



MINNESOTA GROCERS ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION

April 7, 2025

Chair Champion and members of the Senate Jobs Committee,

The Minnesota Grocers Association Foundation would like to thank you for including the funding for the Carts to Careers Program (SF1276 - Pha: Draheim, Gustafson, Nelson) in SF1832 (Champion), the Senate Jobs and Economic Development omnibus bill.

Minnesota has a unique culture of hundreds of grocers and convenience stores, many of whom are independent, multi-generational, and locally owned. From farm to fork, our industry provides 1 out of every 20 jobs in this great state. These are not just jobs, but offer opportunities for successful lifetime careers, with competitive pay and a wide range of benefits to meet the needs of our very diverse workforce. The support of this committee will allow the Carts to Careers program the opportunity to grow talent from within our industry and highlight the life-long careers that are available to workers and necessary for healthy and viable communities.

This funding will allow Carts to Careers to continue the successful work of our Retail Management Certificate Program, which started in 2019 in conjunction with Alexandria Technical & Community College and is approaching nearly 100 successful graduates. In addition, we are excited about the opportunity to grow our meat-cutting program in partnership with Ridgewater Community College, as well as our transportation and driving program that will allow warehouse workers in the industry to advance their career by training to become an in-demand transportation professional.

With continued funding, we are also planning on expanding Carts to Careers to support the recruitment and training of two essential worker groups: individuals with disabilities and those re-entering the workforce after incarceration. Grocery stores offer flexible hours and a variety of tasks, making them an ideal environment for individuals with disabilities, fostering a positive, inclusive workplace culture. Additionally, food producers have found success in hiring formerly incarcerated workers, addressing workforce shortages while providing returning individuals with stability and purpose as they reintegrate into society.

A strong workforce is crucial to maintaining viable grocery stores and a robust supply chain, and we are proud to offer rewarding career paths across our industry, from farm to fork. Thank you again for your support of the Carts to Careers program

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steve Barthel".

Steve Barthel
Director of Government Relations
Minnesota Grocers Association