



**MICHIGAN**  
**WORKS!**  
Great Lakes Bay Region

# Annual Report 2021



Learn how to  
get noticed  
by employers



# Board Leadership

## Consortium Board

(elected officials/administrators)

**Carl Ruth, Commissioner**  
(Chairman)  
Saginaw County

**Scott Noesen, Commissioner**  
(Vice-Chairman)  
Midland County

**Vaughn Begick, Commissioner**  
Bay County

**Jan Bunting, Commissioner**  
Gratiot County

**Marie Fox, Commissioner**  
Bay County

**Nicole F. Frost, Administrator**  
Isabella County

**James Geisler, Commissioner**  
Midland County

**Tom Herek, Commissioner**  
Bay County

**Jim Horton, Commissioner**  
Isabella County

**Gerald Little, Commissioner**  
Saginaw County

**Sheldon Matthews, Commissioner**  
Saginaw County

**Jack Tany, Commissioner**  
Saginaw County

**Michael Webster, Commissioner**  
Saginaw County

## Workforce Development Board

(private industry, labor, education, economic development,  
community organizations)

**Brian Sheets, Executive Manager of  
Employee Development & Quality  
Assurance (Chairman)**  
Avalon & Tahoe Manufacturing, Inc.

**John Kaczynski, Director of  
Governmental Affairs  
(Vice-Chairman)**  
Saginaw Valley State University

**Erik Rodriguez, Interim Public  
Relations Director**  
Saginaw Indian Chippewa  
Tribe of Michigan

**Trevor Keyes, President**  
Bay Future, Inc.

**Brian Klele, Director of Membership  
Development**  
IBEW Local 692

**Bryan Klett, MiOps Site Learning &  
Labor Contract Implementation Leader**  
Dow

**Colleen Markel, Manager of Workforce  
Development**  
MidMichigan Health

**Brian McBride, Career Center  
Assistant Principal**  
Bay-Arenac ISD

**Dr. Kelley Peatross, Community  
Affairs Regional Manager**  
Consumers Energy

**Carrie Prosowski, District Manager**  
Michigan Rehabilitation Services

**Chris Taylor, Marketing  
Representative**  
LiUNA

**Dan Wortman, Senior Vice President**  
My Member Insurance Agency

**Chad Wurtzel, International  
Representative**  
UAW

**Raquel Perez, Diversity &  
Community Liaison**  
HSC

**Eva Szelesi, Global Human  
Resources Director**  
Nexteer





## 2021 was a challenging yet impactful year requiring continuous innovation spurred by COVID-19 and growing workforce needs in our Great Lakes Bay Region.

Our response to what many label the “great resignation” is a “great reinvention” – in our service delivery model, interaction with employers, outreach to the public, strategies for collaboration, and legislative advocacy.

As you read through this report, you’ll learn how our five service centers pivoted to provide both virtual and in-person services, all while undergoing a transformation in technology infrastructure and operational philosophy.

As the first Michigan Works! organization in the state to launch a comprehensive “back to work” campaign in 2021, we also

conducted workforce research. By asking “why aren’t you back to work?” we received hundreds of responses challenging old assumptions and stereotypes. From that research, both job seekers and employers are learning “hard truths” to better align themselves with local and regional realities. Coupled with 2020 Census data showing a decline of 20,000 in our region’s population, it’s clear that a successful path forward points to critical investments in:

- Retaining and upskilling our current labor force
- Building a future talent pipeline

We couldn’t do what we do without key partners in industry, education and economic development. 2021 was a year where collaboration made all the difference.

Looking ahead at 2022, Great Lakes Michigan Works! is poised to impact lives and businesses more effectively than ever.

