

WORKFORCE STRATEGY CONSULTANTS

WORKFORCE WEDNESDAY

Providing Workforce Solutions for MN Employers



We Will Begin Shortly

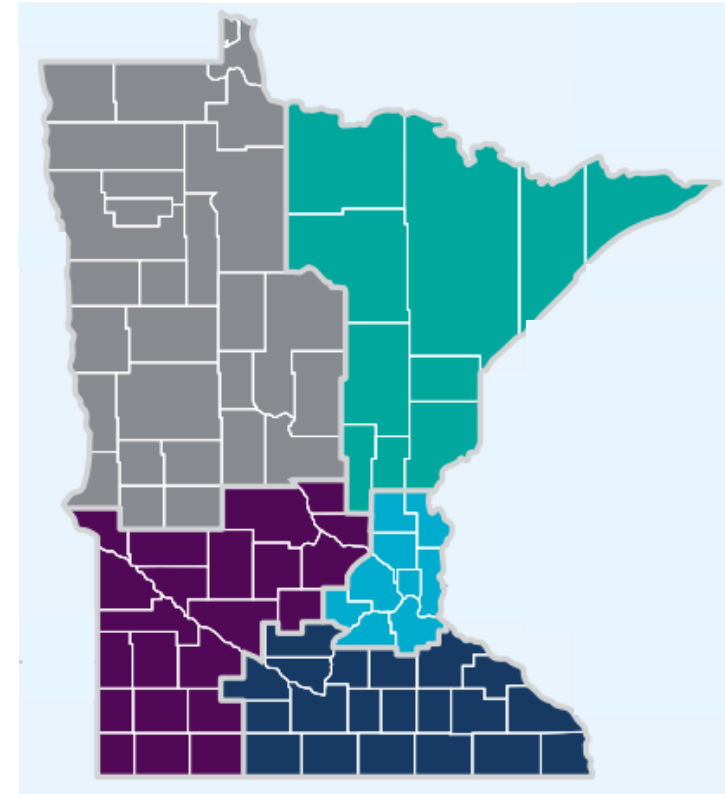
Workforce Strategy Consultants

Assist employers in increasing the number of applicants and new hires

Offer employer tools to assist them in reviewing and enhancing their current training programs

Enhance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) within their workplace

Develop programs that help employers be recognized as an employer of choice in their industry



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<https://careerforce.mn.gov/WorkforceWednesday>

<https://mn.gov/deed/business/help/workforce-assistance/wf-strategy.jsp>

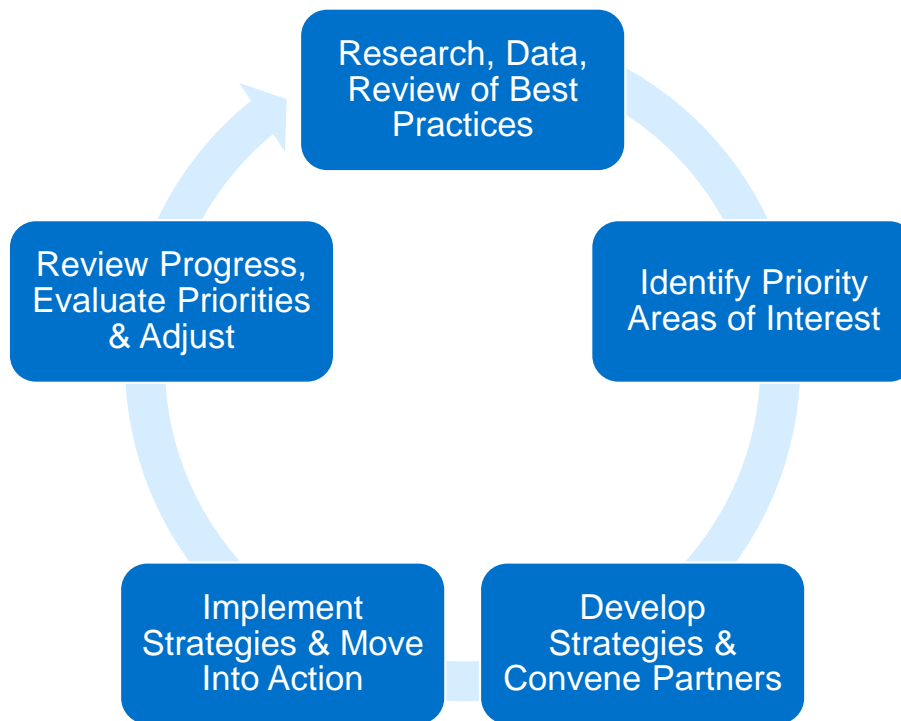
mn EMPLOYMENT AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Leading
CareerForce

careerforce.mn.gov

What We Do

MISSION: Develop innovative workforce solutions by aligning resources, facilitating collaboration, and leveraging expertise in targeted industry sectors to drive economic equity and growth





