

TALENT TALK

December 2025 | Volume 9, Issue 2



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

Advancing Employers | Enhancing Talent



REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

61.6K
Job Postings

728
Occupations

7.1K
Employers

4.1K
Locations

74.7%
Employed At Exit

Real-Time Intelligence Report - Online Job Ads 07/01/2025 - 09/30/2025 # Active Job Ads

Registered Nurses	5,902
Retail Salespersons	2,867
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	2,418
Medical and Health Services Managers	1,624
Stockers and Order Fillers	1,297
Social and Human Service Assistants	1,221
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	1,097
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	1,097
Fast Food and Counter Workers	1,077
Nursing Assistants	904
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	885
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	884
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	873
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	756
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	720
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	606
Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	586
Production Workers, All Other	576
Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	575
Medical Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	574
Human Resources Specialists	552
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	539
Teaching Assistants, Preschool, Elementary, Middle, and Secondary School, Except Special Education	533
Medical Assistants	525
Securities, Commodities, and Financial Services Sales Agents	520
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	517
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	516
Physical Therapists	512
Customer Service Representatives	511
Speech-Language Pathologists	500
Cashiers	497
Pharmacy Technicians	485
Food Preparation Workers	470
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education	424
Receptionists and Information Clerks	368
Personal Care Aides	366

 **10,636**
Page Likes

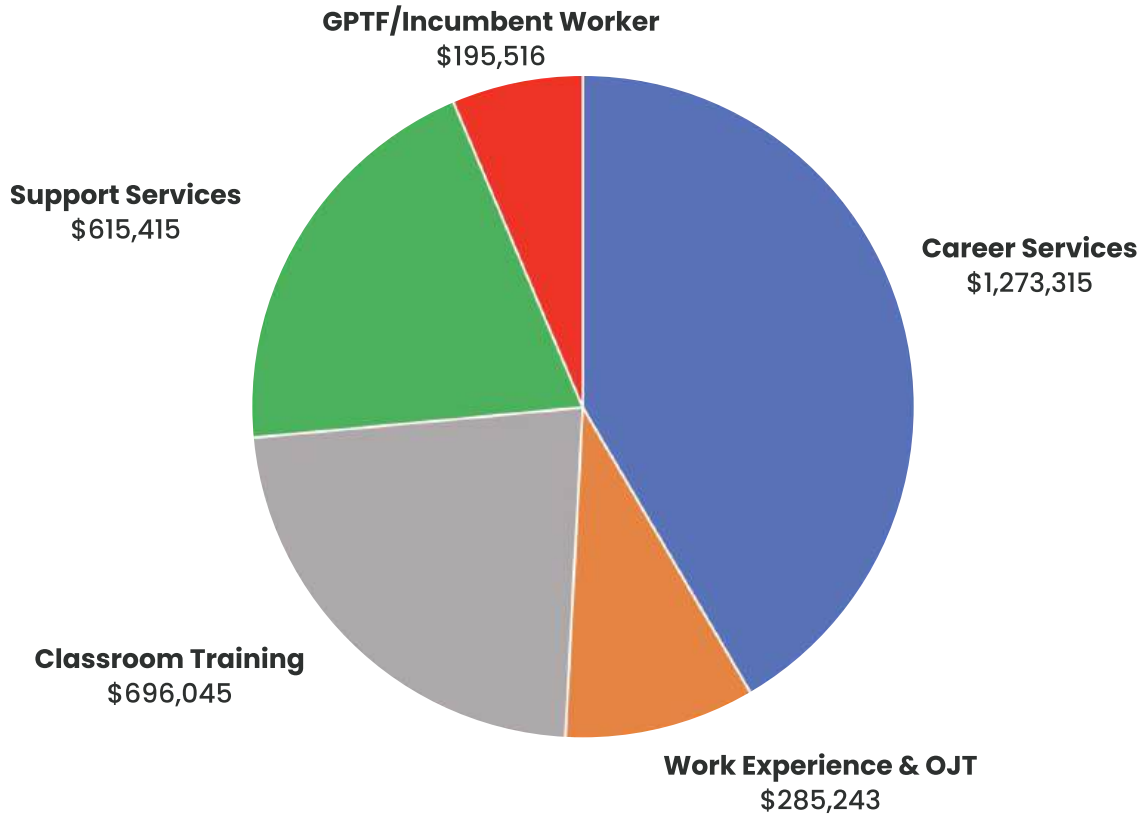
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Followers

 **700**
Followers

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

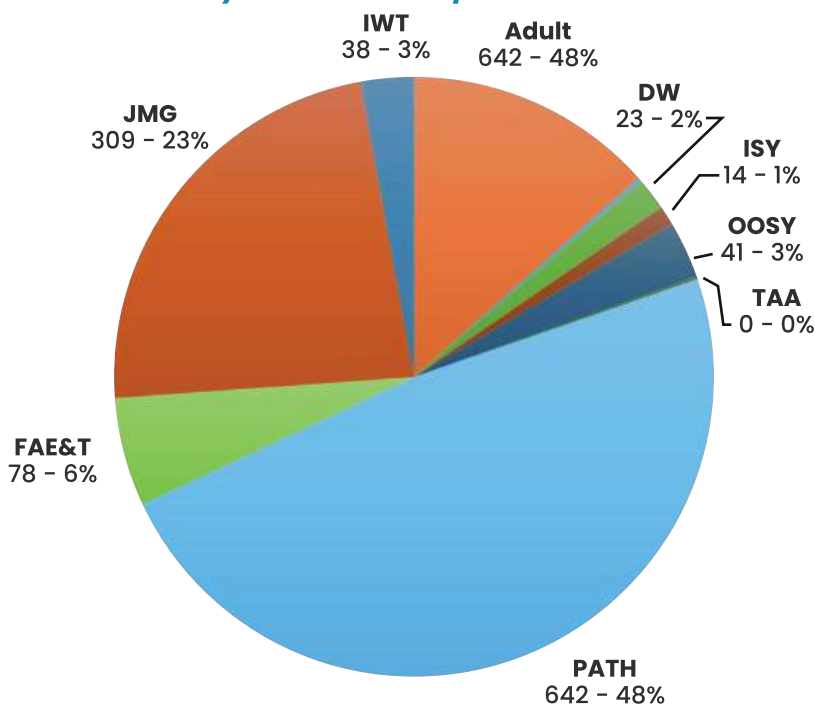
CAREER SERVICES & PARTICIPANT PAYMENTS

July 1, 2025 - Sept. 30, 2025



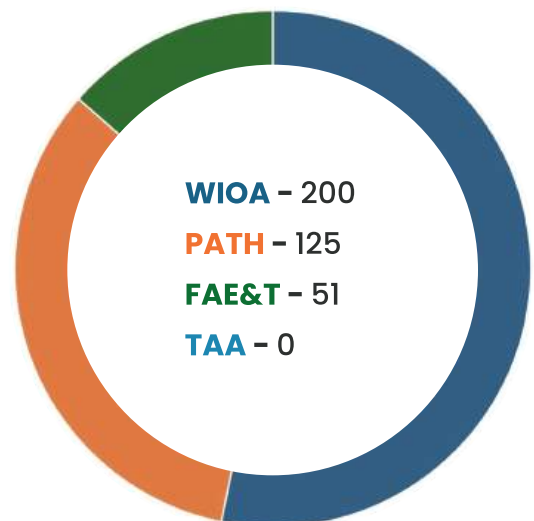
NEW ENROLLMENTS

July 1, 2025 - Sept. 30, 2025



ENTERED TRAINING

July 1, 2025 - Sept. 30, 2025



EMPLOYEE SUCCESS STORIES

BREAKING BARRIERS

Genesee Co. - Trinity had a steep mountain to climb. She wanted to break into the HVAC industry as a technician. When speaking about it, she said, "As one of the most male-dominated industries to get into with a very competitive job market, it felt like something unattainable for me." However, with a little help, she was able to break through barriers to achieve career prosperity.

Before connecting to GST Michigan Works! (GSTMW) Trinity worked as a server at a local restaurant. She knew she didn't want to pursue a long-term career in food service and wanted a more fulfilling career. She came into GST MI Works! looking for career information on different opportunities related to trades.

At GST MI Works! she was referred to Mrs. Michael's Plumbers, Electricians, and HVAC Technicians. At Mrs. Michael's, their goal is to support and empower women to join and work in the trades! "I started riding along with experienced technicians at Mrs. Michael's shortly after that. And after a couple of months of training, I was able to start working in the field doing maintenance on customers' HVAC systems," Trinity commented on how quickly everything has happened since her first trip to GST MI Works!

Trinity told us,

"After speaking with some of the people at [GSTMW], I learned that I do qualify for a couple of programs that would help me start learning and training to become an HVAC technician."

With funding through the Young Professionals Plus program, GST helped pay for her training for 8 weeks while allowing her to also collect a paycheck while gaining experience at Mrs. Michael's. She was also provided support to purchase tools and clothes, along with her Chauffeur's License!

Today, Trinity is thriving in her new career, breaking down barriers and proving that with determination—and a little help—anything is possible.





DRIVEN BY A PASSION TO SUPPORT & UPLIFT OTHERS

Lapeer Co. - Audra came to GST Michigan Works! in Lapeer with credits toward an associate degree but needed additional support to complete her education. Her professional experience was primarily in service and retail, yet she aspired to make a difference in business management, with a particular interest in non-profit organizations and the meaningful work they do.

During her time with GST Michigan Works!, Audra successfully navigated transitions between case workers and stayed focused on her goals despite changing expectations and personal challenges. She worked closely with her career coach to refine her resume and cover letters and applied tirelessly to positions across multiple industries.

Her persistence paid off when she secured a position at McLaren, where she embraced the opportunity to begin her career in a new direction. Today, Audra contributes her skills and dedication in a clerical support role, helping those in need while continuing to learn and grow professionally.

Audra also achieved academic excellence, earning her associate degree in legal studies, summa cum laude. One of her biggest challenges was balancing full-time work, full-time school, and the responsibilities of being a single parent. Her family served as her inspiration, providing the strength to persevere and achieve her goals.



LANDING A FULFILLING CAREER

Genesee Co. - Before coming to GST Michigan Works!, Chaddwick worked at a local factory where he found little opportunity for growth or advancement. Wanting more for his future and determined to make his late grandmother proud, he turned to GST Michigan Works! for a new direction and a lasting career.

To take full advantage of the resources available, Chaddwick enrolled in both the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) program and the Out-of-School Youth program. Through these programs, Chaddwick received comprehensive support, including funding for training and additional support.

In June, Chaddwick completed his training, and by July, he was hired as a welder at Ultra Aluminum. His hard work, punctuality, and dedication quickly paid off; he earned a \$1.50 raise soon after starting.

Today, Chaddwick loves what he does and is proud of how far he's come. He's grateful for the support that helped him turn a job into a fulfilling career.



RECREATING THE NARRATIVE OF MY LIFE

Genesee Co. – Arrion came into the PATH program with a mindset that she was stuck and lacked the ambition to reach for more fulfillment than just a job. She shared that she only looked forward to the weekends, which became a problem and a conflict when caring for her family. She also noticed the depression it created. She could not see past the current rut she felt stuck in. Arrion’s background was full of temporary employment in the manufacturing industry, but her passion was to serve people, be social with her customers, and gain employment growth.

