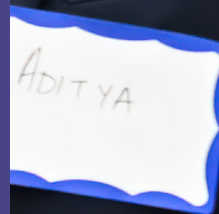




Michigan Global  
Talent Initiative

# Filling Michigan's Talent Gap

Annual Report 2024





## The Michigan Global Talent Initiative is a critical part of the State achieving its Sixty by 30 goals.

The Michigan Global Talent Initiative (MGTI) is designed to help realize the State's Sixty by 30 goal of increasing the number of working-age adults with a professional certification or college degree to 60% of the workforce by 2030. While Michigan is the 41st state to have a post-secondary workforce development goal of this type, we are the first state in America to develop and implement a comprehensive immigrant inclusion strategy to reach that goal.

MGTI programming and strategies are specifically designed to attract, retain, and place 100,000 to 125,000 immigrant, international student, and refugee workers with degrees and professional credentials into the Michigan workforce by 2030—or 25% of the 450,000 skilled workers needed to achieve the Sixty by 30 goal. MGTI ensures that Michigan's immigrant residents can fully participate in Michigan's plans to meet the Sixty by 30 goal.

“MGTI ensures that Michigan's immigrant residents can fully participate in Michigan's plans to meet the Sixty by 30 goal.

## NEW RESEARCH

# Immigrants are vital to advancing the work of the Growing Michigan Together Council.

A 2024 study by the American Immigration Council found that **immigrants contributed 57.7% of Michigan's population growth between 2012 and 2022, and 100% of the population growth since 2020.** Despite representing a **6.9%** share of the state's population, immigrants accounted for **8.4%** of Michigan's employed labor force and **18.6%** of STEM workers.

Further, immigrants moving to Michigan are often highly educated, with **44% holding a bachelor's degree and 22.9% holding an advanced degree**

in 2022. **It is critical to intentionally invest in an essential population that not only promotes Statewide priorities, but grows Michigan's population, economy, and workforce.**



READ THE REPORT  
*Contributions of New  
Americans in Michigan*





## STRATEGIES

**MGTI consists of multiple statewide programming strategies to attract, retain, train, and place global talent.**

MGTI aligns business and economic organizations, corporations, workforce development agencies, state and local government and higher education with developing and implementing strategies that leverage the contributions and potential that global talent offers the Michigan economy.

## These strategies include:

- 1 Global Talent Retention Initiative**  
Retaining international students in Michigan after graduation and connecting them with Michigan employers.
- 2 Global Entrepreneurs in Residence Program**  
Supporting immigrant high-tech founders in launching startups in Michigan, creating jobs and attracting investment.
- 3 Michigan Skilled Immigrant Integration Program**  
Reconnecting internationally-trained or -educated immigrants to the Michigan workforce through career development offerings.
- 4 Credential Evaluation and Upskilling Scholarships**  
Providing credential evaluation and upskilling scholarships and resources to immigrant professionals.
- 5 Industry-Specific Contextualized ESL Support**  
Assisting immigrants, educators, and employers with industry-specific, digital, contextualized English as a Second Language (ESL) support.
- 6 Michigan Attraction Initiative**  
Attracting college-educated, skilled immigrants to Michigan through a digital marketing strategy and support campaign.
- 7 Immigrant Student Success at Michigan's Community Colleges**  
Enhancing enrollment, retention, and completion rates at Michigan's community colleges.

