



Introduction to the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors Program

The Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors provide essential support for all Chamber projects and programs while serving as the Chamber's representatives within the community. Ambassadors are dedicated to greeting new investors, promoting the Chamber's four priority areas, and bridging the gap between general membership and the Board of Directors.

Our work focuses on four main areas; Business & Legislative Advocacy, Workforce & Economic Development, Leadership & Professional Development and Downtown Revitalization.

- **BUSINESS & LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY:** As part of the Northern Michigan Chamber Alliance, we are actively working at regional, state, and national levels to prioritize the best interests of Manistee County. By fostering strong relationships with legislators, partners, and key state offices, we remain focused on the unique needs of rural northern Michigan. The Alliance, which unites 20 chambers, is dedicated to advocating for rural businesses, developing local talent, and enhancing competitiveness throughout northern Michigan, including Manistee County. Through collaboration with local stakeholders, we aim to strengthen and expand business opportunities, making it easier for businesses to succeed and thrive in our community.
- **ECONOMIC & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** Manistee County continues to see strong economic momentum, with \$36 million in projects and investments driving growth across the region. In 2025 alone, these efforts contributed to the creation of 82 full- and part-time jobs. Through Networks Northwest, the Chamber also secured \$80,000 in Strategic Site Readiness funding from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, further supporting future development opportunities. Looking ahead to 2026, the community is poised for continued progress with four new housing projects, a new childcare center, and six redevelopment projects planned - bringing added beautification, business enhancements, and job creation to the area.
- **LEADERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** Since 2018, the Manistee Area Leadership Program has made a meaningful impact on the community, graduating 108 participants and engaging more than 90 local organizations. Through the program, \$101,727 has been reinvested back into the community, supporting a variety of initiatives and projects. To date, 11 community projects have been completed, including the installation of life jacket stations at five area beaches, rehabilitation of the First Street Beach Dog Park, and renovations to "The Rec" Center at Sands Park. In addition, Chamber staff have completed leadership and strategic professional development to strengthen organizational effectiveness and enhance their ability to serve the community.
- **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION:** In 2025, the Manistee DDA continued to drive downtown investment and revitalization, distributing \$102,957 in Facade Restoration Grants to support local property improvements. The DDA was also awarded a \$756,825 RAP Grant from the State of Michigan for the Downtown Streetscape Project, further enhancing the area's appeal and

infrastructure. Downtown Manistee welcomed seven new businesses, contributing to a vibrant and growing business community. Additionally, \$22,719.09 was spent locally through Manistee County Cash, reinforcing support for downtown merchants. Strategic efforts also included the creation of a Target Business Group focused on intentional business attraction, as well as a collaboration with the Manistee County Tourism Authority to invest in updated wayfinding signage throughout the downtown area..

The Ambassadors Program is a volunteer-driven initiative that supports the growth of Chamber investments and plays a key role in strengthening the local community. Through this program, Ambassadors help retain and grow Chamber investment, educate investors on Chamber benefits, welcome new investors, and encourage participation in Chamber events and programs. Our dedicated group of Ambassadors fosters connections that benefit both the business community and the broader community, ensuring continued success and collaboration.

Learn more about the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce at www.manisteechamber.com.

Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors Program Purpose/Mission

The Ambassadors Program serves as an elite group of members assisting the Chamber staff with business outreach, investor retention, and education, supporting investor celebrations, and welcoming new investors into the Chamber. Ambassadors perform calls and site visits to learn about our business investors and answer their questions about investor benefits and programs. Additionally, Ambassadors greet both current and potential investors at Chamber programs and participate in ribbon-cutting ceremonies and other celebrations.

Purpose/Mission Statement

Purpose

The Ambassadors Program serves as a vital connection between the Chamber, its members, and the greater business community. It fosters collaboration and supports the growth and success of businesses in our area.

Mission

To actively support and promote the success of local businesses and the broader community by building strong relationships, providing helpful resources, and creating opportunities for growth through Chamber events, business site visits, and community initiatives. Our focus is on empowering businesses and community members by connecting them with the tools, knowledge, and networks they need to succeed.

Who is an Ambassador?

An Ambassador is a dedicated and experienced Chamber investor who is passionate about serving the community. Ambassadors are committed to supporting local businesses by fostering positive relationships, mentoring new investors, and promoting collaboration. They actively participate in Chamber and community events, ensuring that every business feels valued and connected to a network of shared success.

