

ANOKA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

THURSDAY, February 5, 2026  
7:30 A.M.

BLAINE HUMAN SERVICE CENTER  
1201 89<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE NE, ROOM 2402  
BLAINE, MN 55434

\* \* \* AGENDA \* \* \*

- I. ROLL CALL
- II. APPROVE ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
- III. APPROVE January 8, 2026 MEETING MINUTES (Attached)
- IV. ONE-STOP OPERATOR & DIRECTOR TRANSITION UPDATE – Jessica Leth, Deputy Director – Human Services Division, Anoka County (Attached)
- V. OPEN TO BUSINESS (MINNESOTA CONSORTIUM OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPERS (MCCD) – Tyler Hilsabeck, Director of Small Business/Washington County and NaSee Lor, Business Advisor – MCCD (Attached)
- VI. CONSTRUCT TOMORROW EVENT – Sue Gunder, Supervisor – Anoka County Job Training Center Empowers Youth Team (Attached)
- VII. OTHER BUSINESS
  - Director Update
  - Partner Sharing
    - Career & Technical Education, Jessica Lipa, Director – STEP, Anoka-Hennepin Schools
  - Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) – November 2025 (Attached)
- VIII. Adjourn



## **ANOKA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

### **Minutes**

**Thursday, January 8, 2026**

The Anoka County Workforce Development Board Meeting was called to order by Paul Johnson at 7:33 a.m.

#### **I. ROLL CALL**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Debby Boyd, Greg Frahm-Gilles, Sara Garbe, Lori Higgins, Paul Johnson, Molly Liberto, Jessica Lipa, Patrick McFarland, Lisa Mehling, Jay Nelson, Alison Vogtlin

**NON-MEMBERS PRESENT:** Commissioner Schulte, Cameron Macht, Jim Hegman, Jessica Leth, Kate Heffernan, Maureen McCarthy, Nicole Swanson, Krista Peterson

#### **II. APPROVE ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

MOTION by Greg Frahm-Gilles to adopt the agenda. Seconded by Debby Boyd.  
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### **III. APPROVE November 6, 2025 MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION by Debby Boyd to approve the November 6, 2025 Meeting Minutes as presented. Seconded by Lori Higgins. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

#### **IV. SHARED WORK PROGRAM – DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT and ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (DEED) – UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE – Jim Hegman, Director**

- MN Shared Work Program – allows employers to reduce employee hours while providing partial unemployment benefits, helping to avoid layoffs and retain employees during temporary downturns.
- Eligibility – employees must be scheduled to work at least 50% but no more than 80% of their normal weekly hours and must have been employed at least three months prior to application for the program. Seasonal, temporary or intermittent workers are not eligible.
- Application Process – employers must submit a proposed Shared Work plan to the MN UI Program for approval. The plan should include names and Social Security numbers of participating employees, proposed hours they will work, and the duration of the plan. Plan must be a minimum of two months and can be extended up to an additional year upon approval.
- Employers must provide written notice to each employee on the participant list before the approved start date of the plan, informing them of the terms and their right to apply for UI benefits. Employers must manage the Shared Work Plan and notify UI of any changes.
- Visit <https://www.uimn.org> or contact the Shared Work Program directly at [shared.work@state.mn.us](mailto:shared.work@state.mn.us)

**V. ANOKA COUNTY DATA HIGHLIGHTS DASHBOARD 2024** – Cameron Macht, Regional Analysis & Outreach Unit Manager – Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

- Population - Anoka County is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest and 15<sup>th</sup> fastest growing county in the state with nearly 15% of the population 65 years and over.
- Education – 93.4% of Anoka County adults have at least a high school diploma, 35.8% have a bachelor’s degree or higher. MN Dept. of Ed reported 56,550 students in public schools in Anoka County in 2024.
- Housing – 25.1% of housing units have been built since 2000. 40.3% of Anoka County renters are paying 35% or more of their income for rent. Anoka County has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest household income in the state (\$98,764), 2<sup>nd</sup> highest cost of living in the state (\$76,786).
- Labor Force – Anoka County is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest labor force in the state, one of the fastest growing in the state over the past three decades (8,723 establishments; 133,985 jobs).
- Industry Trends – Health Care & Social Assistance and Manufacturing remain the top industries for workers residing in Anoka County and those employed in Anoka County.

