



MAWB Business Services/Economic Development Committee Minutes

May 13, 2021

Hot Topics

- The committee discussed potential future speakers at meetings. Suggestions included: Minnesota Chamber 2030 Report and apprenticeships.
 - Leslie Wojtowicz clarified that it would be beneficial to hear from an employer engaged in apprenticeships to learn more about their motivation for getting involved. Local areas want to know more about engaging employers. Bridgett Backman added that additional clarification on pre-apprenticeship activities would be helpful.
 - Links were shared for the [Midwest Manufacturers Association \(MMA\) Youth Skills/Apprenticeship resources page](#), and the [DLI Youth Skills Training program guide](#).
- The committee discussed their interest in learning more about entrepreneurship.
 - Mark Jacobs shared the [Open to Business program](#), a partnership between the Dakota County CDA, Dakota County cities, and the Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD).
 - Jessica Miller mentioned the [1 Million Cups chapter in Mankato](#) and offered to invite someone to come speak to the group.
 - Becky Milbrandt shared the [University Enterprise Laboratories' \(UEL\)](#) work in St. Paul, and offered to connect with their Executive Director, Diane Rucker.
 - Eriann Faris presented a hot-off-the-presses infographic about entrepreneurship. This will be updated and shared through the RC3s.
- The committee discussed using ARP funds for workforce projects. Discussion ensued. Local areas have heard reports from employers that they want the UI benefits to end, citing this as a main reason why they are struggling to find employees.
 - Some local areas have started doing in-person hiring events.
 - Angie Dahle said that Career Solutions' CDL Discovery Day events have been successful. They are planning another similar event for a Welding Discovery Day.

Employer-Related Updates: Items Pertinent to Employers or Employer Services

- Local Areas
 - City of Duluth
 - Disaster grants are in progress.
 - Recruiting for Digital Navigator positions and are recruiting people out of IT programs.
 - At a recent job fair, stuffed bags with job opening information and included a universal application. They encouraged people to fill it out before leaving the event. Primarily focused on hospitality.
 - Central Minnesota (CMJTS)
 - Co-hosting outdoor event with Career Solutions. Doing an in-person event in Monticello.

- I-WE initiative has been moving forward.
 - Awarded disability innovation grant – want to increase the Direct Service Provider workforce. Hosted IT event with 50-60 students in attendance.
 - Southwest Minnesota
 - Hosted a drive-thru job fair which was not especially well-attended. Took leftover information bags to undecided high school seniors and other students.
 - [Big Ideas event trailer](#) includes a virtual reality experience in construction and welding.
 - Also having a hard time getting people into training, in addition to work positions.
 - Anoka County
 - Received two disaster relief grants – Opioid and DWG.
 - Planning drive-thru job event in Blaine parking lot.
 - Libraries have been open. Will have a presence there to connect with jobseekers.
 - Ramsey County
 - Planning an in-person event at Allianz Field which will target the Midway business area in Saint Paul. They are planning a date and a rain date.
 - Also starting an inclusive employer cohort.
 - Stearns-Benton (Career Solutions)
 - NEG DW grant will provide wages for dislocated workers who are doing COVID-19 related jobs.
 - Also working on I-WE designation.
- State Agencies
 - DEED, Jessica Miller
 - Newsletter includes best practices by region.
 - New project focuses on minorities in manufacturing.
 - Employers are increasing conversations about retaining talent – ensuring promotion opportunities every two years. Also using PTO and hiring/retention bonuses. Seeing in general much more flexibility in hours. Also heard of one employer using a new strategy to get talent: two-week training program to gain basic skills for entry level careers in manufacturing.
 - DEED, Chet Bodin
 - In the far Northwest, connecting justice-involved jobseekers with employers. Working with probation officers. Looking at having 20 OJTs in FY22.
 - Talking with DEED about making I-WE a statewide designation. Chet will be presenting at [an event about I-WE during TRUE Tuesdays](#).
 - DoLI, Kathleen Gordon
 - Dual-Training grant has closed.
 - Held a big DEI half-day yesterday – [slides here](#).
 - [June 8th: Pipeline 101 Webinar](#), [June 15th: All-Industry Forum](#).
 - Dual Training Pipeline Grants will be announced the first week of June.

- Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers (MAPCED)
 - Recently held a meeting with DEED to discuss the American Rescue Plan (ARP) and potential business relief programs. Want to avoid overlap. Discussion centered on building resiliency for businesses and strengthening infrastructure.