Ambassadors Program Benefits

- **Recognition:** Verbal and visual recognition at select Chamber programs, boosting your visibility in the community.

- **New Business Contacts & Connection with Leaders:** Expand your professional network and build relationships with influential business leaders and key community decision-makers through Chamber events.
- **In-Depth Knowledge:** Enhance your understanding of Chamber investor benefits and services to maximize your membership value.
- **Online Presence:** Have your name and business listed on the Ambassador page of the Chamber website, increasing your visibility.

Ambassador Responsibilities and Requirements

Ambassador Responsibilities and Expectations

1. Commitment & Participation

- Volunteer 3 to 5 hours per month on Chamber tasks, events, and programs.
- Attend five scheduled Ambassador meetings.
- Regularly participate in Chamber programs, ribbon-cutting ceremonies, and community events.

2. Engagement & Outreach

- Conduct at least three outreach calls or visits monthly to support investor retention.
- Provide feedback and share updates on business developments with Chamber staff.
- Assist new investors in networking and understanding Chamber benefits.

3. Advocacy & Professionalism

- Promote Chamber benefits and business opportunities to investors.
- Stay informed via Chamber newsletters and website updates.
- Follow the Ambassador Code of Ethics, attire guidelines, and interaction policies.
- Use social media to support Chamber events and refer new investors.

Ambassadors Program Eligibility

The Ambassador Program is open to anyone, with preference given to individuals who are associated with a business that is a Chamber Investor, are a Chamber Investor themselves, or have retired from a business that is a Chamber Investor.

Our Ambassadors are professional, highly motivated, enthusiastic, actively engaged with the Chamber, and are able to volunteer up to potentially 5 hours a month performing Chamber duties.

Ambassador Meetings

The Ambassador Program will meet as needed, but no fewer than four times per year. Meeting dates will be determined based on Ambassador availability and will typically occur in advance of key Chamber programs. Meetings will be held at 400 River Street unless otherwise noted.

The Ambassadors Program meetings consist of Ambassador reports, community updates, program updates, and a Chamber update. Ambassador Orientation will be held on an as-needed basis to provide training for new Ambassadors in the program.

As a Chamber Ambassador, active attendance and participation in meetings are strongly encouraged to maintain full engagement with the program. We understand that life can get busy, but we are dedicated to fostering a program that remains deeply connected to both the Chamber and the community.

Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors Code of Ethics

As a Chamber Ambassador, we kindly ask that you refrain from using your ambassador status for solicitation purposes. Instead, we encourage you to connect with and build relationships with businesses and other professionals in a neutral and respectful manner. While representing the Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce, Ambassadors should focus on promoting the Chamber and the community as a whole, remaining neutral and avoiding the endorsement or promotion of specific goods, services, or competing organizations.

Investor Interactions

Chamber Ambassadors are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional behavior when interacting with investors, as these interactions reflect both the Chamber and the Ambassador's professionalism and integrity. When conducting Ambassadors duties the Ambassador represents the Chamber first, then their business. Ambassadors should remain mindful of the difference between networking and sales activities. Any complaints received by the Chamber about an Ambassador will be discussed on an individual basis and the following will apply:

- 1st complaint – warning
- 2nd complaint – removal from the committee

Ambassador Program Selection

The Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce will make every effort to maintain the diversity of professional disciplines, service providers, race, age, and gender within the program. The Ambassador program is not industry exclusive and there is no limit on the number of representatives from any specific industry or company. The Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce will work to provide the appropriate balance of industries represented within the program to reflect the makeup of the Chamber investors appropriately. We strive to have our Ambassadors program reflect the Chamber's investors inclusively.

Ambassador Attire

- Business casual to business professional attire is expected.
- Ambassador name badge (your first name badge is free; replacements are \$15 each).
- Jeans are acceptable, provided they are business-appropriate.
- Please be respectful of the organizations you are visiting and their office cultures (e.g., attorneys, banks, CPAs, etc.).

Ambassadors Program Chamber Staff Contact:

Nicole Kaminski, Operations Manager | 231.299.5358 | operations@manisteechamber.com

Interested in becoming a Chamber Ambassador?

Visit www.manisteechamber.com and download the program application or contact: Nicole Kaminski, Operations Manager, 231.299.5358