**VI. OTHER BUSINESS**

**Director Update – Nicole Swanson**

- Workforce Development System Reform Task Force – Purpose of the Task Force is to examine how MN develops workforce strategies, sets goals and allocates funds to meet statewide workforce development needs. You are invited to participate in a survey as it relates to the programs you operate within the state’s workforce development system. Survey will be emailed next week.
- Upcoming Events: March 11 – Third annual Economic and Workforce Development Summit – Generations in the Workplace. February 24 – Construct Tomorrow at the National Sports Center in Blaine. To date 734 high school students registered to attend.
- IFA/MOU meeting with DEED scheduled Monday, January 12. Goal to bring to the February WDB meeting for approval.
- Federal CWI (Center for Workforce Inclusion) Senior Employment Program – due to significant funding cuts in this program, JTC will no longer provide services. All participants have either been placed in employment or enrolled with the DEED SCSEP Program.
- JTC was awarded funding for the Growing Careers and Pathways to Prosperity grant, however, we did not get funded for the CNA Pathway to LPN Drive 4 Five grant.

## **2026 MAWB STATE PLATFORM and PRIORITIES**

Key priority for 2026

- Ensure the Workforce Development Fund remains focused on prioritizing support for the State Dislocated Workforce Program to ensure consistent service delivery.

Workforce Policy Issues

- Advocate for changes to increase local area's ability to provide uninterrupted, high-quality service delivery through grant funding while maintaining accountability.
- Advocate that all funds directed to organizations and other entities for workforce development or training efforts are coordinated by and through Workforce Development Boards.
- Allow maximum flexibility in the use of state funds to encourage innovation and allow local boards to design programs that meet the needs of employers and jobseekers.
- Align investments and eliminate silos across the workforce development system, regardless of funding committee or state agency structures.

### **Recredentialing Pathways for Internationally Trained Professionals – Pilot Project – DEED**

Internationally Trained Professionals in Education, Engineering, Health Care or Information Technology may receive credit for prior learning. This program connects New Americans to a career pathway that builds on their past education and work experience.

### **Director Transition Planning – Kate Heffernan – Chief Officer, Anoka County Human Services Division**

Director position is posted through January 11<sup>th</sup>, interviews the following week. This position will be approved by the County Board. Transition planning meetings are taking place to ensure a smooth transition. Nicole's last day in the office is February 6<sup>th</sup>, last day of employment February 20<sup>th</sup>. Join us for her retirement party on January 29<sup>th</sup>, an invitation will be emailed to the board next week.

### **Other Business**

Lori H. - National Civics Bee Competition

Students grades 6-8 can submit a short essay on how they would make a difference in their community using civic virtues and principles. Essays are due by February 3<sup>rd</sup>. Grand prize winner will receive a \$100,000 scholarship. Flyer will be emailed to the board.

Patrick M. - CCAP (Child Care Assistance Program) Federal Funding update. If paused could affect Anoka County – equates to \$26M annually.

## **ADJOURN**

MOTION by Debby Boyd to Adjourn. Seconded by Lori Higgins. Adjourned at 9:00 a.m.





