



Business Services/Economic Development Meeting

Date: December 10, 2020

Time: 9:30 – 11:30 AM

Location: Online meeting

Attendees: Leslie Wojtowicz, Mike Postma, Dan Wenner, Samantha DiMaggio, Liz Jennings, Bridgett Backman, Dan Solomon, Rick Roy, Marie Larson, Jennifer Byers, Eriann Faris, Mark Jacobs, Jackie Buck, Marci Jasper, Angie Dahle, Mary Rothchild, Sonji Davis

Diversity and Inclusion Best Practices – Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

The Chamber has been focused on making their organization more diverse. They have been developing opportunities to intentionally engage BIPOC members. The Chamber's Diversity & Inclusion Working Group has been focusing on how to reach small and mid-size businesses to help them understand the importance of hiring and engaging with diverse employees. The Chamber is currently making a toolkit to help employers understand the importance of diversity and inclusion and they are raising funds to support that effort. They are also looking to add a staff person to go out to employers and help them implement equity and inclusion practices. Visit their website to view [some webinars](#) for employers about diversity and inclusion best practices.

Their [annual benchmarks report](#) compares Minnesota to the rest of the states in the country: check out the [workforce](#) section.

Employer-Related Updates

EDAM – EDAM leadership recently met to discuss a member survey they had done pre-COVID. The survey results expressed frustrations with the Job Creation Fund and Minnesota Investment Fund. EDAM identified a disconnect happening between the workforce and economic development. They are advocating for some flexibility with funding and will be working to get some stories out from members about why this funding is important.

MAPCED – MAPCED members are keeping an eye on a potential COVID-19 state relief package. They have been discussing how these funds will get distributed to employers and lessons learned from CARES Act distribution. Several members also shared workforce projects that had been done with CARES Act funds.

M State, Mary Rothchild – Board of Trustees passed Biennial Budget request that will go to the Legislature. Included in that budget is a \$6M request for Career and Technical Education. Part of the funds would be used specifically for alternative training opportunities for unemployed individuals and would give the opportunity for rapid training with alternative credentials. A report on non-credit instruction will be heard soon by the Board of Trustees. The report renews emphasis on industry sectors and how programs work with employers. The Job Skills Partnership Board met earlier this week and some funding was approved to support credential transparency. [Credential Engine](#) is a national partner that will be collaborating with M State to provide greater transparency of credentials through the creation of a database where credentials can be searched. M State is also working with RealTime Talent on web development and web process.

DLI, Dan Solomon – [Apprenticeship grants](#) are available. There is an [Apprenticeship event](#) on Dec. 17th aimed at doing apprenticeship in healthcare. In Pipeline, doing some community conversations around the state. They have two events coming up in December: [Dec. 16th](#) and [Dec. 22nd](#).

DEED, Liz Jennings – Talked to [Jessica Yang](#) who works for Office of Higher Education in the federally-funded [Get Ready](#) program. The program helps high school students get ready for colleges and careers. She is looking for people who could make a short video directed at high schoolers about their career journey. Liz will connect Jessica with Eriann to access their library of videos for youth. Also, WOTC (Workforce Opportunity Tax Credit) and H-2A/H-2B are now reporting to CareerForce. This is primarily an administrative change. MinnesotaWorks hired an additional staff person to answer calls more quickly from employers. In November, 182 employers made new requests for MinnesotaWorks accounts. Of those, 105 were approved.

DEED, Jackie Buck – January is Healthcare Month: focus on healthcare, healthcare careers, and career pathways. They are working on getting some media spots for Commissioner Grove to talk about the importance of healthcare jobs. Two employer round tables are also in the works for January 6th and January 19th. If anyone knows employers who would want to be on a round table, [send to Jackie](#). Explore Career events in January around healthcare. There are safety concerns around healthcare because of COVID-19, so companies are trying to do some videos talking about the culture and what they're doing to increase safety. Focusing on small and medium-size businesses, particularly long-term care facilities. April is being designated as Tech Month: DEED is planning to engage MSP TechHire and other organizations. DEED submitted H-1B grant on Nov. 12. They requested \$8M. Much of the work was done by Leslie Wojtowicz and team! [Cirtec Medical](#) is building a second facility, opening August 2021, and they are looking at hiring 200 new people. Many of the jobs are assembly and manufacturing.

VRS, Marci Jasper – Three of four categories are now open, providing the opportunity to serve those individuals that have been put on a waiting list. This has many great benefits, including increased numbers of candidates for employers – and candidates who are a bit higher than entry level. VRS and DLI are partnering on a new project, "Disability Boot Camp." They will develop and pilot over the next six months.

Local Initiatives:

- *Minneapolis* – Continuing to plan a schedule of virtual interactive career fairs. Regionally, they are involved with planning a healthcare event. Minneapolis had started talking to RealTime Talent about two months ago to do some targeted outreach to hospitality jobseekers.
- *Anoka* – Secured the Opioid Grant. State applied for \$1.3M and we have the first \$800,000. The funds will hopefully be used to encourage people to train for healthcare positions to combat the crisis. Anoka is still looking for jobseekers and enrollments. They had another EasyVirtualFair this week which was intentionally scheduled to avoid conflicts with regional virtual job fairs. They are also implementing an Incumbent Worker Training, delivered through Zoom, in collaboration with St. Thomas. Youth are largely doing Earn-and-Learn right now in lieu of work experience.
- *Rural Minnesota CEP* – Northwest PIC organized seminar about intercultural workplaces which was well-attended. The session was led by [Ubuntu Consulting](#). Three more entities received the I-WE designation. A National Apprenticeship Week event showcased current apprenticeship openings and heard from current apprentices. Their Regional Workforce Alliance group met, and Jennifer Byers presented about economic conditions. Check out DEED [Guide to Inclusive Workplaces](#).
- *Dakota-Scott* – Doing a Healthcare Career Fair soon. Had their first virtual fair which featured about 15 employers. Once a month during COVID, they have had a meeting with the president of their local Chamber president and representatives from community colleges. Dakota County libraries put together a series of workshops for entrepreneurs. Libraries also offered free professional photos as an event, and the Dakota-Scott

workforce board had folders ready for people getting their photos taken so they could have info from employers.

- *Central Minnesota JTS* – Job fairs are continuing but they are struggling to get high turnout from jobseekers. They also received a grant to get technology to youth and are looking at replicating the I-WE program. Engaging with [Big Ideas](#) out of New Ulm to encourage non-traditional employees in trades paths.
- *Southwest* – Workforce Development Board's marketing strategy has been underway. A dozen or more employers have been attending meetings. Pushing more curbside career fairs. Asset gap analysis with employers is going out soon – the survey questions will be sent to Dan Wenner.
- *Southeast* – Creating database for employers and students to access opportunities. SteeleCoWorks doing virtual sessions instead of in-school. Mayo Clinic gave guest presentation about health in the workplace. WDI is also working on a grant which will provide training for folks coming out of the justice system. They are doing a survey of manufacturers in their 10 counties to see what skills are most valued by employers. Chet Bodin and Bridgett Backman offered additional ideas/resources – they will connect with Mike Postma.
- *Career Solutions* – First curbside career fair last Wednesday had 117 jobseekers attend and 57 employers participated. Connected with Minnesota Department of Health to create an upcoming webinar about [COVID and Workplaces](#). Invited HR professionals and contacted CMJTS. No cap for attendees. Next HR networking group will have someone from the VA Medical Center to talk to employers about the benefits of hiring veterans. Career Planners going out to local library in St. Cloud to meet with jobseekers until Career Lab opens.

Next meeting: January 14th, 2021