



**Greater Twin Cities
United Way**
gtcuw.org

May 2, 2023

Dear members of the Omnibus Jobs and Labor Conference Committee,

Greater Twin Cities United Way writes in support of the inclusion of an appropriation to Career Academies in the Workforce, Economic Development, and Labor Omnibus bill.

At Greater Twin Cities United Way, our mission is to develop solutions to address the challenges no one community or group can solve alone. Together with our partners, we touched over 500,000 lives across the nine-county metro area last year. As an organization that partners with over 100 nonprofits and coalitions across the Twin Cities region and state, we know that a holistic approach to Household Stability, Educational Success and Economic Opportunity is key to providing the foundation for individuals and families from low-wealth households to move toward prosperity.

Since its launch in 2015, Career Academies has supported 20 school districts along with their community and employer partners to redesign educational opportunities in line with high-wage, high-demand career fields, such as education, healthcare, manufacturing, engineering, and IT. These career pathways include access to college credit in the high school sequence, career and technical education and paid work experiences. **Career Academies intentionally invests in communities of color, low-income communities, and Greater Minnesota to combat inequity and ensure all students in Minnesota have pathways to wealth-building and purpose-driven careers.**

This appropriation will contribute to funding for the next phase of Career Academies so that **every region in MN has robust career pathways and a united employment and school system**, by ensuring that:

- All MN school districts have access to the **knowledge, tools and relationships** needed to strengthen career pathways in their region.
- K-12 and post-secondary systems are aligned toward increased access and utilization of **free college credits toward zero college debt**.
- Employers are offering **supportive work experiences** for youth.

We would like to sincerely thank you for your consideration of this program and the impacts that can be made,

Susan Carter
Director, Advocacy & External Engagement
Greater Twin Cities United Way

Tina Rucci
Advocacy Manager
Greater Twin Cities United Way