Arrion entered the PATH program on July 2nd, 2025. Her immediate barriers were the lack of childcare, transportation, work attire, and motivation. She continued to meet with her Career Coach weekly to create and make sense of an action plan that would assist her in reaching her goals. The first step was to secure childcare and then polish her resume. Arrion took full advantage of the resources provided and took accountability for her path. She resolved the childcare barriers and humbly accepted the challenges that were given to her. She received funding support to assist with clothing and mileage. While shopping for work attire, she accepted an

interview with Forman Mills and was hired on the spot. She also received assistance with a car purchase. Arrion started employment at Forman Mills as a customer service/ sales associate on August 14th, 2025.

“Before I met my Career Coach, I found myself going through the motions every day and fulfilling tasks that were never aimed toward my goals. I was expecting a roadmap and a list of instructions. Instead, I received a question that carries me every day. “What do you want your professional legacy to be?” I believe my coach saw skills and strengths in me that I had dismissed, because I was only after a job, and I had no plan for my career. Her coaching encouraged me to take a leap of faith. Today, I am not just in a new job and role, I am building my legacy.”



A STORY OF DETERMINATION & NEW BEGINNINGS

Huron Co. – Aaron walked through our doors in February 2025 with a clear goal and strong determination. At the time, he was working as a Sugar Specialist with Michigan Sugar, a seasonal role that left him laid off each year. With a family to support and a desire for stable, year-round employment, Aaron knew it was time for a change.

His plan was ambitious but focused: obtain his CDL-A license. Aaron showed commitment and wasted no time completing the necessary steps: securing his drug test, DOT physical, and temporary permit.

Understanding the financial strain that comes with changing careers, GST Michigan Works! was proud to support Aaron by helping cover the costs of his physical, drug test, temporary permit, and tuition for CDL training. With this support, Aaron was able to stay focused on his goal without the added burden of financial stress.

Aaron completed his training and earned his CDL-A. He is now on the road to a stable and rewarding career that will allow him to support his family throughout the entire year.

DRIVEN TO SUCCEED

Genesee Co. – Before joining the Young Professionals Program, Davia was already working and managing to stay financially stable. But beneath the surface, she was fighting much harder battles, both mental and physical, as she navigated life as a single mother.

After losing her son’s father, Davia faced the heavy responsibility of raising her child alone. Without her parents and with only a small circle of family for support, she often carried the weight of everything on her own. Breaks were rare, and most days revolved around work and caring for her son. Yet through every challenge, Davia’s determination never wavered. Her friends, cousins, sisters, and especially her son became her greatest sources of strength, helping her push forward and keep faith in a better future.

When Davia connected with GST Michigan Works!, staff helped her access additional programs and support, including Jobs for Michigan’s Graduates (JMG), WIOA, and the Young Professionals Program. Through these programs, Davia received career coaching, soft-skills training, and paid work experience with Hurley Medical Center, where she gained valuable on-the-job experience and confidence. She also received assistance with work clothing and ongoing career guidance to help her reach her goals.

Balancing motherhood while building a career has not been easy, but Davia continues to rise to the occasion. One of the biggest lessons she has learned through this journey is the importance of communication and perseverance.

“Never doubt yourself. And if you’re having a hard time, call your specialist!”
Davia shared.



FINDING HER TEAM

Sanilac Co. – Carrie has always had a desire to help others. That interest guided her through several roles, as a Certified Nurse Assistant, a Dental Assistant, and a Paraprofessional.



With two young children to support, she took pride in her work but knew she needed to secure a full-time position with reliable benefits. The challenge was bridging the gap from her varied assistant positions to a more stable career path.

Carrie was already familiar with GST Michigan Works! through financial literacy and resume workshops offered by a Youth Career Coach who visited her high school. When she decided to pursue certification as a Medical Assistant, a field that would allow her to continue helping people while providing better pay and benefits, she knew exactly where to turn.

In January, Carrie visited the GST Michigan Works! office in Sanilac County. There, she connected with a Career Coach who listened to her goals and scheduled her for an orientation. Her Career Coach quickly directed her to the Sanilac Career Center, where a Medical Assistant class was set to begin in just a couple of weeks.

Carrie jumped at the chance. She successfully completed the class, demonstrating her dedication and aptitude for the medical field. Her hard work paid off, and she found her new professional home with the team at Aspire in Deckerville.

This career change was transformative for Carrie and her family. She received a \$5 an hour increase in pay and moved from a part-time, school-year-only schedule to a full-time, year-round position with benefits. With the help of GST Michigan Works!, Carrie achieved the stability and professional growth she had been striving for, while continuing to pursue her passion for helping people.

SECOND CHANCES

Genesee Co. – Anthony was referred to GST Michigan Works! (GSTMW!) via Catholic Charities' Reconnect Program. At his orientation, he shared his determination for a second chance and not wanting to let his past define him. He was working part-time at Golden Corral and wished to get his CDL-A license, but couldn't afford the training.

Anthony knew a CDL-A license would open a path to full-time work and a career. In January 2025, he started CDL-A training at Polyservice Driving School. GSTMW! paid his tuition and helped with clothing and mileage costs. During training, Anthony kept his job at Golden Corral.

He finished training in March 2025 and immediately looked for a CDL-A job. After some seasonal work with Broadlines, gaining experience, he sought new opportunities. "I'm already working on my next step," he said. It didn't take long, and within a week, he joined Lee's Transportation, working 40 hours a week at a great wage. His new job required a GPS, which GSTMW! provided to ensure his future success.

Today, Anthony continues to work at Lee's Transportation. He expressed gratitude, stating,

"This program changed my life. It helped me make the complete 180 I was trying to do. You (GSTMW!) are really showing that you want to help people in the community. I love my job. I was able to get a second chance thanks to GSTMW!"

With his dedication and the support available to him, Anthony is now doing something he enjoys and is building a brighter future.



HALEY'S CAREER JOURNEY

Huron Co. – Haley first visited the office on August 13, 2024. At the time, she was balancing two part-time jobs, one as a childcare provider and the other as a waitress, demonstrating strong dedication and a great work ethic.

Haley wanted to work in the medical field. She enrolled in the Clinical Medical Assistant program at Tuscola Tech Center, which she attended from August 26, 2024, to January 15, 2025.

During that time, she also completed a 160-hour externship with Scheurer Hospital, gaining valuable hands-on experience in a clinical setting.

Support was provided to assist her in overcoming financial barriers. This included help with tuition costs,

scrubs, and mileage reimbursement. She also qualified for youth incentive funds for completing her training/earning credentials and securing full-time employment.

On January 30, 2025, Haley took the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) certification exam but missed passing by just two points. Undeterred, she prepared thoroughly and retook the exam on August 20, 2025. Her determination paid off; she passed and officially became a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant (CCMA).

Today, Haley is working full-time in her field, earning a higher wage and advancing steadily in her healthcare career.

UNSTOPPABLE: ANGELA'S PATH TO EMPOWERMENT

Genesee Co. – Born and raised in Detroit, Angela was adopted from foster care at age three. Her early years were marked by instability, frequent moves, and challenges that forced her to grow up quickly. Despite these hardships, Angela remained focused on building a better future and graduated from high school in 2020 with a full scholarship to Wayne State University, where she began studying nursing.

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, Angela's perspective began to shift. She realized that nursing might not be the path for her. In 2021, her life changed dramatically when her adoptive mother suffered a sudden stroke and passed away. Feeling more alone than ever, Angela had to pause her education and focus on meeting her basic needs. She faced periods of homelessness and uncertainty, but she never gave up on her dreams.

In search of a career that would offer growth and stability, Angela explored various jobs in different locations before discovering the Job Corps program in Flint. There, she earned a Level 1 Carpentry certification, gaining hands-on skills and a renewed sense of confidence. Though challenges remained, Angela stayed determined to move forward and focused on building a stable life, securing her own place, and buying her first car.

Her determination to pursue job readiness and employment opportunities led to an unexpected breakthrough. A mistaken phone call from GST Michigan Works!, originally intended for another youth, ended up reaching Angela instead. After clarifying the mix-up, she immediately expressed her interest by saying, "If it has anything to do with work, I'm interested."

That moment opened the door to new possibilities. After meeting with a specialist, Angela was enrolled in the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) program, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the Young Professionals program. She was selected as one of the 2025 Summer Young Professionals and quickly distinguished herself in the first two weeks through her leadership, maturity, and drive during workforce preparation.

Recognizing her potential, she was placed in a newly opened position and began gaining valuable hands-on experience through a paid work opportunity with Action Management, where she provided administrative support.

Angela enjoyed the work so much that she shifted her focus at Job Corps from Carpentry to Office Administration. She is now being considered for a permanent full-time position.

Through GST Michigan Works!, Angela also received personalized support, including professional attire, to help her confidently enter the workforce. Her administrative skills continue to grow, and full-time employment is within reach.

Today, Angela is pursuing a certification in Office Administration through Job Corps and a degree in Holistic Health at Mott Community College. From foster care and homelessness to steady employment and higher education, Angela's journey is a powerful example of never giving up, embracing opportunity, and growth.

Her story continues to inspire other young people who face adversity, showing that no matter what the obstacles, it is possible to reclaim your future and create lasting change.





AN UPDATE FROM SHELBY

Huron Co. – It’s hard to believe it’s already been a year since Shelby became a Pharmacy Technician at Walgreens! With support from GST Michigan Works! programs, she turned her dream into reality, progressing from student to intern to full-time certified Pharmacy Technician. Here’s what Shelby has to say about her first year on the job:

“I came to share the news of my first anniversary with Walgreens! One year ago, I was about a month into classes and freshly employed. Over the past year, so much has happened! From passing my test to position change/promotion to pay increase to employee of the month, and so much in the middle. This has been the greatest year thanks to your programs helping me get started! I love my job, coworkers, boss, and customers. Thank you again for all the help and support!”



TRANSPORTATION BARRIER REMOVED!

Tuscola Co. – Brandon, a single father working full-time, faced a significant challenge in maintaining reliable employment without having his own vehicle. He worked at an AFC home for six years and continued to excel in his current position. After losing transportation, he was solely reliant on family to provide transportation to and from work. With this barrier to employment, Brandon had a difficult time coordinating daily rides to arrive at work on time. Without a vehicle, even the simplest tasks – getting to work on time, taking his kids to school, or running errands – became daily challenges. This barrier put his employment and his ability to support his family at risk.

On Brandon’s behalf, his employer reached out to their local GST Michigan Works! (GSTMW) service center to ask for help. The employer was concerned about his transportation barrier and the potential of losing a great employee. With perfect timing on his side, a GSTMW career coach met with Brandon to explain new funding from a special grant, which could provide him with the opportunity to purchase a vehicle. After discussing the requirements of the program, Brandon quickly found an allowable vehicle to purchase at Bell Wasik. This assistance lifted a major burden! It would not only allow him the ability to get to and from work, but also allow him the freedom to transport his children to school and appointments and focus on building a brighter future for himself and his children. His new vehicle isn’t just transportation – it represents freedom, stability, and opportunity. It has given Brandon the ability to succeed at work, care for his family, and move forward with confidence.

FROM GRADUATION TO A HEALTHCARE CAREER

Genesee Co. - When Corrieonna joined the PATH program, she held a clear goal: finishing high school. She enrolled in Vision for My Life to earn her diploma. Though it was a major barrier, she didn't face it alone.

With PATH's support, she re-enrolled, stayed motivated, and overcame challenges. On September 13, 2025, she received her high school diploma, a milestone of academic and personal achievement.

The PATH program played a pivotal role in her journey, offering barrier resolution services and ongoing support that helped her stay focused and empowered. Her story is a testament to what's possible when determination meets opportunity.

Now, she's ready to conquer her next goal, taking the first step towards a career in healthcare by enrolling in phlebotomy training at Soaring CNA Training Center, with classes beginning on October 20, 2025; this next step will help her earn the credentials needed to pursue employment in the healthcare field, a path she's deeply passionate about.

