

NORTH CENTRAL MICHIGAN COLLEGE

1515 Howard St.

Petoskey, MI 49770

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**NORTH CENTRAL ANNOUNCES SUPPORT FOR MICHIGAN RECONNECT
PROGRAM**

Program offers eligible adults the opportunity to earn a tuition-free college degree

North Central Michigan College announced that it will serve as a Champion to support the Michigan Reconnect program unveiled today by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. The program aims to help address a widening skills gap within the state's workforce. Hundreds of leading Michigan business, community, and legislative leaders say Reconnect is exactly what state employers need to alleviate the shortage of highly skilled and capable workers.

"We believe Michigan Reconnect will not only help individuals and families pursue their dreams, but it will also help build a strong economy that requires a talented and modern workforce to compete for the jobs of the future," said David Roland Finley, North Central's president.

As a Champion, North Central has committed to spreading the word about the opportunity Michigan Reconnect is providing for eligible adults locally and statewide. The program is specifically designed for residents who are 25 years or older and have obtained a high school diploma or equivalent. Michigan Reconnect will help pay the costs of tuition or training for eligible adults who want to pursue an associate degree or technical degree. The program also offers skills scholarships to help cover the cost of tuition at more than 70 private training schools with 120 programs to earn certification in manufacturing, construction, information technology, health care, or business management.

In order to be eligible for Michigan Reconnect, adults must meet the following criteria:

- Age 25 or older
- High school graduate or equivalent
- Michigan resident for at least one year
- Not yet completed a college degree (associate or bachelor's)

Michigan Reconnect pays the remaining balance of tuition and mandatory fees after other state and federal financial aid have been applied.

As of 2019, only 42 percent of Michigan's working-age residents had an associate degree or higher. Michiganders without a college degree or training credential often face economic challenges. A 2020 analysis by the American Association of Community Colleges reports the median earnings of full-time employees with a high school degree is \$40,510 annually, while those with an associate degree make \$50,079 per year, based on U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Michigan employers' ability to find highly skilled employees is more difficult than ever and is cited as a top concern in the most recent Michigan Future Business Index Report. Michigan Reconnect will help address the dual challenges of the state's widening talent gap and aging workforce.

"We encourage area residents who want to secure their future by pursuing a satisfying, in-demand career to take advantage of what Michigan Reconnect is offering," said Corey Lansing, North Central's director of admission.

The application and additional program information are available now on North Central's website and at Michigan.gov/Reconnect, with enrollment in classes beginning May 2021.

North Central Michigan College is an open-door community college based in Petoskey, with additional locations offering classes and services in Cheboygan and Gaylord. North Central's mission is to provide exceptional, accessible, relevant higher education of and for the community. North Central is an Achieving the Dream Leader College with a designation of

Veteran Friendly Silver by the Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency.

For more information:

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