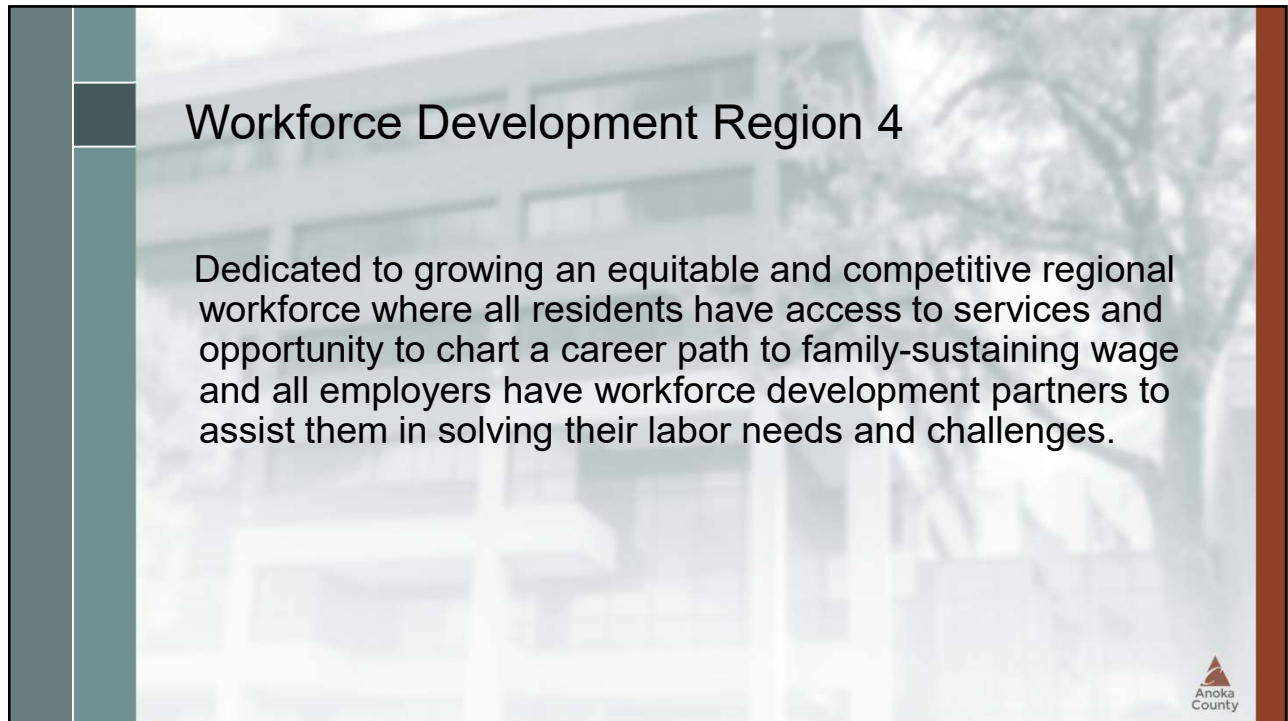
Anoka  
County

# One Stop Operator

Workforce Development Board  
February 5, 2026


Respectful. Innovative. Fiscally Responsible.

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## Workforce Development Region 4

Dedicated to growing an equitable and competitive regional workforce where all residents have access to services and opportunity to chart a career path to family-sustaining wage and all employers have workforce development partners to assist them in solving their labor needs and challenges.



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## One Stop Delivery System Blaine Human Service Center

- ❖ Job Training Center, Anoka County
- ❖ Department of Employment and Economic Development
- ❖ Minnesota Veterans Employment Services
- ❖ Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- ❖ Unemployment Services
- ❖ Metro North Adult Basic Education
- ❖ Economic Assistance, Anoka County



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## Blaine Human Service Center Partners

- ❖ Achieve Services [www.achieveservices.org](http://www.achieveservices.org)
- ❖ Anoka County Community Action Program (ACCAP) [www.accap.org](http://www.accap.org)
- ❖ Salvation Army [www.salvationarmy.org](http://www.salvationarmy.org)
- ❖ Learn and Grow Childcare Center
- ❖ Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) [www.anokacounty.us/WIC](http://www.anokacounty.us/WIC)
- ❖ Mediation and Restorative Services [www.mediationservice.org](http://www.mediationservice.org)



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## Job Training Center

Mission: Contributing to the success of individuals and employers through workforce development services.

