

DECEMBER 2025

Volume 4, Issue 6

ASIAN KALEIDOSCOPE

MN BIZ VISION



An Interview with Real
Estate Investor -
Chen Zhou

Calling America
HOME Series -
Dr. Elizabeth
Wilcox

From Efficiency to
Reinvention: A
Guide to Human-AI
Collaboration



Asian Media Access

This monthly e-Magazine is published by Asian Media Access and Multi Cultural Community Alliance to highlight the accomplishments of Asian American and Pacific Islanders' (AAPI) small businesses in MN.

Table of Contents

01~03	Introduction
04~08	AAPI Business Profile - Chen Zhou
09~16	Calling America HOME
17~20	Center for Wellness Technology
21~23	What's News in IT
24~27	AAPI Community Updates
28~31	Business and Workforce Development Resources
32~33	Upcoming Training Events
34	Contact



Bridging Cultures, Building Futures: Minnesota's AAPI Business & Workforce Magazine

Welcome to **MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope**, a monthly e-magazine dedicated to empowering Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities across Minnesota. More than a publication, this platform uplifts AAPI entrepreneurs while advancing workforce pathways through the **Center for Wellness Technology** - a visionary hub that integrates Agricultural Technology, Multimedia Technology, and Wellness Technology into culturally grounded IT career opportunities.

AAPI Entrepreneurship & the Need for New Pathways

AAPI entrepreneurs are vital to Minnesota's diverse business landscape, operating successful restaurants, grocery stores, salons, healthcare practices, consulting firms, and manufacturing businesses, etc.. While AAPIs comprise 6% of Minnesota's population, Asian-owned businesses represent only 3% of the state's small businesses—revealing persistent barriers to entrepreneurship. Yet these 15,500+ Asian-owned firms account for 35% of all minority-owned businesses in Minnesota, demonstrating the community's outsized economic impact and resilience. Targeted workforce development in specialized IT sectors can help bridge this entrepreneurship gap and create new pathways for community economic mobility and innovation.

The Center for Wellness Technology: Our Dual Mission

At the heart of MN Biz Vision stands the Center for Wellness Technology, which unifies three high-impact technology tracks designed for AAPI youth, families, and entrepreneurs:

- **Agricultural Technology (AgTech):** Blending modern engineering with ancestral agricultural knowledge, learners explore aeroponics, aquaponics, vertical farming, and sustainable food systems that support food sovereignty and sustainability.
- **Multimedia Technology:** Youth and creatives gain experience in game design, AR/VR development, digital storytelling, and AI-assisted media production—tools that amplify AAPI voices and ensure cultural stories are represented in the digital future.
- **Wellness Technology:** Integrating traditional healing practices with modern innovations, the Center supports healing with telehealth systems, VR calming room designs, and culturally informed wearable devices, advancing non-invasive and holistic care models.

Together, these tracks demonstrate why IT matters: technology becomes a vehicle for economic mobility, cultural preservation, and community innovation.

What You'll Discover Each Month

Every issue of MN Biz Vision highlights AAPI business owners across diverse sectors, celebrates immigrant and refugee success stories, and shares practical resources on financing, marketing, digital tools, and entrepreneurship. Workforce development features dive into emerging IT opportunities within AgTech, Multimedia, and Wellness Technology, supported by training programs and employer partnerships.

Building Economic Opportunity & Cultural Resilience

Whether you are strengthening a family business, exploring a career transition, entering tech fields, or launching a new venture, MN Biz Vision: Asian Kaleidoscope connects you to the networks, knowledge, and inspiration needed to thrive. Join us each month as we celebrate AAPI excellence - honoring cultural traditions while embracing the technological innovations shaping Minnesota's future.





BUILDING WEALTH, COMMUNITY, AND CULTURAL BRIDGES: AN INTERVIEW WITH REAL ESTATE INVESTOR CHEN ZHOU

When people talk about the American Dream, they often speak in broad ideals – opportunity, hard work, and the hope of building a better life. For Chen Zhou, a real estate investor and community leader with the company Camelot Management, that dream took shape one property at a time and expanded into something much bigger: a commitment to uplifting the cultural and social fabric of Minnesota's diverse communities.

The Seed of Inspiration that sprouted Camelot Management

Chen Zhou's journey as an entrepreneur began with a simple but life-changing lesson from a high school teacher. The teacher suggested that instead of asking parents to pay for college, students should ask them to help purchase a rental property. The rental income could cover tuition while the property grew in value.

"That idea stayed with me for years," Chen says. "It planted the seed early."

Alongside this early inspiration, Chen's Chinese cultural heritage played a powerful role. For generations, farming and land ownership have been core parts of Chinese identity. *"Owning land is in our DNA,"* he explains. *"It symbolizes stability, hard work, and a foundation for the future."*

These values followed him to the United States and shaped his decision to pursue

real estate as both a profession and a passion.

Overcoming Challenges Through Trust and Relationships

Chen's path wasn't simple. Before the housing crash of 2008–2009, property prices were too high and the investment numbers didn't make sense. Chen waited patiently – relying on discipline, math skills, and intuition.

When the market finally shifted and opportunities opened up, a new challenge emerged: banks were hesitant to lend. *"I saw the opportunities, but I didn't have the funding,"* he recalls.

What helped him break through was community. A Hmong banker in St. Paul believed in his vision and offered small loans to help him get started. From there, Chen slowly built a diverse and trusted team: Latino laborers, Chinese maintenance workers, a Vietnamese electrician, a Russian mechanical contractor, and many others.

"Every cultural community contributed something important," he says. Chen builds these kinds of relationships by treating people fairly and working hard. *"As immigrants, we are taught to treat people kindly, work hard, and build trust. Those values helped me tremendously as I first became an agent, then an investor. Whether I was working with clients, contractors, or property managers, good manners, respect, and strong relationships helped me move forward."* he stated.



Cultural Values That Guide Every Decision

Chen credits three elements of his cultural identity for shaping his business approach:

1. A Respect for Land

Growing up with farming roots gave him a deep appreciation for property as a long-term asset and responsibility.

2. Kindness and Respect

"Chinese culture teaches you to treat people well," he says. Whether working with tenants, contractors, or business partners, he believes good relationships make everything easier.

3. Hard Work

Success, in his view, comes from effort and perseverance – principles that have helped him connect with other hardworking immigrant communities.

In Minnesota, he found an atmosphere he describes as *"honest, earnest, and supportive."* These qualities aligned with his upbringing and made the transition into American business culture smooth. *"Respect, honesty, and hard work translate well in both cultures,"* he adds.

Advice for Immigrant Entrepreneurs

For immigrants who dream of starting a business but struggle with fear or uncertainty, Chen offers simple but powerful guidance:

- **Start by talking to people.**
- **Build connections**, especially with those who share your goals.
- **Learn from those who have already done it.**
- **Don't wait for the perfect team – begin with one step.**

"Many of the people I work with today came from simple conversations," he says. *"Be honest, pay fairly, and care about others. Your reputation lasts longer than any quick profit."*



Giving Back: A Vision Beyond Real Estate

While real estate opportunities have become more limited due to rising prices and interest rates, Chen has shifted part of his focus to community service – something he considers just as important as business.

