

News Release
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Comprehensive Review of Child Care Challenges Set to Begin in Northern Michigan

TRAVERSE CITY, MI – Networks Northwest is partnering with Lansing-based Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to conduct a comprehensive review of child care challenges and opportunities in Northwest Lower Michigan. The review will focus on child care as an economic development issue and will look at how improving access to quality, affordable child care can help attract and retain talent in the region.

Beginning in April, PSC will be gathering data about the region's population and existing child care providers, and looking at what parents want from their child care provider. They will also be interviewing local child care experts and business leaders.

"Working families have a positive effect on the region," said Matt McCauley, Networks Northwest CEO. "The core infrastructure required for young, working families in the region is quality jobs, housing, schools, and child care. In close consultation with the business community, caregivers, parents and other stakeholders, we believe that our region is experiencing a significant infant and toddler care shortage, with the potential for long-term negative impacts on our labor force and overall economy."

"The evidence is clear. Families need access to high quality, affordable child care to enter the workforce," said Michelle Richard, Vice President, Public Sector Consultants. "Without it, families are choosing between a sub-optimal child care experience that may affect their child's health, safety, or learning, or throttling their household's prosperity by working less or not at all. Both of these are bad options."

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PSC will develop a comprehensive report that objectively frames the child care shortage and connects it to the overall economic health of the region. The report will also identify the regulatory barriers that affect access and affordability. This project is scheduled to be completed by late this summer.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Dan Boss at dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5047. Check our online Media Room at: networksnorthwest.org/media

Founded in 1974, Networks Northwest facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10 county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to our communities' requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business and community services Networks Northwest offers if you visit our web site, networksnorthwest.org. Networks Northwest's member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.