowing that there were people who were available to help."**



**CHECK OUT  
CROSWELL-LEXINGTON  
HIGH SCHOOL'S  
APPRENTICESHIP WALL  
INSPIRED BY GSTMW!**





## Student SUCCESS STORIES



# ALLETA SUCCESS STORY

Alleta is an Out-of-School Youth participant from the Greater Flint Health Coalition's Flint Healthcare Employment Opportunities (FHEO) program, a GST Michigan Works! service provider. During her senior year of high school Alleta attended an information session about the FHEO Program Summer Youth Work Experience Program at the Genesee Career Institute. Alleta was studying exercise science at the time and was interested in healthcare education post high school so she chose to participant in the program to further her skill set and gain practical work experience.

Before beginning her summer work experience, Alleta completed ten days of Life Skills and Healthcare Career Exploration training hosted by the FHEO Program. This training included workplace readiness and professional development activities, entrepreneurial and career exploration, financial fitness, mental health strategies, digital literacy, and public service activities. Alleta received a \$50 financial stipend for every day she attended pre-employment training, as well as mileage reimbursement, scrubs for employment, and a laptop computer. Alleta shared that, **"I greatly enjoyed my time in the program. I learned all sorts of things that I can expect from working in different healthcare careers."**

Alleta was placed at Burton Urgent Care as an assistant where she provided administrative and clinical support to medical staff temporarily for the summer. Alleta said, **"I was taught how to work in all areas of the urgent care, including check-in, running tests, and taking vitals. I learned so much and it was very helpful to know how it feels to work in that setting."** After summer youth work experience, Alleta enrolled at Saginaw Valley State University to begin a bachelor's degree in health sciences. Alleta shared that she intends to work as an esthetician while she completes her degree.



# JANAYA SUCCESS STORY

Janaya is an Adult participant from the Flint Healthcare Employment Opportunities (FHEO) Program, a GST Michigan Works! service provider. Janaya had recently moved back to Michigan and was unemployed when she heard about the training opportunity. As a single mother of four children, Janaya was excited for the assistance and the chance to start a sustainable healthcare career.

Before healthcare training, Janaya completed 120 hours of Life Skills and Healthcare Career Exploration training hosted by Flint Strive. Janaya shared that, **"I was taught why, when, and how to be more professional and productive at work. I learned how to better manage my time."** Janaya also shared that the pre-employment training prepared her for working in the healthcare industry and how to balance her personal life with her professional life. During this training, Janaya participated in career exploration activities and chose to pursue Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training. Janaya entered EMT training with Patriot Ambulance Services in October 2024. She said, **"I was so nervous about working on an ambulance and being under pressure in case of an emergency, but my training prepared me to provide exceptional emergency services."** The FHEO Program paid for the cost of Janaya's tuition and required uniform.

After successful training completion and passing her licensure exam, Janaya was offered a full-time employment opportunity with Patriot Ambulance Services. She shared that she is enjoying her new career, stating, **"I appreciate working with a crew that allows me to learn while we work and allows me to be myself. Patriot is committed to helping the community as much as they can and give the best possible service."** Janaya shared she intends to further her career by becoming a Paramedic and then eventually a Sheriff Deputy Medic.

Overall, Janaya shared that her participation in the FHEO Program has been positive. Janaya said, **"I look back on this past year and all the obstacles that I had to get through and I'm thankful I stuck through it. I am beyond grateful for the opportunity that was handed to me."**



On April 22nd, over 60 Genesee County students attended a career day hosted by Curbco. Students had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience operating backhoes, skid steers, mini loaders, excavators, front-end loaders, sweepers, and cranes! Other community partners and employers were in attendance and shared their experiences and hiring needs.

**IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL DAY AND A GREAT SUCCESS!**

# HANDS ON CAREER EXPERIENCE AT CURBCO

# EMPOWERING FUTURE TRADES PROFESSIONALS THROUGH THE MICHIGAN APPRENTICE READINESS PROGRAM

The Michigan Apprenticeship Readiness Program (ARP) has made significant strides in preparing individuals for successful careers in the skilled trades. Currently, the program has 20 participants, of whom 18 have successfully completed the training. Among those graduates, 11 have secured placements in registered apprenticeship programs within the professional trades—highlighting the program’s effectiveness in bridging training and industry opportunities.

Under the expert guidance of Instructor Howard Hipes, these individuals earned multiple industry-recognized credentials, such as OSHA 30, First Aid & CPR, Hazardous Waste Worker certification, and Confined Space certification. They also completed the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum Modules, developed tailored resumes, and sharpened their interview skills through dedicated workshops. Additionally, students gained 40 hours of hands-on work experience at union training halls and toured nine different union training centers, providing an immersive industry perspective.

Thanks to the diligent efforts of Raymond Barry and Heidi Powell on the apprenticeship team at GST Michigan Works!, 11 graduates have secured employment and transitioned directly into the workforce. Their certifications and practical experience have created a competitive edge, opening doors to apprenticeship opportunities with partnering building trades unions. Many are now actively contributing to local

construction projects, building a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

This success aligns with The Center for Construction Research and Training’s (CPWR) mission to improve construction safety and health through research, training, and education. The program emphasizes the importance of safe work practices and industry standards, echoing CPWR’s commitment to protecting workers and promoting a culture of safety in the trades.

This comprehensive approach—combining technical training, industry certifications, real-world experience, and industry connections—reflects the dedication of participants and the strong support from program staff in cultivating confident, skilled workers ready to meet the workforce needs of the trades.

The Apprenticeship Readiness Program at GST Michigan Works! is a free and accessible pathway for anyone interested in entering the skilled trades. It offers a valuable opportunity to gain real-world experience, industry-recognized credentials, and a clear pathway to a rewarding career with a construction trades union.

Congratulations to all the graduates—you’ve earned your success! We look forward to supporting many more future tradespeople in achieving their career goals.

This program was made possible through the generous support of grant number U45-ES006185 from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS). The contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official views of NIEHS.





## **HOWARD HIPES**

### *MICHIGAN TROWEL TRADES APPRENTICESHIP & TRAINING FUND*

Driven by a passion to empower the next generation of craftspeople, Howard has spent 37 years supporting skilled trades through his membership with BAC Local 2 MI and his dedication to Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs). His passion for RAPs stems from a desire to encourage the next generation of craftspeople, a commitment evident in the work he does when recruiting aspiring apprentices, providing crucial education to journey workers and offering mentorship.