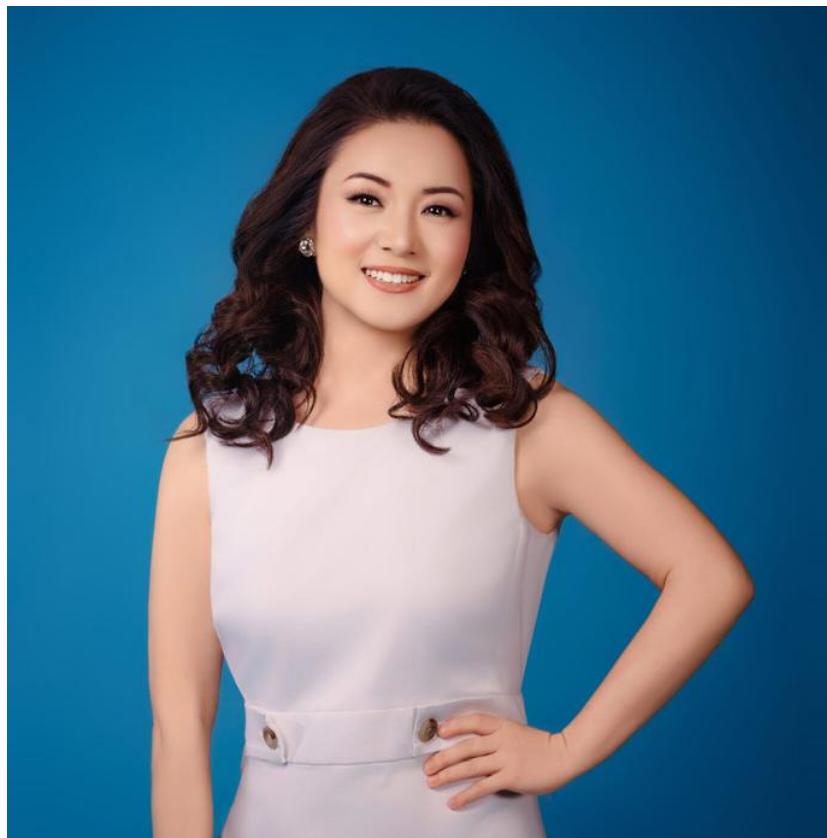
Each year, he organizes the Asian Fair, an eight-hour cultural celebration held in Plymouth the weekend after Memorial Day. In 2025, the event brought together more than 20 Asian communities and welcomed over 12,000 attendees. It featured cultural performances, food, a Parade of Cultures, dance-offs, contests, and spaces for families to celebrate diversity together.

Chen sees the event as part of a much larger purpose.

"My long-term vision is not just to grow my business," he says. *"It's to help our communities build a legacy – one where we learn from each other, come together, and strengthen the place we all call home."*

For Chen Zhou, real estate is more than an investment strategy – it's a pathway to connection, collaboration, and community-building. And that, he believes, is where true meaning is found.





In this edition, we proudly feature Dr. Elizabeth Wilcox, the dynamic Founder and CEO of Princess of Asia®. She reminds us that true beauty begins within – and this is HERSTORY, a journey of grace, vision, and empowerment.

Q1. Elizabeth, thanks for taking on this interview with AMA. Please introduce yourself, and your experience settling in MN.

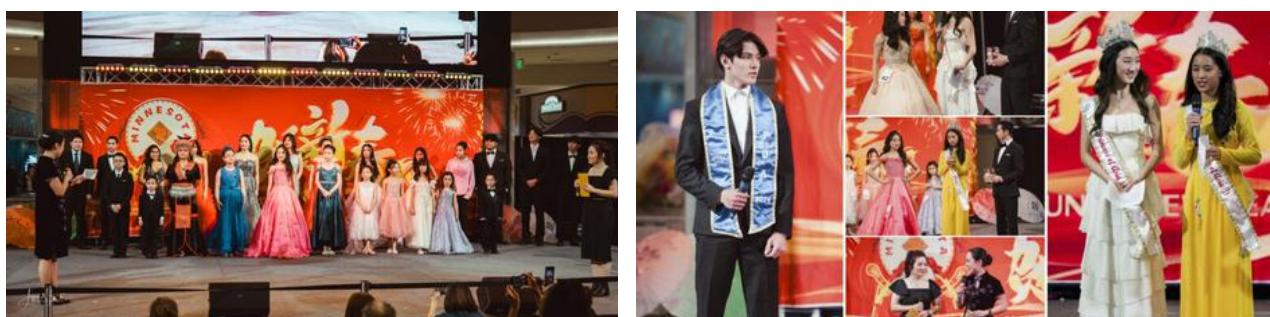
Hi! I'm Elizabeth. I'm the Founder and CEO of Princess Of Asia®. At its heart, Princess Of Asia® is a confidence, leadership, and communication development program presented through a rich cultural lens – and yes, it happens to take the form of a pageant. Through competitions, community service, and year-round mentorship, we help participants learn to lead – not just on stage, but in everyday life.

My Minnesota journey began in 2002, when I arrived from China as an international graduate student at the University of Minnesota. I studied at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs and Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development – eventually earning my Ph.D. in Evaluation Studies in 2012. During that time, I was teaching in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies and later working at a Chinese immersion school. I was working full time, finishing a dissertation... it was a lot, but I pushed through. Teaching has always been my calling – even before coming to the U.S., I was already a college instructor in China.

But like many women, especially immigrant women, motherhood changed everything.

I experienced a traumatic childbirth and postpartum depression, and suddenly the academic path I thought I was on no longer felt realistic. So I reinvented. I started One On One Learning Consultants LLC, and began tutoring and coaching students and adults – those struggling, those accelerating, and those needing clarity or direction in life.

Over the years, one truth kept showing up: confidence changes everything. Yes, I was teaching content, but I was also cheering students on – helping them believe, “I can do this.” After more than 20 years in education, I realized confidence is the foundation of success – in school, work, community, and life. That’s why my business slogan became, “Building confidence one student at a time!” And honestly, that philosophy planted the seed for Princess Of Asia® – because once you witness what confidence can unlock, you can’t unsee it.



Q2. Share more with us – why did you choose to launch the Princess Of Asia?

Honestly, I never set out to start a pageant – that was never on my life plan. It all started with my daughter. When she was six, she entered National American Miss (NAM) pageant, which focuses on confidence-building and real-world skills for girls. She didn’t win that first year. But what struck me was watching those young girls introduce themselves under bright lights, speak clearly, and walk with poise... at six years old! I remember thinking, “Wow... that level of confidence is powerful.”

She returned the next year, a little older, a little more prepared, and with some coaching – and in 2021, she won! She became National American Miss Minnesota Jr. Pre-Teen. But the real growth happened after the crown. She volunteered, spoke about anti-Asian hate during COVID, met elected officials, and discovered her voice in meaningful ways. I shared parts of that journey on social media, and parents began reaching out: “How is she so confident? Can you help my daughter too?” So I started coaching girls for pageants.