WORKFORCE WEDNESDAY

Workforce Strategy Consultants share what works with Minnesota employers

2025 Workforce Wednesday Schedule

- **January 8:** DEED's Business Development Team: The Key to Business Expansion and Growth
- **February 5:** Employee Resource Groups
- **March 5:** Strategies for Developing a Fair Chance Workforce
- **April 2:** Powering Workforce Success: Leveraging Industry Sector Partnerships
- **May 7:** It Takes a Village: Resident Recruitment & Community Impacts on Workforce
- **June 4:** Workforce Consultation Strategies
- **July 9:** Introduction to AI for Employers: What It Is, How It Works, and Why It Matters
- **August 6:** Unlocking Workforce Insights: Navigating Labor Market Information for Employers
- **September 3:** Engaging the Unhoused Workforce
- **October 1:** Enhance Employee Skills with Incumbent Worker, On-the-Job Training, and Other Grant Funded Training Opportunities
- **November 5:** The Minnesota Indigenous Workforce Initiative and the Economy of Minnesota's Indian Country
- **December 3:** 2025 Year in Review Highlights

WORKFORCE STRATEGY CONSULTANTS

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Engaging the Unhoused Workforce

September 3rd, 2025

Agenda

- Who is the unhoused?
- Engaging the unhoused job seeker: why it matters.
- Removing barriers: what employers can do.
- Checklist: are you hiring inclusively?
- Taking the first step
- Panel Discussion



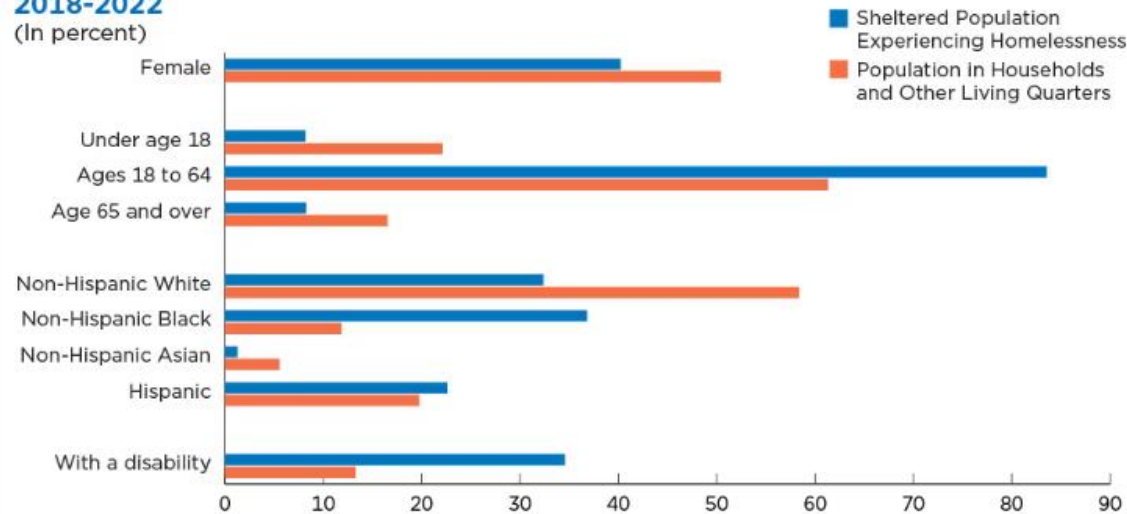
Who is the Unhoused?

- Veterans
- Young adults aging out of foster care
- Individuals with college degrees
- Skilled tradespeople
- People with tech or service industry experience
- Individuals fleeing domestic violence
- Those recently released from incarceration