**Thank you for your interest and continued support.**

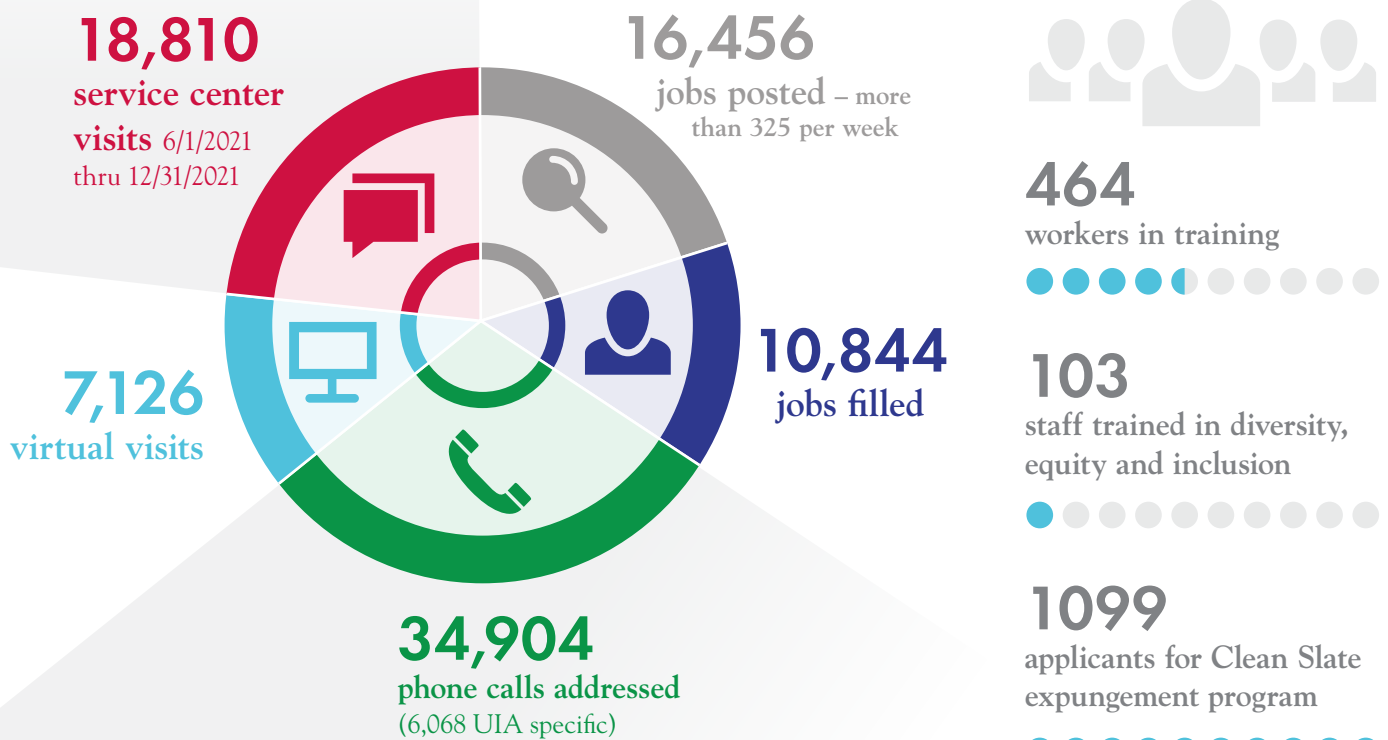
**Christopher Rishko**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



