



SUMMIT

ACADEMY OIC

TO: Senator Bobby Joe Champion, Chair, Jobs & Economic Development
Senator Jen McEwen, Chair, Labor & Industry
Senator Zaynab Mohamed
Senator Grant Hauschild
Senator Heather Gustafson

Representative Hodan Hassan, Chair, Economic Development
Representative Jay Xiong, Chair, Workforce Development Finance & Policy
Representative Mike Nelson, Chair, Labor & Industry
Representative Kaela Berg
Representative Liz Olson, Chair, Ways & Means

FROM: Leroy West, President, Summit Academy OIC

DATE: May 1, 2023

RE: Summit Academy Legislative Funding Request for FY24-25

Thank you for your work and consideration of Summit Academy OIC's funding request to the Minnesota Legislature. We are grateful for your support in our work to equip low-income Minnesotans with the training and in-demand skills needed to secure living wage jobs that lead to career advancement and economic prosperity.

For our legislative funding request for this session, Summit Academy is planning an expansion of our work in the Twin Cities and in St. Cloud and Bemidji. **We are requesting at least \$3 million in FY24-25 to continue and expand our work in the Twin Cities, St. Cloud and Bemidji.**

Summit Academy OIC is an accredited training organization delivering accelerated, in-demand trainings in Healthcare, Construction, and Information Technology at no out-of-pocket costs to the student. Training close to 1,000 low-income students annually, Summit Academy OIC is recognized as an outcome-based, results-driven organization leading with economic impact. It awards more short-term certificates in the construction sector than any other post-secondary institute in the State of Minnesota (*RealTime Talent*).

Summit Academy OIC creates pathways into the middle class. The overwhelming majority of students who enroll in Summit's GED and/or vocational training programs are at 200% below Federal Poverty Guidelines. Within a span of 20-weeks, the average annual starting wage was \$40,160.00 in 2022. Summit achieves a nearly 100% placement rate in in-field occupations.

Summit is leading the way in workforce innovation. Beyond core education and training offerings, the organization is building the (STEM) talent pipeline, equipping young adults with micro credentials and internships to accelerate their career journey post-graduation. The economic value of stackable credentials and career acceleration cannot be underscored and is a key solution in maximizing (early) workforce engagement supporting economic vitality in the region.

The funding request to the legislature will support the organization's economic impact by:

- Growing Summit Academy's enrollment from 1,000 to 2,000 students.
- Expanding our impact in developing the STEM youth and young adult talent pipeline leading to occupational training, careers and higher education.
- Expanding Summit Academy's geographic reach driving impact in the Twin Cities, St. Cloud and Bemidji.
- Continuing the organization's GED & Adult Basic Education program, many of whom move on to Summit's career track programming after successfully earning their GED.

The expansion of Summit Academy will be made possible by leveraging private fundraising, financial partnerships with employers and a financial commitment with the State of Minnesota through a direct appropriation made by the Minnesota Legislature. With the \$3 million in funding from the legislature, we will leverage private sector funding to make Summit Academy's expansion a reality.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached at 651-206-9297 or lwest@saoic.org

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