

# Minnesota Association of Professional Employees



## 2022-2027 Strategic Plan



# Minnesota Association of Professional Employees Strategic Plan 2022-2027

## Our Mission

Public-sector workers building better workplaces and supporting strong, diverse communities.

Questions about this publication may be directed to:  
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*Approved by the MAPE Board of Directors March 18th, 2022*

Dear Union Siblings,

As we started this strategic plan, our union had just wrapped up successful negotiation of our contract, punctuated by a rally on the Capitol steps. We made it clear to the employer we were serious about getting a fair contract, and that moment was one of the best of my time as your president so far. We have also had some of our most difficult moments during the ongoing pandemic, wrestling with questions about working from home, employer policies, and how to ensure our members thrive during this unprecedented time.

As the Board of Directors has pored over member feedback and your important questions, we have tried to set aside those moments of difficulty and focus on the fundamental questions facing the future of our union.

How will we build a union that can win the contracts, investments, workplace treatment, respect, and safety our members deserve? How do we focus on what matters most to our members while speaking out for and protecting our collective values? How will we train, engage, and empower each other to ensure that our siblings receive the support they need? How will we show up with coalition partners, both politically and through our organizing and advocacy work? In short, where do we want to go as a union, and how do we get there?

This strategic plan is a result of countless hours of conversations with members, surveys, research, and challenging discussions. It is both a vision for our future and a guiding document for ensuring success. This plan is our North Star, aligning our work and moving us forward in creating the union we need and deserve. *I hope all members, from the Iron Range to Albert Lea, see themselves in this plan.*

Thank you for our work together in the coming years.

In solidarity,



Megan Dayton





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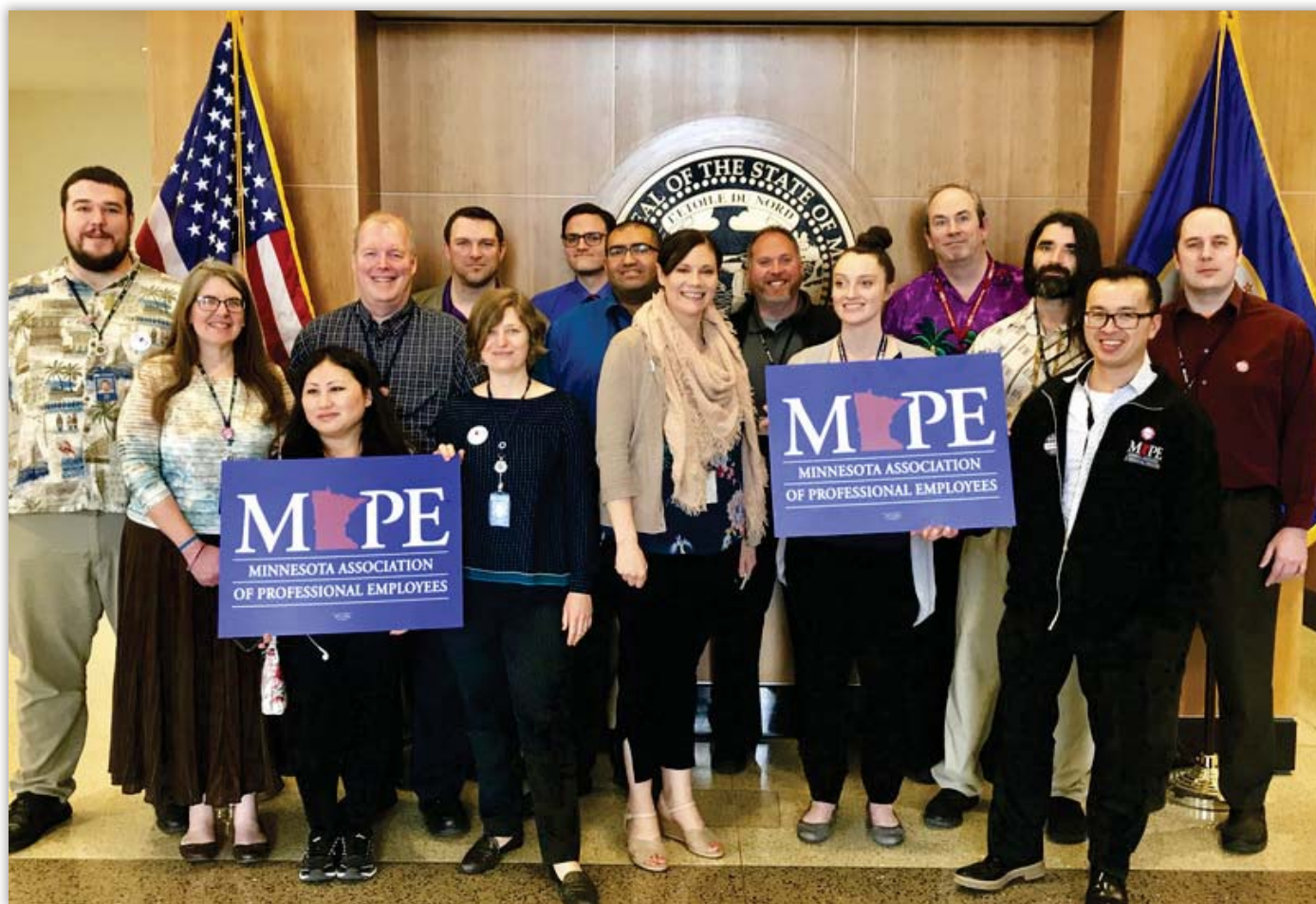
## Introduction

