

**Letters for
Jobs Conference Committee
SF 5289**



May 5, 2024

Dear Senator Champion, Representative Hassan and members of the conference committee,

As you move into the conference committee to confer about the final jobs bill, we want to thank both the Senate and House for including Bolder Options in their omnibus bills. We are grateful to our authors and co-authors, to the committee chairs, and to the members of both committees for welcoming our testimony and considering our request. We are especially appreciative of the tremendous learning and leadership opportunity this provided for our young testifiers.

Mentoring is a research-based strategy proven to make a difference in young people's lives through improved educational outcomes, expanded social emotional skills, and stronger relationships. Our new alumni programming that introduces career exploration in early adolescence is necessary - and interest is surging. After a full year of 1:1 mentorship, our young people want to keep setting and achieving goals that will lead them to bolder options for their futures. This funding will help us quickly respond to the demand from our young participants for this programming, also allowing us to host cohorts in both the Twin Cities and in Rochester.

Bolder Options is fortunate to have been included in both the House and Senate bills. In the end, we respectfully urge the conference committee to adopt the Senate language with \$250,000 allocated for Bolder Options (vs. \$200,000 in the House bill). This is half of our original request of \$500,000 but would still be transformational for our organization and our youth.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Darrell Thompson
President & CEO

Dear Chair Champion, Chair Hassan, and Members of the Jobs Conference Committee:

The Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL) writes to encourage members of the conference committee to adopt the House position that includes \$500,000 to CAAL to support Asian women entrepreneurs.

Asian women entrepreneurs are living and working across Minnesota. As one of the fastest growing demographics of business owners, Asian women run grocery stores, bakeries, and organic food distribution programs. They own home healthcare businesses, laundromats, and beauty salons. Their businesses and services are meeting a wide variety of community needs and are a backbone for many local economies. Unfortunately, specific barriers stand in the way of the ability of Asian women entrepreneurs to develop and grow these businesses. These include language barriers, a lack of relationships with banking institutions, a lack of familiarity with government programs supporting businesses, and discrimination and negative stereotypes.

Targeted investment in Asian women entrepreneurs, through a trusted community network, is needed to overcome these barriers and will benefit the state as a whole. The **House Jobs omnibus legislation provides a one-time appropriation of \$500,000 through CAAL**, a trusted nonprofit organization with a strong community network and proven track record of supporting Asian Minnesotan women entrepreneurs and business owners. This appropriation will provide business owners with technical assistance to navigate assistance programs and build relationships with financial institutions. It will also offer direct financial support and support the development of a peer network of Asian women entrepreneurs.

When we equip Asian women entrepreneurs with the tools to turn their ideas into businesses, we begin building intergenerational wealth for the Asian Minnesotan community. We create pathways out of low-wage work for Asian American families, and our children have better educational and career outcomes because of it. We boost the economic stability of the Asian Minnesotan community – and Minnesota overall.

Thank you to both Chairs for your support of this appropriation during the legislative process this year, and to Senator Hawj and Representative Vang for authoring the original legislation.

Please support Asian women entrepreneurs across Minnesota by supporting the House position in the final conference committee report.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

ThaoMee Xiong
Executive and Network Director
Coalition of Asian American Leaders



DEDICATED TO A STRONG GREATER MINNESOTA

May 9, 2024

Re: PFA Language in the Omnibus Jobs Bill

Dear Senator Champion, Representative Hassan, and members of the Omnibus Jobs Conference Committee,

On behalf of the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC), I am writing to express our support for one provision in the Senate version of this bill and urge its adoption. Specifically, we urge the adoption of language increasing the grant limits for two of the Public Facilities Authority (PFA) programs, which can be found in Article 8 of the Senate Policy Article, at pages R 99 – R101, lines 23.25 – 25.21. The Governor included this change in his bonding proposal as well.

The PFA helps fund water, sewer, wastewater, and related projects in Minnesota. Almost every city or responsible government unit works with PFA to help underwrite a portion or all of the funding for their projects. Much of the funding available to cities is in the form of low-interest loans, but there are two types of grants that may be available to local governments that qualify. Water Infrastructure Fund (WIF) grants are awarded to cities to pay for wastewater and drinking water projects based on an affordability formula that looks at the impacts construction will have on water rates. The Point Source Implementation Grant (PSIG) program helps local governments pay for construction projects that are required to meet pollution reduction mandates placed on their wastewater and related facilities. The requirements that make a project eligible for a PSIG grant, such as an effluent limit on phosphorus, are important for the health of Minnesota's waters, but they are still a state mandate that increases the cost of a project.

