



Frequently Asked Questions

Who is organizing MiCareerQuest and how is it funded?

MiCareerQuest™ was created in 2015 by Michigan Works! Kent, Allegan & Barry Counties (now West Michigan Works!), Kent ISD and the Construction Workforce Development Alliance (CWDA) in response to employers' need for future talent in construction, health sciences, information technology and manufacturing. The agribusiness industry was added in 2023 and hospitality in 2025.

MiCareerQuest is an employer-driven event. Employer champions, assisted by West Michigan Works! staff, drive employer participation and the creation of student activities. Student participation is coordinated through regional ISDs.

The event is funded by donations from participating employers, associations and corporate and education sponsors. See [MiCareerQuest sponsors page](#) >

What is the schedule for MiCareerQuest in 2026?

Tuesday, May 19 – Exhibit Set up

Wednesday, May 20 (8:30 am - 1:45 pm) - MiCareerQuest; plan to arrive by 8 am for setup.

Where will MiCareerQuest take place?

In Grand Rapids, Michigan, at DeVos Place Convention Center (devosplace.org)
303 Monroe Ave NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503 [Map](#)

How many students are expected to attend?

We expect 9,000 students.

What is the cost associated with exhibiting as part of MiCareerQuest?

Although there is no cost to exhibit, sponsorships keep this event free for exhibitors and students alike. Each industry sector is responsible for raising \$25,000 to cover the cost of the event. These fundraising efforts are led by Industry Council Leads and employer champions. Exception: Exhibitors are responsible for covering any additional costs specific to exhibits, such as move-in/out labor, commercial shipping or special set-up equipment.

Educational institutions may exhibit during the event as part of a sponsorship, and there are special rules for certain categories of exhibitors. You can find more information on the [MiCareerQuest exhibitor page](#).

Are donations to MiCareerQuest tax-deductible?

Yes. ACSET, the fiduciary for the event, is a governmental unit as defined in Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 170 and is a public charity according to IRC Section 170 and IRC Section 509. ACSET provides no goods or services as consideration for your contribution.

When and how do I make an industry sector or sponsorship donation?

You can make your payment by check or ACH. All pertinent information will be included on your invoice. Contact Chad Patton at cpatton@westmiworks.org to be invoiced. Please refer to our [sponsorship page](#) to determine your sponsorship level.

What makes a good exhibit?

All exhibits should be highly interactive and targeted towards students in grades 8-10. Refrain from using static displays. The best exhibits are those that illustrate some aspect of the career you're highlighting. For useful tips on how to create an impactful exhibit, read our [Tips for Creating a Fun and Engaging MiCareerQuest Exhibit](#). 

Can educational institutions exhibit at MiCareerQuest?

To exhibit at the event, an educational institution must be a sponsor of the event. [Learn more >](#)

What is the standard exhibit size and what is included?

Exhibitors must consider equipment size, products and student activity when determining their exhibit space. Also consider items such as tables, chairs, display components and storage of boxes and supplies. Your entire exhibit must be contained within the allotted space. We have sample sizes taped out for exhibitors to help determine sizing needs at our SW service center. Please reach out to your industry lead to arrange to see the sizes.

Here are some tips to calculate your exhibit space:

- To establish the square footage, multiply length x width.
- Allow 50 square feet of space for each staff person in the space at one time. - Consider how students will interact and move through your exhibit.
- Don't overcrowd your exhibit!
- Remember that some students will be using walkers, wheelchairs, or adaptive devices.

Outlines are available showing examples of three sizes: 12x12, 20x15 and 20x30. Please reach out to your industry council lead for more information.

Once square footage has been determined, exhibitors will need to complete an online registration form via the MiCareerQuest website to reserve the space and any supplies needed. Some of the supplies included in your exhibit space may include:

- 3' high side walls
- Tables
- Chairs
- Wastebasket
- Electrical outlets (Various Amps available) and Accessories
- Banner with company name(s) and logo, and name(s) of occupation(s) being showcased at the exhibit
- AV equipment

Note: the cost of event-provided supplies is covered by sponsorships.

What does a standard MiCareerQuest exhibit look like?

There is no standard MiCareerQuest exhibit! The only common denominator is “interaction” — each exhibit should be designed to engage and educate students about a high-demand occupation. Here are some photos of past exhibits:



What is the layout of the MiCareerQuest?

MiCareerQuest will encompass the entire DeVos Place Exhibit Hall- 162,000 square feet of uninterrupted, column-free space, as well as the Grand Gallery Meeting Rooms. These will be divided into quadrants to house the industry exhibits.

What is the deadline to register my exhibit information?

The deadline to register your exhibit is March 1, 2026.

What if I need to make adjustments to my exhibit description?

Changes to your exhibit can be made through April 1, 2026 through your initial registration confirmation. Please consult with your employer champion or industry council lead.

Who do we contact about a special need?

We will do what we can to accommodate special circumstances; please discuss with your employer champion or industry council lead.

What about signage?

Because the mission of MiCareerQuest is to promote an industry, as opposed to individual companies, company table skirting is not allowed. Each exhibit will receive a standard identification sign with the occupation(s), the name(s), and logo(s) of the participating employers. Limited company signs will be allowed at MiCareerQuest. The ultimate goal of a sign is to enhance career development and understanding, not to function as a company promotion. **Signs must be pre-approved.** Please reach out to your industry council lead with any questions.

How do I hang a sign or a banner in a booth?

Signage beyond what is provided (see above) must be approved; please contact your employer champion or industry council lead. Staff will be available during set-up to hang all approved signs.

