



2022 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT





Growing a Stronger West Michigan Workforce

The Agribusiness Talent Council (ATC) is a collaborative of agribusiness employers, educators, workforce development and economic development agencies working together to meet West Michigan’s current and future agribusiness talent needs. The ATC is:

- Employer-led with WMW! as backbone agency.
- Supportive of local efforts to connect individuals with employment opportunities in agribusiness.
- Innovative, creating new programming to support the industry.
- A means for employers to engage in growing the region’s talent pool.

STRATEGIES

- **Promote the Industry:** We promote agribusiness as a great career pathway for all ages.
- **Recruit and Retain Talent:** We create and join efforts to bring new talent into the industry and keep existing talent long term.
- **Train:** We connect businesses with training resources to upskill their current workforce.
- **Connect to Resources:** We create and share existing beneficial resources for the industry.

COUNCIL EMPLOYER PARTICIPANTS

Hearthside Foods, Dykhuis Farms, Revolution Farms, Koeze Company, Herbruck’s Poultry Ranch, Riveridge Produce Marketing, GTF Technologies, Ottawa County Economic Development, Michigan State University, Allegan County ISD, and West Michigan Works!

ADDITIONAL PROJECT PARTNERS

The Chop House, Frederick Meijer Gardens, Umlor Orchards, Daddy’s Dough Cookies, King Milling, Last Mile Cafe, Cellar Door Preserves, The Gluten Free Brothers, Farmhaus Cider, Superbloom Farms, SpartanNash, Muskegon Conservation District, Plainsong Farm, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ionia Conservation District, Nutrien Ag Solutions, USDA Farm Services Agency, Michigan State University Extension, The Critter Barn, Denim and Dust 4-H, Waggle Dance Bees, Muskegon Farm Bureau, Coalition for Community Development, Muskegon Area ISD, Hortech Inc, JVC Enterprises, Lundell Farms, Ottawa County Farm Bureau, Shadyside Farm, Michigan Farm Bureau, Ionia County Career Tech Center, Saranac High School, MSU Product Center

WEGROWMI.ORG

Why is the Agribusiness Taleng Council (ATC) important?

This high-demand sector employs 26,000 people and generates \$300 million in labor revenue in our region. Maintaining this economic strength makes workforce development a priority for agribusiness employers. The ATC leverages resources and creates opportunities to promote this vital industry and strengthen the current talent pool through training. The work of the ATC will shape the future workforce for West Michigan’s farms and food processors.



A strong, local food system is important because it is one answer to the current and looming threats of climate change. Our local food system is also a huge part of our local culture and it tells the story of our land, people, and community. The stronger our local food system is the stronger we are as a people and the more resilient our economy is.”

~ Alita Kelly, chair, City of Grand Rapids Urban Agriculture Committee

ATC Strategies in Action!

PROMOTE THE INDUSTRY

Career AG-xploration

Piloted two events this year:

- Ionia County event at Saranac High School - **4 employers** shared career pathways information with **120 high school agriscience students**.
- Muskegon County event at Muskegon Farmers Market - **13 employers** presented to the greater community on a Saturday while the farmers market was open.

Agribusiness Spotlight Week

The industry-specific spotlight week helped us shine a light on the great careers available in agribusiness. The week featured:

- WZZM Interview showcasing in-demand careers in the industry.
- Social media series highlighting area ag workforce needs received over **2,300 views**.

MiCareerConversations

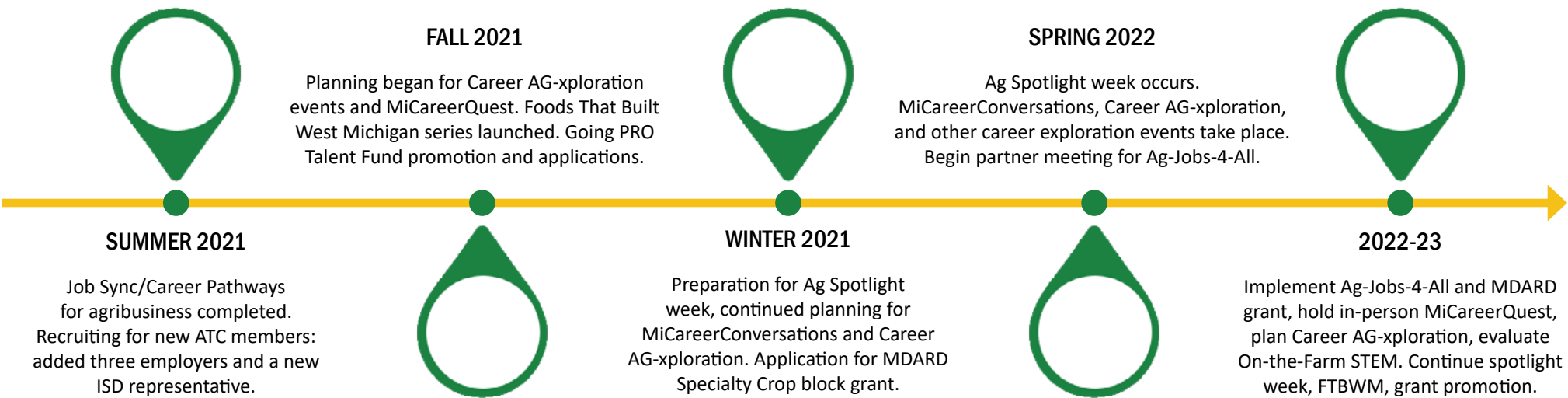
MiCareerConversations was a two-day series of webinars featuring agribusiness professionals sharing information about the industry and their career pathways.

- **5 employers** presented.
- **366 students** joined live.



Continued on back

ATC Quarterly Project Timeline FY 2021-2022



ATC Strategies in Action! (cont.)

RECRUIT/RETAIN

Job Sync / Career Pathways

Subject matter experts from various sectors of the industry provided feedback on the competencies required for their positions. Career guides created from SME feedback will help students and job seekers find rewarding careers where they can thrive.

- **6 agribusiness** professionals participated.

RESOURCES

Foods That Built West Michigan

A monthly spotlight on one agribusiness operation to share best practices and information about workforce needs in the industry. Launched in January 2022.

- **6 employers** have been featured in the ATC newsletter and on the ATC website.

Grant Expansion Lunch and Learn

A partnership with Michigan State University Product Innovation Center. Launched in June 2022.

- Connected with over **35 start-up and scaling-up food processors** about Going PRO Talent Fund and other WMW! support services to increase utilization in the industry.

TRAIN

MDARD Specialty Crop Block Grant

- If awarded will provide for **130 certifications**.
- If awarded will provide for filming of **5 industry promotional videos**.
- **13 organizations** signed letters of support for the application.

Grant Expansion

Expansion of training grants through Going Pro Talent Fund, incumbent worker training grant, and on-the-job training. A 7% increase in funds for the industry compared to 2020-21 fiscal year:

Type of Training	Investment	# Trainees
Classroom	\$309,000.00	206
New Hire	\$349,500.00	233
Apprenticeship	\$18,000.00	6
TOTAL	\$676,500.00	445