



#1

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA: Anoka County Job Training Center - #12

Submitted by: Nicole Swanson, Becky White, and Becca Johnson

Attach a description (no more than three pages) describing the innovative practice. Please address the following points. See the following page for an outline.

- Overview describing the innovative practice
- Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)
- Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)
- Identification of those involved, including collaborators
- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources
- **NEW This Year** – Ability to replicate by others: Include guidance or a template which provides a roadmap for other local areas to replicate this practice. This could be a step-by-step list, a diagram, an outline, a series of questions, etc.

Information can be emailed to:
Becky Accettura, baccettura@mncounties.org

DUE ON: Friday, July 9, 2021 at 5:00 PM CST

Scoring Criteria for Selection of Outstanding Practices	Maximum Points
Overview describing the innovative best practice	20
Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)	20
Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)	20
Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	10
Ability for use or replication by others	15
TOTAL	100

Program/Initiative Title: Online Interest Form
LWDA Name: Anoka County Job Training Center - #12

Overview describing the innovative practice

The Anoka County Job Training Center (ACJTC) previously had a 13-page universal application that asked all eligibility questions inclusive of each program available we offered. This included Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker, and all other special projects. This universal application was previously viewed as a statewide best practice for its comprehensive program eligibility however staff saw an opportunity to enhance the customer experience. After an individual turned in the application, the customer's first contact was one of our intake technicians. Our intake technicians specialize in program eligibility – not necessarily all of the other resources that CareerForce or the ACJTC has to offer. They collect all documentation for data validation prior to program enrollment determination.

Once initial eligibility has been determined, participants were then invited to an information session to learn more about available programs, program expectations, and take a math & reading assessment, as well as an interest inventory. Once the information session is completed, a program counselor would be assigned. The counselor then completes any additional assessments required, develop an IEP, and determine enrollment options.

An intake process continuous improvement project was completed with the following goals:

1. Enhance Customer Service
 1. Increase client engagement and ensure access to immediate resource information.
 2. Improve ease of inquiring about programs.
 3. Enhance process of applying for and enrolling in programs.
2. Decrease Processing Time
 1. Answer program questions ahead of applications.
 2. Increase the use of technology to create a better application process for clients and internal workflow.
3. Increase Enrollments
 1. A more efficient and streamlined process for clients and internal workflow will result in a higher percentage of enrollments.

As a result, we shortened our 13-page application to a 1-page interest form for and eliminated group information sessions.

New enhanced process includes:

1. The interest form is available online, paper form, or via phone if the individual does not have access to technology. When the Career Lab in Blaine opens, a customer kiosk will be available.
2. An Admissions Team (A-team) member is the customer's first contact. The team's responsibilities include:
 1. Provide job search resources – Veterans Services, CareerForce and workshops, Hiring Events, interest assessments.
 2. Provide other resources – Adult Basic Education, Voc Rehab, public assistance, housing, food.
 3. Share JTC programs options and refer the customer to a technician to apply for our programs.
3. Intake Technician assists the applicant with the program specific application, reviews intake process and pertinent information needed to determine eligibility determination for the specific program and if eligible counselor assignment.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

1. Customer service has improved with enhanced program connections and enrollments.
2. Program enrollments have increased with a faster turnaround time.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

Dual impact has resulted. Being able to enroll more participants at a faster pace, we can provide training and job search skills that more quickly prepare customers for the workforce, thus meeting the needs of employers sooner.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

- Aimee DeMond, JTC Intake Technician
- Ann Fouty, JTC Intake Technician
- Becca Johnson, JTC Employment & Training Intake Supervisor
- Becky White, JTC Business Operations Manager
- Bridgett Backman, JTC Employment & Training Program Manager
- Darcy Hokkanen, JTC Program Coordinator
- Dave Ahsenmacher, JTC Systems Support Coordinator
- Krista Peterson, JTC Office Manager
- Troy Scheffel, JTC Senior Vocational Counselor
- Amanda Lee, DEED Customer Service Specialist
- Melissa Epping, Facilitator, AC Attorney's Office
- Mike Roff, Facilitator, AC Administration

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

Anoka County Information Technology (IT) has local systems for Veterans Services and the License Center. We were able to take the framework of those systems and customize it to meet our needs. We also worked with the County Attorney's office on language and legalities, as well as the Communications Department to develop a short video in lieu of the in-person information session.

Project innovation shared with the Workforce Development Board, which includes community partners and employers, the Minnesota Association of Workforce Board's Job Seeker Services Committee, and a request from DHS to be shared with statewide providers.

Attach guidance and/or template which provides a roadmap for other areas to replicate the practice.



Customer View:

Welcome

Please click the begin button to fill out the form provided to be seen by a team member.

Begin

Full Legal Name

Preferred Name

Preferred Pronoun

Date of Birth

Social Security Number

Address

City

State

Zip

County

Phone

Email

Are you a citizen of the United States?

- Yes No – Eligible Non-Citizen No – Non-Citizen, not authorized to work

Are you a Veteran?

- Yes No Eligible Spouse of a Veteran

How did you hear about us?

- DEED Website Flyer Career Force Job Fair/Open House Unemployment Session Anoka County Website
 Counselor Agency or School Referral Veteran Counselor Other

What is your primary interest at this time?

- Getting a full-time job with little or no training Enrolling in training to get a certificate or degree before seeking full-time employment
 Other (please describe)

Have you applied for, do you receive, or have you exhausted unemployment benefits?

- Yes No

Do you have an employment counselor?

- Yes No

Go Back

Submit

I understand that I am being asked to provide private information to the Job Training Center to enable the Job Training Center to assist me. I understand this information may be shared with others as allowed by law but only after I have received and signed the full Department of Employment and Economic Development Notice How We Use Your Personal Information. I acknowledge and agree that all data I enter will be available to the Anoka County Job Training Center. I further acknowledge and understand that all data entered is subject to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

I acknowledge that by electing to receive my information via email in a non-secure manner that the information will not be encrypted, and that it could be intercepted & viewed by a third party. Anoka County Job Training Center is not responsible for unauthorized access to your information while in transmission to the email address you designated above.

[Cancel](#) [Submit](#)

Staff View:

[Refresh Grids](#) [Admin Tool](#) [Enter request for client](#)

Data last refreshed at 11:00 AM.

[Search](#)

Clients waiting to be Seen **1**

Clients to Contact via Phone, Email, or Mail **6**

Service Completed **37**

Clients with Staff **125**

Technician Detail **0**

Holding/Failed To Contact **1**

Clients to be seen Queue

Client Name	Preferred Name	Time Entered	Primary Interest	Have a Counselor	Age	
Becca		7/2/2021 10:57:47 A M	Getting a full-time job with little or no training	No	31	View



#2

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA: _____Anoka County WDA 12_____

Submitted by: _____Nicole Swanson and Bridgett Backman_____

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TOTAL	100

Program/Initiative Title: Dislocated Worker and Adult Orientation Video
LWDA Name: Anoka County - #12

Overview describing the innovative practice

Anoka County Job Training Center created a video that is posted on our website for prospective program participants to learn about the dislocated worker and adult programs. The video is live and posted on a YouTube video platform and is accessible and meets ADA compliance.

In the past staff would schedule face to face orientation sessions and by making the information available in a video format, individuals do not have to wait to be scheduled for an orientation. The video can be viewed multiple times and then enquirers may apply for the program and have a framework of how the program operates, have the ability to prepare questions they may have before enrolling in the program and learn about the need for an employment plan.

The YouTube platform also has the ability to translate information in a number of other languages so that a person's language preference can be met when available. This alternative format has provided alternative staff connections as well as providing in depth information during COVID-19 and the expansion of virtual services.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

Job seekers benefit by hearing about the opportunities and expectations in advance of their first meeting or appointment with an Employment Counselor. The video also shares resources and links to career exploration tools such as the CareerForce platform and other resources found on the JTC website. Other benefits include:

- saves time on behalf of job seekers that need to travel to our site or have scheduling conflicts.
- allows the job seeker to share information about the program with their peers and/or support system.
- allows the JTC to free up staff time to provide other services.
- demonstrates that many partners are involved in the workforce development space as we mention partners and additional resources throughout the video,

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

The DW Informational video can be viewed by employers that may be anticipating lay offs or small proportion. The link to the video could be shared at the time of lay off.

