



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/.



2025

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



EXPLORE HOSPITALITY

ABOUT THE COUNCIL

MISSION AND VISION

Elevating West Michigan by developing careers, cultivating talent and promoting a thriving, dynamic hospitality industry. The council's efforts will attract and develop skilled workers to provide world-class service throughout the region.



INDUSTRY IMPACT

More than 35,000 people are employed in the hospitality industry in West Michigan, and 20 of the most in-demand jobs in our region are part of hospitality. This Industry Talent Council is bringing together employers, education, and economic and workforce development in our inaugural year. When the hospitality industry succeeds, the whole community benefits through better jobs and stronger businesses.

We are thrilled to announce the formation of Explore Hospitality. As a key employment sector in our region, it's essential that we highlight the broad range of opportunities our industry offers. This newly formed council brings together diverse representation from across the hospitality landscape – including lodging, food & beverage, transportation, healthcare, events, destination marketing, education, attractions and others.

- Ross Bartlet, AHC Hospitality

COUNCIL MEMBERS



- ROSS BARTLETT
COUNCIL CHAIRPERSON
AHC HOSPITALITY
- LISA CALHOUN
SHERATON GRAND
RAPIDS AIRPORT HOTEL
- JANET KORN
EXPERIENCE GRAND RAPIDS
- JANE NEWTON
CREATIVE DINING SERVICES
- RICH MACKEIGAN
ASM GLOBAL
- KEVIN VOS
COREWELL HEALTH
- HEATHER DAY
GERALD R. FORD
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
- AMY YOUNG
DESTINATION CONSULTANTS
- CAROL KENDRA
FREDERICK MEIJER GARDEN &
SCULPTURE PARK
- DR. WERNER ABSENGER
GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY
COLLEGE
- DR. MICHAEL SCIARINI
GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
- KELLY BOWERS
KENT CAREER TECH CENTER
- AMY LEBEDNICK
WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!

FUNDERS

- EXPERIENCE GRAND RAPIDS
- MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT
OF LABOR AND
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
- WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!
- GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
SECCHIA INSTITUTE FOR CULINARY EDUCATION



BE THE CHANGE



MICAREERQUEST

At MiCareerQuest this year, seventh-10th grade students learned about 13 hospitality occupations through hands-on activities. They were prepping for events, frosting cupcakes, planning transit routes and more. These students were inspired to consider this key industry as a career path after these experiences. This was the first time Explore Hospitality participated in the event, and we hope to expand our presence there in years to come.

I liked the hands-on activities. It gave me and others a better understanding and experience of what I'm thinking of continuing in the future.

- Briar, Mona Shores High School



8
EXHIBITORS

345
TEACHERS

8,500+
STUDENTS

OUR STRATEGY

ELEVATE • TRAIN • RETAIN



ELEVATE

We are dedicated to promoting hospitality as a sustainable career pathway for anyone in the workforce.



TRAIN

We provide resources for employers to upskill new or current employees and create a sustainable talent pipeline for West Michigan's hospitality industry.



RETAIN

We create or promote beneficial retention programs aimed at keeping existing talent in the hospitality industry.



\$171,500
TRAINING
DOLLARS
INVESTED



85
PROFESSIONALS
TRAINED



18
ENGAGED
BUSINESSES



37
PROJECT
VOLUNTEERS



8,500+
K - 12 STUDENTS
EXPLORED CAREERS

