



# **NEWS RELEASE**

## **STATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **State Agencies Team Up to Fill Critical Food and Ag Jobs** *Employers encouraged to post jobs on MiTalent.org*

**LANSING, MICH.** The Michigan departments of Agriculture and Rural Development and Labor and Economic Opportunity are leading efforts to help fill critical food and agriculture jobs that are emerging due, in large part, to the COVID-19 pandemic. Part of the collaborative effort includes raising awareness of existing resources and services available to food and agriculture businesses, as well as promoting opportunities for job seekers.

“Throughout this emergency, MDARD has been hosting regular calls with industry stakeholder groups, and one of the top issues raised has been the growing need for skilled workers,” said MDARD Director Gary McDowell. “Understanding how essential skilled workers are in the food and agriculture supply chain, we were quick to call upon the knowledgeable experts at LEO and Michigan Works! to find effective solutions to a rapidly growing problem.”

Those experts have also assisted MDARD with prioritizing and expediting food and agriculture opportunities through close collaboration.

“With more than 800,000 active job seekers registered in Pure Michigan Talent Connect, we’re hoping more employers will take advantage of this site to get matched up with the skilled talent they need to fill in-demand jobs,” said LEO, Employment and Training Director Stephanie Beckhorn. “This collaborative approach with MDARD and employers allows us to deliver effective solutions that address our state’s critical food and agriculture talent needs.”

To help fill these and other critical jobs, the state is working with partners at Michigan Works! regional service centers to help businesses attract, train and retain a skilled workforce.

Serving more than 800,000 job seekers each year, Michigan Works! helps prepare job seekers for Michigan’s high-demand occupations, like food and agriculture. Services include job search assistance, employability workshops, access to publicly funded programs and other support services.

Employers across the state also turn to Michigan Works! to identify skilled candidates. Through Michigan Works! Business Solutions, agri-business staff are dedicated to meet the growing needs of food and agriculture businesses and help get people into these jobs.

“The Michigan Works! Business Solutions team works closely with employers across a variety of industry sectors to better understand the specific needs of each industry,” said Ben Damerow, Executive Director of Michigan Works! Southwest. “With staff who specialize in employment and re-employment services, Michigan Works! is uniquely positioned to provide talent solutions during this unprecedented time of demand for skilled workers in the food and agriculture industry.”

Food and agriculture employers looking for assistance filling open positions should go to [www.MiTalent.org](http://www.MiTalent.org), to complete the [COVID-19 On-Demand Hiring Intake Form](#) to add their postings of essential positions in the search results.

Pure Michigan Talent Connect is free to use for employers and job seekers and boasts more than 800,000 active job-seeker accounts and an average of 50,000+ daily job opportunities posted during the pandemic.

For assistance with Pure Michigan Talent Connect, employers can contact us at [jobs.mitalent.org/contact-us](http://jobs.mitalent.org/contact-us).

Information around this outbreak is changing rapidly. The latest information is available at [Michigan.gov/Coronavirus](http://Michigan.gov/Coronavirus) and [CDC.gov/Coronavirus](http://CDC.gov/Coronavirus).

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