Her journey continues, and we couldn't be prouder of the progress she's made and the future she's building.



SMILING BRIGHT INTO A NEW CAREER

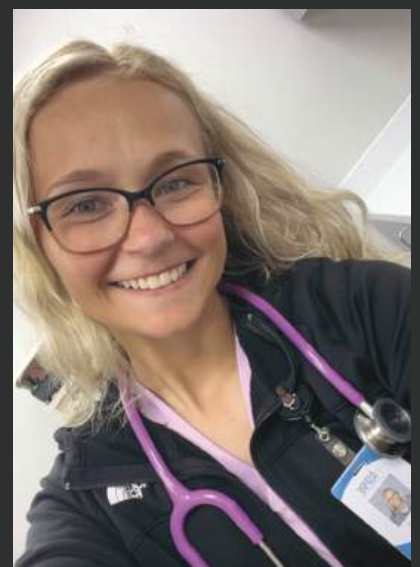
Huron Co. - Jordyn visited GST Michigan Works! in search of a new career path. After working part-time as a CNA, she was ready for a change. When she learned that the Sanilac Career Center offered training for Certified Medical Assistants, she knew exactly which direction she wanted to take.

With approval from GST Michigan Works! in Huron County, Jordyn enrolled in the program at the Sanilac Career Center. She began her training in February 2025, completed the course on May 20, 2025, and passed the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) exam to become a Certified Medical Assistant.

By July 14, 2025, Jordyn had secured full-time employment as a Certified Medical Assistant at

Aspire in Bad Axe. She now earns \$3 more per hour than in her previous role, is working full-time, and will soon receive medical benefits.

**Jordyn is
thrilled
with her
new
career—
and her
smile
says it all!**



FROM THE COURT TO THE ROAD

Genesee Co. – After years of traveling the world as a professional basketball player and later serving his community as a substitute teacher, Dominez was ready to begin a new chapter that offered long-term stability, freedom, and a fresh sense of purpose.

In March 2025, he was referred to his Career Coach by a former client who had received WIOA funding for CDL-A training and had found success in the trucking industry. Inspired by his friend's journey and ready for a change, Dominez decided to pursue a long-standing interest in becoming a professional truck driver.

With the help of WIOA and Michigan's Electric Vehicle Jobs Academy funding, Dominez enrolled in the Public Works Academy training at Mott Workforce Development and partnered with 160 Driving Academy to earn his CDL-A license. He began training on April 7, 2025, approaching this new opportunity with the same discipline and focus that fueled his athletic career.

To help reduce the barriers that often come with career transitions, Dominez was provided with gas, mileage assistance and auto repair funding, allowing him to stay focused and committed throughout his training.

Dominez completed the program on June 10, 2025, and just a few weeks later, on July 1, 2025, he began his new career as a Professional Driver with Granger.



Dominez stated, "Transitioning from basketball to truck driving wasn't easy, but I knew I wanted a career with stability and freedom. **With the support I received during training, I didn't have to walk the road alone.** Now I'm driving toward a better future. This is my second chapter, and I'm excited for what's ahead. And a special shout-out to my Career Coach, Angel. I appreciate her for always believing in me, guiding me, and making sure I had the support I needed every step of the way."

Dominez's story is not just one of career change; it's a powerful reminder that it's never too late to start over. His journey from the basketball court to the open road proves that with the right support, determination, and vision, the next chapter can be just as fulfilling as the first.

VETERAN COMMUNITY HEALTH EVENT

Sanilac Co. – GST Michigan Works! was proud to participate in the first-ever Sanilac County Veteran Community Health event, hosted by the Sanilac County Department of Veterans Affairs at Sandusky High School. The event brought together local resources, including Michigan Rehabilitation Services, area hospitals, and the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Office, to connect veterans with the support they need. About 50 veterans attended, and having so many organizations under one roof created opportunities for information sharing that will benefit the broader veteran community for years to come. Plans are already underway to host the

event again next year, with hopes of reaching an even more diverse group of veterans.



PAVING A NEW PUBLIC-WORKS CAREER PATH

Genesee Co. – Jacob knew he wanted a career, not just another job, but didn't know how to get there. After cycling through low wages, part-time work, and struggling to find stability, he was at a standstill. "I was doing what I could to get by," Jacob said. "But I didn't have a plan. I didn't have direction."

That started to change when he walked into the Flint GST Michigan Works! Service Center and connected with a career coach. "The services and coaching process were straightforward and well worth the investment of my time," said Jacob. He was eligible for training!

However, getting into the Public Works Academy training was only part of the process. His career coach helped him sort out short and long-term goals, improve his resume, and prepare for interviews in the public sector.

Jacob focused, applied himself, and persevered over the few challenges he encountered while in the maneuver yard for the CDL-A portion of the training. He successfully completed that training, along with his OSHA 30 and CPR certifications.

Jacob entered employment with the Genesee County Road Commission, working forty hours a week and earning a good wage with benefits. He received additional funding for cold-weather outerwear and boots. Without that assistance, he said, the timely transition into employment might not have been possible. His first full-time job offers a clear pathway for advancement.



"It feels like everything I worked for finally came together," Jacob said. "This isn't just a job. It's a future."

THE ADVENTURE SEEKER

Huron Co. – After graduating from Bad Axe High School in 2021, Carson went off to college and earned a degree in a field he later determined he had no passion for. In an effort to become more fulfilled, he joined the U.S. Air Force and trained as a Munitions Specialist for the National Guard Reserves.

When Carson returned home from training, he realized he wasn't happy spending his days indoors at his current job. What truly motivated him was hands-on work, being outdoors, and operating heavy machinery. That's when he set his sights on truck driving and decided to pursue his CDL-A license.

Carson came to GST Michigan Works! seeking help to make his goal a reality. He met with a Career Coach, who discussed his barriers and options with him. The challenge was clear, how could he balance CDL training, commuting to a full-time job out of town, and fulfilling his duties with the Reserves? Confident in his abilities, Carson developed a detailed plan to manage it all and enrolled in the CDL program at Thumb CDL, LLC.

Determined and focused, Carson dedicated his weekends to training and completed the program in less than three months. He passed his CDL road test with flying colors and officially received his CDL-A license.

Carson began working for a friend while searching for the right long-term opportunity, one that would challenge him and align with his passions. Before long, Kappen Tree Service hired him as a Woodsman Driver, offering a large hourly wage increase and full health benefits. Though his career path took a few turns, Carson found the adventure he was looking for.

TIME CHANGES *BUT THE AMERICAN DREAM DOESN'T*

Lapeer Co. – When Karla was just four years old, her parents immigrated to the United States with hopes of building a better life and giving their daughter opportunities they never had. Though they faced challenges adapting to a new language and culture, they never doubted their decision to pursue the American dream.

Karla attended school like any other child and, despite language barriers, graduated from high school. She began working in agriculture and customer service before marrying and starting a family of her own. For several years, she stayed home to raise her two young daughters, but her desire to further her education never faded.

She knew that education and a stable immigration status were key to achieving the life she envisioned. In 2019, she studied diligently for the U.S. citizenship exam and proudly became a citizen. This was a milestone that reignited her determination to pursue a professional career. Soon after, Karla connected with GST Michigan Works! and enrolled in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program to pursue her dream of becoming a dental hygienist.

Although she was initially accepted into a dental

hygiene program, Karla later realized her true passion was in physical therapy. With guidance and encouragement from her career coach, she transitioned into a Physical Therapy program, which aligned perfectly with her strengths and goals.

Throughout her journey, Karla remained committed, balancing family life, rigorous coursework, and internships with unwavering determination. Her husband and daughters provided constant support, inspiring her to keep going even during the most demanding moments.

After four years of dedication and hard work, Karla graduated with honors, earning a high GPA and the admiration of her instructors. Even more rewarding, she was hired by the hospital where she completed her internship.

Karla is the first in her family to graduate from college, a milestone that fills her with pride and gratitude. She sees her achievement not only as a personal victory but as a promise to future generations — to show that with perseverance, education, and community support, the American dream is still alive and attainable.

It was a great honor for us [GST Michigan Works!] to be part of this dream!

CHANGE IS ON THE ROAD AHEAD OF YOU

Sanilac Co. – Jesse inherited his family's business, Timber Wolf. He worked tirelessly to support his family and maintain his family's company. However, it was becoming increasingly difficult to do that without being able to afford benefits for his growing family.

That was when Jesse decided to visit GST Michigan Works! and enroll in the WIOA program. He needed assistance paying for his CDL-A training. Jesse started training at Thumb CDL in July 2024. He stayed persistent while still working full-time. In March 2025, Jesse received his CDL and started his journey to find employment.

For the first few months, he struggled with finding something. However, in June 2025, Jesse started at



Blattner Energy as a Truck Driver. While he has a significant commute to work, he started his new employment with benefits. Jesse is gaining great on-the-job experience and is creating a whole new life for himself and his family.

GOING THE DISTANCE

Genesee Co. – Qwonda faced challenges related to her background and financial barriers, but she was determined to create a better life. At the time, she was unemployed and eager to earn her CDL-A license. After being out of work for over two years, she completed the Workplace Excellence workshops in GST Michigan Works! Flint Service Center, which she found very beneficial.

In September 2024, Qwonda began her CDL-A training at Polyservice Driving School. GST Michigan Works! was able to support her by covering tuition costs, MDOT/DT requirements, training clothing, and mileage reimbursement during her training. Through persistence and hard work, Qwonda successfully completed her CDL-A training in November 2024.

After finishing her training, she began searching for employment but faced difficulties due to her background. She felt discouraged when opportunities slipped away. She just wanted someone to give her a chance. Despite these setbacks, Qwonda didn't give up. In June 2025, her determination paid off when she secured a full-time position at Corning, earning a great wage and benefits.

When transportation challenges arose due to her job being 55 miles from home, GST Michigan Works! stepped in again. We assisted her with a vehicle purchase through the Talent & Growth Initiative so she could continue working.

Today, Qwonda is thriving in her position at Corning. She expresses deep gratitude for the program, saying,

"I am glad I came through the program and was able to receive the assistance I did. It changed my life for the better."

Through her perseverance and desire for self-improvement, Qwonda overcame her barriers and laid the foundation for a successful future.

FROM DEAD END TO UNLIMITED OPPORTUNITIES

Huron Co. – Shannon, a wife and mother of two teenagers, was working two jobs when she first came to GST Michigan Works! in Bad Axe. She had spent several years in the healthcare field, caring for others while managing operations and staff. At the time, Shannon was employed as a Home Manager at Faith Flushing Associates, a residential home in Caro, Michigan. Unfortunately, her employer did not offer health benefits, and the facility was preparing to close permanently.

Shannon had long been interested in becoming a Clinical Medical Assistant (CMA) but needed certification to enter that career path. She came to GST Michigan Works! for help with training to earn her CMA credential. Shortly after she began her training, the residential home where she worked closed, reducing her hours from full-time to just 15 per week. Although she filed for unemployment benefits, the temporary income was not enough to support her family of four.

Working closely with her Career Coach, Shannon was awarded WIOA funding to help cover tuition, mileage reimbursement, and the cost of scrubs and supplies, including a stethoscope. Her coach also assisted her with updating her resume and cover letter to strengthen her job search.

During this time, Shannon secured a part-time position at the Scheurer Health Fitness Center, which opened the door to a future promotion into a Medical Assistant role.

After completing her training and successfully passing the National Healthcareer Association (NHA) exam, Shannon applied for a CMA position at Scheurer Primary Care in Pigeon and was offered the job.

