

Q2 PARTNER UPDATE

ALLIANCE PLAYS CENTRAL ROLE IN FUNDING OFFICE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance led the way in advocating for the establishment of the Office of Rural Development (ORD) and is now playing a leading role in ensuring this office has the funding to be as effective as possible.

After the office was established in January, Governor Gretchen Whitmer requested \$10M in the state budget to get the office off the ground. The House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee then held an introductory hearing on the ORD. Legislators asked questions about the goals and operation of the department, but since no deputy had been appointed, some questions were left unanswered.



Leaders from the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance member organizations at a meeting with Sarah Lucas, deputy for Rural Development, in Lansing in June.

In April, Sarah Lucas, the former CEO of the Lake Superior Community Partnership – an NMCA Partner – took the helm at the ORD. Since then, the Alliance has worked closely with Sarah to develop a comprehensive policy framework, office structure, and coalition of supporters. Over less than two months, we have helped answer nearly all questions from lawmakers about how this office will operate.

On June 14, we traveled to Lansing and met with lawmakers from northern Michigan and members of the House and Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee. We distributed information related to the ORD while formally asking again for \$10M to be included in the state budget to get the office off the ground.

We also discussed [SB 682](#), which enshrines the ORD in state statute, with the bill sponsor Sen. Ed McBroom.

On July 1, the ORD received a \$3M investment in the state budget recommendation. The NMCA will continue to work closely with Deputy Director Lucas and MDARD to commence full operation of the office and demonstrate the value of investing in rural economic development.

The partnership between MDARD and the Alliance has never been stronger.

CHILD CARE TOWN HALL

WEDNESDAY, JULY 13 6:00 - 7:30 PM

hosted by



HISTORIC CHILD CARE REFORM BECOMES LAW

Access to affordable, quality child care remains a barrier to talent attraction and retention across northern Michigan. That's why the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance helped initiate a [bipartisan effort](#) to increase accessibility to child care in northern Michigan, including measures to increase capacity at facilities, networks for at-home providers, operation in multi-use facilities, and a 90-day grace period to comply with new health and safety rules.

The bills sailed through the House last fall but hit a snag in the Senate early this year. The NMCA successfully advocated for a re-referral of the bills to a favorable committee and received a hearing and a vote on May 26. The bills subsequently passed the full Senate and House and were signed by Gov. Whitmer on June 23.

This monumental accomplishment will not only increase access and help make child care more affordable but also sends a signal that legislators from across the state can come together and create positive change.



The NMCA this summer will partner with Traverse Connect and the United Way of Northwest Michigan to host a child care town hall to identify ideas for a second round of child care reforms.

TRAVERSE CONNECT HOSTING CHILD CARE TOWN HALL

Traverse Connect on Wednesday, July 13 from 6-7:30pm will host a [Child Care Town Hall](#) featuring Sen. Wayne Schmidt, Sen. Curt VanderWall, Rep. Jack O'Malley and Rep. John Roth.

After the passage of historic child care reforms this year, our legislators want to hear from parents and providers about new ideas for legislation to help make child care more accessible and affordable.

CADILLAC GOVERNOR'S BREAKFAST



The 45th Annual Cadillac Governor's Breakfast took place in April. Several Alliance members were in attendance and spoke with Gov. Whitmer, Sens. Schmidt and VanderWall, Rep. Hoitenga, and staff from the MEDC.

ATTAINABLE HOUSING LEGISLATION NEARS FINISH LINE

There is one package of policy bills now under consideration in Lansing that seeks to address the lack of workforce housing across the state. The difficulties finding affordable housing are exceptional in northern Michigan, so the NMCA joined the Housing Michigan Coalition to develop a [package of reforms](#) aimed at incentivizing the development of workforce housing.

The bills moved quickly through the Senate, but stalled in the House due to concerns from several key members. The NMCA worked diligently with members from across northern and mid-Michigan to explain the legislation and address concerns.

