

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2026

Primary Media Contact: Evelyn Szpliet, Regional Director of Apprenticeship Services
231.631.2613
evelyn.szpliet@networksnorthwest.org

Secondary Media Contact: Dana O'Dell, Communications Coordinator
231.929.5075
dana.odell@networksnorthwest.org

Manistee Early Childhood Center partners with Northwest Michigan Works! for first Early Childhood Educator Youth Apprenticeship Program

NORTHWEST LOWER, MI– Northwest Michigan Works!, in partnership with Manistee Early Childhood Center, has officially launched the region's first-ever U.S. Department of Labor Registered **Early Childhood Educator Youth Apprenticeship**. The new apprenticeship marks a major milestone for professional trades training and workforce development in Northwest Lower Michigan.

This innovative program will provide youth apprentices with a comprehensive, hands-on learning experience designed to meet essential industry needs and strengthen the skilled trades pipeline in the region. Apprentices will complete **12 months of on the job learning**, gaining real-world, practical experience under the guidance of qualified, professional and proficient mentors.

In addition to on-site learning, apprentices will complete **155 hours of comprehensive coursework through a variety of educational partners** that deepen technical knowledge and reinforce essential early childhood educator skills.

Antrim ● Benzie ● Charlevoix ● Emmet ● Grand Traverse ● Kalkaska ● Leelanau ● Manistee ● Missaukee ● Wexford

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.

“The Early Childhood Youth Apprenticeship Program is a unique opportunity to inspire the next generation of educators. By providing students with real-world experience, professional mentorship, and a clear pathway into the early childhood profession, we hope to foster a passion for serving young children while encouraging talented young people to build their futures right here in our community,” expressed **Nicole Anciso**, Manistee Early Childhood Center Director.

“Northwest Michigan Works! is proud to partner with the Manistee Early Childhood Center to provide this innovative, high-quality training opportunity for local youth,” said Evelyn Szpliet, Regional Director of Apprenticeship Services.

“Through this program, apprentices as young as 16 can explore a rewarding career in early childhood education while earning wages and gaining valuable hands-on experience in a profession that plays a critical role in shaping the future of our communities. This pilot initiative not only creates meaningful career pathways for students before they graduate high school, but also helps build awareness, appreciation, and a stronger talent pipeline for the early childhood education profession.”

Registered apprenticeships are certified through a partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor and are a proven training method for employers to build a talent pipeline of highly skilled, educated employees. Northwest Michigan Works!, the workforce development program of Networks Northwest, provides technical assistance and administrative support for Registered Apprenticeships, including program development, implementation, and ongoing management. For more information about Registered Apprenticeships through Northwest Michigan Works!, visit nwm.org/apprenticeships.

###

Antrim ● Benzie ● Charlevoix ● Emmet ● Grand Traverse ● Kalkaska ● Leelanau ● Manistee ● Missaukee ● Wexford

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.



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

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.

Antrim ● Benzie ● Charlevoix ● Emmet ● Grand Traverse ● Kalkaska ● Leelanau ● Manistee ● Missaukee ● Wexford

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.