



Kirsten Kennedy Bio

Kirsten Kennedy is the executive director of the Minnesota Center for Employee Ownership, a free and unbiased hub for information and resources on all forms of employee ownership, including employee stock ownership plans, employee ownership trusts, and worker-owned cooperatives.

As executive director, Kirsten is responsible for leading MNCEO's networking, fundraising, and programming initiatives to educate business owners, their employees and financial advisors, and elected officials across Minnesota on the prospect of and long-term benefits of employee ownership.

Prior to joining MNCEO, Kirsten served as the mayor of North Branch, a city in Central Minnesota with more than 10,500 residents. During Kirsten's tenure as mayor, her public policy initiatives were focused on economic development, affordable housing, infrastructure repair and development, and supporting housing for people with chronic mental health challenges and homelessness.

An ardent advocate for grassroots community building and social justice, Kirsten was recently selected from a pool of 946 candidates to complete a prestigious Bush Fellowship focused on improving community health. During this time, she served as a statewide health improvement partnership administrator in Chisago County, where she was responsible for supporting the implementation of policy, systems, and environmental changes focused on healthy living.

Kirsten holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology and a master's degree in Political Advocacy and Leadership from the University of Minnesota. She also holds certificates in Continuous Improvement Management and as a Six Sigma Lean Black Belt in Healthcare from the Management and Strategy Institute.

Active in local and statewide business and community organizations, Kirsten is the board chair of the Women's Environmental Institute, as well as a founding board member of the Chisago AgeWell Coalition. She has also served on the boards of the East Central Regional Development Commission and the Chisago County Housing and Redevelopment Authority-Economic Development Authority. Kirsten is also an active member of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and the Minnesota Economic Development Association.

Born in Norway and raised in East Central Minnesota and Southern California, Kirsten is engaged to the love of her life, Mark, and the mother of five adult children. When Kirsten is not busy helping business owners navigate their employee ownership journeys, she enjoys reading, theater, travel, and spending quality time with her loved ones.