The cap on the upper limit of these grants has not changed since 2017 and currently sits at \$5 million for WIF and \$7 million for PSIG. The Senate language would increase the cap to \$10 million for WIF and \$12 million for PSIG, better reflecting the actual cost of projects. Changing these caps would help the financial health of our cities and their residents, protect the environment, and promote construction jobs.

We urge you to adopt this Senate language from pages R99 – R101 of the Senate policy section. Thank you for allowing us to comment on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Wefel
Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities

The Honorable Hodan Hassan
Chair, House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
597 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Bobby Joe Champion
Chair, Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee
Minnesota State Senate
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Room 3401, Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

May 8, 2024

Chair Hassan, President Champion & Members of the Omnibus Jobs, Economic Development, Supplemental Appropriations Conference Committee:

I write to you today in support of a \$1,000,000 million dollar appropriation included in House File 5205, the House Omnibus Jobs & Economic Development Omnibus bill, that benefits the Entrepreneur Fund.

This appropriation will be used for loan capital to continue to grow the Entrepreneur Fund's lending capacity. These dollars will be used to lend to small businesses. The Entrepreneur Fund will use this grant to leverage \$12,000,000 in new capital for lending to small businesses.

The Entrepreneur Fund's business lending has grown at a remarkable pace and, with tightening credit in banking this year, will continue to grow. On an annual basis, the Entrepreneur Fund issues 300-600 loans, totaling between \$23-\$27 million dollars, and provides no cost services to 1,600-2,200 entrepreneurs in north and central Minnesota.

Efund provides access to capital where it is difficult to find – *business* types that include restaurants, retail, start-ups, turnarounds, and high growth; or *borrowers* with limited net worth, limited down payment, newer to an industry, and lower credit scores. In short, Efund extends capital where it is difficult to find but real opportunity exists. All Efund borrowers receive access to Efund consulting services, at no cost, to drive successful outcomes. This unique combination of services and capital results in high start-up survival rates, a well performing portfolio, and revenue growth that exceeds their regional peers despite being "unbankable".

Because of the consulting and lending services received by the Efund we were able to expand our small business and add the Boomtown locations. Without their assistance we never would have been able to grow and succeed to the level we have today. We now have 4 successful restaurant locations plus a catering division including our own banquet hall. More conventional lenders didn't want to fund us due to the high failure rate of restaurants so are forever grateful for this partnership.

Thank you again for including funding for the Entrepreneur Fund in the House bill. We respectfully request that the conference committee agree to this provision for this important funding.

Respectfully,

Jessica Lietz

Jessica Lietz
Owner
Boomtown Group Restaurants



DEPT.two
Salon, Boutique, & Events
621 1st Ave
Two Harbors, Minnesota 55616

The Honorable Hodan Hassan
Chair, House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
597 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

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I began my relationship with the Entrepreneur Fund 6 years ago when i decided to take a chance on starting my own business in downtown Two Harbors. With their business resources I was able to purchase my first property, which is home to my hair salon, boutique & event space. I am now just about to open a second location in Two Harbors, expanding my brand and

mission to reach more customers. Without this resource it would be nearly impossible to be where I am today.

Thank you again for including funding for the Entrepreneur Fund in the House bill. We respectfully request that the conference committee agree to this provision for this important funding.

Respectfully,

Chrissy Scandin

Chrissy Scandin
DEPT.two & LAGOM by DEPT.two
Owner/CEO
621 1st Ave
Two Harbors, MN



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Chair, House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
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The Entrepreneur Fund has been instrumental in the success of the Fredenberg Minno-ette, providing us with a crucial loan that allowed us to purchase the inventory from the previous owners. Our community relies on the Minno-ette for essentials like groceries, bait, sporting goods, automotive and marine supplies, and fuel. We always hear "The Minno-ette has EVERYTHING".

The funding from the Entrepreneur Fund enabled us to continue serving our community's needs effectively. Additionally, their support and guidance in areas where we lacked experience, such as retail management, inventory control, and sales projections, have been invaluable. With their assistance, we've been able to navigate the transition smoothly and ensure the continued success of our business.

Thank you again for including funding for the Entrepreneur Fund in the House bill. We respectfully request that the conference committee agree to this provision for this important funding.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Briana & Jason Manning". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Briana and Jason Manning, Owners
Fredenberg Minno-ette, Inc
5109 Fish Lake Road
Duluth, MN 55803
218.721.4800



319 7th Street
Proctor, MN 55810

Phone: 218.481.7306
Fax: 218.481.7309

Reliable • Respectful • Rock Solid

The Honorable Hodan Hassan
Chair, House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
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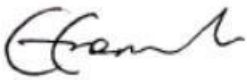
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Efund has been instrumental in the success of our small business, at Lifestone Health Care Inc. During our start-up phase when traditional banking avenues were limited, Efund stepped in with not only financial support but also invaluable technical assistance, ensuring our continued growth and prosperity. Over the years, Efund has consistently provided us with helpful tools and resources to support our small business.