Today, Shannon is thriving in her new position. She continues to help others, support her team, and has become a vital member of the Scheurer Health family.

FROM PIZZA TO OFFICE PROFESSIONAL

Shiawassee Co. - Anna came to the GST Michigan Works! Owosso Service Center in May 2025 seeking a more stable career path. At 22, she was a high school graduate with no post-secondary education or certifications and a work history of part-time, low-wage positions in food service and at car dealerships. When she connected with GST Michigan Works!, she was working part-time as a crew member and delivery driver at a local pizza shop—a temporary role she took to pay bills and build savings while she searched for a long-term opportunity. Despite the job’s challenges, Anna consistently showed up early, took on extra tasks, and was known for her professionalism, strong work ethic, and excellent customer service. During this period, she was staying with family while striving to become self-sufficient and secure a full-time career that would allow her to live independently.

Though unsure what was in store for her, Anna knew her endgame. She wanted to find a career that interested her. With that goal-driven mindset, she walked into GST Michigan Works! After meeting with the JMG coach and taking steps to assess her needs, a discussion began immediately about the value of Paid Work Experience (PWE) opportunities. With the help of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) Out of School Youth (OSY) funding and Career Coach, Anna began applying at places with the potential of getting work experience training there.

After applying at several locations, the City of Owosso HR Director interviewed her for an office position and expressed an interest in hosting her paid work experience. Anna was excited about the opportunity and was able to get everything completed to start her new position on 5/29/25. During the experience, Anna received help from WIOA funds to assist her with mileage and other support. In her downtime, Anna worked diligently to learn everything she could, including the completion of Essential Customer Service Skills through the WorkKeys Curriculum.

After the first few weeks, Anna’s supervisor stated, “She is a very hard worker; she asks for more work when she anticipates that she will have everything done. She is dependable, and her work has been above average. She’s been great.” At her 30-day evaluation, her supervisor stated that she continued to perform above-average work and was learning various aspects of the job, including working through difficulties that arose. At her 60-day review, she again received high commendations in every area, and her supervisor shared that they were interested in hiring her directly once she completed the work experience. Eager to get established in an office career, Anna began looking for potential employment opportunities with other organizations, as well.

Anna’s paid work experience was completed on 8/27/25. Her above-satisfactory performance led to her being offered an Office Assistant position with the City of Owosso, which she gratefully accepted. She was hired directly, earning a great wage, 35 hours a week, with benefits starting the next day! Her hard work, resilience, and confidence transformed even the humblest beginnings into a powerful success story. Anna walks with great pride and purpose around the City of Owosso. She has now become a trusted member of their team and is often praised for her cheerful attitude and a job well done. She expressed appreciation for this amazing opportunity and the support that she received in getting to where she is today. Anna’s story is just beginning!



PATHWAY TO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Tuscola Co. – After working as a dedicated schoolteacher, Terri’s life took an unexpected turn when unforeseen medical issues forced her to step away from the career she loved. On top of her health challenges, she was navigating a new chapter as a single mother, determined to provide stability for her young daughter.

Unsure of her next steps, she connected with the PATH program through GST Michigan Works! With their encouragement, resources, and one-on-one support, she began to rebuild her confidence and explore new career opportunities that aligned with her passion for helping others.

Through the program, Terri was introduced to a position as a Behavioral Technician at Thumb Area Psychological Services. The role allowed her to utilize her background in education in a new and impactful way, working closely with individuals in need of behavioral and educational support.

Terri has continued to advance in her new field and is currently preparing to take her certification exam to

become a Certified Behavioral Technician. Following certification, she will begin a three-semester university program to earn her degree in Applied Behavioral Analysis. Upon completion, she will receive a substantial pay increase and take on greater responsibilities within her organization.

It’s an exciting time for Terri, who says she loves her work and finds it deeply rewarding to help children overcome the challenges of autism. Today, she is thriving in her career, proud of the progress she’s made, and grateful for the support system provided by GST Michigan Works! that helped her move forward with confidence and purpose.



FROM MACHINIST TO TRUCK DRIVER

Huron Co. – Tyler came to our office with a clear goal in mind: to build a better future for himself and his child by transitioning from his role as a machinist to a career in truck driving.

Recognizing both the financial and logistical challenges of making such a significant career change, we were able to assist Tyler with tuition, drug testing, and licensing/testing fees to help make his goals more attainable.

Tyler began training in January and completed it in May 2025. With hard work and commitment, he gained the skills and certification needed to start a new chapter in his professional life.

Tyler officially began working full-time as a Truck Driver and Soil Sampler with Cooperative Elevator. He is now working 55 hours a week, demonstrating a strong work ethic and a commitment to his new career.

We are proud to have played a part in his journey and wish him continued success on the road ahead.



BUILDING SKILLS FOR TOMORROW: LUKE'S CNC OPERATOR AND PROGRAMMER REGISTERED USDOL APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM SUCCESS WITH ARCH CUTTING TOOLS

Genesee Co. – Luke has successfully completed a Computer Numerical Control (CNC) Operator and Programmer apprenticeship program with Arch Cutting Tools in Flushing. This achievement marks a pivotal milestone in his career within the manufacturing industry, highlighting his dedication to professional growth and skill development.

Throughout the apprenticeship, Luke gained practical and theoretical knowledge of CNC operations. The program provided him with extensive hands-on experience in setting up, programming, and operating CNC machines to produce precise components for diverse industrial applications. He also learned advanced machining techniques and the complexities involved in modern manufacturing processes.

Support from GST Michigan Works! played a vital role in Luke's success, offering essential resources, guidance, and valuable connections that enhanced his apprenticeship journey. The collaborative efforts between Arch Cutting Tools and GST Michigan Works! fostered a nurturing environment where Luke was able to excel. Mandi Klatt from Arch Cutting Tools expressed her appreciation, stating,

"This apprenticeship pathway offers employees an excellent opportunity to achieve academic success while maintaining full-time employment." She further added, **"We are grateful for the support of the GST Michigan Works! team and everyone involved in making this program a success."**

Luke's unwavering dedication and eagerness to learn did not go unnoticed. He received mentorship from seasoned professionals at Arch Cutting Tools, who shared their industry insights and best practices. This mentorship not only sharpened his technical skills but also reinforced a strong work ethic and a

commitment to excellence.

As Luke completed his apprenticeship, he emerged as a highly skilled CNC Operator and Programmer, ready to take on new challenges within the manufacturing sector. His accomplishments demonstrate the impactful role of apprenticeship programs in cultivating the next generation of skilled workers.

Now, as he advances in his career, Luke is energized by the numerous opportunities ahead. His journey exemplifies the effectiveness of vocational training and the importance of supportive industry partnerships. Luke's story is an inspiring example of how dedication, mentorship, and collaborative efforts can pave the way for success in the manufacturing industry.



ATHERTON HIGH SCHOOL APPRENTICESHIP WALL

Atherton High School has proudly unveiled a new Apprenticeship Program Wall near its gymnasium, showcasing union apprenticeship opportunities across the skilled trades. The wall was created using apprenticeship postcards provided by GST Michigan Works!, giving students a visual reminder that high-demand, high-wage career pathways are within reach





JMG LAUNCHES 2025–2026 SCHOOL YEAR WITH HIGH-ENERGY SUMMER EMPLOYMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

GSTMW! & GISD JOB'S FOR MICHIGAN'S GRADUATES PROGRAM PARTNERSHIP

Empowering Tomorrow's Workforce Today

Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) jump-started the 2025–2026 school year with a high-impact, four-week Summer Employment Training Program that brought together students from 16 local high schools. Held throughout July, the program offered paid workforce development opportunities supported by grant funding through GST Michigan Works!, blending practical job training with personal and professional growth.

This dynamic program wasn't just about clocking hours—it was about preparing students for long-term success. With a strong focus on employability, leadership, and life skills, participants rotated through three core cohort areas designed to build a solid foundation for both immediate and future goals.

COHORT HIGHLIGHTS

1. Pre-Employment and Workplace Readiness

Led by Genesee Intermediate School District staff/ JMG specialists, Carrie Blanchard and Denise Tucker, this cohort delivered essential skills training—from resume writing and mock interviews to dressing for success and mastering financial literacy. A special highlight was the tour of Mott Community College, where students explored post-secondary pathways and resources to help them plan their futures with confidence.

2. Teamwork and Leadership

Facilitated by Base Camp instructors Alex Boylan and Ibrahim Sene, this high-energy track focused on communication, collaboration, and leadership development. Students participated in team-building challenges that promoted trust and problem-solving, culminating in a high ropes course experience that pushed them outside their comfort zones and helped them realize their potential.

3. Life Skills

Healthy Schools Healthy Families instructors Sarah Kennedy and Lauren Kennedy provided hands-on lessons in healthy living. From navigating grocery store layouts to cooking nutritious meals in GCI's kitchen, students gained practical skills to support their well-being now and in the future.

Real-World Work Experience

Perhaps the most transformative part of the program was the real-world job placements with local business partners. Students gained valuable, paid experience in a variety of industries, including:

-  **Retail** – Gabe's
-  **Food Service** – Red Lobster
-  **Automotive** – Randy Wise
-  **Nature & Education** – For-Mar Nature Preserve
-  **Nonprofit Logistics** – Eastern Michigan Food Bank

These placements allowed students to apply what they learned in their cohorts directly to the workplace. From professional communication to teamwork and adaptability, the on-the-job experience offered students a realistic and rewarding look into today's workforce expectations.

Year-Round Engagement

The momentum doesn't stop with summer. JMG continues to support student success throughout the school year. Participants can stay involved by joining work experiences, attending college tours, FAFSA workshops, leadership events, and more. Many of these opportunities will be led by the JMG Student Leadership Team—students nominated by their peers to shape and guide the year's programming. With programs like these, JMG isn't just preparing students for jobs—it's equipping them for bright futures.



GST MICHIGAN WORKS! CAREER COACHES BRING INCREDIBLE HEART AND DEDICATION TO THEIR WORK THROUGH THE JOBS FOR MICHIGAN'S GRADUATES (JMG) PROGRAM.



Every day, this passionate and caring team goes the extra mile to guide, mentor, and inspire young people as they prepare for life after high school, whether entering the workforce, pursuing further education, or launching a meaningful career. Their efforts help students build essential skills, discover their potential, and gain the confidence to reach their goals. Each summer, our Career Coaches have the opportunity to attend the JMG Summer Summit, an uplifting event that connects coaches from across the state for professional development, collaboration, and some well-deserved fun. The experience reignites their enthusiasm and reinforces the incredible impact they make in shaping Michigan's future workforce.



SUMMER SUCCESS: YOUNG PROFESSIONALS 2025

JOBS FOR MICHIGAN'S GRADUATES – GSTMW! GENESEE PROGRAM

This summer, our team had the privilege of hosting ten young adults, ages 18–24, as part of the Young Professionals program. Each participant was dual-enrolled in both Jobs for Michigan's Graduates and the WIOA Youth Program, giving them access to robust career readiness training, meaningful work experience, and supportive services to help them transition successfully into the workforce.

One of the highlights of the program was the opportunity for young people to engage with our virtual reality technology. This immersive experience allowed them to explore a variety of career paths, participate in hands-on simulations of real-world job environments, practice industry-specific tasks, and gain a deeper understanding of the skills needed to thrive in their chosen fields.