The video also has many resources that the community may not be aware of such as our universal career services, workshops and events hosted or co-sponsored locally, regionally or statewide.

The outcomes for job seekers may not realized now, but our hope is that when employers and community members see the video, they will be better prepared to refer someone when the situation deems it necessary

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

The video was a collaboration of our Eligibility team, CareerForce Lab, and DW and Adult Counselors for the development and adaptation of the content previously given over PowerPoint and used in a face to face session that was 45 minutes in length – the current video is 11 minutes in length.

The video production was a collaboration with Anoka County Communications unit who provide the YouTube and Voice over talent.

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

The JTC is fortunate to have an experienced team that reflected on past practices and challenges and made every effort remove barriers such as:

- Access to info was limited to one day per week through a group session held onsite.
- Scheduling of staff, rooms, and prospective client schedules or other circumstances.
- Rescheduling – due to weather or staffing.
- Testing was also done on this day in the past for all regardless of their path.
- Hearing information that was not relevant to the person (Services for Vets, when they were not a vet or information about college – when they may have been interested in On the job training).

A draft version was shared at the local One-Stop Operating meeting with the OSO provider, Job Service, Veteran Reps, VR and Youth services providers to gain their insights and awareness of the video's accessibility.

Attach guidance and/or template which provides a roadmap for other areas to replicate the practice.

The link to the video is: <https://www.anokacounty.us/1365/Dislocated-Worker>

In the future, we are considering opportunities to link prospective applicants in a more efficient and immediate manner to online information/inquiry system.



#3

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA: Career Solutions

Submitted by: Angie Dahle, Business Services Manager (for Tammy Biery, Executive Director, Career Solutions)

Attach a description (no more than three pages) describing the innovative practice. Please address the following points. See the following page for an outline.

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Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	10
Ability for use or replication by others	15
TOTAL	100

Program/Initiative Title: Career Solutions Welding Discovery Day and CDL Discovery Day workshops

LWDA Name: Career Solutions

Overview describing the innovative practice

Career Solutions has partnered with the St. Cloud Technical & Community College and local businesses to develop two 3-hour, bi-monthly Discovery Day workshops for job seekers. Job Seekers can “try a career” for the day and get all their questions answered about their career of interest. We have started with a CDL Discovery Day and a Welding Discovery Day so far as these careers are a few that are currently in high demand in our region.

These Discovery Day workshops are basically comprised of two parts to include local labor market information from the employers and hands-on career activities with the college. We have an employer panel so the job seekers can get all their questions answered from those who work in these positions as well as hands on activities with a semi-truck/ bus and welding equipment depending on the workshop. In these Discovery Day workshops, job seekers can learn about:

- Requirements for the positions
- The abundant job openings, great wages, company perks from these local employers
- Insight and advice from the local workers in these positions
- Tools, equipment and safety gear
- Welding tools, equipment and safety gear and perform basic welds for Welding Discovery Day.
- Climb into the semi- truck, check out equipment and conduct pre-trip inspections for CDL Discovery Day.

And get all their questions answered to see if the career is right for them!

Eventually we would like to expand these Discovery Days into other careers such as machining, nursing assistant, etc.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

We invite our job seeker clients as well as the general public. If Discovery Day participants are currently enrolled in one of our programs, they have access to retraining benefits if they wish to pursue training in these areas. If participants are interested in either one of these careers and are not one of our clients, we inform them of the Dislocated Worker Program, WIOA Adult or WIOA Young Adult programs and discussed potential retraining options and services through these programs.

We have had a great jobseeker turnout for these events. Jobseekers have been able to get all their questions answered about these careers. These workshops have really given the participants the knowledge and insight if they are interested in pursuing these high demand careers.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

Benefits for Employers:

- Employers get invited to participate at the bi-monthly Discovery Days to showcase their company, career opportunities and company perks.
- Employers are invited to come back and connect and network with training grads.
- Career Solutions provides social media shout-outs about these employer sponsors.
- Employers are recognized as community partners.

Overall, we are helping to fill the gap in these high demand roles in our community. It is a win-win for all!

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

Career Solutions collaborates with the St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) and local businesses. The Discovery Days are located at SCTCC and the instructors facilitate the hands-on

portion of the workshop while utilizing their equipment. We also collaborate with local businesses including but not limited to Daggett, Simonson, Performance Foods, Speedy Delivery, Metro Bus, Park Industries, DCI, ATS, Polar Tank and Trailer and CWMF. Our business services manager recruits the employers while our career planners facilitate the actual workshop.

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

Career Solutions received sponsorships from the employers to pay for SCTCC costs and radio advertising. We also promoted through several free avenues:

- Our local social services contacts to include adult basic education, probation, corrections, veteran services, vocational rehabilitation, county human services, kidstops, etc.
- Career Solutions social media
- Several free social media groups in Central MN
- Marketing to our job seeker clients
- Participating employers posted on their social media
- Somali radio

Attach guidance and/or template which provides a roadmap for other areas to replicate the practice.

This model could definitely be adopted by other WDAs. Please see the attached documents:

- Welding Discovery Day flyer for job seekers
- CDL Discovery Day flyer for job seekers
- Welding Discovery Day flyer and sponsorship levels for employers
- CDL Discovery Day flyer and sponsorship levels for employers
- Agenda for Welding Discovery Day
- Agenda for CDL Discovery Day

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A GREAT, IN-DEMAND CAREER?

Consider a career in

WELDING



Join us for Welding Discovery Day!

THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021, 1:00PM-4:00PM

Learn about the high-demand, wild world of welding in this FREE 3-hour workshop!

- Welding job requirements for various welding positions
- Abundant job openings, great wages, company perks from local employers
- Insight and advice from local welders
- Test out the welding tools, equipment and safety gear
- Get all your questions answered...see if welding is the right career fit!

Location: St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC)
1542 Northway Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303, Parking Lot D, Door 8, Room 1-377

Registration: Contact Greg at Career Solutions! 320.761.3339 or Email: gregory.holub@CSJobs.org



Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer/Americans with Disabilities Act. Career Solutions does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, family status, disability or age. Please contact 320-308-5334 if you need to receive this information in alternative format or if you need accommodations to attend any of our events.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A GREAT CAREER?

Consider a career in

TRANSPORTATION



Join us for CDL Discovery Day!

July 13, 1:00PM-4:00PM OR August 18, 1:00PM-4:00PM

Learn what it takes to be a CDL Driver in this FREE 3-hour workshop!

- CDL training requirements for semi-truck and bus drivers
- Job openings, wages, company perks from local employers
- Insight and advice from local drivers
- Pre-trip inspections & equipment
- Experience climbing into the actual driver seat
- Get all your questions answered...see if driving is the right career fit!

