



THE MINNESOTA FOUNDATION FOR STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS  
BIENNIUM REPORT  
FEBRUARY 2025





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## Who We Are

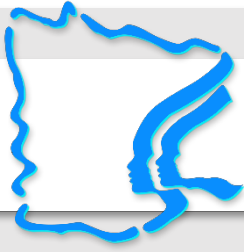
The Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MFSO), established in 1996 under Minnesota State Statute 124D.34, continues to serve and advocate for Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) in Minnesota. Collaborating closely with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and Minnesota State Colleges, the MFSO administers, allocates, and reports on state and federal funds that sustain and grow CTSOs.

In addition to funding oversight, the MFSO supports CTSOs by fostering leadership development, guiding growth, and managing special initiatives. This comprehensive support empowers CTSOs to align with the rigorous academic standards of Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, ensuring that students acquire the industry-relevant skills and leadership qualities essential for career success.

CTSOs play a pivotal role in CTE programs by providing students with experiential learning opportunities that enhance their leadership, personal, and employability skills. By bridging the gap between classroom instruction and real-world application, CTSOs remain a cornerstone of student achievement and workforce readiness in Minnesota.

## Our Mission

The MFSO promotes and supports career and technical student organizations as they work to provide student opportunities for leadership, personal development, community service and career preparation.



Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) support the rigorous academic content of career and technical education (CTE) programs.

CTSOs ensure students are meeting industry skill standards and are prepared for employment. They also provide students with a comprehensive framework of leadership, personal and employability skills. CTSOs are considered an integral part of student's CTE program.

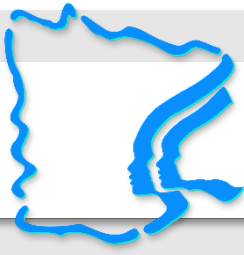
## Our History

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) have been empowering students for over 70 years, originating from federal legislation that first supported agriculture and homemaking education. This led to the establishment of FFA (Future Farmers of America) and FHA (Future Homemakers of America). As career and technical education expanded at both state and national levels, new CTSOs were formed to address emerging career fields and workforce needs.



Initially, these student organizations operated as state and federally managed programs. Over time, they evolved into independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations, a transition that allowed for greater flexibility and innovation. With the implementation of the School-to-Work Program in the 1990s, CTSOs gained prominence as an essential element of education. They provided students with opportunities to apply technical skills and cultivate leadership abilities in real-world contexts.

In 1996, recognizing the critical role of CTSOs, the Minnesota State Legislature established the Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MFSO) under Minnesota State Statute 124D.34. The MFSO was tasked with ensuring the sustained support and funding of CTSOs as an integral, inter-curricular component of career and technical education. Modeled after the successful Minnesota Academic Excellence Foundation, the MFSO was provided with funding not only for its operations but also to distribute to CTSOs to support their ongoing efforts in fostering student growth and career readiness.



## Career and Technical Student Organizations

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) are a vital part of career pathways; bridging classroom learning with practical, real-world experience. These organizations equip students with the technical, workplace, and personal skills necessary for success in today's competitive job market. By fostering leadership, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities, CTSOs prepare students to meet the demands of industry standards while also encouraging personal growth and civic engagement. In Minnesota, the following CTSO's are recognized:

- [DECA/Collegiate DECA](#) enhances the education of all students with interests in marketing, management or entrepreneurship.
- [BPA/Collegiate BPA](#) *Business Professionals of America* contributes to the preparation of a world-class workforce through the advancement of leadership, citizenship, academic, and technological skills.
- [FFA](#) makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources (AFNR) education.
- [HOSA-FHP](#) *HOSA-Future Health Professional's* mission is to empower HOSA-FHP members to become leaders in the global health community, through education, collaboration, and experience. HOSA actively promotes career opportunities in the health industry and to enhance the delivery of quality health care to all people.
- [FCCLA](#) promotes personal growth and leadership development through Family and Consumer Sciences education.
- [SkillsUSA](#) is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA's empowers its members to become world-class workers, leaders and responsible American citizens.



Career and Technical Student Organizations are in more than **85% of public school district** career and technical education programs.

