



MAWB and DEED Legislative Advocacy Meeting  
February 4, 2021

Attendees included: Anne Kilzer, Ben Baglio, Deb Bahr-Helgen, Barb Chaffee, Ling Becker, Laura Beeth, Bud Stone, Carol Anderson, Carrie Bendix, Chad Kulas, Commissioner Mary Hamann-Roland, Darielle Dannen, Deb Barnes, Diane Halvorson, Elena Foshay, Mayor Jacob Frey, Commissioner Steve Grove, Heather Gleason, Ian Vincent, Janelle Wald-Kovar, Jim Kingsley, Jinny Rietmann, Commissioner Kevin Adeo, Laura Petterson, Lori Schwartz, Marc Majors, Marie Domiano, Nicole Mattson, Nicole Swanson, Pam Oeffler, Shauen Pearce, Maureen Ramirez, Commissioner Richard Greene, Rick Roy, Shirley Barnes, Commissioner Stan Karwoski, Tammy Biery, Teresa Bohnen, Vicki Leaderbrand, Deputy Commissioner Hamse Warfa.

MAWB Chair Shirley Barnes welcomed the group, thanked DEED for their time and attendance, and led introductions.

Discussion ensued regarding economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Tammy Biery, Executive Director of Career Solutions, outlined the following points:

- A joint reskilling strategy is needed to assist large numbers of dislocated workers. How can MAWB collaborate with DEED on a cohesive plan a plan to develop and promote reskilling strategies?
- Strengthened connections with Unemployment Insurance (UI) recipients at the local level provide great value to job seekers and employers and MAWB would like to discuss these opportunities with DEED in reinstating strategies that support a plan.
- Reopening brick and mortar CareerForce locations is important to this effort. Many people need the access to internet and technology which is provided at physical locations.

Commissioner Grove responded:

- The number of people requesting UI each week is decreasing, but this will still be a long economic recovery process. DEED expects to be restarting RESEA sessions in the next few weeks.
- The pandemic has had an uneven impact on the economy. There are many jobs open, but many people are also unemployed.
- DEED believes that digital services are the future but also understands the value and necessity of in-person services. Safety of clients and staff is their priority.

Barb Chaffee, Executive Director of the Central Minnesota Workforce Development Board, described a situation with the manufacturing industry and discussed the need for flexibility on the 20% cap policy with incumbent worker training.

- Commissioner Grove replied, saying that increasing flexibility was a priority for the agency on several different policy items. He emphasized his appreciation for the list of recommended changes that MAWB had sent to DEED in advance of this meeting and agreed that some things – such as the Dislocated Worker funding allocations – should not change.

- Deputy Commissioner Warfa added that there are some policies which are under the control of the Minnesota Job Skills Partnership Board (MJSP) and not DEED.

Carol Anderson, Chair of the Rural Minnesota CEP Board, outlined the following points:

- Local Boards have a wide scope of work and provides valuable services to local/regional economies, employers, and jobseekers.
- The existing system is flexible and historically adapts quickly to meet changing needs.
- Discussed return on investment (ROI) data from the previous year.
- Local Boards want to ensure that they are communicating their stories effectively and to the correct people at DEED.

Commissioner Grove responded:

- DEED supports local coordination. They have been communicating with the public through the Top 30 Jobs in Demand during COVID-19.
- Communications and outreach has been highly prioritized during COVID-19.
- The CareerForce brand makes it easier to communicate throughout the system and build outreach efforts.

Laura Beeth, Vice President of Talent Acquisition at Fairview Health Services, discussed innovation at the local level.

- MSP TechHire program has served thousands of jobseekers, especially people of color.
- The Step Up program is a national model and supports thousands of diverse youth each year, including students with disabilities and low-income youth.

Commissioner Grove responded:

- Youth jobs are a high priority for the agency right now. They are also focusing especially on the 18 to 25-year-old age range and are looking at ways to build pipelines to successful careers.
- Equity in the workforce continues to remain an essential priority for DEED.

Other local Board directors and attendees on the call shared other examples of local innovation.

Anne Kilzer, Director of the Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board, asked about the Workforce Development Fund. MAWB had sent recommendations to DEED about proposed changes to the fund. Anne asked about getting into the details of the recommendations and how MAWB can help carry the message to legislators.

- Commissioner Grove replied that DEED has already incorporated the Dislocated Worker formula ideas. Changing the Dislocated Worker program in general is challenging. When the language is released, more detailed conversations can begin.
- Deputy Commissioner added that DEED has been soliciting feedback on the Workforce Development Fund since July 2019 and will continue to collaborate when the bill draft is released.

Commissioner Grove asked what DEED should be keeping top-of-mind during this session. Responses included: program funding, flexibility in funding mechanisms, ensuring that disparities across the state are not exacerbated, avoiding shifts in funding away from local Boards, and continuing to work with employers to adopt equity goals.