NORTHERN MICHIGAN CHAMBER ALLIANCE

Elevating & advancing local business.

2026 Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance Candidate Questionnaire

Name:
Email Contact:
Phone Contact:
Campaign Website URL:

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 seeking this office of the 104th State House District again to continue to serve the people of Northern Michigan. This position is to understand the issues that harm our area, continue with items that help our area and listen to the residents to find solutions to help fix those issues that continue to be problematic to our area.

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?

   The Northern Michigan Caucus has to be together and strong in our voice from the start of a term. There are 148 legislators and about 18 members are from the middle of the state north. As legislators we need to make sure a significant number of investments are targeted for the north. A certain percentage of the state spending needs to be dedicated to the northern region of the state. I think this year we have done a good job in working together to promote the importance of Northern Michigan especially with the Drone Corridor from Cheboygan through Camp Grayling to Traverse City. I believe the promotion of the corridor and Selfridge Airforce Base will bring real investment by outside companies to Northern Michigan. We also need to have good relationships with our federal partners like we currently do to make investments happen like the Drone Corridor. This only happens when we work together.

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?

We have to be creative in our approach to housing like the educator housing project. That project put together all of our public and private schools along with a state investment to provide housing. That project also showed what I think is the most glaring problem in our area with infrastucture. We need a regional approach to water and sewer projects. Township, cities, villages all working together to propose plans with possible state and federal help to improve those infrastructure projects. Some townships and villages are working together, others are not. We need to work with some of our farmers to see if there is a desire to sell affordable land to housing development rather than them selling for solar energy projects. I would like the help of the Alliance to help me as a legislator make water and sewer projects a priority going forward.

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?

   I have supported Going PRO, Michigan Reconnect and other ideas for workforce attraction and training. We are currently deciding on whether to lower the age of Michigan Reconnect down to age 21. I would support a tiered approach of lowering the age to 23 this year and evaluating whether we move down to 21 in 2028. These programs have worked and they show we are supporting our community employers and our community colleges. Working with Networks Northwest has been a priority of mine this term especially with internship programs.

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 may be the toughest item to deal with. I will start with the TRI-Share program that the state is involved with. We just passed in the State House a bill that would ensure TRI-Share is available going forward. TRI-Share is a childcare program that shares the cost three ways with the employee, the employer and the state. It has been a successful program in the Grand Traverse Area and now others can take advantage of the program. The State needs to allow rural areas of Northern Michigan more flexibility in how we approach childcare. Allowing childcare to take place in non-typical locations like churches, businesses and other places outside of the home. The state is currently dragging their feet on proposals that would allow this change. We are aware that in-home childcare is waning due to overburdensome regulations and some community objections.

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?

We have failed our children as a state education program. We are 44th in the country in reading scores and possibly moving down. We took away any accountability from our schools. We need to get back to teaching reading the right way. We have passed several laws this term to move to the reading programs that states that were in the same level have now succeeded in passing Michigan scores. The Mississippi Miracle or the Stubben Ohio program that take poor areas of the country that are now reading far above grade level. We have also passed laws to improve the lives of kids with dyslexia by asking schools to have a teacher versed in the Orton Gillingham program. We have consistently spent more money on education since 2020, except for 2024, with no improving scores. We are hopeful that the new state school board president will work with the legislators to make changes. We also need to return money back to the K-12 funding that was taken as a loan to the Universities under the Granhom era.

6. **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 burdensome regulation we put on our small businesses is driving some of them out of business or possibly out of state. Michigan's licensing needs a large overhaul with its duplicative paper work or its infringement on competition. We are trying to address the permitting process with laws that favor the applicant by telling the department they have a certain amount of time to approve or approval is recognized after the time period or money is refunded. In the State House we have passed a large number of bills that get rid of regulations and rules that don't make sense today. I believe the income tax on small businesses needs to be eliminated or at least reduced. The personal property tax should have been eliminated long ago. The ESTA mandate should be revisited as certain parts are unworkable in the workplace such as letting employees take all of their sick time at the end of the year causing employers to close or reduce hours of operation. The ESTA laws should not have been put on some of our AG workers as this has caused more costs of groceries. I think putting together a packet of permits (state/local) required for a new business to start along with a dedicated phone line for questions to be answered would smooth the start up process.

7. **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 have to change Michigan's business climate in multiple ways; first is to create business incentives that are consistent for an extended period of time, second is to lower the tax on our small businesses through income tax changes, third is to promote Michigan more extensively through an upgraded Pure Michigan Campaign that promotes the jobs we have to offer in our state.