



**Introduction to the  
Manistee Area Chamber of Commerce  
Ambassadors Program**

**2 Year Commitment**

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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 18 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:** Investments play a vital role in strengthening the local economy, creating jobs, and improving the quality of life for residents. In 2024, we saw \$23 million in projects successfully completed. Looking ahead to 2025, an additional \$56 million in new and expanding projects is planned. These investments will fuel job creation, support business growth, and contribute to beautifying and enhancing our community.
- **LEADERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:** The Leadership Program, now in its tenth cohort, plays a key role in developing and supporting future leaders in our community. This milestone offers a chance to reflect on the program's successes and the individuals it has impacted. Recent community projects include the renovation of the First Street Beach Dog Park and the installation of seven life jacket loaner stations at beaches across the county.
- **DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION:** Downtown Manistee is heading in an exciting direction, with a Streetscape plan, new businesses revitalizing our downtown, and a facade grant that leveraged a \$125,000 budget item and \$200,000 in additional funding to beautify and enhance our downtown.

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](http://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**

**1. Outreach & Mentoring:**

- Help new investors understand the Chamber's value by attending programs with them and facilitating networking opportunities
- Encourage new and current investors to participate in Chamber activities.

**2. Volunteerism:**

- Provide at least 3 to 5 hours per month volunteering for Chamber events, programs, and initiatives.
- Attend and assist with ribbon-cutting ceremonies for new businesses.

**3. Investor Retention:**

- Work with Chamber staff to conduct retention visits and calls, including a minimum of three business outreach calls/visits each month.
- Provide ongoing feedback via email to the Chamber on outreach calls & visits on a monthly basis.
- Keep the Chamber posted on business openings, celebrations, and intel from the business community at large.

**4. Event Participation:**

- Actively participate in Chamber programs like ribbon-cuttings, Chamber UnTapped, and other networking opportunities.
- Maintain visibility at community events to strengthen the Chamber's presence in the business community.
- Each Ambassador must volunteer at a minimum of two Chamber programs annually.
- RSVP in advance for all events (accept, tentative, or decline)

**5. Advocacy & Engagement:**

- Promote Chamber investor benefits and business development opportunities.
- Use social media to share posts about events and tag the Chamber in posts during or after Chamber functions.
- Refer new investors to Chamber staff and help strengthen relationships with current investors.

**Overall Ambassador Program Expectations**

- Volunteer (3 - 5) hours per month performing Ambassador related responsibilities.
- Attend the five Ambassador meetings
- Attend the as-needed scheduled Ambassador training/orientation meetings.
- Attend Chamber programs on a regular basis.
- Conduct Ambassador 1x1 meetings.
- Promote the Chamber to investors and future-investors in the business community.
- Accept additional Ambassador assignments as designated by Chamber Staff.
- Stay current on Chamber information by visiting [www.manisteechamber.com](http://www.manisteechamber.com) on a regular basis and reading our Chamber newsletters.
- Ambassadors are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the Chamber and the community.
- Abide by the Ambassadors Attire, Code of Ethics and Investor Interactions policies.

**Ambassadors Program Eligibility**

Ambassadors must be associated with a business that is a Chamber Investor or they themselves are a Chamber Investor. New Ambassadors are added to the program as they are accepted and will be required to meet with a Chamber Staff member for an Ambassador Orientation following their placement.

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 Ambassadors Program will meet five times a year. Each meeting will occur ahead of a Chamber program. Meetings will occur in February (Before the Business Awards Gala), May (Before the Annual Golf Outing), June (Before the Manistee National Forest Festival), November (Before the December Chamber UnTapped: Holiday Edition). The meeting date will be selected based on the availability of Chamber Ambassadors but occurring at least 2 weeks before the scheduled program. The location of the meeting will be held at 400 River Street, unless otherwise noted.

The last meeting will be held in December, this meeting will act as an end of the year recap and review.

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:

- 1<sup>st</sup> complaint – warning
- 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. It is possible however that an industry will be closed based on the number of members from an industry currently serving in the program. 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, Program Specialist | 231.299.5358 | [programs@manisteechamber.com](mailto:programs@manisteechamber.com)

### **Interested in becoming a Chamber Ambassador?**

Visit [www.manisteechamber.com](http://www.manisteechamber.com) and download the program application or contact: Nicole Kaminski, Program Specialist, 231.299.5358