



Chief Elected Official: Chris Christensen
Board Chair: Nicole Sulak
Chief Executive Officer: Janie McNabb

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Marco Barberini Returns to Lead Northwest Michigan APEX Accelerator as Regional Director, Succeeding Cathy Fairbanks

NORTHWEST LOWER, MI – Northwest Michigan APEX Accelerator, a program of Networks Northwest, is pleased to announce that Marco Barberini has returned to the organization and will be assuming the Regional Director position. Barberini will be replacing long-term Regional Director, Cathy Fairbanks, beginning April 1, 2025. With a background in technical project management, government contracting and business ownership, Barberini brings years of business development and civil service to the position, along with multiple nationally-recognized certifications in networking and cybersecurity.

Prior to January of 2024, Barberini served as a Procurement Counselor at Networks Northwest, where he skillfully displayed his ability to connect with clients and navigate the complexities of government contracting at all levels. While with the organization, Barberini also chaired the statewide APEX Accelerator committee for information technology. The organization is very pleased to have Barberini back in his new role.

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PO Box 506 ● Traverse City, MI 49685-0506 ● Phone (231) 929-5000 ● Fax (231) 929-5012 ● networksnorthwest.org

Networks Northwest and Northwest Michigan Works! are supported by the State of Michigan and are proud partners of the American Job Center Network. Projects may be funded with the authorized and appropriate use of federal funds. Contact Networks Northwest for additional information. Equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and service are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Individuals with speech or hearing impairments may call the Michigan Relay Center by dialing 711.



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Fairbanks will step down from the Regional Director role at the end of March 2025, where she has served in this role for more than a decade. During Fairbanks tenure as Director, she received the *Women In Defense (WID) Michigan Chapter Horizon Industry Award for 2018*, served as Vice President and President of the Procurement Technical Assistant Centers (PTACs) of Michigan, and oversaw local rebranding efforts for the national organization, PTACs to APEX Accelerators. Fairbanks will remain with us in the foreseeable future as a Procurement Counselor at Networks Northwest.

The Northwest Michigan APEX Accelerator helps businesses navigate the process of selling to federal, state, and local government agencies across a 25-county region in Northwest Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. Their services are provided at no-cost and include assistance with registrations, certifications, market research, bid-match, solicitation/proposal review, compliance and more.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by emailing Dana O'Dell at dana.odell@networksnorthwest.org and stating preferences for resolution, file format, and file size. Or phone (231) 929-5075. 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!, APEX Accelerator (formerly PTAC), 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 website, networksnorthwest.org. Networks Northwest's member counties are Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.

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