

# The Rise Up Center

The Lake Street corridor bears the scars of decades-long economic disinvestment; the pandemic and the uprisings of 2020 re-opened and poured salt in those wounds. Those most impacted by these simultaneous crises are the Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) communities who live and work along Lake Street. This moment calls for a radically new vision for economic revitalization that centers equity and sustainability. We are developing a transformational economic development center rooted in Lake Street's BIPOC communities: **the Rise Up Center**. The Center will be a 70,000-square-foot, geographically accessible, culturally competent, and economically sustainable hub for BIPOC-workforce development in the green building and clean energy fields. As a result of The Rise Up Center and its programs, low-wage BIPOC workers will have dignified, union jobs with good salaries, benefits, and safe working conditions. Most importantly, these workers will have a powerful collective voice and economic clout.

## More than just a building: a cooperative community for and by low-wage workers

<p><b>Co-train</b></p> <p>The Rise Up Center will house workforce development programs for low-wage BIPOC workers seeking stable, middle-class union careers. The Rise Up Center's programs will move workers into apprenticeship programs and address the long standing barriers faced by BIPOC workers and immigrants.</p>	<p><b>Co-op</b></p> <p>The Center will house a first-of-its-kind worker cooperative for immigrants, a workforce that has been subject to wage theft and workplace abuse because of their immigration status. The cooperative will be a union contractor in the construction industry, owned and managed by the immigrant workers themselves.</p>
<p><b>Co-work</b></p> <p>Partner organizations will house their offices in the Rise Up Center, which will have a large meeting hall, offices, classrooms, and flexible space for organizing, education, rallies, and business meetings. The Center will also provide community space for multidisciplinary arts and culture in partnership with local artists and collectives.</p>	<p><b>Co-live</b></p> <p>We envision an on-site child care center to support workers' ability to fully participate in the Center's programs. We also envision on-site affordable, cooperative, multi-family housing to provide high-quality, accessible homes close to jobs in the rapidly-gentrifying Lake Street corridor.</p>

## Partners

The Rise Up Center is an innovative project of **Tending the Soil**, a coalition of Minnesota organizations led by people of color that organize in working-class communities of color. Too often, workforce development efforts provide in-depth training for workers, but cannot guarantee good jobs at the end of the program. The organizations co-creating the Rise Up Center are deeply rooted in low-wage worker communities and trade unions, making it totally unique from other projects. Key partners include:



*Unidos MN is dedicated to immigrant justice, opportunity and respect for workers, especially in the Latinx community.*



*The New Justice Project is a Black-led organizing hub building power for & with low-income & no-income Black Minnesotans.*



*Minnesota Training Partnership advances equity by strengthening the pipeline of underserved populations into stable jobs.*



*UNITE HERE LOCAL 17 is Minnesota's Hospitality Union. Representing 6,000+ hotel, restaurant, and sports complex workers.*



*SEIU Local #26, Minnesota's property services union, represents 8,000+ janitors, security officers, & window cleaners in the Twin Cities.*



*BDC is developing a worker-designed, worker-enforced Code of Conduct for new construction projects in the Twin Cities*

# Tending the Soil Alignment History & Established Work

Tending the Soil was formed in 2018 but the roots have been around much longer, coming out of former constellations of many of the same organizations dating back to 2008. TTS is an alignment rather than a coalition. Policy priorities may not be exactly the same, but the analysis of power and organizing strategy and interconnected memberships are similar enough that the groups have made a longer term commitment to each other.

Though each organization does more, below are examples of the established work of each organization:

- o CTUL: Campaign focused on workers' rights in the construction industry through the Building Dignity and Respect Standards Council (BDC), a monitoring program built on the Worker-driven Social Responsibility (WSR) model. CTUL is also leading a campaign with low-wage workers in Downtown Minneapolis and St. Paul.
- o Inquilinx Unidxs por Justicia: Campaign focused on Progress Residential/Pretium Partners, a corporate landlord in North Minneapolis that owns 80,000 homes across the country. Inquilinx is also working in five buildings in south Minneapolis to form the cooperative Sky Without Limits, a project of community ownership.
- o The New Justice Project: Campaign to pass a municipal ballot measure that would allow the city of Minneapolis to expand public safety. Developing a fellowship program for formerly incarcerated Minnesotans to gain job skills and political education. Expand democracy through restoring the vote.
- o SEIU Local 26: Campaign focused on unionization of janitors and security guards downtown as COVID restrictions are lifted and creation of alternative public safety systems.
- o Unidos MN EF/Navigate: Campaign focused on Excel Energy and utility corporations to push for more BIPOC, immigrant/refugee workers into the green energy sector.

## Rise Up Center Workforce Development Programs

### Green Training Pre-apprenticeship Program

**Partners:** Unidos MN; New Justice Project

**Overview:** This is a new program in development which will provide a critical on-ramp for BIPOC and immigrant workers to the skilled construction trades. The pre-apprenticeship program will include hands-on, classroom training by accredited experts in their respective construction trades. Students will also receive a stipend as well as a set of tools that will carry them through to their jobs, union membership, and beyond. This program is in pilot phase through partnerships with existing pre-apprenticeship programs.

### Community Safety Specialists (CSS) Apprenticeship

**Partners:** Northside Residents Redevelopment Council (NRRC); SEIU Local 26; NEXT Global Security; Anoka Technical College; Minnesota Justice Research Council

**Overview:** The CSS program reimagines public safety by training and paying community members to deescalate crime and promote peace throughout the Northside of Minneapolis. Community Safety Specialists are directly recruited from the neighborhoods they serve and are paid a living wage with health care benefits under a union contract. Through a new state certified apprenticeship program, CSS apprentices receive 300 hours of classroom instruction as well as 2,000 hours of on-the-job mentorship. The CSS program launched in November 2021.

### High-rise Window Cleaners Apprenticeship

**Partners:** SEIU Local 26; Minnesota Training Partnership

**Overview:** High-rise window cleaners face dangerous working conditions, but are not considered a skilled trade. After a ten-day strike in 2021, high-rise window cleaners who are members of SEIU Local #26 won funding to start the first ever state-registered window cleaner apprenticeship safety program in Minnesota, as well as increased wages, sick days and disability pay. Launched in 2022, the Apprenticeship program is designed by cleaners themselves, and so far has 40 workers enrolled in its inaugural cohort.