Then in 2022, the President of the Alliance of Minnesota Chinese Organizations (AMCO) approached me and said, “Could you create something like this for Asian

girls at the Lunar New Year celebration at Mall of America?" And that's when everything clicked. So many Asian kids excel academically, but few have platforms to practice leadership, communication, stage presence, or cultural pride. So, Princess Of Asia® wasn't born from a business idea – it was born from a community need.

In our first year (2023), we had twelve girls and crowned three queens. Soon after, parents of boys started asking how their sons could be involved – so I created escort volunteer roles. By 2024 and 2025, participation grew and age divisions expanded. Our reigning 9-member royal court now represents Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Korean, and Vietnamese communities.

What started as my daughter's confidence journey is now a movement – a space where Asian youth can find their voices, own their identities, and step into their power.



Q3. That is such a powerful start. How did your own cultural identity evolve while working in such non-traditional field, especially for Asians – and how has that shaped your sense of belonging?

My cultural identity definitely evolved through this work. Like many immigrants, I once believed success meant assimilation – speak perfect English, stay in academic spaces, don't draw too much attention. Pageantry felt unfamiliar, maybe even culturally contradictory.

Then something happened that really opened my eyes. I coached a girl whose mother was completely supportive of her joining mainstream pageants like NAM – but she refused to let her daughter participate in Princess Of Asia®. She said she didn't want her daughter "around too many Asians" because there might be drama. It stung, but it was honest – some Asian families still believe distancing ourselves from our own community feels safer.



Photo Courtesy: Jijun He

That moment reminded me: representation doesn't just start on stage – it starts at home, around dinner tables, in the beliefs we pass down about identity, belonging, and worth. Before I could empower Asian youth, I needed to help Asian parents understand the value of visibility, confidence, and cultural pride.

So yes, somewhere along the way, I went from trying to quietly fit into existing spaces... to building new ones with glitter, music cues, and a microphone. And now my definition of belonging is very different. It's not about squeezing myself into a space that wasn't designed for me – it's about expanding the room so more of us can walk in comfortably, preferably in heels if we choose.

Through Princess Of Asia®, I hope to build spaces where Asian youth can show up fully, proudly, loudly – without apology. And now, belonging doesn't mean shrinking to match the system. It means expanding the system so more of us can stand inside it.

Q4. How do you balance cultural authenticity with the need to integrate into larger society to have more diverse support?

Very intentionally. From the beginning, I knew Princess Of Asia® had to proudly center Asian heritage – not as decoration, but as the core. Our values, traditions, and stories are what make the program meaningful, so we protect that.

But Asian youth don't grow up only in Asian spaces – they grow, study, and lead in a multicultural America. So Princess Of Asia® also has to welcome allies and supporters from beyond our community, because confidence and leadership are universal skills.

I always come back to two questions: Are we honoring who we are? And are we building bridges, not walls?

That's why Mall of America is the perfect stage for us – it's visible, public, and shared. It's also why contestants must be of Asian heritage or adopted by Asian parents, but escorts may come from any racial background. Representation matters. And yes, formal wear is Western gowns, but the heart of the experience – respect, humility, family, and community – is deeply Asian.

What excites me most is the diversity of support behind us. We have wonderful Asian sponsors like Asia Mall, Shanghai Market, TCM Therapy Center, Welwe Hearty Foods, and more. But we also have sponsors such as African Fashion Week Minnesota, Chloe by Vincent, EaTo Restaurant, and Rhinestones Unlimited – businesses not Asian-owned but who believe confident Asian youth make Minnesota stronger.



And our judges? They represent multiple cultures and industries – business owners, educators, pageant winners, politicians, community leaders – all volunteering their time because they believe in the mission.

To me, cultural authenticity gives us identity, and inclusion gives us impact. We don't need to dilute who we are – we just need to invite others in with pride, openness, and joy.

Q5. We all know starting something new often comes with risk and uncertainty. What challenges did you face as an immigrant business owner and cultural innovator, and how did you overcome them?



Photo Courtesy: Anna Wan

Oh, there were definitely challenges – both expected and surprising. Starting something new is hard for anyone, but doing it as an immigrant adds extra layers. Entrepreneurship taught me strategy, but immigrant life taught me strength, adaptability, resilience, and creative problem-solving.

In the beginning, resources were limited. There was no big launch budget or corporate backing. So I built slowly – conversation by conversation, sponsor by sponsor, volunteer by volunteer. It wasn't glamorous, but it was intentional, relational, and sustainable.

There was also a misunderstanding about pageantry. Some assumed it was all glitter and crowns. I had to gently reframe it – it's not a "beauty pageant"; it's a I belong here pageant. Our mission is to boost confidence, build leadership, and improve communication. Once people saw the growth, they understood.

And then there's cultural hesitation. Many Asian parents — understandably — prioritize academics over public speaking, performing, or community involvement. Some worried about judgment or comparison. Instead of pushing, I listened, answered questions, and let results speak for themselves.

I've seen incredible transformations. One girl was so shy she couldn't make eye contact — now she's the first to raise her hand in class. That sounds small, but for her, it was huge. There was a POA queen who cried at her very first solo appearance in front of 150 seniors because of social anxiety — by the end of her reign, she became a state debate champion. That kind of confidence doesn't just rise — it skyrockets.

Moments like those remind me why I do this. As a CEO, it's fulfilling — but as a lifelong teacher, it's everything. My purpose is to help young people — and sometimes adults too — believe in themselves, speak up, and take space in the world.

So yes, there were challenges. But every single one came with growth, purpose, and community — and that made all the difference.



Q6. Love your statement "That kind of confidence doesn't just rise — it skyrockets." You've not only built something successful, but something meaningful. What impact do you hope your work has on the next generation?

Thank you — that line comes from witnessing these transformations. My dream is that Asian youth — and honestly, all youth who participate — walk into the world already knowing they belong. Not years later, not after working twice as hard, but now, while they're still forming their sense of self.

And I hear that reflected in the most touching ways:

"The main point I truly love about POA is knowing that I could accomplish something I never know I could." – 2023 Queen Sophia

"Signing up for Princess Of Asia® turned out to be one of the best decisions for my daughter and me. At first, I just wanted her, as a teenager, to carry herself with grace and better posture. I never expected that along the way she would also gain confidence, leadership, a sense of responsibility, and even make such amazing friends." – Parent of 2024 Jr. Teen Queen Zitian

"What began as a simple volunteer escort role at the Princess Of Asia® pageant turned out to be one of the most positive and empowering experiences for my 14-year-old son. The most rewarding part, as a mother, has been watching my child transform into a more confident and responsible young man in such a short time." – Parent of 2025 Sr. Best Escort Oliver

These aren't pageant results; these are life results. And that's what I want for the next generation.

To me, the real victory isn't the crown or sash. It's when a child finds their voice, stands taller, feels proud of their heritage, and realizes they have something meaningful to offer. It's when they speak up in class, try out for something they were once too scared to attempt, or advocate for others with empathy and courage. And especially for Asian youth, I want them to know they don't have to choose – they can be successful AND culturally rooted. They can lead with both competence and identity.



