



2026

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



WEST MICHIGAN
TECH TALENT

ABOUT THE COUNCIL

MISSION AND VISION

West Michigan Tech Talent connects local businesses, educators, community organizations and workforce experts who are invested in creating a strong tech workforce. By sharing best practices, leveraging resources and collaborating on innovative solutions, we are addressing the tech talent gap.



INDUSTRY IMPACT

West Michigan's technology industry is a key driver of the regional economy, supporting thousands of jobs across software development, healthcare, manufacturing, IT services, food production and emerging AI. The region is expected to add more than 6,000 technology jobs next year, with continued growth projected over the next five years.

West Michigan Tech Talent strives to unite leaders from industry, education, workforce and economic development to address these workforce goals through collaboration. Together, the council develops initiatives that strengthen the region's technology talent pipeline and support long-term economic growth and competitiveness.

« *We foster a strong tech community through career exploration, networking and professional development events that bring people together. We help people see themselves as part of something bigger, a thriving tech ecosystem that is shaping the future of our region. Our community believes in this mission and values the opportunities we create to connect, learn and grow together.* »

- Virginia Berger, Industry Council Lead

OUR STRATEGY

GROW • DEVELOP • RECRUIT • RETAIN



GROW

We grow tech talent through K-16 initiatives that engage students in career exploration.



DEVELOP

Develop existing tech talent in West Michigan by connecting businesses to training and funding opportunities that make developing West Michigan's workforce accessible and affordable.



RECRUIT & RETAIN

Recruit and retain top tech talent to West Michigan by connecting local businesses with organizations that actively recruit top talent from outside areas to West Michigan.



TECH TRENDS

Tech Trends 2026 brought together technology businesses, educators, workforce development professionals and community leaders to discuss the future of technology in West Michigan. The event featured keynote speakers Keith Brophy, CEO of Mentavi Health, and Dre Wallace, CEO of Opnr, who shared insights on innovation, entrepreneurship and the evolving tech landscape. Through presentations, networking and discussion, Tech Trends helped strengthen the region's tech network.



What began as a conversation about the future became a catalyst for a community. For over two decades, Tech Trends has helped inspire the growth of Grand Rapids' thriving tech ecosystem—fueling connections among entrepreneurs, businesses, educators, students, investors and innovators, and helping pave the way for the many tech meetups, conferences and events that strengthen the region today.

- John Rumery, GRCC



\$1,000

RAISED

64

BUSINESSES
REPRESENTED

100+

PROFESSIONALS
ENGAGED

BE THE DIFFERENCE

MICAREERQUEST

MiCareerQuest gives West Michigan middle and high school students the opportunity to explore careers in the region's high-demand industries through hands-on experiences with businesses across our seven-county region. While the annual event helps students envision future career paths, it also allows businesses and educational institutions to showcase industry career opportunities and training.

It was exciting to see students fully engaged, asking thoughtful questions and discovering new possibilities for their futures. The event was exceptionally well-organized and full of positive energy. Opportunities like this inspire curiosity and broaden students' perspectives.

- Megan McCoy, Xello



8,100+
STUDENTS

71
IT INDUSTRY VOLUNTEERS

665
VOLUNTEER HOURS

BE THE CHANGE

{MI}CODE EXPERIENCE

Every December, during Computer Science Education Week, {Mi}Code Experience creates hands-on coding experiences for thousands of West Michigan students in grades 3-5. During this initiative, local tech professionals act as volunteer mentors and teach basic coding and technology skills. The goal is to introduce as many students as possible to technology and ultimately see broader participation in the industry across gender, ethnic and socioeconomic groups.

The best part of the event was when I realized my mistake, was able to debug it, then my brain grew!

- 5th Grade Student,
Glenwood Elementary

58
CLASSROOMS

1,747
STUDENTS
ENGAGED

33
VOLUNTEERS



\$16,000
TRAINING
DOLLARS
INVESTED



8
PROFESSIONALS
TRAINED



102
ENGAGED
BUSINESSES



377
PROJECT
VOLUNTEERS

TECH TRAILS

Tech Trails is a series of outdoor hikes held at parks and trail systems throughout West Michigan. These casual, energizing networking events bring together tech professionals and community members for a mix of sunshine, fresh air and great conversation. Attendees enjoy unplugging, getting outside and engaging with the West Michigan community in a fresh, informal setting.



These hikes have helped me make great new connections while learning about companies right here in West Michigan. I love exploring our beautiful parks and trails with people who share a genuine passion for tech!

- Charlie Peck, Gordon Food Service



63

HIKERS

4

PARKS



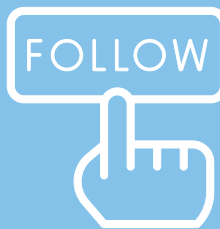
12,326

K-12 STUDENTS
EXPLORED
CAREERS



445

EVENT
ATTENDEES



3,374

LINKEDIN AND
NEWSLETTER
FOLLOWERS



COUNCIL MEMBERS



- ROB GEER
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
RANDSTAD DIGITAL
- JIM BECHER
AUGUSTO DIGITAL
- KRISTI HAIK
*GRAND RAPIDS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE*
- CASEY HORNER
COREWELL HEALTH
- AMY LEBEDNICK
WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!
- KRISTY LOUGHLIN-VANCE
KENT CAREER TECH CENTER
- CHARLES ELWOOD
SOLISMATICA
- RODD LOWELL
*GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY*
- SCOTT PALLAS
MEIJER
- CHARLIE PECK
GORDON FOOD SERVICE
- A'MYA SAFFORE
THE RIGHT PLACE
- GARRY VONMYRH
TECH DEFENDERS
- DIANA REIL
SPARTANNASH

FUNDERS

- COREWELL HEALTH
- XELLO
- GRAND RAPIDS
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT
OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC
OPPORTUNITY
- KENT ISD
- WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!
- AUGUSTO DIGITAL
- MENTAVI HEALTH
- RANDSTAD DIGITAL
- TECH DEFENDERS
- GORDON FOOD SERVICE
- SOLISMATICA
- GRAND VALLEY STATE
UNIVERSITY



WEST MICHIGAN
TECH TALENT



West Michigan Works! is a division of ACSET, an equal opportunity employer/program and a proud partner of the American Job Center network. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. West Michigan Works! is supported by state and federal funds; more details at westmiworks.org/about/.