



MAWB Policy & Issues Committee Agenda

July 14, 2021

- Are there any new DEED policies the group should be aware of?
- Will all DEED-leased CareerForce sites open on August 1, 2021? (See Commissioner Grove's letter on reopening, attached)
- CAREER (Comprehensive and Accessible Reemployment through Equitable Employment Recovery) National Dislocated Worker Grant & any policy discussion items? – Marc Majors
- Updates on Job Service – Mike Lang
- Are there any new changes to the Governor's Workforce Development Board? – Ben Baglio

June 30, 2021

Dear Workforce Development Leaders,

This past year has brought unprecedented challenges to our state's economy, and our entire workforce system has had to adapt to serve Minnesotans in new ways. At DEED, our commitment throughout this pandemic has been to work with partners across the state to meet our mission: to empower the growth of the Minnesota economy, for everyone.

As we move into the next chapter of our efforts, we know that nothing will go "back to normal." We are evolving our service model to meet new and unprecedented demands. I'm writing now to share with you the direction we're headed, and to ask for your collaboration in that journey.

First, I want to share what our goals are in this economic recovery. As part of Governor Walz's "One Minnesota" plan, DEED is focused on three main goals by the end of 2022:

1. To shrink unemployment disparities between white and BIPOC Minnesotans by 50%;
2. To create jobs where they are needed most through recovering all net jobs lost for Minnesota workers; and,
3. To strengthen our workforce by achieving a full recovery to pre-pandemic levels for the number of adults earning a family sustaining income after completing a state supported program, including full recoveries for women, BIPOC, Adults in Greater MN, and Adults with disabilities.

With these goals in mind, we want to learn lessons from the pandemic and ensure we're building a system made for maximum impact. The pandemic taught us that remote services are possible – and in many cases, they remove physical barriers and create efficiencies. The pandemic also taught us that we have to find innovative ways to serve our customers. It forced us to re-think nearly all of our business processes and service assumptions.

The pandemic also highlighted and deepened employment disparities that have existed for far too long in Minnesota. We know that Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Minnesotans suffered a disproportionate amount of job loss, and in many cases left the labor force in higher rates than white Minnesotans.

Given these lessons and more, the core principles for our new strategic direction are centered on three principles: equity, proactivity and flexibility. They will help guide everything that we do to help Minnesota workers and businesses.

Here's what that means specifically:

CareerForce Employment Services (Job Service) and Vocational Rehabilitation Services will implement an evolution of their traditional service delivery models focused on providing greater impact for our customers. We want to develop a better digital presence and new model for entry into employment

services. By enhancing our self-service and a strong online toolset, we can both broaden and deepen our positive impact for the customers we serve.

Since March of this year, Job Service staff have partnered closely with DEED's Unemployment Insurance staff on the Good Jobs Now campaign reaching out to directly connect with unemployed Minnesotans most affected by the pandemic. That new and proactive way of doing business translates to over 50,000 calls made, and 290,000 CareerForce services provided. Those numbers dwarf the amount of people we were able to reach in previous service models where we staffed Career Force Centers to welcome walk-in customers. They are proof that proactivity pays off.

Job Service staff will continue reaching out to unemployed Minnesotans and prioritize in-depth services for those customers in greatest need as we recover from the pandemic recession.

At the same time, we know in-person service is critical to our success. Many jobseekers don't have access to technology, or, require assistance in using computers to create resumes or apply for jobs. DEED will pilot the return of one Job Service team member at each of the 16 comprehensive CareerForce Centers across the State, beginning on August 2. These team members will center their in-person work on appointment-based counseling (including for walk-ins) so that we're able to maximize the number of people we reach.

We understand that staffing for in-person services will require some changes for our partners. We will work with our partners over the coming months to come up with solutions to help address staffing challenges in career labs and at reception desks. Tracking our success will allow us to be flexible in our approach moving forward.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) will transition back to in-person service too. These services will be provided primarily in-community and in-home given the needs of VRS and SSB customers. Again, we are refocusing resources and services based on how we serve customers best. This customer-centered approach is core to our strategies for reaching our three goals by the end of 2022.

These strategic shifts in service delivery require us to examine our leased spaces throughout the state. We are reviewing leases as they come due to identify shared objectives and a physical footprint that allows us the flexibility to serve communities well. We anticipate that our footprint will be a combination of leased space in CareerForce Centers, use of third-party spaces, and mobile services. These decisions will be made in conjunction with our partners on a case-by-case basis, with plenty of time for feedback and discussion.

DEED is committed to listening to our partners and customers as we move forward with these changes. One of the ways we will do this is by visiting communities throughout the state on a CareerForce Tour to engage with customers and partners. We're eager to hear from workforce leaders across the state about the most pressing concerns and innovative ideas. This tour will allow us to engage on how service delivery models work best in each region and what that means for the CareerForce system's physical footprint across the state. Beyond this immediate engagement effort, DEED is committed to engaging in

ongoing and regular communication with partners throughout the state. We will hold quarterly CareerForce townhalls with agendas for discussion on workforce issues and opportunities.

Thank you for everything you're doing for Minnesota's workers and employers. Your leadership will help ensure we help Minnesotans get back to work, we help Minnesota employers find the employees they need to thrive - and we put Minnesota on the leading edge of America's economic recovery.

Sincerely,



Steve Grove
Commissioner

cc: Hamse Warfa, Deputy Commissioner
Blake Chaffee, Deputy Commissioner
Lorrie Janatopolos, CareerForce Director
Dee Torgerson, VRS Director
Elizabeth Frosch, Chief of Staff