



Business Services/Economic Development Meeting

Date: April 9, 2020

Time: 9:30-11:30am

Location: Online meeting

Attendees: Mark Jacobs, Becky Accettura, Leslie Wojtowicz, Bridgett Backman, Annie Welch, Mary Rothchild, Deb McMillan, Jackie Buck, Marie Larson, Betsy Hill, Rick Roy

Notes

Agenda item: Updates

M State – Mary Rothchild: M State has found that up to 95% of courses can be delivered online. There is an ongoing problem with healthcare clinical requirements: students need clinical training and in-person assessments for their degrees, but facilities are not currently open to students. They are finding that FAFSA applications are down for the 2020-21 academic year. This suggests that there could be a significant decrease in Fall semester enrollment. Customized training and continuing education programs have a few issues from an academic perspective including online grading and assessments.

- Access to computers and food pantries are extremely important for students right now. Some campuses have created a single point of entry to a facility and provided computers safely distanced for students to use. They have tried leasing laptops for students but are struggling with availability.

Chamber – There have been many questions about UI. Businesses are trying to determine whether to furlough or lay off employees. What does recovery look like, especially with the extended stay-at-home order? There will need to be a focus on local industries and supporting the local economy.

DoLI – Recently made changes about method of outreach. They are now reaching out to many businesses every day with resources and answers to frequently asked questions. There is still an open grant window of \$2.7 million for dual training grants. Some companies have had to put training on hold. In the youth skills training area, the 16-17 year old student work experience ends in June. It seems that there are many employers still interested in hosting youth. The question now is how to provide instruction online.

- Regarding worker's compensation: are colleges and universities liable if students get sick while doing clinical hours? Answer: since students are not really "workers," they would not receive worker's compensation, but someone at DoLI will check on this question.
- Youth skills programs will be key for recovery. We will need to find employees for high demand industries.

DEED – LMI launched a new tool which gives UI application data per county. DEED is still working remotely and most employees are using Microsoft Teams. They are working on providing virtual services.

- NEXT STEPS: If you have any stories about businesses doing good, send to Jackie Buck at jacqueline.buck@state.mn.us or your local workforce strategy consultant.
- UI still has the employer's side of customer service shut down to help field applicant calls.
- Minnesota was one of the first states to get the \$600 unemployment bonus out.

- They are holding virtual employer webinars via Teams. There are 40 active layoffs in the state. A lot of large healthcare workers are laying off or furloughing people so they can be healthy when they are needed. Sleep Number is furloughing 2,000 people.
- If employers are coming to you with a lot of questions, send these to your workforce strategy consultant. They are taking questions to UI internally. There is also a new link to the employer FAQ on the UI website, so continue to check that for the most up-to-date information.
- There are reports that some employers have gotten emails that are scams relating to UI or DEED. Forward these to Jackie at jacqueline.buck@state.mn.us to send to MNIT.
- Some local areas are starting virtual career fairs. The City of Minneapolis is hosting one soon. Direct any interested employers to Liz Jennings to set up. There is no cost to employers.

Local Areas—

- **Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services:** Setting up webinars and continuing HR groups. People have lots of questions. They are doing their best to share resource documents with employers. Virtual training methods such as mock interviews, resume building, and more are available for clients. They are also fielding a ton of calls about UI.
- **Duluth:** Trying to collect needs from employers. Healthcare career pathways are a problem – students are finished except for clinicals or assessments which need to be done in person. The testing sites that are open are primarily in/around the metro, which does not work for their students.
- **Anoka:** Their economic development agency has been sending resources out to employers. They are trying to use social media to help find workers for employers who desperately need people. Colleges have expanded wi-fi access to parking lots where students have been sitting in their cars and working. Many calls have been coming in about UI.
 - They are still waiting for information about assessments. WIOA has a list of approved sources for math and reading but these are mostly difficult to do online. This question has been taken up a DEED many times.
- **Washington County:** Trying to coordinate with employers and get the word out to job seekers about who's hiring. There is some uncertainty about whether the people who have been recently laid off are looking for jobs. The federal boost plus the state unemployment benefits could bring people to the range of \$25-30 an hour, on average. This is more than many people make at their regular jobs.
 - Now may be a good time for certain unemployed individuals to think about a career change, but it's difficult to tell when this will happen. It is likely that some people who think they are going to get re-hired will not be, and these folks could be considering a change to a higher-demand sector like healthcare.
 - Local areas may want to advise via virtual resume assistance that the resumes are skills-based to help with any change in sector that might be needed.
 - MFIP and public assistance applications are increasing. They are redeploying staff from other areas who aren't as busy to assist.
- **City of Minneapolis:** There is a worker FAQ on the city website. Childcare for essential and emergency workers information is also available online. There is a Hospitality and Events emergency fund as well.

Next meeting: May 14, 2020