



MAWB Policy & Issues Committee Minutes

May 19, 2021

IFA/Reopening Discussion

- Vicki Leaderbrand, Executive Director of Rural Minnesota CEP, opened the conversation with an update on the IFA process in Rural Minnesota CEP and expressed difficulty negotiating with a DEED partner. Rural Minnesota CEP's Board is writing a letter to Commissioner Grove to express that they do not think the process was fair and equitable.
- Lorrie Janatopoulos, CareerForce Director, said that if IFAs are at an impasse, the State Funding Mechanism is an option. She reiterated that no decisions have been made by DEED to exit brick-and-mortar locations.
- Mark Jacobs, Director of the Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board, said that there are good reasons for reassessing the future of workforce in Minnesota as far as it relates to digital vs. in-person services delivery, but this is a conversation which should be held transparently and collaboratively with all stakeholders in the system.
- Jinny Rietmann, Executive Director of Workforce Development, Inc. mentioned that the State Funding Mechanism might be an option for their local area. Their contribution cannot get much higher and three of their locations are being vacated by Vocational Rehabilitation Services. None of their IFAs are signed.
- Several people discussed and agreed that continuing to not offer in-person services, or switching to an all-virtual service model, hurts BIPOC and low-income communities the most. It also has impacts for those with physical disabilities and language barriers.
- Nicole Swanson, Director of the Anoka County Job Training Center, asked about the status of IFAs that have already been turned in to DEED. Lorrie replied that some are approved, and some are not finalized. Until the new IFA is completely signed, the old IFA remains in place.
 - Nicole followed up, saying that since the IFAs have been submitted, Job Service staff have been fully reassigned to the RESEA calls and DEED is considering pulling out of physical locations, which is necessitating a complete renegotiation of the IFA.
 - Lorrie said there is no definitive timeline on any renegotiation.
- Jeanna Fortney, MAWB Director, mentioned that in a recent meeting, Commissioner Grove had said that DEED-managed locations could reopen by appointment only without Job Service staff on June 1, and reopen fully by July 15. She asked how this will impact the IFAs.
 - Lorrie replied that the MOUs include Job Service staffing of Career Labs, so this would need to change either by an addendum to the IFA or another means.
- Several people on the call agreed that the RESEA calls are a good idea, but they are not equally impactful in all areas. Ling Becker, Workforce Solutions Director, at Ramsey County, suggested forming a local-level committee to help decide how resources are best used.
- Mike Lang, Employment Service Director, clarified that the RESEA calls are Wagner-Peyser outreach calls. Job Service workers' "fifth day" is spent doing follow-up.

- Jeanna asked for clarification on whether a mask mandate is still in place for DEED employees. Mike said there has been some confusion about this and they will clarify their policy with field workers.

Next Steps

- Any local areas that are planning to reopen DEED-managed physical locations should please email Lorrie to let her know plans.