



May 2, 2023

The Honorable Bobby Joe Champion
President of the Senate
Minnesota Senate Building, Room 3401

The Honorable Hodan Hassan
Chair, Economic Development Finance and Policy Committee
State Office Building, Room 597

The Honorable Jay Xiong
Chair, Workforce Development Finance and Policy Committee
State Office Building, Room 557

Chair Champion, Chair Hassan, Chair Xiong, and Members of the Conference Committee,

I'm writing on behalf of the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA) to support the inclusion of funding for the Getting to Work Grant Program in the Jobs and Labor Omnibus bill. AEOA is a private, 501(c)3 nonprofit Community Action Agency with over 58 years as a major provider of self-sufficiency services to low-income and disadvantaged persons throughout Northeastern and Central Minnesota including Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, Chisago, Cook, Crow Wing, Isanti, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, and St. Louis. The mission of AEOA is to strengthen communities by providing opportunities for people experiencing social and economic challenges through our five service departments including Housing, Head Start, Senior and Nutrition Services, Employment and Training, and Transit. AEOA especially aims to serve historically marginalized, high-barrier populations, such as people experiencing homelessness, people of color, Veterans, women, young parents, previously incarcerated individuals, LGBTQA+, and people with a physical and/or mental disability.

We support funding for the Getting to Work Grant Program because transportation barriers affect many of our clients. In less than 2 months, AEOA received over 35 calls asking for assistance with car repairs. The AEOA Foundation Fund, which provides funding of last resort receives multiple requests for car repairs because this need cannot be met through existing services.

AEOA received a Getting to Work grant in the past and opened a social enterprise car repair shop that offered a reduced rate to income-qualified customers and operated as a "normal" shop to general community members where we were able to provide 190 vehicle repairs. We support fully funding the Getting to Work program so that organizations across the state can meet the transportation needs of their community.

Sincerely,

Emily Bombich
AEOA Director of Planning

702 Third Ave South, Virginia, Minnesota 55792-2797
(218) 749-2912 · (800) 662-5711 · FAX: (218)749-2944

Equal Opportunity Employer and Affirmative Action Agency