Howard takes pride in his role as the Coordinator of the Apprentice Readiness Program in Flint, where he sees apprentices develop into skilled professionals.

Outside of his job as the Statewide Director of Apprenticeship & Training, Howard is a licensed minister who enjoys outdoor sports and spending time with his family.



## DRIVING CHANGE

Steve walked into GST Michigan Works! (GSTMW) looking for a stable job to support his family. Recently married and a proud new dad to a baby boy, he realized it was time to get serious about his career path.

To make the most of the resources available, Steven was enrolled in several programs. These programs equipped him with essential job readiness training, resume writing skills, and professional communication techniques necessary for success in the job market.

He decided to focus on CDL-A training at 160 Driving Academy, where he excelled, completed the program, and landed a job the following week. The coaching and job readiness support he received, combined with his determination, were crucial in achieving his goal. GSTMW provided financial aid for his training, rewards for reaching milestones, and assistance with transportation and work attire.

Steven's journey is a perfect example of how the right support and perseverance can turn dreams into reality. With his CDL-A license and a bright new career, he can now provide for his family. His story also inspired Youth Solutions, leading to his selection for the 2025 JMG Excellence in Youth Leadership Award!

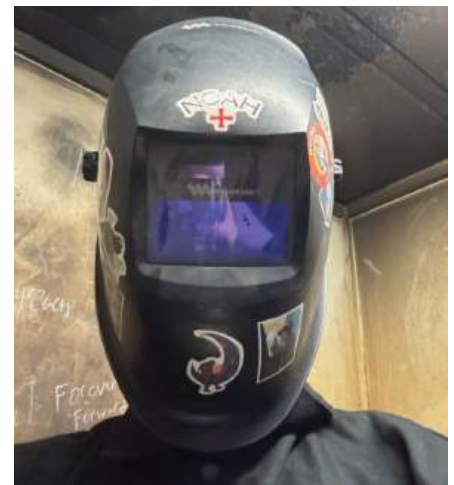
Daiton always knew he wanted more for his future. While working at Arby's, he took the initiative to visit GST Michigan Works! in March 2024 to explore training programs that could help him grow. With the support of the Talent Development Center, he was connected with a Career Coach, Rosie, who guided him through enrollment in the Adult WIOA Program and Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG), setting the foundation for his next steps.

With Rosie's guidance, Daiton gained access to valuable resources through these programs, including supportive services that covered the cost of his welding class and the boots required for his training. Determined to advance his career, he pursued his education at Mott Workforce Development, where he successfully earned his Welding Certificate.

Now, as he prepares to walk in the Mott Community College Graduation Ceremony, his journey stands as a testament to perseverance and the power of support. Throughout this journey, Daiton has remained employed at Arby's, demonstrating a strong work ethic and commitment to personal growth. Not stopping there, he has chosen to continue his education with advanced welding courses at Mott Community College, further refining his skills and expanding his career opportunities.

Through it all, his Career Coach has been a guiding force, providing mentorship, encouragement, and career navigation support to keep him on the path to success.

Daiton's story is a shining example of how determination, support, and education can open doors to a brighter future. His journey proves that with the right resources and a strong work ethic, anything is possible!



# BUILDING HER LEGACY

Victoria is a remarkable young woman whose journey through the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) Program is nothing short of inspiring. With a vision to become an architect, she approaches every opportunity with courage, determination, and an unwavering commitment to growth. Her story is a testament to perseverance, leadership, and the power of building confidence to lift others along the way.

In March of 2024, Victoria began her paid work experience as an Office Administrative Assistant. Over the next few months, she demonstrated exceptional organizational skills, keen attention to detail, and a growing ability to navigate professional spaces with confidence. By the time she completed her role in June, Victoria had not only built valuable workplace experience but also developed stronger communication and problem-solving abilities that continue to support her success.

Now, she is enrolled in the carpentry trade program at Job Corps—an intentional step toward her dream of becoming an architect. For Victoria, learning to work with her hands and understanding the physical structure of buildings is more than just skill-building; it's the foundation for her future. Each day, she sharpens her technical abilities, transforming passion into purpose, and turning her long-held goals into tangible progress.

Victoria's leadership qualities shone during her participation in Leadership Day, a JMG event. She showed great leadership and offered thoughtful ideas, encouraged her peers, and helped build a sense of unity among the group. Her presence created a ripple effect of support and collaboration, showing that leadership isn't always loud; it's consistent, kind, and inclusive.

She continued to sharpen and showcase those leadership skills during Legislative Day, where she confidently



engaged in discussions, represented her peers with pride, and demonstrated the power of a youth voice in action. The experience gave Victoria another platform to lead, speak up, and advocate—not only for herself, but for the future she envisions for others.

Victoria wears her emotions like armor, a testament to her courage and resilience. She transforms what others might see as vulnerability into a wellspring of strength, standing tall against life's challenges and empowering those around her to rise, as well. Her commitment to accountability and support elevates her as a leader, not just in what she does, but in who she is—a source of hope and motivation for her peers.

Throughout her journey, Victoria has grown tremendously in confidence, learning to trust her voice and lead by example. Along the way, her JMG Specialist, Dominique, has been a consistent and encouraging presence, offering guidance, a listening ear, and steady support when it mattered most. Dominique's support helped Victoria stay grounded and focused, reminding her that the confidence she needed was already within her, she simply had to trust it.

Reflecting on her growth, Victoria shares, ***"Leadership isn't about being in charge, it's about showing up, learning to believe in yourself, and using that confidence to lift others. I've learned that the more I grow, the more I can help others grow with me."***

As she continues forward, Victoria remains focused on becoming an architect and inspiring others to believe in themselves. She is building a legacy grounded in confidence, compassion, and a commitment to helping others rise beside her. Victoria is not just designing her future, she is shaping a brighter one for everyone around her.

# EMPLOYER SUCCESS STORIES

## LAFONTAINE

### NETWORKING WITH GST MICHIGAN WORKS! BIG WIN FOR THE LAFONTAINE AUTOMOTIVE GROUP

In the summer of 2023, a GST Michigan Works! Business Solutions Professional reached out to an old college friend who is the General Manager at LaFontaine Automotive Group in Genesee County. It was a great opportunity to find out how GST Michigan Works! could help the company, particularly with the Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) getting ready to start a new funding cycle. They arranged to meet so they could further discuss a future partnership. The GPTF could be a great tool in training and upskilling their current and future employees.

