

2022 Legislative Session Issue Brief

Frontline Worker Pay

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it even more clear — our schools are the bedrock of our communities.

Educators have gone above and beyond these past three school years, teaching and caring for students so their families could keep our communities healthy, safe and fed, preparing and delivering nutritious meals to our students and keeping our school buildings safe and clean.

Minnesota needs to recognize the essential workers that put themselves at risk to provide vital services during the pandemic. This includes school staff, health care workers, janitors and security officers, child care workers, meatpackers and retail grocery store workers.

The 2021 Legislature allocated \$250 million that was supposed to be distributed to frontline workers in a timely fashion. Unfortunately, that money is still in limbo because Republican members of the Frontline Worker Pay Working Group wanted to exclude many essential workers from receiving premium pay.

It's time to take the first step in honoring the sacrifices frontline workers have made over the past two years. The Minnesota Legislature must:


- Increase the Frontline Worker Pay fund to \$1 billion to compensate ALL essential workers on the frontlines of the COVID-19 crisis.
- Make a swift decision and make the funds easy to access for these workers who risked their lives and did their jobs to keep our state running.

Whether in health care settings, making food, teaching and caring for young people and students, cleaning buildings, preparing food, driving buses, or other crucial work, essential workers stepped up during the pandemic to keep Minnesota safe and healthy.

The Minnesota Legislature must act now and properly recognize all essential workers, including our teachers and school staff.

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Education Minnesota is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and AFL-CIO.  2505



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