



Business Services/Economic Development Meeting

Date: May 15, 2020

Time: 9:30-11:30am

Location: Online meeting

Attendees: Mark Jacobs, Becky Accettura, Leslie Wojtowicz, Bridgett Backman, Mary Rothchild, Jackie Buck, Marie Larson, Betsy Hill, Rick Roy, Eriann Faris, Jeanna Fortney, Morgan Hill, Dan Solomon, Dan Wenner, Liz Jennings

Notes

Agenda item: Updates

Virtual Job Fairs – Marie Larson, Industry Relations Manager, City of Minneapolis Employment and Training: Metro areas decided to discuss the possibility of virtual job fairs. They have been talking with Mike Lang at DEED about which software to use. They are hoping to theme these events by sector. So far, they have been primarily focused on larger employers.

- It was suggested that smaller employers around the state should also be involved in these job fairs, or have a regional session later in the week for other employers in the same sector.
- They have received feedback that it is occasionally difficult to get into the events from a technology standpoint. There are caps on registration and they are difficult to troubleshoot in real time.
- All of these job fairs have been recorded and will be made into videos, including the Q&As, on CareerForceMN.com.
- Mary Rothchild will circle back with M State's Career Center directors with information from DEED. Liz Jennings will send Mary the calendar of upcoming events.
- Bridgett Backman is planning for Anoka's first virtual career fair on June 3rd.

M State – They have received permission to teach out career and technical education programs that were incomplete from the spring. There is some disappointment that this was not extended into fall. Campuses are currently planning for Scenario 2, in which courses would be online for the fall. Trustees will decide in June. They will probably launch a short-term task force to look at career and technical education programs. The US Department of Education has a short-term career grant program. There are 8 or 9 awards at \$15M each. There is a priority for states, but it is not an exclusively state-based application. "High coronavirus burden states" will take the priority. The Reimagining America's Workforce Act is a piece of federal legislation that was introduced and provides additional funds for WIOA and Perkins.

- [Scholarships are available](#) for students in education programs for high-demand occupations. Please consider promoting these scholarships.
- [Webinars](#) about manufacturing career pathways are open for registration.

DoLI – There is information available on the Department of Labor and Industry's website about safety and preparedness planning for reopening. There is also information from OSHA and handouts related to worker safety. Rights for workers have been translated into Spanish, Hmong, and Somali. There is also specific guidance for niche industries such as meatpacking. The PIPELINE grants have moved forward, with about 70 applications for \$3.8M requested. PIPELINE will be holding a webinar on May 21 at 9 AM on employment-based training.

DEED – Jackie’s team has been working on videos and blogs for employers. You can [view the first](#) in a series of CareerForceMN.com healthcare blog posts. They are also hosting some webinars to promote in-demand sectors like I.T. There is no additional information available about when the employer section of the UI customer service lines will reopen. If anyone from local areas hears specific questions from employers, they can be brought to Jackie who will pass them along internally to the UI office. Liz Jennings has been involved with monthly CareerForce update meetings which have been recorded and made into videos. There is some information of interest to employer services so these videos will be distributed once they are available.

Local Areas—

- **Duluth:** Recently completed a survey to assess employer’s needs.
- It was suggested that MAWB collect a list of virtual services available to employers in local areas.
- **Southwest MN PIC:** Also recently put out a survey to assess employer’s needs. Employers have been reaching out to local CareerForce sites, asking to be connected to resources. Most local employers are not interested in job fairs right now and probably won’t be until July or August. They have created some virtual career conversations which you can [view on their website](#).
- **Central MN Jobs and Training Services:** Recently held a Webex session with DoLI on the CARES Act plus a Q&A session. They are still receiving incumbent worker applications. There are not many jobseekers coming to them yet and it is unclear when that wave will come.
- **Anoka:** Two local community colleges recently held a webinar for employers about PPE. A guest speaker, an employer with a mixed-model business, talked about how he wrote his reopening plan. These plans should be flexible and be readily available in case of an audit.
 - These return-to-work plans need to include “inside” and “outside” plans, such as having people wait in their cars and then texting them when they can come inside the building.
- **Rural Minnesota CEP:** Still fielding many calls about UI. Trying to talk to folks about DW services. As a function of regional planning, there was a program to get a certification on hiring diverse applicants. Eleven employers have achieved the designation but there has been no publicity on this due to the pandemic.

A general question was asked about how to catalog businesses which have closed in local areas. Is this information with the Department of Revenue, or somewhere else? Someone suggested that utility companies are usually the first to know – when businesses stop paying utility bills on their space.

Next meeting: June 11, 2020