

TALENT TALK

June 2026 | Volume 9, Issue 4



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

Advancing Employers | Enhancing Talent



REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

95,485
Total Job Postings

4,243
Employers

\$20.49
Median Advertised Salary

Occupation (SOC)	Unique Postings (Jul. 2025 - Apr. 2026)
Registered Nurses	2,516
Retail Salespersons	1,814
First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers	1,155
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	948
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	914
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	637
Food Service Managers	571
Customer Service Representatives	559
Sales Representatives of Services, Except Advertising, Insurance, Financial Services, and Travel	544
Medical and Health Services Managers	535
Fast Food and Counter Workers	512
Stockers and Order Fillers	512
Merchandise Displayers and Window Trimmers	507
Cashiers	493
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	485
Driver/Sales Workers	445
Nursing Assistants	443
Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other	423
Medical Assistants	422
General and Operations Managers	364
Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	358
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	357
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	355
Child, Family, and School Social Workers	346
Food Preparation Workers	337
Pharmacy Technicians	330
Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	326
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary	319
Secretaries and Administrative Assistants, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	295
First-Line Supervisors of Office and Administrative Support Workers	290

**Source: Lightcast Job Postings. Job postings are collected from various sources and processed/enriched to provide information such as standardized company name, occupation, skills, and geography.*

 **10,777**
Page Likes

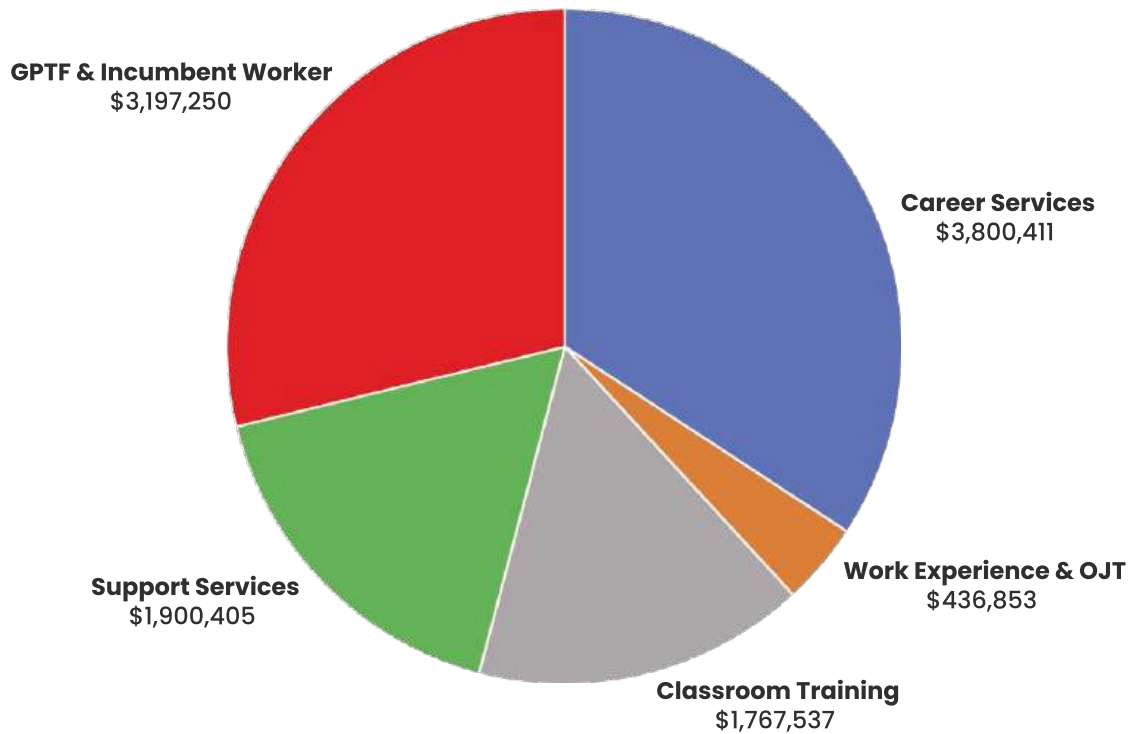
 **707**
Followers

 **702**
Followers

REGIONAL ANALYSIS

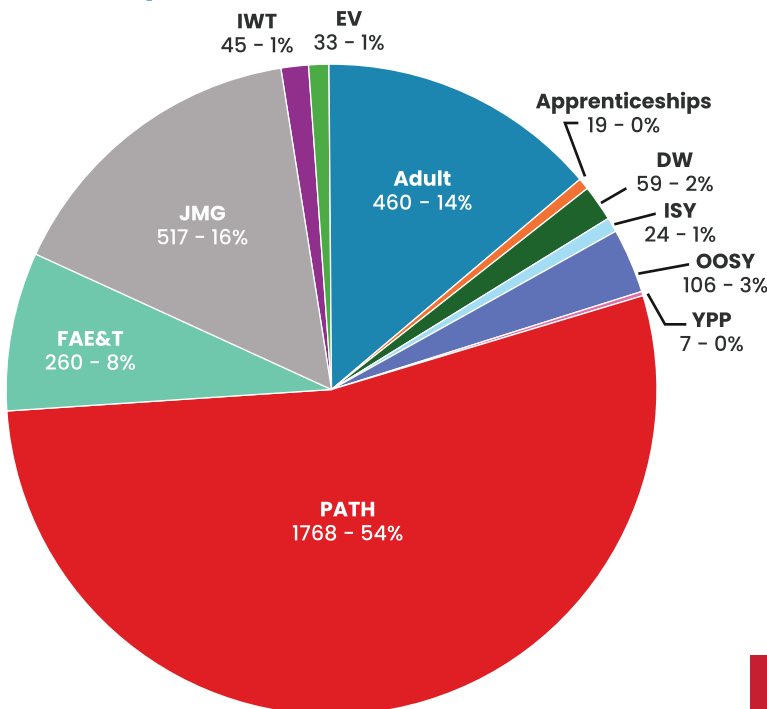
CAREER SERVICES & PARTICIPANT PAYMENTS

July 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026



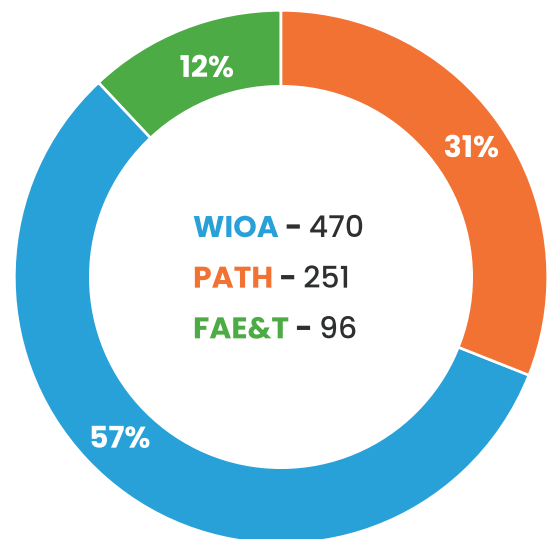
NEW ENROLLMENTS

July 1, 2025 - Mar. 31, 2026



ENTERED TRAINING

July 1, 2025 - Mar. 31, 2026



70.1% Exited to Training!

EMPLOYEE SUCCESS STORIES

CHANGE IS FOR THE BEST

Genesee Co. - Hayden built a successful career in engineering, starting as an engineering technician and advancing to a systems engineer. While he recognized the value of his work, he felt a growing desire to do more—specifically, to serve his community in a meaningful and lasting way.

Although he had progressed far in the engineering field, Hayden realized he was ready for a new challenge. He decided to pursue a career in law enforcement, where he could protect and serve his community while making a direct impact.

Hayden came to GST Michigan Works! seeking assistance to enroll in the Law Enforcement Regional Training Academy (LERTA) through Mott

Community College. This program prepares candidates to meet the standards required to become law enforcement officers in the state of Michigan. With the support of dedicated career coaches, Hayden's skills were assessed, and he was found eligible to enroll using WIOA Adult funding.

GST Michigan Works! provided financial assistance to cover the cost of the academy, as well as uniforms, required clothing, and mileage reimbursement. After 16 weeks of intensive training, Hayden successfully graduated with the certifications and knowledge needed to begin his career in law enforcement.

Today, Hayden serves as a police officer with the Davison Township Police Department. His story is a powerful reminder that it is never too late to pursue a new path and make a meaningful difference.





SETTING GOALS

Sanilac Co. – Monica had decided it was time for a career change. Her previous employment included dairy farms and factory work. She was looking for something that felt more rewarding personally.

Monica came to GST Michigan Works! with hopes of finding a new career path. She met with a career coach and discussed her interests. She decided that she would like to become a certified medical assistant. Upon meeting with a career coach, they discovered that Monica would be eligible for WIOA funding. GST Michigan Works! was able to fund the cost of the program.

Monica would begin training at the Sanilac Career Center in the clinical medical assistant program in September. She studied hard and completed her training while maintaining a full-time job as a production operator at a manufacturing facility. She was able to complete her training in mid-December. By February, she had secured full-time employment as a medical assistant. Using support services funding, GST Michigan Works! was also able to purchase two pairs of scrubs so she was prepared for her new employment. Monica set her mind on a goal and was determined to accomplish what she had set out to achieve.

ANSWERING THE CALL

Lapeer Co. – Just one month after graduating high school, Cattibrie walked into the GST Michigan Works! Lapeer office with a clear goal and a strong sense of purpose. Inspired by her school's Decision Day and her experience in a Public Safety Careers program through her local EdTech center, she was ready to take the next step toward becoming an EMT and beginning a career as a first responder.

At the time, Cattibrie was working at a local fast-food restaurant, but she knew she was capable of more. Her passion for emergency services had been growing for years, influenced by her mother's career—first as an EMT and later as a paramedic. A defining moment came when she participated in a ride-along with her mother. Witnessing firsthand the impact of emergency responders confirmed that this was the path she wanted to pursue.

