



February 27, 2023

Dear Public Safety Committee Members

Elpis Enterprises is a not-for-profit organization in Saint Paul providing paid work experiences within a supportive environment specifically designed for young people between 16 and 23 years of age with lived experiences that places them at risk for homelessness or unstable housing. Lived experiences include being a young parent, justice system involvement or foster care involvement, as well as family poverty. Agencies from Ramsey and Hennepin counties refer young people to us.

At the heart of our program and other youth intervention programs is supporting young people in developing soft skills and these soft skills center on social-emotional learning and making sound choices. We are seeing a larger number of young people entering our program without positive connections with others in the community-this includes having adult mentors and also accessing programs promoting emotional well-being. Without these support systems and opportunities that provide healthy connections to the broader community, young people face few pathways to choose and too often the result is poor choices that destroy their individual futures and also negatively impact the safety and well-being of the broader community.

Youth intervention programs like Elpis that use best practices work! At Elpis, 80% of trainees completing our program achieve post-Elpis employment and/or continue their education, as well as upon leaving our program graduates report having more adults they can talk to as well as being supported in their goals and having confidence. *But it requires adequate financial resources to use best practices. With additional youth intervention program funding, organizations like Elpis can open doors and provide opportunities for more young people to become contributing members of the community. I urge you to vote for providing more youth intervention funding during this budget session.*

Sincerely,

Paul Ramsour
Executive Director

Demonstrating to youth that they can accomplish great things. ✿ Elpis means hope.