

# Best Places to Work in Southeast Minnesota



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# Introduction

- What is the Best Places to Work program?
- Why does it matter?
- How does it benefit employers and the workforce in Southeast Minnesota?



# Program Overview

- 16 Years of Recognizing Workplace Excellence
- Employers compete to be named a 'Best Place to Work'
- Extensive survey covering key workplace factors
- Evaluation categories: Small (<50 employees), Medium (51-150), Large (151+ employees)

# The Application & Evaluation Process

- Employers complete a comprehensive 40-question survey
- Data is analyzed using measurable benchmarks
- Scores weighted across turnover, growth, training, benefits, pay, and workplace culture
- A panel of judges reviews results and selects winners

*Measurable Data*

Turnover Rate  
Growth Rate  
Promotion Rate  
Employee Evaluations  
Employee Feedback  
Training Expenditures  
Number of Employees Trained  
Hours Employees Spent in Training  
Percentage of Employees Injured  
Diversity of Management  
Percentage of Disabled Workers  
401k Participation  
Stock Ownership Participation  
Fully Funded Retirement Participation  
Profit Sharing Participation  
Bonus Participation  
Health Insurance Participation  
Health Insurance Expenditure  
Dental Insurance Participation  
Dental Insurance Expenditure  
Life Insurance Participation  
Life Insurance Expenditure  
Short-Term Disability Participation  
Short-Term Disability Expenditure  
Long-Term Disability Participation  
Long-Term Disability Expenditure  
Availability of Section 125 plan  
Child/Elder Care Participation  
Child/Elder Care Expenditure  
Paid Time Off  
Employee Assistance Program  
Telecommuting Opportunities  
Written Flex Time Policy  
Average Increase in Pay

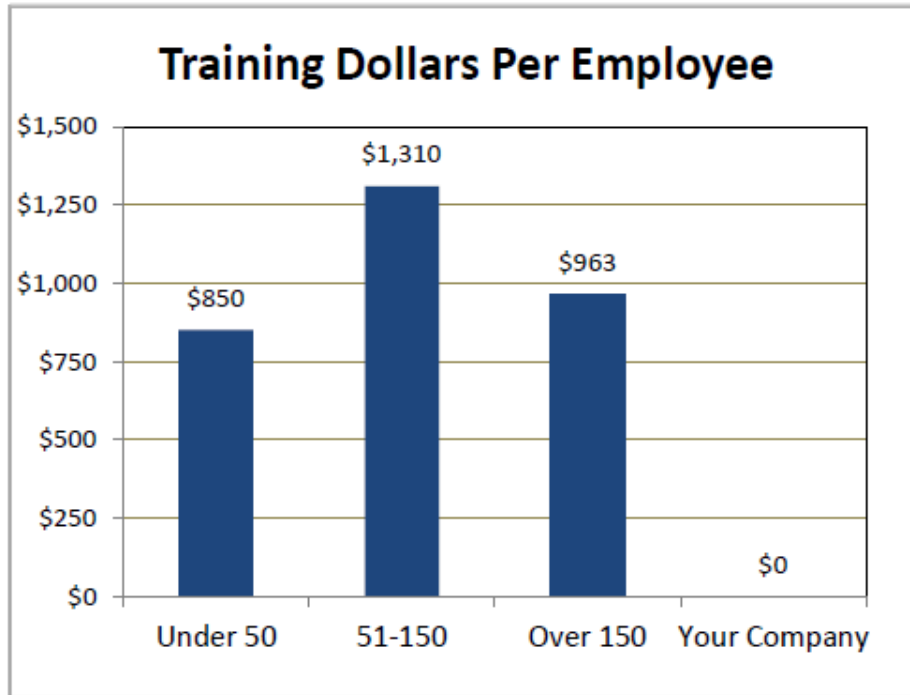
*Written Response*

Orientation Program  
Employees' ability to influence decision-making  
Programs Company is especially proud of

# What Employers Gain from Participating

- A detailed workplace report benchmarking them against regional employers
- Actionable insights to improve recruitment, retention, and workplace culture
- Recognition and marketing benefits as a top employer in the region
- Access to best practices shared by other top employers

## Training Expenditures



The average training expenditure for all companies was \$1,182 per employee. Of those reporting, the top nine (20%) companies all average more than \$1,726 per employee. There were nine (20%) companies spending less than \$414 per employee.