# Michigan Global Talent Coalition (MGTC)



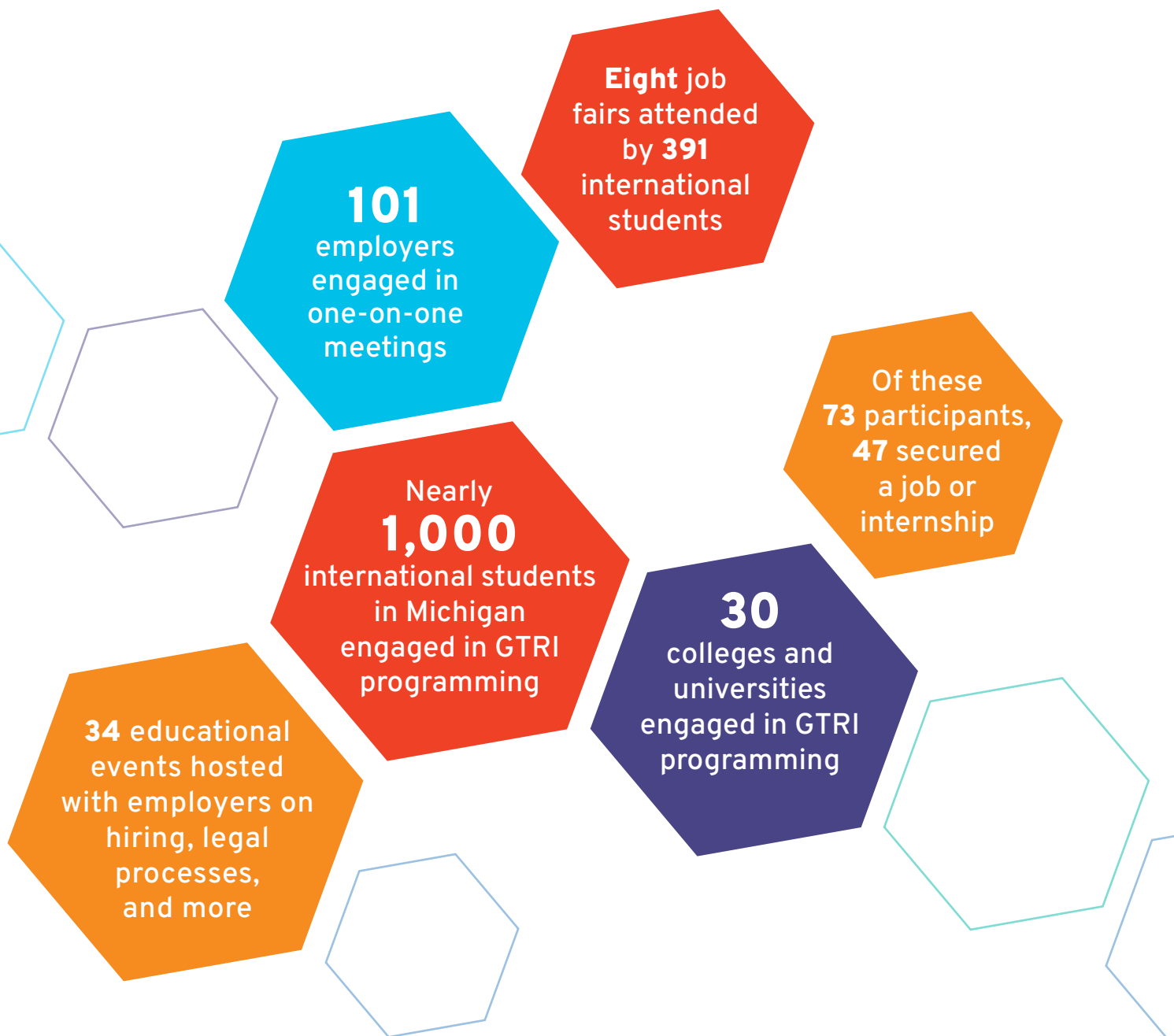
## Michigan Global Talent Coalition Members



## Global Talent Retention Initiative

The Global Talent Retention Initiative (GTRI) highlights the importance of **international student retention** to Michigan's economy and workforce. GTRI assists Michigan employers with their unmet talent needs by connecting them with international student graduates. GTRI includes programs that partner with Michigan universities to offer international students soft skills training and networking with employers, in addition to job fairs, direct matching, and other opportunities.

Michigan is home to **38,000** international students, the **8th largest population** in the US. International students also represent **70% of electrical engineers and software developers**, as well as **50% of STEM graduate students**.





**Madison Partak**  
Recruitment Manager  
Cherry Republic

## EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT

# International Students Perfect Fit for Northern Michigan Business

With storefronts across the state, a production facility, and thriving e-commerce operations, Cherry Republic experienced rapid expansion, with increasingly complex fulfillment and supply chain challenges.

