



2026

COMMUNITY
IMPACT REPORT



CONSTRUCTION
CAREERS COUNCIL

ABOUT THE COUNCIL



MISSION AND VISION

We build West Michigan's construction industry by being a collaborative toolbox that aligns employers, educators and the workforce for the future. Our activities equip the current and future workforce with knowledge and skills to keep the industry thriving.

INDUSTRY IMPACT

Careers in the construction industry offer strong earning potential, long-term stability, multiple entry pathways and opportunities for advancement, making the construction field an attractive career choice. Within the next five years, West Michigan's construction industry will require 15,000 new workers to meet growing demand.



The Council is built on collaboration — we address the challenges affecting West Michigan's construction industry from multiple angles and find the most effective ways to serve our industry. By collaborating with businesses, educators and workforce partners, we open pathways to careers in skilled trades and construction. This work ensures that we are not only meeting today's needs but building a solid foundation for long-term growth and a steady talent pipeline.

- Rachel Austin, Barton Malow Company

OUR STRATEGY

CAMPAIGN • SUSTAIN • TRAIN



CAMPAIGN

Implementing initiatives to promote construction careers across all age groups, showcasing opportunities and benefits.



SUSTAIN

Creating projects focused on the individuals in construction and implementing retention strategies to maintain a skilled workforce.



TRAIN

Developing programs for skill enhancement of current workers and introductory training for newcomers interested in construction.



WORKPLACE WELLBEING SUMMIT

The West Michigan Works! Industry Talent Councils hosted a Workplace Wellbeing Summit, bringing together business leaders and community partners to prioritize mental health in the workplace. The summit focused on expanding awareness of available resources, equipping businesses with practical tools and sharing strategies to embed mental health best practices into everyday operations. Through open dialogue and collaboration, participants explored meaningful ways to foster healthier, more supportive work environments for all employees.



Construction has this culture of pushing through; we're starting to recognize the cost. When we're proactive about mental health, not reactive, it starts making it okay to say you need support, and knowing your team has your back.