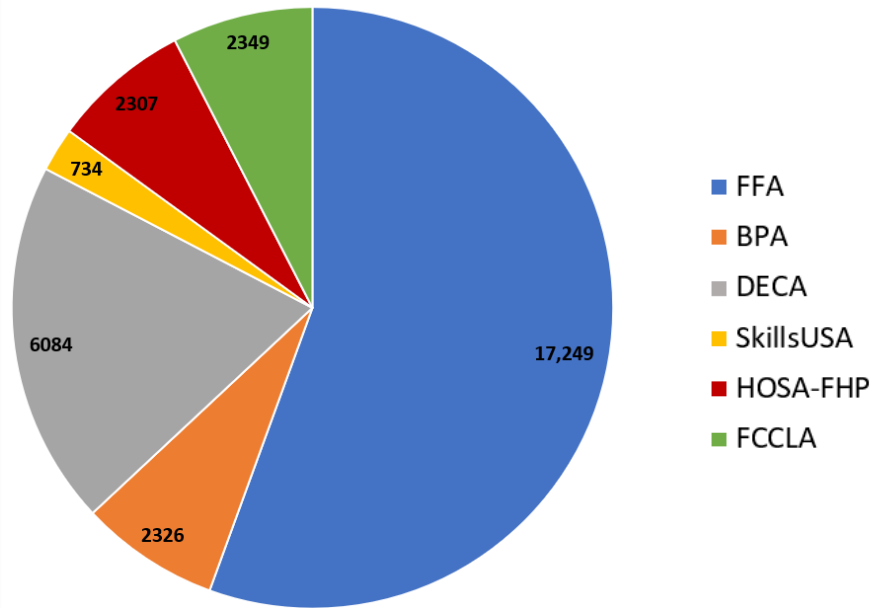
**Minnesota's CTSOs serve more than 30,000 student members** across the state.

Collectively, the inter-curricular student organizations have more than **650 public school chapters** throughout Minnesota.

From Roseau to Blue Earth and Breckenridge to Stillwater; CTSOs are embedded into classrooms as an integral part of career and technical education.

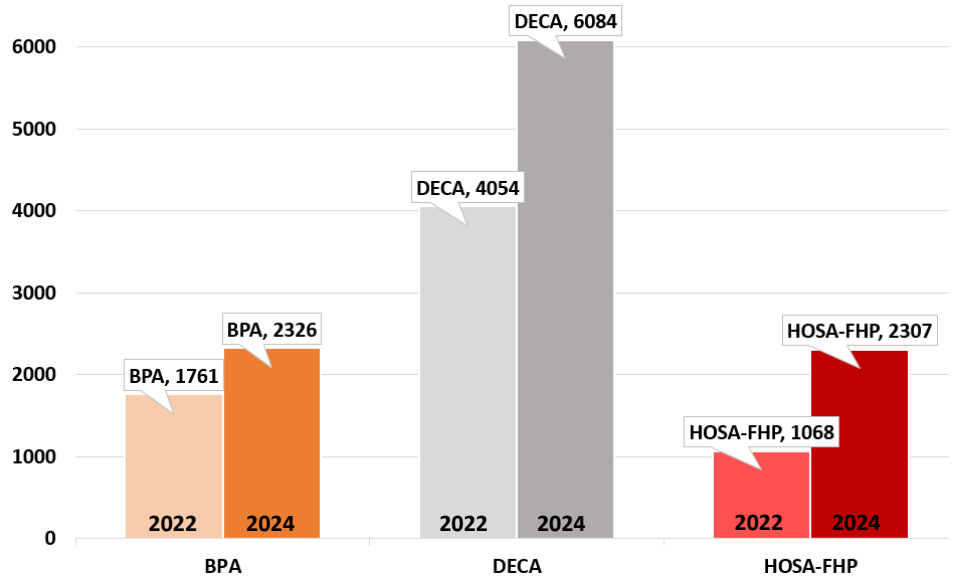
## A Year of Unprecedented Growth

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) in Minnesota continue to experience remarkable growth, reflecting the increasing demand for career-focused education and leadership development opportunities. Current membership in our CTSOs:



While all our CTSOs continue to grow, a closer look reveals three standouts:

- HOSA-FHP has grown by an impressive 116%.
- DECA has experienced a growth rate of 38%.
- BPA has grown by 28%.