Thanks to a wonderful partnership with Hurley Medical Center, all ten participants were placed in 10-week paid work experience positions. Lydia Sanchez-Roat, Director of Volunteer Services & Project Leadership, met individually with each youth to learn about their passions and long-term goals. She thoughtfully matched them with roles designed to provide meaningful, career-aligned experiences. Placements included Urgent Care, the Surgical

Lounge, Pediatrics (as Patient Pals), Volunteer Services, the Lobby Shop, Hurley Garden, and the FARMacy. Through these roles, participants developed patience, attention to detail, customer service skills, effective communication, teamwork, and a strong sense of workplace professionalism.

Before beginning their work placements, the youth spent two weeks on-site with our team building foundational skills. During this time, they completed the Workplace Excellence series, which covered topics such as Dependability, Presentability, Communication, Adaptability, Positive Thinking, and Emotional Intelligence. They also earned their OSHA 10 General Industry certification. In collaboration with the Talent Development Center, each youth created an updated resume that included their Young Professionals experience.

One particularly inspiring activity was the creation of Vision Boards. At the end of the program, each participant shared their board and spoke about their aspirations for the future. This exercise helped shift their focus beyond the workshop setting and into a space of possibility, allowing us to begin setting goals that align with the futures they envision.

ACTIVITIES & GUEST SPEAKERS

Brooke Summers, *The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan*, provided a fast-paced work experience preparing food boxes for mobile community distribution.

Kevin Galloway II, *ELGA Credit Union*, led a session on financial planning, budgeting, and the importance of saving. Several youth used their first stipend checks to open bank accounts with ELGA.

Jennifer Keasler, *The Crim Foundation*, introduced mindfulness practices and simple exercises to help youth stay present and manage stress.

Dante Jennings, *Genesee Health Systems*, spoke about mental health and the importance of emotional regulation in everyday life.

LaDelvin Walker, *GST MI Works!*, shared her inspiring journey of perseverance, including earning her GED later in life and building her career at GST MI Works!

Act (WIOA) funding through GST Michigan Works! With support from these programs, Bella developed essential life skills and work readiness. Within six months, she achieved her GED, gained employment, and built the confidence to speak publicly. She actively participated in JMG Leadership Day, Legislative Day, graduation events, and even spoke at her local City Commissioners' Meeting.

Now 17, Bella continues her growth as a member of JMG, attending weekly Life Skills Classes and exploring apprenticeship opportunities. She has completed driver's education and is scheduled to visit Pipefitters Local 636 to gain insight into the trade and potential career pathways.

Over the course of her journey, Bella has transformed from a shy, reserved young woman into a confident leader who actively seeks new experiences and hones her leadership skills.

"From earning her GED to mastering the road, from building life skills to stepping into leadership, Bella has turned every milestone into a stepping stone—proving that determination transforms goals into greatness." — **Joe Davis, JMG Specialist**

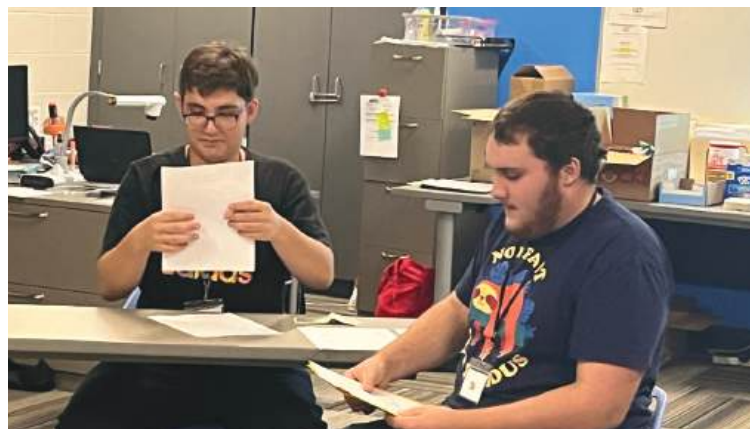
Thanks to the support of JMG and GST Michigan Works!, Bella now has a job, the opportunity to join a union, and a bright future ahead.

We encouraged each participant to apply what they learned throughout the program—building relationships, gaining confidence, and laying the groundwork for future career opportunities. The growth we witnessed was remarkable, and we're excited to see where their journeys take them next.

THE SHY STUDENT TO CONFIDENT LEADER

Tuscola Co. – At 16, Bella Conatser walked into the Family Literacy Center (FLC) with no diploma, job experience, or transportation. She had limited life skills and lacked self-confidence. Her initial goal was simple: earn her GED. Along the way, she joined Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) and discovered she was eligible for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity





MiCareerQuest™

EAST MICHIGAN

MiCareerQuest East 2025 was a tremendous success, bringing together **265 industry professionals** who showcased over **100 high-demand occupations** to inspire the region's future workforce. **2,176 students from 52 school districts** registered to attend the event on October 22, 2025, gaining hands-on exposure to careers in advanced manufacturing, health sciences, construction, and more. The collaborative effort among educators, employers, and community partners demonstrated the power of experiential learning in workforce development. Planning is already underway for next year's event, scheduled for **October 21, 2026, at the Dort Event Center.**





SUPPORTING SAFE & SKILLED AGRICULTURE IN MICHIGAN'S THUMB

Huron Co. - GST Michigan Works! has partnered with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) over the past year to make pesticide certification testing more accessible to agricultural workers in Michigan's Thumb region. Through this partnership, the GST Michigan Works! Bad Axe office now serves as an official MDARD pesticide testing site, administering more than 120 certification exams to date.

The pesticide certification process ensures that individuals applying pesticides, whether private farmers, commercial applicators, or those working under supervision, understand the principles of safe and effective pesticide use. Certification is required by both state and federal law for anyone applying or

supervising the use of restricted-use pesticides. It safeguards not only the health of the applicator but also the broader community and environment.

Most participants using the Bad Axe testing site are currently employed, often referred to by their employers or operating as self-employed farmers seeking to maintain compliance and professional credibility. Testing is completed online through MDARD's system, with participants registering via Michigan.gov/MDARD and selecting Bad Axe as their preferred location. On test day, GST Michigan Works! staff verify each applicant's identity, ensure testing integrity, and provide the necessary materials and quiet space for completion.

Before this partnership, agricultural professionals often had to travel long distances to testing sites in cities like Flint, Grand Rapids, or even the Upper Peninsula. By hosting the service locally, GST Michigan Works! helps reduce travel barriers, strengthen compliance, and support the continued growth and safety of the region's agricultural sector. This collaboration underscores GST Michigan Works! commitment to connecting resources, training, and opportunity, helping sustain Michigan's agricultural workforce.



EMPLOYER SUCCESS STORIES

EPIC MACHINE

SMALL BUSINESS, BIG REWARDS

Genesee Co. - GST Michigan Works! has had the pleasure of working with Epic Machine since 2018. Epic is home to 17 CNC Turning Centers and 9 CNC Milling Centers. They have diversified their customer base to include not only the automotive industry, but also agricultural, construction, rail, medical, food, wind, solar, municipal, and military industries. Since 2018, GST Michigan Works! has watched as Melinda Keway grew into her role and learned the business from her dad, Mike Parker. Now, as President of Epic Machine, Melinda has ensured the business continues to grow and expand under her leadership. The company has been interested in the Going PRO Talent Fund for quite some time, but because of internal changes and various other factors, they did not apply until 2024. Much to their surprise, they were awarded a total of \$15,620! The funding has allowed them to train a total of 10 incumbent workers in 5S

Application, Lead Auditor, Value Stream Mapping, and Lean Simulation. All courses were completed through the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center.



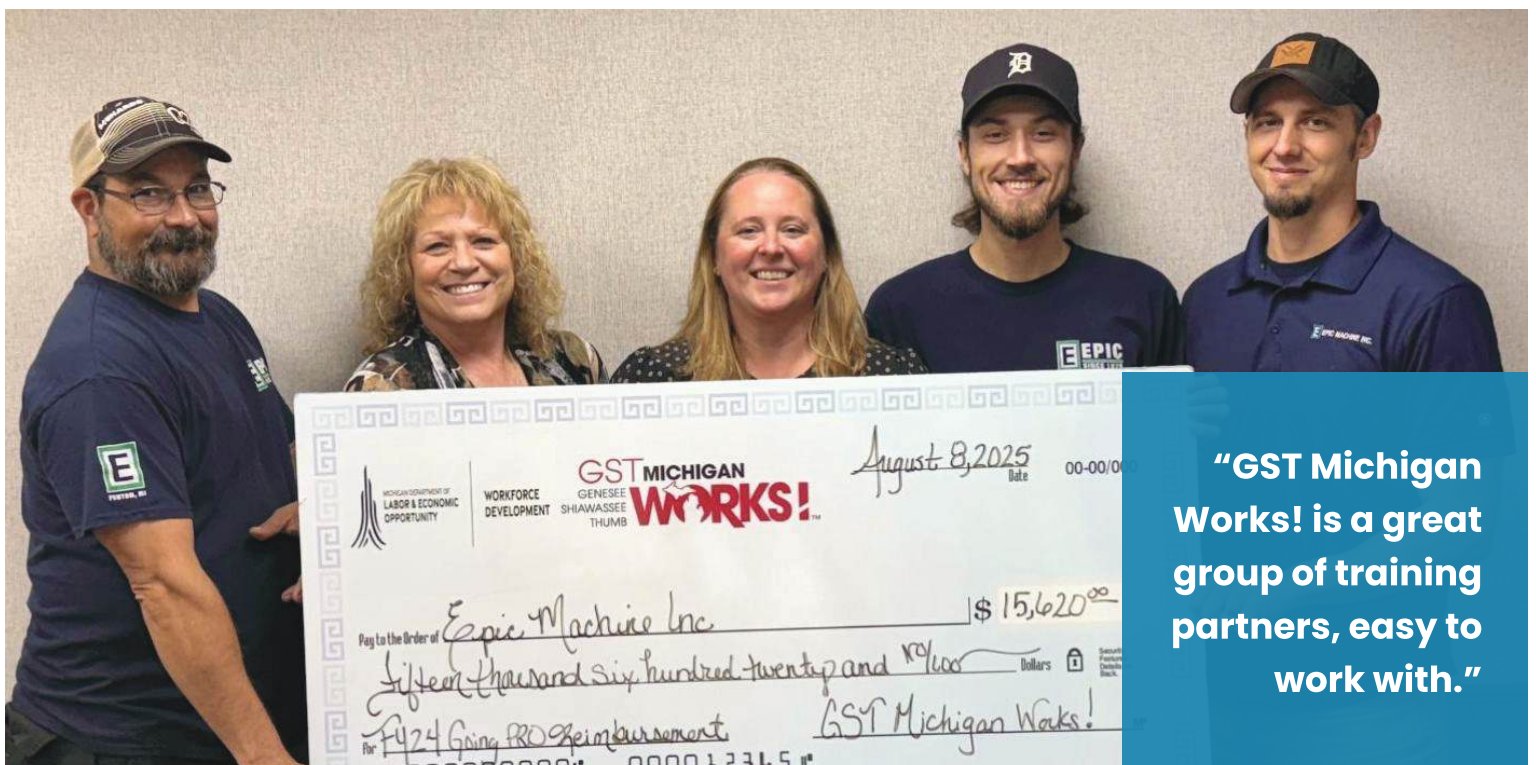
Melinda Keway stated,

"The training our staff attended was primarily focused on Lean Manufacturing, and we found the training was a huge morale boost to the staff. They enjoyed going off campus, but also really enjoyed the in-house classroom courses as well."



The training has boosted employee morale and engagement at Epic Machine, with several employees now organizing the shop to put their learning into practice.

Melinda also states, "I have found if you continually offer, even small, training courses that keep employees engaged and feeling like they are helping to contribute to the success of the company and themselves, it really helps with employee retention."



"GST Michigan Works! is a great group of training partners, easy to work with."

