



Minnesota Workforce Council Association 2009 State Legislative Platform

It is the mission of the Minnesota Workforce Council Association to provide Minnesota with a skilled and competitive workforce through engaged and proactive local elected officials, workforce investment boards, and staff.

Priority Funding Issues

Emergency Jobs / Stimulus Legislation

MWCA believes any job stimulus plan should: take effect quickly; target unemployed workers; anticipate and address future workforce needs; promote regional competitiveness; and be fiscally responsible. Many unemployed workers would benefit from increased access to short-term opportunities allowing them to utilize or improve their current skills while searching for a permanent job.

- MWCA supports the implementation of an Emergency Jobs program, providing a wage subsidy to employers who make available opportunities to unemployed workers by creating a new job which pays a competitive wage and incorporates a plan to upgrade the worker's current skills.

Workforce and Employment

- MWCA advocates for the restoration of general funds for the Minnesota Youth Program. MWCA is requesting an appropriation of \$10 million annually to provide work experience and academic enrichment activities to economically disadvantaged and at-risk youth state wide.
- MWCA encourages directing Job Skills Partnership Board, Workforce Development Funds, and direct appropriations to local workforce councils, enabling them to partner with local businesses and economic developers to provide on-the-job training, short-term specific job training and soft skills training for MFIP recipients, job seekers, and incumbent workers.
- MWCA recommends the creation of appropriations which can be used to provide employment and career guidance services to the general population.
- MWCA supports allocations which would promote partnerships between adult basic education and employment and training providers at the local level.
- MWCA supports funding to conduct a state wide labor force study.

Minnesota Family Investment Program

- MWCA recommends, in an effort to help Counties meet new Federal participation requirements, providing funding to employment service providers:
 - for transportation, tools and clothing expenses for welfare recipients who are participating in required work activities;
 - to continue to implement work experience, supported work, and volunteer work activities
 - to successfully meet the intention of the new Family Stabilization Services program, which is designed to provide more extensive service to families who are not making progress in MFIP due to significant barriers to employment.
- MWCA recommends including education as an allowable activity under MFIP.

Policy Issues

Workforce and Employment

- MWCA recommends strengthening the governance and oversight responsibilities of the private sector-led local workforce councils and the role of local elected officials as envisioned in the Workforce Investment Act, allowing them to:
 - Make decisions on how best to spend funding and achieve requirements within broad guidelines established by state and federal agencies.
 - Determine Workforce Service Area boundaries and select physical site locations of WorkForce Centers.
 - Create a local workforce service area plan that is not a program compliance document, but a comprehensive strategy to maximize resources and eliminate duplication of services.
 - Use their authority to set the direction for workforce development in Minnesota and to convene and engage partners from economic development and education in these efforts.
- MWCA supports providing UI benefits to those who are participating in entrepreneurship programs or training programs approved by local workforce councils

Minnesota Family Investment Program

- MWCA recommends modification of community work experience personal injury coverage to minimize County/provider and worksite liability. We encourage the State to take out policies to provide workers compensation insurance coverage for those participating in community work experience programs.

Other Issues of Association Interest

- MWCA advocates for workforce development efforts that help prepare and integrate immigrants, aging workers, ex-offenders, the homeless, and people with disabilities into the workforce.
- MWCA supports collaborative efforts to address affordable health insurance coverage for laid off and underemployed workers.
- MWCA is supportive of restoring funding for childcare programs that help to encourage families to remain productively employed and that prevent families from returning to MFIP.
- MWCA recommends increasing funding to enhance the local capacity to train individuals to become nurses, health care workers and other high demand occupations identified in local areas.
- MWCA supports amending the Food Support Employment and Training (FSET) program to provide sufficient funding to implement the program state-wide and to maximize federal match opportunities.
- MWCA supports efforts to fully invest in Minnesota's critical pre-K, K-12 and Post-Secondary education programs to prepare youth for competitive employment and life-long learning. A special effort should be made to support education in the STEM areas.
- MWCA is supportive of efforts to fully invest in transportation infrastructures to allow for increased access and mobility for Minnesota's workforce.
- MWCA supports initiatives that assist in supporting, retaining and expanding Minnesota's business community.
- MWCA is supportive of initiatives which ensure working low- and moderate- income people have access to stable and affordable housing, particularly near areas of employment growth. The State should consider policies to reduce the number of workers who are losing homes through mortgage foreclosure.