# WHY AREN'T YOU Back to Work?



# Impact Dashboard



**\$11.8**  
million



annual  
budget

**\$2.3**  
million



Going Pro  
Training Funds  
to 48 employers

**\$150,000**



IT savings with  
infrastructure changes

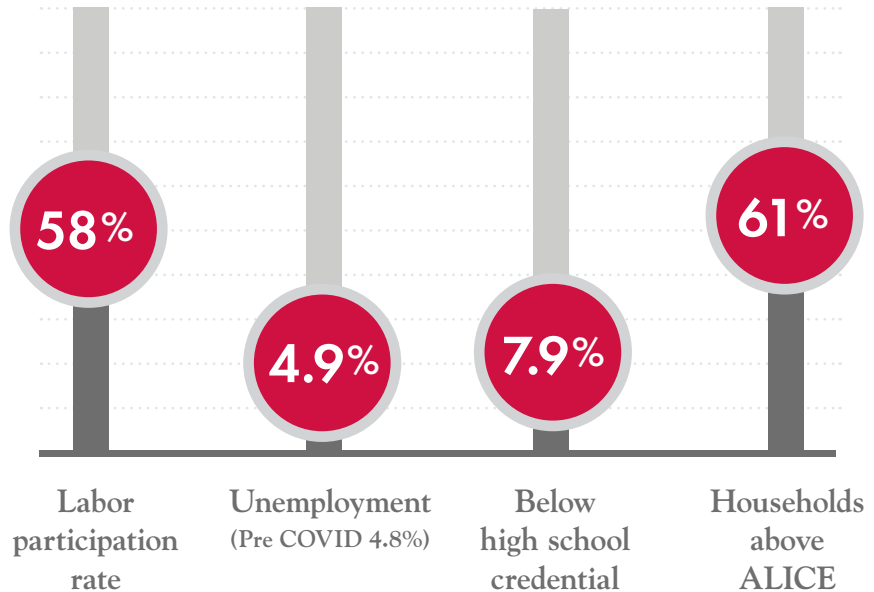
# 2021 Regional Indicators

**207,558**

employment  
(-3.9% Pre-COVID)

**\$51,960**

average annual wage  
(+10.1% Pre-COVID)



## Ongoing Pandemic Response

- Web chat feature – leader in the state on this
- Video and virtual workshops
- Virtual, by appointment, and in-person services
- Outdoor job fairs
- Virtual job fairs
- Industry specific resume drop offs
- MCQMM talent tours in place of live event



## IT Accomplishments in 2021

Integrating the technology infrastructure in service centers in five different counties has been a multi-year endeavor. With a dedicated internal IT director, Great Lakes Michigan Works! has significantly improved overall IT operations – as evidenced by successful completion of more than 800 internal IT support “tickets” – and realized savings of more than \$150,000:

- New fiber internet circuit and updated network infrastructure in Saginaw and Isabella service centers with network integration in Bay and Midland
- New unified communication system in Bay, Midland, and Saginaw service centers – including voice, chat, and video conference solutions from Charter Spectrum
- Implementation of text-from-computer solution from Signal Vine
- Office 365 implementation
- New Barracuda SPAM blocking solution
- External WIFI access point implementation at the Saginaw Service Center
- Electronic in/out board solution rolled out to all staff, contractors, and partners
- Migration to new, supported versions of Microsoft Office Suite
- Implementation of a mobile device management system, security awareness solution and email phishing security testing from KnowBe4, and email encryption solutions for O365
- Windows 10 OS upgrades to supported versions
- Implementation of new visitor kiosk system from Envoy



## Great Reinvention Tackles Great Resignation

While much of the state and nation watched COVID-19 worsen an already challenging workforce shortage, Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! jumped into action to meet the growing and changing needs of our region.

Our ability to pivot and provide services without interruption has been critical (see page 5) to our success in serving both employers and job seekers.

We were the first in the state to launch an aggressive and comprehensive back-to-work campaign in five counties designed to:

- Raise awareness of employer needs
- Reveal opportunities for recareering
- Prepare job candidates for new roles in areas of high demand
- Share hard truths about lengthy resume gaps and opportunities to land best jobs while others waited for unemployment benefits to run out
- Deploy innovative strategies like outdoor job fairs and drive-thru resume drops.

And we found answers to the million-dollar question: Why aren't people coming back to work – especially with so many employers actively recruiting and hiring? In 2021, it was tough to say, “We don't know!” So, we decided to ask.