If Princess Of Asia® helps even one young person believe, “*I belong here*,” that ripple spreads into families, classrooms, friendships, workplaces, and entire communities. Confidence is contagious. Representation is contagious. Leadership is contagious.

So the impact I hope for is generational – a world where Asian American youth grow up never questioning whether they belong, because they’ve already practiced standing tall, speaking up, and shining with pride.

And if we can plant that seed early? Imagine who they’ll become.

Q7. Thank you so much for these powerful statements. Any final words for our readers?

Yes – and it’s truly an invitation from the heart.

The 4th Annual Princess Of Asia® Pageant returns on February 21–22, 2026.

Registration is now open for girls and women ages 4 through adult, who will compete for Queen’s titles, and for boys ages 6 and up with any racial background, who will serve as escort volunteers. To register, visit our website at www.princessofasia.org.

New for 2026 Princess Of Asia Pageant

The 2026 program features a new **one-on-one interview** as part of the required competitions, plus six exciting **optional** competitions: Photogenic, Runway, Ethnic Wear, Fun Fitness, Talent, and Spokesmodel. Open to both girls and boys, these high-energy optionals celebrate personality, poise, and creativity.

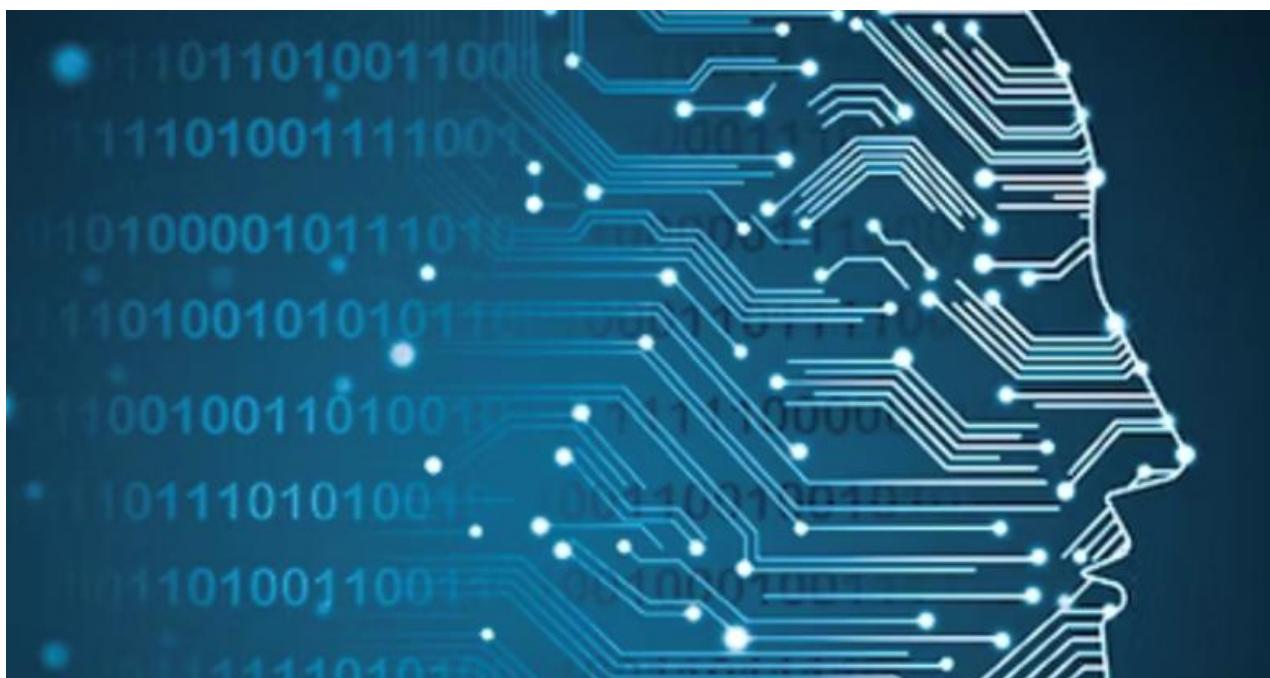
Event Schedule

- Day 1 (Feb 21): Optionals & Prelims – *DoubleTree by Hilton MSP*
- Day 2 (Feb 22): Finals & Royal Crowning Ceremony – *Mall of America*

Whether you’re a parent, educator, business owner, cultural organizer, community advocate, or simply someone who believes representation and confidence-building matter, I would love for you to join us.

Come witness the joy, pride, and empowerment that happen when young people are given a stage – and a community – that believes in them. FMI: <https://princessofasia.org/>



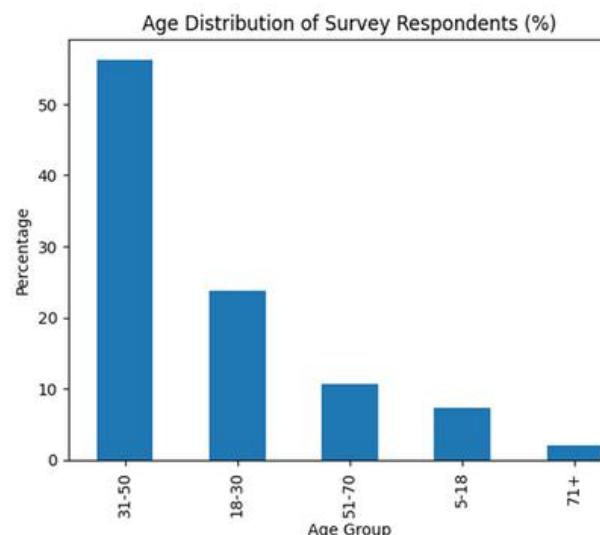


CENTER FOR WELLNESS TECHNOLOGY: COMMUNITY-DRIVEN DESIGN

Since late 2024, our organization has intentionally collected Social Connectedness and community wellness surveys from members, participants, and residents to inform the design of the proposed **Center for Wellness Technology**. To date, **more than 152 surveys** have been collected across community events, convenings, and engagement activities. This ongoing data collection effort ensures that the center is not driven by assumptions, but by lived experience, expressed needs, and community-defined priorities. The Social Connectedness Survey Set provides actionable insights that directly shape the center's physical layout, programmatic components, and access strategies.

