

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Northwest Michigan Employers Secure Over \$1 Million in Going PRO Talent Fund Awards to Strengthen Regional Workforce

NORTHWEST, MI- Eighteen employers across Northwest Michigan have been awarded \$1,016,803.50 in Cycle One of the 2026 Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF), fueling workforce training for 460 employees, including 148 registered apprentices. The awards highlight the region's continued commitment to growing, retaining, and upskilling talent in high-demand industries.

Notably, 75 percent of awarded employers incorporated apprenticeships into their training plans, this is an indicator of a strong, forward-looking focus on long-term talent development and career pathways.

"This training award equips the Central Industrial Manufacturing team with sharper skills and shared best practices they can put to work immediately, improving efficiency, quality, and safety on the floor," said Tonya Fegan, Central Industrial Manufacturing. "Over time, it builds a deeper bench of knowledgeable employees who are more confident, adaptable, and prepared to take on advanced technologies and leadership roles. The result is a stronger, more resilient team positioned for sustained growth and long-term success."

Antrim Benzie Charlevoix Emmet Grand Traverse Kalkaska Leelanau Manistee Missaukee Wexford

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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.

The funded training spans a wide range of in-demand skill areas, including Medical Assistant Apprenticeships, Childcare Development Specialist training, EtherNet/IP Configuration and Troubleshooting, and HVAC Technician training. Awarded employers represent diverse industries such as energy, agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, education, construction, professional services, and nonprofit organizations, underscoring the broad economic impact of the program across the region.

Beyond the state investment, employers reported more than \$7.34 million in private matching contributions—more than seven times the amount of the state grant—demonstrating a deep and shared commitment to workforce development.

The Going PRO Talent Fund continues to serve as a powerful catalyst for economic growth in Northwest Michigan—helping employers remain competitive, employees advance their careers, and communities thrive through a skilled, resilient workforce.

The program is administered by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). Learn more at: nwm.org/businessservices

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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, Emet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.

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