The LaFontaine Automotive Group applied and received Going PRO Talent Fund FY24 Cycle 1 funding for 32 of their dealerships throughout the State of Michigan. LaFontaine knocked it out of the park and trained 202 incumbent employees and 108 new hires throughout 2024.

GST Michigan Works! delivered a check for \$391,198.44 for reimbursement of the trainings that the LaFontaine Automotive Group had completed for their FY24 Cycle 1 Going PRO Talent Fund award.

***“At LaFontaine Automotive Group, we are committed to investing in our team members and providing them with the tools and training needed to grow and succeed in their careers. Partnering with GST Michigan Works!, the Going PRO Program has been an invaluable resource in helping us***

***achieve this goal.***

***Through this program, we have been able to provide essential training for new hires and existing employees across various departments, including Technicians, Variable Managers, Sales, and Office staff. The reimbursement of training costs allows us to continue developing our workforce while reinforcing our commitment to excellence.***

***In 2024, we were honored to receive \$391,198.44 in training reimbursement funds, a testament to the impact and effectiveness of this program. We sincerely appreciate the support from GST Michigan Works! and the Going PRO Program, which enables us to enhance the skills of our employees and provide exceptional service to our customers.***

***Thank you to GST Michigan Works! for their continued partnership and dedication to workforce development. We look forward to further collaboration in the years ahead!”***

**- Ryan LaFontaine, Owner**



## TOLEDO COMMUTATOR

### DESIGNED FOR SUCCESS

**Shiawassee Co.** - For over 100 years, the Toledo Commutator Company has been an industry leader in producing commutators, springs, and related products that help keep the world in motion. Their products are used in a variety of commercial, scientific, and military applications. Due to the precise requirements of their products, engineers must possess the right skill set to design them. This expertise is gained over time, and not everyone has all the qualifications straight out of college.

Toledo Commutator has the foresight to invest in young graduates, training them to meet the company's current and future engineering needs. GST Michigan Works! is proud to support this effort by offering the On-the-Job Training (OJT) program to Toledo Commutator.

The company hired a recent engineering graduate who had academic training but lacked practical experience. After meeting with a career coach, we developed an individualized training plan that benefited both the new hire and the company. By working closely with seasoned design engineers, the new hire gained valuable hands-on experience and began taking on design responsibilities, becoming a contributing member of the team.

Toledo Commutator utilized \$2,600 of the OJT funding through GST Michigan Works! to invest in their newest engineer. This additional training will help maintain the quality reputation Toledo Commutator has built, ensuring the company continues to grow and replace retiring engineers.



## AUTOKINITON

### AUTOKINITON INVESTS IN WORKFORCE GROWTH THROUGH APPRENTICESHIPS AND GOING PRO SUPPORT

**Huron Co.** - Autokiniton, a provider of automotive components and assembly solutions for the mobility industry, is located in Elkton, in Michigan's rural Thumb region. Hiring and retaining both skilled and unskilled laborers has always been a challenge in this area. To address this, Autokiniton has developed robust Apprenticeship Programs in Tool & Die, Electrical, and Machine Maintenance, recruiting talent from within their existing workforce. By investing in employee education and training, the company strengthens retention and builds a more skilled internal pipeline.

These apprenticeship programs have proven highly successful, helping to transition unskilled laborers into skilled roles and allowing the company to promote from within. However, as employees advance, the need for additional unskilled labor arises. Recognizing the costs associated with training, Autokiniton worked with GST Michigan Works! to apply for a Going PRO Talent Fund grant to offset some of those expenses.

Through the Going PRO grant, Autokiniton was able to fund classroom training at Delta College and provide On-the-Job Training (OJT) for 16 current apprentices and 5 new hire apprentices. In addition, the grant supported OJT for 20 new Production Operators.

The hands-on training for Production Operators has proven effective in reducing quality alerts and improving employee retention. Training alongside experienced colleagues has boosted morale and accelerated the learning process. Meanwhile, the apprentices continue to grow through their combined classroom and on-the-job training, resulting in increased knowledge, responsibility, and wages.

Autokinton's commitment to developing talent from within is paying off—not only in employee satisfaction and retention, but also in the overall quality and efficiency of their operations.

## STONEBRIDGE

### STONEBRIDGE TECHNICAL ENTERPRISES: **SUCCESSFUL GOING PRO AWARD**

**Genesee Co.** - The need for a highly trained workforce is as important today as it has ever been, and Fenton, Michigan-based Stonebridge Technical Enterprises, Ltd. knows this for sure. Stonebridge provides automation services and equipment to a wide range of manufacturing companies. Their services and equipment are focused on Industrial Automation in high volume and specialty manufacturing environments, supplying automation equipment design and build, control panel design and build, programming, installation, and skilled trades and engineering support. Stonebridge operates in two divisions, Atlas Technologies and Stonebridge Technical Services. These divisions are both recognized as high-quality, dependable suppliers that serve a variety of appliances, automotive, aerospace, agricultural, and energy customers worldwide.

As 2025 marks the 60th anniversary of Atlas Technologies and the 30th anniversary of Stonebridge Technical Services, this leader in its field considers providing its teams with ample quality training paramount to its accomplishments. A recipient of a Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) grant from the State of Michigan in 2024, the company has continued to train its staff in engineering and other technical fields, general job skills, safety standards, and more. As part of the grant, all employees completed formal training

underwritten by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). This training isn't cheap, but Stonebridge believes this specific level of further education is central to remaining relevant and at peak performance.

Since the company specializes in the technicalities of engineering equipment, it was further beneficial for its staff to have access to formal courses that included training in blueprint reading, hydraulics, and more, and the company is building on this to further the in-house education it provides. As a press-room equipment leader routinely handling loads weighing tens of thousands of pounds, the powered industrial truck forklift operation safety training, and the crane and rigging safety training, is a must for the safety of its people; investing in this area is an easy choice.

Thanks to the help from GST Michigan Works! and the Going PRO Talent Fund program, Stonebridge continues its forward-thinking strategies that will assist in providing employees and corporate strength and stability for many more years to come. Happy 60th birthday, Atlas Technologies...and happy 30th birthday to Stonebridge!





## HARBOR BEACH COMM. HOSPITAL

### UPSKILLING FROM WITHIN: *APPRENTICESHIP SUCCESS*

**Huron Co.** - Harbor Beach Community Hospital, a small rural hospital nestled in Huron County, often faces challenges in finding qualified employees with the skills and certifications needed to fill critical roles. To address this, the hospital has taken a proactive approach—investing in its workforce through apprenticeships and support from the Going PRO Talent Fund.