The mission of **BPA** (Business Professionals of America) is to contribute to the preparation of a world-class workforce through the advancement of leadership, citizenship, academic, and technological skills.

Minnesota BPA provides educational experiences that further develop social intelligence, civic consciousness, leadership skills and self-esteem for its members.



Throughout this past biennium MN BPA has “Seized the Opportunity” (mirrored in the 2023 theme of the year! Under the continued leadership of Executive Director Jackie Schiller, BPA has experienced its largest growth in the biennium. BPA Advisors across Minnesota has enthusiastically embraced both computer science education and financial literacy. [Learn more about Minnesota BPA.](#)





The mission of Minnesota **DECA** and **Collegiate DECA** is to enhance the education of all students with interests in marketing, management or entrepreneurship. DECA assists students in developing skills and competencies for marketing careers, while building self-esteem, experiencing leadership, and providing community services.

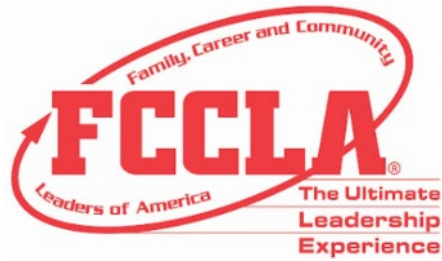


Minnesota DECA saw big changes and big growth over the past biennium. Minnesota was recognized nationally for growth, hitting 5000 members for the first time! Minnesota DECA also saw it is first Back to Business event this past biennium. The event features educational workshops and is designed to prepare students for DECA Spring Competitive Events. This event has doubled in attendees in just three years and is poised to continue to be a signature event for DECA! [Learn more about Minnesota DECA.](#)

Collegiate DECA also had an amazing two years culminating in the national ENGAGE Leadership Conference being hosted here in Minnesota. [Learn more about Minnesota Collegiate DECA.](#)







The mission of **FCCLA** (Family Career and Community Leaders of America) is to promote personal growth and leadership development through service occupations. Minnesota FCCLA empowers students to expand their leadership potential and develop skills for life within the home and workplace. FCCLA is a youth led Career and Technical in-school Student Organization with

family as its central focus. Members have the opportunity to explore the Education and Training, Human Services, Hospitality and Tourism and Visual Arts and Design career fields while gaining invaluable universal skills in planning, goal setting, problem solving, decision making, and interpersonal communication.



In 2023, FCCLA welcomed a new Executive Director: Patrick Mitchell. Prior to FCCLA, Patrick led statewide conferences, managed community inclusion projects and oversaw the administration of a statewide network that empowered thousands of people with disabilities. He also served two years with AmeriCorps, addressing workforce development needs in Minnesota. [Learn more about Minnesota FCCLA.](#)





employment skills to create a seamless transition into the workforce.

SkillsUSA Minnesota welcomed Heidi Mattson as the new Executive Director. Over the past year she has been developing new business and industry partnerships as they rebuild their membership.

SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers & industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce. SkillsUSA Minnesota creates opportunities for students, educators and business. This is accomplished through leadership training, competitive events and conferences, which enhance students' self-worth and



This biennium SkillsUSA introduced several new skill-based competitive events, including Robotics Search and Rescue! SkillsUSA is also building new partnerships with Mn State Centers of Excellence, leading to business and industry partnerships across Minnesota! [Learn more about Minnesota SkillsUSA.](#)







The Minnesota FFA Organization is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agriculture, food, and natural resources education. The Minnesota FFA Organization focuses on growing leaders, building local communities, and strengthening agriculture and recognizes students for excellence in those areas through the FFA award and degree programs.



Minnesota FFA has embraced and led in new technologies being integrated into AFNR (Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources) education. Notably, they are developing a partnership with NCAT (National Center for

Autonomous Technologies) to introduce comprehensive drone curriculum and competitive events. Furthermore, FFA has responded to a significant career shortage area and is leading the way to introduce students to careers in the meat cutting industry.



Recently, FFA welcomed a new Executive Director in 2024: Dr. T.J. Brown. T.J. spent twelve years teaching high school agricultural education and industrial technology in Springfield, MN followed by 8 years of teaching Agribusiness and Ag Mechanics at South Central College. [Learn more about Minnesota FFA.](#)



**PAS** (Professional Agricultural Student Organization) is a student-led organization that allows students to build and sharpen their skills so that they are ready for the workplace. Through competitive style learning and real-life application, members are skilled professionals and prepared to work in all areas of the agriculture industry. Minnesota PAS has a partnership with FFA and continues to lead the national PAS organization in membership and competitive events.



