NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER ALLIANCE

Elevating & advancing local business.

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 am running for Governor because I love Michigan and I feel called to continue my service at home. Michigan has extraordinary potential, but we lack experienced leadership. Michigan's house is on fire, and throughout my life, I have always run toward the fire to solve problems and help those in need. Too many families, workers, and business owners feel that state government has become an obstacle rather than a partner. It is time for change. Michigan was made for more.

   The responsibility of the Governor is simple: serve the people, protect taxpayers, create opportunity, and ensure every region of the state has a voice in Lansing. I bring a unique combination of leadership experience in business, government, and the military to the office of Governor and believe I am the best qualified to fulfill this responsibility.

   Northern Michigan is not just a place I visit—it is a place I call home. My family's had a camp in the Upper Peninsula for nearly 40 years. My wife's family has been a part of the Leelanau County community for more than a century. We have deep roots in these communities, and I understand both the opportunities and the challenges they face.

   For too long, northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula have been treated as afterthoughts by policymakers who do not understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face. As Governor, I will work to physically connect our two peninsulas to build greater resilience in the Great Lakes, ensure that state government respects local communities, supports job creation, invests in critical infrastructure, and creates an environment where families and businesses can thrive.

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?**

My economic development strategy is centered on Retention, Reclamation, and Recruiting.

Michigan currently has one of the highest unemployment rates in the nation, yet employers across northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula cannot find enough nurses, electricians, welders, teachers, machinists, and skilled workers to fill critical jobs. That disconnect is a sign that our workforce and economic policies are not aligned with employers' real needs. I support a Retention and Relocation Worker Tax Credit for individuals in critical shortage occupations and a 100 percent tax credit for businesses that invest in scholarships for students pursuing high-demand careers. These proposals will help northern Michigan to become much more competitive in economic development and will create many new opportunities for the region's residents.

As Governor, I will also renew Michigan's participation in the federal Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP), a program I supported in Congress that has already brought $173 million to Michigan's rural communities to expand access to telehealth, strengthen mental health and addiction treatment services, and increase health care provider options for families across northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

As Governor, I'll also reverse Gov. Whitmer's destructive and costly "green energy" mandates that have driven up the cost of energy for businesses and residents alike. I'll also work with the state legislature to restore local control of energy policy by repealing P.A. 233 of 2023, which removed local decision-making for energy projects.

I will also end the state's ideological lawsuit against Enbridge Line 5. We do not have to choose between protecting the Great Lakes and providing reliable, affordable energy. We can and must do both. Preserving Line 5 is essential to keeping energy costs down, protecting jobs, and ensuring northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula continue to have a reliable energy supply.

I also strongly support tort reform to stop abuse of the legal system and lower insurance costs for businesses and residents.

Tourism and hospitality are crucial to the growth of the northern Michigan economy. That's why, as Governor, I will support dedicated and increased funding for the Pure Michigan marketing campaign, a proven and highly successful tool in promoting our state and delivering economic benefits to our communities.

Infrastructure must also include protecting communities from flooding and ensuring critical water infrastructure is safe and reliable. Michigan's recent dam failures were a failure of accountability. As Governor, I will require a comprehensive review of high-risk dams across the state, strengthen oversight of aging and privately owned dams, and ensure that owners meet their maintenance and safety obligations. Flood mitigation and infrastructure resilience are essential to protecting families, businesses, farms, roads, and local economies. In Congress, I secured $40 million in federal funding for flood

mitigation projects, and I will continue to prioritize investments that protect communities while supporting responsible water management.

In Congress, I also worked alongside federal, state, and local leaders to secure disaster assistance for Northern Michigan communities following the March 2025 ice storms. As Governor, I will prioritize disaster preparedness, forest health, wildfire mitigation, and resilient infrastructure to better protect Northern Michigan communities before and after disasters.

I will also make the Soo Locks a priority because they are essential to both Michigan's economy and our national security. My first bill to pass the U.S. House, the Soo Locks Security and Economic Reporting Act, directed a comprehensive assessment to help protect this critical infrastructure and ensure the reliable movement of the raw materials that support manufacturing, commerce, and our national defense.

For too long, Lansing's answer has been to hand billions of dollars to politically connected corporations while neglecting the workers and small businesses that drive our economy. I believe the state government should focus on creating opportunities for Michiganders who shower *after* they get home from work as well as those who shower before.

That means supporting the industries that already power northern Michigan, including tourism, agriculture, forestry, mining, manufacturing, and energy. It means investing in infrastructure, broadband, and reliable energy. It means reducing taxes, streamlining permitting, and creating a business climate that encourages investment and job creation.

My goal is simple: make Michigan the best place in America to build a business, create jobs, and raise a family.

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 affordability has become one of the most significant barriers to economic growth and workforce retention across northern Michigan. Employers cannot fill jobs if workers cannot find affordable housing.

I believe the state should focus on removing barriers that unnecessarily increase housing costs, streamlining permitting and approval processes, supporting infrastructure investments that enable housing development, and encouraging local solutions that reflect the needs of individual communities. We must begin by repealing Governor Whitmer's onerous and ill-advised regulatory mandates on new home construction, which has driven up the cost of a new home by an average of $15,000 per home.

That also means pushing back on policies that allow Wall Street to outcompete local families for housing while supporting local efforts to balance the need for workforce housing with property owners' rights to offer short-term rentals.

Regional partnerships are critical because housing challenges do not stop at municipal boundaries. I welcome opportunities to work with organizations like NMCA to identify practical solutions that increase housing supply while respecting local priorities and community character.

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?**

Michigan's workforce strategy should be focused on results. Programs that successfully connect people with in-demand careers, skilled trades, and workforce opportunities deserve continued support and accountability.