BLUE DIAMOND STEEL CASTING

EMPOWERING TECHNICIANS, ELEVATING PRODUCTION

Huron Co. – Blue Diamond Steel Casting, a veteran-owned business in rural Huron County, is the world’s leading producer of high-quality, shot-backed, large shell-molded steel castings for critical industries such as mining, construction, and railroads. To maintain superior quality and innovative solutions, the company recognized the need to reinvest in technology and workforce skills, particularly in automation and robotics.

After discussing their training needs for robotic operations and On-the-Job Training (OJT) for apprentices and new hires, Blue Diamond Steel Casting applied for a Going PRO Talent Fund Grant.

Through the grant, the company was able to send two employees to Fanuc Handling Tool Operations/ Programming training, two employees to Rockwell Automation Training, provide OJT funding for one apprentice, and 11 new employees!

The training has had a significant impact on employee skills and confidence. Muriel, HR Manager, said,

*“The Rockwell Automation Fair allowed our technicians to gain a deeper understanding of their field. **These new skills broaden their capabilities and give them confidence when approaching previously uncertain situations. The credentials gained provide written confirmation of their skills and achievements, and Fanuc training has enabled employees to perform duties that were previously outsourced.**”*

Ronald and Miquel, Rockwell Automation participants, shared, “The seminars were incredibly insightful. We learned new techniques for machine repair and

gained exposure to a broad spectrum of industry practices. This training has helped us innovate, improve productivity, and stay current in an evolving industry.”

Brian and Heather, Fanuc trainees, explained, “Learning how to perform maintenance on our robots has reduced the company’s reliance on outsourcing. Since completing Fanuc Academy training, we successfully repaired two robot wrist issues, preventing the need to replace the robots entirely. Machine downtime has decreased, allowing for greater productivity. The training also taught us safe disassembly and repair techniques, which have been invaluable.”

The training has produced many measurable outcomes for Blue Diamond Steel Casting, including: faster robot repairs and reduced machine downtime, reduced outsourcing and associated costs, increased technician confidence and expertise in automation and robotics, successful deployment of a new camera system for early defect detection, reduced scrap, and enhanced ability for employees to train others and share knowledge internally.

By investing in employee development and leveraging the Going PRO Talent Fund, Blue Diamond Steel Casting has strengthened both its workforce and operational efficiency. The company continues to position itself as an innovative leader in steel casting while empowering employees with the skills and confidence to excel.



CUSTOM AIR HANDLING

Genesee Co. – When Custom Air Handling Solutions set their sights on expanding operations, they found the perfect opportunity in Burton, where they purchased a 50,000 square foot facility to manufacture custom-engineered air handling units and hydronic packages. These advanced systems, designed for heat recovery, dehumidification, and energy recovery, are in high demand across the country.

To prepare the facility for production, Custom Air needed to hire two skilled tradespeople: a certified welder and a journeyman electrician.

Representatives from Custom Air Handling Solutions contacted the Flint & Genesee Group, who quickly connected them with GST Michigan Works! for workforce support.

Through this partnership, GST Michigan Works! helped identify, hire, and onboard two experienced professionals: a certified level 1 female welder and a journeyman electrician.

To support the company's immediate workforce needs, GST Michigan Works! developed an On-the-Job Training (OJT) plan, which resulted in \$4,400 in grant reimbursement to offset onboarding and upskilling costs.

"We are excited to be in Burton, and we have already found great local talent, vendors, and support," said Jason Kinney, General Manager of Custom Air Handling Solutions, in an interview with ABC12. "We are looking forward to years of growth and connection to this community."

Custom Air's investment is expected to generate nearly 70 new local jobs, offering starting wages of \$25/hour plus benefits. Their expansion into Burton also brings significant economic growth to the region, supported in part by a \$410,000 performance-based grant from the Michigan Business Development Program.

As they continue to grow, Custom Air Handling Solutions remains committed to working with GST Michigan Works! to build a strong, local workforce and drive long-term success in Genesee County.

URGENT DESIGN



GOING PRO TRAINING BOOSTS ROBOTICS EXPERTISE

Lapeer Co. – In the fast-paced world of advanced manufacturing, keeping up with the latest robotics technology is essential to maintaining efficiency and competitiveness. For Urgent Design, a company that utilizes both FANUC and KUKA robotics in its production processes, training employees on these sophisticated systems was a critical need.

Support from the Going PRO Talent Fund enabled Urgent Design to send seven employees to receive advanced training and certification through FANUC Academy and KUKA Robotics Corporation. This training provided hands-on experience in programming, robotic welding, and operations — key skills that enable the company to handle programming in-house and significantly reduce turnaround time.

"Without the Going PRO funding, we would have only been able to train one or two employees," a company representative shared. "Being able to certify seven team members has made an incredible difference. We've strengthened our ability to maintain consistent production levels and minimize downtime."

The impact of the training has gone beyond productivity. It has empowered employees with new skills, improved efficiency, and enhanced the company's capacity to stay ahead in a rapidly evolving industry.



FERNCO, INC.

ADVANCING WORKFORCE EXCELLENCE THROUGH GOING PRO TALENT FUND FY24 AWARD

Genesee Co. - Fernco, Inc., a leader in the manufacturing of flexible pipe connectors and solutions, has exemplified its commitment to workforce development and operational excellence through its successful implementation of the Going PRO Talent Fund. By investing strategically in both current employees and new hires, Fernco has leveraged this funding to build technical skills, leadership capabilities, and advanced manufacturing knowledge across its organization. Fernco maximized its impact by hiring and training 25 new employees, who each received structured on-the-job training totaling 143 hours per trainee. This \$50,000 investment provided essential hands-on instruction in roles such as Injection Machine Operator, strengthening Fernco's production workforce and operational agility. Recognizing the importance of data literacy in modern manufacturing, Fernco enrolled multiple employees in cutting-edge digital training programs: Python Programming, Power BI, and Data Analysis & Reporting. The courses included Get and Transform Data with Power Query and Python Interactive

Dashboard Development. In total, over 16 employees were trained in data technologies, with certifications from providers including Koenig and Coda Bears, Inc. Over 40 employees participated in supervisor development courses, including Supervisor 2.0 and Supervisor 3.0, delivered by the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center (MMTC). These sessions equipped frontline leaders with the tools to foster team productivity, resolve conflicts, and manage operational performance. Training programs such as Systematic Injection Molding, Standard Work, Human Machine Interaction, and Manufacturing Skills Development were also conducted, reinforcing Fernco's drive for lean, efficient, and technically competent operations. Fernco utilized over \$111,000 of the award, directly supporting over 140 employees through a blend of online, onsite, and classroom instruction. The company's training plan demonstrated strategic foresight, with targeted training that aligns with current and future business needs. This award is a highlight of Fernco's commitment to upskilling its workforce and creating training avenues to lead successful new hires to be more efficient in hiring practices and to cut down on turnover.

HURON CASTING

HURON CASTING, INC. **INVESTS IN WORKFORCE** **EXCELLENCE THROUGH GPTF**

Huron Co. – Founded in 1976, Huron Casting, Inc. produces high-quality shell-molded steel castings. The company has grown every year since its inception and now operates over 1.5 million square feet of facilities, with an annual production capacity approaching 100,000 tons.

Currently, Huron Casting has eight apprentices participating in training while completing their On-the-Job Training (OJT) hours. Additionally, a few employees have sought Automation Training through Rockwell to further enhance their skills.

After discussing their workforce needs, it was determined that applying for a Going PRO Talent Fund Grant (GPTF) to support training and wages would be a strong option. After working through the application process, they were awarded a \$37,595 GPTF grant.

Through the grant, two employees received Certificates of Completion for Rockwell Automation Training, providing them with a deeper understanding of their field. These new skills have broadened their capabilities and increased their confidence when approaching complex or unfamiliar situations. The credentials serve as formal recognition of their achievements and reinforce their development as professional technicians.

Huron Casting also invests in its apprentices through Delta College programs and hands-on, one-on-one departmental training. This combination of classroom instruction and practical experience allows apprentices to expand their knowledge, develop new skills, and contribute more effectively to the company's operations.

“Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the Rockwell Automation Fair in Anaheim, California. I have been an electrician for 27 years, primarily in large commercial and government projects. Making the switch to industrial electricity has allowed me to learn a whole new part of the trade. This experience has made me a better electrician and troubleshooter.

I am now training to become a programmer and electrical technician, opening new doors in my career. Thanks to this training, we no longer need to outsource certain contractors, and I can better adapt to our ever-changing and diverse industry. The training has also helped increase productivity and improve profit margins, and we have successfully integrated several of the new products presented at the fair. While these advancements come with challenges, the training has made it easier to understand and apply these advanced technologies,” shared Aaron Bairski, Electrical Technician, Huron Casting

Huron Casting has consistently reinvested in its workforce since its founding, recognizing that upgrading employee skills is essential to keeping pace with evolving technologies. By leveraging programs like the Going PRO Talent Fund, the company ensures that its employees remain skilled, adaptable, and ready to meet the demands of a modern, high-precision manufacturing environment.



FLINT ODYSSEY HOUSE



BUILDING A STRONGER WORKFORCE THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Genesee Co. – Flint Odyssey House has long been a cornerstone of community support with a mission “to provide prevention, early intervention, primary treatment, and family services to families impacted by substance use disorder and mental health crises 24/7.” Since its founding in 1972 near Detroit, the organization has served as a vital pillar in the community. While its work is essential to public health and community well-being, Flint Odyssey House—like many behavioral health organizations—faces an ongoing challenge: recruiting and retaining a highly skilled workforce while supporting professional growth from within. Investing in professional development strengthens internal talent pipelines and ensures that the community receives the highest level of care.

On October 10th, a GST Apprenticeship Specialist met with Executive Director Dr. Tyson and HR Director Rochell to explore a partnership. The goal was to identify state-funded training opportunities that could both upskill their workforce and align with the

organization’s mission. From this conversation, the team decided to host an open-house style information session for Flint Odyssey House employees. At the session, the GST apprenticeship team presented—both in person and virtually—an overview of available training programs and apprenticeship opportunities. Through these discussions, it became clear that the Michigan Career Opportunity Academy for Community Health (MiCOACH) Worker training, combined with a U.S. Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship, would be the ideal solution.

What is MiCOACH?

The Michigan Career Opportunity Academy for Community Health (MiCOACH) prepares recent high school graduates and other adults to enter the healthcare field. Operating across five Michigan Works! agency regions, the program provides training, mentoring, and support for individuals pursuing careers as Community Health Workers (CHWs). MiCOACH plays a critical role in strengthening underserved communities by expanding the behavioral healthcare workforce and equipping participants with the skills to address pressing public health needs and emergencies. Participants in MiCOACH benefit from more than high-quality training: tuition is fully covered through GST Michigan Works!, each participant receives a \$300 weekly stipend, and every trainee is provided with a new laptop to support their learning. Upon completion of the 12-week program, graduates are prepared to transition to employment and ideally, into a registered apprenticeship program.

The Registered Apprenticeship is a one-year, competency-based program that places graduates in full-time Community Health Worker roles. Each apprentice is paired with a mentor within the organization, who provides guidance and oversight. Mentors are responsible for coaching apprentices through 37 required competencies, ensuring that they achieve the professional standards set by the Department of Labor. Once all competencies are met, apprentices receive a nationally recognized Department of Labor certification—portable across the United States and highly valuable in the healthcare workforce.