In 2023, the hospital launched a Surgical Technologist Apprenticeship Program. Building on that momentum, they expanded in 2024 to include a Medical Assistant Apprenticeship, working closely with the GST Michigan Works! Apprenticeship Team to get the new program approved and running.

Two current employees expressed a strong interest in advancing their careers. Sarah, already a Certified Medical Assistant, completed her Surgical Technologist training and now supports the operating room team as needed, while continuing in her CMA role. Kari, previously working as a Health Information Management Specialist, transitioned into a full-time Medical Assistant position.

To support their development, the hospital applied for and received a Going PRO Talent Fund grant, which helped cover the cost of classroom instruction and on-the-job training for both roles.

This investment paid off in more ways than one. Both employees gained new skills, higher earning potential, and greater job satisfaction. The hospital was able to fill long-standing open positions with trusted internal talent. Kari, who completed her training online through the Sanilac Career Center, shared that the flexibility was ideal for her situation as a single parent, and she loves her new role as a Medical Assistant.

By using apprenticeships and strategic funding support, Harbor Beach Community Hospital is not only filling key positions but also creating a workplace culture that values growth, opportunity, and loyalty.

## ADVANCED DECORATIVE SERVICES

### GPTF BOLSTERS **EFFICIENCY**

**Tuscola Co.** - Advanced Decorative Systems (ADS US Inc.) is a global leader in the design and manufacture of decorative plastics for the automotive, medical, and consumer markets. With approximately 57 full-time employees at their location in Millington's Industrial Park, ADS US recognizes the importance of continuous improvement to stay competitive.

Recently, they identified a critical need to enhance their finance and accounting functions. To address this, they determined that Macola software training for five key employees would be a valuable solution for increasing efficiency and better managing operational data.

A Business Solutions Professional from GST Michigan Works! reached out to Wayne Morey, Managing Director, at ADS US to remind them of the upcoming Going PRO Talent Fund FY24 Cycle 1 application period. The timing was perfect, and following the grant award, ADS US was able to proceed with the selected five-module Macola training. All five individuals successfully completed the training.

The five trainees earned certificates in the following Macola modules: Part Costing/Inventory Value, Budgeting, Forecasting, P&L Balance Sheet, and Report Writing & Analysis. ADS US Inc. received a reimbursement for the full Going PRO award amount of \$3,900.00.

Wayne noted, "The training provided a deeper understanding of the Macola system and each module, which can be challenging for reporting and recording accounting data." He also added, "The training hours provided to our employees and management staff have made navigating our ERP system much easier."

## FESSLER & BOWMAN

# INCREASED TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

**Genesee Co.** - GST Michigan Works! has had the privilege of working with Andrea Alvarez at Fessler & Bowman for the last three (3) years. Andrea, the Director of Workforce Development, has taken the team at Fessler & Bowman to new levels. She has made a huge impact as she has single-handedly increased the training opportunities for the employees at the company in her short tenure there.

In the fall of 2022, Andrea decided to apply for the Going PRO Talent Fund. Due to her efforts, Fessler & Bowman was awarded an FY23 Going PRO award of \$175,840. The ability to train a large number of employees with the Going PRO reimbursement energized Andrea to apply again.

Since the company was planning to do the training anyway, this funding allowed Andrea to utilize the Going PRO reimbursement to purchase a simulator trailer. The simulator provides hands-on training to new employees (and current employees) to increase their knowledge of operating heavy equipment. Even our CEO, Jody Kerbyson, had the opportunity to try out the simulator while touring the company's beautiful, new, state-of-the-art facility.

In addition, Fessler & Bowman brought the simulator to the GST Michigan Works! MiCareerQuest East event and it was a huge hit! The students loved the ability to try their hand at operating heavy equipment in a video-game style simulation.



Fessler & Bowman decided to apply for a GPTF FY24 Cycle 1 award and were again successful. This time, they were awarded \$498,000. They were successful in scheduling numerous training courses to capture a total of \$372,000 of their award. They trained a total of 88 apprentices in varying positions, including laborers, operators, carpenters, and cement masons.

During that cycle, there was a \$500 incentive (over and above their grant) for any employer who hired individuals who fit into any of the following categories: older workers, veterans, active military reservists, justice-involved citizens, individuals with a disability, or individuals receiving public assistance. Fessler & Bowman hired twelve (12) individuals age 55 or older and two (2) individuals receiving public assistance, as part of their Going PRO new hires. GST Michigan Works! was able to add \$7,000 to Fessler and Bowman's Going PRO reimbursement.

Andrea shared, ***“Investing in our team's professional development demonstrates the company's commitment to their growth, increasing job satisfaction, and retention. Employees who feel confident in their skills are more engaged, take greater pride in their work, and positively contribute to the company's culture. Building successful, long-lasting relationships with our customers is at the heart of everything we do, and well-trained employees consistently deliver high-quality results, strengthening the company's reputation and positioning us as a continued leader in the industry.”***

Andrea also states, ***“Cindy and Laura continue to set a standard of excellence with every interaction. GPTF has enabled Fessler & Bowman to provide our team with cutting-edge workforce development opportunities. We are so appreciative! Thank you so much! It's always such a pleasure working with you!”***



Thanks to Going PRO grant funding, we're training more apprentices, shaping future leaders through our youth programs, and upskilling our team with hands-on learning that fuels real career growth.

***This investment is building a stronger, safer, and more skilled workforce, ensuring our industry thrives for generations to come.***

Construction isn't just about what we build—it's about who we build, and we're just getting started."

**Andrea Alvarez, Director of Workforce Development**



## CENTURY TOOL AND GAGE

# OPPORTUNITIES TO TRAINING, SUCCESS, AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

**Genesee Co.** - Since 1974, Century Tool and Gage has been a leader in providing high-quality compression and reaction molds for composite components, serving industries ranging from automotive and marine to agriculture. Located in Fenton, Michigan, the company prides itself on its ability to deliver precision molds that meet the highest industry standards, including molds used for high-visibility vehicles like the Corvette, Jeep, and Ford Bronco. Beyond its reputation for excellence in manufacturing, Century Tool's success is driven by an unwavering commitment to workforce development, training, and internal growth.

Century Tool has partnered with GST Michigan Works! for several years to ensure that its employees stay at the top of their game and continue to meet the ever-evolving demands of the industry. This ongoing collaboration has allowed Century Tool to tap into valuable resources, including the Going PRO Talent Fund. Since the introduction of the grant, Century Tool has utilized this funding to provide world-class training opportunities for its team.