### Programs

- › Dislocated Worker / Adult
- › Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- › Empowers Youth Program
- › Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)
- › Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment & Training
- › Career Pathway Training / Special Projects
- › Job Seeker Services – Career Lab

### 2025 Data

- 7,691 Customer Visits; 3,795 Calls & 3 Open Houses
- 27 Onsite Hiring Events, 354 Employers with 2,713 Attendees
- Anoka County Career Fair @ Anoka Technical College – 111 Businesses and nearly 600 Attendees
- Made in the North Metro – 28 Exhibitors and 414 Attendees
- 2,455 JTC Program Inquiries generated 756 Applications and 298 Enrollments

### NEW Grants

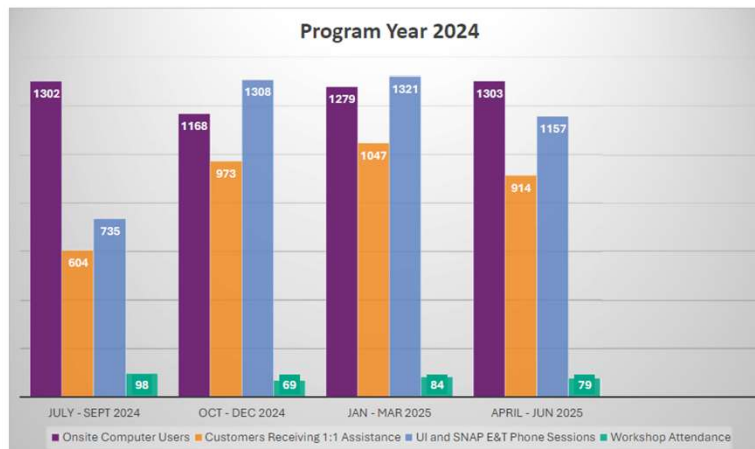
- › YouthBuild, Growing Careers & Pathways



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## DEED Job Service

Provide universal labor-exchange services (Basic Career Services), including job search assistance, resume writing and interview preparation, referrals to training and employment programs, career counseling, and workshop services.



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## Veterans Employment Services

Mission is to assist veterans in overcoming employment barriers by offering individualized career services, connecting them to quality career opportunities, and engaging employers to promote veteran hiring.

### Performance Outcomes:

- › 556 Veterans received case-managed services (tracked in Workforce One).
- › 78% of Veterans receiving case-managed services in State Fiscal Year 2025 successfully exited.
- › The average wage at exit was \$29.16 per hour.
- › This is \$11.48 per hour *more* than the average cost of living for a single adult in Minnesota.
- › This is \$6.63 per hour *more* than the average cost of living for a typical Minnesota family.

### Characteristics of Veterans receiving case-managed services:

- › 60% were between the ages of 25 and 49.
- › 40% had a disability, which is a barrier to employment.
- › 14% were female.
- › 21% were from a community of color or were Indigenous.
- › 17% were ex-offenders.
- › 14% were homeless.
- › 21% had a high school diploma/GED only; 46% had a bachelor's degree or higher.
- › 56% were unemployed coming into the program.



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## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES (VRS)

Mission: Empower Minnesotans with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment, independent living and community integration.

Offer training, preparation and workplace accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

### Dual customer approach:

- › Assist students and young adults with disabilities who are making the transition from school to work or to post-secondary training.
- › Serve employers who seek to hire, support and retain qualified candidates for job openings.

### Data:

- › 38 offices across Minnesota
- › Served 14,389 individuals
- › Anoka County served 729 participants.