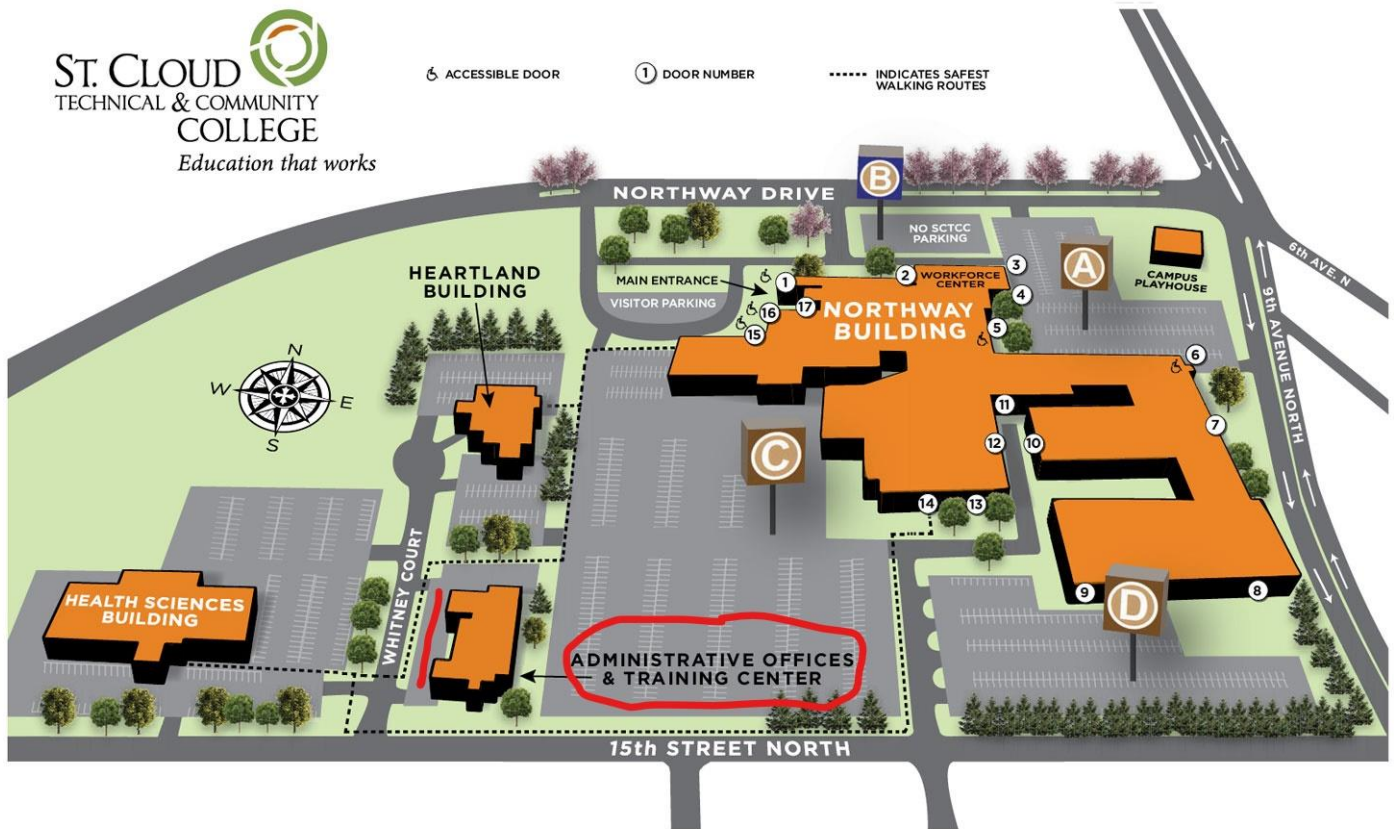
Location: St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) Customized Training
1215 -15th Street North, St. Cloud

Registration: Contact Greg at Career Solutions today! 320.761.3339 or
Email: gregory.holub@CSJobs.org



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 ACCESSIBLE DOOR
  DOOR NUMBER
 INDICATES SAFEST WALKING ROUTES



St. Cloud Technical &
 Community College
 1540 Northway Drive
 St. Cloud, MN 56303

Health Sciences Building
 1245 15th Street North
 St. Cloud, MN 56303

Heartland Building
 1520 Whitney Court
 St. Cloud, MN 56303

President's Office/Training Solutions
 1215 15th Street North
 St. Cloud, MN 56303

www.sctcc.edu | 320-308-5000 | 800-222-1009

SCTCC is a member of Minnesota State and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. ADA accessible facility. Affirmative action/equal opportunity educator/employer.

Administrative Offices & Training Center building, the red line in front of the building indicates where individuals should park on the map.

Please enter the door in the center of the building by the picnic table.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A GREAT, IN-DEMAND CAREER?

Consider a career in

WELDING



Join us for Welding Discovery Day!

THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2021 1:00-4:00PM

Learn about the wild world of welding in this FREE 3-hour workshop!

- Welding job requirements for various welding positions
- Job openings, wages, company perks from local employers
- Insight and advice from local welders
- Test out the welding tools, equipment and safety gear
- Get all your questions answered...see if welding is the right career fit!

Location: St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC)

Registration: Contact Greg at Career Solutions today! 320.761.3339 or
Email: gregory.holub@CSJobs.org





Funding new and innovative programs to educate our future workforce.

Sponsorship Opportunities

How you can participate: Join us in educating 50-60+ job seekers annually about the welding industry while showcasing your job opportunities at Career Solutions 3-hour Welding Discovery Day workshop! At Welding Discovery Day, participants who are interested in welding learn about: job openings and wages from local employers, insight and advice from local welders, welding training requirements, welding tools, equipment and safety gear...and they get all their questions answered to see if welding is the right career fit. (Career Solutions can fund Welding Training through the [Dislocated Worker Program](#)).

ANNUAL SPONSORSHIP BENEFITS	Platinum Sponsor \$1,500	Gold Sponsor \$1,000	Silver Sponsor \$500
Showcase your Welding career opportunities on our Employer Spotlight Panel for Welding Discovery Day	✓	✓	✓
Access our candidate pool of Welding training grads	✓	✓	✓
Company logo added on Discovery Day Marketing	✓		
Social Media shout-outs about your company	✓	✓	
Virtual Tour of your company provided to candidates (video supplied by company)	✓	✓	
Company listed in Career Solutions Annual Report publication	✓	✓	✓
Join our Preferred Employer List	✓	✓	✓
Recognized as a Community Partner	✓	✓	✓
Business Services consultation to assist you with your recruiting, training and retention needs	✓	✓	✓
Present open job leads to Career Solutions staff to increase their ability to refer strong candidates	✓	✓	✓

Each sponsor will:

- Get invited along with other businesses to participate at each bi-monthly Welding Discovery Day (for the year) to showcase your company, career opportunities and company perks.
- Get invited to connect and network with our Welding training grads.
- Provide Career Solutions with the opportunity to add additional resources to make Discovery Day the best it can be.

Career Solutions Staff will provide sponsor guidelines.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities, contact:

Ann Meline, Development & Program Manager, Ann.Meline@CSJobs.org / 320.342.3084 (Sponsorship details)
 Audrey O’Driscoll, Program Director, Audrey.ODriscoll@csjobs.org / 320.308.5712 (Discovery Day activities)
 Tammy Biery, Executive Director, Tammy.Biery@csjobs.org / 320.308.5702

CDL DISCOVERY DAY

AGENDA – JUNE 2, 2021

1:00 – 1:05	Welcome & Introductions	Greg
1:05 – 1:10	Overview of Events & Agenda	Angela
1:10 – 1:20	Client Success Story	Tim H.
1:20 – 1:30	Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQXVgnil-hw	Angela
1:30 – 1:40	Presentation	Metro Bus
1:40 – 1:50	Presentation	Performance Foods
1:50 – 2:20	Tours and Pre-Trip Inspections – Truck	TBD
1:50 – 2:20	Tours and Pre-Trip Inspections – Bus	Metro Bus
2:20 – 2:30	BREAK	
2:30 – 3:30	Introductions of Employer Panel & Open Forum	Greg/Angela
	1. Performance Foods	
	2. Metro Bus	
	3. Daggett Truck Line	
	4. Simonson Lumber/ Simonson Properties	
	5. Spee-Dee Delivery	
	*Share answers to common questions	
3:30 – 4:00	Open Forum Q & A	All
	Ask-It Basket as needed	All



#4

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA: Dakota-Scott #14
Submitted by: Mark Jacobs

Attach a description (no more than three pages) describing the innovative practice. Please address the following points. See the following page for an outline.

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Chambers of Commerce Engagement Dakota-Scott

Overview describing the innovative practice

The Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board (WDB) partners with the Chambers of Commerce across the two counties in numerous ways primarily focused on information sharing and communications. This two-county region has more than 500,000 residents and 13,000+ employers. The engagement of Chambers includes: 1) A Chamber of Commerce President serves on the WDB; 2) An additional President serves on the Business Services committee; and 3) most of the 9 local Chamber leaders in the area take part in monthly “South of the River Chamber Presidents meetings” which include: the Chamber leaders; Economic Development staff from each county; Workforce Development Board staff; and the President of Inver Hills Community College / Dakota County Technical College as well as the colleges’ Director of Customized Training and Continuing Education.

One example of the powerful partnership in effect is that four of the Chamber Presidents were featured panelists for a WDB meeting in January addressing a multitude of topics including:

- How have businesses been impacted by Covid?
- How are Chambers doing on memberships and what have Chambers done to help support businesses?
- What are you hearing from businesses/employers regarding workforce issues? Are they having trouble hiring workers?
- How have businesses opening/operating at a percent of capacity been affected? What percent of businesses are participating in the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)?
- How can the WDB assist with issues? What changes have you made during the pandemic that you will keep in the future?

