



MINNESOTA ASSOCIATION
OF WORKFORCE BOARDS

March 30, 2023

Chair Xiong
557 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Xiong and Members of the House Workforce Committee:

On behalf of the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB), which represents Minnesota's 16 local workforce development boards, I am writing in support of several provisions in HF2233, the Workforce Development Omnibus bill. As the committee has highlighted this session, the pandemic has only exacerbated existing workforce challenges in the state, including a dire worker shortage and racial disparities. This is a pivotal time for the legislature to address these issues through meaningful investment in workforce funding and we thank you for your thoughtful omnibus bill.

Local workforce development boards partner closely with DEED to serve jobseekers and employers throughout the state. We support several provisions in HF2233 that we believe would benefit the entire workforce system, including:

- **Added funding for the Minnesota Youth Program (MYP):** MYP funds workforce programming for low-income and at-risk youth all over the state, operated by local workforce development boards. This is the one state-funded workforce program that serves youth in all 87 counties and has excellent performance outcomes. Added funding will help local boards meet the demand and need we are seeing from youth in local communities.
- **Targeted Populations Workforce Program:** Local workforce development boards lead several strategies to address disparities working with both jobseekers and employers. We welcome the opportunity to expand this programming with potential funding through the Targeted Populations Workforce Program.
- **Drive for 5:** We support investment in career pathway style programming focusing on Minnesota's in-demand sectors. We appreciate the intention of the program to establish innovative approaches to training, reskilling, or building pipelines of workers for those industries.
- **Workforce modernization to improve the workforce development digital system.** The COVID-19 pandemic truly highlighted the need to have accessible, modern, and easy to use technology to ensure services and communication are available to all. MAWB looks forward to working with DEED on further developing these ideas to ensure it meets the needs of jobseekers, employers, and workforce system staff around the state.
- **Office of New Americans:** Local workforce development boards work with new Americans throughout the state and support the need for coordinated activities and resources which assist this population, helping to ensure a smooth transition for families and active participation in the workforce.

We appreciate the committee's leadership on these topics and the much-needed investment in Minnesota's workforce system. We also encourage all programming to be flexible enough to meet the needs of local communities and economies.

Sincerely,

Jeanna Fortney, Director