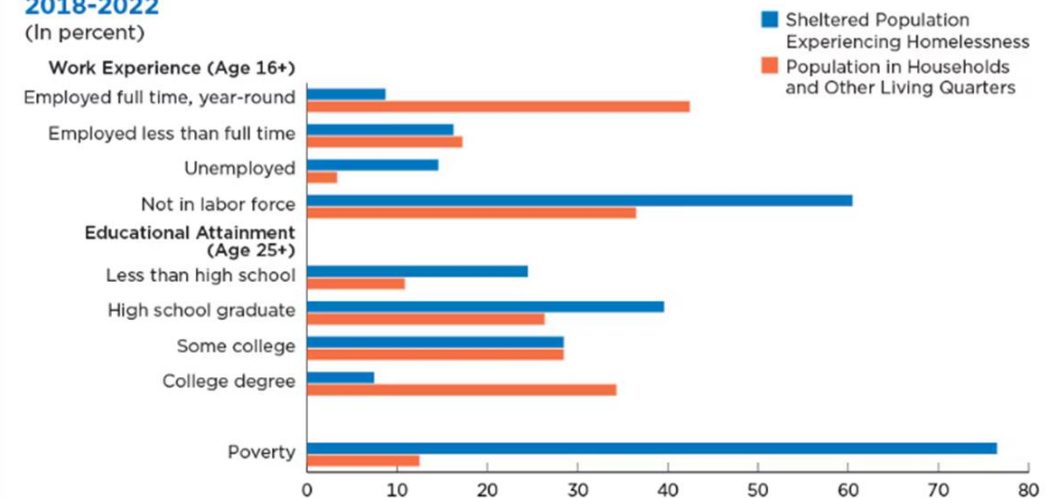
Profile of the Unhoused

Figure 1.
Demographic Characteristics of the Sheltered Population Experiencing Homelessness and the Population in Households and Other Living Quarters: 2018-2022
(In percent)



Note: All comparisons between the sheltered population experiencing homelessness and the population in households and other living quarters by demographic group are different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Figure 2.
Labor Market Characteristics of the Sheltered Population Experiencing Homelessness and the Population in Households and Other Living Quarters: 2018-2022
(In percent)



Note: All comparisons between the sheltered population experiencing homelessness and the population in households and other living quarters by labor market characteristic are different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level, except for the some college category. Poverty universe excludes unrelated individuals under age 15. All people under age 15 and living in group quarters are considered unrelated individuals.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Engaging with the Unhoused: Why it Matters



Benefits for the company

- Access to a resilient and loyal talent pool.
- Enhanced innovation and problem-solving.
- Improved company culture and employee morale.
- Strengthened brand reputation and community ties.
- Potential tax benefits and cost savings.

Benefits for unhoused job seekers and the community

- Pathways to stability.
- Holistic support and personal development.
- Breaking the cycle of poverty and stigma.

Removing Barriers – What Employers Can Do

Barrier	What Employers Can Do
No permanent address or ID	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accept shelter addresses or local service provider contact info• Allow digital or phone-based communication in place of mailed forms.
Limited internet/tech access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow in-person applications• Communicate via multiple channels (text, email, calls) and be flexible with response times.
Transportation Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider hybrid/remote work or provide bus passes, gas stipends• Partner with organizations to provide vanpool rides.• If hiring for multiple sites, choose locations easily accessible by public transportation or flexible scheduling for longer commutes.
Gaps in work history	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on skills, not chronology: used skills-based interviews• Reconsider strict background check policies for nonviolent or old offenses.
Stigma from coworkers or managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide trauma-informed and stigma reduction training.• Train HR and hiring managers to avoid bias and assumptions about unhoused candidates.• Build a workplace culture that values inclusion and second chances.
Lack of skills or experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer on-the-job training or apprenticeships.• Create entry-level roles that include mentorship or upskilling paths.
Lack of support systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partners with local CareerForce or workforce development partners and/or case managers/• Designate an internal advocate (example - HR contact) for navigating challenges.

Inclusive Hiring of the Unhoused

Organizational Readiness



Job Design & Flexibility



Application Process



Recruitment & Outreach



Interview Process



Onboarding & Support



Ongoing Support & Retention



Evaluation & Feedback



First Steps



- Identify and connect with a local agency that aligns with your hiring goals.
- Design low-barrier jobs.
- Audit your job postings and interview/hiring process for any exclusionary requirements.
- Build a referral pipeline via trusted community organizations.
- Offer support and stability
- Train internal teams on inclusive practices and trauma-informed management

PANEL DISCUSSION

Panel



Adesewa Adesiji
Metro Area Workforce
Strategy Consultant /
Panel Moderator



Deanna Monroe
Leech Lake
Housing Authority



Katie Brown
Leech Lake
Housing Authority



Derrek Christensen
Wildflyer Coffee



Denise Goldman
Project for Pride in Living



Tosheed Thompson
Small Sums

A top-down view of a cup of coffee on a wooden table. The cup is white with a black rim and a black handle, sitting on a black and white saucer. The coffee is a latte with a light brown foam and a small white heart-shaped latte art. Dried rose petals are scattered on the left side of the coffee. The background is a dark brown wooden table with green leaves visible on the right side.