Additionally, a popular WDB agenda item at many meetings is the update about the general business environment and challenges from the Burnsville Chamber of Commerce President, who is also a WDB member.

Why is this strong partnership so critical and important?

The Dakota-Scott WDB’s Vision Statement is “To be an inclusive and equitable workforce development system that benefits employers and job seekers so that residents have the competencies, employment skills, and education to support themselves and their families, and employers will have access to the skilled and educated workforce necessary to remain competitive in a dynamic global economy.”

And, the Mission Statement is “The Dakota-Scott WDB leads, collaborates and provides linkages that facilitate equity-informed workforce planning and supports economic development providing individuals, families, employers and the community opportunities to transform lives through meaningful employment.”

Additionally, two of the WDB’s three primary goals tie directly to businesses. They are:

- Effectively match employer needs with employee skills (for the economic vitality of the community)
- Convene business, community groups, and educators/trainers to facilitate collaboration between these groups to advance employment opportunities.

The strong connection and communications with the Chambers aligns with the vision to “benefit employers” and within the mission statement to “support economic development” and providing opportunities to transform lives through meaningful employment. Additionally, the Chamber connections are instrumental to the identified WDB goals. In Dakota-Scott, the Chambers have the deepest and most extensive connections with the business community. This was extremely evident over the past 16 Covid-impact months as the

organizations provided information and resources to the business community and also provided those of us in education, workforce and economic development with the real-time information we needed.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

- The Lakeville Chamber of Commerce in response to needs expressed by employers who had to lay off staff, created a resource guide for those employees (now job seekers) which featured employment-related information provided by WDB/CareerForce staff as well as information on food access, holiday support, free human services, housing, and utility payments. This document was then used by many other of the local Chambers of Commerce.
- The future workforce! In 2019, one of the Chamber Presidents helped develop, and many of the Chambers partnered with the WDB to provide an educator bus tour of employers. The busload of school leaders, including principals, from across the area toured three companies and the technical college to get a better understanding of career opportunities for their students in industry sectors such as manufacturing, health care, transportation and more! The Chambers saw value in this partnership as a step in helping build the workforce pipeline.
- Most of the Chambers have provided information about CareerForce resources (both for employers and job seekers) in their weekly email updates. Due to their vast email distribution lists, this information is read by employers – and the broader community including job seekers.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

- For Chambers the partnership has expanded the resources they have available for their members. Many of the topics covered in the monthly partner meetings were then shared by Chambers in their weekly email updates to members. Examples of this included: public health information, data and resources (Covid-19); the WDB's Employers of Excellence opportunities; a teen job fair; and resources for hiring such as the WDB's virtual job fair platform.
- In the early days of Covid, many of the employer needs were around unemployment program resources and assistance with program challenges. During the economic recovery phase we're now in, the focus is providing resources and tools to help employers with recruitment, retention and culture-building.
- One example of information sharing is via a webinar series that six of the Chambers partner together on. The colleges, Economic Development staff and WDB Chair and staff have all been featured guests on these webinars sharing insights and tips.
- Not long ago, concerns from area employers about the need to reach those on unemployment - channeled through a local chamber to the Dakota-Scott WDB – contributed to a statewide initiative being developed and implemented to provide additional workforce-related information to unemployment benefit recipients.
- In partnership with the WDB, two of the Chambers offered an award to an employer who excelled in hiring people with disabilities.
- The Chambers are exceptional partners with the WDB's Employers of Excellence program – helping promote it to get employer engagement and then afterwards recognizing the award recipients.
- Most recently, as the WDB looks at implementing the Inclusive Workforce Employer (I-WE) program, the Chambers in Dakota County hosted a workshop with employers to hear first-hand their thoughts and their needs relative to inclusion, diversity, and equity programs.

Dakota/Scott County Chamber Presidents meet with Commissioner Grove



Once a month Mark Jacobs, the Director of CareerForce in Dakota/Scott Counties, facilitates a meeting with the Chamber presidents in Dakota and Scott, along with representatives from each county's CDA, and representatives from Dakota County Technical College/Inver Hills Community College.

Each month we have a guest and on Friday it was DEED Commissioner Steve Grove. We only had Commissioner Grove for a short time, but we were able to express our concerns about our business community in general, and our hospitality communities - which we know have a halo effect on so many areas of our cities and towns.

One of the areas we talked about was re-building the economy. **Commissioner Grove highlighted three areas that DEED is working on now - (1) Equity and Inclusion (2) Re-skilling MN for the jobs that are hiring and (3) Creating family sustaining jobs that will outlast the pressures created through changes like a pandemic.**

He talked about the **importance of attracting businesses to re-locate here and entrepreneurs to start a business here.**

He quoted a couple interesting statistics, in that we have a low business start rate, 48th in the country, but a high survivability rate, 5th in the country.

Excerpt from Lakeville Chamber of Commerce email update.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

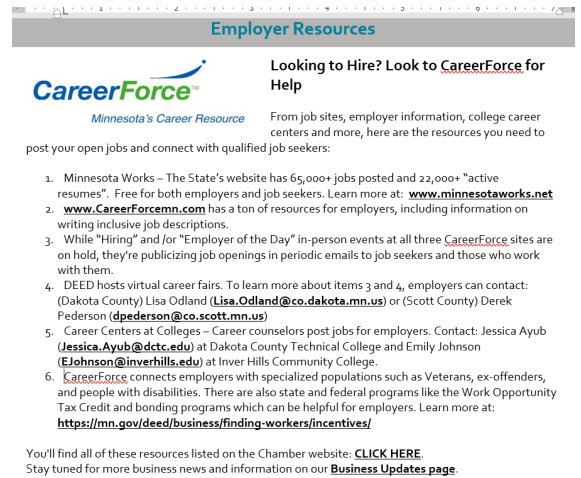
- Inver Hills Community College and Dakota County Technical College: Michael Berndt, President; and Bob Trewartha, Director of Continuing Education and Customized Training
- Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA): Maggie Dykes, Assistant Director of Community and Economic Development; and Lisa Alfson, Director of Community and Economic Development
- Scott County CDA: Stacy Crakes, Business Development Director for First Stop Shop
- Dakota-Scott Workforce Development Board: Mark Jacobs, Director
- Apple Valley Chamber of Commerce: Ed Kearney, President
- Burnsville Chamber of Commerce: Jennifer Harmening, President
- Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce: Maureen Scallen Failor, President
- Hastings Area Chamber of Commerce: Kristy Barse, President
- Lakeville Area Chamber of Commerce: Krista Jech, President
- River Height Chamber of Commerce: Colleen Roth, President
- Prior Lake Chamber of Commerce: Sandi Fleck, President
- Savage Chamber of Commerce: Anne Masis, President
- Shakopee Chamber of Commerce: Tim Zunker, President

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

- Other than switching to using zoom technology for meetings, primary outside resources used have been guest speakers for the meeting which included:
 - Steve Grove, DEED Commissioner
 - Mike Veeck, owner of the St. Paul Saints and Motivational Speaker
 - Matt Smith, County Manager (Dakota) and Leslie Vermillion, County Manager (Scott)
 - Natalie Mouilso, Business Advisor, Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers
 - Public Health Staff from both counties providing ongoing information on Covid and vaccines

Attach guidance and/or template which provides a roadmap for other areas to replicate the practice.

- 1) Talk to a few of the key Chamber Presidents in the area to ensure convening a larger group makes sense and identify key agenda items / items of interest.
- 2) Assuming the idea makes sense, establish the meeting date, and send invites. (probably good to make a few calls too if you don't already know the Chamber leaders)
- 3) Set an agenda
 - a. Have a guest speaker on a key topic
 - b. Set time for discussion
 - c. Also, set time for updates.
- 4) Determine the breadth of group. Do you want to include post-secondary? Economic Development? ABE?
- 5) At the conclusion of the first meeting, ask group for direction relative to future meetings, frequency, topics, etc.