Our plan encompasses three core parts:

**Section 1** - Essential background information and an analysis of our union as it stands today.

**Section 2** - Our mission, vision, values, and plans for organizing people, resources, and ideas.

**Section 3** - Our plan for implementing the strategic plan.

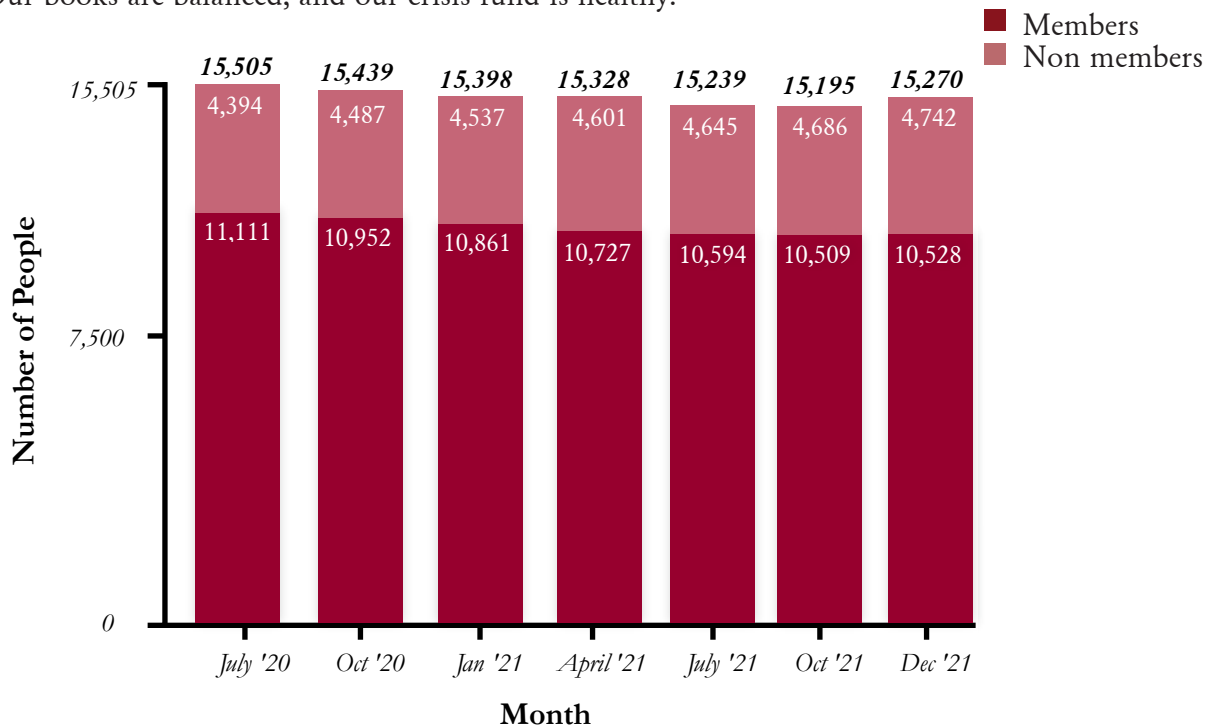




# Section 1: Background

## Background

When creating this strategic plan, our union's membership was strong but had felt the effects of the pandemic. Our books are balanced, and our crisis fund is healthy.