"At Century Tool, we believe that training isn't just about keeping up with the times; it's about staying ahead," says Karen, Senior Human Resources Generalist. "We rely on the Going PRO Talent Fund to provide top-tier training for

our employees, enabling us to deliver superior products and maintain our competitive edge in the industry."

The company's dedication to training doesn't stop with technical skills. Century Tool is also deeply committed to fostering internal growth and providing clear paths for career advancement. Through its internal succession planning strategies, Century Tool promotes from within, offering employees the opportunity to advance in their careers while gaining expertise across various facets of the business.

The company's successful apprenticeship program is a key component of this strategy. With the support of GST Michigan Works! Century Tool has been able to recruit, train, and develop apprentices who become integral members of the team. The seamless process facilitated by GST Michigan Works! has helped Century Tool bring in fresh talent while ensuring apprentices receive hands-on experience and in-depth training from seasoned professionals.



Apprenticeships are a win-win for both the company and the employee. Not only does it allow us to develop the next generation of skilled workers, but **it also helps us create a team that is loyal, dedicated, and well-equipped to take on future challenges."**

**Tom, Director of Manufacturing**

Century Tool and Gage's partnership with GST Michigan Works! exemplifies how investing in training and workforce development not only strengthens the company but also supports the local community by providing rewarding career paths in the ever-evolving manufacturing industry.

# UNLOCKING POTENTIAL THROUGH ROBOTICS TRAINING

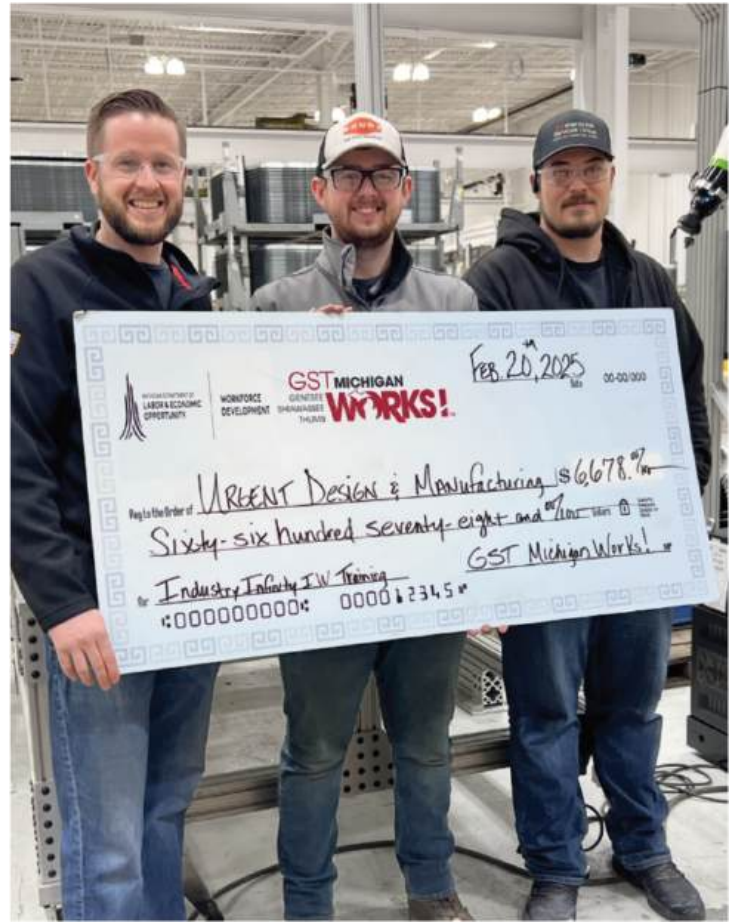
**Lapeer Co.** - Located in the John Conley Industrial Park in Lapeer, Urgent Design and Manufacturing is part of the 3-Dimensional Services Group, known for its cutting-edge engineering and design capabilities. The company specializes in producing high-quality prototype parts for industries ranging from military and medical to automotive, communications, and household appliances.

Recently, Urgent Design found themselves facing a frustrating challenge: their FANUC CRX-Series collaborative robots were significantly underutilized. While they had invested in the robots and the accompanying tablet Teach Pendants (TPs), the ROI was falling short simply because their staff hadn't been trained to fully operate and program the equipment.

During a Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) Fact-Finding meeting, the urgency of the training need became clear. However, relying on GPTF funding could delay the solution, and there was no guarantee of an award. That's when their GST Michigan Works! Business Solutions Professional (BSP) suggested an alternative—the Industry Infinity Incumbent Worker Training (IWT) grant. This is a great illustration of how valuable it is for the system to have the ability to braid funding streams to find the best and most appropriate source for businesses and job seekers.

Working quickly together, the team completed the paperwork and secured approval. Just two weeks later, training was underway. Three employees participated in hands-on instruction and earned certificates in CRX-Series Collaborative Robot Operations and Programming from FANUC Academy. Urgent Design and Manufacturing was reimbursed \$6,678.00 for the training costs through the IWT grant.

The training didn't just deliver skills, it sparked inspiration. One of the trainees, Nate, stated, **“I could compare the training to my cell phone usage. The more you learn about it, the more it can do—and then the more you want to try different things and learn more!”**



After the training, the impact was quickly evident. Maggie, the company's HR Coordinator, shared, **“The class equipped us with essential skills in robotics, particularly with FANUC's CRX series. With automation becoming increasingly vital in modern manufacturing, this training allows us to implement more efficient, precise, and faster production processes. Understanding robotics opens the door to optimizing workflows, reducing human error, and improving safety.”**

She also emphasized the broader value of this investment, “By upskilling the workforce, we can stay competitive in the global market. This increased productivity can lead to greater job security and higher wages within the area, while also attracting more business and potentially new manufacturing clients to the region.”

This serves as a great reminder to BSPs to listen closely to the employer and always be ready to think outside the box. Thanks to quick action and creative problem-solving, Urgent Design and Manufacturing has not only increased the value of their robotic equipment but also empowered their workforce for the future.

## AUTOMATION INTELLIGENCE LLC

# AUTOMATING SUCCESS!

**Genesee Co.** - Automation Intelligence LLC, located in Flint, has become a leader in the world of robotics and industrial automation. The company specializes in providing customers with tailored automation solutions that not only enhance productivity but also reduce operational costs. As the only Genesee County company to receive the 2024 Michigan Companies to Watch award from the Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM) Foundation, Automation Intelligence's success is a testament to the power of innovation, skilled labor, and continuous improvement.