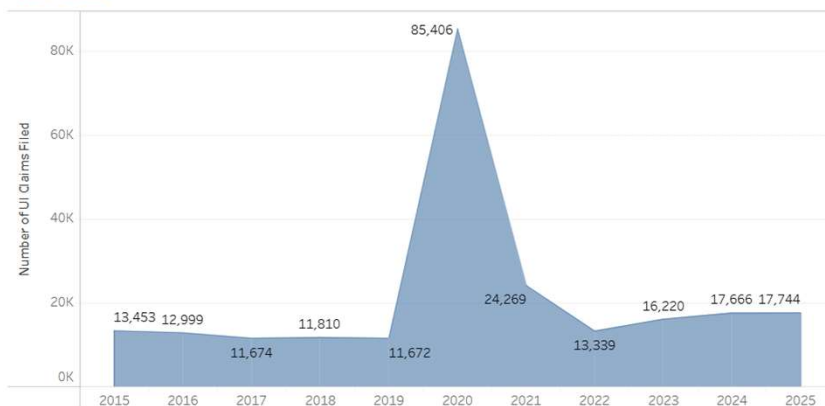


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## Unemployment Insurance Program

Provides benefits to eligible unemployed workers in Minnesota and throughout the United States and collects taxes and reimbursements from employers who have employees in Minnesota.

UI Claims filed in Anoka County,  
Total Claims



Source: DEED Unemployment Insurance Claims Statistics

<https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/unemployment-insurance-statistics/>



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### METRO NORTH ADULT BASIC EDUCATION (ABE)

Mission: To inspire and challenge all learners to reach their full potential. In a safe, supportive environment, we will teach the skills needed to succeed as responsible citizens in our changing world.

#### Fourth largest consortium in Minnesota.

##### 2024-2025 school year:

- › 78 staff
- › 4320 enrollees with 2676 participants
- › 329,284 contact hours – record breaking!

##### Who was served?

- › 60.5% female, 39% male, .5% nonbinary/other gender
- › Largest age range was 25-44 at 55.8%
- › 27.4% Black or African American, 35.9% Hispanic, 24.6% White, 7.9% Asian
- › 106 different countries, spoke 81 different languages
- › Lived in 145 different cities across 79 different school districts in 29 different counties



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## Economic Assistance

Mission: To provide effective services with a focus on dignity and self-sufficiency.

### Public Assistance Programs

- › Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- › Medicaid/Medical Assistance (MA)
- › Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- › General Assistance
- › Minnesota Supplemental Aid
- › Housing Support
- › Emergency Programs
- › Funeral Assistance

### Child Support Services

- › Establishment, Paternity, Enforcement

### Partnerships:

- › Job Training Center
- › Child Care Assistance with ACCAP

### 2025 office support annual data:

- › 33,328 visitors to the lobby
- › 71,353 calls handled by call center staff

### 2025 average monthly public assistance:

- › MAXIS cases open: 19,924
- › MNsure cases open: 27,626
- › New applications: 1,091

### 2025 average monthly child support cases:

- › Total cases: 9,549
- › MAXIS/METS referrals: 210
- › Non-public assistance applications: 74



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## Changing Landscape

- › New Job Training Center director
- › New EA director
- › New One Stop Operator in 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2026



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**Anoka County Workforce Development**  
**02/05/2026**  
**Tyler Hilsabeck**  
**NaSee Lor**



MCCD is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit serving Consortium of 35+ nonprofit affordable housing and economic development organizations, and a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI).

**Mission**

MCCD works collectively to advance racial and economic justice by leveraging and stewarding community development resources. :





**MCCCD Program Areas**

- Open to Business
- Shared Ownership
- Lending
- Advocacy & Field Building
- Leadership Development



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Minnesota Consortium  
of **Community** Developers

### **Business Technical Assistance**

- 1-on-1 basis or group learning
- Free to the Entrepreneur through Partnership with Anoka County
- Webinars and Group Learning Opportunities
- All stages of development
- 3rd Party objective view of business
- No pre-qualifications – the program is open to any entrepreneurs other than non-profits, investment-based businesses or illegal businesses.
- Business Advisors have language capabilities in Spanish, Somali and Hmong.