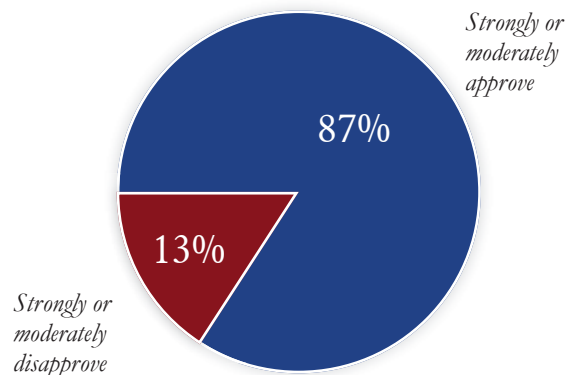


However, we have had to use Future Years' Funds to manage at times, which leaves us without the resources to make meaningful investments in our future. At the same time, most of our members reported being happy with the union and fairly represented. More robust membership numbers mean substantially more power to create the workplaces our members deserve. We cannot be satisfied until we are 15,000 strong.

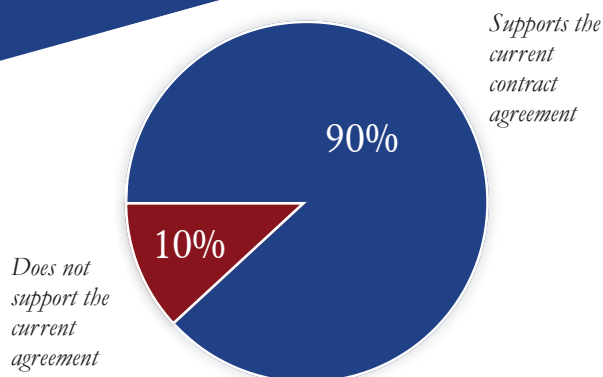
## Member Survey

As part of the strategic planning process, 3,394 members took a broad survey in the fall of 2021. Some highlights from the survey included:

**Approval of the union:** 87 percent of survey respondents said they “strongly approved” or “moderately approved” of the job the union was doing. Only 13 percent moderately or strongly disapproved. The most robust approval numbers came from members who identify as women (91 percent) and from members aged 18-35 (92 percent).

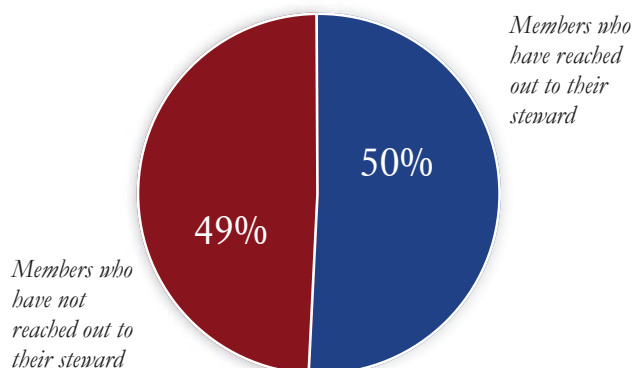






**Perception of the 2021-2023 contract:** 90 percent of survey respondents said they supported the current agreement, with the same share also expressing understanding of the union's fight.

**Engaging with stewards:** About half of members said they had gone to their steward with either a question or when they needed help. That number was 10 percent higher for members who identify as women than for those who identify as men, with members who identify as non-binary coming in the highest, at almost 70 percent. This percentage was also slightly higher for members in Greater Minnesota than for members in the metro. Engagement with stewards rose as members aged, but 45 percent of young members (age 18-35) also reported having engaged with their steward.



| STRENGTHS  | CHALLENGES  |
|--|---|
| Members lifted up as strengths our diverse, educated, geographically spread out membership; our mature, strong, well-enforced contract, our political program and partnerships, our dedicated and talented staff, and our member-driven-and-led union. | Members cited the challenges of a membership made up of professionals that don't always see the union or union values as critical, members being tired and spread thin, our union's size and diversity making it hard to come to consensus at times, a harmful public narrative about public workers, and the employer's use of temporary unclassified status, along with canceling or limiting access to new employee orientation. |

There will be two gubernatorial elections, two negotiation cycles, and much critical work around ensuring the contracts and workplaces our members deserve in the next five years. After enduring a global pandemic, it is more apparent than ever that our union is central to our members' experience through any changes that come our way.