Employer Resources

CareerForce
Minnesota's Career Resource

Looking to Hire? Look to CareerForce for Help

From job sites, employer information, college career centers and more, here are the resources you need to post your open jobs and connect with qualified job seekers:

1. Minnesota Works – The State's website has 65,000+ jobs posted and 22,000+ "active resumes". Free for both employers and job seekers. Learn more at: www.minnesotaworks.net
2. www.CareerForceMN.com has a ton of resources for employers, including information on writing inclusive job descriptions.
3. While "Hiring" and for "Employer of the Day" in-person events at all three CareerForce sites are on hold, they're publicizing job openings in periodic emails to job seekers and those who work with them.
4. DEED hosts virtual career fairs. To learn more about items 3 and 4, employers can contact: (Dakota County) Lisa Odland (Lisa.Odland@co.dakota.mn.us) or (Scott County) Derek Pederson (dpederson@co.scott.mn.us)
5. Career Centers at Colleges – Career counselors post jobs for employers. Contact: Jessica Ayub (Jessica.Ayub@dctc.edu) at Dakota County Technical College and Emily Johnson (EJohnson@inverhills.edu) at Inver Hills Community College.
6. CareerForce connects employers with specialized populations such as Veterans, ex-offenders, and people with disabilities. There are also state and federal programs like the Work Opportunity Tax Credit and bonding programs which can be helpful for employers. Learn more at: <https://mn.gov/deed/business/finding-workers/incentives/>

You'll find all of these resources listed on the Chamber website: [CLICK HERE](#). Stay tuned for more business news and information on our [Business Updates page](#).

Excerpt from Burnsville Chamber of Commerce email update.



#5

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA: Dakota-Scott

Submitted by: Amber Higgins and Mark Jacobs

Attach a description (no more than three pages) describing the innovative practice. Please address the following points. See the following page for an outline.

- Overview describing the innovative practice
- Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)
- Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)
- Identification of those involved, including collaborators
- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources
- **NEW This Year** – Ability to replicate by others: Include guidance or a template which provides a roadmap for other local areas to replicate this practice. This could be a step-by-step list, a diagram, an outline, a series of questions, etc.

Information can be emailed to:
Becky Accettura, baccettura@mncounties.org

DUE ON: Friday, July 9, 2021 at 5:00 PM CST

Scoring Criteria for Selection of Outstanding Practices	Maximum Points
Overview describing the innovative best practice	20
Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)	20
Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)	20
Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	10
Ability for use or replication by others	15
TOTAL	100

Virtual Teen Job Fair Dakota-Scott

Overview describing the innovative practice

In March 2020 Dakota County hosted its Virtual Teen Job Fair for teens and young adults of all abilities ages 14 to 22. The Dakota County Virtual Teen Job Fair was designed to connect teens with job opportunities, build awareness in teens about county resources that support the job search process, and support Dakota County businesses in building their workforce. The platform for the event was Premier Virtual Job Fair which was procured by Dakota County using CARES Act funding. Using this virtual approach was necessary as it was not feasible to replicate the previously held in-person events.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

In preparation for the Virtual Teen Job Fair event, Dakota County Workforce Services partnered with Dakota County Libraries to offer a Teen Job Skills virtual workshop series geared for youth ages 14 and older. Topics included:

- **Searching for Your First Job (25 people attended)** – *Learn how to prepare for a job search by learning where to find job openings and understanding what factors to consider before applying.*
- **How to Create Your First Resume (23 people attended)** – *Learn how to craft a resume and get tips on what to include and what to leave out. Explore different resume styles and find what works best for you.*
- **Teen Job Skills 101 (15 people attended)** – *Learn how JobNow, a free online tool available through the library, can help prepare for getting your first job. Explore its helpful features for developing basic job skills, including live interview coaching and resume help.*
- **How to Prepare for Your First Interview (19 attended)** – *Discover ways to stand out from the crowd during your next job interview. Get tips for setting up your space for a virtual interview, answering interview questions and avoiding common mistakes.*

In total, 215 registered participants attended the Virtual Teen Job Fair event. In a survey issued to registered participants, as a result of attending this event:

- 95.5% of survey respondents rated this program 4 (Good) or 5 (Excellent).
- 86% of survey respondents reported they feel more confident about the job search process.
- 81% of survey respondents reported they learned about a new job opportunity.
- 72% of survey respondents reported they feel more confident speaking with an employer or hiring manager.
- 57.1% of survey respondents reported they submitted a resume to a potential employer.

Comments received through this survey include:

- “I got a job through this program!”
- “I am a Work Based Learning teacher and promoted this to all my students. Nice group of employers.”
- “I would love more job opportunity events!”

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

In all, forty area employers and organizations participated in the event. All partners were recognized publicly for their involvement (e.g., thank you letters, media publications, etc.).

Jobs were posted prior to the start of the event which allowed educators and others to work with teens/young adults prior. Event feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Below are some of the general comments from participating employers:

- “I really liked that visitors were able to see job posting before the event officially began. All of our applicants applied before the day of the event and were scheduled for interviews on the Thursday of the event.”

- “After sending 9 emails out to visitors to our booth or people we chatted with, we have 4-5 interviews set up already with our company. I really like that we are targeting teens for specific events and working with schools to get it advertised.”
- “I liked how it easy it was to have a conversation with the job seekers.”
- “I will gladly attend the next Virtual Teen Job fair!”

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

- Dakota County Library System
- Dakota County Employment Services
- Dakota County Social Services
- TriDistrict Staff and Youth Interns
- Area Businesses
- Area Community Organizations

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

Each played an essential role which contributed to the overall success of the event.

- Relationships with employers – all collaborators reached out to employer contacts which resulted in wider outreach/marketing.
- Workshop expertise – Dakota County Workforce/CareerForce staff modified workshops to be geared specifically towards young job seekers. The Teen Job Skills virtual workshop series provided answers to questions before the event.
- Virtual Job Fair Platform – The platform allowed for an interactive experience between jobseekers and employers. In addition, Premier Virtual staff were available to help trouble shoot any issues.

Attach guidance and/or template which provides a roadmap for other areas to replicate the practice.

- Procure a virtual platform. Note – not all virtual platforms are created equal. Take time to research what features and options are important for supporting the types of events you tend to host.
- Have a taskforce to develop the game plan and start planning early.
- Either having, or developing, strong partnerships with the K-12 system is important for attendance.
- Students have busy schedules so timing can be a challenge. It can be difficult to find a time that works for all.
- Get teens/young adults involved with the planning.



#6

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA: Hennepin-Carver (WDA 09)

Submitted by: Anne Kilzer and Anna Mullikin

Attach a description (no more than three pages) describing the innovative practice. Please address the following points. See the following page for an outline.

- Overview describing the innovative practice
- Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)
- Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)
- Identification of those involved, including collaborators
- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources
- **NEW This Year** – Ability to replicate by others: Include guidance or a template which provides a roadmap for other local areas to replicate this practice. This could be a step-by-step list, a diagram, an outline, a series of questions, etc.

Information can be emailed to:
Becky Accettura, baccettura@mncounties.org

DUE ON: Friday, July 9, 2021 at 5:00 PM CST

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Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	10
Ability for use or replication by others	15
TOTAL	100

Program/Initiative Title: Building Equity into RFPs
LWDA Name: Hennepin-Carver (WDA 09)

Overview describing the innovative practice

The Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board subcontracts with community-based organizations in suburban Hennepin County to ensure that services provided are easily accessible to all residents throughout our Workforce Development Area. In addition to WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, Hennepin County contracts with community-based organizations for the Minnesota Family Investment Program and SNAP Employment & Training.

The Workforce Development team has been analyzing ways to create a more equitable request for proposals process that advances an approachable design to encourage and enable more community-based organizations to apply for funding.

Considerations of how to do business differently include:

- Hosting a pre-release RFP conference to explain programs, services, and service provider expectations
- Establishing intentional narrative questions (shortening the proposal narrative)
- Re-evaluating additional documents requested to those that are only required by law – not adding additional requests that are not mandatory or do not provide information pertinent to the decision-making process
- Evaluating the point system and leveraging more points in sections of the RFP narrative that have been identified as addressing and/or reducing disparities
- Offering a longer submission timeframe to allow for thoughtful RFP responses
- Offering interviews with the review panel for proposers
- Conducting surveys with all organizations that submit proposals for feedback on the RFP process
- Implementing the use of Hennepin County's Racial Equity Tool when designing RFPs as well as considering the requirement of proposer to utilize the tool when writing and submitting proposals
- Identifying process barriers and advocating for process and rule changes where possible/necessary

Another key element of this initiative is ensuring that we provide intentional and frequent formal and informal opportunities for providers to receive support and technical assistance from staff, knowing that federal and state funded grants have very specific rules, policies and measures.