After countless emails, phone calls, and meetings, the bills were voted out of a House committee in June. Thanks to our collective effort, these bills are one step closer to Gov. Whitmer's desk. We are committed to working with legislators from across the state to ensure this legislation receives a vote in the full House later this year.

NMCA SUMMER LOBBY DAY

On June 14, the Alliance gathered in Lansing for our summer lobby day. We focused on advocating for \$10 million in one-time funding to start the Office of Rural Development. We met with several legislators, including many from the northern Michigan delegation, and others from the House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture and Rural Development.

The NMCA met with Sens. Stamas, Schmidt, VanderWall and Daley, along with Reps. Borton, Hoitenga, Damoose, Roth and Allor.

All legislators had positive and constructive feedback. Many noted the progress made by the NMCA and MDARD in answering questions and concerns from legislators about the ORD.



Sen. McBroom detailed background information on his legislation SB 682, which enshrines the Office of Rural Development in statute. The NMCA identified steps that we can take to get [SB 682](#) across the finish line.

We will now work with MDARD Director Gary McDowell and Gov. Whitmer's policy office to find a compromise on SB 682.

The Alliance is proud to have secured the initial \$3M investment from lawmakers, but will still work to ensure this office is codified into law.

DETROIT POLICY CONFERENCE IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN

The NMCA was well-represented on Mackinac Island for the Detroit Regional Chamber's Annual Policy Conference.

In addition to attending several informative panels from national business and political figures, the NMCA discussed collaboration on simplifying MSHDA housing rules with Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan. Initial discussions are now underway to see how Detroit and northern Michigan can work together to ensure MSHDA rules are conducive to investment in affordable housing.

We personally asked U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow and Michigan Department of Transportation Director Paul Ajegba to be special guests at the Northern Michigan Policy Conference. Director Ajegba confirmed and talks are ongoing with Sen. Stabenow's office.

The Alliance initiated talks with U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg about coming to his new home in Traverse City to discuss infrastructure priorities with members of the business community.

Sen. Wayne Schmidt delivered comments urging the expansion of the Alliance-supported Earned Income Tax Credit from six to 30 percent.



"Just like many years ago, we are here today in a bipartisan fashion, united in our desire to increase the EITC for working Michiganders. The EITC is a pro-work tax credit. It's that simple," Mr. Schmidt said. "It's a policy designed to bolster the earnings of low wage workers and offset some of the taxes they pay, providing the opportunity for struggling families to step up and out of poverty, and toward meaningful economic security. And increasing the credit requires no additional government bureaucracy – allowing us to help working families without growing government."

The NMCA also had conversations about shared priorities with MEDC CEO Quentin Messer, Michigan Farm Bureau, Majority Floor Leader Ben Frederick, House Tax Policy Chair Matt Hall and House Judiciary Chair Graham Filler.



NMCA 2022 PRIMARY ELECTION GUIDE

The past year has perhaps been the most confusing time in Michigan politics. For the first time in our state's history, the people of Michigan voted to overhaul the redistricting process and develop an Independent Citizen's Redistricting Commission. After much deliberation, many public hearings and lawsuits, the maps are final.

This process, combined with term-limits and legislators seeking higher office, has resulted in a scenario where virtually every district in northern Michigan is now an open seat. Only a few incumbents have maintained a similar district as they now represent.



That's why the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance developed our [2022 Primary Election Guide](#). This page is intended to be a matter-of-fact guide to help understand

new district lines and corresponding candidate information.

Click on a candidate's picture to learn more about them. Click on their name to see campaign finance reports.

Base numbers are provided by nonpartisan Dave's Redistricting. Learn more [here](#) about their method for analysis.

CANDIDATE FORUM

The Charlevoix and Petoskey Area Chambers of Commerce hosted a candidate forum on June 20, featuring candidates for both the 107th House District and 37th Senate District.

The 37th Senate District covers a significant portion of the Alliance footprint and begins at 1:08:55 by clicking the video snapshot below.



ALLIANCE MEMBERS

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTING PARTNERS



ASSOCIATE PARTNERS

