

**News Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **New Program at Benzie County Jail Prepares Inmates to Re-enter the Workforce**

BEULAH, MI— Inmates at the Benzie County Jail are receiving training that will help them successfully re-enter the workforce when they're released. G.R.O.W. (Getting Ready for Opportunities at Work) Workplace Excellence soft skills training is being offered through a partnership between Northwest Michigan Works! and the Benzie County Sheriff's Department. These courses coach attendees on what it means to be a dependable employee, how to work with multiple generations respectfully, what clear and positive communication looks like, and the value of being adaptable in the workplace. Through tangible examples, activities, and real world applications, students come away better equipped to perform well in their workplace environments.

"I have spoken with several inmates who have attended the Workplace Excellence classes. They are very enthusiastic about attending the classes," said Lt. Daniel Smith, Benzie County Jail Administrator. "The Workplace Excellence class fills a gap in the inmates' educational needs. Many of them don't realize that you need to go to work every day, even if you don't feel like going. They don't learn the necessary job skills needed to get or maintain a good job from their families or the schools they attended. I have had many of them show me their certificates they have received, they are eager to learn."

Northwest Michigan Works! staff has been facilitating the weekly classes at the jail since March of 2023 with topics changing on a rotating basis. Attendance has been as high as 20 inmates.

Northwest Michigan Works! is offering unique and effective G.R.O.W., (Getting Ready for Opportunities at Work), workshops to businesses, organizations, and schools to cultivate soft skills in your workforce, clients, or students. Certified facilitators will come on-site to provide: Adaptability, Dependability, Workability, Communication Ability, Respectability workshops - or all five - directly to your employees, clients, or students.

Individuals interested in pursuing G.R.O.W. services in a one-on-one setting with a certified facilitator should contact their local Northwest Michigan Works! Center, [NWMiWorks.org/contact](http://NWMiWorks.org/contact).

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by emailing Dan Boss at [dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org](mailto: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](http://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](http://networksnorthwest.org). Networks Northwest's member counties are Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.