



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

March 28, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of our team at YMCA of the North and all the youth we serve, I am writing to express our deep gratitude for the resources the Legislature has devoted to high quality programs to help youth explore and have access to positive first employment experiences and career exploration. We strongly support HF 2233.

The YMCA is committed to supporting critical youth employment initiatives. Our Career Pathways program is holistic, helping youth develop power soft skills, workforce readiness, on-the-job experiences, and a professional network. Our program puts youth on a path towards a long-term career that fits their needs and interests, as well as employers' needs for a diverse workforce. We provide 1:1 coaching—our staff serve as the primary coaches who assist youth with navigating challenges and problem-solving—as well as larger group opportunities, and we offer paid internships for older youth and stipends for younger youth.

Our Career Pathways experience delivers a general introduction to the expectations of the workplace and prepares youth with foundational employment and career readiness skills to launch them on long-term career paths. This is critical as we experience significant shifts in the workforce, with large populations entering retirement and unemployment extremely low. It is critical that we engage our young people in the workforce both so that they are deeply integrated within our communities and personally successful, and so that our larger economy continues to flourish.

We are grateful for the Legislature's support of workforce development experiences that provide young people with the opportunity to learn critical skills, hard and soft, for employment success; have positive first employment experiences; and explore careers that may interest them. We are committed to ensuring all youth in our state can thrive, and this bill advances Minnesota towards this goal. Thank you for investing in Minnesota's future workforce.

If you have any questions at all about our work at the YMCA, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,

Glen Gunderson
President
YMCA of the North