Motivated and determined, Cattibrie enrolled at the American Training Institute in Flint to earn her EMT credential. She excelled in the program, embracing every opportunity to learn and develop hands-on skills. Her confidence and enthusiasm continued to grow as she prepared for a career in the field.

After successfully completing her training, Cattibrie achieved her goal and was hired full-time by Patriot Ambulance. In addition to beginning a meaningful career, she significantly increased her earning potential.

Cattibrie's journey shows how passion, early exposure, and determination can lead to a meaningful career. She started as a recent high school graduate and is now a full-time EMT making a difference in her community.

FROM POTENTIAL TO PERMANENT

Success Story for JMG and WIOA OSY Programs, along with Young Professional and Young Professional Plus Funding

Shiawassee Co. – With only four months of work history as a part-time grocery store cashier, Ella came to GST Michigan Works! in Owosso without having worked in over six months. She found it difficult to secure employment without much experience and was struggling to have the confidence needed to get into the workforce permanently. Other barriers she faced included limited skills, unstable housing, and a lack of transportation. She mostly depended on a bicycle, a friend or family member, or public transportation to get places.

After coming to the Owosso GST Michigan Works! office, Ella met with a Career Coach to explore services and support options for finding employment. She completed assessments and was enrolled in October, 2025. She was enrolled in various youth programs to maximize the resources available to her. She also completed an individual service strategy (ISS) with her coach to map out her experience, barriers, and goals for determining the best course of action. The first plan was to find an appropriate workplace to refer her for a Paid Work Experience. This would provide her with further instruction and an opportunity to gain experience, with the hopes of leading her to permanent employment. As preparation, Ella completed online instruction for office technology skills, received assistance completing a professional resume, interview skills, and participated in virtual reality career exploration. Due to her lack of transportation, Ella was accepted into a Paid Work Experience within walking distance of her home, at the Volunteers of America (VOA) Thrift Store in Corunna. She was also provided with Shiawassee Area Transportation Agency (SATA) bus passes to help her when the weather wasn't cooperative.

Ella began her work experience program in November, 2025. She was assisted with purchasing clothing to help her get started. After the first two weeks, her dedication and positive attitude stood out

to the store manager, who was eager for her to learn, grow, and become part of their team. Throughout her work experience, her performance ratings were above satisfactory every week, and the manager gave her many opportunities to learn multiple duties at the store to find the best fit for her. She was cross-trained in production, dock work, and the clothing department, learning valuable skills and confidence along the way.

After Ella had completed only six weeks of work experience, her manager inquired if she would be eligible for direct hire before the scheduled end date of her work experience program. By the next day, Ella was offered a position as a Clothing Department Associate, with the potential for growth and future benefits. She also received incentive payments for her success.

Ella faced many challenges due to her lack of work experience, skills, and transportation. However, through her preparation, with the support of GST Michigan Works! and the staff at VOA, her confidence grew quickly. She shared that the staff at VOA is very understanding and helpful in building her confidence and fostering the independence that she needed.

Through this opportunity, she has been receiving sufficient wages to maintain housing and daily expenses. Ella stated,



"I appreciate the opportunity to work with Volunteers of America. I have learned several areas within the company, including being cross-trained in Production, Dock, and as a Clothing Department Associate. I am happy to say I was offered the position of Clothing Department Associate. Much to my surprise, I was hired much faster than expected, which makes me happy that I can work with some really nice people."

Ella also expressed her appreciation for all the coaching and support she received from GST Michigan Works! staff.

TALENT GROWTH & BARRIER REMOVAL INITIATIVE

Huron Co. - Madison connected with GST Michigan Works! for assistance with purchasing a vehicle through the Talent Growth & Barrier Removal Initiative.

Madison was in a rough spot in life and had been without a vehicle for almost a year. She was stressed out, depressed, and completely exhausted! She was having difficulty getting to appointments and was unable to visit her family, who lived an hour away. She was working two jobs, trying to save up for a vehicle. Madison walked in the snow and cold this winter to get to work. Madison realized that a vehicle was a necessity to get to work and provide stability in her life. Unfortunately, life was not going the way she had hoped or planned. Madison had more going on, which stopped her from purchasing a vehicle. She worked as much as possible but couldn't get ahead. Someone suggested Madison should contact GST Michigan Works! for assistance.

GST Michigan Works! was able to assist Madison with purchasing a vehicle, removing one of the biggest barriers she faced in maintaining steady employment. With reliable transportation, she can consistently and independently drive herself to work.

Since receiving this support, Madison has been taking important steps toward building a brighter future. She is currently working toward earning her GED. In addition, she has set her sights on entering the healthcare field and plans to obtain her CNA license to begin a career helping others.

Madison has also begun thinking about her long-term goals. While her immediate focus is finishing her GED and becoming a CNA, she hopes this path may eventually lead to her attending college. With determination, hard work, and the support she has received, Madison is creating new opportunities for herself and moving forward with confidence toward a stable and successful future.

"I never knew there were programs like this one, but they are available, and the staff is truly happy to help people who need it! Thank you to everyone at GST Michigan Works! for what you do! I am forever grateful for what they have done for me, and I don't think you know just how much you have HELPED and SAVED me so much more than you will ever know!! I am forever grateful to you and all the GST Michigan Works! staff," Madison shared. She continued, "Angel at GST Michigan Works! was so kind and understanding that I no longer felt like a burden but felt that she genuinely cared and wanted to help me. I never knew there were programs like this one. The staff truly are happy to help people who need it!!"



REMOVING BARRIERS, BUILDING CONFIDENCE



Lapeer Co. – Alanna first connected with the Family Literacy Center (FLC) in November 2025, seeking financial assistance to attend classes at Mott Community College. Having recently earned her GED, she was already working and eager to take the next steps toward a brighter future. Since then, she has remained actively engaged with FLC, regularly attending Life Skills classes where she has strengthened her communication skills, developed a deeper sense of self-worth, and learned the importance of surrounding herself with positive influences.

More recently, Alanna faced an unexpected challenge when her vehicle began experiencing significant mechanical issues—repairs that would cost more than the car itself. Recognizing how critical reliable transportation is for maintaining employment, FLC partnered with GST Michigan Works! to explore possible solutions.

Through the Talent Growth and Barrier Initiative Funding Grant, and with strong collaboration between FLC and GST Michigan Works!, Alanna was able to quickly gather the necessary documentation and purchase a reliable vehicle within just one week.

With dependable transportation, Alanna no longer faces the stress of getting to work or the financial strain of costly repairs. This support has provided her with greater stability and peace of mind, allowing her to stay focused on her goals.

Alanna expressed sincere gratitude for the assistance she received and was visibly excited throughout the process!

FROM HOUSEKEEPING TO HEALTHCARE HERO

Tuscola Co. – Sarah first came to GST Michigan Works! (GST) in June of 2025, while working as a housekeeper at a local hotel. Although she worked hard, she had always dreamed of pursuing a career in the medical field, specifically as a medical assistant. As a mother of four, Sarah believed going back to school simply wasn't possible, especially while living paycheck to paycheck.

With support from GST Michigan Works!, that dream became a reality. Through training assistance, GST was able to cover the cost of Sarah's medical assisting program at the Tuscola Technology Center. Along the way, Sarah received ongoing encouragement and support, whether it was financial assistance for essentials like scrubs or simply having someone in her corner cheering her on.

In January 2026, Sarah successfully completed her training and earned her medical assisting certification. Just a few short weeks later, she was hired at Aspire Rural Health Systems as a float medical assistant. Today, Sarah is thriving in her new role, doing work she loves while serving the same community where she is raising her children.

When asked what services she found most helpful, Sarah shared, *"My career coach helped me the most. She gave me all the information about the school, set everything up for me to take the class, and made it easy. GST Michigan Works! also helped me find the class and paid for it. They even helped cover items I needed for my externship."*

Sarah also reflected on the challenges she faced, stating, *"I have four children and never thought I would be able to go back to school. Living paycheck to paycheck, I didn't think I could afford it."*

Thanks to her determination and the support of GST Michigan Works! Sarah overcame those barriers and built a better future for herself and her family.

SOME JOURNEYS BEGIN WITH A SINGLE STEP. OTHERS BEGIN WITH A LEAP OF FAITH.

FOR KIMBERLY, IT BEGAN WITH BOTH.

Genesee Co. – Kimberly traveled to Michigan with a clear purpose: to grow, to transform, and to align her effort with the potential she knew she carried. Her eagerness was not accidental; it was the quiet signal of someone ready for more. That journey first led her to Set Apart Enterprises, a valued partner of GST Michigan Works! where her determination was recognized, and her next steps took shape through referral and collaboration.

Once connected to GST Michigan Works! Kimberly entered the Talent Development Center, where her resume was more than revised; it was reimaged. Her skills, experiences, and aspirations were shaped into a professional narrative that reflected not just where she had been, but where she could go. From there, the career coaching team worked closely with her to translate potential into confidence, helping her find her own words while strengthening interview skills and career direction.

Workforce development, however, does not happen in isolation. It succeeds through partnership.

Kimberly's journey continued with the Business Services Team, whose relationships with local employers, entrepreneurs, and community partners help connect talent to opportunity. A Business Solutions Professional collaborated with Kimberly and her career coach to identify not just a job, but a workplace culture where growth and well-being could thrive. This internal collaboration across departments exemplified the strength of GST Michigan Works! network and teams navigating together with intention and purpose.

Kimberly met each step with persistence. She participated in ongoing interview preparation and remained engaged throughout her job search. Through consistency and resilience, her efforts paid off. Kimberly secured employment as an Outpatient Lab Phlebotomist at University Trail Primary Care Center, an organization that invested not only in her professional development but in her overall well-being. In a workplace built on strong morale and

balance, she found stability, support, and opportunity.