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Minnesota Consortium  
of **Community** Developers

### **Business Technical Assistance**

#### **Our experienced advisors offer confidential business consulting & lending options:**

- Business & strategic planning
- Marketing & communications planning
- Regulatory, tax, licensing, & accounting training
- Financial assessment
- Direct lending
- Access to governmental & community financing
- Loan packaging for private financing
- Referrals to critical professional services



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## Partnerships and Resources

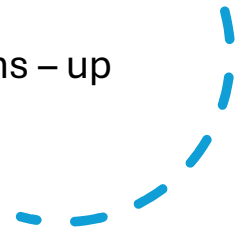


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## Other Resources

- UofM Law Q&A Event
  - April 9, 2026
- Small Business Resources Newsletter monthly
- Lending Information Session – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of the month
- Accounting Consultations – up to 10 free hours



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## Who Can Use *Open to Business?*



Any **business or business-owner** located in Anoka County

No prequalification

- Any Business Stage from Start-Up to Existing Businesses with Challenges or Opportunities.
- Language Services offered in Spanish, Somali and Hmong
- **Free and Confidential** to the entrepreneur

The program is open to **EVERYONE** in Anoka County!

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## Loans For Startup Businesses

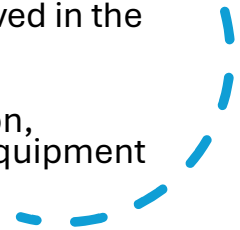
- For Businesses that are either too new or too small for bank financing.
- Start-Up Loans of up to \$50,000 for start-up businesses that cannot secure any or all their financing from traditional commercial lenders.
- Loan terms are typically 3-5 years and loan proceeds may be used for a variety of business purposes including inventory, working capital, equipment, leasehold improvements, start-up costs.

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## Participation / Gap Lending

- MCCD works with
  - Banks
  - Credit Unions
  - Community Development Lenders
- MCCD takes a subordinated lien position
- Clients that are in a growth mode
- Designed to benefit the borrower so working capital can be preserved in the business.
- Includes real estate acquisition, improvements, business or equipment purchases.

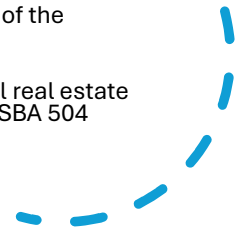


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## MCCD Loan Terms

- **Loan Amount:** Loans are from \$5,000 to \$350,000
- **Loan Term:** Up to 10 years.
- **Amortization:** Up to 25 years.
- **Interest Rates:** Capped at 7%
- **Loan Fees:** 1% of MCCD commitment amount
- **No Prepayment Penalty**
- **Interest-Only Periods available**
- **Collateral:** MCCD will provide up to 90% or more of the appraised value.
- **Assets Financed:** Business assets or commercial real estate projects, including projects financed through the SBA 504 program



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# On the Ground

## Macro / Micro Trends & Insights

- Wait-and-see approach – Tariffs and Uncertainty
- Costs are still high for goods, services, supplies, insurance, labor – for consumers & businesses
- Interest rates have eased some but are still high; delaying expansion or investment decisions (SBA 7A)
- Commercial rental markets are very competitive
- Demand for TA & nontraditional financing is high



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## How to Get Started With *Open to Business*

Call or email to set up an initial appointment!

**NaSee Lor**  
 Anoka County Business Advisor / Loan Officer  
 612-843-3270  
 nlor@mccdmn.org  
[www.mccdmn.org](http://www.mccdmn.org)



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## CanStartUp Program

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## Program Overview

- Statewide initiative – partnership with DEED + nonprofit lenders
- Goal – support cannabis microbusinesses (< 3 years old)
- Eligibility – MN based, licensed microbusinesses
- Equity Focus – priority for social applicants and impacted communities

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## Loan Terms

- Loan Amounts - \$2,500 min; up to \$75k; up to \$200k with private match
- Interest Rate - 7%
- Origination Fee – 1% of loan value
- Number of loans – one at a time; cap of 2 per borrower

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## Loan Application Process

- Pre-application Phase
  - Confirm your current stage in the licensure process.
  - Complete the Client Intake Form
  - Meet with a Loan Officer
  - Begin your process in Lenderfit – your Loan Officer will send an invite

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## Phases

- Phase I – Application Information:  
Provide business owner details
- Phase 2 – Document Collection:  
Complete due diligence  
questionnaire ; upload supporting  
documents
- Phase 3 – Decision Phase:  
Application reviewed; decision  
communicated

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## QUESTIONS?



