

February 4th, 2025

Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Chamber Support for Senate File 365, Bridges to Healthcare Appropriation

Chair Champion and Members of the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee,

The Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce expresses our strong support for Senate File 365, which appropriates funding for the Bridges to Healthcare program.

Each year, the Chamber engages with our members to develop our legislative agenda that reflects the needs of the business community in the Rochester region. A key 2025 legislative priority shared by our members has been the support of efforts that promote the creation and renewal of workforce programs and initiatives that promote career pathways, encourage industry partnerships with education, and increase awareness of high-demand job opportunities.

Workforce shortages remain a significant challenge, particularly in the healthcare sector, which plays a vital role in Rochester's economy. The Bridges to Healthcare program directly addresses these shortages by building a sustainable talent pipeline while helping individuals secure stable, well-paying careers in healthcare.

Since its inception in 2013, Bridges to Healthcare has provided individuals from diverse backgrounds with the training and credentials needed to enter the healthcare workforce. Currently, the program serves over 300 students, with 45% identifying as immigrants or refugees and 76% living at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Senate File 365 would appropriate \$750,000 in both FY 2026 and FY 2027 to fund career education, wraparound support services, and job skills training for low-income parents, non-native English speakers, and other individuals seeking careers in high-demand healthcare fields. This investment not only strengthens Minnesota's healthcare workforce but also empowers families to achieve economic stability.

The Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce urges your support for Senate File 365 to ensure continued funding for Bridges to Healthcare. This program is essential to addressing workforce shortages while providing life-changing opportunities for individuals and families across our region.

Respectfully,



Ryan Parsons, President
Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce