

Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB), CareerForce Systems, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), and State Services for the Blind (SSB) Joint Statewide Meeting

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Notes

Nicole Swanson, Director of the Anoka County Job Training Center and MAWB Operations Committee Chair, facilitated the meeting. Following a welcome, introductions, and an icebreaker activity, Nicole reviewed the Mission, Purpose, and Goals of these collaborative meetings.

Each partner presented an overview of their work.

- Tammy Biery, Executive Director of Career Solutions, shared an update about MAWB. She presented a summary of work that had been done on National Emergency Grants and summarized other recent initiatives.
- Mike Lang, Director of Employment Services, presented about the Explore Careers Series and 1:1 Virtual Services, emphasizing the shift to virtual service delivery during COVID-19.
- Dee Torgerson, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, shared a slideshow. She reviewed the VRS Priority for Service Categories and explained the historical context of the Waiting List. The presentation also included an overview of the five services required by WIOA for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).
- Natasha Jerde, Director of State Services for the Blind, reviewed the services available through their Communication Center and their Program Services. The list is available on those slides of the presentation.
- Ray Douha, Director of Veterans Employment Services, shared a brief overview of his department's work and recent hiring of new staff. He emphasized that the change to virtual services during COVID-19 has made it increasingly difficult to reach out to Native American veterans, especially since many were already impacted by pre-existing divides in accessibility to technology.
- Cindy Larson, Workforce Development Field Operations Area Manager, presented an overview of the timeline, history, and progress of the new Standardized Workshops Pilot program.

The next meeting will be on Thursday, April 15th at 1:30 PM. Meetings have also been scheduled for July 15th and October 21st at 1:30 PM. If you have not received calendar invitations for these meetings, please email Becky Accettura at baccettura@mncounties.org.