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**Answer three simple questions**  
to help us understand at [www.michiganworks.com](http://www.michiganworks.com)





Throughout the summer, we reached out directly to our workforce – the people who didn’t come back to work as quickly as employers thought they should – the ones who baffled us by staying away...even without unemployment benefits. Here’s what we learned:

- Extended unemployment benefits weren’t the culprit. Less than 10% of respondents indicated that they were waiting to return to work until their unemployment benefits ran out.
- Only one quarter of the people we surveyed were looking for a position comparable to their pre-COVID jobs. Our workforce is seeking something new and better. And here’s what “new and better” means to them – FLEXIBILITY! Flexibility to determine their own schedules and workday based on family care needs – which includes work-from-home options.
- Nearly one in four workers are struggling to find affordable childcare options.
- They want employers to reconsider the traditional 8-5 workday and are seeking opportunities to have weekends and holidays off.
- One in four said, “I’ve applied for so many jobs and I can’t get a call back!”
- The Baby Boomer generation – many of whom still want to work – are fearful because of their age and worry that new employers won’t want them.

Employers are clearly facing new and complex workforce challenges. But they are NOT facing them alone. Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! is here to help. We are actively working with employers to create a more flexible, safe, multi-generational, satisfied workforce to improve productivity and competitiveness for our region.

## Transitioning from “Case Management” to “Career Coaching”

Nobody looking for a quality career or employment opportunity wants to be considered a “case” to be “managed.” And no one job search process or solution works for everyone. People are different! We have recognized this for quite some time, working our best to personalize our services to better meet the needs of individuals looking to re-enter or re-career in our region’s workforce.

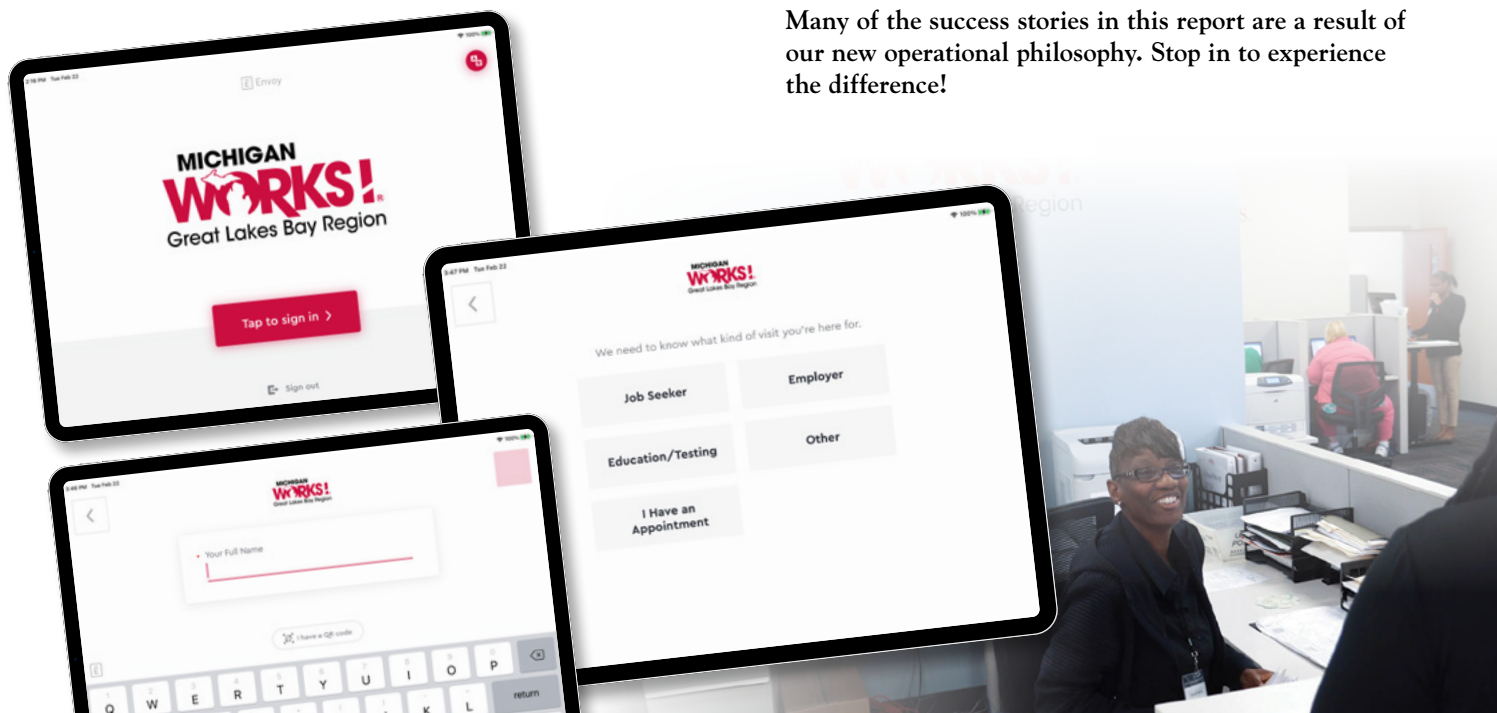
So in 2021, we took bold steps to reshape our operational philosophy in our service centers to train staff with a new mindset and approach. Now, from the minute a job seeker walks into one of our service centers – or engages with us