Thank you again for including funding for the Entrepreneur Fund in the House bill. We respectfully request that the conference committee agree to this provision for this important funding.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chiamaka Enemuoh". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Dr. Chiamaka Enemuoh
President, Licensed Assisted Living Director
Lifestone Health Care, Inc
319 7th Street, Proctor MN 55810



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Chair, House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
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Our family of companies is comprised of several different operating entities across multiple market sectors. The team at Entrepreneur Fund has given us the opportunity to continue to grow our business and create successful opportunities for our family to continue offering safe and reliable employment growth in this region. Each one of our companies has been able to rely on the Entrepreneur Fund for funding and financing opportunities, which may have proven more challenging with traditional bank financing. We are proud and thankful for our partnership with Efund, and hope there is continued opportunity for growth as we continue to expand our portfolio.

Thank you again for including funding for the Entrepreneur Fund in the House bill. We respectfully request that the conference committee agree to this provision for this important funding.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicholas E. Minardi".

Nicholas Minardi
Vice President

Minardi Lumber and Millwork, Brents Heating and Cooling, Minardi Outdoors, Minardi Properties,
Hansen Refrigeration Machinery
3707 Lavaque Rd
Hermantown, MN 55811



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Chair, House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
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Thank you again for including funding for the Entrepreneur Fund in the House bill. We respectfully request that the conference committee agree to this provision for this important funding.

Respectfully,

Shawn Wellnitz

Shawn Wellnitz
President/CEO

CC: Senator Grant Hauschild
Senator Jennifer McEwen
Senator Robert Farnsworth
Representative Dave Lislegard
Representative Liz Olson
Representative Liish Kozlowski
Representative Spencer Igo
Representative Roger Skraba
Representative Natalie Zeleznkar

equa#space

May 8, 2024

Dear Sen. Champion, Rep. Hassan, and members of the Conference Committee:

Thank you for hearing our bill in the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee during this legislative session. I am writing on behalf of EquaSpace in reference to SF 5289 and to urge you to adopt the House language on the bill.

EquaSpace exists to provide space and infrastructure support, including education and training related to running an effective and efficient nonprofit. Nonprofit jobs comprise 13% of the workforce in MN, and, just like any other field, require training to ensure they continue to be abreast of any shifts and legal requirements that apply to the sector.

In addition, by becoming a tenant of EquaSpace, there is a cost savings of around \$15,000 annually per organization (as cited by the Nonprofit Centers Network, 2019). As a result of the budgetary relief, EquaSpace tenants can re-allocate financial resources towards mission work, and often can add new employees, a significant point of interest of this committee.

EquaSpace is slated to open in September 2024, with a growing number of nonprofits that are attracted to becoming tenants. With the current design of the space, we can house 20+ organizations with over 250 employees. Many of these nonprofits are slated to add new positions to their teams.

EquaSpace is a compliment to Propel Nonprofits in that we help organizations implement the advice and technical assistance that they provide. As Henry Jiménez, CEO and President of Propel Nonprofits, shares, "By offering nonprofit leaders and staff a chance to stay flexible and efficient, and to work near other motivated leaders who also serve their communities providing services and resources to those who need it most, EquaSpace would enhance the nonprofit ecosystem."

We appreciate your support and urge you to adopt the House position.

With gratitude,



Sarah Clyne, Executive Director
EquaSpace



May 8, 2024

Dear Sen. Champion, Rep. Hassan, and members of the Conference Committee on SF 5289:

Entrusted Committee members, I am writing to ask you to please consider including Hired's job retention services provision in the final bill, which reads:

\$280,000 is for a grant to Hired to create services for low-income Minnesotans designed to increase job retention by offering a continuum of employment coaching, navigation, and support services to economically disadvantaged employees leading to a more stable workforce for employers.

Thank you for hearing testimony and considering this concept that helping people to **navigate barriers to keep a job** increases job retention rates as a critical step after someone has invested so much to upskill and get a job.

And, thank you for your support of **Hired's direct appropriation (DA) last year** for a completely different purpose: **expanding career pathway trainings** at Hired. I'm delighted to let you know that those funds are being well utilized and training more people! Our DA contract was signed in October and in the first six months of the contract, 69 people completed training and 25 people have started a new job! **We're right on track with 30% of job placement goal met while being a quarter through the contract.** Thanks to your support last year, we're doing the important work of getting people ready for family-sustaining wages and careers that will help them build wealth.