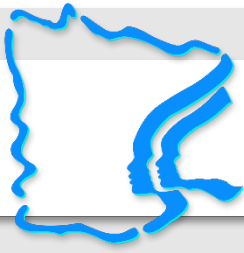
The mission of **HOSA-FHP** is to empower Future Health Professionals to become leaders in the global health community, through education, collaboration, and experience.

Over the past biennium Minnesota HOSA has more than doubled in size under the direction of Executive Director Summer Hagy. In 2024, Minnesota HOSA's conference participation has doubled in the past year, creating opportunities for over 1200 members to compete in skill-based competitions. Students had an opportunity to participate in more than 30 educational sessions, meet perspective employers and explore educational opportunities made possible by Minnesota HOSA's dedicated education, business, and industry partners.



Minnesota HOSA has also continued to pioneer new events like Midwinter Competitive Event Days and reinvent signature events including the return of MRC (Medical Reserve Corp). [Learn more about Minnesota HOSA.](#)





According to a study published by the US Dept of Education, *Looking inside the Black Box: The Value Added by Career and Technical Student Organizations to Students' High School Experience*, there is a “clear positive correlation between CTSO participation and increased academic motivation and engagement, with student members reporting higher levels of interest in their studies and better grades compared to non-members.”

Long-term, CTSOs increase a community’s economic growth and promote engaged citizenry.

## Supporting Underserved Populations

In the 2023 legislative session, the MFSO was provided additional funding to increase meaningful participation for students in underserved, nontraditional and special populations; with an emphasis on supporting economically disadvantaged students and chapters in Greater Minnesota.

As part of that effort, many of the CTSOs launched impactful programs and projects addressing barriers to participation.

**Year one (FY24) initiatives** focused on increasing access for economically disadvantaged students, bilingual (ESL) students, and schools with high BIPOC membership, ensuring that all students have opportunities to thrive within CTSOs.

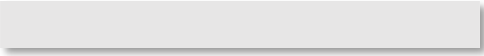
FFA. Spanish-Language Leadership Development: FFA piloted a Spanish version of leadership competitive events, expanding opportunities for Spanish-speaking students. This initiative directly impacted 30 students in year one, with continued growth in subsequent years.

Chapter Support: Financial assistance was provided to 15 FFA chapters with economic need, directly benefiting over 150 students in FY24.

FCCLA. Targeted Chapter Engagement: Leadership visits were made to four high-need schools, including Burnsville, Rochester, Shakopee, and Eastview, to increase active participation in underserved populations within FCCLA chapters.

Peer Mentor Leadership Development: A program to engage 20+ chapter officers from targeted schools, featuring virtual and in-person leadership training with guidance from State Officers and successful professionals.





HOSA-FHP. Suit Shop: To alleviate financial barriers, HOSA created a lending program for business attire required at conferences, providing 20 suits and 20 shirts for students to borrow.

Supply Cupboard: Competitive event supplies were purchased and made available to students to ensure equitable participation.

Transportation Pool: Funding reduced transportation costs for chapters in rural or economically disadvantaged areas, increasing access to leadership conferences.

**Year two (FY25) initiatives** (current), included similar transformative projects and programs expanding access to leadership opportunities and ensuring meaningful participation across the state.

FFA. Spanish Creed Expansion and Multilingual Pilot: Building on the success of the first Spanish Creed Speaking event in April 2024, FFA supported Spanish competitive event winners in attending national competitions and pilot Somali and Hmong language competitive events. Parent materials were also translated into these languages to enhance family engagement.

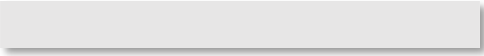
Socioeconomic Support: Transportation, housing, and Official Dress costs will be covered for chapters with high socioeconomic needs or significant BIPOC membership, facilitating participation in leadership conferences.

Unified Career Development: Four new events will pair students with and without disabilities on teams, promoting social inclusion and providing tailored resources.

