



Business Services/Economic Development Meeting

Date: November 12, 2020

Time: 9:30 – 11:30 AM

Location: Online meeting

Attendees: Bridgett Backman, Mike Postma, Angie Dahle, Mark Jacobs, Sonji Davis, Betsy Hill, Catalina Valencia, Liz Jennings, Dan Wenner, Eriann Faris, Jacqueline Buck, Leslie Wojtowicz, Jeanna Fortney, Raymond Douha

Catalina Valencia, DEED

Catalina shared a presentation about workforce in the state of Minnesota and how it connects with business development goals. She discussed how automation will impact the workforce and how this has accelerated since COVID. Catalina listed valuable assets and opportunities in the state's economic system and described DEED's efforts to expand business investment opportunities. She mentioned that ensuring a talent pipeline and building successful collaboration is essential for business development.

Discussion ensued about sharing site selection information. Catalina advised that as a state, Minnesota needs to unify disparate sources of information (education, workforce systems, DEED, CareerForce, etc.) Can't assume the employer is going to have the patience to piece all of it together. Work needs to be done to present that information as a cohesive story/narrative for the employer.

Guest Speaker – Raymond Douha, Veterans Employment Program Director, DEED

Raymond shared a presentation about the work of the Veterans Employment Program at DEED. The [Veteran's Virtual Career Fair is coming up November 19th, 2:00 – 6:00 PM](#). The Minnesota Veterans Employment Program is funded by US DOL Jobs for Veterans State Grant. Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) provides case management, helps people overcome significant barriers, works with partners to provide employment services to veterans. The Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) assist with career fairs, employer outreach, recruitment, credentialing, etc.

Employer-Related Updates

EDAM – Planning for Winter Conference which will likely be virtual January 21 and 22. Conference has focused on innovative practices during COVID. Seeking Excellence in Economic Development Award nominees.

DEED, Liz Jennings – Lots of virtual career fairs happening all over the state. Receiving many emails from employers trying to track down information about virtual career fairs. Post any local fairs on the [CareerForce calendar](#) to increase coordination. Monthly Employer Navigator calls are still meeting to try and determine how to best serve employers.

Local Initiatives:

- *Minneapolis* – Interactive virtual career fair was recently very busy and successful. 205 people registered. The event had a more narrowed focus for this fair. Clean Energy Pathways conversations have continued. Also focusing on diversity in the workplace. Local investment in renewable energy projects. RFP out from Apprenticeship Minnesota: funding [Career Readiness Training](#) – Marie asked whether anyone was doing specific outreach to employers.
- *Anoka* – Looking for enrollments across the board for youth, adults, and DW. Kiosk system set up for walk-ins, but since no in-person, set up an inquiry button on their website. Individuals seem to be interested in talking to a counselor specifically. UI REA

restart sessions starting next week. They are also a pilot for new Standardized Workshops which are starting today. Low on Out of School Youth numbers so they are trying to connect with employers to find referrals.

- *Rural Minnesota CEP* – Staff are returning to work from home. Have also been doing drive-thru and virtual job fairs. Maureen Ramirez sharing a presentation on DEED's Guide to Inclusive Hiring for Employers. They are also hosting presentations to students about registered apprenticeship (held virtually).
- *Duluth* – Recent virtual hiring event for transportation sector. Recapped float-pool hiring event for CNA positions held earlier this year. This type of hiring is a creative solution, but there are issues regarding how the employee would receive benefits. Duluth has also been working on Career Pathway documents for healthcare positions.
- *Central Minnesota JTS* – Currently engaged in projects with the Central Minnesota Manufacturers Association and helped put together a [resource library on their website](#). Busy developing virtual tours, and have worked with employers to get youth involved. Hosted a drive-thru career fair in October. Recently updated Career Pathway Infographics are now available that use statewide data and exclude local logos from the document. The infographic is open to share with anyone interested. They are also available in Spanish.
- *Southwest* – Providing CareerForce presentations to local Chamber of Commerce. Southwest has started an asset gap analysis and will complete in-person conversations with employers to provide additional information. [Updated infographics](#) (also available in Spanish) are available on the Southwest website.
- *Southeast* – Working with employers on the Pathway Home Grant to determine what credentials would be most valuable. Focusing on youth work experiences.
- *Career Solutions* – Curbside Career Fair scheduled for December 2nd, 1:00 – 3:00 PM. Created a master recruiting checklist: job advertising, website career page, social recruiting, etc. Continuing to offer immigrant services for businesses. Career planners assist employers with cultural training and employee retention strategies. [Infographics](#) also on Career Solutions website.

*Potential future meeting discussion topic: lessons learned from virtual career fairs. Share best practices and challenges?

Plan of Work – Mission

Draft: “To have a broad-based committee membership which shares employer-related resources, information, and best practices that align efforts whenever possible.”

- Liz Jennings: What is the question we're trying to wrestle with and hopefully solve? Are there ways we can focus each month about a specific topic to aid employers?
- Bridgett Backman: Possibly change “best practices” to “workable solutions.” Given COVID, we might not have the opportunity to hone best practices.
- Mark Jacobs: Might want to add something to the mission which clarifies that the committee's goal is to benefit employers.

What's Needed for Employers!

- Discussion ensued about how employers could change strategies to “pitch” job openings to career seekers. Employers could be more creative about how to advertise their workspace as safe and clean during COVID especially since it seems that employers continue to struggle to find applicants. Mike Postma recommended the [Hormel Foods toolkit](#).

Next meeting: December 10, 2020