Moving toward a more open, transparent, and member-driven union will improve the lives of our members, their communities, and the state of Minnesota.

This plan is a collection of thousands of our members' work, perspectives, priorities, and vision. It is our path forward for the next five years.



## Section 2: Our Union

## Our Union

MAPE is a union made up of more than 15,000 employees who work in all segments of Minnesota state government service, from air quality control specialists to zoologists, who are significant contributors to the high quality of life enjoyed by Minnesotans. MAPE members deliver the services that make it all possible. The state works because we do!

### Mission

Public-sector workers building better workplaces and supporting strong, diverse communities.

### Vision

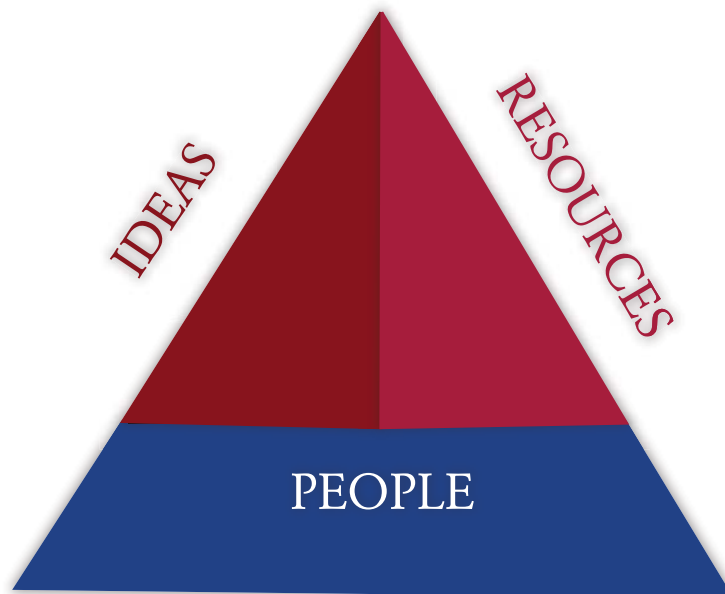
Workplaces are fair when someone who sees something of concern can speak up to create change. Our members are experts in their fields; acting upon their expertise leads to a better Minnesota. We are building power with organized people, resources, and ideas.

### Values

MAPE members strive to provide workers with the resources and tools to exercise their voice to cultivate positive change for the collective good. Together, we value:

- Democracy with transparency and accountability
- Diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion
- Solidarity

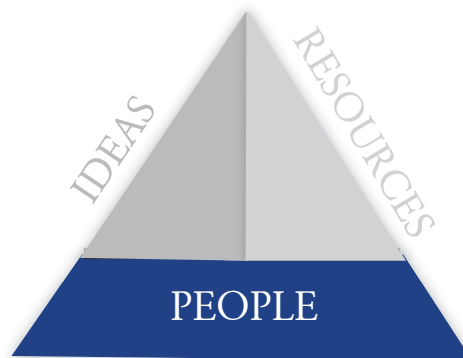
Our power comes from three places: Our People, Our Resources, and Our Ideas. Our members are the base and foundation of our union, of our communities, and of the work done by the state of Minnesota.





## Organized PEOPLE

Every MAPE member is part of building the union. Our members are our union, and our union is our members. For this statement to be accurate, our organizing must be open, transparent, and persistent in member engagement. We must create opportunities for members to build a better union.



