

February 29, 2024

Representative Mary Frances Clardy
529 State Office Building
100 Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Clardy,

At Ramsey County Workforce Solutions, we support all efforts that address accessibility and affordability related to obtaining a driver's license. Efforts that make obtaining a driver's license more accessible and affordable contribute to a more inclusive and equitable society. HF 3360 is a great step to this effort, and we are writing to offer support to your bill today.

The shifting economy and the need for more workers in a post pandemic economy requires young adults to have their driver's licenses. The disparities between which young adults obtain licenses follow predictable racial and economic lines. Driver's licenses are necessary to provide reliable transportation to jobs, to work a more flexible work schedule and increase earnings. Without the means to get a driver's license, employment and professional opportunities are limited.

Prior to the pandemic, only 15 percent of teens received driver's education at school, compared to 95 percent in the 1970s. It was difficult for opportunity youth (youth involved in foster care, the justice system, experiencing homelessness or pregnant/parenting) to attain pre-pandemic, but with the shifting world of work it is even more imperative to obtain the driver's license as a needed employment credential.

Obtaining a driver's license broadens the range of available jobs opportunities and enhances employability. A driver's license is a very common requirement for jobs that can lift people out of poverty- these are construction, manufacturing, healthcare, automotive, union jobs including electricians, plumbers etc. While a driver's license is not the sole determinant of economic mobility, it plays a significant role in breaking down barriers that can hinder individuals from accessing opportunities and improving their economic circumstances.

The [Ramsey County Driver's License Academy](#) (DLA) supports Ramsey County residents ages 18-24 who are enrolled in a credentialed or certificate career pathways, job training or industry exploration programs. Young adults receive individualized support to obtain a driver's license. Having a driver's license not only widens the spectrum of available jobs opportunities but also elevates employability. Numerous participants of the DLA have expressed gratitude for this support and have shared the opportunities that have come since getting their license.

Please reach out if you need further information about the Ramsey County Driver's License Academy.

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