Sustainable employment often depends on stability beyond the workplace, and for Kimberly, reliable transportation was essential. Like many individuals navigating career transitions, this step required patience and support. With guidance from the GST Michigan Works! career coaching team, Kimberly was encouraged, informed, and supported as she moved through the process to qualify for vehicle repair supportive services. These steps are not always easy, and the courage to keep trying matters.

Through steady effort and coordinated support, grant-funded assistance helped ensure Kimberly's transportation remained reliable.

Kimberly's story reflects what is possible when determination meets opportunity, when partnerships are intentional, and when workforce development is rooted in empathy. It is proof that when the right teams come together, transformation is not just possible, it's inevitable.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Huron Co. – Amber’s journey began in July 2024, when she walked into the office for her WIOA orientation. At the time, Amber was a single mother working as a housekeeper at McLaren Thumb Region. She worked hard to support her family but wanted to build a career that would provide more stability and opportunity for herself and her child.

Determined to move forward, Amber enrolled in the Clinical Medical Assistant (CMA) program at Tuscola Technology Center. Her classes ran from August 2024 through January 2025. During this time, Amber balanced many responsibilities. She continued working part-time as a housekeeper while attending CMA classes two nights each week. As a single parent, her schedule was demanding, but she remained committed to completing the program. Support from the program helped cover tuition costs and mileage, easing some of the financial burden so she could stay focused on her education.

After months of dedication and hard work, Amber reached an important milestone. In January 2025, she took the NHA National Healthcareer Association (NHA) state certification exam at Tuscola Technology Center—and she passed. Her accomplishment earned her a \$100 Youth Incentive for the Recognition of Completion and Attainment of a Recognized Credential. She also received another \$100 Youth Incentive for completion of her work experience, and an additional \$100 Youth Incentive for placement in employment, recognizing the progress she had made toward her career goals.

Amber’s next step came in June 2025, when she began a paid work experience as a Medical Assistant at Harbor Beach Community Hospital. She worked 30 hours per week for a 12-week work experience placement. At her six-week midway review, Amber received an overall good rating, demonstrating her strong work ethic and growing skills in the medical field.

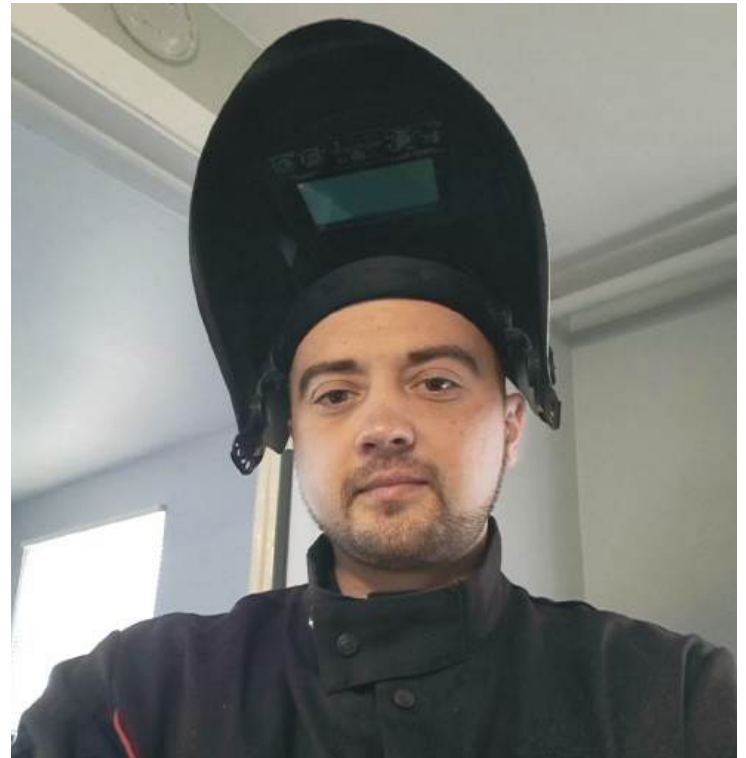
Her dedication paid off. In November 2025, Amber successfully transitioned into permanent employment as a Clinical Medical Assistant at Scheurer Primary Care in Caseville. In this new role,

she worked 36 hours per week, marking a significant step forward in her career.

A follow-up text to Amber in February 2026 confirmed that she was still employed at Scheurer Primary Care in Caseville, continuing to work the same hours. Her hard work had not gone unnoticed; she had earned a raise.

Amber’s story is one of perseverance and determination. From balancing work, school, and single motherhood to achieving certification and securing a healthcare career, she demonstrated that with commitment and support, it is possible to turn goals into reality. Today, Amber continues to build a brighter future for herself and her daughter while making a meaningful difference in the lives of the patients she serves.

WELDING A NEW FUTURE



Genesee Co. – After gaining custody of his young son, Jesse became a single parent and quickly realized the importance of building a stable future for his family. Determined to succeed, he began exploring

his options and, by securing reliable childcare and identifying an available training program, started putting a clear plan into action toward long-term, full-time employment.

Jesse found a welding school in Detroit, Welding Concepts Training, Inc., that aligned well with his goals and took the initiative to reach out to GST Michigan Works! for financial assistance. Through this support, we were able to assist with the cost of his training, which helped remove a significant barrier to his success.

While enrolled, Jesse faced additional challenges beyond the classroom. His 140-mile daily commute created financial strain, including ongoing fuel costs and necessary vehicle repairs. With added support

services to help offset these burdens, Jesse was able to remain focused on his training and continue moving forward.

Throughout the program, Jesse demonstrated strong commitment and determination. He not only successfully completed the course but also excelled in his work, earning additional qualifications that further strengthened his skill set and employability.

With his certificate in hand and a clear career path ahead, Jesse secured employment in his field and is now building a stable, successful future for himself and his son as a working single parent.

Jesse is grateful for the opportunity and continues to keep in touch and update us on his work successes.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Sanilac Co. – GST Michigan Works! in Sandusky is proud to celebrate the success of three newly graduated police officers, Carter, Arlen, and Cole, whose journeys into law enforcement were made possible through funding support from WIOA. This investment represents more than financial assistance –it reflects our commitment to strengthening public safety and supporting those who dedicate their careers to serving our community.

With the help of this funding, each officer was able to complete academy training and overcome the financial barriers that often stand in the way of pursuing a new career. After months of rigorous instruction, hands-on training, and unwavering dedication, all three officers successfully graduated from the police academy at Oakland Community College.

They officially began their full-time careers at the Sanilac County Sheriff Department, stepping into roles where they will protect, serve, and build trust within the communities they call home. Their success is a testament to their hard work and determination, as well as the power of strategic investment in workforce development.

We are honored to have played a role in launching these careers and look forward to seeing the positive impact these officers will make throughout their service. This milestone reinforces our mission to support meaningful opportunities that strengthen both individuals and the communities they serve.

MEET THE NEW SUPERHEROES OF SANILAC COUNTY!



DRIVING TOWARDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE



Lapeer Co. – Jakob first connected with the Family Literacy Center (FLC) in January 2026 with a goal of continuing his education at Mott Community College. In an impressive accomplishment, he earned his GED after just one month of tutoring. At the same time, Jakob was participating in a supportive housing program, where he remained focused on building stability, maintaining employment, and creating a better future for himself.

Through his work with FLC, Jakob secured employment and continued to invest in his personal growth by regularly attending Life Skills classes. There, he has focused on developing healthy relationships, navigating adult responsibilities, and building the tools needed for long-term success. His commitment to growth and self-improvement has remained consistent throughout his journey.

While working with Jakob on his WIOA application, his



FLC coach identified transportation as a potential barrier to maintaining employment. Recognizing how critical reliable transportation is, FLC partnered with GST Michigan Works! to explore available solutions. Through the Talent Growth and Barrier Initiative Funding Grant and with coordinated support from both organizations, Jakob was able to quickly gather the necessary documentation and purchase a reliable vehicle within just one week.

Having dependable transportation has removed a significant barrier and provided Jakob with greater independence and stability. This support has allowed him to focus on his goals with increased confidence as he continues to move forward.

Jakob expressed sincere appreciation for the support he received and recognized the impact that community organizations have had on his journey.





LEVELING UP IN HEALTHCARE

Tuscola Co. – Jenny is a driven and determined young individual from the small town of Sebewaing, Michigan, whose dedication to her education and career has led to remarkable success in the healthcare field. Through hard work, perseverance, and the support of GST Michigan Works! Jenny has transformed her grit into a thriving nursing career.

Jenny began her journey by enrolling in an accelerated Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program at the University of Michigan–Flint. While pursuing her education, she took her first step into healthcare by becoming a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA). With guidance and assistance from GST Michigan Works! Jenny was able to access training opportunities and supportive resources that helped her enter the workforce in a clinical setting.

Starting as a CNA allowed Jenny to build a strong foundation in patient care while developing confidence and knowledge in her classes. Her determination and work ethic quickly became evident as she balanced demanding academic coursework with real-world experience.

Today, Jenny is employed full-time as a Registered Nurse at Covenant HealthCare in Saginaw. Her journey from CNA to RN reflects not only her personal grit and motivation but also the impact that supportive workforce development has on individuals who want to pursue meaningful careers. GST Michigan Works! has had the privilege of working alongside Jenny and witnessing her growth as she “leveled up” in her profession.

Reflecting on her experience, Jenny shared with her career coach, “I am so thankful I was able to get my foot in the door as a CNA, because it opened so many doors for me to receive helpful resources from GST Michigan Works! I am thankful for everyone who supported me along the way.”

Jenny’s story is a powerful example of how determination and education can create lasting career success. There is no doubt that Jenny will continue to shine in her nursing career and serve as an inspiration to others who are working toward their own goals in healthcare.

Sanilac Co. – At just 22 years old, Brooklyn walked through the doors of McKenzie Health Systems with equal parts excitement and uncertainty. Fresh off a lay-off, she had landed a 12-week secretary position with the Young Professionals program in the Physical Therapy Department. She saw this as an opportunity for a first step into a healthcare career, which she had always had an interest in pursuing.

