



THE POWER OF WORK COMPREHENSIVE CAMPAIGN

CASE FOR SUPPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota, you give people the power to work, so they can experience the power of work. Job seekers are resilient; they use our programs to create individual pathways to prosperity. By maximizing their potential, you're helping communities thrive and remain vibrant.

Since 2020, the landscape of work has changed fundamentally:

- The current worker shortage in Minnesota is an unprecedented opportunity to lower barriers for people who seek to enter or reenter the workforce.
- Access to technology separates the haves from the have-nots, making it difficult to search for work and successfully get a job.
- Digital skills are now critical for nearly all jobs and industries yet many still lack access to the necessary resources to grow their competencies with these tools
- An increase in support for basic needs – food, housing, and childcare – complicates the search for work.

With a bold opportunity to disrupt the employment disparities that have confronted Minnesota for generations, our enduring mission to overcome barriers to work and independence is more critical than ever. Through the Power of Work Comprehensive Campaign, we will **reach** people in underserved communities, **expand** digital skills training and resources for participants, and **build** long-term support for job seekers in the region.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEED

Employers need trained workers like never before.

According to the Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, nearly 75% of our region's businesses and employers have a difficult time finding qualified employees. In 2022, Minnesota employers needed to fill 550,000 jobs in new and existing openings. Of those new job openings, 70% required training or education beyond a high school diploma.

Creating a qualified and diverse workforce is necessary to maintain the competitiveness and strength of the region's businesses, but also to stimulate new business growth and development for the future of our Minnesotan communities.

Goodwill-Easter Seals works to make well-paying, quality employment attainable for all.

The Twin Cities region consistently ranks near the bottom nationally regarding racial employment disparities. In fact, the state's Dept. of Employment and Economic Development found that current unemployment for the state's black population (7.3%) is roughly triple the rate of the state's white population (2.4%). According to a report from the Governor's office, these racial disparities present an "existential threat" to the state's future economic success (Council on Economic Expansion, 2022).

The state's gaps are even steeper for those with disabilities. Minnesota's Olmstead Plan reports that 22.6% of those with disabilities live in poverty compared to 8.3% of the total population (Olmstead Subcabinet, 2022). Similarly, for individuals involved in the justice system, the Prison Policy Initiative reports that the national unemployment rate is higher than 27%. For both unique populations, increased access to job training resources is imperative for poverty alleviation in our communities.

CAMPAIGN GOALS

Building on Success to Secure Futures

For Minnesota to prosper, we all need a chance to succeed. In 2022, Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota took a comprehensive look at the community's need for workforce and employment services. We started with participants and prospective participants, we also talked to business employers, partners, and community leaders.

Their input informed our campaign goals and inspired an even greater commitment to remaining an effective partner for our neighbors as they build better futures.

Our \$12.8 million Power of Work Comprehensive Campaign includes:

1. Technology to Bridge the Digital Divide *\$2.6 million goal*

- **Participant Accessibility:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital divide became painfully obvious. Participants tell us that they lack access to devices, connectivity, and computer training. These are critical needs in order to participate in our programs and successfully find work in an increasingly digital world.
- **Program Technology and Training:** Hand-in-hand with participant technology, program needs include a classroom platform, database, and training for Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota program staff who continue to require new skills needed to coach participants in using virtual tools.

2. Power of Work Program Innovation *\$2.2 million goal*

- **New and Expanded Regional Training Opportunities:** The impact of Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota's programs depends on our ability to reach neighbors throughout Minnesota and Western Wisconsin. Job seekers in rural areas share many of the same challenges as people in the Twin Cities, with fewer opportunities to develop new skills and build a network of support around them.
- **Employer Engagement, Feedback, and Recognition:** We must be adaptive to the changing priorities of employers. Working with employers as partners allows us to create skills-based processes that help businesses attract and retain diverse talent. Success in this goal will require strategic insight and ongoing communication with employers and other stakeholders to align current programs to market needs.
- **Responsive Communication and Community Dialogue:** Prospective participants and employer partners both reported a gap in the understanding of Goodwill-Easter Seals' programs. In addition, COVID-19 disrupted traditional channels of outreach and program marketing. The Community Needs Assessment reports that "the primary criticism was that not enough people know about what GESMN offers."
- **Advocacy for Workforce Systems Change:** We anticipate serving a prominent role in advancing policy reform that promotes economic stability and dignity for job seekers in our community. Success in this goal will require strengthened efforts to confront the root causes of workforce disparities and drive broader systems change in Minnesota's economy.

3. Long-Term Sustainability *\$1.2 million goal*

- **Sustainable Community Impact:** Investment in Goodwill-Easter Seals Foundation assets will give us the funding flexibility to meet emerging needs as they arise and to bolster the long-term health and sustainability of Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota.

4. Increased Capacity for Annual and Operating Support *\$6.8 million goal*

- **Strengthened Development Operations:** Ongoing strategies to cultivate community support will diversify Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota's revenue streams and yield a more resilient organization in service of job seekers. The campaign will inspire us to reach and keep new donors, increase our grant seeking capabilities and create a vibrant ongoing major donor program.

Join Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota in a campaign that builds on our century-old tradition of meeting people where they are — and guiding them to where they want to be.

Learn more at gesmn.org/future

WORK IS PRIDE. WORK IS PURPOSE. WORK IS BELONGING.