virtually – he or she has a customized and personalized experience designed just for them.

Career navigators introduce job seekers to a variety of career coaches within our centers who can best help them gain the knowledge and skills needed to accomplish their goals.

OUR goal is helping job seekers succeed in whatever they need to advance on their career path so they better meet the needs of our region’s employers, whether it is upgraded workplace skills, interview/resume improvements, soft skills, academic catch-up, access to technology resources for job search, transportation, child care, and much more.

Many of the success stories in this report are a result of our new operational philosophy. Stop in to experience the difference!



# Success Stories



## Jasmine Mims



Jasmine came to Michigan Works! seeking assistance with career exploration to define her career path, obtain work experience, and get her driver's license.

Jasmine began attending YouthBuild and was referred for the Young Professional program to assist with increasing leadership skills, responsibility and employability skills.

As part of the program, Jasmine participated in work experience at Great Lakes Pace. She took the opportunity to put her best foot forward and discovered her passion for caring for others. Great Lakes Pace took note of her ability to be a valuable member of the team. She was offered permanent employment.

Before connecting with Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works!, Jasmine was earning \$11 an hour working a part-time job. After, she was earning \$14 an hour at a full-time job with opportunities for advancement. She also obtained her driver's permit, and her new employer is sponsoring her continuing education in CNA training. Her supervisors report that Jasmine "is a great asset to our team."

## Caitlin Draves

Caitlin was permanently laid-off from Suniva in 2017 working as a shift supervisor making \$23 an hour. She needed to provide for her growing family and was ready for a change in careers and industries. Her goal was to find something in the medical field.



Caitlin was eligible for training assistance under the Trade Adjustment Act and worked with Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! to enroll in nursing school at Delta. All of her tuition, books, supplies, and testing costs were paid in full, along with mileage reimbursement to and from her classes and shoes and scrubs for her new job.

But nursing school came with challenges including being waitlisted for clinicals, having a baby, and navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic. Michigan Works! continued to be a source of support and resources for Caitlin. Once her clinicals were underway at Ascension St. Mary's, she was offered a part-time nurse intern position there. Upon graduation from Delta with her RN degree, Caitlin was offered a full-time job at St. Mary's making \$28.64 an hour.

## Jeremy Bierlein

Jeremy was laid off as a team leader at TRW making \$25 an hour. At the time, he held an associate's degree and was unable to find employment at or near this wage. The situation at his former employer made Jeremy eligible for training benefits under the Trade Adjustment Act, and he began working with Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! to pursue additional education.

With the assistance of his Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! career coach, Jeremy decided to pursue a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering at Saginaw Valley State University. Michigan Works! was able to help him in a variety of ways throughout his educational journey, including reimbursement for his commute to school, tuition, and more.

One summer during his schooling, Jeremy obtained a co-op position at Nexteer in the engineering department, where he worked 20 hours per week applying what he was learning at SVSU.