COFFEE
Wildflyer

Wildflyer's Work & Life Skills Training Program



- 4-month cohort training program for youth between the ages of 16-24 who have experienced homelessness or housing instability
- Our YOU Portfolio incorporates personal and professional development, providing a holistic experience while youth are hired as paid baristas
- Participants gain specialty coffee knowledge and experience, and receive employment coaching and career guidance
- Youth build confidence and belonging in the workplace
- Program graduates gain connections to mainstream employment

Wildflyer COFFEE

2024 program outcomes

98%

of participants improved or maintained their stable housing while working at Wildflyer Coffee

75%

of participants graduated from Wildflyer's Work & Life Skills Training Program

100%

of graduates left employed, enrolled in education, or actively working with their employment counselor

44

young people employed

8,114

hours of youth employment





**PROJECT FOR
PRIDE IN
LIVING**

Our Mission

PPL builds the hope, assets, and self-reliance of individuals and families who have lower incomes by providing transformative affordable housing and career readiness services.

7,000 Total people served through housing and career readiness

1,539 Housing units owned, managed, and supported by PPL

98% Of residents maintained stable housing for 24 months or more

114 First-time home buyers attained homeownership (73% BIPOC)

90% Of people places in jobs retained employment for 12 months or more

3.5x Average income growth for participants after job placement

+18% Statewide growth in ABE participants 2022-2023

98% Of credit-eligible high school students earned diplomas through PPL's contract alternative schools

