



Monday, March 13, 2023

Dear Chair McEwen and Members of the Senate Labor Committee,

I am writing on behalf of Workforce Development, Inc. to express our support of the Department of Labor and Industry's (DLI) request to increase funding for the Labor Education Advancement Program (LEAP) Grants.

Workforce Development, Inc. has been a recipient of LEAP funds for the last several years which has helped us facilitate the participation and retention of women, people of color and Indigenous people into registered apprenticeship programs and employment in careers that pay a family-sustaining wage.

While DLI's LEAP grant has been an important supplemental funding source to reach more participants and add more support services for people entering registered apprenticeships, the current funding covers only a portion of the budget necessary to implement a comprehensive program. With larger grants, we could serve more individuals, stand up additional training opportunities (currently they access existing training opportunities vs. creating new ones for this population), and we would be able to provide additional supports to help individuals through and to successful employment. Additional supports needed include things such as childcare, transportation, and emergency expenses.

Registered apprenticeship is a time-tested employment-based training model providing workers the opportunity to earn as they learn a valuable career and achieve a nationally recognized credential. However, registered apprenticeships can be intimidating for people who have few connections to apprenticeship. As Minnesota's workforce becomes more diverse, we need to invest in programs that support women, people of color, and Indigenous people succeed in registered apprenticeship programs.

Thank you for your past support of the LEAP program and for your consideration of this proposal to meaningfully increase the impact of these funds.

Sincerely,

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