One of Michigan's greatest challenges is that too many people are sitting on the sidelines while employers cannot find enough workers to fill critical jobs. Northern Michigan employers need nurses, electricians, welders, teachers, machinists, health care professionals, and skilled trades workers right now.

My plan focuses on helping the people and industries Michigan needs most. I support a Retention and Relocation Worker Tax Credit for Americans already working in critical shortage occupations and for those who move to Michigan to fill them. I also support a 100 percent tax credit for businesses that invest in scholarships for students pursuing careers in the skilled trades, health care, manufacturing, information technology, and education.

Similarly, I strongly support expansion of the ProStart program, which is an economic investment in growing the skilled workforce for Michigan's hospitality and tourism industry, especially in northern Michigan. I also support fixing the tipped wage law, which is crucial for businesses and workers in the hospitality industry.

Unlike Lansing's corporate subsidy programs, these opportunities would be available to every Michigan business. No insiders. No special deals. No politically connected middlemen. The workers and employers who have been overlooked for too long should come first.

Every student should graduate with marketable skills and a diploma that means something. Whether that means college, military service, a skilled trade, or direct entry into the workforce they will have the tools to succeed on their own terms. When we lower costs, expand opportunity, and reward work, Michigan will once again become a magnet for talent and investment.

a. ***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 both a workforce issue and a family issue. Many parents want to participate in the workforce but struggle to find affordable, reliable childcare options.

I support flexible solutions that expand access while preserving parental choice. That includes supporting private childcare providers, encouraging employer-supported childcare programs, reducing unnecessary regulatory barriers where appropriate, and ensuring families have access to a variety of childcare options that fit their needs. As a Member of Congress, I have proposed legislation to expand access to employer-supported tri-share childcare programs.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution, particularly in rural communities in Northern Michigan. We need policies that increase availability and affordability while allowing communities to develop solutions that work best for them.

b. ***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?**

As Governor, I'll ensure that state government focuses less on inputs and more on education outcomes. State government is spending massive amounts of money on education administration and bureaucracy, but Michigan continues to languish among the worst-performing states in the country when it comes to results in student achievement. There are more school districts in Southeast Michigan alone than there are in the entire state of Florida. Michigan's school-age population is decreasing, and our students' literacy proficiency is cratering while administrative spending has jumped. Taxpayers deserve real, quantifiable accountability for academic performance of our public schools and far better results for our state's education spending.

I support greater accountability, stronger academic standards, expanded educational options for families, and increased emphasis on literacy, math proficiency, career readiness, and workforce preparation. Specifically, I will opt Michigan into the new federal Education Freedom Tax Credit to give families more choices in education. I'll work to remove burdensome regulations that stifle charter schools and innovation in public school districts.

Governor Whitmer's repeal of our state's 3rd grade reading law was a colossal mistake. I will work with the legislature to restore Michigan's 3rd grade reading law, which will implement early intervention to address literacy challenges for K-3 students and retain 3rd-grade students until they become proficient. Mississippi spends $6,000 to $7,000 less on a per-pupil basis less than Michigan spends, and yet Mississippi has far better literacy scores, especially among its most disadvantaged students.

I also support preserving Proposal A of 1994, which has successfully protected taxpayers from large property tax increases while making great progress toward equity in school funding across the state.

I want all schools to be successful: public, private, charter, home, magnet. That means having a governor with the courage to confront these issues instead of throwing more money at them without real change. It also means real accountability, which is why I have proposed changing education governance in Michigan to make the state superintendent appointed by the governor and to give the governor more direct control of the state board of education.

At the higher education level, we should align funding priorities with regional workforce needs while preserving educational opportunity. We need more graduates in fields where Northern Michigan faces critical shortages, including health care, skilled trades, engineering, manufacturing, information technology, and education. Our goal should be to ensure students graduate with the skills needed to succeed while minimizing unnecessary debt.

c. ***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 consistently tell me they need certainty. They can adapt to almost any challenge, but they struggle when the government creates confusion, delays, and constantly changing rules.

Permitting delays, excessive regulations, labor mandates, rising energy costs, and an increasingly adversarial relationship between state agencies and employers all make it harder to invest and grow. I will repeal EGLE, which has become one of the biggest impediments to economic growth in Michigan, creating uncertainty rather than providing clear, predictable rules.

As Governor, I will build a culture of customer service throughout state government. Government agencies should be customer-obsessed, helping businesses navigate contracts, access capital, and achieve compliance rather than creating unnecessary barriers. I will streamline and automate permitting, reduce unnecessary regulations, improve transparency, establish clear timelines for agency decisions, and ensure businesses receive consistent answers from state government.

d. ***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?**

We should embrace an all-of-the-above energy strategy focused on reliability and affordability, reform regulatory policies, enact tort reform to crack down on lawsuit abuse

and lower our insurance rates, confront labor shortages that drive up housing costs, and create a tax and regulatory environment that rewards work, investment, and entrepreneurship.

Michigan must become more affordable if we want to attract families, workers, businesses, and investment. That means committing to cut waste while growing the tax base rather than growing the tax rate. I have proposed eliminating the state income tax.

As Governor, I will order an immediate fiscal cleanup through a comprehensive audit of state government expenditures to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse, beginning with the up to $3.5 billion in wasteful spending already identified by the House Republican Oversight Committee. We need to return the savings to taxpayers and reverse the green energy mandates that have driven up energy costs. Having built and grown a business that created hundreds of jobs in Michigan, I know economic growth comes from empowering job creators—not growing government.

The states growing the fastest today have embraced economic freedom, affordability, and opportunity. Michigan has every advantage necessary to compete, but we must be willing to adopt policies that make our state a place where people want to live, work, raise a family, and build a business.