



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC**  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

# YOUR GUIDE TO MICHIGAN TALENT



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Michigan Economic  
Development Corporation



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### AMID A NATIONAL TALENT SHORTAGE, COMPANIES OF ALL SIZES ARE ASKING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES, “HOW MANY PEOPLE CAN I HIRE, AND HOW FAST CAN I HIRE THEM?”

Even as businesses continue to prioritize funding, talent has become valuable currency.

In Michigan, companies in a range of industries are connecting with some of the most highly qualified talent in the country, thanks to the state’s circuit of top-tier universities. Michigan is creating programs, initiatives, partnerships and campaigns centered around talent attraction, retention and upskilling. This guide serves as your starting point, providing background on Michigan’s exceptional workforce.

#### YOU CAN IN MICHIGAN

In October 2023, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) launched the largest state talent attraction campaign and effort in the U.S., aptly dubbed “You Can in Michigan.” Designed to showcase the lifestyles and careers available in Michigan, the campaign provides tools and support for job seekers in states from California to New York.

Within the first 10 days, the campaign was seen by millions, and prospective employees were using the Michigan Career

“Michigan is a welcoming, inclusive state with strong career opportunities for workers and resources for cutting-edge, high-tech industries that will define the future. Our new, national campaign—‘You Can in Michigan’—will attract talent and grow our population and economy by sharing our story and showing the nation what we have to offer. From a great quality of life, good cost of living, and strong economic opportunities, there’s something in Michigan for everyone.”

– Governor Gretchen Whitmer



Portal to connect with local employers. This website, a one-of-a-kind, AI-driven platform powered by FutureFit AI, helps job seekers explore the state, calculate their cost of living and define and reach their career goals.

You Can in Michigan highlights the state’s mission of creating top-tier programs built on partnerships between private and public entities to bolster the state’s ability to attract and retain talent.

#### MAKE IT IN MICHIGAN

You Can in Michigan is part of the state’s “Make It in Michigan” strategy, which aims to drive economic momentum by



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empowering people and businesses. By combining what people care about most – good-paying jobs, vibrant places to live and an environment conducive to raising a family – with business priorities like bringing home manufacturing and supply chains, Michigan aims to connect people, places and projects.

Make It in Michigan remains a long-term strategy, but in the campaign's first six months, the state ranked No. 4 in the nation and No. 1 in the Midwest in total employees added to the workforce, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## GROWING MICHIGAN TOGETHER COUNCIL

Rounding out the state's talent strategy is the first-of-its-kind Growing Michigan Together Council, which is tasked with developing strategies focused on improving pre-K-12 education, supporting the workforce with community assets and upgrading and modernizing the state's transportation and water infrastructure.

### Strategy 1: Build a lifelong education system focused on future-ready skills and competencies to thrive.

This includes transforming Michigan's education system into a well-aligned, accountable and adequately funded lifelong learning system. It also means committing to a Michigan Education Guarantee, which ensures all Michigan students will get the necessary support to graduate with the competencies needed to be successful in their next stage of education and in today's economy.

### Strategy 2: Create a transformative economic growth strategy that establishes Michigan as the Innovation Hub of the Midwest and America's Scale-Up State.

This strategy focuses on supporting entrepreneurs and businesses of any size in growing their business and creating high wage, knowledge-based jobs. Another aspect of the strategy are concentrated regional innovation districts to support the cycle of attracting more talent, which contributes to more knowledge-based business creation and growth, thriving communities and median income growth.

### Strategy 3: Create thriving, resilient communities that are magnets for young talent.

This includes developing regional well-connected public transit systems that allow residents to get to work, school and amenities. By focusing on the fundamentals including transit, housing and climate-resilient, durable infrastructure, businesses and talent will seek to locate here and drive further investment in thriving communities. The Council recognizes Michigan's relatively low cost of living and suggests that increasing the housing stock will support the growth and economic mobility of employees and address the lack of desirable housing and availability.

## TALENT ACTION TEAM

Michigan's Talent Action Team, launched in 2022, bridges the gap between the private and public sectors. The team helps make connections between job seekers and Michigan businesses, building a talent pipeline that removes barriers and expedites companies' ability to scale.

Our Next Energy is tapped into the Talent Action Team's Michigan EV Scholars program - providing incentives for top tech students who commit to work for at least 12 months in Michigan after graduation. This program was first private-public partnership created by the Talent Action Team, and it aimed to help bridge the gap between an eager workforce and employers, in addition to supporting recruitment and retainment incentives.

"Talking about the Talent Action Team was the first conversation we had following our decision to site our factory here, and it's very indicative of the philosophy of the state," says Deena Ahmed, ONE's vice president of strategy, policy and sustainability. "They care about, 'How do we bring more jobs here to Michigan?' and are doing this, instead of feeling a loss of jobs from the transition to electrification."

## THE DRIVING FORCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Michigan's research universities are creating pipelines of eager, high-quality talent who are invested in the future of the state. Among Michigan's 93 colleges and universities, eight are research universities. Each of these institutions of higher learning is attracting business leaders and investors who see the value in remaining in this workforce.





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## UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

**LOCATION: Ann Arbor, Michigan**

Fall 2023 Enrollment: 50,000+ students\*

*\*includes undergraduate and graduate students*

Founded in 1817, the University of Michigan (U-M) was one of the nation's first public universities. Known for its educational prowess, U-M consistently places third in top public university rankings. Both of the school's locations, Ann Arbor and Dearborn, feature advanced research facilities and exceptional faculty.