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## Contact Us

[www.propagatecdc.org](http://www.propagatecdc.org)

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# Region 4 Construct Tomorrow Event

## National Sports Center in Blaine

### February 24, 2026

#### **Background**

Construct Tomorrow is a statewide initiative that introduces high school students to careers in the union construction trades through engaging, hands-on events. The mission is to educate students about the benefits of union careers, competitive wages, strong benefits, and debt-free training through registered apprenticeships while showcasing the wide variety of skilled trades available.

#### **Why It Was Created**

**Address Workforce Shortages:** The construction industry faced a growing need for skilled labor as experienced workers retired and demand for projects increased.

**Provide Career Awareness:** Highlight the opportunities in union construction trades, especially the benefits of **debt-free training through registered apprenticeships.**

**Union Advantages:** Educate on the difference between union and non-union careers—highlighting better wages, benefits, and long-term stability.

**Bridge Education & Employment:** Create a direct pipeline from high school to rewarding careers without requiring a four-year college degree.

#### **What Makes Construct Tomorrow Impactful:**

**Proven Reach:** Construct Tomorrow has connected with nearly 90,000 students across Minnesota.

**Union-Focused Education & Careers:** Ensuring students understand the long-term value of these careers.

**Hands-On Exploration:** Students actively engage with tools and equipment at interactive stations.

**Workforce Development:** Create a pipeline of informed, motivated students ready to enter the trades.

**Direct Industry Connections:** Events feature professionals from apprentices to journey workers, offering real-world insights and mentorship. Anoka County Job Training Center and Anoka Technical College will be onsite.

**Statewide Access & Inclusion:** There are 9–10 events annually in both urban and rural communities, ensuring students statewide have access. Core locations include Rochester, Mankato, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Hinckley, and Duluth, with rotating rural sites to reach underserved areas.

Construct Tomorrow is more than an event—it's a strategic investment in Minnesota's future workforce, creating pathways to stable, high-paying careers while strengthening the union construction industry.

#### **TRADES Represented At the event**

Electrical	Iron Workers	Elevator Constructors
Finishing Trades	Sprinkler Fitters	Operators
Pipefitters	Insulators	Sheet Metal
Cement Masons	Carpenters	Brick Layers
Carpenters Union	Apprenticeship	

# construct tomorrow

www.constructtomorrow.org



Construct Tomorrow is an immersive, hands-on event that introduces high school students to real careers in the construction and building trades. Through interactive experiences and direct conversations with skilled tradespeople, students discover what it's really like to work in these high-demand, high-reward industries.

Since 2013, Construct Tomorrow has connected over 70,000 Minnesota students with life-changing opportunities in the union construction trades-offering a powerful alternative to traditional four-year college paths.

At the event, students will:

- Use real tools to complete hands-on activities from various trades
- Meet and learn from diverse professionals actively working in the field
- Explore competitive wages, benefits, and career pathways in the trades
- Gain insight into how registered apprenticeships work-and how to get started

Whether your students are already curious about the trades or just beginning to explore their options, Construct Tomorrow offers a fun, eye-opening experience that could shape their future.

## ANOKA COUNTY

### FEBRUARY 24<sup>TH</sup> 2026

**NATIONAL SPORTS CENTER  
1750 105<sup>TH</sup> AVE NE  
BLAINE, MN 55449**

**School Registration Now Open!**



**PLEASE NOTE FOR EVERY 25 STUDENTS WE REQUIRE 1 CHAPERONE**



**CONTACT US:**

**ADMINISTRATOR@CONSTRUCTTOMORROW.ORG**

**612-412-4101**