Under the Joint Powers Agreement between Hennepin County and Carver County, Carver County staff provide services within that portion of our Workforce Development Area. While this proposal focuses on the RFP process that Hennepin County utilizes for services in suburban Hennepin, it is worthwhile noting that Carver County staff have been intentional in their service delivery design and have incorporated equity leadership training into their staff development initiatives as well. Along with Workforce Development Board members, Carver County staff have helped inform, review and score proposals for services provided in suburban Hennepin County.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

By soliciting services that could be achievable to a wider variety of community-based organizations, we hope to engage with those serving suburban Hennepin County who have not applied to provide services under these grants before, but otherwise serve populations that face significant barriers to economic stability.

Our network of providers offer common programs, services and activities but also are each uniquely positioned to present additional opportunities and complimentary services to customers, leveraging non-WIOA funding. They also present a broad range of community partnerships including but not limited to libraries, religious communities, cultural centers and other relevant county departments.

All of this ultimately benefits jobseekers as we are able to support a broader range of services than any one funding stream could provide. Additionally, community-based organizations offer a broader range of in-person access points than we are able to provide in the CareerForce locations alone. (While Carver County does not have contracted providers, Carver County has also been focused on offering services in a partner/community locations. Carver County partnered with libraries, food shelves and local cities to offer culturally focused employment and training services to the community.)

Designing an RFP that is more accessible for a wider variety of service providers, specifically, enhances these benefits and is intended to offer organizations - who are often already in close contact with jobseekers who may not otherwise seek our services – increased feasibility of a successful proposal and therefore the opportunity to provide services with our funding and technical assistance. This in turn will lead to a broader reach of jobseekers who are aware of and benefitting from our services.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

Many employers in our counties are interested in expanding outreach and diversifying their workforce to meet their hiring needs. By intentionally simplifying the process by which a community-based organization can become a service provider, we are hopeful that we in turn attract participants who may not otherwise utilize our services, creating a stronger and more representative pipeline for our employers.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

- Workforce Development staff; MFIP Program staff, SNAP E&T Program staff
- Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board members and staff
- Hennepin County Procurement staff
- Community member participation and others as identified

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

PEAK (Principles Equity Advocacy Knowledge) Grant Making. PEAK is a member-led community of professionals dedicated to advancing equitable, effective grantmaking practices.

Future Services Institute. Equity Works Leadership Institute; Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota. Several of the Workforce Development Team members are graduates of this intensive, cohort-based training tailored for workforce development professionals. Through this program, participants explore how systems of inequities were built, and learn and practice skills to lead equitably. A key component of the experience is identifying opportunities within one's organization to address inequities and developing a proposal to disrupt those institutional practices.

Federal/State/County Guidance. As we consider how to do work differently, it is critical that we understand foundational procurement rules and responsibilities, to work within them and advocate for change when possible/necessary.

Attach guidance and/or template which provides a roadmap for other areas to replicate the practice.

Specific language that could be incorporated into a local area's Request for Proposals can be provided upon request.



#7

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA: _____ WDR4 _____

Submitted by: _____ Marie Larson _____

Attach a description (no more than three pages) describing the innovative practice. Please address the following points. See the following page for an outline.

- Overview describing the innovative practice
- Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)
- Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)
- Identification of those involved, including collaborators
- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources
- **NEW This Year** – Ability to replicate by others: Include guidance or a template which provides a roadmap for other local areas to replicate this practice. This could be a step-by-step list, a diagram, an outline, a series of questions, etc.

Information can be emailed to:
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Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	10
Ability for use or replication by others	15
TOTAL	100

Program/Initiative Title: Metro Region Virtual Services

LWDA Name: Workforce Development Region 4

Overview describing the innovative practice

Workforce Development Region 4 is working metro-wide, in response to the unprecedented economic conditions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic shut-down and recovery. The metro region's rapidly-shifting labor market requires our local Workforce Development Areas to act in collaboration and to bring the best strategies of our local areas forward. Our joint goals are to connect metro residents to critical employment opportunities, and to support our region's businesses as they return to prosperity. To meet this challenge, WDR 4 formed a Virtual Services – Employer Response Team in April, 2020.

This Employer Response Team elevates outreach for essential and high-demand workers, engages and serves employers and industries, and expands access to hiring opportunities. Employer of the Day spotlights, industry-specific webcasts, and career and resource fairs have evolved and transformed to regional, virtual experiences. With our return to in-person services, we are now planning to adjust to a hybrid mix of virtual and on-site events.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

Jobseekers access thousands of active employment opportunities with support provided by the Metro Region's local area staff. Jobseekers connect to employers in an on-line job fair environment by chat (similar to instant messaging), resume upload, applying for open positions, video networking, and via live webcasts. Virtual handshakes facilitated by metro region staff provide concierge services to guests, enhancing career seeker-to-recruiter connections. A live Info Stand is fully staffed for all events, providing event navigation and jobseeker referral to CareerForce services.

Event Analytics:

- 12 Interactive Virtual Events from November, 2020 – June, 2021
- 3000 Career Seekers Registered in Interactive Virtual Career Fair systems
- 4924 total guest attendance, all events combined (through 6/23/21)

Resources, Webinars and Guest Speakers provided to jobseekers:

- Guest Welcome Video
- Info Stand staffed throughout the event
- Discover Apprenticeship
- Women Building Success Info Expo Panel Presentation
- Jeff Tollefson-(MN Technology Association) - IT Career Fair Keynote
- IT Career Training Panel – “Get Started in IT”
- Introduction to CareerForce
- Health Care Career Panel
- Benefits of Union Members

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

Employers benefit from connections to new applicants, marketing their organizations and opportunities in the interactive event environment. Unique Metro offerings to exhibiting employers include complementary “Public Announcements” featuring companies and positions, benefits, hiring bonuses, etc. Post-event access is available 24/7 for employers to download and export resumes, log into applicant tracking and rating system, and to retrieve chat text history. Event and employer marketing are offered at no charge to participants.

Event Metrics:

- 240 Virtual Booths set up in system
- 309 exhibiting employers and partners, all events combined (through 6/23/21)

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

This Workforce Development Region 4 initiative involves the collaboration of local workforce service areas in this region, including Hennepin/Carver, Dakota/Scott, Anoka, Washington, Ramsey County/St. Paul, and the City of Minneapolis. DEED collaborates with the metro team by supporting outreach and communication efforts, hosting a Metro Region webpage on careerforcemn.com, and by developing and updating the Metro Region marketing toolkit.

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

Leveraged resources include project management and registration systems, communications expertise and networks provided by each Metro WDA, Careerforcemn.com and DEED communications, and DEED-produced CareerForce videos. The metro region aligns resources and information to create informational webcasts featuring workforce-funded program, including career pathways training in high-growth Metro industries. When developing industry-specific events, we’ve partnered with MN DOLI, Construct Tomorrow, Women in Construction, the Construction Hiring Connection, MN Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Minnesota Technology Association, Healthcare Heroes, Long Term Care of Minnesota, the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, Richfield Public Schools, Hennepin County Libraries, the Minneapolis Youth Coordinating Board, the Minneapolis Youth Congress, Bloomington Public Schools, St Paul Public Schools, and many more.

Attach guidance and/or template which provides a roadmap for other areas to replicate the practice.

Project Roadmap – Overview:

When work began, the Virtual Services- Employer Response Team immediately assessed available technology solutions, identified enhancements to existing systems, and established goals and priorities for a new virtual job fair tool. A committee was formed to create a vision for our virtual events. Using regional planning funds, a license for this virtual platform was secured through 2021.

This interactive platform is accessible by mobile phone, mobile device or computer with internet access. It provides accessible features and functionality, and it can be translated into over 100 languages. Available interactions on this platform include 2-way chat (similar to instant messaging), resume upload, position opening search by keyword, live webcasting and recorded video, in-event messaging, and more.