From her very first day, Brooklyn approached every task with purpose. Whether she was preparing paperwork for the day, assisting therapists, or simply offering encouragement to patients working through difficult recoveries, she brought a level of compassion and dedication that didn’t go unnoticed.

But it wasn’t just her work ethic that set Brooklyn apart—it was her heart. She took the time to listen to patients’ stories, celebrate their progress, and support them on the days that felt especially hard. To her, this wasn’t just a job.

At the end of her initial term, Brooklyn received a formal evaluation. What followed was nothing short of exceptional. Her supervisors praised her professionalism, her initiative, and her natural ability to connect with both patients and staff. The review highlighted her as someone who elevated the entire department—a rare quality in someone so early in their career.

Impressed by her performance and recognizing her potential, the leadership team at McKenzie Health Systems made an easy decision: they offered Brooklyn a full-time position in the Physical Therapy Department.

Today, Brooklyn continues to grow in her role, gaining hands-on experience and building meaningful relationships every day. Her journey is a testament to what can happen when passion meets opportunity—and when a workplace recognizes and invests in emerging talent.

ROSE BLOOMS AGAIN

A Journey of Perseverance and Success

Genesee Co. – After nearly ten years as an Adult Services Supervisor, Rose made the difficult decision to step away from her career in June 2025 to care for her ill mother. When her mother passed away, Rose found herself grieving while also preparing to re-enter the workforce after a brief but impactful three-month absence. Even a short time away brought challenges. Emotionally, she was navigating loss, and practically, she needed to regain momentum in her job search.

Still, one thing never changed: Rose had a goal. Since the age of 18, she had been applying to Hurley Medical Center, hoping for an opportunity to join their team, but she never received a call back. Now, 48 years later, she remained determined to finally achieve that long-standing goal.

In October 2025, just one month after her loss, Rose reached out to her GST Michigan Works! Career Coach Angel, ready to move forward. Together, they refreshed her resume and began applying to positions at Hurley Medical Center and other local employers. By December, Rose secured a position as a Caregiver with a home health agency in Clarkston; an important step that allowed her to re-enter the workforce while continuing to pursue her long-term goal. The Career Coach enrolled Rose in the WIOA program to support her transition, and WIOA funding was used to provide mileage reimbursement, helping offset the cost of her long commute.

During ongoing check-ins, Rose shared that her personal vehicle was unsafe to drive due to worn tires, requiring her to rely on her father's car. Recognizing this as a critical barrier, her Career Coach connected her with the Talent & Growth Barrier Removal Initiative program, which funded new tires and necessary repairs. This support ensured Rose had reliable transportation to maintain employment and continue attending interviews.

Although she had regained employment, Rose remained focused on her ultimate goal. She continued applying to Hurley Medical Center with persistence. Then, on February 19, she called her Career Coach with exciting news; she had received a job offer as a Psychiatric Technician at Hurley.

Before she could begin, a few final barriers needed to be addressed. Hurley required proof of education and specific onboarding items, including a Basic Life Support (BLS) certification, which required upfront costs. Through WIOA support, funding was provided to obtain her educational documentation, cover the cost of BLS training, and purchase required scrubs, ensuring she could start her new role without delay.

Today, Rose is working as a Psychiatric Technician at Hurley Medical Center, the very place she had been pursuing since she was 18 years old. After 48 years of persistence, what once felt out of reach has finally become a reality. *"What began as a time of loss and uncertainty became a journey of resilience and determination,"* Rose shares.



With the unwavering support of my Career Coach at GST MI Works!, I was able to face every obstacle head-on. Even when setbacks felt overwhelming, I learned that with guidance, hard work, and persistence, dreams that once seemed impossible can become reality. Today, I'm not just back at work, I'm stepping into a career I've long aspired to, and proving that determination and the right support can turn challenges into triumphs."



SERVING AS AN EXAMPLE FOR SUCCESS

Shiawassee Co. – Iman came to GST Michigan Works! Owosso office in March of 2025. She had been working low-income jobs in the medical field for about four years and was working toward getting her Bachelor of Nursing through Baker College to become a Registered Nurse (RN). She faced some challenges and barriers (personally and as a first-generation college student), but her hard work was paying off as she was approaching completion of her degree in less than a year. However, Iman found she was struggling to finance the remainder of her training due to being low-income and only working a part-time job.

After coming to the GST Michigan Works! office and completing paperwork needed to determine eligibility for WIOA funding, Iman met with a Career Coach to consider her barriers and need for services. She completed an Individual Employment Plan with her coach, any necessary assessments, and career research assignments as instructed. Iman was

approved to receive assistance in funding the last six months of her degree program and enrolled in WIOA funding. She received assistance with her tuition and the cost of her nursing exams required to complete her degree. WIOA was also able to cover the cost of her nursing license, which is necessary for employment as an RN.

Iman completed her bachelor's degree and nursing exams by December of 2025, and didn't take long to find a position as an RN. She was hired as a Registered Nurse at Henry Ford Health System in January of 2026, earning more than double her previous income. Iman expressed appreciation for the support and stated, "Becoming a Registered Nurse has given me the opportunity to serve my community while showing other first-generation students that anything is possible." After working at her new job for a few months, Iman moved to the night shift and received almost a \$4.00 per hour raise.



VALLEY AREA AGENCY OJT SUCCESS STORY

Genesee Co. – Valley Area Agency on Aging (VAAA) was hiring Maliah as a Social Services Paraprofessional and reached out to GST Michigan Works! to inquire about utilizing the On-the-Job Training program to offset the costs of her training. Funds were available, and Maliah began her four-week training program in order to learn how the company maintained case history records and how to prepare reports correctly. She also learned how to use and care for company equipment and oversee the day-to-day activities of residents. Maliah's journey to employment is a great example of how strong partnerships and targeted training can lead to long-term success. The OJT allowed her to gain hands-on experience while developing the skills needed to succeed in her new role.

GST Michigan Works! partnership with Valley Area Agency on Aging, with our On-the-Job Training program, Maliah received structured, paid training that helped her learn the responsibilities of her position while contributing meaningfully to the organization. In addition to the OJT support, Maliah completed VAAA's internal training and onboarding process, where she learned agency policies, procedures, and best practices to effectively serve the community.

The combination of employer-led training and GST Michigan Works! support allowed Maliah to build confidence, strengthen her skill set, and transition smoothly into her new role. Her success highlights the impact of collaborative workforce solutions in meeting employer needs while supporting job seekers in achieving sustainable employment.

Maliah's story reflects the commitment of Valley Area Agency on Aging and GST Michigan Works! to invest in talent, develop skills, and create pathways to meaningful careers. VAAA was able to recoup a total of \$1,520.00 in OJT funds to offset the cost of Maliah's training, and she remains employed at VAAA.

DRIVING HIS FUTURE FORWARD

Lapeer Co. – Eli faced the possibility of being laid off from his full-time position due to seasonal work limitations and not yet having his CDL-A credential. Without the financial means to pay for training on his own, and with plans to secure his own housing, losing his job would have been a significant setback.

In November, Eli came into the office seeking assistance after learning from his employer, Motor City Electric, that he would likely be laid off for the season. Determined to continue working and prove his value as a year-round employee, he set a clear goal: earn his CDL-A and strengthen his future with the company.

Eli began CDL-A training in January and successfully earned his credential by the end of the month. Throughout the process, his employer supported him by working around his training schedule. His dedication paid off! Eli was able to retain full-time employment and received a \$3.00 per hour wage increase after earning his CDL-A.

With his new credentials, Eli advanced from a groundsman role to driving trucks and operating a boom bucket, expanding both his skills and responsibilities. Having been with the company for nearly a year, he is proud to continue growing within his position and building a stable future.

Eli's enthusiasm was evident throughout his training. On his first day, he called excitedly to share that he was already behind the wheel of a truck. By the end of the program, he proudly reported that he had passed and described the experience as positive from start to finish.



WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES, ANOTHER ONE OPENS



Sanilac Co. – Jennifer had been working at an automotive factory for 25 years. In June 2025, the factory announced it would be closing in June 2026. This sent instant fear and panic through Jennifer since that had been her home away from home for such a long time. She didn't have any other skills or training to change careers. But Jennifer knew that change was coming, and she had to prepare for the future. She had friends who had gone to GST Michigan Works! in the past and had received grant funding for training. She wondered if she would qualify for that assistance, also.

In July 2025, Jennifer set up a meeting with a Career Coach, during which they talked about possible career choices. Jennifer said she had always been interested in becoming a CNA, but never took the initiative to pursue it. Well, now was the time to jump in with both feet! Jennifer was eligible for assistance with training funding through WIOA. She registered for the Certified Nursing Assistant program at the Sanilac Career Center. GST Michigan Works! was able to pay for the tuition for the program, as well as scrubs needed for her clinicals. GST Michigan Works! also used support services funding to pay some mileage reimbursement to get her to and from her classes.

Jennifer really enjoyed her classes and received her Certified Nursing Assistant certificate on November 1, 2025. During her training at the Sanilac Career Center, she did her clinicals at the Medical Care Facility in Sandusky. After she received her certification, Jennifer was offered a part-time position as a CNA. She took that opportunity with great excitement! What started with a scary and uncertain future turned into a wonderful opportunity for a career change and secured plans for Jennifer's future.

FINDING A WAY TO MOVE FORWARD

Shiawassee Co. - Lisa had successfully worked as an Office Clerk and in medical records for many years until being permanently let go in December of 2023. After filing for unemployment and registering for work at GST Michigan Works! in Owosso, she learned about potential coaching and resources available through WIOA Career Services. Lisa started working with a Career Coach at GST Michigan Works! in February of 2024 and attended a workshop on interviewing skills. Very quickly, she found new employment as a Medical Biller, and she was happy to get right back into the workforce.

