

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Northwest Michigan Employers Secure Over \$500,000 in Going PRO Talent Fund Cycle Two Awards to Uplift Regional Workforce

NORTHWEST LOWER, MI - Thirteen employers across Northwest Michigan have been awarded a total of \$502,674.50 in Cycle Two of the Going PRO Talent Fund (GPTF). These state training awards fuel critical skill development and upskilling for 327 regional workers, including 264 current employees and 63 newly hired team members. Highlighting a strong focus on long-term career pathways and talent development, 45 of these trainees are registered apprentices.

The funded training spans diverse high-demand sectors in the region, including Manufacturing, Agriculture, Healthcare, Construction, and Energy. The Going PRO Talent Fund program operates on a reimbursement model, ensuring that employers receive financial backing for completed training. Demonstrating a profound, shared commitment to regional economic development, the awarded employers are investing an additional \$646,402.74 of their own capital for the year alongside the state grant, bringing the total workforce investment in the area to well over \$1.1 million.

"We are incredibly excited to help local employers realize their critical training and upskilling needs through the Going PRO Talent Fund," said Rob Dickinson, Regional Director for Business Services at Northwest Michigan Works!. "We are even more excited about this major investment in our workforce here in Northern Michigan. By empowering employers to bridge their skill gaps and

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.

support career growth from within, this funding serves as a vital catalyst for regional economic growth, helping our community and businesses thrive.”

Among the funded employers is Ellsworth Farmer's Exchange, a local agricultural employer. “The Going PRO Talent Fund will be an invaluable investment in our workforce here,” said Angela Middleton of Ellsworth Farmer’s Exchange. “This investment strengthens our employees by providing industry leading training. We appreciate the partnership with Northwest Michigan Works! for helping make this opportunity possible.”

The Going PRO Talent Fund is administered statewide by the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity (LEO). For more information about Networks Northwest and business services offered throughout the region, visit 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, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.

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