

News Release
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Local Jobs for Michigan's Graduates Program Receives State and National Recognition for Serving Youth

NORTHWEST LOWER, MI— Staff members with the Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) program in northwest Michigan have received state and national recognition for their work equipping young people with the skills to overcome barriers and succeed in education, employment, and in life. The Northwest Michigan Works! Jobs for Michigan's Graduates program served 346 youth during the 2021-2022 school year. Students participating in the JMG program had a 99% high school graduation rate, 81% full-time employment rate, and an 82% positive outcome rate which is a combination of employment, enrollment in post-secondary education, or enlistment in the military. Northwest Michigan Works! coordinates JMG programs at Cadillac's Mackinaw Trail Middle School, Cadillac Public and Innovation High Schools, CASMAN Academy in Manistee, Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District, the Northwest Education Services Career-Tech Center, the Wexford-Missaukee Career-Tech Center, and at Northwestern Michigan College.

Kim Benz, the JMG Specialist at Cadillac Innovation High School and the Wexford Missaukee Career Tech Center, received the Outstanding Specialist of the Year Award from both JMG and the national organization, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG).

LeAnne Bush, the JMG Work Based Learning Coordinator at the Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center, received state and national Peak Performer Awards for aggregate jobs rate and connectivity rate. Bush also received a JMG Living Our Values Award for Excellence.

Tracy Beckley, the JMG Work Based Learning Coordinator at the Char-Em ISD, received a JMG Living Our Values Award for Leadership.

Lisa Baldyga, the JMG Specialist at the Northwest Education Services Career Tech Center and Northwestern Michigan College, received a JMG Living Our Values Award for Collaboration.

Jim Rummer, the Regional Director of Career and Technical Education for the Char-Em ISD, earned a Peak Performer Award as a champion of the JMG program.

Along with the individual awards, the Northwest Michigan Works! JMG program received a national Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) 6 of 6 Award for the first time ever for all of its Alternative and Out of School programs. Recipients of the JAG 6 of 6 Award have met or surpassed all of JAG's six rigorous performance metrics dedicated to ensuring young people succeed in education and employment.

Northwest Michigan Works! is proud to partner with Jobs for Michigan's Graduates (JMG) in serving the region's youth. JMG is the leading program of Youth Solutions, Inc., a premier youth opportunity organization on a mission to equip young people with the skills to overcome barriers and win in education, employment, and in life. The JMG program consists of a comprehensive set of services designed to help young people achieve education and career goals. The purpose of this program is to inspire and connect youth to achieve a future beyond imagination.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by emailing Dan Boss at dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org and stating preferences for resolution, file format, and file size. 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!, 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.