One of the key factors behind the company's success is its commitment to staying at the forefront of technological advancements. With a focus on services like Automation Engineering, Fanuc Robotics, Vision Guided Robotics, and DeviceNet to CANopen Converter Boxes, Automation Intelligence caters to highly customized customer needs. These services require exceptional precision and expertise, and as a result, the company continuously invests in the development of its workforce.

To ensure that its team remains equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly changing industry, Automation Intelligence has partnered with GST Michigan Works! through the Going Pro Talent Fund. This collaboration resulted in a \$34,000 award to support the company's robust training program. The funding has allowed Automation Intelligence to enhance the skill sets of its employees across various critical competencies, including robotics programming, troubleshooting, and systems

integration.

**"Training is crucial for our success,"** said Jeff McGarry, Managing Partner of Automation Intelligence. **"We don't just want our employees to be good at their jobs—we want them to be the best. Continuous training helps our team stay agile, innovative, and capable of making informed decisions on the fly, which is essential in our field."**

The company's emphasis on training not only boosts internal capabilities but also opens pathways for employee growth and career advancement. It ensures that the workforce remains highly employable, not just within Automation Intelligence, but across the broader automation industry. By investing in its people, the company also strengthens its position as a sought-after provider of automation solutions, ensuring the long-term success and satisfaction of its clients.

In addition to workforce development, Automation Intelligence also takes full advantage of the recruiting and talent acquisition resources offered by GST Michigan Works! These services help the company attract top-tier talent, ensuring a steady pipeline of skilled workers who are ready to contribute to the company's continued growth.

Through its partnership with GST Michigan Works! and the Going Pro Talent Fund, Automation Intelligence demonstrates how investing in talent development can propel a business to new heights. The company's dedication to continuous training, its innovative services, and its ability to attract top talent ensure that Automation Intelligence will remain at the cutting edge of the automation industry for years to come.





## GOYETTE MECHANICAL

# CAREER PATH TO SUCCESS

**Genesee Co.** - Since 2021, GST Michigan Works! has been working very closely with Goyette Mechanical in providing successful career paths to their current and future employees. By overseeing their Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) awards and ensuring that trainings are completed following their application, those career paths become stable and easily accessible to their employees. This creates a strong workforce for Goyette Mechanical and Genesee County.

In 2024, Goyette Mechanical was awarded \$437,400.00 through the GPTF. With this award, they were able to train a total of 124 incumbent workers, along with 26 newly hired workers. They were also able to continue the training for 81 current USDOL Registered Apprentices.

Goyette Mechanical's intent is for every employee they hire to be on a career path to be successful at Goyette. Employees trained through the GPTF award all gained skills that make them more valuable to the company and the customers they serve. All employees receive an increased level of responsibility and opportunities, which also results in pay increases. By training employees, it significantly improves their business operations and productivity and reduces downtime for both customers and employees. Goyette can introduce and offer new services to current and potential customers in other markets and increase profitability.

In 2024, Goyette was able to provide a total of \$373,670.00 in training to their employees. Their Going PRO Talent Fund reimbursement check was a very beloved delivery!

What are their employees saying about the training opportunities?

*"Dear Mr. Goyette, I'm writing to thank you for being committed to training your employees. I'm only in period three of my apprenticeship, but I have already learned so much. I'm looking forward to the braze and solder course that Gary is going to put on next month."*

*"I wanted to make sure I thanked you for sending me to the training I went to last week. It was awesome. I'm really excited to use what I learned this AC season."*

*"If anyone is considering the Merlo training, I would highly recommend it. My team who took the training all said they learned a lot and are already using some of the info for one of the next bids."*

Despite ongoing industry-wide challenges, Goyette made progress in employee training throughout 2024. Cherie Parks, HR Director, shared that while scheduling training sessions wasn't always easy, due to limited trainer availability, staffing conflicts, and unexpected illness, Goyette remained committed to upskilling its workforce. Goyette maintained its reputation for reliability while investing in its employees' growth.

Cherie Parks, HR Director, shared that, **"Goyette appreciates all the effort, patience, and support provided by Cindy and Laura at GST Michigan Works! They [GST] are wonderful to work with!"**



## DANIEL ELECTRIC

# EMPOWERING FUTURE ELECTRICIANS THROUGH CLASSROOM TRAINING FUNDING

**Oakland Co.** - Daniel Electric Company has emerged as a leader in the electrical contracting industry, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to quality work and the development of future professionals. With over 40 years of experience, Daniel Electric is not just focused on its business success; it is equally dedicated to investing in the education and training of its apprentices. This commitment has recently been bolstered by the invaluable support of GST Michigan Works!, which has played a key role in maintaining Daniel Electric's Apprenticeship Program.

Recognizing the multifaceted challenges associated with running an apprenticeship program, GST Michigan Works! stepped in to provide essential funding. The organization has awarded Daniel Electric \$14,000 through the Closing the Skills Gap funding initiative. This grant translates to \$1,000 for each apprentice enrolled in the program, significantly alleviating the financial burden associated with high-quality classroom training. This support is instrumental in helping apprentices secure the theoretical knowledge that complements their on-the-job training.

The importance of training apprentices in the electrical trade cannot be overstated. With the industry facing a growing skills gap, integrating comprehensive classroom education is critical. This training equips apprentices with essential information about electrical systems, safety regulations, and cutting-edge technologies that are continuously evolving. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of GST Michigan Works!, Daniel Electric is effectively preparing its apprentices for successful careers while addressing the pressing needs of the workforce.

The benefits of this funding extend beyond the walls of the company; they reverberate throughout the wider community. By investing in education and training, Daniel Electric ensures that well-prepared electricians are readily available for both current and future projects. This investment facilitates job readiness and promotes economic development, empowering young professionals to build meaningful careers in the trades.



Daniel Electric's proactive approach to training is a model for other companies in the electrical contracting sector. By embracing educational opportunities and leveraging available support, businesses can contribute to a sustainable workforce while maintaining high standards of service. The success of the Apprenticeship Program not only enhances the skill set of the apprentices but also enriches the entire community.

As we celebrate this success story, we are excited about the ongoing growth of Daniel Electric's apprentices and their anticipated contributions. Together with GST Michigan Works!, we are not just closing the skills gap; we are lighting the way for the next generation of skilled electricians.

Daniel Electric expressed heartfelt gratitude to GST Michigan Works! for their timely support. The grant has proven essential in funding high-quality classroom training for apprentices, ensuring they receive the education needed to become successful journeymen. The collaborative spirit between Daniel Electric and GST Michigan Works! is a testament to the power of partnership in fostering a skilled, prepared, and thriving workforce.