Unfortunately, in June of 2025, Lisa found herself in the same dilemma, as her position had been eliminated. She filed for unemployment and registered for work once again. After working part-time for low wages for about six weeks, she reached back out to the coach at GST Michigan Works! in Owosso in September of 2025. Lisa was facing an uncertain future as an older worker, and as she applied for positions to get medical office work, she discovered that she needed an updated certification to successfully become re-employed in that area of work.

As Lisa started to work with her coach again at GST Michigan Works!, she attended a resource navigation session and received further assistance with updating her resume and improving her interviewing skills. She continued to apply for office positions and started looking at the possibility of having GST Michigan Works! assist her with obtaining her Medical Coding certificate to increase her opportunities for employment. Lisa was determined eligible for WIOA funding to pay for the certification fee and books needed to prepare for the exam.

Along with getting set up to complete the Medical Coding exam, in October of 2025, she was hired full-time at Health Park Medical Practice for Medical Billing and Coding. This was conditional on her successfully getting the coding certificate in a reasonable amount of time.

After preparing for a month and starting her new job, Lisa got her exam scheduled and continued to study and excel in her new position. Then, in February of 2026, Lisa reached out to her coach to express that

she had passed the exam to receive her Medical Coding Certificate. Currently, she is still employed with Health Park Medical Practice and is enjoying her work. She was extremely excited to get her certificate and was very happy that Health Park Medical allowed her to work while she was studying to obtain it. She really enjoys working there and is thrilled that everyone there is so friendly and helpful.

Lisa's primary challenge was completing this self-motivated and self-directed study while working 40 hours a week. Through her perseverance, continued coaching support, and access to study resources, she successfully overcame this challenge, which contributes to achieving long-term employment and stability success.



EMPLOYER SUCCESS STORIES

ADAPTIVE MANUFACTURING SOLUTIONS

THE BEST EMPLOYEES DON'T NECESSARILY COME FULLY SKILLED

Genesee Co. – In late October 2025, the Executive Director of Adaptive Manufacturing Solutions, Laurie Moncrieff, reached out to inquire if there were any funds available for On-the-Job Training. Laurie had recently interviewed a CNC candidate, and although he had a few years of CNC experience, he was previously trained in MasterCam software. Adaptive Manufacturing Solutions utilizes Fusion 360, a completely different language from what he was used to; he would need several hours of training to effectively use the different software and operate the CNC machines at AMS.

Luckily, GST Michigan Works! did have On-the-Job Training (OJT) funds available, and we immediately

went to work to ensure this individual would be WIOA eligible and qualify for the OJT. Once the individual was determined eligible, a start date was given by Adaptive Manufacturing Solutions. There were only five (5) days between the first communication from Laurie and the employee's start date.

With the available funding, Adaptive Manufacturing Solutions decided to take the chance and hire this employee, even though there would be several hours of training ahead. He had a curiosity and a strong understanding of the CNC machining process already; now, he just needed software training. The OJT allowed him a total of 100 training hours to learn the software program and prove to AMS what he could do with the CNC machines.

By the end of the 100 training hours, he wasn't just using the new software – he was translating between the systems and ensuring the CNC machines were operating correctly and efficiently. Proof that his skills weren't outdated or expired, only in need of updating. Adaptive Manufacturing Solutions didn't see the \$2,000.00 as just any reimbursement; they saw it as leverage. Turning a potential hire into a trained and highly effective employee who has allowed not only himself to grow but also Adaptive Manufacturing Solutions as well.

He continues to do well at Adaptive Manufacturing Solutions and states that he loves his new job. He foresees a long future at AMS. Dan Beamer, Plant Manager at AMS, states that his new employee has worked out great, and he's grateful for the assistance from GST Michigan Works!



COOPERATIVE ELEVATOR COMPANY

GOING PRO CDL A TRAINING

Huron Co. - The Cooperative Elevator Company, established in 1915, has grown significantly over the years to support the needs of local farmers. The organization markets a variety of commodities, including dry edible beans, corn, wheat, and soybeans. Its retail division supplies essential farm inputs such as seed, chemicals, fertilizer, tires, and petroleum products. In addition, patrons benefit from expert guidance in marketing, agronomy, and petroleum services. Today, the cooperative operates facilities in Akron, Bad Axe, Elkton, Fairgrove, Gagetown, Pigeon, Ruth, and Sebewaing, Michigan.

As the business continues to evolve, the Cooperative Elevator Company identified a need for additional employees to obtain Class A CDL licenses. This would help meet increasing demands from farmers while also preparing for upcoming retirements within the workforce.

In discussing these needs, it was determined that the Going PRO Talent Fund would be a strong fit to support training for first-time CDL holders. They applied for and were successfully awarded funding through the Going PRO 2025 Cycle 1 grant.

Through this support, four employees completed training, successfully passed testing, and earned their Class A CDL licenses for the State of Michigan.

Earning a CDL A license has allowed these employees to increase their wages while gaining flexibility to work across different areas of the business. This added versatility supports the Cooperative Elevator's operations and strengthens succession planning for the future. Overall, the training has helped build a more skilled and adaptable workforce capable of meeting ongoing operational needs.

"The Going PRO Talent Fund is a great program. We will apply again in the future as training needs arise," shared Corinne, Human Resources Director at The Cooperative Elevator Company.



MIDWEST BUS

Shiawassee Co. - As the largest refurbisher of mass transit buses east of the Mississippi, Midwest Bus stays very busy. As such, the need for new talent is always present. GST Michigan Works! (GST) was able to assist with finding a new employee by combining resources with partnership across the organization.

A Justice-Involved Citizen came to the GST Michigan Works! Shiawassee Service Center to do research navigation, after which he met with one of the career coaches, who gathered more information. It was established that there were barriers and hurdles to overcome to facilitate employment. The coach reached out to the Business Solutions Professional (BSP) for suggestions on who in the area might be a second-chance employer. After reaching out to Midwest Bus, it was suggested that he fill out an application, which was then forwarded to the company by the BSP.

Although lacking the proper skill needed for the job, the candidate was hired. Midwest Bus utilized On-the-Job-Training (OJT) funding to train him to the level required for proper execution of his job duties. This was accomplished with the assistance of an individualized training plan developed by the BSP.

Because of open communications and the partnership between GST and the employer, he was able to learn new skills by training in the bus overhaul process and now has a career, not just a job.

Renee Cooper of Midwest Bus stated, *"He has been an ideal employee with perfect attendance. We hope to have him on board for many years to come."*

HURLEY MEDICAL CENTER

Genesee Co. – In the heart of Flint, Hurley Medical Center stands as more than a hospital; it is a cornerstone of community health, workforce development, and opportunity. As a premier public teaching hospital, Hurley has served the region for more than a century, delivering advanced care while preparing the next generation of medical professionals through academic partnerships and hands-on clinical training.

Every day, Hurley’s impact is felt not only in patient outcomes but in the stability it creates for families across Genesee County. As the region’s only Level I Trauma Center and home to its only Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care Units, Hurley is often the place families turn to in their most critical moments when seconds matter, and hope cannot wait.

Beyond its walls, Hurley’s reach extends into the community in deeply human ways, delivering education, preventative care, and outreach that meets people where they are. Through active partnerships with GST Michigan Works!, the Greater Flint Health Coalition, and statewide tools like Pure Michigan Talent Connect, Hurley remains deeply embedded in the region. They have participated in career fairs and MiCareerQuest East, expanding access to opportunity and strengthening the local workforce pipeline. Within a community that has faced its share of challenges, these efforts are not just programs; they are lifelines that restore dignity, stability, and hope.

That impact was further amplified through the successful completion of the Going Pro Talent Fund, resulting in an award of more than \$497,000, an investment that strengthens both the workforce and the community it serves. This milestone reflects a shared commitment to growth, collaboration, and long-term sustainability.

The approval of this substantial award marked a pivotal moment for the organization, reinforcing its commitment to employee development and continuous learning. Through its partnership with GST Michigan Works! Hurley was able to define workforce needs, navigate a competitive process, and secure reimbursement funds that directly support upskilling initiatives and industry-recognized credentials. As emphasized by Summer Jenkins, VP of Human

Resources, this collaboration demonstrates that strong partnerships are essential to building a competitive and resilient workforce.

The investment has translated into meaningful professional impact across the organization. Through leadership development and skills-based training, employees at all levels gained the tools to lead with confidence, strengthen collaboration, and improve outcomes, creating a more unified, resilient healthcare system.

Leaders like Jennifer Hendrick are bringing that training to life in meaningful ways. In labor and delivery, where every moment carries both clinical and emotional weight, she has applied new leadership strategies to foster positivity, strengthen team dynamics, and create a more supportive environment, ensuring families are met with care that is not only highly skilled but compassionate and steady.

This growth extends beyond professional development. It creates daily stability, empowering employees, strengthening retention, and opening doors of opportunity. Over the past year, Hurley has hired hundreds of individuals and continues to recruit from within the community, including justice-involved citizens, embracing second-chance hiring practices that provide pathways to meaningful careers while reinvesting in the region it serves.

Hurley Medical Center’s success is not defined by a single achievement, but by the lives it touches each day. It is found in the child who receives critical care and gets a second chance, in the parent who finds stability through meaningful employment, and in the employee who discovers purpose through growth. Through continued investment in talent, education, and collaboration, Hurley is not only shaping the future of healthcare, but it is also strengthening the very fabric of Genesee County, ensuring that hope, opportunity, and healing are not privileges, but promises kept.





DAYSTARR COMMUNICATIONS

HIGH-SPEED EQUALS HIGH GROWTH

Shiawassee Co. - Founded in 2001, DayStarr Communications is a locally owned Internet and phone service provider in Shiawassee and Clinton Counties. DayStarr serves both private and business customers with high-speed internet, cloud-based business phone systems, and other wholesale services. These offerings have made Owosso a “GIG” city.

