



MAWB Policy & Issues Committee Minutes

April 14, 2021

- **NEG Update:** Received nine proposals that came in for about \$1 million in the metro and \$600,000 in greater Minnesota. Lensa Idossa followed up with applicants and the total amounts were raised to \$1.1 million for the metro and \$950,000 in greater Minnesota. The DEED team attempted to equalize these numbers as much as possible while also understanding that some local areas had to go outside of their comfort zones to meet performance numbers. Lensa and the team is trying to get everyone in contract as soon as possible.
 - Marc will check with Jennifer about getting more guidance for enrollment eligibility. As far as we know, eligibility requirements are the same as they are for DW.
 - Marc will schedule a meeting next week for NEG applicants to talk through guidance on paid eligible employment.
- **Tech Training:** an RFP went out about 30 days ago. The goal is to increase the numbers of BIPOC individuals in tech training. Application deadline was extended through April 30th. Partnerships are encouraged. Because this is a pilot, the geographic area is limited to the metro. Participation is restricted to 18-30 year-olds.
- **YouthBuild RFP:** In the next couple of weeks, a grant for YouthBuild will go out. Trying to get waivers to extend past June 30, 2022. The goal is to expand the program as much as possible. Kay Tracy will answer specific questions about whether existing providers can expand or whether it's only open to new applicants. Eligibility requirements will be in the RFP.
 - Discussion ensued about the requirements for YouthBuild instructors. Funding is generally not enough to pay instructors a reasonable wage for the credentials they are expected to have.
- **Incumbent Worker Training Demand:** Discussion ensued about how to quantify demand for incumbent worker – MAWB has been in conversation with DEED about getting a statewide waiver on the 20% cap.
 - Rural CEP has seen 18 requests with one completed and the rest in process. Demand has increased.
 - In general, any other numbers or data to quantify increased demand should be sent to the team at DEED.
- **Reopening Physical CareerForce Locations:** There is no date yet for returning to physical locations. The DEED headquarters is moving, and staff will not return there until at least August.
 - Discussion ensued. Points were made regarding an issue of perception between employers and workforce centers including: 1) employers are scrambling for employees and locations are not physically open to help, and 2) local staff can meet with people in

person but DEED staff are not required to, and this is causing an issue. Employers are increasingly frustrated that they can't find applicants.

- It was suggested that a targeted communications campaign emphasizing virtual service delivery might help change the perception that CareerForce is "closed."
- Another perception issue between workforce centers and jobseekers: hypocrisy of staff telling jobseekers to find in-person jobs, including jobs that have face-to-face interactions with customers, implying that the jobseeker must absorb that risk of COVID-19 infection while staff remain at home.
- RESEA/UI Applicant calls are also taking Job Service staff away from other projects and several areas have not seen a notable increase in referrals.
- Tammy Biery mentioned that potentially, part of the reason why the phone calls are not generating the maximum number of referrals is because handoffs are not happening live. She suggested doing three-way calls and bringing local staff into the conversation so that a day or two days didn't pass by.
- Calls have been targeted to the hospitality sector and this is not addressing the main need in some areas of the state, since the workforce situation varies widely.
- DEED partners reiterated that the 4,000 calls per week is a direct instruction from the Commissioner and the project will continue into the foreseeable future.
- Discussion ensued about the impact of the RESEA calls project on Job Service staff time. This is creating issues in some areas.