## VETS ACCESS



### MATTHEW COMPLETES HIS APPRENTICESHIP AS A **RESIDENTIAL CARPENTER SPECIALIST**

**Genesee Co.** - At Vets Access LLC, the Apprenticeship Program stands as a beacon of opportunity in the Home Access industry, particularly for individuals looking to make a meaningful impact on people with mobility challenges. A testament to the program's effectiveness is the journey of Matthew, who recently completed his apprenticeship as a Residential Carpenter Specialist.

Matthew began his journey in the program a year ago, eager to develop practical skills and passionate about contributing to the accessibility solutions that transform lives. Throughout his apprenticeship, he received hands-on training in installing ramps, lifts, and accessible bathrooms, acquiring valuable skills that he can carry forward in his career. Matthew's enthusiasm and dedication shone brightly as he eagerly absorbed knowledge from experienced mentors.

***"The mentorship I received during the program was invaluable,"*** Matthew reflects. ***"It's not just about technical skills; it's about learning to truly connect with clients and understand their needs. This experience has shaped my perspective on the work we do."***

Under the guidance of Vets Access LLC's owner, Daniel P. Corcoran, and the skilled team, Matthew was not only trained in carpentry but also developed a sense of professionalism that will serve him well in his future endeavors. This holistic approach to apprenticeship fosters a nurturing environment where apprentices like Matthew grow not just as tradespeople but as leaders.

Daniel Corcoran expressed pride in the program's outcomes. ***"Matthew's success is a shining example of what we envisioned for our apprenticeship initiative. We are committed to cultivating skilled talent, and seeing apprentices like Matthew grow and advance within our company. This gives us hope for the future."***

A significant aspect of the program's success is the partnership with GST Michigan Works! This collaboration has been integral in connecting Vets Access LLC with a broader network of resources, funding opportunities, and support services for apprentices. GST Michigan Works! has provided critical funding that helps offset training costs, allowing the company to offer high-quality programs without the burden of financial constraints. Additionally, the partnership facilitates access to job placement services, career counseling, and further educational resources, enhancing the apprenticeship experience.

Since completing his apprenticeship, Matthew has transitioned from Operations Manager to Director of Operations/Mentor within Vets Access LLC, contributing significantly to the company's mission and enjoying increased earning potential. He now plays a role in mentoring new apprentices, sharing his experiences and insights to guide others on their journey.

The impact of Vets Access LLC's Apprenticeship Program extends beyond the individual success of apprentices. It has become a vital pipeline of skilled workers trained to meet industry needs. This model enhances workforce development and retention while fostering a culture of loyalty, where employees are invested in the company's values and mission.

The program also promotes workforce diversity, allowing individuals from various backgrounds the opportunity to enter a meaningful career path. The enriched workplace culture contributes to greater innovation and collaboration, benefiting the company and the community.

As Matthew continues to thrive in his role, he exemplifies the program's potential to empower individuals, create lasting change, and address the skills gap in the Home Access industry. "I am grateful for the opportunity provided by Vets Access LLC and GST Michigan Works!," Matthew shares. "I look forward to what's next, and I'm committed to making a difference in our community."

Matthew's journey through Vets Access LLC's Apprenticeship Program illustrates the profound impact of hands-on training, mentorship, and career development. It is a story of personal growth, professional success, and a brighter future for those in need of accessible living solutions. The partnership with GST Michigan Works! has further strengthened this initiative, ensuring that apprentices receive the support they need to thrive and succeed.



## DEBORA SMITH ENERGY PARTNERS, INC.

# ENERGIZING LEARNING: ON-THE-JOB TRAINING SUCCESS

**Sanilac Co.** - Debora Smith Energy Partners, Inc. is a women and veteran-owned supplier of replacement parts and equipment for nuclear energy plants and the Defense Logistics Agency. Specializing in the replacement of legacy components and custom-fabricated parts, they offer innovative solutions for general obsolescence, including reverse engineering activities. The company prides itself on prioritizing safety, quality, and project management processes, which enables it to provide excellent customer service while executing complex and challenging orders.

The company was awarded a \$2,000 grant for On-the-Job Training (OJT) to help support the development of their new hire, Jaclyn. Jaclyn completed 120 hours of training as a receipt inspection logistics administrator.

Due to the nature of Debora Smith Energy Partners' business as a job shop (rather than a standard production facility), they manage thousands of unique items in their system, with more being added daily. The role of the receiving inspector is vital and requires extensive knowledge due to the variety of parts and shipments the company handles. Understanding the specific critical characteristics of each item and knowing what to include in inspection reports takes time and experience.

In this role, Jaclyn must locate the job file for each incoming order, match it to the appropriate vendor purchase order, and identify the correct part number.

Once identified, she is responsible for completing the receipt inspection report. On the shipping and logistics side, Jaclyn must comprehend customer purchase orders, including special packaging and documentation requirements. For government purchase orders, this often means ensuring the correct packaging codes, specialized labels (such as barcodes, QR codes, or RFID), and adhering to stringent cybersecurity protocols. Some outgoing items also require test and repair reports, certifications, or tamper-evident packaging. Parts may need to be hand-labeled, stamped with ink, or tagged individually, adding to the complexity of the job.

Despite the high demands of this multifaceted role, the company is thrilled to have Jaclyn on board. Debora Smith, President and CEO, shares,

**“We are excited to have Jaclyn as part of our team and deeply appreciate her contributions toward achieving our shared goals. Her role in shipping and receiving is invaluable, as it streamlines our operations and allows us to dedicate more time and energy to driving the growth and expansion of our business.”**



## HURON INC.

**Sanilac Co.** - Founded in 1943, Huron Inc. has grown into one of North America's largest producers of tubular assemblies and precision machined components. Their commitment to quality and customer service has made them Ford's largest powertrain supplier. However, as skilled employees retire, Huron faces the challenge of replacing their expertise, which has taken years to develop. To address this, they reinstated their USDOL Apprenticeship program in 2015 and prioritized employee training through credentials and college credits.

The Going PRO Talent Fund has been instrumental in helping Huron meet these workforce development goals. In 2024, they received a \$142,262.56 grant, the largest training grant they have ever received, to train 77 individuals. The funding enabled them to train 41 current employees, all of whom received pay increases, with some even earning promotions. The grant also helped onboard 27 new machine operators through On-the-Job Training (OJT) and funded college tuition for nine apprentices.