As the company grows and technology changes, the need for more upskilling and advanced training is constant. To help fill this skills gap, DayStarr applied for and was awarded the Going PRO Talent Fund for Cycle 1 of 2025.

Using \$4,725.00 of their award, DayStarr was able to invest in training at a critical time of growth and network modernization. The training resulted in industry-recognized credentials and technical training in both customer service and network expertise areas. Using this training, DayStarr can provide customers with the most highly trained employees to work on their behalf.

DayStarr was awarded the Going PRO Talent Fund in previous years and stated they will be applying again to maintain the most highly trained staff.

The company’s spokesperson, Brent Klein, stated, *“As a result, our team is better equipped to respond quickly to issues, reduce long-term operational risk, and support growing customer demand. Most importantly, the training strengthened the career paths for our employees while helping DayStarr remain a reliable, locally owned provider serving our community.”*

THUMB ALARM SYSTEMS

MEETING TALENT WHERE THEY ARE

Lapeer Co. - Thumb Alarm Systems, a locally owned security company based in Lapeer, Michigan, has spent over 60 years providing affordable security solutions to local homes and businesses. As the company has grown, it has faced challenges in finding employees who meet the strict background and security requirements needed to build trust with customers.

At the same time, connecting with job seekers in a meaningful way has become increasingly difficult, as many hiring processes rely on limited personal interaction. Recognizing this gap, GST Michigan Works! worked with Thumb Alarm Systems to explore solutions that would better connect the employer with local talent.



It was determined that the most effective approach was to “meet job seekers where they are.” Services provided included assistance with the Pure Michigan Talent Connect, identifying potential candidates through resume searches, and hosting in-person interviews at the Lapeer office.

This approach allowed job seekers to engage directly with the employer, ask questions about career pathways in the security industry, and learn how

experience in construction and electronics can translate into a successful career in home security.

As a result, four individuals participated in interviews, leading to potential employment opportunities. More importantly, job seekers expressed appreciation for the chance to interact face-to-face with an

employer, an experience that is becoming increasingly rare in today's job market.

By creating opportunities for real-time, personal connections, this effort helped bridge the gap between employer needs and job seeker opportunities in the local community.

KAPPEN TREE SERVICE

KAPPEN TREE SERVICE EXPANDS TRAINING TO SUPPORT SAFETY, GROWTH, AND RETENTION

Tuscola Co. – Kappen Tree Service, a well-known and highly respected employer in Michigan's rural Thumb region, employs approximately 409 individuals and is proudly woman-owned. The company specializes in line clearance services, playing a critical role in maintaining a reliable power supply across the state. Their clients include major utility providers such as DTE Energy (Detroit Edison), International Transmission Company (ITC), and Thumb Electric Cooperative (TEC). Each year, Kappen Tree Service clears approximately 3,000 miles of power lines, making workforce development essential to sustaining operations.

To meet the ongoing need to attract, train, and retain skilled employees, Kappen Tree Service has invested heavily in apprenticeship programs. The Going PRO Talent Fund has been a strong fit in supporting these efforts, helping offset the costs associated with training, including lost productivity, safety gear, equipment, and continued instruction.

All tree trimmers at Kappen Tree Service participate in an apprenticeship program through IBEW Local 17, progressing through a structured five-step framework. Apprentices undergo regular evaluations, and each advancement is tied to wage increases. This structured approach, combined with continued training, ensures employees build the skills needed to succeed while staying aligned with career

progression opportunities. The investment in apprenticeship training also plays a key role in strengthening employee loyalty and improving retention.

Through the Going PRO Talent Fund, Kappen Tree Service achieved significant training outcomes. A total of 113 Tree Trimmer-Line Clearance apprentices received on-the-job training, including 90 current apprentices and 23 new apprentices. Of the new apprentices, 17 reached 100% retention, while six achieved 75% retention. In total, the company received \$390,250 in reimbursement to support these training efforts.

The impact of this investment has been substantial. As Jason from Kappen Tree Service shared, *"Receiving this grant has transformed our company. It enabled us to turn our ideas into reality, and the results are evident—our employees perform some of the most dangerous tasks daily, and now we can be confident that they have the proper tools and training to do their work safely and efficiently."* He added, *"Our additional training has led to higher production. A safe, efficient workforce helps our company secure and retain work in our industry."*

A well-trained, safety-focused workforce positions Kappen Tree Service to meet today's challenges and tomorrow's demands.



SUNNY PATCH LEARNING CENTER

Genesee Co. – At Sunny Patch Learning Center, the journey of personal and professional growth is exemplified by the accomplishments of two dedicated individuals, Shavon and Martha. Both apprentices have completed their Childcare Development Specialist Apprenticeship Programs, a vital initiative aimed at addressing the workforce needs in Flint, Michigan's childcare industry.

Sunny Patch Learning Center, founded by Annette Hughes in 2008, has become a vital resource for families in the Flint community. Annette expressed, "Our vision at Sunny Patch Learning Center has consistently been to establish not only a secure space for children but also a supportive environment where both children and professionals can thrive." The achievements of Shavon and Martha reflect the commitment and effort invested in our apprenticeship programs. The center, devoted to delivering exceptional childcare, recognized a pressing need for skilled professionals to provide excellent care and educational support. In addressing this challenge, Sunny Patch partnered with GST Michigan Works! to create a robust apprenticeship program that nurtures the next generation of childcare specialists.

Shavon and Martha joined the program fueled by their passion for early childhood development and a dedication to making a positive impact on children's lives. Shavon expressed, "I am incredibly grateful for my time at Sunny Patch." This program has provided me with the necessary skills to thrive in childcare while also enabling me to forge enduring relationships with both the children and their families. I am eager to apply what I have learned to create a positive impact in our community. My experience at Sunny Patch has equipped me with the vital skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the childcare field. Supported by experienced mentors, they engaged in hands-on training, acquiring knowledge about child development, safety protocols, and the educational components of the center's programs, especially the preschool curriculum tailored for four-year-olds.

Throughout their apprenticeship, Shavon and Martha demonstrated remarkable dedication and enthusiasm. Martha stated, "**Completing the**

apprenticeship at Sunny Patch has been a transformative experience. I have discovered my enthusiasm for early childhood education, and I take pride in being part of a team dedicated to delivering outstanding care. I eagerly anticipate the continuation of this journey and the opportunity to inspire future generations."

They embraced the chance to connect directly with children, providing care, support, and guidance while nurturing meaningful relationships with the families they served. Their commitment to quality was clear; they gained the admiration of the Sunny Patch community, embodying the values of kindness and professionalism.

The accomplishments of Shavon and Martha highlight the positive impact of community collaborations. The collaboration between Sunny Patch Learning Center and GST Michigan Works! has played a vital role in empowering individuals through apprenticeships, while simultaneously improving the quality of childcare services. The dedication to their professions embodies Sunny Patch's mission to foster safe, nurturing spaces for children, ensuring that the next generation of childcare experts is equipped to make a significant difference.

Shavon and Martha embark on their careers, carrying with them the lessons learned and experiences gained at Sunny Patch. Their success highlights the center's commitment to developing skilled childcare professionals, ultimately improving the lives of many children and families in the Flint community. The apprentices have achieved their goals and set a benchmark in childcare, inspiring future generations to follow in their footsteps.



STRENGTHENING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Genesee Co. – When a fire alarm sounds, there is no negotiating with time. In that instant, preparation is everything, and preparation is built long before the first spark.

Since 1958, Wolverine Fire Protection Co., headquartered in Mt. Morris, Michigan, has stood as a steady guardian of communities across the region and beyond. As a family-owned company with national reach, they design, fabricate, install, and maintain advanced fire suppression, detection, and alarm systems that protect schools, hospitals, manufacturing facilities, and commercial spaces. Their work does more than meet code. It preserves life. It protects property. It safeguards the economic stability of the communities they serve. Yet the true strength of Wolverine Fire Protection is not found only in steel pipe or system design. It's found in people.

The company's commitment to workforce development is not new, nor is its partnership with GST Michigan Works! in Genesee County. This is a relationship built over years, grounded in trust, aligned goals, and a shared belief that strong businesses and strong communities grow together.

Through continued engagement with GST Michigan Works! and recurring utilization of the Going Pro Talent Fund, Wolverine has strategically invested in its workforce year after year. Most recently, the

company was reimbursed with \$46,222 to support advanced, industry-specific training for its Michigan-based team. These funds do more than offset cost; they accelerate capability. They allow Wolverine to elevate skill sets, strengthen compliance expertise, improve response precision, and create clear career pathways for both new and existing employees.

This sustained collaboration reflects a deeper truth: workforce development is not a one-time initiative. It is an ongoing commitment.

When workforce strategy is intentional, and partnerships are cultivated over time, talent pipelines strengthen, retention improves, and institutional knowledge deepens. The economic impact multiplies through high-wage career opportunities, increased productivity, and enhanced public safety infrastructure.

For nearly seven decades, Wolverine Fire Protection has protected what matters most. Through an enduring partnership with GST Michigan Works! and disciplined investment in people, they are not only installing systems, but they are also building leaders, strengthening families, and reinforcing the long-term economic resilience of Genesee County. When preparation is sustained and partnership is intentional, a community does more than endure; it thrives.

"As one of the owners of Wolverine Fire Protection Co., I am so grateful for the resources GST Michigan Works! provides us. With the help of the Going Pro Talent Fund, we have been able to provide opportunities to many local residents starting out their careers in the fire protection industry. Building leaders for the next generation is our goal, and proper training is key to that success. Thank you for [your] help in making this possible."

– Amy Shanks



MIDWEST RUBBER COMPANY

UPSKILLING TO SUCCESS

Sanilac Co. – Midwest Rubber Company has operated in Sanilac County since 1946, developing and producing single-source rubber and plastic components for the automotive and medical industries. Through decades of innovation and diversification, the company has remained competitive even during slower economic periods, demonstrating how an employer-driven focus on continuous improvement can support long-term profitability.