I know that approaching the legislature for additional support this year is raising questions. And please know, that in our 56+ years of connecting people with family-stabilizing services and employment, we know that **employment equity doesn't stop at getting that good job.** After people have worked hard to upskill and prepare for a job, most often our contracts and grants end, which means that our services and the trusting relationships we've established with people stop. Our current funding supports only superficial monthly connections, for a brief time, even though the people we have been working with are experiencing a very fragile transition into employment.

Hired's bill this session addresses this critical need and persistent gap. It is all about **helping people navigate a strong start in their jobs.** Today, many of the people we work with face historic, systemic, and situational barriers and inequities to not just finding, but also *sustaining*, employment. We have found they need **on-site and mobile services including coaching** to prepare for a benefits cliff as they become eligible for employment benefits and ineligible for other benefits they may have been relying upon for housing, childcare, healthcare, or food. They also need **support connecting to or navigating needed community resources, and support services to address unexpected emergencies or reemerging barriers that could end employment**...very often transportation, childcare and food barriers.

The majority of people we serve are people of color, have low and very-low incomes, and face critical disparities in employment, education, health outcomes, and more. Hired is part of the solution in closing persistent employment disparity gaps in the State, and in addressing inequities that are connected with income and employment disparities.

As Jamin Cook testified—the second shift supervisor at Medtronic—**people definitively need help navigating the workplace and life barriers to keep their jobs.** That pilot project with Medtronic was great, and **demonstrated the difference that intensive job retention can make.**

I do ask that you please accept the House position and include Hired's bill. This direct appropriation will help workers in high growth sectors keep their jobs, advance in a company, and build stability and wealth for their families, all while stabilizing workers for employers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julie Brekke".

Julie Brekke
Executive Director

Empowered people & families. A prepared workforce. An inclusive economy.

217 Fifth Avenue North - Third Floor, Minneapolis, MN 55401 · TEL 612-808-9500 · FAX 612-338-1375 · www.hired.org



To: Senator Champion, Representative Hassan and Members of the Conference Committee on SF 5289

Date: May 7, 2024

Dear Senator Champion, Representative Hassan and Conference Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the International Institute of Minnesota to ask that you adopt into SF 5289 the House language in which our workforce programming is included.

The Institute is a leader in New American workforce development and our work addresses Minnesota's labor scarcity through comprehensive job training, and career advancement. Our Business Career Pathway develops and expands the professional skills of our immigrant workforce, for which there is a strong demand. As a result, graduates of these programs achieve their goal of joining the state's work while employers gain access to a pool of motivated, skilled employees with a 92% one-year retention rate.

Adopting the House language into SF 5289 will allow our work to reach a greater number of New Americans seeking jobs and career advancement in our community. Thank you for your time and we look forward to continuing our partnership in creating a more inclusive and prosperous future for all Minnesotans.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Graupman', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Jane Graupman, Executive Director
International Institute of Minnesota
jgraupman@iimn.org | 612-770-5198

CC: Kirsten Christopherson, Christopherson Advocates
Andy Eilers, Christopherson Advocates

REPOWERED

Fair chances for people, planet, and technology.

Chair Champion, Chair Hassan, and members of the Conference Committee on SF5289,

I am writing to strongly encourage this Committee to adopt the House language as it relates to the Jobs Foundation in the final language of SF5289.

As CEO of Jobs Foundation, I can attest that inclusion of Jobs Foundation dba Repowered on this bill is critical and serves an immediate need for a population with significant barriers to employment. Jobs Foundation has a proven track record of increasing employability of previously incarcerated individuals while reducing recidivism. This helps our communities who need more motivated employees. In 2023:

- 82% complete the first 90 days of the program and 100% are housing stable
- 70% of our graduates have jobs secured when they graduate

The state benefits because Jobs Foundation helps break the cycle of poverty and recidivism and replace it with productive, talented, tax paying citizens who dream of a better future. One of our graduates made the Dean's list at college after he was able to stabilize his life during our program. Another graduate bought her first house, providing a home for her family. And one of our testifiers so moved by his experience is considering applying for a support position in the legislature. Jobs Foundation enabled all of these individuals to create a better future for themselves, their families, and their communities.

When we bring someone into our work readiness program, we are making a commitment to pay wages, benefits, and support services for up to 18 months. Participants work while also working on necessary life skills and needs. Historically, Jobs Foundation has self-funded our work readiness program through our electronic refurbishing. We are not requesting these funds lightly – we are asking because of an immediate need.

Thank you for being here on this committee at this time. Your leadership and commitment to funding critical initiatives making Minnesotans more employable are to be applauded.

Let me finish with one big thought: what would the world be like if we're not known for the biggest mistake we've ever made but instead known for the biggest gift/biggest strength we have? At Jobs Foundation, we help people rediscover their gifts. Please adopt the House language for S.F.5289.