“In our very rural area, we struggled to find local talent with technical experience needed to support this growth,” shared Madison Partak, recruitment manager of Glen Arbor-based Cherry Republic. “These international students are reliable, skilled, and dedicated to making an impact. International students are a group we continue to look at now.”

“ These international students are reliable, skilled, and dedicated to making an impact.



READ MADISON'S STORY

**78**  
ecosystem and  
networking events  
attended to promote  
international  
talent and  
programming

Four Global  
Talent Accelerator  
cohorts launched,  
providing **73** total  
participants with  
intensive soft skills  
training and  
U.S. job search  
preparation

**One employer**  
global talent  
accelerator launched,  
providing **4 employers**  
with international  
student hiring best  
practices

## Global Entrepreneurs in Residence Program

The Global Entrepreneurs in Residence Program (Global EIR) enables immigrant founders of high-tech startups to anchor and launch their businesses in Michigan through partnerships with Michigan colleges and universities.



**15**  
founders places  
H-1B issued

**\$29 Million**  
venture capital  
raised since 2019

**196**  
jobs  
created

Impact report  
released, highlighting  
that since 2019, the  
founders in Michigan  
have raised millions  
in venture capital and  
created nearly  
**200 jobs**



**Dr. Rehab (Ruby) Alhajjar**  
CEO & Founder  
FlowShield-Nano

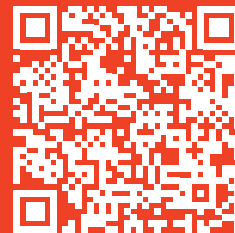
## SUCCESS STORY

# Houghton Entrepreneur Develops Real-Time Monitoring of Water Contaminants

Dr. Rehab (Ruby) Alhajjar grew up in Saudi Arabia and holds a doctorate in biological sciences, specializing in water microbiology and nanotechnology, from Michigan Technological University.

Alhajjar founded FlowShield-Nano, a Houghton-based startup specializing in detecting contamination in drinking water and beverages in real time. Alhajjar's device holds great potential for maintaining the quality of public and private drinking water sources and for beverage product makers. It is believed to be the first device of its kind.

“ Alhajjar's device holds great potential for maintaining the quality of public and private drinking water sources and for beverage product makers.