To launch this initiative, Region 4 developed the following key strategies and action steps:

1. Expand virtual services and event marketing to the metro
Action Plan: The metro team developed a communication network which includes all metro region WDA representatives, amplifying CareerForce messages and developing new content for Virtual Events. The team also worked with DEED to establish consistent Metro Region branding and messages, and to create a Metro Region web page on [careerforcemn.com](https://www.careerforcemn.com):
<https://www.careerforcemn.com/Metro>
2. Deepen existing, and develop new, employer connections across the Metro Region
Action Plan: The metro team developed a centralized outreach approach to reach existing employer partners, and to develop new employer relationships. At least 50% of all employers engaged in Metro virtual events are new to CareerForce regional career fairs and services.
3. Create alignment and enhance the working partnership of our WDA's across the Metro Region
Action Plan: Metro leadership and team members regularly meet to exchange demand-side information, COVID-related updates, promising practices, and more. The regional team has supported each other in learning virtual platforms in order to offer more frequent and customized events to the Metro Career Seekers. The group collaborates to determine the types of events we'll hold collectively, to schedule staff, to create marketing pieces, to develop videos and other associated tools, and more.
4. Deliver events to promote employment in the Metro Region's high-growth sectors
Action Plan: The metro team holds events on the Metro Region career fair platform in the major sectors of the metro, including health care, transportation, construction, and IT/Tech.
5. Support transition and integration of on-line resources and events as we reopen and transition to the in-person environment.
Action Plan: Work has begun on evaluating the use of the Metro Region On-Line platform as a counseling tool for region staff as the work both remotely and in-person with career seekers.



#8

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA: South Central WorkForce Council WDA #7

Submitted by: Sara Carrigan

Attach a description (no more than three pages) describing the innovative practice. Please address the following points. See the following page for an outline.

- Overview describing the innovative practice
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Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	10
Ability for use or replication by others	15
TOTAL	100

Virtual Career Services: Adapting to COVID South Central WorkForce Council, WDA #7

Overview describing the innovative practice

The South Central WorkForce Council and our strong partnerships identified and created a variety of innovative ways to deliver virtual career services to youth during the pandemic. We learned that offering virtual options allows youth, job seekers, and secondary schools the flexibility to participate in career events and employment readiness services according to their schedule and can be available throughout the year. These new virtual options and strategies will continue to be utilized in addition to traditional in person events to provide a robust service delivery and learning experience for youth and job seekers.

Strategies to provide career services in a virtual manner include 1) Virtual Tour of Manufacturing 2) Virtual Construct Tomorrow 3) Skills for Success Services and Videos 4) Get Started Course.

Each year local manufacturers opened their doors for tours and provided information on career opportunities at their business through the **Tour of Manufacturing**. In fall 2020, the event was changed to a virtual format offering virtual tours, an employer panel, virtual scavenger hunt, electronic Tour of Manufacturing magazine and additional resources to educate students and job seekers on the opportunities in manufacturing. Fourteen manufacturers and one higher education location participated in the virtual format. The event was launched in October 2020 with over 1,800 students participating from 31 area schools and over 1,300 web page views.

Manufacturing packets were delivered to schools participating in the event which included Manufacturing Labor Market Infographics, Manufacturing Resource Guide, Minnesota Manufactured Teachers Guide, scavenger hunt forms and student prizes donated by local manufacturing businesses. For more information visit:

www.tourofmanufacturing.com



The **Construct Tomorrow Event** hosted in November 2020 pivoted to a virtual event. The virtual event provided students the opportunity to learn about construction trades and explore union apprenticeship opportunities through construction and apprenticeship videos, construction trades websites, infographics, trades contacts and a "What Trade Career Should I Choose" survey. Over 1,300 students from 27 schools signed up to participate in the Virtual Construct Tomorrow event. The South Central Construction Trades Partnership provided strategies and ideas to the Construct Tomorrow team in developing virtual options based on feedback from local high schools and our success with the virtual Tour of Manufacturing. The materials developed through Construct Tomorrow are available to all schools, youth, and job seekers through <https://www.constructtomorrow.org/resources>

Skills for Success in Employment, Education & Life offers free interactive sessions to high school students on career exploration, labor market information, career/educational opportunities, work readiness skills, job search skills, interviewing, and financial literacy at local high schools through Higher Education Career Advisor Project funds. In partnership with Minnesota Valley Action Council, a three-part [video series](#) and interactive lesson plans were created to provide virtual sessions to students through in-person, hybrid, and distance learning models. The videos feature four employers providing advice on the importance of skills, interviewing tips, and maintaining employment. The employers represent Healthcare, Manufacturing, Agriculture, and Construction industries. Over 21 schools requested the videos series impacting over 1,300 students. The services were designed to meet the unique and varying learning models of each school district allowing them to choose how they would like to engage in the Skills for Success services including virtual presentations, video links, and lesson plans. In addition, youth employment programs are utilizing the videos during work readiness workshops and during the Get Started virtual course.

Get Started is a virtual four-week course focused on preparing youth for the world of work that was developed to adapt to the changing needs of youth and when worksites were not as readily available during the pandemic. Many youth lack the necessary work readiness skills to be successful in employment and the Get Started course is the first step in their journey to be a successful employee. Youth and their families expressed safety concerns with starting employment during a pandemic and the Get Started course offered an option for youth to continue to build their employability skills prior to beginning a work experience or employment. The Get Started course provides youth and young adults (16-24 years of age) training in communication skills, budgeting, health and wellness, and community exploration, which are fundamentals in being successful in life and employment. Youth learn about the importance of effective workplace communication, how to budget their money, the impacts of health and wellness on employment, and local community resources that are available. Youth received a \$50 stipend for each week of completed assignments, earning up to \$200 over the four-week course. In addition to the topics covered, youth are learning technology skills, dependability, time management skills and building self-confidence through the Get Started program.



MVAC Young Adult Program presents:

Get Started

A 4-week virtual course to prepare youth ages 16-24 for the workforce
Topics Covered include:
Basic Budgeting
Communication
Health and Wellness
Community Exploration

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

Youth can participate in multiple virtual opportunities to learn about high growth, high pay, demand occupations and employability skills. Manufacturing tour videos and construction apprenticeship videos allow youth to explore career opportunities in their local communities and make informed choices about their career aspirations. These resources also help break down the misconceptions about manufacturing and construction industries. The virtual options also allow youth, job seekers and schools to access the information according to their schedule. For example, one school plans to use the Tour of Manufacturing videos quarterly in their careers course instead of a one-day event. Offering the Skills for Success and Get Started course virtually provides the ability for youth to understand the skills needed in the workforce including work readiness skills, job search and retention. The virtual Get Started course provides youth the opportunity to network, build relationships and learn from peers and youth counselors throughout the nine-county area which is especially beneficial to youth in small communities, allowing the opportunity to learn in a cohort instead of individually. Offering virtual options has removed transportation barriers for youth especially in rural areas. These virtual services will continue to be utilized during in person events, individual appointments and in workshops to provide flexibility and on demand access when it is convenient for the youth and schools.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

As noted in the DEED Local Look in June 2021, South Central/Southwest MN experienced the fastest recovery from the pandemic and currently has the tightest job market in the state with .8 job seekers per job opening. The virtual services were critical to continue to engage youth and job seekers during the pandemic to fill the pipeline and continue to address the workforce shortage. Virtual services allow local employers to engage in educating youth on high pay and high demand career opportunities, showcase their businesses and inform youth on the importance of work readiness skills. In addition, virtual services contributed to the continued progression on breaking down the stigma of certain industries including high tech skills in manufacturing and non-traditional opportunities in construction careers.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

This work cannot be done by any one agency or partner but calls for a collaboration of partners working together to provide youth the experiences they need to make informed choices. Partners include: Minnesota Valley Action Council, South Central Service Cooperative, South Central College, local school districts, employers, CareerForce partners, WorkForce Strategy Consultant, Construct Tomorrow, South Central Construction Trades Partnership, Minnesota Manufactured, local chambers, economic development, South Central WorkForce Council and community partners.