Sincerely,



Heather Walch, CEO

hwalch@getrepowered.org

651-238-3927



May 10, 2024

Re: LMC Comments on Jobs and Economic Development Supplemental Omnibus Bill

Dear Chairs Champion and Hassan and members of the Jobs and Economic Development Supplemental Omnibus Bill Conference Committee:

The League of Minnesota Cities, representing 838 of Minnesota's 855 cities, appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on the language being considered by the conference committee. One part of the bills, in particular, is very important for cities and their ability to provide water and wastewater services to their residents and businesses.

The League strongly supports the language found in the Senate language on R99-101, lines 23.24-25.21 of the side-by-side. These are changes needed by the Public Facility Authority to increase grant maximums to reflect increasing infrastructure costs and new pollution control requirements. Without these changes, the state cannot provide resources up to the range needed to complete city projects to provide safe, affordable, reliable water and wastewater services that protect public health, the environment, and economic development needs. We ask that the conference committee adopt that language.

Thank you for providing the opportunity for this input. We look forward to working with the Chairs and the committee as this bill progresses.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig A. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Craig A. Johnson
Sr. Intergovernmental Relations Representative
League of Minnesota Cities



05/13/24

RE: BioTech Innovation District

Members of the Senate File 5289 Conference Committee,

Medical Alley represents a global network of more than 800 leading health technology and care companies including representation from all corners of the state of Minnesota. Our mission is to activate and amplify healthcare transformation.

Recognized worldwide as a leader in healthcare innovation, Minnesota sets a standard for excellence – impacting local communities and influencing global health outcomes and advancements. With access, affordability, and quality as top priorities, Medical Alley and our partners are committed to developing solutions which drive meaningful change and save lives.

It is with these guiding principles that we extend our support for the BioTech Innovation District proposal under Article 2 Section 17 of the House-passed version of [Senate File 5289](#).

Equitable Job Creation

Brooklyn Park is home to nearly 90,000 residents — 60% of which identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and where one in four people speaks a language other than English at home. The city is Minnesota’s sixth largest and one of the most diverse. Yet, Brooklyn Park faces disparities related to health, income, and public safety outcomes.

The establishment of a BioTech Innovation District would create as many as 10,000 quality and sustainable jobs to the benefit of residents of the city and those surrounding it. With a focus on inclusivity, the district would empower the region’s diverse talents and perspectives, ensuring that development in biotechnology and healthcare directly contributes to improving the quality of life. This investment would also enable local programs like the BrookLynk Workforce Development Initiative to synergize with these advancements, amplifying its impact by connecting youth and underserved populations with education, training, and employment opportunities in the burgeoning biotech sector.

Innovation

Progress in the biotechnology industry has the potential to improve lives in ways we've only begun to imagine. From revolutionizing healthcare through personalized medicine and cutting-edge treatments to addressing global challenges such as food security, environmental sustainability, and disease prevention — biotechnology stands at the forefront of innovation.

The biotechnology market is anticipated to grow significantly, driven by increasing demand for diagnostics, therapies for major diseases, and biopharmaceutical research. The global biotechnology market, valued at \$1.38 trillion in 2023, is expected to reach \$4.25 trillion by 2033.

Brooklyn Park and Minnesota have a unique opportunity to leverage these advancements to position this region as a leader in this transformative industry. A mixed-used district would incentivize innovative companies to come to Minnesota, fostering a vibrant ecosystem where entrepreneurship and research thrive.

Economic Development

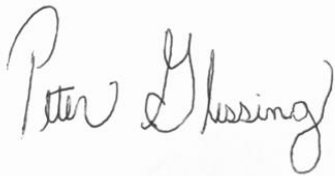
Brooklyn Park has been successful in attracting some of Medical Alley's leading health technology and care companies. International companies such as Medtronic, Steris, Olympus Surgical and more have all established a presence near the Highway 610 corridor. Still, there is significant room to grow within the city's borders.

With more than 700 developable acres of land, Brooklyn Park has the capacity to support medical and pharmaceutical manufacturing and other biotech industry companies into a vibrant mixed-use development district. Adjustments to Tax Increment Financing in three target geographic areas would catalyze private investment in housing and commercial areas. The BioTech Innovation District would support an estimated 3,000 additional housing units.

Medical Alley is home to one of the most diverse and influential healthcare ecosystems in the world. This initiative represents a strategic investment in the region's future. By establishing a BioTech Innovation District in Brooklyn Park, we set a standard for cities across Minnesota by demonstrating a proactive approach to harnessing the power of innovation for economic development and public health improvement. We believe this project will make the northwest metro a national and international destination for biotech manufacturing for Minnesota – attracting and growing new businesses, cultivating next-generation Minnesota workforce talent, incentivizing innovation, and reducing disparities throughout the region.