READ DR. ALHAJJAR'S STORY

**64**  
program  
applications

**78**  
inquiries about  
the program

**20**  
founders vetted and  
recommended for  
placement

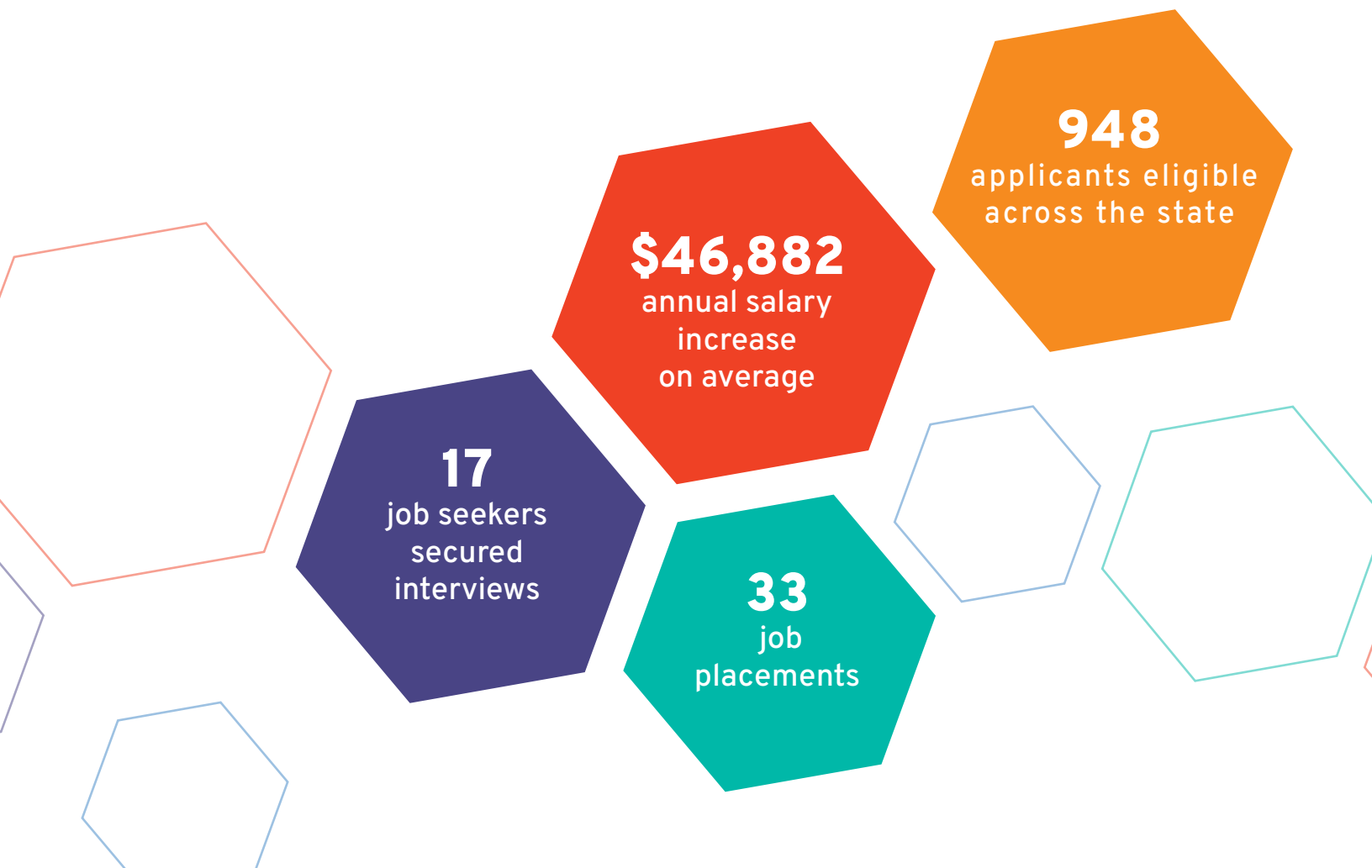
# Michigan Skilled Immigrant Integration Program

The Michigan Skilled Immigrant Integration Program (MI SIIP) reconnects college-educated immigrants to the Michigan workforce by establishing pathways to professional licenses, enhancing job search skills and career readiness, and placing them with Michigan employers. MI SIIP is offered in partnership with Upwardly Global, the Michigan Works! Association and five Michigan Works! agencies: West Michigan Works!, Macomb St. Clair Michigan Works!, Capital Area Michigan Works!, Oakland County Michigan Works!, and The Southeast Michigan Community Alliance (SEMCA).

## Michigan Skilled Immigrant Integration Program Statistics

### INDUSTRIES INCLUDE:

- Automotive
- Business & Communications
- Education
- Manufacturing, Transportation & Logistics
- Healthcare





**Shanelle Dale**  
Civil Engineer

## PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

# Civil Engineer Strengthens Skills and Positive Contributions

“I always had a love of buildings and architecture. A degree in Civil Engineering from the University of the West Indies (Jamaica) allowed me to broaden my scope to explore different areas of the processes, from design to construction. My international background has given me multiple perspectives of how the construction industry is operated in Jamaica and the United States.

The MI SIIP program helped me to improve my resume and gain interview skills. This helped to make me a stronger candidate during the job search and interview process.

I have used skills I learned in Jamaica and incorporated it with new skills I’ve learned while being in the U.S. This drives my goals of making a positive contribution towards efficiency in my work here.”

“ The MI SIIP program helped me to improve my resume and gain interview skills.

**87**  
career plans  
created

**89**  
job seekers  
completed at least  
one  
module

**51**  
job seekers  
completed all  
core modules

**188**  
job seekers  
onboarded to the  
Upwardly Global  
job training  
platform



**Ibrahim El Roz**  
Applied Innovation

“ To fellow immigrant job seekers: keep the faith and never give up. The right opportunity will come, and when it does, you’ll be ready.

## PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

# Michigan’s Growing IT Industry Gains Talent

“My educational background includes an MBA in Master of Business Administration from the American University of Technology in Lebanon and a degree in Electrical Engineering from Beirut Arab University.

My journey with the SIIP program was truly transformative. One of the most valuable insights I gained from the program was learning how to structure my resume according to Michigan standards and templates. Tailoring my resume to meet Michigan’s hiring requirements helped increase its visibility and improved my chances of getting noticed.

My international background has played a significant role in shaping my career here in Michigan. Having extensive experience in IT, particularly in infrastructure, allowed me to refine my focus and grow in my field. Through the program’s guidance and support, I gained the skills and opportunities needed to advance my career. The community here is lovely, the workplace culture is phenomenal, and the people are incredibly friendly.

To fellow immigrant job seekers: keep the faith and never give up. Keep applying, build your skills, and update your resume regularly. The right opportunity will come, and when it does, you’ll be ready.”





## Credential Evaluation and Upskilling Scholarships

As a complement of the Michigan Skilled Immigrant Integration Program, the Credential Evaluation and Upskilling Scholarships support immigrants' career success through credential evaluation of international transcripts, upskilling, or reskilling activities.

### Skilling Resources Include

Coursera  
ECornell  
Cisco  
Networking  
Academy

EnGen  
SalesForce  
Fundamentals  
Microsoft  
Learning  
Pathways



**Eun Joo Lee**  
HR Professional  
Teacher

“MI-SIIP provides skilled immigrants like me with the opportunity to succeed in our careers and make meaningful contributions to the community—an aspiration shared by many.

## PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

# Credential Evaluation and Upskilling Opens Doors

“After immigrating from South Korea last year, I had to leave behind my career as an HR manager in multinational companies. I held a bachelor’s degree and a teaching certificate in Korea, and I had built a professional career in Human Resources.

These resources have allowed me to improve my English fluency, immerse myself in a new culture, and build meaningful relationships. This program has been instrumental in helping me navigate the U.S. job market, offering guidance on how to craft a professional resume, write cover letters, prepare for interviews, and have my degree credentials evaluated. MI-SIIP also supported me in taking an HR certification program. I firmly believe that one day, I will contribute meaningfully to an organization as an HR professional in the United States.

Currently, I am working as a temporary substitute teacher in schools, utilizing my teaching certificate and degree, both of which were evaluated by an educational credential agency supported by MI-SIIP.

MI-SIIP provides skilled immigrants like me with the opportunity to succeed in our careers and make meaningful contributions to the community—an aspiration shared by many.”





## Industry-Specific Contextualized English as a Second Language (ESL) Support

The industry-specific, contextualized English as a Second Language (ESL) support strategy partners with national experts at EnGen to assist immigrants, educators, and employers through digital, customizable, contextualized ESL support. Learners who use EnGen's licenses gain access to a rich catalog of industry-aligned curricula, including English for Business, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Technology, and more.

**35**

ESL programs  
supported  
across the  
state

**590**

licenses  
distributed  
across the  
state

**95%**

participants report  
improved job and  
digital literacy  
skills



## PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

# English as a Workforce Upskilling Strategy Improves Job Skills and Confidence

Michigan employers, workforce development agencies, higher and adult education providers, chambers of commerce, and professionals utilize contextualized ESL in pharmacy technician and other healthcare programs, manufacturing, apprenticeship offerings, licensing exam support, and more.

“ Before EnGen, I couldn’t hear anything in English at all. Now I understand what my supervisor tells me, my work is getting better because I now understand the instructions given. Overall EnGen has truly changed my life.

– Michigan-Based EnGen Learner, Food Manufacturing Sector

**100%**  
of participants  
report saving time  
at work

**100%**  
of participants  
improved their  
confidence  
in speaking  
English

**95%**  
of participants  
report achieving  
a career or  
social goal



## Michigan Attraction Initiative

The Michigan Attraction Initiative will attract college-educated immigrants and international students to Michigan through a digital marketing and support strategy, similar to the MEDC's "You Can in Michigan" Campaign. This initiative targets high-demand talent such as electrical engineers, computer scientists, IT and software developers.

