

Letters and Information  
for  
HF 2039 (Sencer-Mura)

# HF2039 SUSTAIN THE MINNESOTA YOUTH PROGRAM



The Minnesota Youth Program serves youth in every part of the state.



Estimated ROI was \$6.80 for SFY24 through taxes paid and other public benefits saved.



Minnesota has only 6 jobseekers for every 10 job openings.

The Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) supports **making the 2024-25 one-time funding increase (\$4.511 million annually) to the Minnesota Youth Program ongoing.**

The Minnesota Youth Program is one of our state's core workforce programs. It serves at-risk, low income youth ages 14-24 *in every part of the state* who need support with academic and applied skills needed for the workplace. *Youth earn a wage* through work experience placements and access career exploration and advising through Outreach-to-Schools programming. Communities and local employers benefit when young people graduate with work readiness skills.

## Increased Investment, Increased Results

The Legislature's one-time increase of funding made a difference. With this funding increase, local workforce boards and service providers were able to scale to serve over 44,500 youth in FY2024. Work experience for youth leads to improved performance in school, engagement in positive activities, and better wages after graduation.

		One on One, Work Experience Programming	Outreach to Schools / Career Advisor Programming	Total
Years with Base Funding (\$4.05m annually)	FY21	2,684	14,880	<b>17,564</b>
	FY22	3,278	19,975	<b>23,253</b>
Years with One-Time Increase in Funding (\$4.05+\$4.511m annually)	FY23	3,766	32,038	<b>35,804</b>
	FY24	4,575	40,374	<b>44,949</b>

\*Data from Minnesota Youth Program Annual Reports



March 31, 2025

**Re: Support for HF2039**

Dear Chair Pinto, Chair Baker, and members of the Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of our collective organizations, we are writing in support of HF2039 (Representative Sencer-Mura). HF2039 would make a crucial investment in Minnesota’s future through the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP), a core workforce program that provides one-on-one intensive support to at-risk young people through paid work experience and in-school career counseling. This investment in youth leads to **better outcomes for our youth and supports local employers by equipping young workers** with the basic skills needed to enter the workforce before they start their first day on the job.

Minnesota Youth Program supports young people who are facing significant barriers and are at-risk with developing hands-on, work readiness skills. Research shows us that this leads young people to increased likelihood of staying engaged in school and positive activities in the short term, future success in the workforce and self-sufficiency, and increased wages in their 20s in the longer term. This upstream investment supports young people in making a strong entrance to the working world and helps provide ready-to-work staff for local employers.

**Implemented at the local level to meet each community’s needs, the Legislature’s investment in the Minnesota Youth Program makes a real impact.** Youth earn wages while building valuable job skills and their professional networks, increasing their opportunities for success. Students who dropped out of high school are able to get back on track by completing their GED and connecting to employment. Paid internship placements result in being hired on as direct employees. Youth are given the chance to

explore high wage, high demand careers in the trades, technology, and more before making decisions about their post-graduation plans. **In 2024, over 4,500 youth were served through work experience programming and over 40,000 more were served through Outreach to Schools.**

This biennium, the Minnesota Youth Program received its first increase above \$4 million in funding since 2003. Over the years, the lack of needed funding for this program meant thousands of youth in our communities missed out on crucial work skills support. However, **the increased investment in 2024-2025 flowed out to your local workforce boards and community partners and we scaled to nearly double the annual combined enrollments of youth in one-on-one support and outreach-to-schools activities. HF2039, as it is to be amended, would make that increased investment and the impact it had on Minnesota's youth from this biennium ongoing.** Minnesota's youth can't wait – our state has only 6 jobseekers for every 10 job openings and employers are in need of job-ready workers. Minnesota needs this investment for our young people, our local employers, and our local economies.

We would like to thank Representative Sencer-Mura for authoring HF2039 and Representative Mueller and Representative Hussein for their co-authorship. This bill would continue to support our youth and our communities' employers through this core workforce development program that is delivered at the local level with excellent results. The impact is statewide and time-tested. We recognize that the state's financial situation requires careful decision-making, and we thank you for your leadership in making those choices. Investing in our youth is one of the best investments we can make – and this program brings real results. **We ask you, Chair Pinto, Chair Baker and committee members, to please support the Minnesota Youth Program and HF2039.**

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Beth Burt, Strategic Advisor, and Savannah Swanson, Policy and Advocacy Director, **YWCA Duluth**

Jared Smith, Executive Director and CEO, **Tree Trust**

Julie Brekke, President and CEO, **Hired**

Danielle Grant, Executive Director, **Achieve Twin Cities**

Amber Sadowski, Executive Director, **Life House**

Karen Blackburn, Executive Director, **Cook County Higher Education**

Dodie Brown, President and CEO, **True North Goodwill – Northern Minnesota and Northwestern Wisconsin**

Zak Radzak, Secretary-Treasurer, **Teamsters Local 346, Duluth, MN**

Jack Carlson, Business Representative, **District Council 82, Painters and Allied Trades Local 106**

