



German American
Chambers of Commerce
Deutsch-Amerikanische
Handelskammern

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Press Release

For immediate release

Talent Investment Agency's Michigan Advanced Technician Training (MAT2) Program gains new management partner

German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest chosen to transition state's successful apprenticeship program to industry-led program, promoting growth and further success

LANSING, November 13, 2018 — Today the Michigan Talent Investment Agency announced that it selected the German American Chamber of Commerce of the Midwest (GACC Midwest) as the recipient of a program management award for the Michigan Advanced Technician Training (MAT2) program. Wanda M. Stokes, director of the Michigan Talent Investment Agency, said this award is to support the overall administration of the MAT2 program for the period covering October 1, 2018 to September 30, 2019.

MAT2 was originally launched as a State of Michigan program, at the request of Governor Rick Snyder following a trade trip to Germany where he observed successful German-based apprenticeship programs. Participants in the MAT2 program have their tuition, at a participating college, paid for by an employer, receive a weekly stipend while in school, earn an hourly wage while training on the job, and have an opportunity for employment upon successful completion of the program, which allows participating employers to build a sustainable pipeline of talent.

"We started the MAT2 program to address the professional trades shortage that exists in Michigan and it is working," Gov. Snyder said. "This program is what the Marshall Plan for Talent is all about – the education and business worlds working together toward one goal, connecting talent to jobs. This marks the next step in growing the program and making it even more successful. Offering apprenticeships that allow students to develop their talent while providing a great start to their careers is a smart approach and having GACC Midwest on board to expand this program statewide will help ensure its continued success."

From its inception, the strategic plan for MAT2 was to ensure long-term sustainability, through transitioning the administration of the program to industry. GACC Midwest has the proven experience of managing employer-driven apprenticeship programs like the MAT2 program. They have been administering apprenticeship programs since 2013 and created their own successful Industry Consortium for Advanced Technical Training (ICATT) Apprenticeship Program in 2015, with 47 companies training 65 apprentices in four states.

GACC Midwest is part of a worldwide network in over 90 countries, including both Germany's Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHKs), which administers all of Germany's over 350 apprenticeship programs, as well as German Chambers Abroad (AHKs), such as GACC Midwest, who manage and advise on apprenticeship programs based upon this German model in over 35 countries. GACC Midwest leverages the network's knowledge and experience to develop, implement, and manage high-quality apprenticeship programs for local companies with headquarters in the U.S., Germany, Japan and more. "We're excited about this new stage in the cooperation," Mark Tomkins, president & CEO of GACC Midwest, said. "Being personally involved in MAT2 since the conceptual stages, I'm happy that our team will now contribute to the growth and continued success of the program on an everyday basis."

Michigan will have nearly 811,000 career openings to fill over the next six years in fields that are facing talent shortages, with an average salary of over \$51,000 per year. Data indicates current and future shortages exist in information technology and computer science, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, and other professional trades and business careers.

The MAT2 program not only trains skilled workers for the Michigan labor market, but they also offer Michigan workers high-wage, high-demand job opportunities that do not require a bachelor's degree. Between fiscal year



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2008 and 2017, the number of active registered apprentices in Michigan grew from 3,132 to 15,304, demonstrating a growth rate of almost 500 percent in this supply of skilled workers over nearly a decade.

“The GACC Midwest has a vast array of industry contacts in the Midwest, that they can work with to expand the MAT2 program,” Stephanie Beckhorn, director of the Talent Investment Agency’s Workforce Development Agency, said. “Currently, the MAT2 program is heavily concentrated in Southeast, Northwest and Southwest Michigan. There is so much room for growth of this program in other areas of our state and we are confident GACC Midwest has the right connections and expertise to expand MAT2 statewide. I’m very excited about GACC Midwest taking over program management. As the chair of the Strategic Steering Committee, and as an industry representative, I’m confident that their expertise will help the further growth of the MAT2 program and strengthen this high-quality apprenticeship program in Michigan.”

To date, over 50 employers and 112 graduates have participated in the three programs MAT2 offers – Mechatronics, Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) Programming, and Technical Product Design (TPD). These three programs currently have 119 students. Additionally, MAT2 has graduated two Information Technology cohorts and is exploring future IT cohorts.

ZF North America, with US headquarters located in Livonia, MI, has been a MAT2 employer since the program started. “We are able to train our apprentice while they are attending college, so they have the skills to meet our company’s needs,” Sophie Stepke, ZF North America training manager, said. “By paying for their education, and building a relationship during the three years, we are also developing long-term loyalty and investing in our company’s future. I can’t say enough good things about the MAT2 program. I highly recommend this program to other employers and am looking forward to making the MAT2 program even stronger with the addition of more participating employers and colleges across the state. I’m very excited about GACC Midwest taking over program management. As the chair of the Strategic Steering Committee, and as an industry representative, I’m confident that their expertise will help the further growth of the MAT2 program and strengthen this high-quality apprenticeship program in Michigan.”

About The Talent Investment Agency (TIA)

TIA is the agency that combines Michigan Unemployment Insurance and Workforce Development, and is responsible for their activities. Businesses need a talented workforce. Workers need the right skills to compete for available jobs. TIA programs are focused on job preparedness, career-based education, worker training, employment assistance and unemployment insurance.

About the German American Chambers of Commerce

The German American Chambers of Commerce (GACCs) with their main offices in Atlanta, Chicago and New York, as well as branches in Detroit, Houston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, work together under the network of the GACCs. With approximately 2,500 members, an extensive international network, and their broad spectrum of activities and services the GACCs are the first choice when it comes to business between the US and Germany. Additionally, our liaison office in Washington, DC, the Representative of German Industry and Trade (RGIT), represents the interests of the German business community vis-à-vis both the US administration and other international organizations based in Washington, DC. AHKs are closely connected to the Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHKs) in Germany. The umbrella organization of the IHKs is the German Association of Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK), which speaks for 3.6 million business enterprises in Germany and also coordinates and supports the AHKs. The German Chamber Network (AHK) provides experience, connections, and services worldwide through over 140 locations in 92 countries. www.gaccmidwest.org | www.ahk-usa.com

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