

# STATE OF MINNESOTA

Executive Department



## Governor Tim Walz

### Executive Order 21-31

#### Establishing the Governor's Council on Economic Expansion

**I, Tim Walz, Governor of the State of Minnesota**, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and applicable statutes, issue the following Executive Order:

The people of Minnesota met the COVID-19 pandemic and worst economic downturn since the Great Depression as we always do when faced with hardship—with grit and resiliency. As we look toward the future, we must ensure that we emerge from this crisis stronger than before and with our people—Minnesota's strongest asset—at the center.

Although the pandemic has affected everyone in Minnesota, it continues to disproportionately impact families and children with fewer economic resources. The pandemic exacerbated existing racial and geographic inequities—disparities that have persisted across generations. Too many metrics reflect these disparities, including rates of unemployment, home ownership, business ownership, poverty, illness, and death. During the pandemic, Indigenous communities, Black communities, and people of color lost work at higher rates, widening the longstanding racial wealth gap. Racial bias and gender discrimination continue to impact individuals' economic stability and lifetime earnings. People who experience persistent income volatility are less likely to have emergency savings to fall back on and are more likely to be unbanked and to use costly alternative financial services like payday loans. This economic insecurity harms both emotional and physical health.

Our economic recovery from the pandemic presents unique opportunities to build a stronger Minnesota. Empowering small business growth and workers is critical to this work. Fostering a strong innovation ecosystem, including through partnerships with the nonprofit sector, will bring jobs with long-term potential to our state. Building incentives and access to capital for entrepreneurs of color, Indigenous entrepreneurs, and historically underserved groups will improve our business climate. This work will send a message to businesses and talent around the world that Minnesota has a thriving economy that will emerge even stronger on the other side of this pandemic.

Minnesota's demographics offer an important guide for the years to come. Seventy percent of our population growth in the next decade will be from people of color. Ensuring inclusive

economic growth is not just a moral imperative, but an economic one. Research shows that when growth is inclusive, it brings greater overall prosperity.

We know that childcare is the backbone of our economy, and that childcare workers are the workforce behind the workforce. Increasing access to affordable childcare will play a key role in our shared economic success. Affordable, quality childcare was critically scarce throughout the state even before COVID-19. The pandemic worsened this shortage, deeply impacting our economy and disproportionately impacting women.

We must seize the opportunity to imagine an economy that is equitable, inclusive, sustainable, resilient, and centered on our workforce. We must identify the policies and strategies that are grounded in community that will achieve that vision. We cannot allow our economy to default to pre-pandemic settings.

Many key partners—including tribal, state, and local governments, businesses, workers, higher education institutions, nonprofits, grassroots movements, and communities—have valuable insights that will help us achieve our goals. By working together to intentionally rebuild our economy, we will better serve all of the people of Minnesota.

For these reasons, I order as follows:

1. The Governor’s Council on Economic Expansion (“Council”) is established to catalyze progress toward an equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient economy.
2. The purpose of the Council is to reimagine Minnesota’s economic future and recommend policies and strategies for the public, private, and nonprofit sectors that will support shared economic prosperity.
3. The Council provides an opportunity to center workers in our rebuilding of the economy and further attack poverty, which are priorities of our Administration.
4. The Council will be comprised of the following members:
  - a. Jeff Ettinger, Former Chairman of the Board and CEO, Hormel Foods (Co-Chair)
  - b. Paul Williams, President and CEO, Project for Pride in Living (Co-Chair)
  - c. Scott Burns, CEO and Co-Founder, Structural
  - d. Brett Carter, Executive Vice President and Chief Customer and Innovation Officer, Xcel Energy
  - e. Joe Fowler, President, Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council
  - f. Jodi Hubler, Vice Chair, Medical Alley Board of Directors
  - g. Brenda Hilbrich, Executive Vice President, SEIU Healthcare Minnesota

- h. Neel Kashkari, President and CEO, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis
  - i. Marcus Owens, Executive Director, African American Leadership Forum
  - j. Tuleah Palmer, President and CEO, Blandin Foundation
  - k. Joo Hee Pomplun, Executive Director, Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
  - l. Nonoko Sato, Executive Director, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
  - m. Traci Tapani, Co-President, Wyoming Machine
  - n. Bharti Wahi, Executive Director, Children’s Defense Fund - Minnesota
  - o. Penny Wheeler, CEO, Allina Health
5. The Council will work closely with the Commissioners of Employment and Economic Development, Human Services, and Labor and Industry. The Council will also benefit from the expertise of other state agencies.
  6. The Council will consult with existing councils and entities, including:
    - a. The Governor’s One Minnesota Council on Inclusion and Equity (“One Minnesota Council”), which I established in my first executive order, to address disparities based on race, geography, and economic status and to renew our State’s commitment to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to thrive.
    - b. The Governor’s Community Council on Inclusion and Equity, which I established in Executive Order 21-13, and through which community members advise, support, and collaborate with the One Minnesota Council.
    - c. The Children’s Cabinet, which places children at the center of government.
  7. The Council’s actions and recommendations will also be informed by consultation with tribal, state, and local governments, businesses, workers, higher education institutions, nonprofits, grassroots movements, and communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the inequitable systems of the past and the pandemic.
  8. The duties of the Council are as follows:
    - a. By November 15, 2021, the Council will recommend the following to the Governor and Lt. Governor:
      - i. Immediate actions that can be taken by the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.
      - ii. Policy changes and investments for potential enactment during the 2022 legislative session, including recommendations on ways that

Minnesota might leverage remaining American Rescue Plan dollars to advance equitable economic growth.

- b. By June 30, 2022, submit a long-term roadmap for systemic change in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors that will achieve a more equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient Minnesota economy.
- c. Solicit, receive, and respond to feedback from workers, families, and communities that are representative of Minnesota and our Administration's priorities for equity and inclusion.

- 9. The Department of Employment and Economic Development and Department of Human Services will provide administrative support to the Council.

This Executive Order is effective fifteen days after publication in the State Register and filing with the Secretary of State. It will remain in effect until July 1, 2022 or until rescinded by proper authority.

A determination that any provision of this Executive Order is invalid will not affect the enforceability of any other provision of this Executive Order. Rather, the invalid provision will be modified to the extent necessary so that it is enforceable.

Signed on September 14, 2021.



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**Tim Walz**  
Governor

Filed According to Law:



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**Steve Simon**  
Secretary of State