36 Currently enrolled in PPL's adult high school diploma program (89% BIPOC)



Career Readiness



Education



Financial
Counseling and
Homeownership



Career
Pathways



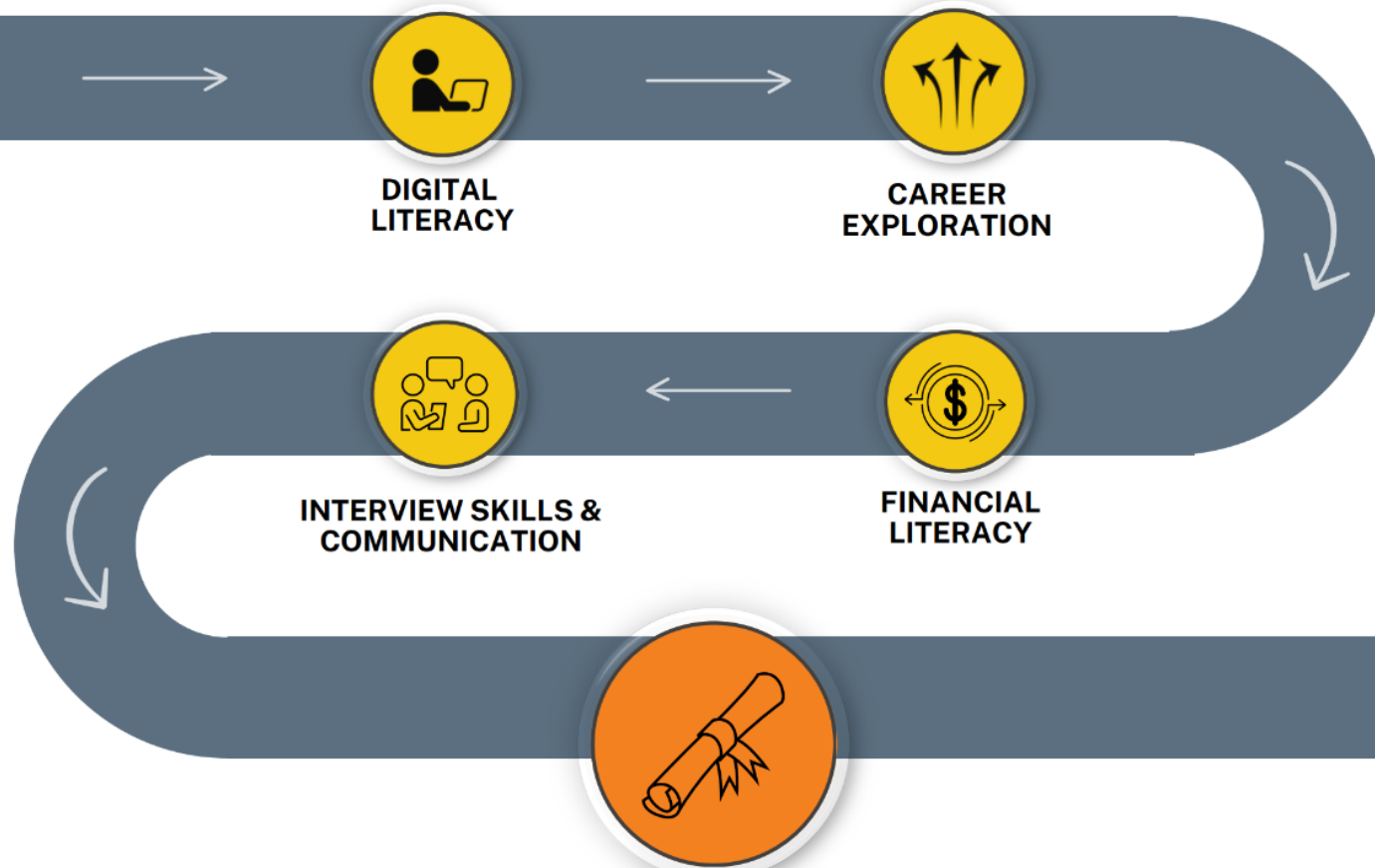
Access Program



BASIC SKILLS



PPL CAREER READY CERTIFICATE





Small Sums

Small Sums is a non-profit organization dedicated to removing barriers to success for individuals experiencing homelessness. We provide essential work items such as clothes, shoes, tools, and transportation to help individuals secure and maintain employment.



ABOUT US

Small Sums is a Minnesota-based 501(c)3 non-profit working to eliminate barriers to unemployment for individuals who are experiencing homelessness or housing instability.



GET ASSISTANCE

We provide customized care, including work clothes, a pair of non-skid shoes or steel toe boots, two pairs of socks, a bus pass, and individualized referral and supportive services.

OUR SOLUTION

WHAT WE PROVIDE

The work we do at Small Sums is simple, practical, and powerful. We listen to our clients, remove barriers to employment, and set them on the path toward stability.



Dressed & Ready

Appropriate work-wear and work shoes.



Tools for the Job

Mandatory tools for trade professions.



Transportation Assistance

Unlimited 31-day bus pass, gas card.



Professional Trade Licenses & Union Due Fees

We help cover test and license fees.

Resources

- Avivo – Ending Homelessness Services (<https://avivomn.org/ending-homelessness/>)
- EMERGE Minnesota (<https://emerge-mn.org/>)
- Small Sums (<https://www.smallsums.org/>)
- YWCA of the North (<https://www.ymcanorth.org/impact/housing>)
- Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS) (<https://www.lssmn.org/services/housing-and-assistance>)
- Ujamaa Place (<https://ujamaaplace.org/theory-of-transformation/housing/>)
- The Listening House (<https://www.listeninghouse.org/worknow>)
- WorkWell Minnesota (<https://www.workwellmn.org/>)
- Epimona Transport (<https://www.epimoniast.com/>)
- Enterprise Vanpool Program (<https://www.commutewithenterprise.com/>)

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Next Webinar:

Enhance Employee Skills with Incumbent Worker, On-the-Job Training, and Other Grant Funded Training Opportunities

October 1st, 2025

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Thank You!

DEED Workforce Strategy Consultants

MINNESOTA WORKFORCE STRATEGY CONSULTANTS

MISSION

Develop innovative workforce solutions by aligning resources, facilitating collaboration, and leveraging expertise in targeted industry sectors to drive economic equity and growth.

THE VALUE WE BRING

- > Provide tools and resources to support businesses in developing strategic workforce strategies
- > Connect stakeholders to economic development and workforce development resources
- > Focus on workforce diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives
- > Enhance Minnesota's economic prosperity through workforce and economic development partnerships
- > Work in partnership with our stakeholders to provide workforce training development solutions to meet your talent needs



WORKFORCE STRATEGY CONSULTANTS



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SOUTHEAST

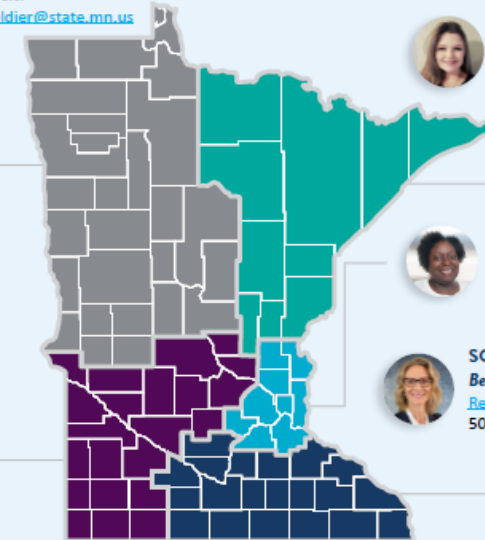
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UNPLUGGED – Q AND A