GEMINI PLASTICS

Huron Co. – Gemini Plastics operates out of the rural town of Uby in Huron County, manufacturing high-quality plastic parts for the automotive and other industries. The company prioritizes promotion from within and has established a Tool & Die Apprenticeship Program to train employees in skills that support their current roles while preparing them for future advancement.

GST Michigan Works! met with Human Resources at Gemini Plastics to discuss the challenges the company is currently facing. At the time, four employees were participating in the Tool & Die Apprenticeship Program, and another employee was attending college to earn an accounting degree. As the business continues to grow, Gemini Plastics is

A key priority for Midwest Rubber Company in 2025 was upskilling its workforce, with an emphasis on cross-training employees and promoting from within. This strategy is designed to strengthen internal talent, improve operational efficiency, and support employee career growth.

Through the Going PRO Talent Fund, GST Michigan Works! assisted the company in securing funding to support training for 11 current employees. The training focused on workplace safety, problem-solving, supervisory skills, and accounting fundamentals.

Midwest Rubber Company partnered with Baker College to deliver the training in-house, ensuring employees received relevant, accessible, and high-quality instruction tailored to their workplace needs.

The impact of the training has been significant across the organization. Employees gained valuable skills in areas such as 8D problem-solving, task delegation, effective communication, hazard identification, and bookkeeping for career advancement. These skills have strengthened daily operations, improved cross-departmental communication, and contributed to a more positive and collaborative workplace culture.

HR Manager Kelly Bearer shared, “The training helps us with profitability, but also safety. We were able to learn a lot through this course, and all the employees didn’t just learn, but also enjoyed each course with the professional trainers.”

also hiring new operators and, like many companies, is experiencing some employee turnover. Together, it was determined that applying for a Going PRO Talent Fund Grant would provide valuable support for employee training and advancement opportunities.

Through these efforts, one employee completed the Tool & Die Apprenticeship Program, while three others participated in training through Delta College, in addition to receiving on-the-job training. Other employees earned certifications in Intensifier Maintenance V-iRVision, Internal Auditor, GD&T, and Mistake Proofing, to further enhance their skills.

The training has helped employees better understand their roles while gaining new skills they may not have otherwise had the opportunity to learn. As a result, production has improved, and employees feel more confident in their positions. Intensifier

Maintenance training has also enabled the company to maintain equipment more effectively and reduce downtime. Additionally, having trained Tool & Die Makers allows Gemini Plastics to produce its own precision tools, molds, and dies in-house.

By investing in employee development, Gemini Plastics aims to create an environment where individuals are encouraged to stay and grow within the company.



GST Michigan Works! partnered with the hospital to support the development and implementation of these apprenticeship programs. At the time, a Clinical Medical Assistant apprentice had completed her classroom training and was working toward finishing her on-the-job training hours. The hospital also aimed to expand its workforce by hiring additional apprentices for both the Clinical Medical Assistant and Surgical Technologist programs.

Through collaboration, it was determined that the Going PRO Talent Fund would be an ideal resource to help achieve these goals. With support from GST Michigan Works!, a grant application was submitted and successfully awarded for the Going PRO 2025 Cycle 1 funding period.

As a result, the Clinical Medical Assistant apprentice completed her on-the-job training hours, leading to increased skills and higher wages. The grant also provided partial wage reimbursement to the employer during her training period. Having an additional Certified Medical Assistant has helped alleviate staffing challenges within the hospital's medical clinics.

Investing in apprenticeship programs continues to benefit both the employer and its employees. The hospital can retain and develop talent while creating clear career pathways, and employees gain valuable skills, increased earnings, and the opportunity to grow within an organization they already know and serve.

HARBOR BEACH COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Huron Co. - Harbor Beach Community Hospital, located in Huron County, is an acute care, emergency, and extended care facility that serves the surrounding community's medical needs. In addition to the hospital, the organization operates two medical clinics. Like many employers in rural areas, the hospital faces challenges in finding candidates with the necessary credentials to fill critical roles.

To address this need, Harbor Beach Community Hospital established Clinical Medical Assistant and Surgical Technologist Apprenticeship Programs, creating opportunities to train employees and build a skilled workforce from within.



ADVANCED AUTO TRENDS

STRENGTHENING THE WORKFORCE AND REDUCING COSTS

Sanilac Co. - Advanced Auto Trends Inc. (AATI) is an injection molder specializing in sunroof components for the automotive industry. The company's niche expertise lies in overmolding metal components with plastic and precisely positioning them in molds using robotic automation. Because of the highly specialized nature of its work and the limited local labor pool in rural Sanilac County, employee training is essential to maintaining operations and meeting customer demand.

Through the Business Solutions Professional (BSP) Fact Finding process, it was determined that the Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF) Cycle 2 grant would be a strong fit to support critical training needs at the right time for the business.

AATI partnered with a variety of training providers, including Educated Business Resources Corp., Baker College, QX Soft, Quality-1 International, and the Sanilac Career Center, ensuring employees received targeted and industry-relevant instruction.

As a result, Advanced Auto Trends was reimbursed \$19,130 in employee training costs through the grant.

The impact of this training was both immediate and significant. Ken Surbrook, Manufacturing Engineer at AATI, shared that the Root Cause Analysis (RCA) training was particularly valuable, bringing together upper management, plant managers, engineering, and sales teams in a collaborative learning environment. Through this training, the team was able to resolve a customer issue by using data from test studies to demonstrate that an incorrect material had been selected for a specific application.

He noted that a similar issue in 2024 resulted in a \$250,000 loss. However, due to the RCA training and improved data collection processes, the company was able to resolve the 2025 issue with no financial loss. The savings contributed directly to employee profit-sharing.

Additional training also produced measurable benefits across the organization. An employee who completed welding certification training earned two certifications and has since become a highly skilled welder within the company. Metrology training for new quality inspectors and trainers has also helped reduce scrap rates and ensured coverage during absences, improving consistency and operational efficiency.

Ken emphasized the long-term value of the Going PRO Talent Fund, stating that while AATI has participated in multiple grant cycles, the RCA training stands out as the most impactful to date. The investment in training has not only strengthened employee skills but has also delivered substantial cost savings and improved overall business performance.



258 STRONG!

SKILLED TRADES EXPO ENERGIZES THE WORKFORCE

Genesee Co. – On Friday, February 27th, GST Michigan Works! hosted a successful Skilled Trades Career Expo, bringing together job seekers and employers from across Genesee County and beyond for a day focused on opportunity, connection, and career growth.

With 258 job seekers in attendance and 25 employers actively participating, the event created a dynamic environment where individuals could explore high-demand careers in the skilled trades while engaging directly with hiring representatives from some of the best companies Genesee County has to offer. An astounding 120 of the 258 candidates who attended the Skilled Trades Career Expo were first-time job seekers at GST Michigan Works! Flint Service Center, helping to expand our reach in the community!

Throughout the Expo, job seekers had the opportunity to learn about apprenticeship programs, entry-level openings, career advancement pathways, and the certifications required to enter various skilled trades. Employers shared insight into their company culture, workforce needs, and the long-term stability that careers in skilled trades can offer. Many attendees left

with interview invitations, next steps for applying, and a clearer understanding of how to move forward in their career journey.

The strong employer turnout reflects the ongoing demand for skilled talent in industries such as manufacturing, construction, HVAC, electrical, heavy equipment operating, and other technical trades. By creating space for face-to-face interaction, the Skilled Trades Career Expo strengthened the partnership between local businesses and GST Michigan Works! while helping bridge the gap between talent and opportunity.

Events like the Skilled Trades Career Expo demonstrate GST Michigan Works! continued commitment to building a skilled talent pipeline and supporting regional economic growth. With hundreds of meaningful conversations taking place throughout the day, the impact of this event will extend far beyond the expo floor.

We thank the 25 employers who invested their time and expertise, and the 258 job seekers who took the next step toward a career in the skilled trades.





“GST Michigan Works! continues to be a trusted partner in helping us build and maintain a strong talent pipeline. The Skilled Trades Career Expo was exceptionally well-organized, and the turnout exceeded our expectations. We appreciated the opportunity to meet candidates who are genuinely interested in skilled trades careers. The ongoing support from GST Michigan Works! helps us stay connected to our community and future workforce.”

Crystal Ginderske, Talent Acquisition Specialist for Fessler and Bowman



“Vic Bond Sales would like to say thank you to the GST Michigan Works! Flint team for the amazing job hosting the Trades Career Expo today! Roy, Erich, and Mike, you guys did great! We had a great time participating and representing our city. We had the privilege of meeting some truly talented and passionate people! Can’t wait to start the callback & interviewing process to find our next teammates!”

Lindsey Mott, Vic Bond Sales





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

SKILLED TRADES CAREER EXPO

Fri., February 27th | 12:00PM - 3:00PM

FLINT SERVICE CENTER

711 N. Saginaw St. Flint, MI 48503 (Lower Level)

Learn A Trade And Get PAID!

This event is for both **Union and Non-Union** skilled trades employers.



VETS ACCESS, LLC.
 INDEPENDENT LIVING CONTRACTOR



LEARN MORE: GSTMWORKS.ORG/EVENTS

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FLINT ODYSSEY HOUSE

ASSISTING IN THE CONTINUATION OF TRAINING

Genesee Co. – Flint Odyssey House secured a FY25 Cycle 1 Going PRO Talent Fund Award of \$146,600.00, of which they were able to utilize \$108,600. This award allowed Flint Odyssey House to continue to train its 13 U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Registered Community Health Worker Apprentices. The first program in the State of Michigan for Community Health Workers! The commitment of Flint Odyssey House to continually invest in growing its staff into a skilled and sustainable healthcare workforce has been nothing short of amazing. Flint Odyssey House strives for whole-person integrated care, taking their level of caring to new heights. But that caring is not only for clients, it includes their staff’s well-being as well. Ensuring that Flint Odyssey House is by far an employer of choice!