We are grateful to Chair Hassan and Chair Xiong for incorporating this provision into the House omnibus bill. Medical Alley respectfully urges members of the Senate File 5289 Conference Committee to adopt Article 2 Section 17 of the House-passed version of Senate File 5289.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Glessing". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Peter Glessing

Senior Director of Policy & Advocacy

Medical Alley

The MN Family Resiliency Partnership

Formerly Known as the MN Displaced Homemaker Program

Dear Sen. Champion, Rep. Hassan, and Members of the Conference Committee on SF 5289—

We are asking that you support the House position in the Omnibus Jobs, Economic Development, Supplemental Appropriations bill which appropriates \$250,000 to the statewide Minnesota Family Resiliency Partnership.

The Minnesota Family Resiliency Partnership has provided excellent outcomes and has always had strong bipartisan support since its inception in 1979 and we are grateful that that support continues today. As the only pre-employment program providing family stabilization through trauma-informed care, our services are unique and unduplicated. We are often the first step for people looking to enter or re-enter the workforce due to abandonment, divorce, death or disability of a spouse or partner.

We are facing a constant demand for services and a decrease in funding which currently comes from a portion of marriage license and divorce filing fees.

Last year, this one-of-a-kind self-sufficiency program achieved a 97% success rate, meaning participants are employed, continuing their education, or have achieved the goals they set at in-take!

Each of the 6 providers that make up the program covers a service area of seven to eleven resource-limited, rural counties, covering hundreds of miles, with only one or two staff. Participants we are serving often don't have reliable transportation or gas money to reach us, sometimes they don't even have a driver's license. We must go to them. Often, our program is "the only game in town". Increased funding would increase our capacity to provide these unique services.

Additional funding would also allow for direct support dollars for participants to eliminate barriers to their training or job search needs that are not covered by other service providers such as minor car repairs, gas cards, a month's car insurance or even help with driver's training. We could provide appropriate shoes, uniforms, or even childcare funds until they get that first paycheck.

We respectfully request that you support the House position in the omnibus bill. Thank you for all that you do for your constituency and our participants!

Respectfully,

Jean M. Keenan

Jean Keenan OBO the Minnesota Family Resiliency Partnership



May 12, 2024

Sen. Champion, Rep. Hassan, and members of the Conference Committee on SF 5289:

I am writing to you today to encourage the Conference Committee to adopt the House language that Propel Nonprofits is currently included in.

Propel, in this bill, proposes to be a community partner to support these nonprofits and their projects across the finish line, to ensure that the State's investments are protected and strengthened. Minnesota nonprofits received appropriations from the State in 2023 to support 68 transformational community facilities projects. We want all of them to be successfully completed, knowing what positive impact that will have on the in-need community members these organizations serve.

As you know, often community facility projects face funding gaps, and run into challenges as they reach completion—construction, logistics, unforeseen operational expenses, and gaps in understanding from not having undergone large-scale projects before—which is where Propel's financial expertise and nonprofit savvy come in. As a partner to these projects, Propel would provide capital and technical support throughout the duration of the projects, ensuring complete impactful community development projects, with expert assistance tailored to their needs.

A bit about Propel Nonprofits: In addition to providing critical access to capital to expand programs or services, bridge cash flow gaps, and purchase or renovate buildings, Propel provides wraparound capacity building supports to nonprofits. With expertise in nonprofit finance, strategy, and governance, Propel is a trusted partner to provide guidance and support for nonprofits as they navigate their financial and operational challenges and opportunities. Propel, as ever, remains committed to accountability for responsibly stewarding state dollars, and to nonprofit organizations using sound fiscal management practices.

Having a patient, flexible project partner with capital and technical expertise is critical to the success of these projects. Also, let me make clear that the work Propel proposes in this bill is entirely different work benefiting entirely different organizations than what was appropriated to us last session. Last session's appropriation was for a program helping small community rooted nonprofits learn how to accept and administer state funds and build their internal capabilities; this year's bill would fund work supporting larger organizations undertaking community facilities projects. Your support of this bill will leverage and ensure the State's investments and have great impact on the many communities these nonprofits serve.

In closing, we ask that the conference committee adopt the House language in which we are currently included.

