



SUMMIT

ACADEMY OIC

May 16, 2025

Via E-Mail Delivery

Senator Bobby Joe Champion, Chair
Representative Dave Baker, Co-Chair
Representative Dave Pinto, Co-Chair
House Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chairs Champion, Baker, and Pinto,

Thank you for your support of Summit Academy OIC. The state funding we've received has had a meaningful impact—helping low-income adults launch stable careers with good pay, allowing them to support their families and contribute to our communities. In turn, Summit's work positively supports the economy of the entire state.

As you finalize the Workforce, Labor, and Economic Development Finance bill, I want to share more about the work Summit Academy is doing and how state support is critical.

Summit Academy delivers 20-week career trainings at no cost to students in high-demand fields like construction, healthcare, financial services, and information technology. Demand for our programs is high—we already have a waitlist for our electrician training through November.

Here's how we stand out:

- **Accreditation and Licensing:** We're licensed by the U.S. Department of Education and the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and one of over 500 member institutions nationally accredited by the Council on Occupational Education.
- **Credit Transfer Options:** We have credit transfer agreements with colleges like St. Paul College and Hennepin Tech. In fact, Summit awards more construction certifications than any single two-year or technical college in Minnesota (Lightcast, 2025).
- **Strong Union and Employer Partnerships:** Our graduates go on to work for union partners like the IBEW or get hired directly by companies like Mortenson, Kraus-Anderson, Atomic Data, HealthPartners, the University of Minnesota, and Ameriprise.
- **New Programs to Meet Workforce Demands:** We're launching an unlicensed dental assistant program in fall 2025, in partnership with Park Dental, Aspen, and Heartland. We've already raised private funds to build the facilities needed for this training.

- **Accelerated GED Program:** Our 10-week GED program helps adults earn this key credential and move on to college or good jobs—at no cost to the student.
- **Real Results:** On average, our graduates double their income by the time they graduate. Last year, the average annual salary of our students before Summit was \$23,000. After graduating Summit, that average increased to over \$45,000 a year.

With continued state funding, Summit Academy can accomplish our goal to double our enrollment to serve 2,000 students each year. This means we will get more skilled workers into the Minnesota workforce—to both bolster the economy and provide positive opportunities for our community members.

We ask that you keep our impact and future potential in mind as you make final decisions on the budget. Thank you for your leadership and support.

Please feel free to contact me at lwest@saoic.org or 651-206-9297 (mobile) if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Leroy West
President

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Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar
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