Lori Kloos, President, **St. Cloud Technical and Community College**

Dr. Annette Parker, President, **South Central College**

Breton Monroe, Executive Director, **The Brainerd Baxter Youth Center**

Carol Anderson, Executive Director, **Morrison County Community Development**

Stan Paczynski, Business Representative, **Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers, Local Union 1 MN/ND/SD**

Jordan Bremseth, Recruiter, **Finishing Trades Institute Upper Midwest**

Corey Cusick, **AFL-CIO Community Services Director, Head of the Lakes United Way & Duluth Central Labor Body**

Scott Luostari, Business Representative, **Carpenters Local Union #361**

Bruce Remme, Assistant Principal, and Tricia Neubarth, School Counselor, **South Ridge School**

Michael Renford, Building and Grounds Director, **Pequot Lakes Public Schools**

Liz Moscatelli, Executive Director, **Vadnais Heights Economic Development Corporation**

Armin Budimlic, Executive Director, **IMAA**

Jim Root, Affiliate Administrator, **Gundersen St. Elizabeth's Hospital and Clinics**

Lorne Lundeen, **Construction Laborers Local No. 405**

Tammy Bohlke, Director of Workforce Development, **Center for Workforce Professional Education at Minnesota State University – Mankato**

Kim Mueller, CTE Coordinator, **South Central Service Cooperative**

Karen Wolters, Adult Basic Education Coordinator, **Mankato Area Adult Basic Education**

Nancy Sprengeler, Director, **Educational Talent Search**

Trish Boeke, **BENCHS**

**Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards**

Anoka County Workforce Development Board

Career Solutions (Stearns-Benton Counties) Local Workforce Development Board

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services

Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board

Duluth Workforce Development Board

Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board

Minneapolis Workforce Development Board

Northeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board

Northwest Private Industry Council Workforce Development Board

Ramsey County Workforce Development Board

Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program Workforce Development Board

South Central Workforce Council

Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board

Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board

Washington County Workforce Development Board

Winona County Workforce Development Board



March 31, 2025

**Re: Letter of Support for HF2039 and the Minnesota Youth Program**

Dear Chair Pinto, Chair Baker, and Members of the House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of our collective businesses and organizations, we are writing in support of HF2039 (Representative Sencer-Mura). HF2039 would make a crucial investment in Minnesota’s future through the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP), a workforce program that supports at-risk young people in getting ready for the workplace through paid work experience and outreach-to-schools programs.

**As employers, access to a strong, well-trained workforce is crucial to our success.** Recently, there has been a need for increased onboarding and support for entry level workers which has increased costs for businesses. This program is a foundational investment in supporting our communities’ youth and helping employers by decreasing the amount of onboarding needed as we hire young people. By investing in youth now, we will see the benefits in our workforce for years to come.

We thank the Legislature for the increased funding this biennium. Your decision to invest in the Minnesota Youth Program made it possible for local workforce areas to enroll nearly double the annual number of youth in either paid work experience programs or outreach-to-schools programs across the state. HF2039, as it is to be amended, would make the investment from this biennium ongoing at a time

when Minnesota has only 6 jobseekers for every 10 job openings and employers are in need of job-ready workers.

Without HF2039, our community workforce providers will be forced to serve many fewer youth at a time when we continue to need well-trained, ready-to-work employees. We know that the state's financial forecast will require difficult choices for you this year and we thank you for your work. And, we believe that investing in our youth has an excellent return on investment for our state and our business community. **We ask you to please support the Minnesota Youth Program and HF2039.**

Thank you,

Kayla Dietzmann, Director of Administration, **SCS Interiors**

Kim Parmeter, President & CEO, **Hermantown Area Chamber of Commerce**

Matt Baumgartner, President, **Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce**

Shari Marshik, Executive Director, & Riki McManus, Chief Production Officer, **Upper Midwest Film Office**

Jenny Paulsrud, Vice President of HR & Organizational Development, **Preferred Credit, Inc. (PCI)**

Jodi Gertken, Director of State Government Affairs and Community Relations, **CentraCare**

Ali Bilden Camps, Senior Consultant, **Northspan**

Purva Watten, President and CEO, **Little Falls Area Chamber and Tourism**

Melinda J. Fietek, Manager, **Larson Abstract Company**

Sharon Brixius, **Pierz Floral**

James R Whaley, President, **DJ Products**

John Perlich, Vice President of Government Affairs, **St. Paul Area Chamber**

Yao Yaj, Executive Director, **Minnesota Hmong Chamber of Commerce**

Les Engel, CEO/Metallurgical Engineer, **Engel Metallurgical Ltd.**

Les Engel, President, **Central Manufacturer's Association**

Cathy Lamers, CHRO, **Red Wing Shoes**

Lane Powell, New Business Development Manager/Data Protection Officer, **Harmony Enterprises, Inc.**

Craig Ryan, President, **Winegar, Inc.**

Brent Christopherson, Director of Talent Acquisition & Community Partnerships, **Taylor Corporation**

Amanda Anez, Board Chair, **Key City Bike**

Joe Huber, CFO, **The Dork Den, Inc.**