Sincerely,



Henry Jiménez
President & CEO, Propel Nonprofits



May 9, 2024

TO: Chair Bobby Joe Champion
Senator Heather Gustafson
Senator Zaynab Mohamed

Chair Hodan Hassan
Chair Jay Xiong
Representative Natalie Zeleznikar

We write you today as Chair of the Ramsey County Board and the Locally Elected Official representing the Workforce Board of Ramsey County with support for several provisions under consideration in your conference committee on [HF 5205/SF 5289](#). Both omnibus bills contain a number of good policy and funding provisions that will advance economic development and will increase investment in residents in our community to support holistic workforce development supports. The requests we have target low income, diverse communities and those experiencing the highest barriers to economic opportunity and employment.

**HF 5205, Article 3 Workforce Development Appropriations, Section 3 DEED Appropriations
(Starting Page 52, line 29)**

(21) \$100,000 is for a grant to Ramsey County for a subgrant with Milestone Community Development to provide competitive grants for culturally specific East African-led youth workforce development programs.

**HF 5205, Article Workforce Development Appropriations, Section 3 DEED Appropriations
(Starting Page 58, line 27)**

(41) \$150,000 is for a grant to Ramsey County for a Justice Impact Navigator to support Ramsey County residents who have a justice impact or who are reentering the community after incarceration to connect to resources with a focus on employment and training supports. Funds will be used for a navigator pilot and other administrative expenses such as outreach, marketing, and resources for residents; and

(42) \$150,000 is for a grant to Ramsey County for a Digital Equity Specialist to support Ramsey County residents with digital literacy resources and skills to connect to employment and training supports. Funds must be used for a digital navigator pilot serving in Ramsey County Career Labs and community-based locations and other administrative expenses, such as outreach, marketing, and resources for residents.

Lastly, there is a clarifying policy change on census tract language we need included in your conference committee report in order to actually distribute the appropriation we received in your 2023 bill. The clarifying language in the amendment that is in HF 5205 works, and we appreciate the adoption.

**HF 5205, Article 4 Workforce Development section 8
(Page 86, line 26)**

(ccc) \$500,000 each year is for a grant to Ramsey County for a technology training pathway program focused on intergenerational community tech work for residents who are at least 18 years old and no more than 24 years old and who live in a census tract that has a poverty rate of at least 20 percent as reported in the most recently completed decennial census published by the United States Bureau of the Census whose household income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. Grant money may be used for program administration, training, training stipends, wages, and support services. This is a onetime appropriation.

Congratulations on getting this far and we wish you good luck in the remaining days of session. We ask you include the above provisions in your conference committee report. If you have questions regarding our positions, please be in touch with us or our director of government relations, Jennifer O'Rourke at 651.724.3461.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Trista Martinson".

Commissioner Trista Martinson
Chair of the Ramsey County Board

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rena Moran".

Commissioner Rena Moran
Member of the Ramsey Workforce Board

SF 5111 and HF 5063

Equitable Development Action EDA, our mission is to foster equity and economic inclusion through capacity development as a bedrock for building generational wealth in underserved communities. The House appropriated \$180,000 to Equitable Development Action. We are asking the Senate to fund this bill to help us deliver programs and provide technical assistance to underserved business owners as follows:

1. **Entrepreneurial Support in BIPOC communities in Twin Cities:** We will use the grant to help entrepreneurs and small business owners in underserved areas to start and grow their businesses. This includes help with business planning, marketing, navigating regulatory environments and others.
2. **Economic Growth and Diversification:** This appropriation supports investing in underserved businesses in black and brown communities in Minneapolis, St Paul, and surrounding suburbs bubbling with people of color which stimulates economic growth by enabling these enterprises to expand and thrive in the communities that have historically been overlooked and underfunded.
3. **Economic Inclusion:** The grant helps in fostering economic inclusion by reducing barriers to entry for business owners and workers from marginalized backgrounds. This not only helps in individual career progression but also helps in creating a more diverse and inclusive economic landscape.
4. **Reduction in Economic Disparities:** This grants targets assistance towards underserved businesses to address economic inequalities and help ensure a more balanced economic development in Minnesota. This is particularly important in communities where systemic barriers have historically limited business opportunities for disadvantaged groups.
5. **Community Development and Stability:** Supporting businesses in underserved areas often leads to improved community services, better and enhanced quality of life for residents. These improvements will make neighborhoods more attractive to both new businesses and residents, promoting long-term stability and growth.
6. **Awareness and Community Engagement:** This will help us to create awareness and community engagement in the underserved communities to take advantage of last year's appropriations for economic inclusion in BIPOC communities in Minnesota.

Thank you so much.



The Honorable Hodan Hassan
Chair, House Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
597 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

The Honorable Bobby Joe Champion
Chair, Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee
Minnesota State Senate
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Room 3401, Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

May 8, 2024

Chair Hassan, President Champion & Members of the Omnibus Jobs, Economic Development, Supplemental Appropriations Conference Committee:

I write to you today in support of a \$1,000,000 million dollar appropriation included in House File 5205, the House Omnibus Jobs & Economic Development Omnibus bill, that benefits the Entrepreneur Fund.