Upon graduation, Jeremy was immediately hired full time at Nexteer, working on the new Mustang and battery electric truck programs making \$33 an hour. He continues to work hard and looks forward to all the opportunities that are now available to him.



## Tierra Harris King

Tierra came to Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! seeking tuition funding assistance to complete a phlebotomy program. She had spent the last 5+ year working in manufacturing production positions and was seeking a change. A single parent, she felt that transitioning to healthcare would provide more stable employment for her family of four.

Tierra was eligible for help with tuition because of her income and because phlebotomists are in high demand in the region. During her training, she was one of three chosen to participate in an externship. She successfully completed the training and gained full-time employment at Covenant HealthCare making \$13.21 an hour.

“Michigan Works helped me achieve my goal by giving me all the resources to do so,” Tierra says. “You helped me build a professional resume, gave me techniques on interviewing skills, funded my phlebotomy training class, and helped me out by getting me tags and insurance for my car so I was able to get back and forth to training safely. You helped with uniforms so that I always looked professional. I could not have done all of this without Michigan Works.”



## Partnerships Make the Difference

With an administrative staff that runs lean and mean, we have always worked closely with key partners to make an even more profound difference in our region's workforce. We believe in the power of collaboration. And 2021 was no exception.



## *FastStart!*

### Fast Start On-Demand Training

We continue working closely area employers and training providers to create on-demand training and recruit candidates. In 2021, our focus was on Manufacturing & Logistics.

For employers this role is essential for materials movement and product packaging:

- Prepare raw materials for operations
- Manually break down pallets of materials and products
- Arrange, stack and repackage materials
- Safely operate fork lifts
- Know and uphold health, safety and environmental standards
- Perform and manage equipment maintenance
- Calibrate instrumentation
- Handle medium-to-heavy tools

For job seekers, it is a great opportunity to learn high-demand skills with no previous experience required. In just 8 training days – including hands-on classroom work at Delta College, some online learning, and forklift training – potential candidates can earn three certifications and earn \$15.85-\$16.85.



## Partnerships **Make the Difference** *(continued)*

## Going **PRO** IN MICHIGAN

TALENT FUND

### Going PRO Talent Fund Help Employers Train Current/Future Workers

The Boy Scout motto is “Be prepared!” Yet, like most employers, the Michigan Crossroads Council of Boy Scouts of America (BSA) was forced to change its entire operations model when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. The organization needed a way to ensure that staff received critical training to “be prepared” to do their best in their roles and serve the organization and its customers.

Ingersoll CM Systems is a full-service machine tool company offering custom machine design and integration to manufacturing challenges. Because of the company’s shrinking market in crankshaft manufacturing – and the Covid-19 pandemic – Ingersoll CM Systems needed to focus on retaining, retraining and diversifying the skills of current employees.

Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works business services team worked with both to apply for Going PRO Training Funds and successfully secured each a grant to upskill existing employees.

For Michigan Crossroads Council of BSA, the trainings focused on non-profit effectiveness/efficiency, leadership development, and program expansion. At the completion of trainings, employees were more prepared to communicate, fundraise, recruit, and create programs in ways they have never done nor imagined was possible before.

For Ingersoll, Going Pro Training Funds were dedicated to both helping employees better work with and understand existing products, but also to learn new skills to market new products. Ingersoll used the grant to develop:

- More skilled engineers to help design and model current machines
- An engineer trained on a ePlan who can also train others within the organization for more effective troubleshooting
- Engineers trained on programming and operating Fanuc robots which the company is marketing as a new service

Due to Ingersoll’s continued diversification efforts and training, the company has been awarded new business.





## Clean Slate Aims to Expand Talent Pool

Along with Legal Services of Eastern Michigan, Saginaw County Clerk Vanessa Guerra, and the Saginaw County Sheriff's Office, we hosted our first expungement clinic in 2021. The goal of Michigan's "clean slate" legislation is to expand the state's talent pool by helping qualified individuals get certain misdemeanors and felonies expunged from their conviction records so they can successfully pass employment background checks.