Understanding the Demographic Data and Barriers

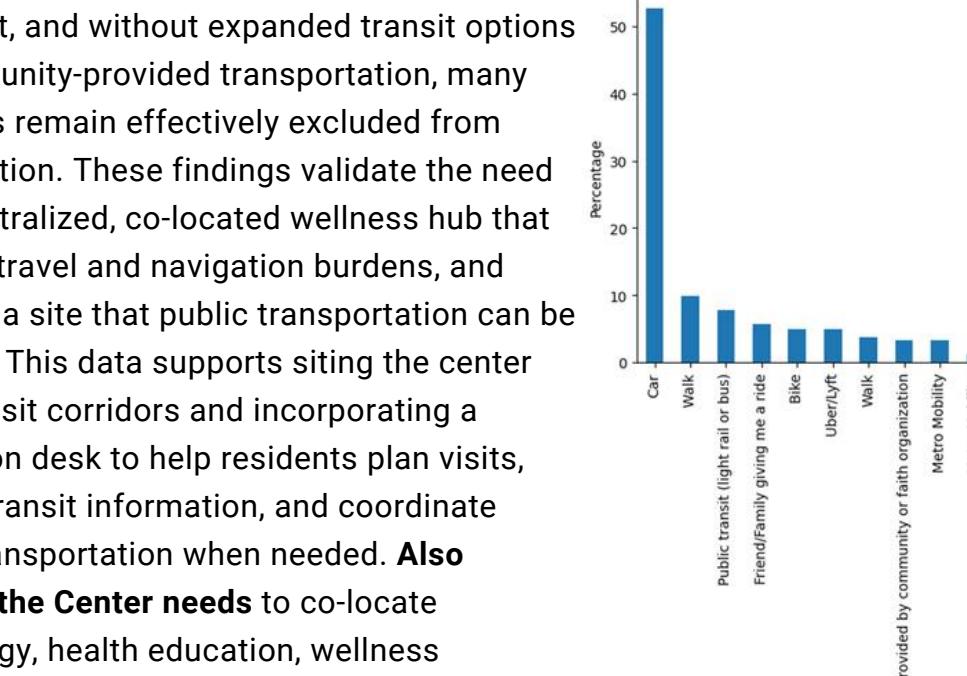
The survey confirms that the Center for Wellness Technology must primarily serve working-age adults and caregivers while remaining accessible across generations. With **56.3% of respondents ages 31–50** and **23.8% ages 18–30**, more than **80% of participants are balancing employment, caregiving, and community responsibilities**. This demographic reality supports a design that prioritizes flexible, drop-in access rather than rigid program schedules.



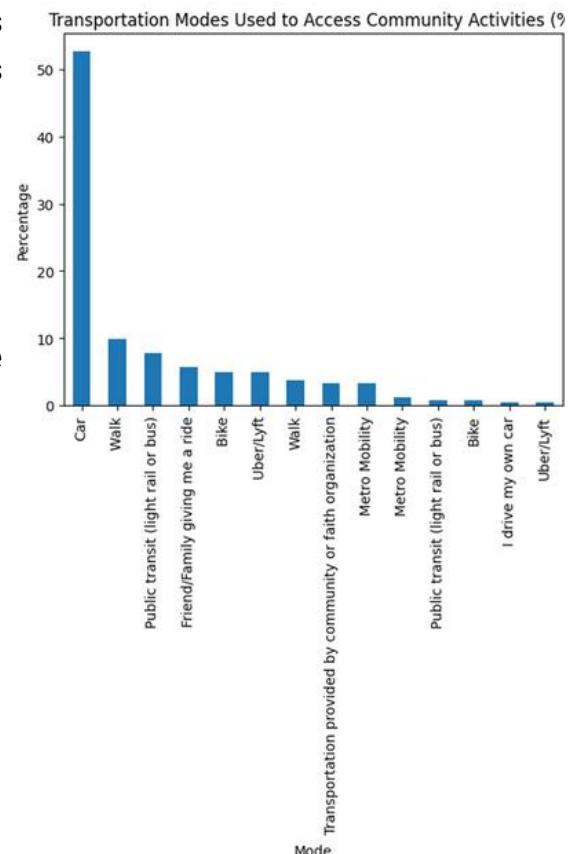
The age data directly supports multi-purpose spaces that can shift between evening, weekend, and intergenerational use, as well as extended hours for technology access and wellness services.

Survey data also reveals that while interest in community activities is strong, participation is shaped by significant access barriers. When asked what prevents them from using community activities and services, respondents most frequently cited **lack of awareness of available activities (approximately 8.8%)** and **lack of transportation (approximately 8.4%)**. Other commonly reported barriers included **limited intergenerational opportunities (7.6%)**, **time constraints (7.3%)**, and **lack of childcare or adult respite care (6.9%)**. Additional challenges such as cost (4.2%), lack of culturally or age-relevant opportunities (3.4%), and limited language access (3.1%) further demonstrate that structural and cultural factors—not lack of interest—are the primary obstacles to social connectedness. The barriers reinforce how these issues cluster around access, information, and caregiving needs.

Transportation data further illustrates inequities in access to community spaces. More than **52.7% of respondents rely on a personal vehicle** to attend community activities, while significantly smaller percentages rely on **walking (9.9%), public transit such as bus or light rail (7.8%), or rides from friends or family (5.8%)**. Only **3.3%** reported using transportation provided by a community or faith-based organization, and just over **3%** relied on Metro Mobility services. This transportation chart underscores that car dependency remains dominant, and without expanded transit options or community-provided transportation, many residents remain effectively excluded from participation. These findings validate the need for a centralized, co-located wellness hub that reduces travel and navigation burdens, and better at a site that public transportation can be reached. This data supports siting the center near transit corridors and incorporating a navigation desk to help residents plan visits, access transit information, and coordinate group transportation when needed. **Also suggest the Center needs** to co-locate technology, health education, wellness modalities, and food-based healing in one center, minimizing the number of trips required to access care and support.



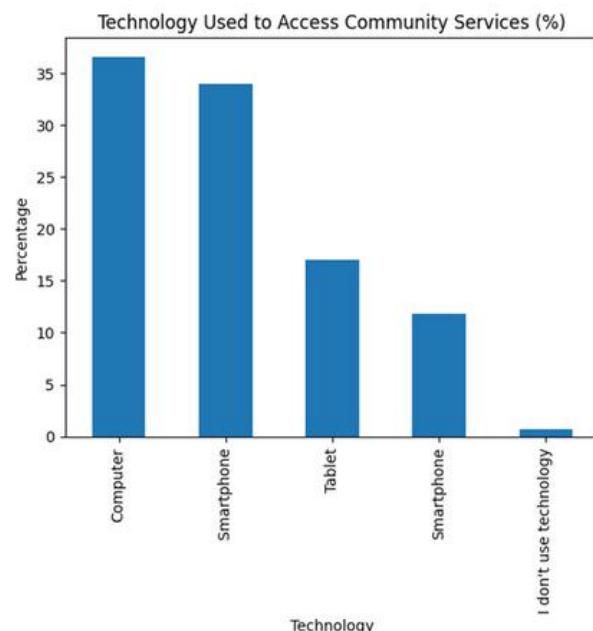
Mode	Percentage
Car	53
Walk	10
Public transit (light rail or bus)	8
Friend/Family giving me a ride	6
Bike	5
Uber/Lyft	5
Walk	4
Transportation provided by community or faith organization	3
Metro Mobility	2
Metro Mobility	1
Public transit (light rail or bus)	1
Bike	1
I drive my own car	1



How Survey Data Shapes Center Design

Many findings directly inform each major component of the Center for Wellness Technology. For example the technology access data shows both opportunity and limitation in how residents connect to information and services. While **36.6% of respondents use computers** and **34.0% use smartphones**, the survey also reveals gaps in consistent, reliable access and digital literacy. Technology is therefore a foundational wellness tool—not an optional add-on. The technology access chart highlights why hybrid communication approaches are essential for equitable reach. The inclusion of a **computer lab and digital wellness space** is directly informed by technology access data. This result explicitly supports the creation of a staffed computer lab where residents can access telehealth, health portals, benefits enrollment, workforce training, and culturally relevant wellness information with in-person assistance.