FCCLA. Increased Classroom Engagement: State Officers will deliver dynamic presentations in Family and Consumer Sciences classes at underserved schools, blending interactive activities and Q&A sessions to boost engagement and membership.

Peer Mentor Leadership Program: Building on the previous year's initiative, the program will group 20 chapter leaders into mentorship teams led by State and Area Student Officers. Activities include workshops, icebreakers, and the "Lessons with Leaders" series, connecting students in underserved populations with mid-career professionals.

Economic Support: Financial barriers to participation, including the cost of official blazers, will be addressed for underserved members.



HOSA-FHP. Expanded Suit Shop: Building on the popularity of this initiative, additional suits were purchased, and existing ones maintained, for student use at leadership conferences, reducing financial barriers. Supply Cupboard: Competitive event supplies will continue to be provided to students to remove economic obstacles to participation.

Increased Transportation Pool: Additional funding lowering transportation costs for rural and economically disadvantaged chapters, supporting broader conference attendance.

SkillsUSA. Updated Uniform Program: As HOSA's program was so successful, the SkillsUSA Closet is being expanded to include the new official dress and additional career pathway uniforms, ensuring inclusivity in competitive events and leadership opportunities.

Chapter Development: Support for economically disadvantaged and rural schools will include chapter supplies and conference cost offsets.

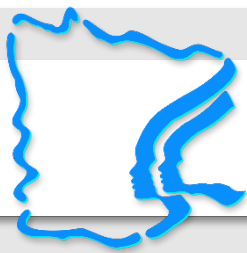
BPA. Conference Accessibility: Funding is being offset costs for district, state, and national conference registration and accommodations for economically disadvantaged chapters, particularly those with high BIPOC enrollment.

Chapter Development: Resources and support will be provided to rural and underserved schools to establish and sustain chapters.

DECA. Economic Accessibility: Conference costs for underserved chapters, such as those with high BIPOC enrollment or economic challenges, has been reduced to encourage participation in leadership and competitive events.

New Chapter Development: Support for new chapters, such as St. Paul Central and St. Cloud Apollo, will include local resources and advisor training tools; encouraging active and meaningful participation in schools with historically marginalized populations.

These programs collectively demonstrate the commitment of the Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations and Minnesota's CTSOs to fostering equitable access and meaningful participation for all students.



CELEBRATE TODAY,  
OWN TOMORROW!



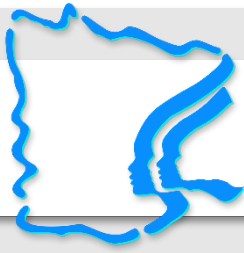
## Civic Awareness: CTSO Day at the Capitol

Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) are not just equipping students with skills for tomorrow’s workforce—they are cultivating dynamic, innovative leaders for today. The Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MFSO) recognizes the importance of fostering advocacy and civic engagement among these emerging leaders.

Each February, in celebration of Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month, Minnesota’s CTSOs participate in the annual CTSO Day at the Capitol. This signature event invites state officers and chapter presidents to take part in a unique, hands-on civic engagement experience that bridges education and government.

The event spans two days, offering student leaders a blend of training, advocacy, and interaction with policymakers. Students attend an immersive training session designed to deepen their understanding of CTSOs’ contributions to education and workforce development and explore how advocacy can drive positive change and learn how to effectively engage in the political process at both state and local levels. The following day, students convene at the Capitol for a day of action; meeting with their Senators and Representatives to share the impact of their CTSO experiences. In addition to their legislative meetings, students can attend committee hearings and explore the Capitol, providing a comprehensive view of state government in action.

In both 2023 and 2024, all of the CTSOs participated in the event, with approximately 40 students each year attending. **CTSO Day at the Capitol is a platform for empowering students to amplify their voices, advocate for their passions, and connect their education to real-world civic impact.**



In 2024, the MFSO conducted a needs assessment to determine and address the needs, or "gaps" between current conditions and desired conditions of the student organizations.

The insights gathered from this assessment will guide the MFSO Board in refining its strategic goals and ensuring targeted support to address CTSO needs effectively.