Use of tape: The use of single-side or double-stick foam tape, single-side or double-stick cellophane tape, or masking tape is prohibited on any surface in the convention center. If an exhibitor needs to tape something to the floor, DeVos recommends Gaffers or carpet tape to use on the floor.

Can I leave items overnight?

The exhibit hall will have increased security during the move-in/out hours and overnight.

Will there be space available to secure my personal belongings?

No. You will be responsible for all personal belongings. This is a large event with many students. West Michigan Works! is not responsible for loss or theft of items. Please watch your own belongings.

Will electricity be provided?

Yes. You will be able to specify the type of outlet and amp increments when you register your exhibit. If you have needs beyond what is listed, please contact your employer champion or industry council lead.

What is the water and air psi in the exhibit hall?

Water: 40 to 45 psi (standard city water pressure)
Air: 90 to 100 psi

Are refrigeration units available?

The event space does not have an option for refrigeration, however we may be able to rent a refrigeration trailer: 12' x 6' x 6'6" trailer weighing approximately 7,000 lbs, requiring a 120V 20AMP connection. If your exhibit requires refrigeration, please include this request (including the electrical specifications) in your exhibit registration. We will try to secure a trailer.

Are drones allowed as a part of an exhibit?

An exhibitor that would like to use a drone as part of their exhibit will need to name SMG and the property owner (DeVos) as additional insureds on their general liability coverage. ACSET (West MI Works!) will also need to be added as an additional insured.

If any exhibitor would like to pursue the use of a drone as part of their exhibit, please contact your employer champion or industry council lead.

Is there wireless Internet access?

General wireless internet (1 gigabyte Internet connection) will be available to exhibitors on May 19 and 20. The login and password will be distributed by West Michigan Works! staff upon arrival.

Is drinking water available?

Yes, water is available from water fountains throughout the hall and we will have water bottles in the industry quadrants.

Will hand washing stations be available?

Hand washing areas are not provided except within the restrooms. Hand sanitizing stations will be available.

Will food be provided?

On setup day, coffee will be provided. No outside food will be permitted on setup day.

On the day of the event, continental breakfast and coffee will be available in the morning at concessions for your purchase. A boxed lunch will be provided free for all exhibitors and volunteers between 11:00 and 1:00 p.m. **Please ensure you have registered your exhibitor roster - only registered exhibitors will receive a lunch.**

Where can I park?

There is a city-run parking ramp directly beneath DeVos Place. It is accessed from Michigan Street through the parking ramp entrance on the Northwest corner of the building.

Validation tickets will be available on May 19 and 20. Exhibitors and volunteers will be issued one validation ticket per person, per day. Please note validation tickets will not work in Ellis Parking or street parking.

What should I wear?

Exhibitors representing their trade should come dressed as they would on the job. They will receive a MiCareerQuest lanyard so that they can easily be identified as an exhibitor. Volunteers providing event assistance (not assisting directly with an exhibit) must wear a MiCareerQuest t-shirt.

Note: If you did not receive your MiCareerQuest t-shirt prior to the event, you may pick it up on May 20 at the information desk in the Grand Gallery.

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What should I wear? (continued)

Comfortable Shoes: You will be standing for long hours on hard surfaces, so be intentional about your footwear:

1. Your shoes will make or break your comfort when you're on your feet for hours. Avoid high heels as well as sandals; toe and foot injuries are common in areas where there is a lot of wiring for dozens of exhibits.
2. Avoid wearing new shoes or you may wind up having aching, blistered feet by the end of the day. You may find bringing two pairs of shoes and changing them mid-day helps to reduce discomfort.
3. The Exhibit Hall floor is concrete. The harder the floor, the more comfortable your shoes will need to be.

How many people will I need to staff my booth?

During the hours of MiCareerQuest your exhibit must be staffed at all times. Each booth should be staffed with a minimum of 2-3 people at all times. We recommend assigning staff and volunteers to shifts, so everyone will be able to take breaks. If you do not have an adequate numbers of volunteers for your exhibit, you will be able to request additional volunteers on your exhibitor registration form.

Can I take photos or film MiCareerQuest?

Yes. Exhibitors may videotape or take photos of their exhibits. If you have someone outside of your exhibit staff coming to take photos, have them stop at the media check-in table in the Grand Gallery to check in. We encourage you to share your photos with us to be featured on social media or promotional materials!

What else should I bring?

- Lots of energy!
- Your mobile phone
- Phone numbers of all your staff and volunteers who will be working the booth throughout the event
- A camera to take pictures of your booth for your next newsletter
- If you use a disposable item for your activity, make sure to bring enough so you don't run out, or have a plan in place to get more.

How many copies of handouts/promos items/give-aways should I bring?

Please do not bring handouts or promotional items for distribution at the event. The exception is items that are a necessary part of the exhibit. For questions reach out to your employer champion or industry council lead.

Can I have sign-up sheets to collect personal information or distribute business cards?

No recruitment activities are allowed during MiCareerQuest. There will be job fairs in each of the participating counties where you can recruit. Dates and locations will be given to you.

Can I purchase a MiCareerQuest t-shirt?

Event volunteers will receive a free t-shirt to wear on the day of the event. Exhibitors are encouraged to wear their company logo apparel during the event and therefore do not receive a t-shirt. If you would like to purchase a MiCareerQuest t-shirt, we will have extras for sale at the info desk.

How can I get my questions answered?

If your question is not answered by the FAQs send an email to cpatton@westmiworks.org.