Huron's training covered a wide range of technical skills. Apprentices took courses at St. Clair County Community College (SC4). The courses were varied and included topics like Semiconductor Devices & Circuits, Machine Tools, Programmable Logic Controllers, and Electrical Power & Control Circuits. FANUC training included Robot Operations, Maintenance, and Programming, equipping employees to manage automation systems and troubleshoot issues with the company's new FANUC

## MANUFACTURING HURON INC.'S FUTURE

SCARA robots. The Winslow Engineering Drill Pointer training was essential after three senior tool grinders retired, enabling less experienced employees to operate and maintain drills, improving tool life and product quality.

Additionally, employees participated in courses through Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (MMTC), including Blueprint Reading, 5S Application Training, and Lean Six Sigma Yellow and Green Belt certifications. Blueprint reading training improved supervisors' ability to identify and address issues, while 5S training helped operators organize their work areas for better efficiency. Lean Six Sigma training led to significant improvements, with Green Belt-certified employees driving projects that increased efficiency from 90.5% to 98.4% by year-end.

HR Manager Kayla Kinnee emphasized the importance of these training efforts, stating,



The results go beyond financial benefits. **Training helps develop the current workforce into future leaders.** We're grateful for this opportunity and hope the state continues to offer these grants."

Reinvesting in employees is a key lesson Huron has learned, as these skilled workers are crucial to maintaining and operating the advanced machinery that drives the company's success.

## KAPPEN TREE SERVICE

**Tuscola Co.** - Kappen Tree Service (KTS) is a woman-owned business located in the rural Thumb Area of Michigan. They provide line clearance services to keep the power on, working with clients such as DTE Energy, ITC (International Transmission Company), and TEC (Thumb Electric Cooperative). Fun fact: On average, KTS clears 3,000 miles of line per year!

As with many businesses, KTS faces the ongoing challenge of training both current and new apprentice employees. The cost of training can drain employer resources, but with the release of the Going Pro Talent Fund (GPTF) grant application approaching, KTS saw an opportunity. Through discussions and a fact-finding session, it became clear that the GPTF could help cover a portion of their training costs.

After working together on the paperwork, numbers, and timelines, KTS was awarded the GPTF grant. This allowed the company to continue apprenticeship training for 101 current employees and hire 16 new apprentices, totaling 117 trainees. Once all required documents were obtained and submitted, the grant reimbursed KTS a total of \$409,500.00 for successful Tree Trimmer/Line Clearance apprentice on-the-job training.

Jason, Owner/Partner of KTS, shared, **“With the help of the grant, we were able to teach our employees the proper techniques for staying safe and efficient. All of**

**our tree trimmers go through an apprenticeship with IBEW Local 17, and they are evaluated before moving up through their 5-step apprenticeship. With each step, there’s a pay increase. Thanks to the extra training, our apprentices have been able to pass their evaluations more easily, ensuring they stay on track and receive the proper wage increases.”**

As a highlight of their accomplishments through GPTF training, Jason added, **“The additional training has not only increased safety but also efficiency. When you improve safety and efficiency, the natural result is increased production. Having a safe and efficient workforce makes it easier for a company like ours to secure and retain work!”**

Jason also emphasized, **“Getting this grant has been a game changer for KTS. It has allowed us to accomplish things we had only talked about. Now we’ve made it happen. The proof is in the field: our employees are doing one of the most dangerous jobs every day, and we all feel confident that they have the tools and training to do it safely and efficiently.”**

While projecting the number of employees who may meet the grant requirements can be subjective, Jason encourages others not to shy away from applying. **“Go for it! You may not know exactly how it will turn out, but the potential payoff is worth it.”**



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# LEARN & EARN

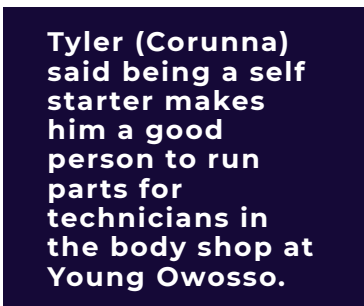
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## SPRING TRAINING

WIOA participants knocked it out of the park during Spring Training at the Shiawassee RESD in March. Julianne Ackerson from LAFUCU provided students with valuable information on financial literacy, covering the basics of banking, loans, and interest, how to keep their financial information safe, and how to recognize financial scams. Students also learned how to hit a home run with a successful job interview by practicing answering common interview questions and identifying good questions to ask an employer. A selfie station helped students identify and highlight the strengths they bring to a job. Additionally, two community agencies, GST Michigan Works! and Michigan Rehabilitation Services, were featured, and students learned how their services could benefit them. At the end of the training, students completed an online job search and learned how to apply for postings using the Pure Michigan Talent Connect website at [www.mitalent.org](http://www.mitalent.org).



**Damie (Owosso) identified skills that make him a good employee for the Shiawassee Family YMCA.**



**Tyler (Corunna) said being a self starter makes him a good person to run parts for technicians in the body shop at Young Owosso.**

## STUDENTS AT WORK

### THANK YOU TO OUR EMPLOYERS!

- Ace Hardware of Durand,
- Dietrich's Flower Shop
- Durand Senior Care & Rehab Center
- Gilbert's Hardware and Appliance
- Lunghamer Ford of Owosso,
- Magoo's Pet Outlet
- Memorial Healthcare
- Owosso Public Safety
- Pleasant View Shiawassee County Medical Care Facility
- Shiawassee Family YMCA
- Sunnyside Florist,
- Young Owosso
- Vernon True Value Hardware.



**Abura is helping create beautiful things at Sunnyside Florist.**



**Matthew is helping Lunghamer Ford of Owosso in the shop.**



**Ace Hardware of Durand is looking great thanks to Noah.**



Cooper is assisting in the office at Owosso Public Safety.



Jaylee is learning about the floral industry at Dietrich's Flower Shop.

Dylan is helping the Vernon True Value Hardware stay stocked.



Morgan assists at the Durand Senior Care and Rehab Center.



Logan is assisting the Same-Day Surgery department at Memorial Healthcare.



Dakota helps get the new Magoo's Pet Outlet ready for customers.

Kaylee is making the residents' days a little brighter at Pleasant View SCMCF.



Natalie helps keep items stocked at Gilbert's Hardware and Appliance.



**CONGRATS TO OUR GRADUATES!**  
**WE WISH YOU ALL THE BEST WITH YOUR FUTURE PLANS!**



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