## CTSO Needs Assessment

The Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MFSO) conducted a nonfinancial needs assessment to identify opportunities for better supporting Minnesota's Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs). The assessment focused on five key areas: organizational support, individual CTSO needs, conference challenges, collaborative activities, and access and opportunity. The results indicated the following opportunities for the MFSO:

### 1. General Organizational Support

- Continue providing technical support on grant processes, reporting, and desk reviews.
- Offer regular workshops on nonprofit governance, liability, and policies (e.g., Best Practices workshops held in 2010, 2016, and 2023).

### 2. Individual CTSO Needs

- Encourage new advisors to join the CTE TIP program.
- Support CTSOs in creating "new chapter kits/resources."

### 3. Conference and Event Challenges

- Explore ways to offset registration costs for chapters in need, potentially using free/reduced lunch demographics to identify underserved populations.

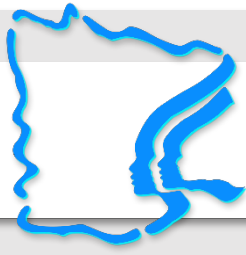
### 4. Collaborative Activities

- Expand and enhance CTSO Day at the Capitol.
- Represent CTSOs at events like CTE Works and MSBA, using joint promotional materials.

### 5. Access and Opportunity

- Offer and promote DEI-focused professional development opportunities for CTSOs, advisors, and board members.
- Provide targeted DEI support as part of the underserved populations program.

As the MFSO moves into the next biennium, the needs of the CTSOs will shape the goals and direct program improvement.



The MFSO Board of Directors meets quarterly, with the annual meeting taking place in November each year.

The Board of Directors is comprised of 23 members: 11 of which are appointed by the Governor and 12 which are direct appointments by the CTSOs.

The Board is designed to support CTE career pathways including agriculture, technical and industrial, business, marketing, family and consumer sciences, health sciences, and service occupations in K12, Higher Education and Business and Industry.

## Operations and Governance

The Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MFSO) operates under the oversight of its Board of Directors, which is responsible for ensuring financial and operational oversight. To deliver essential services, the MFSO utilizes a deliverables-based contract. The Executive Committee reviews contract performance monthly, with the full Board of Directors conducting quarterly reviews to ensure progress.

For more than 20 years, Emily Saed has maintained this contract, serving as the Executive Director of the MFSO. In preparation for a leadership transition, Emily has been gradually transitioning out of this role. The MFSO will welcome Tim Fitze as its new Executive Director in 2025, ensuring continuity and a seamless handover of responsibilities.

The MFSO maintains a partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), which administers the legislative grants for career and technical student organizations (CTSOs). Beyond this financial relationship, CTSOs collaborate closely with MDE's career pathways specialists, who provide guidance on integrating CTSO programming into Career and Technical Education (CTE) classrooms.

Additionally, the MFSO works with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to address CTE post-secondary curriculum and programming. Minnesota State also plays a vital role in supporting the MFSO's diversity, access and opportunity initiatives.

Supporting CTSOs during executive transitions is a core responsibility of the MFSO. Over the past biennium, several CTSOs experienced significant leadership changes. The MFSO provided direct, hands-on guidance to incoming Executive Directors, ensuring a smooth transition and ongoing organizational stability.





## 2024 MFSO Board of Directors

*Agriculture, Business and Industry*

Val Aarsvold, Executive Director, Minnesota FFA Foundation

*Business, Business and Industry*

Jason Subbert, General Manager, TPI Hospitality

*Family-Consumer Sciences, Business and Industry*

Suzanne Anderson, Executive Director, Mahtomedi Area Educational Foundation

*Service Occupations, Business and Industry*

Elizabeth Eckman, Joint Venture Partner/MN Recruiting Accounts Manager, EHS Recruiting Company

*Marketing, Business and Industry*

Michaela Clubb, Program Director, The Brand Lab

*Healthcare, Business and Industry*

Brady Malecha, Training Representative, Saint Paul College

*Middle School Administrator, Education*

Jessica Cabeen, Principal, Ellis Middle School

*Secondary School Administrator, Education*

Cindy Walters, Director of Career and Alternative Programs, SW Metro Intermediate District

*School District Administrator, Education*

Dr. Kim Hiel, Superintendent, Osseo Public Schools

*Post Secondary Administrator, Education*

Farfum Ladroma, Dean of Academic Operations, Anoka Ramsey Community College

*Agriculture, Career and Technical Education*

Pam Debele, Education Coordinator, Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation

*Technical/Industry, Career and Technical Education*

Jason Bruns, BSME, MBA, Director, Minnesota State Engineering Center of Excellence



*Family-Consumer Sciences, Career and Technical Education*

Tammy Borman, RTR Middle School and High School, Career and Technical Education Instructor

*Business, Career and Technical Education*

Sean Hayes, Associate Director, UnitedHealthcare Healthcare  
Officer, Secretary of the MFSO Board of Directors

*Service Occupations, Career and Technical Education*

Cherry Cramer, Retired Service Occupations Educator  
Officer, Treasurer of the MFSO Board of Directors

*Health Occupations, Career and Technical Education*

Daniel D. Olson, MBA, MA, MLS(ASCP)CM, Project Manager, PMO, N. Memorial Health Care System  
Officer, Co-Chairperson of the MFSO Board of Directors

*Marketing, Career and Technical Education*

Justin Klassen, Owner Just Good Farms, JSK Prom and Bridal, Klassen Brothers Farms.

*Post-Secondary Representative, Career and Technical Education*

Linda Althoff, Executive Director, Delano Area/Greater 12 Chamber of Commerce  
Officer, Co-Chairperson of the MFSO Board of Directors

*Post-Secondary Representative, Career and Technical Education*

James J. Elvidge, Owner, Elvidge Training and Consulting

*Secondary Representative, Career and Technical Education*

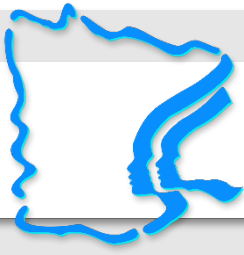
Steve Weber, Owner, ForePartners LLC

*Secondary Representative, Career and Technical Education*

Danny Spors, Brand Manager, DECA Inc.

*Secondary Representative, Career and Technical Education*

Lavyne Rada, Director, Minnesota Teacher Induction Program (TIP)



Together, through shared purpose and collaboration, we will ensure that all Minnesota students have access to the opportunities, resources, and support they need to thrive.

## Moving Forward

The Minnesota Foundation for Student Organizations (MFSO) remains steadfast in its commitment to supporting Minnesota's Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) and the students they serve.

Over the past biennium, the MFSO has made significant strides in strengthening the foundational support CTSOs need to deliver impactful leadership, technical, and skill-based programming. These efforts have ensured that students across Minnesota are not only prepared to transition successfully from education to the workforce but are also equipped to become tomorrow's leaders and innovators.

Looking ahead, the MFSO will continue to build upon this progress, fostering an inclusive climate that prioritizes equity, access, and opportunity. By expanding support to underserved, nontraditional, and special populations, we aim to create flexible pathways that increase program participation and completion.

The MFSO is committed to strengthening partnerships with education, business, and industry stakeholders. These collaborations will align CTSO programming with career pathways, bridging the gap between education and workforce demands to meet the needs of Minnesota's evolving economy.

As we move into the next biennium, the MFSO will continue to champion the unique role of CTSOs as a critical educational tool. By providing students with real-world experiences and applied learning opportunities, CTSOs will empower students to succeed in their careers, contribute to their communities, and help shape Minnesota's future.



## Definitions

### Organization

A Minnesota career and technical student organization must:

- Satisfy all requirements to be in good standing with the national organization;
- Have at least 300 student members in recognized chapters;
- Maintain at least 10 active chapters [within Minnesota]; and
- Have a maximum of two organizations recognized within each of the 6 defined career pathway areas as included in M.S. 124D.34\*.

### Chapter

A career and technical student organization chapter must:

- Be a part of a Career and Technical Education (CTE) state approved program;
- Be in a state and nationally recognized, chartered chapter; and
- Have ten (10) or more members [within the chapter] that meet “member” guidelines.

### Member

A career and technical student organization student member must:

- Be a student who has fully paid state and national CTSO dues for the current year;
- Be enrolled in an approved CTE program at a Minnesota education school or college in grade levels that meet state CTE guidelines.

### Reporting

Each CTSO organization must:

- Comply with the MDE grants management reporting requirements;
- Prepare and present quarterly reports to the MFSO Board of Directors;
- Report the most recent years student and chapter membership to the MFSO office prior to July 1 of each fiscal year;
- Submit to an audit at the discretion of the MFSO Board of Directors.