Along with the continuation of training the state’s first Community Health Worker apprentices, Flint Odyssey House was able to provide necessary training to incumbent staff. This training allows them to learn and grow in order to provide the method of whole-person integrated care. The award also allowed them to train a total of 17 newly hired staff, using the on-the-job portion of the Going PRO Talent Fund.

Trainings included the American Society of Addiction Medicine and Health Equity Grounded Leadership for new and incumbent staff, as well as those

apprentices.

As a result of training, the staff feel valued and able to provide clients with whole-person integrated care. The Community Health Worker Apprentices emerged as trusted advocates, helping improve health outcomes by connecting clients to essential community resources and services.

This amount of training and investment in their staff proves their commitment to and care for their staff and clients. *“It has been a complete pleasure to work with Dr. Ronnie Tyson and Rochell Harper-Shelton at Flint Odyssey House! Their commitment and dedication to their staff and clients come across in everything they say and do.”* – Cindy Thornthwaite, Director of Business Services at GST Michigan Works!

The lasting benefit they provide to their staff will serve this community for decades to come!

Rochell Harper-Shelton from Flint Odyssey House stated, *“The implementation of the Community Health Worker Apprenticeship program did more than fill gaps among the organization and the community. It allowed Flint Odyssey House to build a sustainable, high-skilled talent pipeline that strengthens our workforce, reduces turnover, and secures our competitive advantage for years to come, as is any organization’s goal.”*

GOYETTE MECHANICAL

DEMONSTRATING THE POWER OF THE GOING PRO TALENT FUND

Genesee Co. – Securing a Going PRO Talent Fund award for \$406,402.00, Goyette Mechanical, a leader in plumbing, heating, cooling, and electrical services for over 95 years, made a significant investment in building its highly skilled and future-ready workforce. The Going PRO funding allowed Goyette to expand incumbent worker training opportunities, strengthen its talent pipeline, and meet the growing demand for qualified professionals.

Through the Going PRO Talent Fund, Goyette implemented a comprehensive training strategy that supported both new and existing employees. The company also successfully trained 76 U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Registered Apprentices in a wide range of skills.

Training activities included:

- System Diagnosis & Equipment Operation Safety
- Chillers/Variable Air Volume Training
- Two Pipe VRF Foundations
- ADV Ductless & Crossover
- Pneumatics Controls
- Condensing Boiler Operations
- Advanced Project Management
- New Hire On-the-Job Training
- And Many Others!

The USDOL Registered Apprenticeship component played a key role in developing 15 entry-level apprentices and 61 incumbent apprentices to provide structured, paid, on-the-job learning. Apprentices gained practical experience under the guidance of seasoned mentors, accelerating their career paths.

At the same time, the training allowed incumbent workers to enhance their skill sets, allowing them to take on more advanced responsibilities and adapt to ever-changing industry standards. New hires were quickly provided with the foundational training needed to succeed from day one.

As a result of these efforts, Goyette continues to experience high employee retention and increased productivity. The Going PRO Talent Fund Award also positioned the company to better serve local customers with high-quality and efficient solutions.

The Going PRO Talent Fund continues to demonstrate the power of providing the necessary funding to continue closing skill gaps, supporting career advancement, and driving long-term growth within the skilled trades. Goyette continues to prioritize training and development for their employees, helping to build a stronger, more resilient workforce for the future. Their total reimbursement for their FY25 Cycle 1 Going PRO Award was \$394,197.00!

“We appreciate all the effort, patience, and support provided by Cindy and Laura at GST Michigan Works! They are a pleasure to work with!” Cherie Parks-Goyette, HR Director at Goyette Mechanical.



AUTOKINITON

Huron Co. - Autokiniton is a Tier 1 steel stamping supplier serving the Big Three automakers and many other companies. Like many businesses in the rural area, they face ongoing challenges with hiring and retaining employees, making it essential to provide the training needed to remain competitive.

To support workforce development, Autokiniton offers three Apprenticeship Programs: Electrical, Tool & Die, and Maintenance Technician. Current apprentices balance full-time work with attending school to complete their required technical instruction and on-the-job training hours. However, attracting new apprentices willing to commit the time and effort needed to achieve Journeyman status remains a challenge.

In discussions with Autokiniton, it was clear that they needed support for both their current apprentices and the recruitment and promotion of new ones. The company already partners with GST Michigan Works! to administer WorkKeys testing, helping identify candidates who are a strong fit for apprenticeship programs. Together, it was determined that the Going PRO Talent Fund could help offset training costs for apprentices, as well as provide support for onboarding new production employees by assisting with wages during their training period.

Through these efforts, 28 current apprentices and one newly hired apprentice were able to attend training and complete their on-the-job training hours. In addition, Autokiniton hired 10 new production workers, with wage reimbursement support provided during their training.

Investing in apprenticeship training has allowed Autokiniton to fill critical positions internally while allowing employees to earn wages as they learn valuable, lifelong skills. These programs create clear pathways for career advancement, with some employees progressing from apprentice to Journeyman and even into supervisory and management roles. The experience gained benefits for both the company and its workforce.

Partnering with GST Michigan Works! and utilizing the Going PRO Talent Fund has strengthened Autokiniton's ability to attract and retain talent. It has also enabled the company to offer employees meaningful career opportunities, competitive wages,

and the chance to build their lives within the local rural community.

While balancing work, training, and family life can be challenging for employees, Autokiniton continues to strive for solutions that support both professional growth and personal well-being.



LEARN & EARN

APRIL 2026 | VOL. 24 ISSUE 3

Tours Open New Doors for JMG Students



Students in the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) Career Association recently planned a hands-on learning experience that focused on career exploration and college readiness.

The day began with an interactive presentation from Consumers Energy, where students learned about the company's impact across Michigan and explored a variety of career paths, ranging from entry-level positions to skilled trades and degree-based professions. Examples included maintenance, customer service, welding, dispatch, linework, human resources, engineering, and information technology. Students also learned about the growing energy industry and the company's commitment to renewable energy.

Next, at Baker College of Owosso, the admissions staff shared information with students about their academic programs, tuition, financial aid and scholarships, student clubs, and campus resources. Students toured the campus, including the residence halls and the Auto Diesel Institute of Michigan (ADI), where hands-on training opportunities interested many students.

Overall, the experience was informative and engaging. Students interacted with industry professionals and explored post-secondary options, reinforcing key concepts discussed throughout the school year and encouraging them to think more deeply about their future education and career goals.

STUDENTS AT WORK



Kaleb (Laingsburg) is assisting the maintenance department at Laingsburg Community Schools.



Logan (Owosso) is keeping the operating room carts stocked at Memorial Healthcare.



Aaron (Owosso) enjoys caring for animals at Fairview Pet Center.



Charles (Lincoln) at Family Farm and Home, is keeping the shelves clean and organized.



Shiawassee
Regional Education Service District

Vonda Evans - WIOA Coordinator
Evans@SRES.D.org www.SRES.D.org

JOBS for MICHIGAN'S
GRADUATES
powered by youth solutions



At Owosso High School, senior Lestat is making a lasting impression through his dedication, leadership, and commitment to building a strong future.

Last summer, Lestat took an important step toward his career by enrolling in the Shiawassee RESD Jobs for Michigan’s Graduates (JMG) summer employment program. Through this opportunity, he was placed in the maintenance department at Memorial Healthcare. From day one, Lestat stood out for his strong work ethic and eagerness to learn. His performance was exceptional, and Memorial Healthcare offered him a position upon the program’s conclusion.

Throughout his senior year, Lestat has successfully balanced the demands of school and work, demonstrating maturity and responsibility. In addition, he took the initiative to start the Owosso High School Construction Trades Club, where he currently serves as president. His leadership has created new opportunities for fellow students interested in the trades.

Lestat’s accomplishments have not gone unnoticed. He has earned multiple honors, including Owosso High School Student of the Month, a Career Connections Certification from the Carpenters International Training Fund, and the Outstanding Student Achievement Award in Career and Technical Education for Construction Trades at Owosso High School.

Most recently, Lestat was nominated for—and won—the Jobs for Michigan’s Graduates Excellence in Youth Leadership Award through Shiawassee RESD. He will be formally recognized at the JMG Annual Career Development Conference at Saginaw Valley State University on April 30. After graduation, Lestat plans to pursue his path in the skilled trades by joining the Carpenters Union, where he will undoubtedly build a strong and successful career.

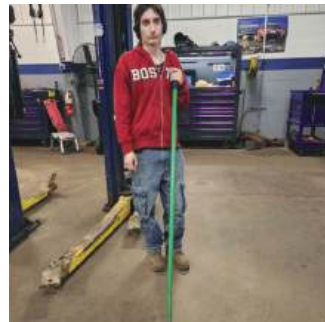
Congratulations, Lestat, on your achievements and bright future ahead!



This program is in partnership with GST Michigan Works! Workforce Development Board and the Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan. Supported by the State of Michigan Equal Opportunity Employer Program. Michigan Relay Center: 711 Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.



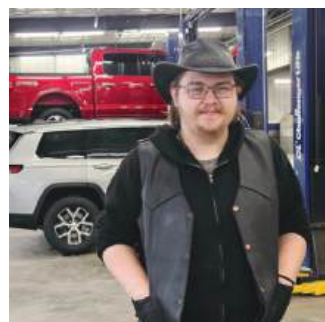
Kollin (Laingsburg) caring for animals and keeping the Shiawassee County Humane Society clean.



Kayden (Owosso) is cleaning the shop at Lunghamer Ford of Owosso.



Demetri (Owosso) is stocking shelves at Gilbert’s Hardware and Appliance.



Joel (Perry) is assisting the porters at Lunghamer Ford of Perry.



Dominick (Morrice) is helping customers at Village Fresh Marketplace in Perry.



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