Time constraints and caregiving responsibilities identified in the survey also shape the center's **health and wellness modality spaces**. Flexible, culturally grounded wellness rooms allow individuals and families to engage in stress reduction, movement, and healing practices without long time commitments. This result justifies drop-in, short-session wellness offerings and family-inclusive design rather than appointment-only models.



Survey findings related to cultural relevance and language access further support the integration of **herbal medicine and traditional healing practices**. Respondents identified barriers tied to lack of culturally appropriate programming and language access, reinforcing the need to elevate ancestral knowledge as a core health resource. This call-out connects survey data directly to dedicated space for herbal education, traditional remedies, and culturally rooted wellness practices. The **Food Is Medicine** component of the Center is informed by the survey's emphasis on prevention, access, and social connection. Food-based programming addresses health at its root while creating natural opportunities for intergenerational learning and relationship-building.

The results shows how nutrition education, herbal knowledge, and culturally relevant food practices respond simultaneously to health, access, and social connectedness

needs.

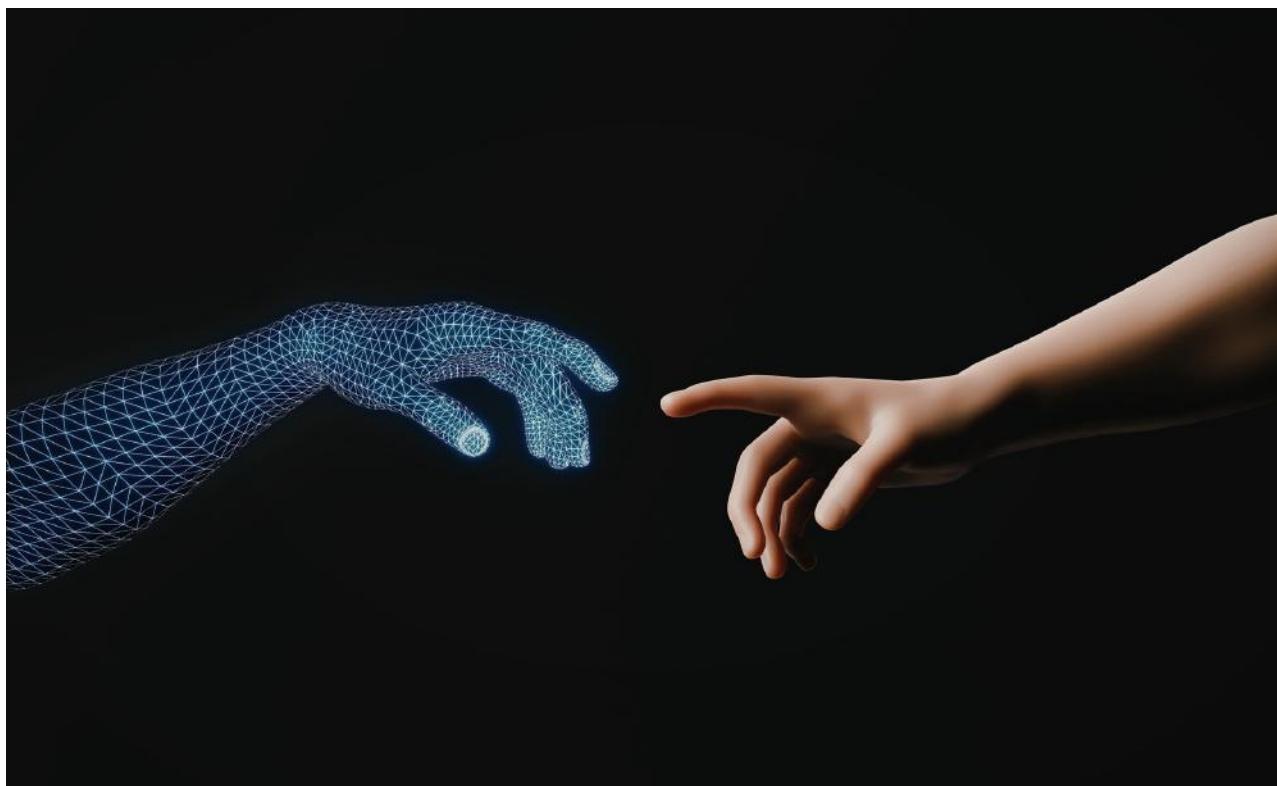
Finally, the survey reveals meaningful readiness among community members to move from participation to leadership. Nearly **47.5% of respondents expressed interest in supporting or helping develop future community programs**. This data demonstrates substantial potential for volunteerism, co-creation, and community-led program design when engagement pathways are clear and accessible. The interest-in-support data shows the untapped capacity and reinforces the value of investing in leadership development and culturally grounded engagement models.



Conclusion

The survey data paints a consistent picture: community members want to be connected, informed, and involved, but face persistent barriers related to transportation, time, caregiving, cultural relevance, and access to information. Addressing these barriers through coordinated investments in mobility, outreach, culturally responsive programming, and flexible engagement models will be essential to strengthening social connectedness and long-term community well-being.

Together, our Design of the Center for Wellness Technology provides a robust, community-driven foundation. Each major design element—computer lab, wellness modalities, herbal medicine, and Food Is Medicine—is directly mapped to documented community needs and participation barriers. The result is a Center intentionally designed not only to deliver services, but to strengthen social connectedness, cultural continuity, and long-term health equity.



FROM EFFICIENCY TO REINVENTION: A GUIDE TO HUMAN-AI COLLABORATION

Columnist - Vivek Ekarat

What if the biggest AI transformation isn't about making humans better at their jobs, but completely reimagining what jobs should look like?

SaaStr's Founder, Jason Lemkin, highlights insights from David Boskovic, CEO of Flatfile, a leader in deploying AI agents for Fortune 500 companies in highly sensitive data environments. Boskovic's work with mission-critical enterprise data gives him a rare, unfiltered view of AI's real-world performance not just in theory, but in high-stakes situations where mistakes are unacceptable.

In his perspective, AI isn't simply a tool to make workflows faster. It's a force reshaping roles, organizational design, and the very definition of "work." Many traditional functions are proving to be a better fit for AI than humans, challenging enterprises to rethink team structures from the ground up.

The Three Paths to AI Integration and Why Two Fall Short

Boskovic observes that most enterprise AI adoption strategies fall into three categories:

1. **Tool-Centric Implementation** Adding AI features to existing workflows without rethinking processes.

2. **Process-Centric Implementation** Attempting to map AI capabilities onto current human-driven systems.
3. **Role-Centric Implementation** Designing entirely new workflows and roles that fully leverage AI strengths.