- Rachel Austin, Barton Malow

25
ORGANIZATIONS

95
ATTENDEES



BE THE DIFFERENCE

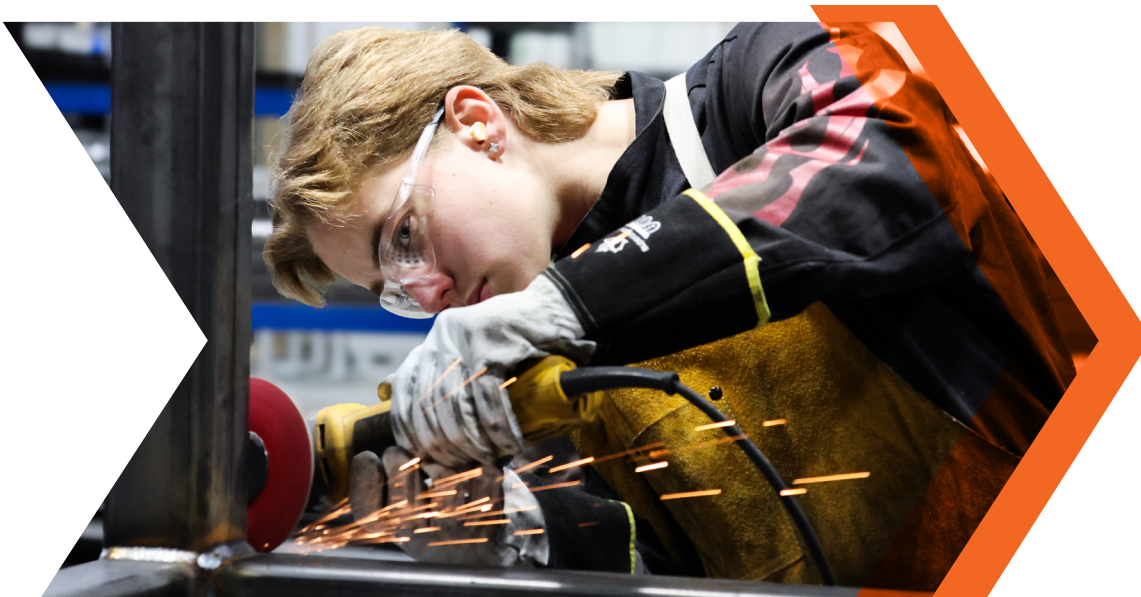
WOMEN WHO BUILD WEST MICHIGAN

The council celebrates Women in Construction Week by recognizing women shaping West Michigan's construction industry through our Women Who Build West Michigan blog series. Women hold less than 12.6% of construction jobs, but their contributions are significant and essential to the industry's future. We focus on this underrepresented workforce by showing women are welcome and can excel. Nominations come from employers and community members, and our nominees' personal experiences, challenges and triumphs inspire younger generations.



Programs like this support those already in trades and use real stories to encourage others to explore construction careers. There is a strong need for skilled trades workforce and women bring talent, skill and quality work to the field.

- Cindy Czarniecki-Brown, ResCom Electric and Integration



23
NOMINEES
RECOGNIZED

5
BLOGS
PUBLISHED

BE THE CHANGE

MICAREERQUEST

At MiCareerQuest, 27 construction and skilled trades businesses wowed over 8,100 8th-10th graders through interactive exhibits featuring heavy equipment operation, team work, welding, electrical work and much more – offering students a glimpse into exciting, hands-on careers.

After years of participating in MiCareerQuest, we see the impact directly in our hiring process. Students leave with interest in the trades and apply for apprenticeship programs. The return on investment makes every bit of effort worthwhile.

- John Hartwell, Operating Engineers 324

27
CONSTRUCTION EXHIBITS

90
SCHOOLS

299
VOLUNTEERS



\$3,300,500
TRAINING
DOLLARS
INVESTED



1,213
PROFESSIONALS
TRAINED



44
ENGAGED
BUSINESSES



283
PROJECT
VOLUNTEERS

CONSTRUCTION CAREER PATHWAYS

Construction Career Pathways activities help students learn about construction directly from professionals while exploring career opportunities and industry pathways. The program remains an important part of the council's work by connecting students to the skilled trades through experiences like mapping a construction project and learning about concrete mix materials.

Presenting to the students was a very meaningful experience. Being able to see their reactions, answer questions directly and engage with the students made each visit a new opportunity to show the range of careers in the construction field.

- Rachel Holliday, Fabcon



240
STUDENTS
ENGAGED

9
CLASSROOM
VISITS



8,693
STUDENTS
EXPLORED
CAREERS



79
INDUSTRY
PROFESSIONALS
AT EVENTS





COUNCIL MEMBERS

- RACHEL AUSTIN
COUNCIL CHAIR
BARTON MALOW
- SARA WHISLER
COUNCIL VICE CHAIR
CARBONSIX CONSTRUCTION
- CARROLL BURGESS
BURGESS CONCRETE
- CHRIS SMITH
EV CONSTRUCTION
- RACHEL HOLLIDAY
FABCON
- JOHN HARTWELL
OPERATING ENGINEERS 324
- AMY LEBEDNICK
WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!
- SHAYNA CARLSON
OTTAWA AREA
CAREERLINE TECH CENTER
- TODD TOMEK
FLEIS & VANDENBRINK
- KELLY WANDEL
LAKESHORE ADVANTAGE
- LINDSAY KRONEMEYER
ASSOCIATED BUILDERS AND
CONTRACTORS, INC. WESTERN MICHIGAN

FUNDERS

- MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
- WEST MICHIGAN WORKS!
- BOUMA CORPORATION
- CONSUMERS ENERGY
- DTE ENERGY
- GELOCK HEAVY MOVERS
- ROCKFORD CONSTRUCTION
- MIDWEST GEOTHERMAL
- OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL 324
- KENT ISD
- MICHIGAN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS AND MILLWRIGHTS
- UA LOCAL 174 PLUMBERS & PIPEFITTERS
- IBEW LOCAL 275
- ROCKFORD CONSTRUCTION
- AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS GRAND RAPIDS
- MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
- GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- MICHIGAN ENERGY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CONSORTIUM
- NATIONAL KITCHEN AND BATH ASSOCIATION OF WEST MICHIGAN



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/.