



MICHIGAN SENATE

Appropriations Requests for Legislatively Directed Spending Items

Date Submitted: 04/21/2026

1. Sponsoring legislator's full name:

Senator Michele Hoytenga

2. Cosponsoring legislators' names (if applicable):

N/A

3. Intended legislatively directed spending item recipient:

Alpena Community College

4. Physical address of legislatively directed spending item recipient and the intended location of the project or activity:

665 Johnson St, Alpena, MI 49707

5. The recipient's employer identification number:

382310748

6. Requested amount of the legislatively directed spending item:

\$1,000,000.00

7. What is the purpose and how does the legislatively directed spending item provide a public benefit that is an appropriate use of taxpayer money?

Executive Summary: Alpena Community College supplies more trained pre-apprentice utility lineworkers than any other higher educational institution in Michigan. Sixty lineworkers graduate every spring from ACC's Utility Technology program trained to climb and work at heights on wooden utility poles. According to recent Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency wage record data, graduates earn an average of \$95,000 per year with nearly 100 percent job placement. Ninety to 120 students per year apply for entry into the program. The Next Generation Climbing Range will introduce to 60 ACC trainees per year, as well as potentially hundreds of incumbent lineworkers statewide, hands-on training to steel grid infrastructure including substation management. ACC officials are not aware of any comparable training range in Michigan or even the Midwest. Purpose: ACC's

Legislative Directed Spending request seeks \$1 million to match \$2.5 million in funding support already committed from the U.S. Economic Development Administration to build a Next Generation Climbing Range on the main campus of Alpena Community College. With its focus on steel poles, grid infrastructure, and substation training, ACC's LDSI request documents the following four points for your consideration:

- The LDSI request will not fund personnel costs at any level or for any amount
- The LDSI request will only fund one-time construction costs, not ongoing maintenance or operational expenses
- The Next Generation Climbing Range is not a standalone pilot project; rather, it is an addition to very successful existing climbing range that for 35 years has been focused on wooden poles and related electrical utility infrastructure.
- The Next Generation Climbing Range, focused on steel grid technology, will enhance the existing UTT program while also preparing trainees for future electrical utility grid work increasingly focused on steel poles and related grid technology, a strategic direction fully embraced by utility sector employers such as Ken Dragiewicz, president of Alpena Power Company.

Public Benefit: "Creation of the Next Generation Climbing Range at Alpena Community College will fill a critical industry need," said Dragiewicz. "The skilled labor shortage with working knowledge of modern designs and equipment capable of withstanding the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events like ice storms, such as steel poles, distributed generation systems, and smart grid devices is a major obstacle to grid modernization. This facility, which will allow pre-apprentice line-workers to gain hands-on training in a controlled environment, is invaluable for developing the practical, job-ready skills required for the field." Dragiewicz continued: "Alpena Power Company is a longtime partner of ACC and is proud to continue to work together developing the workforce needed to meet the challenges of the utility industry." Public Benefit Continued: Alpena Community College's LDSI request provides a public benefit that is an appropriate use of taxpayer money for the following three reasons:

- 1) In the aftermath of the ice storm that devastated Northern Lower Michigan in March 2025, grid repair and grid resilience has increasingly been built with steel infrastructure that supports heavier power lines extending higher beyond the arc of nearby trees. As the ice storm demonstrated, nearby trees encased in ice snap and fall on power lines attached to wooden poles, resulting in sudden life-threatening disruptions of power to tens of thousands of Michiganders. Steel infrastructure mitigates this risk.
- 2) ACC offers a premier climbing program that for the past 35 years has supplied hundreds of high-skilled in-demand lineworkers to utility and transmission companies such as Consumers Energy and ITC, electrical cooperatives such as Cherryland Electric and Cloverland Electric, local privately-owned power companies such as Alpena Power, and municipalities large and small across Michigan. Building out the capacity of a trusted community college with a long track record of delivering hands-on, industry-validated utility sector training is a good investment of taxpayer money.
- 3) Steel infrastructure is increasingly the future of linework in the utility sector. ACC's Next Generation Climbing Range will provide a trained workforce ready to address and advance this growing future need.

- 8. Has the legislatively directed spending item previously received or been awarded any of the following types of funding in the past 5 years? If so, how much? Check all that apply:**

Federal

Amount

\$2,500,000.00

- 9. Estimated time frame for completion of the legislatively directed spending item project:**

12-24 Months

- 10. Is the recipient a nonprofit corporation?**

Yes

Additional Information for Nonprofit Corporations (if applicable)

The answer to questions 1 to 3 must be "Yes" for the nonprofit corporation to qualify for a legislatively directed spending item.

- 1. Has the nonprofit corporation continuously operated in this state for the preceding 36 months?**

Yes

- 2. Has the nonprofit corporation had a physical office in this state for not less than the preceding 12 consecutive months?**

Yes

- 3. Does the organization have a board of directors?**

Yes

- 4. List all of the officers and active members on the board of directors:**

President: Dr. Donald McMaster Board of Trustees: John Briggs (Chairman) Teresa Duncan Joseph Gentry II Lisa Hilberg Susan Stender (Treasurer) Florence Stibitz Thomas Townsend (Vice Chair)

Certification By Sponsoring Legislator

"I certify that my immediate family members, legislative staff members, and I have no direct or indirect pecuniary interest in the requested legislatively directed spending item."

"I certify that the intended recipient of this legislatively directed spending item is not a for-profit entity."

"I certify that the information in this form is true to the best of my knowledge."

Senator Michele Hoyenga