*Terminated employees included in graphs.*



## Successful Recruitment Strategies

There were a variety of ways organizations recruit talent. The clear message in the answers is that organizations have changed their approach to meet the challenge of the talent market.

- Taking care of our employees, friends and acquaintances
- Digital streaming on YouTube, our Facebook, Instagram
- We post through our craigslist. Our most popular
- I (the owner) will make

## Strategies for increasing Retention, Diversity and Quality of Life Issues

The shortage of talent has encouraged employers to create an environment where employees feel welcomed and quickly become engaged with the mission. Below is a sampling of what is being accomplished in Southeast Minnesota.

- Alliance groups are available for employee participation. These voluntary, employee-led groups are aimed at fostering a diverse, inclusive workplace. The alliance groups include mental health, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Persons of Color), LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender,

## Programs of Which You Are Especially Proud

Responses to this area were extensive in their uniqueness. Due to the variety of remarkable practices being utilized throughout Minnesota, we decided just to list a sample of what is being offered.

- We offer a 4 on 4 off schedule.
- Rolled out a new wellness platform, WellRight, that helps employees keep track of their wellness journey and includes challenges, health questionnaires, and reminders to get your annual check-ups all while earning points for incentives. Our wellness program focuses on overall wellness including financial, mental, and environmental wellness, not just physical & nutritional wellness.
- Engagement Team with a mission to cultivate a culture that is fun, inclusive, authentic, and positive. Their job is to plan, organize, and drive new social, charity, wellness and recognition initiatives for the company and includes employees from different areas of the company.
- We have a sick leave donation policy - which allows employees to donate sick leave to other

up  
people).

senior  
mutual

diversity  
leadership  
In  
available to all

# 2024 Award Recipients

## **Small Employer**

(Under 50 Employees)

Southeast Service Cooperative  
Peterson, Kolker, Haedt & Benda, Ltd.  
IBI Data  
Southern MN Municipal Power Agency  
Arcadian Bank

## **Mid-Size Employer**

(50-150 employees)

Albert Lea Seed House  
People's Energy Cooperative  
Custom Alarm  
K&G Manufacturing  
Cooperative Response Center, Inc.

## **Large Employer**

(Over 150 employees)

Gemini, Inc.  
Knutson Construction  
Olmsted County  
Riverland Community College  
Benike Construction

# Key Findings from This Year's Participants

- 37 participating employers this year (an increase from previous years)

## **Workplace trends:**

- Growing emphasis on flexibility, diversity, and work-life balance
- Investments in employee training & development
- Creative recruitment & retention strategies being adopted

# The Cost & Return on Investment

- The program costs approximately \$11,000 to run
- Provides employers with valuable data they can use for workforce planning
- Offers community-wide benefits by showcasing and encouraging strong employment practices

# Annual Recognition Event

- Held in April to celebrate winners
- Employers receive awards and network with other top workplaces
- Media coverage and public recognition of winners

# 2025 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FORUM



Featuring  
Keynote Speaker

*Krista Ryan*



**Location**  
Rochester Event Center



**Date**  
April 3, 2025



**Cost**  
35 person | 250 table of (8)



**Featuring**  
2025 Best Places to Work



### Forum Highlights:

- 2025 Best Places to Work ●
- Networking ●
- Keynote Speaker ●
- Employer Panel ●
- Lunch ●

### About the Event

Join businesses and community partners across Southeast Minnesota to explore innovative solutions for building a future-ready workforce. This year's forum features keynote speaker **Krista Ryan**, a Southeast Minnesota native, dynamic business coach, HR expert, and published author. Drawing on her local roots and national expertise, Krista will share actionable strategies to navigate change, foster belonging, and inspire collaboration. An engaging employer panel and the recognition of the 2025 Southeast Minnesota Best Places to Work make this a must-attend event for anyone invested in workforce development.

REGISTER NOW



<https://wff2025.eventbrite.com>





Workforce Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board  
2024 BEST  
CONGRATULATES  
Cooperative Response Center, Inc.  
2024 Best Places to Work

Workforce Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board  
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CONGRATULATES  
Peterson, Kolker, Haedt & Benda, Ltd.  
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CONGRATULATES  
K&G Manufacturing  
2024 Best Places to Work

Workforce Southeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board  
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2024 Best Places to Work











# Why It Matters for Workforce Development

- Helps strengthen the employer-employee relationship
- Supports economic growth by improving job quality
- Creates a benchmark for workplace excellence in Southeast Minnesota
- Encourages data-driven decision-making for better employment practices



# Q&A and Contact Info



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