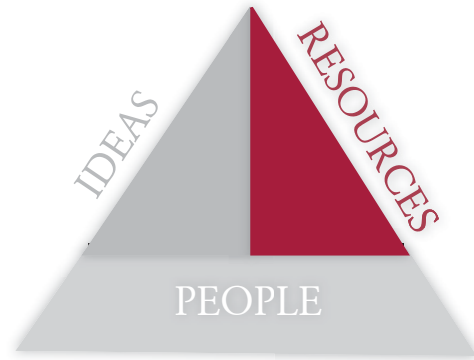
- ***Bringing our work together.*** MAPE's past practice of siloed work, divided between contract, political, local organizing, and enforcement, is ending. In this strategic plan, we align our work across both membership and staff. This alignment will improve our contract, political and local organizing campaigns to achieve greater member engagement, increasing our capacity as a result. All of our members have common goals that everyone can help achieve. We will unite our work under one comprehensive plan that engages members in different aspects of our fight (elections, legislative, contract, etc.).
- ***Connecting with members who telework.*** To organize our members, we have to reach people we do not see in person. Creating best practices and sharing successful approaches to telework issues will help us meet this challenge. We may be physically distant, but we will be truly connected and powerful. Efforts will include organizing with all new employees and tackling challenges with the employer as well as corresponding data issues.
- ***Creating member entry points to engagement.*** Our members need validation and support for taking on an agency-specific fight, lifting up issues like college debt, or taking on a problematic supervisor. We will 1) build and create more opportunities for members to engage in short- and longer-term efforts to assert our power; 2) host more phone banks, letter-writing campaigns, and internal organizing drives.
- ***Advocating in campaigns and at the Capitol.*** Member voices are some of the most powerful change-makers for elected officials. We will make both our political endorsement and giving processes more open, and decision-makers will hear our members' voices. Political efforts will support pro-public employee candidates and elected officials from candidate endorsements to donations. We want to back up our political endorsements with action and fight for our champions, including building a collective commitment to actively supporting our endorsed candidates.
- ***Human capacity building.*** Sufficient staffing levels and structure, steward recruitment and retention, and organizational priorities will ensure our ability to be responsive to members, especially at moments of crisis.
- ***Strong partnerships.*** We are an independent union, but we exist in an environment with many other potential allies. We must build on our relationships with other state employee unions to share the arc of the successive two contracts and explore opportunities to work together, to ensure anti-worker forces cannot pit us against each other. We will invest time at both the leadership and staff levels to strengthen our existing partnerships and go beyond traditional allies, finding places to be donors, supporters, or partners.

- ***Members during bargaining.*** The negotiations team does not work in a vacuum. Our members everywhere create the pressure we need to bargain the contract we deserve. We will:
  1. Continuously organize to ensure a robust and united membership;
  2. Engage local Contract Action Teams (CATs) in a series of planned stress tests throughout the cycle to assess internal progress and strength;
  3. Drive an engagement effort that includes a survey plan to understand members' priorities; deploy our locally-driven workplaces to discuss the contract campaign; and
  4. Find new and creative ways of showing public support and solidarity for the negotiations team.



## Organized RESOURCES

To win bigger fights, we must effectively, efficiently, and most importantly, collectively deploy our resources, including the time we commit, our dues and financial capacity, and our relationships. Organizing our resources means not wasting time, money, or political capital on things that do not build our collective power.



Every member will know:

1. the value and collective strength created by their dues and commitment;
2. the strategic and compelling impact of their time towards our joint mission;
3. the partnerships we build with allies and feel the benefits of those partnerships;
4. who to go to if they need help or have a question, feel comfortable and empowered to engage their steward, and get the help and support they need.

The resources we bring to bear, and the structures and investments we make with them, have the power to transform our union and our state.

- ***Steward training and support.*** We grow our power by organizing and supporting our stewards, who are often the first to interact with members. To do this, we will expand our steward training to two days, adding content that develops our stewards' organizing skills as well as role-plays and practice opportunities that ensure they are not just gaining a theoretical understanding of the work. Expanded training will pair with creating an annual steward retreat, a post-ratification steward briefing, and other opportunities for stewards to learn from each other regularly, get updates, and stay sharp. We will:
  1. work with our Chief Stewards to ensure new stewards are supported and know who to call as they learn the job;
  2. support Chief Stewards with training materials, suggested agenda items, and tools, so their time with stewards is valuable;
  3. invest in tools to share notes and experiences across agencies and regions to identify organizing opportunities, catch problematic trends, and ensure fair outcomes for our members; and
  4. invest in the capacity to track how the employer handles critical issues.
- ***Supporting Meet and Confer Committees.*** Meet and Confer committees are the resources that can move what feels like an isolated issue into a campaign that transforms an agency or even our state. To support organizing through Meet and Confers, we will:
  1. create regular and consistent opportunities for agency teams to meet with the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee;



2. create job descriptions to clarify the Meet and Confer scope, authority, and focus;
3. formally and informally generate and support internal communications for members within agencies;
4. track issues more widely, allowing for agency-level and statewide monitoring; and
5. establish a process for communication between agencies and regions to identify challenges and solutions.

