

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 to continue serving the people of Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula because this district deserves someone who knows it, respects it, and will fight for it every single day.

For me, service has never been a slogan. It has been my life. I served our Nation for decades in the Marine Corps, and that mission did not end when I took off the uniform. The responsibility of this office is simple: show up, listen, tell people the truth, deliver results, and be accountable. Northern Michigan and the UP are not an afterthought. We are the backbone of Michigan's heritage economy, the stewards of some of the greatest natural resources in the world, and a critical part of America's economic and national security future. Too often, decisions are made in Lansing or Washington by people who do not understand rural communities, seasonal economies, working waterfronts, family farms, small manufacturers, or the realities of life above the bridge.

My job is to make sure our communities have a voice in the room before decisions are made, not after. I've worked hard to build the relationships necessary to get things done for this district, and I'll continue doing that work with the same focus and determination I brought to the Marine Corps.

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 and the UP can compete with anyone, but we need a fair shot. We have natural resources, skilled workers, small businesses, manufacturers, tourism assets, ports, agriculture, and a strategic location on the Great Lakes. Federal policy should build on those strengths, not bury them under red tape.

My priorities include:

- Making sure infrastructure dollars actually reach rural communities, including roads, bridges, broadband, ports, and water infrastructure.
- Expanding rural broadband because it is no longer optional. It impacts education, telehealth, small business growth, remote work, manufacturing, public safety, and quality of life.
- Supporting responsible energy development that keeps costs affordable, protects our resources, and creates good-paying jobs. We are stewards of this land, not its last users.
- Streamlining federal permitting so worthwhile projects do not die on a bureaucrat's desk.
- Fighting for federal procurement, defense work, and domestic supply chain opportunities that can support manufacturers in Northern Michigan and the UP.

The bottom line is this: our region should not have to beg for the basics. We need policies that recognize rural Michigan's value and give our communities the tools to grow.

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 barriers to growth in Northern Michigan and the UP. I hear it from employers, families, local officials, and young people who want to stay here but cannot find a place they can afford.

This is not just a housing problem. It is a workforce problem, an economic development problem, and a quality-of-life problem. If workers cannot live near the job, the job becomes harder to fill. If young families cannot find attainable housing, they leave. If seniors cannot downsize in their own communities, they get stuck. That hurts everyone.

I support:

- Reforming and expanding USDA Rural Development housing programs so they better fit rural communities like ours.
- Improving access to construction financing, rehabilitation grants, and rental assistance tools that actually work in small-town and rural markets.
- Supporting federal incentives that encourage local governments to streamline permitting and allow more diverse housing options.
- Using historic tax credits and community development tools to turn underused buildings into housing.
- Encouraging workforce housing partnerships among employers, local governments, nonprofits, and community leaders.

The best solutions will not come from Washington alone. They will come from local leaders who understand their communities, with federal policy that helps instead of gets in the way.

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?

Northern Michigan and the UP are home to some of the hardest-working people in the country. But our employers need workers, and our workers need clear pathways to good-paying careers close to home.

I support programs that connect people with real jobs and real skills - not just programs that look good on paper. That means training needs to match the actual needs of local employers, whether that is in the trades, manufacturing, health care, agriculture, hospitality, construction, or emerging industries.

My priorities include:

- Expanding career and technical education, apprenticeships, and hands-on training opportunities.
- Supporting mobile CTE models that bring training directly to students and rural communities that may not otherwise have access.
- Strengthening partnerships among employers, schools, community colleges, local governments, and workforce boards.
- Expanding broadband so rural workers, students, entrepreneurs, and businesses can compete in a modern economy.
- Making Northern Michigan and the UP places where families can afford to live, work, raise children, and build a future.

Workforce development is not just about training someone for a job. It is about making sure they can stay, raise a family, and see a future 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. If a parent cannot find reliable and affordable childcare, they cannot fully participate in the workforce. When that happens, employers lose good workers, families lose income, and local economies suffer.

This is especially difficult in rural communities where provider options are limited, travel distances are longer, and small businesses often do not have the resources of larger employers.

I support:

- Expanding and strengthening the Child Tax Credit for working families.
- Using USDA rural development and community facilities programs to help establish or expand childcare facilities in underserved areas.
- Supporting employer-sponsored childcare options and tax incentives for businesses that help employees with childcare costs.
- Addressing the childcare workforce shortage by supporting training and retention for providers.

- Giving local communities more flexibility to develop solutions that fit their needs.

Families should not have to choose between raising their children and keeping their jobs. In a region where every worker matters, childcare access is essential.

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?

Education is one of the most important investments we make in the future of Northern Michigan and the UP. But the needs of our schools are not always the same as the needs of large urban districts, and policy should reflect that.

The best results come when parents, teachers, and local school leaders have the flexibility and resources to meet the needs of their students. A one-size-fits-all approach from Lansing or Washington does not work for rural Michigan.

I support:

- More funding flexibility so local districts can use resources where they are needed most.
- Stronger career and technical education, apprenticeships, and workforce partnerships.
- Rural teacher recruitment and retention efforts so Northern Michigan schools can attract and keep quality educators.
- Better access to broadband and education technology for students in rural and remote communities.
- Affordable higher education pathways, especially through community colleges, technical education, and employer partnerships.
- Aligning education with real opportunities in the local economy.

Success should not be defined only by whether a student goes to a four-year university. Success means a young person graduates prepared for college, the trades, military service, a family business, or a good-paying career in their community.

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?

Small businesses are the backbone of Northern Michigan and the UP. But too often, they are treated like they have a full legal department, a compliance office, and unlimited time to deal with government paperwork. They do not.

Whether it is a family farm, a logging operation, a marina, a restaurant, a mom-and-pop shop, or a small manufacturer, the story is the same: too much time and money gets eaten up by confusing

rules, slow permits, tax compliance, labor mandates, and federal agencies that do not understand rural communities.

I will continue to:

- Fight overreaching EPA regulations, including harmful interpretations of WOTUS that put farmers, foresters, and landowners at risk over land uses that have existed for generations.
- Support the REINS Act and other reforms that require Congress to approve major new regulations before they take effect.
- Push for rural impact assessments so agencies have to consider how major rules affect rural businesses and communities.
- Support occupational licensing reform to reduce barriers for qualified workers.
- Simplify tax compliance for small businesses.
- Oppose one-size-fits-all labor mandates that ignore seasonal, part-time, and family-business models common in Northern Michigan and the UP.

Small businesses need predictability. They need government to be fair, clear, and responsive. They do not need bureaucrats moving the goalposts every time they try to grow.

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?

Affordability is one of the biggest issues facing families and small businesses in Michigan. High energy costs, inflation, housing costs, health care costs, taxes, and regulatory burdens all add up. For working families, seniors, farmers, and small business owners, those costs are not theoretical. They are felt every month.

My focus is on:

- Supporting an all-of-the-above energy strategy that keeps fuel and utility costs affordable for families, farmers, and manufacturers.
- Reducing inflationary federal spending because fiscal responsibility is affordability policy.
- Increasing health care cost transparency and competition, especially for small businesses and rural families.
- Supporting tax relief for working families, small business owners, and agricultural producers.
- Cutting red tape that drives up the cost of building, hiring, expanding, and doing business.

Economic vitality is about more than bringing in one project or cutting one ribbon. It is about making Northern Michigan and the UP places where people choose to live, work, raise families, start businesses, and retire. That means safe communities, strong schools, reliable infrastructure, access to health care, affordable energy, good jobs, housing, trails, waterfronts, and a quality of life that makes people want to stay. Those are not luxuries. They are economic development tools, and they are worth fighting for.