

2026 Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance Candidate Questionnaire

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1. Purpose and Responsibility

Why are you seeking this office, and how would you define the responsibility of the office to the people of northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula?

I'm running for re-election because I believe Northern Michigan deserves a Representative who understands the day-to-day realities of the people who live and work here. Families are paying more, small businesses are stretched thin, young people are wondering if they can afford to stay, and too many decisions in Lansing are made without enough input from communities like ours.

This is where my wife Lynn and I raised our family, and this is where I've spent my career working with people face to face - as a realtor, small business owner, and Cheboygan County Drain Commissioner. Those roles have taught me that public service is not about speeches or titles. It is about answering the phone, solving problems, being honest with people, and following through.

The responsibility of this office is to be accessible, practical, and effective. Northern Michigan needs someone who will bring local common sense to Lansing and make sure our communities are not overlooked.

2. Jobs, Investment, and Competitiveness

What specific policies would you support or develop if elected, to ensure northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula can compete for jobs, investment, infrastructure, and other state and federal resources?

Northern Michigan can compete, but we need state policy that respects rural communities and small businesses. I support lowering costs for job creators, cutting unnecessary red tape, improving roads and local infrastructure, expanding reliable broadband, protecting our natural resources, and making sure rural communities receive their fair share of state and federal resources.

We also need to invest in the assets that make this region strong: tourism, agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, small business, skilled trades, and our Great Lakes economy. Lansing should be helping communities grow — not making it harder to build, hire, invest, or expand.

3. Housing and Regional Partnerships

NMCA's policy framework calls for housing solutions and regional partnerships to address the region's critical housing shortage. What policies or ideas do you have in which you can partner with the Alliance to make a positive impact?

Housing is one of the biggest issues holding Northern Michigan back. Employers cannot grow if workers cannot find a place to live. Young families cannot stay if they cannot afford a home. Seniors need options that allow them to remain in the communities they love.

As a realtor, I understand this issue from the ground level. We need more attainable housing, faster permitting, better use of existing properties, and stronger partnerships between local governments, employers, builders, and community organizations.

The state can help by reducing unnecessary barriers, encouraging local flexibility, supporting infrastructure needed for housing development, and making sure rural communities are not left out of housing programs designed for larger cities.

4. Workforce Development and Talent Attraction

What are your views on programs such as Going PRO, Michigan Reconnect, and talent attraction programs? What would you do to help attract, retain, train, and grow the workforce needed by northern Michigan and Upper Peninsula employers?

Workforce programs should be judged by whether they actually connect people with good jobs. I support training that is local, practical, and tied directly to employer needs.

We need to strengthen skilled trades, career and technical education, apprenticeships, and partnerships with community colleges and local businesses. Not every student needs the same path, and we should respect careers in the trades, health care, manufacturing, agriculture, construction, hospitality, and public safety.

To attract and retain workers, we also have to address housing, childcare, broadband, and affordability. People will stay in Northern Michigan if they can build a real life here.

5. Childcare Access

Please describe your view of the need for childcare in the region, and what would you do to enhance access to this resource?

Childcare is a workforce issue. When parents cannot find reliable and affordable care, they are forced out of the workforce, and employers lose good people.

Northern Michigan faces unique challenges because we have smaller communities, longer distances, fewer providers, and many employers with seasonal or nontraditional schedules. We need flexible solutions that fit rural life.

I support reducing barriers for childcare providers, encouraging employer partnerships, improving access in underserved areas, and making it easier for trusted local providers to stay

open and expand. The goal should be simple: help parents work, help children thrive, and help employers keep the people they need.

6. Education Outcomes and Funding

What do you believe is the best action you could take to support growth in measurable outcomes for K-12 students in northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula? How well is Michigan's funding of our higher education systems working, and would you make any changes to the way we fund education in this state?

Students in Northern Michigan need strong fundamentals and more pathways to success after graduation. That starts with improving reading and math outcomes, supporting good teachers, and giving local districts the flexibility to address their own challenges.

A rural school district does not always have the same needs as a large downstate district. Transportation costs, staffing shortages, broadband gaps, and access to career training can look very different here. Lansing should recognize those differences instead of forcing every school into the same box.

I also believe we need to do a better job connecting education to real opportunities in our local economy. That means stronger career and technical education, more skilled-trades options, better partnerships with community colleges, and a serious focus on affordability. Students should be able to leave high school or higher education with a clear path to a good job, not just a pile of debt.

7. Regulatory Climate and Small Business Growth

What regulations, permitting processes, taxes, mandates, or compliance burdens do you believe most limit small business growth in our region? What would you do to make our state's regulatory environment more predictable?

The biggest frustration I hear from small business owners is uncertainty. They can deal with hard work. They can deal with competition. What makes it difficult is when rules keep changing, permits take too long, costs keep rising, and state government feels more like an obstacle than a partner.

As a small business owner and former county official, I've seen how delays and red tape affect real projects. A slow approval or confusing requirement can mean higher costs, missed opportunities, or a project that never happens at all. That hurts local employers, workers, and taxpayers.

I would support faster and more transparent permitting, a serious review of state mandates that fall hardest on small employers, and a more predictable tax and regulatory environment. Michigan should be a place where people feel confident starting a business, expanding a business, building housing, or investing in their community.

8. Affordability and Economic Vitality

What meaningful changes do you believe would help advance Michigan's economic vitality by making this state a more affordable place to live, work, and do business?

Michigan has to become more affordable for families, seniors, and small businesses. That means lowering taxes, reducing energy costs, cutting red tape, improving housing supply, investing in infrastructure, and making health care and childcare more accessible.

Economic vitality starts with people being able to afford to stay here. Northern Michigan has the talent, work ethic, natural beauty, and community strength to thrive. Lansing needs to stop getting in the way and start supporting the communities that are already doing the work.

My focus is simple: protect taxpayers, support small businesses, strengthen local communities, and keep Northern Michigan a place where families can live, work, raise kids, and retire with dignity.