

West Michigan Works! Helps Employers Create and Retain a Qualified Workforce

Written by West Michigan Works

As employers know first-hand, workforce training is critical to retaining employees and growing their businesses. Since 2013 Michigan employers have applied for and received millions of *Going Pro Talent Fund* dollars for short-term training that addresses documented skill deficits.

The WMW! Business Solutions team has developed a process for interested employers to learn about the opportunity, connect to training partners and submit competitive applications. This year, 223 West Michigan employers were able to secure \$9.3 million, 33 percent of total funds awarded statewide.

WMW! can also help employers meet their talent needs through *apprenticeships*. On-the-job learning from an experienced mentor, plus classroom learning, results in employees with the skills that employers need and value. Currently, WMW! holds the standards for 17 programs with 42 participating employers and 112 apprentices actively enrolled.

WMW! recently launched the *Retention Solutions Network (RSN)*, a member-based, private/public partnership to address common workforce needs such as employee retention, training and advancement. RSN provides an onsite success coach to its members where employees receive free and confidential assistance along with resources such as transportation, childcare, and housing.

RSN coaches can leverage training funds and work with employees to create action plans for career advancement. Similar models across the state report increased employee productivity and retention rates, and reduced recruiting and training costs.

To learn more about these or any other WMW! services, visit www.westmiworks.org.