This appropriation will be used for loan capital to continue to grow the Entrepreneur Fund's lending capacity. These dollars will be used to lend to small businesses. The Entrepreneur Fund will use this grant to leverage \$12,000,000 in new capital for lending to small businesses.

The Entrepreneur Fund's business lending has grown at a remarkable pace and, with tightening credit in banking this year, will continue to grow. On an annual basis, the Entrepreneur Fund issues 300-600 loans, totaling between \$23-\$27 million dollars, and provides no cost services to 1,600-2,200 entrepreneurs in north and central Minnesota.

Efund provides access to capital where it is difficult to find – *business* types that include restaurants, retail, start-ups, turnarounds, and high growth; or *borrowers* with limited net worth, limited down payment, newer to an industry, and lower credit scores. In short, Efund extends capital where it is difficult to find but real opportunity exists. All Efund borrowers receive access to Efund consulting services, at no cost, to drive successful outcomes. This unique combination of services and capital results in high start-up survival rates, a well performing portfolio, and revenue growth that exceeds their regional peers despite being "unbankable".

We started working with Entrepreneur Fund back in 2018, and with their help we were able to secure several SBA Microloans as well as a USDA loan. This funding was essential to help us grow our 3 businesses, Spokengear Cyclery, Cedar Coffee Company, and Cedaero. Our 3 businesses (retail, food service and manufacturing) now employ over 30 people in our small town of Two Harbors.

In addition to help with finance, we also participated in several educational programs put on by Entrepreneur fund and provided free of charge to us.

During COVID Times we worked with Entrepreneur Fund to secure several grants as well as defer payments on our SBA Loans. Again this help was essential for us to actually grow our business in this uncertain time.

Thank you again for including funding for the Entrepreneur Fund in the House bill. We respectfully request that the conference committee agree to this provision for this important funding.

Respectfully,

Daniel R. Cruikshank

Daniel R Cruikshank
President, Spokengear, Inc

1130 11th Street
Two Harbors, MN 55616
218-830-1512



165 Western Avenue
Suite 8, Office 100
St. Paul, MN 55102
WomenVenture.org
612.224.9540

May 13, 2024

Conference Committee on Omnibus Jobs, Economic Development, Labor, and Industry Appropriations

Senator Champion, Senator Mohamed, Senator Gustafson, Representative Hassan, Representative Xiong, Representative Zeleznikar,

Thank you for your efforts to invest in the economic vibrancy of Minnesota. This biennium the House and Senate have made child care a priority and we look forward to a continued partnership to address the ongoing child care crisis in Minnesota.

WomenVenture deeply appreciates the inclusion of \$1.0 million in the House Omnibus Jobs, Economic Development, Labor, and Industry bill to support Minnesota's small family child care providers through capital grants and business support.

In 2023, the legislature invested \$1 million in capital grants and business development through WomenVenture to help Minnesota's vital child care providers run sustainable businesses, enhance facilities, and reduce burnout.

Between January (applications opened) and March, WomenVenture deployed grant and loan funding for 28 child care businesses totaling nearly \$400,000, which expended all planned dollars for calendar year 2024. Among other uses, funds were used to tear down a wall to expand enrollment and boost revenue by \$30,000, to add a sport court to attract older kids, and to renovate space to accommodate 24/7 care to support shift-work.

The need is real. We have a wait list for those seeking funding support when we reopen applications for calendar year 2025. And the need is statewide. WomenVenture's 2023 funds support child care providers throughout Minnesota, from the Twin Cities, Detroit Lakes, Waconia, Mayer, Shafer, and Litchfield.

Supporting these small businesses through small capital grants and loans, along with business support is necessary to preserve Minnesota's existing child care capacity and to hopefully create additional capacity as well.

A thriving, equitable and economically growing state requires the full participation of its workforce. And that participation requires accessible, quality child care. Sincerely,



LeeAnn Rasachak
Chief Executive Officer
WomenVenture

WomenVenture is a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) designated Women's Business Center, one of three in the state of Minnesota. We are also a Community Development Financial Institution. WomenVenture's services are business training, access to affordable capital through loans and grants, technical assistance, and business consulting. In our fiscal year 2022, WomenVenture deployed nearly \$2M in loan funds and \$250,000 in grants, and 10,000 hours of training and consulting, serving more than 2500 small business owners and entrepreneurs. During the pandemic, we deployed more than \$10 million in COVID relief funding in partnership with Minnesota DEED and Hennepin County in addition to thousands of hours in training and consulting that stretched across the state of Minnesota and neighboring counties in Wisconsin.