The first two approaches often underdeliver because they treat AI as a bolt-on solution, not a structural shift. Role-centric integration, though harder to execute, delivers the most transformative results.

Lessons from the Space Industry: New Markets Through Cost Reduction

Boskovic draws an economic parallel to the space industry, where drastic cost reductions—driven by technology didn't just make existing missions cheaper; they created entirely new industries. Similarly, AI-driven cost and time efficiencies open the door for enterprises to pursue opportunities that were once unimaginable.



A Content Team Case Study: Humans as Directors, AI as Executors

In one Flatfile-led AI integration, a content team restructured its workflow so AI agents handled execution-heavy tasks like drafting, formatting, and distribution. Human team members shifted focus to direction, creativity, and quality assurance.

The result:

- Faster production cycles
- Greater emphasis on creative vision
- Reduced burnout from repetitive work

New Organizational Roles Emerging with AI

Boskovic predicts that enterprises will see new job categories emerge as AI becomes deeply embedded. These include:

- **AI Operations Specialists:** Bridge AI capabilities with business objectives.

- **Prompt and Process Designers:** Craft instructions and workflows that maximize AI output quality.
- **Ethics and Risk Managers:** Focus on responsible AI use, compliance, and governance.

Deployment Realities: Timing and Technical Challenges

As AI takes over repetitive work, the market value of human skills is shifting:

- **Routine Work:** Decreasing in value as automation handles execution.
- **Judgment-Based Work:** Increasingly premium, as human intuition, strategy, and creativity remain irreplaceable.

Observations from Fortune 500 Rollouts: Who Thrives and Who Struggles

Boskovic's deployments reveal clear patterns in employee adaptation:

- **Thrivers:** Curious, adaptable employees who see AI as a collaborator.
- **Strugglers:** Those who rely heavily on routine work or resist changing workflows.

Enterprises that invest in training and change management help more employees transition successfully, but leadership must recognize that resistance is natural and plan for it.

Why Boskovic's Perspective Stands Out

Unlike futurists offering broad predictions, Boskovic speaks from experience in active enterprise environments. His insights are grounded in:

- **Direct Experience:** Hundreds of AI deployments with real stakes.
- **Dual Perspective:** Implementing AI for clients while scaling Flatfile internally.
- **Practical Lessons:** Sharing what doesn't work as openly as what does.

The conversation around AI in the workplace is often theoretical. [Boskovic's approach](#) offers a rare window into the experimental, messy, but deeply transformative reality of AI adoption at scale.





December 13

THAI TEMPLE TOYS FOR TOTS

We are deeply grateful to our sponsors, partners, and volunteers for making the AAPI Toys for Tots Community Event a success by bringing joy to children, supporting families, and providing free flu shots and health check ups. Photo Courtesy: Wat Promwachirayan



December 14

FAMILY DAY AT MIA

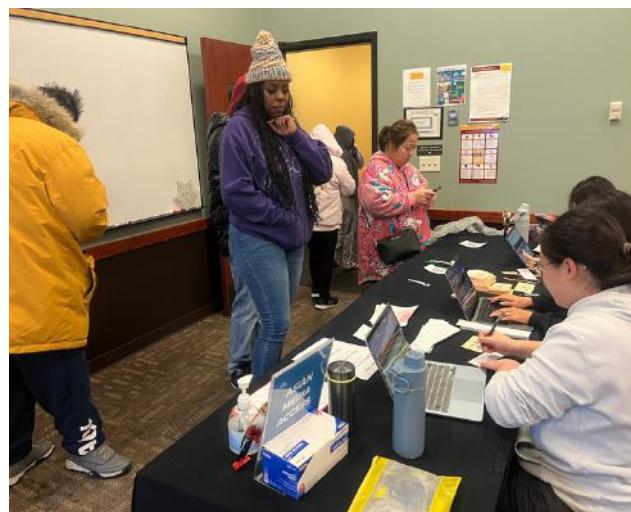
Wattanak Dance Troupe performed at Family Day at Mia, delivering a vibrant and meaningful cultural performance that showcased tradition, storytelling, and artistry while families and community members gathered to celebrate creativity, learning, and connection through art. Photo Courtesy: Sophia Neou



December 20

ASIAN MEDIA ACCESS TOYS FOR TOTS

Asian Media Access hosted the Toys for Tots community event at UROC Gallery, bringing families together for a joyful day of giving, connection, and holiday spirit while supporting children and families across the community.



December 20

KAREN NEW YEAR CELEBRATION

The Albert Lea Minnesota Karen Community celebrated Karen New Year with a beautiful gathering attended by the mayor and representatives from the courts, police, fire department, education, and health services, showing pride and support for the Karen community living there.





E-MAGINE!

60 hours in-person training + 18 hours Internship

Each participant will receive \$1000 incentive and Crown College certificate upon all requested tasks fulfilled



DATES/Time: 13 weeks, Monday-Fridays
5:30pm - 8:30pm, starting February 3-April 29, 2026



Online, Zoom

- Creation – Leveraging generative AI for writing, image generation, audio/video production, and data visualization (e.g., GIS mapping).
- Distribution – Optimizing content through social media management, web development, and other digital platforms.

The State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) funded part of this training through a grant. The grant recipient created this training. DEED does not endorse this publicity or training or make guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, regarding the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability or ownership of the information herein or elsewhere.



ELIGIBILITY

All participants must be:

- Eligible to work in the United States and
- 18 years of age or older at the time of enrollment and
- Not enrolled in any K-12 school and
- Seeking employment or under-employment.

Shall be part of one or more of the following target populations:

- Individuals of color
- Individuals with limited English proficiency
- Individuals at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guideline

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

info@amamedia.org

Register:

<https://forms.gle/QDkZ5RDvyTw465mQ6>

SIGN UP FOR E-MAGINE!

“Generative AIs and Digital Marketing Specialist” Professional Development Course - emphasizes human-centered collaboration with AIs, ensuring technology enhances creativity along with human agency. It focuses on interactive co-creation processes, where AI serves as a tool for storytelling that reflects human imagination, cognition and emotional depth.

Designed for storytellers, creators, and digital professionals, this course bridges cutting-edge AI tools with timeless narrative craft.

Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/QDkZ5RDvyTw465mQ6>



NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2026 NATIONAL SMALL BUSINESS WEEK AWARDS ARE BACK!

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is now accepting nominations for the 2026 National Small Business Week (NSBW) Awards – including the prestigious Small Business-Person of the Year!

[Nominate yourself or someone you know.](#)

About the Awards

Since 1964, the President of the United States has issued a proclamation announcing National Small Business Week, which recognizes the critical contributions of America's entrepreneurs and small business owners. All nominations must be submitted by December 22, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. CT.

To nominate a small business owner in your area or download related forms, criteria, and guidelines.

National Award nominations for the following categories will be accepted:

- **Small Business Person of the Year:** Nominees from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam will compete for the title of the National Small Business Person of the Year, SBA's signature award. Nominees must demonstrate success in business as well as contributions to their local communities.

