

News Release

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Afghan Immigrant and Local Employer Receive Michigan Works! Impact Awards

LANSING, MI— A Traverse City man who immigrated to the U.S. and his local employer each received Michigan Works! Impact Awards for using employment services and other resources provided by Northwest Michigan Works!. Qayum Qayumi, TentCraft and other Impact Award recipients from around the state, were recognized April 17 in Lansing at a special ceremony attended by lawmakers and statewide talent development officials.

Qayum and his wife moved to Traverse City from Afghanistan to find a better life for themselves. Northwest Michigan Works! provided Qayum with job search assistance, resume development, transportation assistance, and connected him with credential evaluation services His wife enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes through the Northwest Michigan Works! Learning Lab to enhance her English skills.

With assistance from Northwest Michigan Works!, Qayum secured a position as a sewing operator at TentCraft in Traverse City, drawing on skills learned from his father beginning when he was a young boy.

“Northwest Michigan Works! gave me hope at the start of my life in the new city,” said Qayum. “This place has been an invaluable resource for me as I navigated the process of job searching. Not only did they assist me with my resume, but they also shared resources directing me towards job opportunities that would be relevant to my skills and qualifications.”

Connecting TentCraft with Qayum is the latest in a long list of services Northwest Michigan Works! has been able to provide to the company.

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"We've maintained a longstanding partnership with Northwest Michigan Works, relying on their invaluable support whenever necessary," said Rob Hanel, Director of People and Space at TentCraft. "Whether it's facilitating access to local job fairs, securing training grants for our staff, or navigating the complexities of workforce development, the Michigan Works! team has consistently exceeded our expectations."

The Impact Awards celebrated the economic impact of newly created jobs, transformational training, and effective talent pipeline development within our communities. Honorees from across the state received awards highlighted by their local lawmakers and state workforce development officials.

"The Impact Awards showcase the impressive workforce development achievements that take place in partnership with the Michigan Works! network each year," said Ryan Hundt, CEO of Michigan Works! Association. "These successes reinforce the role our network plays in transforming our workforce and the lives of Michiganders. Congratulations to all the honorees!"

Established in 1987, the Michigan Works! Association fosters high-quality employment and training programs serving employers and workers by providing support activities and a forum for information exchange for Michigan's workforce development system. For more information, please visit www.michiganworks.org.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Dan Boss at danboss@networksnorthwest.org and stating preferences for resolution, file format, and file size. Or phone (231) 929-5047. Check our online Media Room at: networksnorthwest.org/media

Founded in 1974, Networks Northwest facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10-county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works!, APEX Accelerator (formerly PTAC), various business services, and many different community development initiatives in response to our communities' requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business and community services Networks Northwest offers if you visit our website, networksnorthwest.org. Networks Northwest's member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.