Mike Wong started his BEP business with 4 locations. "I started with BEP in 2018 and trained for four months at St. Paul College with Mary Armstrong," says Mike. He later took over his own locations at the MN Department of Health, MN Department of Revenue, St. Paul City Hall, and the Federal Courthouse. Over the years, his business has grown. He currently has 11 locations.

It's a fact . . .

Today, thousands of qualified, legally blind Americans are proof that this program works. Currently, over 1,300 self-employed men and women operate businesses under the Randolph-Sheppard program across the country. These businesses account for almost $600 million in annual sales and provide entrepreneurs with an average income of $84,000. Businesses also employ hundreds of individuals, many with a disability.

For information on participating in the Minnesota Business Enterprises Program (BEP), or to learn more about obtaining vending services from a BEP vendor, contact:

John Hulet,
BEP Director
651-539-2284
John.Hulet@state.mn.us

mn.gov/deed/ssb

Mary Armstrong *(pictured on front)* has been a part of BEP since 1991. She started working for other vendors, but soon was able to acquire her own business. Mary has started with businesses in several state office buildings and Minneapolis College. Since 2014, she has been running the business at St. Paul College. "BEP is a good opportunity, and I would recommend it to others."

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STATE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

This information is available in alternative formats for people with disabilities by calling **651-539-2300** (voice).

STATE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

Business Enterprises Program

Vending Business Opportunities
for qualified, legally blind Minnesotans

EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STATE SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

The Minnesota Business Enterprises Program

Who we are

The Business Enterprises Program (BEP) provides profitable vending business opportunities for Minnesotans to broaden their economic opportunities.

The BEP provides the following to the self-employed business owners:

- Initial and ongoing training
- Management services
- Certification
- Technical support

The BEP licensed vendors operate vending businesses at:

- State properties and offices including the State Capitol
- Rest areas
- Minnesota State College and University campuses
- Department of Corrections facilities
- Federal sites, including U.S. Postal Service and General Services Administration locations

The BEP administers this program under the authority of the **federal Randolph-Sheppard Act**. **The Act** and **Minnesota Statute 248.07, Subdivision 7.**

How the program works

Individuals interested in the BEP work with an SSB vocational rehabilitation counselor. The operators must complete a comprehensive evaluation and extensive training to be certified to operate a BEP vending business. The individuals must complete a comprehensive evaluation and extensive training to become a licensed, certified BEP operators.

BEP operators are responsible for the day-to-day management of the vending business and meeting all financial and legal obligations associated with anyone who operates a small business.
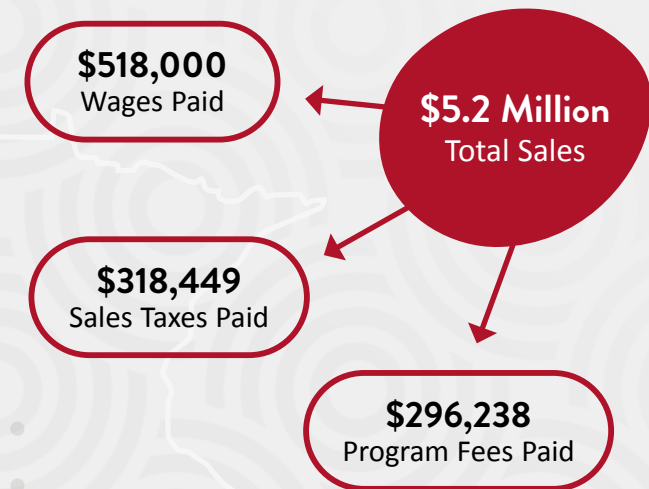
BEP By the Numbers - 2024

- 22 businesses in **100 locations in 44 cities** across the state
- **18 individuals employed** by BEP operators
- **$60,576** average net profit

BEP Contributed $1,000,000 to Minnesota's Economy

$5.2 Million Total Sales

$518,000 Wages Paid

$318,449 Sales Taxes Paid

$296,238 Program Fees Paid

Mike Colbrunn has been operating his BEP business since 2015. His first businesses were in Moorhead at Minnesota State University and Minnesota State Community Technical College and a welcome center located on Interstate 94. Mike now manages multiple locations including Minnesota State College in Mankato, four correctional facilities, two community colleges, and a micro-market at Federal Aviation Administration. Mike is excited to begin his new venture with Camp Ripley in spring 2025. "I very much enjoy being self-employed and the opportunities that brings. Additionally, I have really been embracing growing my business in new and different directions."