- ***Focusing our pro-labor political work.*** Our work is non-partisan, but we live in a political world that affects the environment in which we work. Organizing our money and time engaging in politics builds our union's power. In 2022, we cut back on donations, withheld traditional giving, and slowed our endorsement process. We are reinvesting in organizing efforts, lost time, and external partnerships. We will make timely and strategic decisions throughout the cycle and, in the short term, will invest in ourselves and strategic alliances. While we hope to get better results from elected allies going forward, depending on the effort's success in 2022, we will continue evolving throughout the next five years.



**"We can't just be only about bread and butter. I don't want to be in a union that focuses on narrow definitions of business. Many unions share mutual goals. This union should collaborate with other unions to see wins across the board. Our goals and values will amplify when we speak and work in unison with labor unions."**

**-- Rene Perrance**

- ***Modernizing our member data.*** Excellence in data quality and quantity is the foundation of efficient and effective organizing. We will:
  1. invest in tools and structures to collect data and use it to advance members' priorities throughout the next five years;
  2. continually update databases with our member information to learn about involvement, needs, and experiences; and
  3. push the employer to provide more details and data promptly.
- ***Effective internal structures.*** Organizations can drown in too much bureaucracy and flounder without form and transparency. We will:
  1. consciously and intentionally reexamine our structure and, as needed, make refinements to ensure the best outcomes for members guide our decision-making;
  2. formalize the Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Committee's (EDIC) role and structure and its relationship to the Organizing Council and the Diversity and Belonging Committee;
  3. create a budget for the EDIC's work and invest in its priorities;
  4. take intentional steps towards an equity lens in decision-making;

5. clarify the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors on governance and the Executive Committee on day-to-day matters; and
  6. review the Bylaws and policies of the Employee Rights Committee (ERC) to find opportunities to maximize our Chief Stewards' time.
- ***An equitable dues structure.*** Our Finance Work Group, working in conjunction with the Board of Directors, will bring a formal proposal to the Delegate Assembly in 2023. An education and engagement action plan will accompany this proposal to earn the support of members. It is critical that members clearly understand the impact by hearing and discussing the importance of a more equitable dues structure.
  - ***Strike preparation and the crisis fund.*** Power comes from funds that sustain an organization through a strike or a crisis created by external anti-union forces. The Finance Work Group will evaluate the crisis fund's target balance and governance language. In part, we will examine how to adapt the crisis fund to support members while protecting its use in critical situations effectively. This assignment will begin in 2022, and language to the membership by the 2023 Delegate Assembly will reflect any necessary changes or considerations. The President will ensure time with the Board of Directors and the Negotiations Team for the Finance Work Group to update the crisis fund's balance and review its purpose.
  - ***Integrated Communications.*** The key to achieving our mission and living out our values is communicating with members, allies, legislators, the Governor, and Minnesota communities about our work as State employees and as a union. From the beginning, we will incorporate communications staff and tools into plans and campaigns, centering strategic decision-making in our internal and public-facing communications. In this age of digital media, we have numerous communications tools at our disposal, such as peer-to-peer texting, social media, websites, surveys, digital newsletters, and our traditional media outlets. We must educate members and staff alike on the resources available through MAPE's communications team.

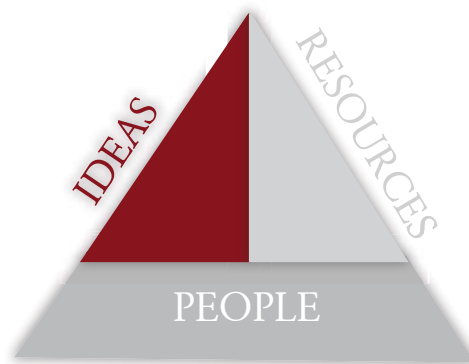


"Our strength is our unity to each other. We work really hard to support each other."