Popular undergraduate majors include computer sciences, business administration, economics and behavioral neuroscience, and according to U.S. News & World Report, U-M is home to more than 100 top 10 graduate programs. In 2022, U-M received \$1.71 billion in total research expenditures.

With MI Hydrogen, a joint venture by the Office of the Vice President for Research, the College of Engineering and the School for Environment and Sustainability, U-M is fostering collaboration among researchers, community groups and government and industry partners to identify industrial limitations and accelerate hydrogen adoption. The discoveries made at U-M will be instrumental in developing affordable and sustainable clean energy strategies.

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

**LOCATION: East Lansing, Michigan**

Fall 2023 Enrollment: 50,000+ students\*

*\*includes undergraduate and graduate students*

Established in 1855, Michigan State University (MSU) was America's first agricultural college, spearheading a national movement that resulted in at least one college in every state becoming accredited to teach agriculture, mechanical arts and military tactics. The funding for these programs was distributed through land grants from the federal government. The schools receiving this support became known as land-grant universities. By 1862, MSU was the nation's premier land-grant university and has remained a leader among its peers ever since.

MSU's graduate program in supply chain/logistics has ranked No. 1 for eight years. With \$844 million in total research expenditures last year and 38 other programs ranked among the top 25 in America, MSU is recognized as a leader in multiple industries.

One of the school's current research projects has brought MSU to the forefront of developing resilient food system strategies. In February, the U.S. Department of Agriculture bestowed a \$10 million grant to a team of researchers, educators and extension experts led by the university. The five-year project focuses on addressing disruption issues that food systems are susceptible to.

## MICHIGAN TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

**LOCATION: Houghton, Michigan**

Fall 2023 Enrollment: 8,000+ students\*

*\*includes undergraduate and graduate students*

Situated on the shores of Lake Superior, Michigan Technological University (Michigan Tech) is home to over 70 graduate programs, including doctoral, master's, certificates and online learning opportunities. The school's second campus, The Michigan Tech Research Institute, is located across the state in Ann Arbor and boasts research projects in areas such as national and homeland security, informatics/biomedical sensing, robotics and autonomy, machine learning and more. In total, Michigan Tech is comprised of 16 official research centers and institutes, providing students with robust experience across majors like engineering, computer science and environmental conservation.

In January 2023, Michigan Tech, along with four partners – Discovery Center & Pier, Northwestern Michigan College, 20Fathoms and Traverse Connect – received funding for the development of the Freshwater Research and Innovation Center in Traverse City, an established hub for research, development and commercialization of freshwater and marine technologies. The \$60 million project will build the new facilities on Discovery Pier, with the first phase estimated to be completed in 2027.



# YOUR GUIDE TO MICHIGAN TALENT

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## OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

LOCATION: Rochester, Michigan

Fall 2023 Enrollment: 16,000+ students\*

*\*includes undergraduate and graduate students*

In the beginning of 2023, Oakland University (OU) accomplished a monumental achievement: the university’s Department of Bioengineering received an ABET (Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology) accreditation. In the wake of this accomplishment, OU has made more exciting announcements, furthering its innovative efforts.

In March 2023, OU announced that its Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) was launching a new Bachelor of Science in cybersecurity degree program. As an institute of higher learning with a strong reputation in research and technology, OU created this new program as a response to the national and global need for competent workers in this expanding industry.

OU is also part of the Midwest Regional Network to Address National Needs in Semiconductor and Microelectronics coalition. This collective is made up of universities and colleges located in four states: Michigan, Ohio, Illinois and Indiana. On the heels of the passage of the CHIPS Act, this collaboration strives to use existing research and curriculum to elevate innovation in microelectronics, semiconductors and supply chains to prepare the next generation of engineers for the future needs of the national workforce.

## THE SKILLED TRADE FUTURE

In addition to the university route, Michigan is focused on continuing to grow its skilled trade workforce. It is projected that by 2030, professional trades will account for more than 520,000 jobs in the Michigan economy, and approximately 45,000 new job openings are expected annually in the state during that time. To meet this need, Michigan’s trade schools are educating a workforce prepared to take on the challenge. In fact, last year, Michigan trade schools like the Southeast Michigan Construction Academy saw record enrollment, nearly tripling from a few years prior.

To meet workforce needs across industries, state agencies and partners are focused on connecting students with the



education they need. Pure Michigan Talent Connect offers the Michigan Training Connect – an information hub to help qualified talent identify and obtain the certifications, licenses and trainings necessary to create a career in a skilled trade. The Going PRO initiative, a program from the state’s workforce development association Michigan Works!, is also providing tools and pathways for job seekers to connect with trade schools and training facilities.

Once they receive the training and certifications they need, programs like the MEDC’s Pure Michigan Talent Connect are helping job seekers find careers and connect with employers. In turn, employers have direct access to pre-screened candidates, the ability to post openings and stay in touch with potential recruits.

## FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE WORKFORCE

Through the strength of these partnerships and the ongoing efforts of all the state’s colleges, universities and trade schools, Michigan has proven to be proactive and intentional in its workforce development, preparing talent across the state for in-demand occupations that will innovate the future.

Michigan is committed to being a premier state for inclusivity and providing equitable access to economic opportunities. As the operational driver of this vision, the MEDC connects employers, educational institutions, job seekers and students.

**Interested in connecting with qualified talent? Get started at [MichiganBusiness.org/Talent-Action-Team](https://MichiganBusiness.org/Talent-Action-Team).**