After careful planning, Flint Odyssey House identified 14 staff members to serve as mentors, creating capacity for 14 apprentices. Today, GST Michigan Works! proudly congratulates the 14 participants who completed both MiCOACH training phases, and 13 who have now been officially registered with the Department of Labor as apprentices. These individuals are expected to complete their apprenticeships by early 2026, strengthening their professional skills and the organization's ability to serve the community.

The Flint Odyssey House partnership with GST Michigan Works! is more than just a training initiative—it is an investment in the future. By aligning its mission with innovative workforce development strategies, the organization is cultivating a sustainable pipeline of skilled professionals who can deliver high-quality care where it's critically needed. This model ensures the immediate strengthening of Flint Odyssey House's workforce and the long-term capacity to meet evolving community health needs for years to come.

learning opportunities and his willingness to help wherever needed will lead to a bright professional career with lots of growth. It's been a pleasure to work with Ryan. His personality has been enjoyed. Ryan made such an impactful impression in 90-days that he was offered a full-time position as a Production Engineer, earning a \$6 raise! .

"We always welcome the programs available through GST Michigan Works! We now have a new manufacturing engineer who started here as a Youth Host Site participant," shared Joe.

This success was made possible through collaboration between Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG), GST Michigan Works!, and LP&P, whose mentorship and planning allowed Ryan to explore career pathways and gain hands-on experience in advanced manufacturing.

Taking a chance on a youth participant not only benefited Ryan, but also the employer, which demonstrates how investing in local talent today helps build the next generation of skilled professionals for tomorrow.

LAPEER PLATING + PLASTICS

BUSINESS TAKES A CHANCE ON YOUTH PROGRAM & GAINS AN ENGINEER

Lapeer Co. - Finding employers willing to invest time in mentoring and paperwork to serve as host sites for the Youth Work Experience Program can be a challenge. That's why GST Michigan Works! truly values businesses like Lapeer Plating & Plastics (LP&P), which recognize the importance of providing meaningful workplace experiences for youth in our community.

Ryan, a youth participant, joined LP&P through the program and spent several weeks rotating through all areas of production. His dedication and curiosity made a strong impression. During his midway point evaluation, Joe DuBreuil, Human Resource Administrator, noted, *"Ryan has been a nice addition to the LP&P team. The initiative he shows when given*



FOOD BANK OF E. MICHIGAN

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS

Genesee Co. – The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan continues to be a vital lifeline for families across our region, ensuring that children, parents, and seniors facing hunger have access to nutritious meals and critical support. Serving thousands each year, the Food Bank’s mission goes far beyond food; it represents compassion, stability, and hope for households in need.

That mission has now been strengthened with the award of \$136,000 through the State of Michigan’s Going PRO Talent Fund, secured in partnership with GST Michigan Works! This investment will provide vital training opportunities for new and existing employees, enhancing skills in logistics, operations, safety, and leadership. By improving organizational efficiency and building staff capacity, the Food Bank will be able to expand its impact by reaching more children, supporting more families, and ensuring food security for communities across Michigan.

“We are incredibly grateful to GST Michigan Works! for their thoughtful investment in our team,” said Kara

Ross, President and CEO of the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. “By supporting training and professional development, this grant helps us improve operations across the board, ultimately enhancing our ability to feed more families and serve our communities with compassion and excellence.”

For GST Michigan Works!, this partnership reflects a continued commitment to aligning resources with purpose. By helping secure the Going PRO Talent Fund award, GST Michigan Works! is proud to stand with the Food Bank in building organizational strength and advancing its critical mission.



SCHEURER HEALTH

Huron Co. – Scheurer Health is a premier choice for health care across Michigan’s Thumb, offering a variety of services, including laboratories, rehabilitation, respiratory care, primary care, swing bed care, two senior living communities, pharmacies, a vision center, a school wellness center, and more. They employ over 500 employees. With all the services offered and the large number of people they employ in a rural area, it is hard to find employees with the training necessary to maintain Scheurer’s variety of operations. They have recently started a Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program to promote employees from within, which requires the upskilling of their current employees.

Upon discussing the needs of Scheurer Health, it was determined that a Going PRO Talent Fund

grant would assist them with funding to train current and new employees in the areas required. They were able to train four employees in Pediatric Advanced Life Support, four employees in Advanced Cardiac Life Support, two employees completed Trauma Nursing Core Courses, two completed Emergency Nursing Pediatric Courses, and one each for Recovery Coach Training, Breast Sonography, and Adult Echocardiography. They were also able to do on-the-job training with six new employees!

This was their first experience receiving a Going PRO Talent Fund award, and they found the process insightful and valuable. They have seen the difference that investing in their employees can make in morale and retention. Because of the Going PRO funding, they were able to upskill several staff members who touch the lives of those they care for and support daily.

MCKENZIE HEALTH SYSTEMS

INVESTING IN YOUNG TALENT

Sanilac Co. - McKenzie Health Systems in Sandusky has been a strong partner in the Young Professionals Program, demonstrating a continued commitment to helping local youth gain valuable work experience. Their HR Coordinator, Kayla Keinath, has played a key role in identifying meaningful opportunities within the organization, ensuring participants are matched with roles that align with their interests and career goals.

This partnership has given young individuals the chance to develop essential skills while helping McKenzie Health Systems strengthen its talent pipeline.

In 2025, through the Young Professionals Program and WIOA Out-of-School Youth funding, McKenzie Health Systems connected with Brooklyn, a motivated young participant seeking real-world experience in healthcare. After a successful interview process, Brooklyn was selected to join the team as a Patient Access Services (PAS) Clerk for a 12-week work experience.

In this role, Brooklyn interacted directly with patients, assisting with registration, collecting personal information, and managing scheduling duties. She

also greeted visitors, operated the hospital switchboard, and supported various clerical tasks. Throughout her placement, Brooklyn quickly became an asset to the team.

By her midterm and final evaluations, Brooklyn had earned excellent feedback for her performance, initiative, and compassionate nature. Her supervisor described her as a quick learner with strong empathy and professionalism, qualities that made her a perfect fit for McKenzie Health Systems.

Brooklyn's hard work paid off! At the end of her 12-week experience, she was offered permanent employment with the organization.

"Brooklyn is a fantastic worker. She has been flexible in learning different positions and takes her work seriously. She is wonderful with our patients," said Jill Modlin, PAS Manager.

Kayla L. Keinath, HR Coordinator, shared, "Youth-serving organizations can empower young people to learn, gain confidence, and develop independence. The Young Professionals Program benefited McKenzie Health Systems by modeling a healthy workplace culture, developing a strong work ethic, and encouraging personal growth. We couldn't be more pleased with the opportunity and the program!"

Through continued collaboration with GST Michigan Works! and the Young Professionals Program, McKenzie Health Systems is helping build a stronger, more prepared workforce, one young professional at a time.

MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE

THE RIGHT TRAINING FOR THE RIGHT JOB

Shiawassee Co. - As the footprint for Memorial Healthcare expands not only in Shiawassee County but throughout the surrounding area, many new employees are needed in these facilities. Some have all the required skills, while others may need a little help to get up to speed. This is when Memorial reaches out to GST Michigan Works! (GSTMW) for assistance with the On-the-Job -Training (OJT) program. GSTMW was

able to implement customized training plans for several of its newly hired personnel to become more productive in their new positions. GSTMW was able to award \$4,322.40 to Memorial to help with this training. Memorial Healthcare has been using the OJT program along with other programs offered through GST Michigan Works! for several years to ensure they have the best people in place to do the job properly.



TEAMWORK ENSURES SUCCESS

Genesee Co. - LJ Inc., based in Swartz Creek, is a family-owned company that has offered a wide range of industrial, commercial, and residential services since 2010. Their expertise spans electrical work, HVAC, automation, networking, generator sales and service, concrete, directional boring, and industrial solutions. Known for their “We Do That” approach, they provide turnkey support, including emergency services and MSHA-certified technicians. LJ Inc. also operates Supreme Manufacturing, which specializes in custom industrial equipment.

As the business grows and the number of employees increases, the demand for training also increases. LJ Inc. decided to complete an application for FY2024 Going PRO. They were excited to learn they were awarded \$37,100 to train incumbent workers in OSHA, liquid-cooled protector, and crane certification. However, due to changes in the Going PRO process, they didn't think they would be able to provide the correct documentation for reimbursement.

Through an in-depth fact-finding session, we discovered that LJ Inc. hired 17 new employees, all of whom completed on-the-job training within the approved Going PRO training period. This allowed grant modifications to ensure LJ Inc. could capture a portion of the available funding.

In addition to the 17 new hires, three incumbent workers successfully completed crane certification and liquid-cooled protector training. The new hires represented a range of skilled trades, including millwrights, electricians, pipefitters, concrete finishers, and carpenters.

Andrea Chapman, HR Administrator, shared,
“The training provided had a significant positive impact on the trainees by enhancing their skills, boosting their confidence, and improving overall job performance. Through hands-on instruction and real-world applications, trainees gained a clearer understanding of their roles and responsibilities, which led to increased efficiency and reduced errors on the job. Many reported feeling more prepared and empowered to handle daily tasks independently, while others noted improved communication and teamwork because of collaborative training exercises. Overall, the training contributed to individual growth and strengthened the team’s ability to meet company goals with greater consistency and quality.”

Because LJ Inc. worked so closely with the GST Michigan Works! team to determine how they could make it work, they were able to collect reimbursement of \$32,640 from their original award. This type of teamwork is a great example of partnerships in action.



VALLEY GEAR & MACHINE

INVESTING IN TRAINING TO STRENGTHEN THE FUTURE

Huron Co. – Valley Gear & Machine, a CNC machining facility, recognized the importance of preparing for the future as a key employee approached retirement. This team member had been instrumental in acquiring three product lines and overseeing the design and engineering of the Valley Gear Transmission, a role that required extensive technical expertise and leadership.

To ensure a seamless transition and continued growth, the company needed to upskill current employees to take on new responsibilities, continue producing existing parts, and expand their capabilities to bid on more complex projects. After discussing training needs with GST Michigan Works!, Valley Gear applied for and was awarded a Going PRO Talent Fund grant to help offset training costs.

Through the funding, one employee completed Mastercam Multi-Axis Training, while two others completed Advanced Multi-Axis Training through Axsys CAD/CAM Solutions, earning Certificates of Completion. Valley Gear also implemented an internal training plan to prepare another employee to take over all aspects of the transmission department.

As a result, Jordan and Bill, the two employees who completed the Mastercam training, are now

successfully leading the Lathe and Mill Departments. They use their new skills daily, allowing the company to confidently bid on more complex jobs than ever before.

Meanwhile, David, who trained alongside the retiring employee, has taken over the Transmission Department, managing everything from sales and customer support to inventory and assembly. He shared that he is enjoying his new responsibilities and appreciates the opportunity to grow within the company.

The retirement of a key employee underscored the value of investing in workforce development. Thanks to Going PRO funding, Valley Gear & Machine now has a stronger, more versatile team who are prepared to carry the company's legacy forward.



BOURNE INDUSTRIES

BUILDING EMPLOYEES TO BUILD CABINETRY

Shiawassee Co. – Bourne Industries is a maker of laminated and fabricated components that make furniture, cabinetry, casework, and many other wood products for commercial and industrial customers. With over 50 years of industry experience, their workmanship speaks for itself. Maintaining this expected level of quality requires continued training in the engineering department and on the production floor. All this comes with a price that can be staggering. Bourne Industries looked at the Going Pro Talent Fund to help offset

some of these costs. Having received the grant before, they were familiar with how valuable this program can be. Bourne applied and was awarded \$8,000 for Cycle 2 of 2024. The award helped four employees receive necessary training in product fabrication. This training is essential to maintain the high standard of quality that Bourne Industries is known for.