- Vernitta Moore

## Organized IDEAS

We envision a robust workforce that generates energy from diversity and health, guiding us to enact the values and beliefs that make our union great.



- ***All members have a role in our union.*** We are MAPE, and MAPE is all of us. To be the most powerful union we can be we must shift from the mentality that our union is run by those with titles to one which opens doors and respectfully pushes members to choose our fights and jump in to lead them. We are 15,000 State employees, banding together for our siblings and our state. We create our successes and fight through our challenges together.
- ***Equity at the center of our work.*** Equity must be at the center of our work for MAPE to truly represent members of all races, ethnicities, religions, gender identities, and abilities. We will establish and fund an ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion training effort for our union's leadership at all levels and create space for post-training conversations, communication, and general next steps to identify and build campaigns. Each governing body will have an equity plan to map out how specific work touches equity and how we can make measurable strides toward the broader vision. We will intentionally build capacity and create new leadership across the state focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion, generating and leading campaigns, and supporting the ongoing data and training work.
- ***Pro-labor issues on the campaign trail.*** Our challenges and opportunities are essential to the future of Minnesota. We will clarify to candidates and elected officials that we are looking for more than just the right words. We expect them to live up to their priorities with 1) a budget that adequately funds State agencies; 2) contract negotiations and ratification; 3) the appointment of labor-friendly Commissioners. We seek to elect a pro-public employee Governor and majority in both legislative chambers.
- ***Mentorship.*** Creating relationships across agency and geography through mentorship opportunities builds our solidarity. We will provide collaboration opportunities for members in similar job classifications to share stories, discuss success strategies, and ask questions. After some experimentation, members will evaluate the helpfulness and success of the program and make adjustments and expansions accordingly. We will support the groups with connection tools to stay in touch and share information and experiences.



**"We don't back down from things that are important. We step up, we are unafraid!"**

**- Jonathan Wetenkamp**



- ***A fairer contract.*** Intelligent and clear proposals provide the direction to build strong negotiating campaigns. We will train and support the new Negotiations Team with research and information from the last team and clear guidance from member engagement. We will contend with the employer early and often so that they are clear on the shared goals of our members.
- ***Accountability for the promise of an equitable workplace.*** Fully realizing equity in our union means ensuring that our workplaces are unbiased. We will:
  1. conduct a landscape analysis to identify what data are available from the employer related to equity, diversity, and inclusion;
  2. request data related to applicant and staff demographics, employee retention, diversity training participation, climate, and leadership;
  3. alternatively develop a plan for systematic data collection through the legislature, organizing, and our contract;
  4. review each agency's affirmative action plan to find themes and track progress, so agencies are accountable for improving the hiring and retention of protected groups;
  5. work with the Negotiations Team to demand all agencies implement diversity, equity, and inclusion committees; and
  6. hold our employer accountable for prioritizing equity in the creation of government.





## Section 3: Where We Go From Here



## Where We Go From Here

Our members work hard each day for the State of Minnesota. They work to improve the communities in which they live. They work to improve the communities they will never see. This plan will also work hard. When we confront conflict, we will look to this plan to guide us through.

The Executive Committee and Governance Work Group will oversee the implementation of this plan and produce regular updates for the Board of Directors. The executive leadership of the MAPE staff will also play a key role in engaging staff members in aspects of the plan, working to support member leaders and ensuring our union moves forward as a whole.

Supplemental plans will help our union's leadership and staff incorporate the ideas and goals of this strategic plan into their work. It will also provide accountability to measure progress and create adjustments to goals as needed.

Finally, this document is our guide. Members are encouraged to employ, support, and share these goals locally and regionally in every part of our union's work.

Our members are passionate. They have worked through tumultuous changes that have rocked our sense of unity. Again and again, they have shown us that people are the most vital attribute of our institution. We sustain ourselves and the people of Minnesota through our ability to organize around the power of solidarity. We will always defend our core belief that we are better when we fight together.

In the coming five years, we will have the opportunity to show our strength through state elections and multiple contract negotiations. Let us not waiver. Our power and our union are and will be stronger together.