Two separate research studies have been conducted to better understand the potential of attracting high-skill international student graduates. Preliminary findings are positive and aligned for the MEDC's "You Can in Michigan" Campaign to attract this talent.

Michigan is  
associated with  
**7 of the top 10**  
industries of  
greatest  
interest

**97%**  
of employers  
willing to hire  
international  
students in next  
3 years

**1 in 5**  
Michigan jobs  
are unfilled  
due to lack of  
qualified  
talent

# Immigrant Student Success at Michigan's Community Colleges

The Immigrant Student Success strategy aims to enhance the enrollment, retention, and completion rates at Michigan community colleges through grant funding, cohort model learning, and best practice technical assistance.

**9**

community college participants in learning cohort

**15%**

of all Michigan high schoolers from immigrant families

6 Community colleges awarded grants totaling  
**\$517,000**

## OTHER STATISTICS



Immigrant Student Success Grant recipients include: Grand Rapids Community College, Kalamazoo Valley Community College, Monroe County Community College, Mott Community College, Muskegon Community College, and Schoolcraft College.



Projects work to advance English attainment, enhance transit access across campus, provide support services, promote recruitment, improve assessment of foreign educational credits and credentials and other activities.



The Welcome Back Center Study, completed by the Michigan Health Council, examined the feasibility of launching a Michigan-based health career training and credentialing center to help foreign-trained healthcare professionals connect with healthcare careers in Michigan, helping to fill Michigan's most critical talent shortages in health care.



Chening Duker, Founder of Goodpluck

## Immigrant Student Success Grant Recipients



MONROE COUNTY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE



MUSKEGON  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE

Kalamazoo**VALLEY**<sup>™</sup>  
community college

**GRCC**  
GRAND RAPIDS COMMUNITY COLLEGE



**MOTT** COMMUNITY  
COLLEGE



**Schoolcraft**  
College<sup>®</sup>



## How Is the Michigan Global Talent Initiative Funded?

MGTI was designed to be a five-year \$24 million program to add **100,000 to 125,000** skilled immigrant workers to the Michigan workforce, approximately **25% of the Sixty by 30 goal**. MGTI programs have been funded through two \$5 million State appropriations made through the Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity's Office of Global Michigan to Global Detroit in FY 2023 and FY 2024 budgets.

**MGTC seeks three additional years of funding.**

To learn more about the Michigan Global Talent Initiative, visit [www.michiganglobaltalent.org](http://www.michiganglobaltalent.org)



LEARN MORE



# Michigan Global Talent Initiative

## Milestones

### February 2019

Governor Whitmer announces Sixty by 30 plan to upskill Michigan's workforce.

### November 2021

Michigan Global Talent Coalition formed. \$24 million proposal over 5 years to fund immigrant-inclusive economic development strategies.

### July 2022

MGTI fully funded at \$5 million for its first year in FY 2023 budget. Programming development begin.

### March 2023

FY 2023 MGTI funding contracted to Global Detroit. First programs launch.

### July 2023

MGTI fully funded at \$5 million for second year in FY 2024 budget.



## Michigan Global Talent Initiative

[michiganglobaltalent.org](http://michiganglobaltalent.org) | [info@globaldetroitmi.org](mailto:info@globaldetroitmi.org)



[michigan-global-talent-initiative](https://www.linkedin.com/company/michigan-global-talent-initiative)

The Michigan Global Talent Initiative has developed inclusive talent strategies rooted in research and best practices adopted across Michigan, as well as other regions. Our programs have been developed through deep collaboration with business, economic development, government and national experts.

MGTI depends on active collaboration with coalition members, business, community stakeholders, economic development entities, universities, local government and more. By building awareness, fostering engagement, and bolstering support for MGTI across the state we can ensure that Michigan builds upon the growing contributions of its immigrant communities in ways that expand prosperity for all.