

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

Thursday, April 15, 2021

Notes

Ray Douha, Veterans Employment Program Director, facilitated the meeting. The meeting began with a welcome, introductions, and an icebreaker activity, and a review of the Mission and Purpose of these collaborative meetings.

Ray Douha and Barry Platt reviewed upcoming events in the Veterans Employment Services department and shared an overview of the roles and responsibilities for individuals in their office. Yogi Montry was on the call and shared information about his work with Native American veterans. Ray Douha described their work with homeless veterans: they participate in a registry on Sharepoint which keeps track of homeless veterans across the state. Andrea Dunn shared about her work with the statewide veterans' reintegration program, including their trips to Texas to meet with soldiers returning to the USA, and briefly described the work of Lee Okerstrom with justice-involved veterans. Pre-COVID, the team went into jails to share information about their services. Now they use recorded videos. Shannon Sprouse is the team lead on virtual services. He shared information about their weekly virtual job club and statewide career and resource fairs.

Alyssa Klein and Diana Ristamaki shared a presentation about Pre-ETS partnerships with local areas. See slides.

Mike Lang shared updates from CareerForce Systems. They have recently concluded the Standardized Workshop pilot and are starting the facilitator training on April 22nd. He also shared an update on the RESEA calls. They have seen the biggest increase in reportable individuals in MinnesotaWorks during the first quarter of 2021 than the previous six quarters. They will be moving next to the retail industry (calls until this point have focused primarily on hospitality industry workers). They have also been working on the referral database which is now available in the staff and partners section of CareerForceMN.com.

Dee Torgerson shared an update from VRS. Their work with Pre-ETS is a major focus. In July, they will be rolling out a framework to help make it easier for families to connect to services.

Natasha Jerde shared an update from State Services for the Blind, and Tou Yang and Sheila Koenig presented about Pre-Employment Transition Services. See slides.

Tammy Biery from MAWB talked about the referral process and emphasized the value of doing real-time handoffs with customers. She suggested setting up a three-way call to make referrals, instead of expecting the customer to reach out or for another party to follow up with them. Live connections may help customers feel more welcome and smooth the process for them. She also shared a [video about the Dislocated Worker program](#) on the DEED website and information about [Dislocated Worker eligibility requirements](#).

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