Additional awards include:

- **Small Business Exporter of the Year**
- **8(a) Graduate of the Year**
- **Phoenix Awards for Disaster Recovery**
- **Counseling Awards**

[Learn More >>](#)



We can help you find your focus

Building a budget that actually works. Growing your network organically. Mastering work/life balance. All this and more with Digital Ready. What will your focus be?

[Check it out](#)



BUDGETING TIPS AND NETWORKING KNOW-HOW

Struggling with budgeting, networking, or work-life balance? Digital Ready can help you find your focus and achieve your goals. Discover expert insights and practical tools to streamline your success at:

https://link.digitalready.verizonwireless.com/OTk2LUtXQy0zNzcAAAGZKn5A0-kz96GrtTzrOAAOnZ_2TNNWrU_BQXIGWbjvQHw_pjs1hSTgctExNiFQleIF4R3PHE=

Find the event that fits your goals:

<https://digitalready.verizonwireless.com/category/events>



Event • Ask the Expert

Small Business Chat:
Crystal Eikcaj Skin & Hair
Care Products, Others...



Event • Ask the Expert

Maximizing reach on the
world's largest social
platforms



Event • Ask the Expert

Media mastery for small
business: Get seen, get
heard, get results



Event • Ask the Expert

AI-powered lead
generation: Turn your
website into a 24/7 sale...

Jan 6, 11:00 am-12:00 pm



Jan 6, 2:00 pm-4:00 pm

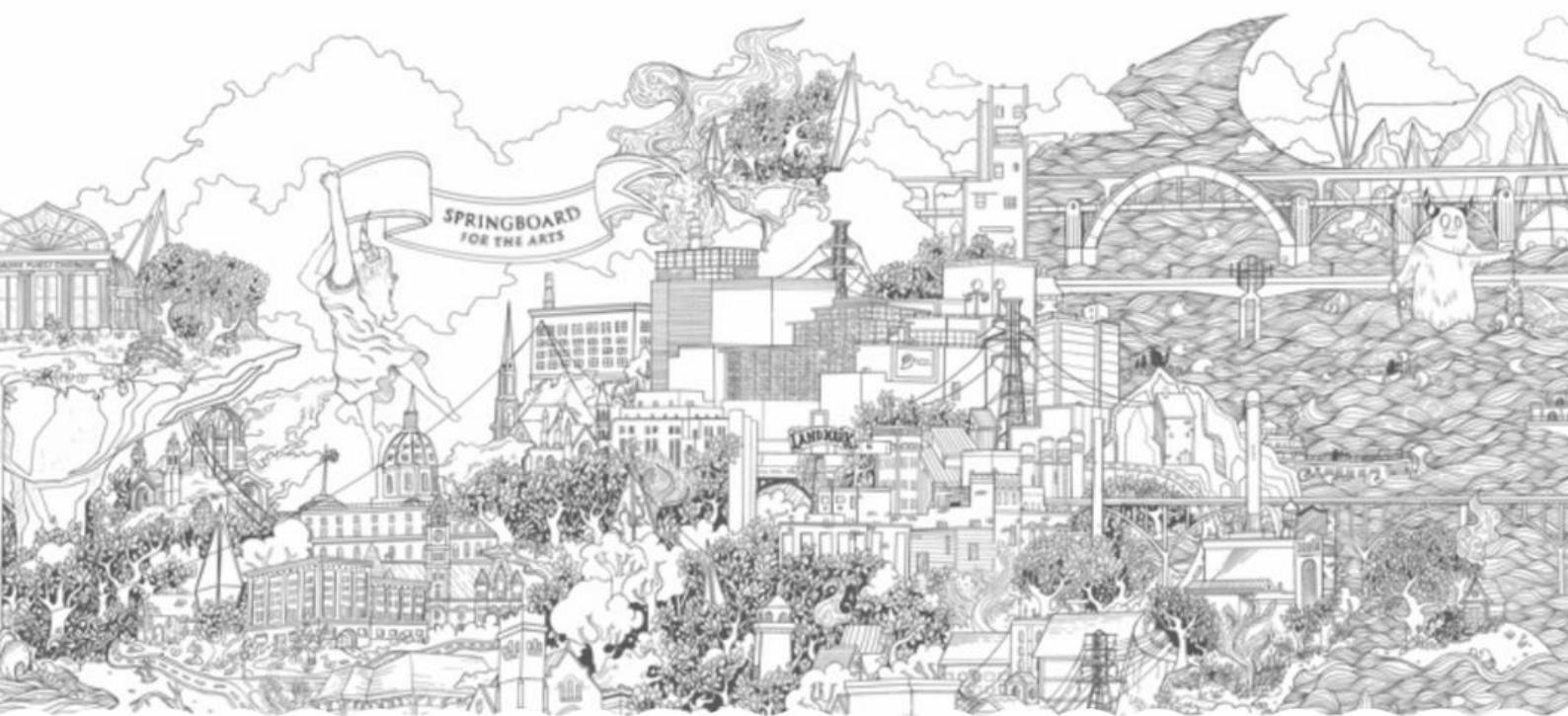


Jan 12, 11:00 am-1:00 pm



Jan 12, 2:00 pm-4:00 pm





Springboard for the Arts Calendar of Events - Professional Development

- January 07, 2026 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM - Work of Art: Marketing – SEMAC
- January 13, 2026 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM - Work of Art: Career Planning
- January 17, 2026 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM - Work of Art: Portfolio Kit
- January 24, 2026 1:00 PM – 3:30 PM - Work of Art: Marketing

Learn more and register at: <https://springboardforthearts.org/events/>

Additional Resources

- Get connected to Artist Career Consultants here:
<https://springboardforthearts.org/professional-growth/career-consultations/artist-career-consultants/>
- Work of Art Toolkit: <https://springboardforthearts.org/woa>
- Handbook for Artists Working in Community:
<https://springboardforthearts.org/artists-working-in-community/>

Tax Tips from the IRS



- [Here's what taxpayers need to know about business related travel deductions](#)
- [Companies who promise to eliminate tax debt sometimes leave taxpayers high and dry](#)
- [Get an Identity Protection PIN.](#)
- [Tax Resources for Members of the Military](#)



JAN

6

1pm~2pm

Introduction to 8(a) Business Development Program

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JAN

7

10am~11am

Website Wednesdays: SBA Business Guide

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JAN

13

9:30am~10:30am

Bookkeeping 101

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JAN

13

11am~12:30pm

Small Business Taxes for 2025 and 2026

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)



JAN
14

11:30am~12:30pm

Is Owning a Business a Good Fit for You?

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

JAN
28

9:30am~10:15am

SBA Funding Options and Resources

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

FEB
4

11:30am~12:30pm

Pros and Cons of Business Structures

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

FEB
12

10:30am~11:30am

10 Steps to Starting a Business You LOVE

Business Webinar

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

Contact Us

Email

lily.do@amamedia.org

Telephone

(612) 376-7715

Address

2418 Plymouth Ave N, Room 105,
Minneapolis, MN 55411



Partnering with