GOING PRO TALENT FUND ENHANCES EMPLOYEES

Tuscola Co. – Walbro is a global market leader in engine management and fuel systems for the outdoor power equipment, recreational, marine, and personal transportation markets. It’s a leading supplier of high-pressure aluminum die casting to various industries. Walbro manufactures carburetors, electronic fuel injection systems, ignition systems, fuel tanks, fuel pumps, valves, and fuel storage and distribution systems, and offers value-added machining, electronics, and assembly.

The Going Pro Talent Fund assisted in training 22 employees, providing a strong positive impact by enhancing their skill sets, building their confidence, and preparing them for real-world challenges. This contributed to greater operational efficiency and aligned team performance with organizational goals. Employees reported increased job readiness, stronger teamwork ability, and a greater understanding of core concepts.

Jordan Hessler, HR Representative, stated,
“This training program provided measurable benefits to us by improving workforce productivity, reducing errors, and increasing employee retention.”

STRENGTHENING WORKFORCE SKILLS

Genesee Co. – Johnson & Wood LLC maximized the \$121,000 Going PRO Talent Fund Award by creating meaningful training opportunities that directly supported new hires and existing employees. The company is equipping its workforce with the technical, academic, and professional skills needed to thrive in a competitive industry.

Through partnerships with union apprenticeship programs, local colleges, and universities, Johnson & Wood expanded access to classroom and on-the-job training. A total of 42 employees benefited, including 6 new hires and 36 current employees. The majority advanced through USDOL Registered Apprenticeships in plumbing, pipefitting, and HVAC service. The apprenticeship training alone accounted for over \$119,000 of investment, strengthening long-term career pathways.

In addition to skilled trades training, Johnson & Wood supported employees pursuing college-credit courses at Mott Community College and Central Michigan University, covering areas such as financial analysis, organizational behavior, data analysis, and digital promotion. This investment ensures that their workforce not only gains trade expertise but also develops business and analytical skills that contribute to organizational growth.

With an average hourly wage well above the regional median, Johnson & Wood is demonstrating its commitment to building a high-skill, high-wage workforce. By leveraging the Going PRO Talent Fund, the company is reducing skills gaps, accelerating career advancement, and preparing new and existing employees for long-term success in Michigan’s economy.



NORTHGATE

IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Genesee Co. - NorthGate in Flint has long been recognized as a leader in innovation, opportunity, and second-chance hiring. Recently, the organization reached another milestone by being awarded \$112,675 from the Going PRO Talent Fund to support training for new and existing employees. This achievement represents far more than just financial assistance; it is a testament to NorthGate's commitment to workforce development and the power of collaboration with GST Michigan Works! The Going PRO Talent Fund provides employers with the resources needed to invest in skills training, ensuring employees are equipped to meet the demands of today's competitive industries. For NorthGate, this investment has been pivotal. By expanding training opportunities, the company is enhancing the skillsets of its team members and creating long-term career pathways that directly benefit the Flint community. NorthGate's dedication to employee development and its commitment to providing second chances have not gone unnoticed. In 2025, General Motors

honored NorthGate with the prestigious Supplier of the Year Overdrive Award. This recognition highlights the company's Be Ready Enrichment Services program, which focuses on second-chance hiring, personal development, and advancement for individuals re-entering the workforce. The award underscores NorthGate's impact within its organization and across the broader community, proving that commitment to people is also a commitment to excellence.

GST Michigan Works! is proud to stand alongside NorthGate in securing the Going PRO Talent Fund and supporting these initiatives. This partnership has allowed NorthGate to strengthen its workforce while ensuring individuals receive training that transforms their professional and personal lives. The ripple effect is substantial: families are empowered, the community gains stability, and industries benefit from a stronger, more skilled workforce.

The \$112,675 award is more than a financial investment; it represents opportunity, resilience, and the shared vision of building a thriving future for Flint. It affirms that when employers, workforce development partners, and community stakeholders come together, the results provide a transformative impact.

GST Michigan Works! is honored to continue supporting NorthGate as it grows, innovates, and leads by example, proving once again that workforce development is not just about filling jobs, it's about creating opportunity and lasting impact.

DEDICATED NURSING ASSISTANTS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Sanilac Co. – Diana and Amy embarked on their journey to becoming outstanding nursing assistants on August 22, 2024, driven by a sincere desire to make a meaningful difference in people's lives. Their dedication to healthcare was evident from the start, as they committed themselves to completing the rigorous USDOL-approved Nursing Assistant Apprenticeship Program. This comprehensive training not only equipped them with essential technical skills but also fostered a deep sense of responsibility and compassion, laying a strong foundation for their future careers.

During their apprenticeship, they engaged in extensive hands-on training, working closely with registered nurses and gaining real-world patient care experience. They learned to handle complex medical situations with confidence and empathy, always prioritizing patient safety and comfort. Their ability to adapt quickly to challenging scenarios and respond with kindness and professionalism distinguished them as remarkable learners and future healthcare providers. The practical experience they gained was invaluable, allowing them to translate classroom knowledge into effective patient care, even in high-pressure situations.

In addition to technical training, the coursework provided by Medcerts through the RTI program played a vital role in developing their soft skills. Diana and Amy mastered effective communication



techniques crucial in healthcare settings, such as active listening and clear, respectful interactions. They also learned the importance of maintaining a professional appearance and demeanor, which helps foster trust and reassurance with patients. Their understanding of medical ethics and cultural sensitivity further strengthened their commitment to providing respectful, personalized care to individuals from diverse backgrounds, embodying the highest standards of professionalism.

Beyond their technical and soft skills, what truly set Diana and Amy apart was their unwavering emotional resilience and genuine compassion. They approached each patient interaction with patience, kindness, and respect, demonstrating a heartfelt commitment to improving others' well-being. Their ability to handle emotionally challenging situations with strength and dignity earned them admiration from colleagues and supervisors alike. Their integrity, combined with their passion for service, exemplifies the core values that define exemplary healthcare professionals.



Aspire Rural Health Systems proudly celebrates Diana and Amy's success. Their journey highlights how perseverance, dedication, and compassion can lead to impactful careers in healthcare. Their ongoing commitment to delivering high-quality, compassionate care promises to positively influence countless lives and strengthen the bonds within their communities. Their story is an inspiring testament to the profound difference that caring and dedicated individuals can make, serving as a beacon of hope and motivation for others pursuing a similar path in healthcare.

RETROFOAM

SMALL BUT MIGHTY

Genesee Co. – RetroFoam of Michigan has been serving the local community since 2002, helping more than 16,000 customers keep their homes comfortable. The company believes that no one should have to live in an uncomfortable home or work in an unbearable workspace. Their mission is to create energy-efficient homes and structures, and they have proudly partnered with Consumers Energy to further that goal.

Beyond improving homes, RetroFoam of Michigan is also committed to investing in its people. The company seeks employees who live and breathe GRIT:

- **G = Growth-Oriented** – Embracing every challenge as an opportunity to learn and improve.
- **R = Respectful** – Treating everyone with compassion and integrity.
- **I = Innovative** – Demonstrating creativity and forward-thinking solutions.
- **T = Team Player** – Harnessing the power of collaboration and a unified team.

The desire to upskill current employees inspired Retrofoam’s General Manager, Jennifer McFatridge, to apply for FY25 Cycle 1 Going PRO Talent Fund funding. This was RetroFoam’s first time applying for the award, and they received \$3,325.00 – a great accomplishment for a first-time awardee!

During the training period, RetroFoam employees completed the following programs: Forklift – Train the Trainer, Forklift Operator Safety Training, and Blueprint for Industry. In total, 11 incumbent workers received training, with a reimbursement of \$3,030.00.

For a small company of just 51 employees, this means over 21% of their staff gained new skills – while maintaining uninterrupted service to their customers.

“Jacob is now acting as our certified forklift trainer; this factors into his upcoming review and raise. The Blueprint”“We are excited to be in Burton, and we have already found great local talent, vendors, and support,” said Jason Kinney, General Manager of Custom Air Handling Solutions, in an interview with ABC12. **“We are looking forward to years of growth and connection to this community.”**t training class allowed our entire sales team to learn blueprint reading and take turns quoting these jobs, resulting in quicker quotes and, hopefully, more sales. The forklift certifications enabled more employees to safely operate forklifts, increasing productivity and safety. Having more sales team members who can quickly and accurately read blueprints will lead to increased sales for the company.”

– Jennifer McFatridge, General Manager, RetroFoam of Michigan

Helping employers invest in their employees is what GST Michigan Works! strives to do every day. We’re thrilled to see the successful outcomes of this partnership with RetroFoam of Michigan.



GREAT LAKES COMPOSITE

TRAINING FOR GROWTH

Shiawassee Co. - Great Lakes Composite is a company that works in multiple markets, producing custom and production products. They specialize in Resin Transfer Molding, Fiberglass Molding, Thermoform Plastics, and Operation Cab Fabrication. These products are made for the military, boat production, truck manufacturing, and other industries. As with most industries, changes in technology, customer needs, and materials require the constant up-skilling of employees.

Being forward-thinking, Great Lakes Composites applied for and was awarded the Going Pro Talent Fund for FY24 Cycle 2 to assist with the cost of training. Using \$22,667 in awarded funds, the company was able to do seven different classes, resulting in 68 certifications. These included 8D problem solving, A3 Problem Solving, and five different Management and Leadership classes.

Ed Devine, HR Generalist, relayed the positive impact on trainees, "The training programs have been instrumental in identifying emerging leaders and individuals eager for growth. They revealed a level of passion and potential that had previously gone unnoticed. These initiatives support the development of a robust talent pipeline and strengthen our succession planning efforts. By proactively preparing employees for future roles, we reduce organizational risk when key personnel transition out. Training also ensures alignment with our strategic goals, core values, and company culture. Additionally, it fosters meaningful mentorship opportunities and enhances cross-training efficiency by equipping team members with versatile, job-relevant skills."

Ed also states the positive impacts on the employer utilizing the Going PRO award,

"The training initiatives have played a pivotal role in standardizing processes and introducing best practices across the organization. By equipping employees with new and refined skills, we've enhanced safety through a shared understanding and fresh perspective on operational protocols. The emphasis on attention to detail has significantly improved product quality, while increased proficiency has enabled teams to work more efficiently and accurately. These programs have also expanded our internal resources, allowing us to identify and support individuals committed to growth. Notably, our investment in employee development has positively influenced client perception, contributing to new business opportunities and reinforcing our reputation as a company that values its people."

The grant provided a tremendous boost to both employees and the company. It enabled Great Lakes Composite to invest in professional development, which improved morale, productivity, and overall business performance. By adding these certificates, the company can bid on new contracts, helping with further growth and expansion. The training also translated into internal growth, such as promotions and wage increases.



MTA JOB FAIR

On Monday, September 22nd, GST Michigan Works! hosted an MTA Bus Route Job Fair in our Flint Service Center. Our goal was to connect job seekers who face a transportation barrier and are actively seeking employment with those employers who are currently hiring and are located on an MTA bus route. There were sixteen employers in attendance, including, City of Flint Police Department, JCPenney, Genesee County, McLaren, U of M Flint, Target, Henry Ford, North Flint Food Market, GISD, and many more. Our job fair drew in over 200 job seekers! By addressing immediate barriers, such as transportation, we were able to connect over 200 individuals with an employment opportunity, while also assisting employers in fulfilling their current hiring needs. Throughout the event (and at the end), we heard job seekers and employers state how satisfied they were with the event, which is why our Business Services team works hard to create these types of events for the community.





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Printed locally by Heritage Press
Heritage-Press.com

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