At our clinics, we are helping individuals navigate the process of gathering necessary documentation so they can sit down with an attorney to begin the process. The demand for this service has far exceeded our expectations, as has the complexity of the task.

In 2022, we are working with all our counties to host similar events throughout the region with the hopes of helping both potential job seekers and employers.

## Talent Innovation Grant Targets Great Lakes Bay Region

In 2021, we partnered with Mid Michigan Development Corporation and Saginaw Future to apply for a regional talent innovation grant earmarked for customized training in production operations. The program provides training for up to 200 people to earn at least one industry-recognized credential through Delta College or Mid Michigan College.

Prior to application, regional employers were surveyed and indicated that "entry-level employees in middle-skills areas" are critical. The nearly \$750,000 grant is designed to provide a pathway for people to get trained and get to work quickly. Employers in eight counties (Arenac, Bay, Clare, Gladwin, Gratiot, Isabella, Midland and Saginaw) can access free training for their newly hired employees or for those existing employees who would like to advance their skills.

To request training, employers can visit [mmdc.org](http://mmdc.org).

## MI Tri-Share Addresses Affordable Childcare Issue

Affordable and accessible childcare is one of our region's most persistent "opportunities" to grow a more reliable labor pool. Great Lakes Bay Michigan Work Works! and the Saginaw Intermediate School District partnered to create MI Tri-Share Pilot, a public/private partnership that splits the cost of childcare between employers, employees, and the state of Michigan.

Seven employers have signed up to participate and realize the following benefits:

- Assisting employees with more affordable childcare costs
- Removing the childcare barrier to employment
- Developing and strengthening the talent pipeline
- Strengthening recruiting and retention of employees
- Impacting longer range achievement of children in childcare





## Restaurant-Ready Curriculum Helps Employers, Employees, and Regional Economy

Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! partnered with Midland Co. ESA, Michigan tourism, and local restaurant owners to bring “Restaurant Ready” to the Great Lakes Bay Region. This national program is dedicated to helping people acquire the basic job and life skills necessary to pursue jobs in the restaurant industry.

Midland County ESA is piloting training in six work-ready competency areas defined by the restaurant industry. The competencies are designed to help participants acquire the skills, discipline and confidence to start a job and stay employed. Michigan Works! is providing links to local employers and providing wrap-around services to eliminate any barriers to success.

## Partnerships Make the Difference

(continued)

### “Where Are All the Good Workers?” – Apprenticeships are the Future of Talent Development

Apprenticeships are a centuries-old method of training new talent, but they now look a lot different than in the past. Today, you’ll find them in healthcare, human services, food and agriculture, information technology and more. Each apprenticeship program is unique, utilizing a combination of on-the-job training and classroom learning that leads to skill mastery and a nationally recognized credential. Apprentices earn while they learn.

#### Employers:

- Reduce turnover
- Foster greater loyalty
- Increase productivity
- Improve their bottom line

Companies can take advantage of this recruitment and hiring strategy and they don’t have to do it alone. Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! provides resources and assistance in customizing an apprenticeship program. We help employers navigate the steps to register with the United States Department of Labor. We may also be able to access potential funds to support the program.







The State of Michigan is placing a high priority on apprenticeships. Based on Going PRO Training Fund awards for 2022, it's clear that apprenticeships are "where the money's at." Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! and Michigan Works! R7B jointly secured an apprenticeship expansion grant to help better align our region's CTE with post-secondary training so that high school graduates can seamlessly transition right from high school into apprenticeships – a plan designed to help employers more effectively use apprenticeships and recruit for them.

Watch [HERE](#) to learn more.



# More Success Stories



## Jessica Cordingly

Jessica was working as a licensed practical nurse at Stratford Pines in Midland. Her goal was to continue her education to become a registered nurse. Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! helped her accomplish that goal by funding allowable expenses during her final semester and clinicals.

