

How Our Values Shape Our Advocacy Areas of Focus

The St. Paul Area Chamber leverages the collective voice of employers on behalf of sustained improvement in economic vitality for all, and business success in particular, across the region.

The St. Paul Area Chamber Public Affairs team will prioritize legislative engagements on four topics in 2022. We will convene stakeholders, identify the “business lane,” and encourage public-private-philanthropic partnerships where those solutions would be the best way for every sector to participate in making change. We will pursue public policy solutions at the state, county, city, or federal level as appropriate.

These four topics are crucial to business success of the region.

Talent Development and the Effect of the Benefits Cliff

For low-wage workers seeking advancement, the realities of public assistance policies (housing, childcare, medical insurance, etc.) are often an inhibitor of success. Workers face a benefits cliff when they receive public assistance, earn a raise, and then discover that they make too much money to receive the benefits -- but the raise isn't enough to make up the difference. The reality of a benefits cliff is a major barrier in career development for low-wage workers. We will identify ways the business community can support reform to public benefits to support workers' job and career development.

Rebuilding the Minnesota Unemployment Trust Fund

Minnesota currently owes the federal government \$1.13 billion for deficits in the state unemployment trust fund, depleted by the massive unemployment of workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Paying that debt will impact employers of all types and could result in as much as a 14% tax hike for some. We will explore options to replenish the fund in ways that protect this safety net while not placing the entire burden of pandemic claims on the backs of Minnesota employers.

Workforce Housing Availability

Workers need places to live in order for businesses to grow. We will start with the recommendations from the 2018 Governor's Task Force on Housing, identify the areas where the business community can appropriately engage, and advocate for solutions to increase the diversity of Minnesota's housing supply to better reflect the needs of employers and workers.

Role of Business in Public Safety

Addressing public safety in our communities is complex and will require cross-sector collaboration. We will examine how public safety, police reform, and criminal justice issues are interconnected and separate, identify the best places for the business community to engage, and advocate for public policy evolution and/or changes to make Minnesota safer for everyone.