Jessica completed her training successfully and she is currently making \$32.75 as an RN working full-time at Stratford Pines and also working an additional ten hours a week at HealthSource Saginaw making \$44 an hour.

## Nicole Lewis

Nicole Lewis reached out to Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! when her job as a waitress at Uno's of Birch Run was drastically cut back because of the pandemic. The cost and online learning platform associated with training for a new job were obstacles she couldn't overcome alone.

That's when she reached out to talk to a career coach at Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works!

Nicole received the financial and career support help she needed to pursue her medical assistant certificate from Ross Education. While juggling a family and her online education for eight months, she earned a training externship with Ross which gave her the hands-on experience she needed to be successful.

After earning her certificate of completion, Nicole got a job as a medical assistant at Frankenmuth Medical Associates. There, she works 28 hours a week so she can maintain her family balance and makes \$14 an hour.

"It's a dream come true," Nicole says. "I was really scared of going to school and even more scared of being in a doctor's office, but it's all come so natural to me. I'm really grateful. I am so proud of myself for making the leap. I honestly would not have made it and done so well without the constant support and recognition from Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! You helped make it all possible!"



## Matthew Visner

Matthew was out of high school, unemployed and without any credentials to help him find viable jobs. He was interested in working as a utility groundman but had been told by employers that there was a greater need for people licensed to drive electrical trucks. He wanted to participate in commercial driver's license (CDL), Class A program training but did not have the financial ability to pay for courses by himself.

That's when Matthew came to Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! in Mt. Pleasant for help.

Matthew's career coach helped him enroll in training with Tri Area Trucking through Mid Michigan College and provided a scholarship to compete his CDL-A. Soon after obtaining his CDL-A license, he was offered a truck driving position with Newkirk Electric as a groundman truck driver making \$29 an hour.

Matthew dreams of being a storm lineman one day, driving the trucks to follow the big storms, hurricanes and tornadoes to restore power in emergency situations. "Michigan Works! was a great help by paying for the class," he says. "Michigan Works! is a great help for anyone who wants to get into the trades."



# Awards



## 2021 Impact Award Recipient: Isabella Bank

Isabella Bank's over 118 years of service to the region began in Mt. Pleasant. With the support of local communities throughout the region, the bank has grown to serve seven counties including Clare, Gratiot, Isabella, Mecosta, Midland, Montcalm, and Saginaw.

The bank believes that educating young people is a crucial part of providing opportunities for personal growth and advancement. Eleven scholarships are awarded each year to young professionals to advance their education. This commitment to building the talent pipeline for youth is one of many reasons why Isabella Bank was selected for our region's 2021 Impact Award – a nomination we submit to the state for consideration as a statewide winner.

Our business services team enjoys assisting Isabella Bank with their recruitment and training needs as well as with FY2021 and FY2022 Going PRO Talent Fund grant applications. We also assist them with in-person and virtual job fairs as well as jobs postings on Pure Michigan Talent Connect, social media sites, and college career portals.

Supporting the bank's unique non-traditional leadership training and talent needs has been exciting. The trainings have helped support Isabella Bank's mission of maintaining high quality, personalized service to their customers, enhancing shareholder value through strategic growth, and being an employer of choice.

### **Bay Service Center**

4061 North Euclid Avenue  
Bay City, MI 48708  
(989) 667-0500

### **Gratiot Service Center**

327 E. Center St.  
Alma, MI 48801  
(989) 466-4832

### **Isabella Service Center**

5889 E. Broadway St.  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858  
(989) 772-5304

### **Midland Service Center**

1409 Washington Street  
Midland, MI 48640  
(989) 631-3073

### **Saginaw Service Center**

312 East Genesee Avenue  
Saginaw, MI 48607  
(989) 752-3145



[www.michiganworks.com](http://www.michiganworks.com)

Great Lakes Bay Michigan Works! is an Equal Opportunity/Employer Program. • Auxiliary aide services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Michigan Relay Services dial 711. • Supported by the State of Michigan. • A proud partner of the American Job Center Network.