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

Funds leveraged include employer contributions, Tour of Manufacturing sponsors, Higher Education Career Advisor Project, Minnesota Youth program, Rural Career Counseling Coordinator, Carl Perkins funding, Minnesota Manufactured, Construct Tomorrow and Mankato Construction and Building Trades Council.

Guidance for Virtual Career Services: Adapting to COVID

1) Virtual Tour of Manufacturing

- Develop a committee to support a local Tour of Manufacturing. Consider some of the following partners for your committee: employers, economic development, local chambers, CareerForce Partners, media partners and school districts.
- Identify a convener of the group, in South Central it is the Workforce Strategist Consultant.
- Appoint committee members to recruit tour sites for designated counties.
- Developed subcommittees for different virtual options such as marketing, virtual tours, electronic magazine, and virtual resources and lesson materials for schools.
- Work with local media on developing a magazine and advertising.
- Contact potential tour sponsors to assist with costs, such as advertising, social media, radio ads and tour videos.

2) Virtual Construct Tomorrow

- Our South Central Construction Trades Partnership meet with the Construct Tomorrow leadership to discuss student needs and ideas of how to promote Construction Trades in a virtual manner.
- Shared ideas on how the Tour to Manufacturing adjusted to a virtual platform and the needs to students regarding construction. We also discussed the needs of youth and some of the best ways to interact with youth in a virtual setting.
- Construct Tomorrow worked with several trades on developing point of view videos and short videos about apprenticeships.
- Developed a Resource Guide for construction trades for local schools along with a construction trades contact handout for the area.
- Informed local schools about the virtual options for Construct Tomorrow and provided a sign-up form.
- Provided a resource guide to schools that participated in the virtual Construct Tomorrow event.

3) Skills for Success Services and Videos

- Youth employment staff and the RC3 coordinator identified topics to focus for virtual videos and employers to participate. We focused on having key industries represented and reaching business from communities throughout the South-Central MN service area.
- Contacted and met with different videographers to determine the best fit for producing the videos.
- Developed a list of questions that employers would be asked to answer during filming. Developed a media release form for anyone filmed.
- Drafted a letter to introduce the Skills for Success videos with potential employers and contacted identified employers.
- Upon confirming employers' interest, set a date for filming with the company and videographer.
- Filmed on location with the employers. Videographer also shot "b" footage onsite when applicable.
- Skills for Success team developed a script for the videos to provide additional information and activities to coincide with the tips received from employer interviews.
- Filmed script with youth staff.
- Worked with the videographer on final cuts and edits to the videos.
- Launched the Skills for Success video series to schools and used a Google form for schools to sign up.
- Scheduled Skills for Success presentations with schools or shared video links based on the schools' requests.

4) Get Started Course

- Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) youth staff reached out to the Step Up, Right Track and Anoka County to learn from their virtual program offerings.
- The youth team discussed and developed a virtual curriculum to assist youth in learning work readiness skills.
- Presented the Get Started idea to the local Youth Council.
- Launched a pilot of Get Started with current youth employment program participants.
- Designed a flyer to market the Get Started course to local schools, CareerForce partners and community agencies.



#9

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA: #6 Southwest Minnesota

Submitted by: Eriann Faris

Attach a description (no more than three pages) describing the innovative practice. Please address the following points. See the following page for an outline.

- Overview describing the innovative practice
- Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)
- Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)
- Identification of those involved, including collaborators
- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources
- **NEW This Year** – Ability to replicate by others: Include guidance or a template which provides a roadmap for other local areas to replicate this practice. This could be a step-by-step list, a diagram, an outline, a series of questions, etc.

Information can be emailed to:
Becky Accettura, baccettura@mncounties.org

DUE ON: Friday, July 9, 2021 at 5:00 PM CST

Scoring Criteria for Selection of Outstanding Practices	Maximum Points
Overview describing the innovative best practice	20
Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)	20
Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)	20
Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	10
Ability for use or replication by others	15
TOTAL	100

Program/Initiative Title: Construction Trades Cankuya Program at the Lower Sioux Indian Community

LWDA Name: Southwest Minnesota Workforce Development Area

Overview describing the innovative practice

The goal of this project is to implement customized career pathway approaches to invest in our indigenous persons, in this instance specifically our native nation the Lower Sioux Indian Community (LSIC) youth, young adults and adults to acquire career specific skills, master work readiness and connect to long term career opportunities in our local communities. Leaders of the LSIC identified several needs for their community. These included a lack of career skills for young adult community members who were not in school as well as deteriorating infrastructure within the Community. Leaders partnered with the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) and Minnesota West Community and Technical College to provide an opportunity for their members to gain career skills and industry recognized credentials. The Cankuya (Pathways) Program was developed. In partnership, the programs were designed in cooperation with LSIC rather than for their members. Construction projects within the community were selected to master the curriculum and support the improvement of the Community including sheds and patios for their elders. The LSIC has been awarded a HUD grant in which the goal is to build 10 green homes in the Community. Beginning in October of 2020, 9 students fully participated in the education program at the Lower Sioux Community and successfully received a Carpentry Certificate (19 college credits) from Minnesota West Community and Technical College. This project went so well, a Plumbing program will be offered beginning July 12th, 2021. We are expecting 8 individuals to participate this summer/fall in the Plumbing Cankuya Program. Pioneer Public TV is preparing a video about the project. Here is a link to a draft of it - <https://youtu.be/PDg1h21jkWQ>.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

The objective is to advance the careers and wages of the targeted population through offering participants a continuum of integrated opportunities to obtain academic credit, college credit/diploma/degree, industry recognized credentials, marketable skills, related OJT/WE, and employment in a high growth, high-demand occupations, providing participants with opportunities to apply what they are learning and build their skills and knowledge in which can be contributed to needs of their community.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

There is a major housing shortage at Lower Sioux, and they are also facing the opportunity of having a significantly growing population of young people who are going to need even more housing. There is great opportunity for the community to put resources into developing housing that develops jobs and ultimately housing innovations. Every year Lower Sioux community conducts an Annual Community Survey. Questions are asked to identify the community's priorities. In 2016, 9 strategic goals were identified, including a focus on education. Since then, the tribal council has refined how they should focus educational training opportunities based on additional community surveys and feedback matched with economic, income and employment data from the community. This data has been used to design and develop education pathways programs such as the Cankuya for Construction Trades program. The idea emerged from the community to create education and training pathways that are in demand which will be useful to both individual and useful to the community as a whole. For this particular collaboration, the needs identified by the community were to create community-based employees for community-based employers. There is a community need for employment, skilled workers and for their community to have their own local businesses for its development of community, economy, and employment. Minnesota West Community and Technical College are currently working through the process to officially establish Lower Sioux as an official Minnesota West Center. This will provide the students the same perks as all Minnesota West students. On June 23rd, 8 students graduated with the Carpentry Certificate from Minnesota West Community and Technical College. Of those 8 students, 3 have applied for carpentry work and 2 are furthering their education in the Cankuya Plumbing Program.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) is working closely with the Lower Sioux Indian Community. The LSIC is committed to outreach and recruitment, engagement of local contractors for training and employment opportunities, provides space, staff, and sufficient, meaningful work in the *Construction Industry*, which was an indicated high interest area for the community members at LSIC. Paid work experiences are integrated internships in their completion of a Carpentry Certificate from Minnesota West Community and Technical College. Additional key partners that support career pathways are workforce development providers, employers, educational cooperatives, and community-based organizations. The overall roles and responsibilities of the workforce development providers are to be the facilitator/fiscal agent, provide coordination of all partners, and hire/train staff who recruits/enrolls/supports participants, provide wrap around supports, develop training plans, collect data, teach employability and essential skills, engage employers, establish career exploration activities and OJT/WE contracts. Employers provided curriculum input, assistance in teaching employability skills, soft skills, and career-specific skills training, and provided paid work experience or internships with workplace mentoring, OJT/WE opportunities, supervision/mentorship, and long-term career opportunities. Engaging employers helps ensure our career pathways system aligns with their needs. Employers are part of regular meetings for ongoing communication, program improvement and curriculum alignment for lab purposes. Support and training for the employer is provided by the workforce development provider, through ongoing contact and training for worksite supervisors as mentors. On May 7th, 2021, PIC coordinated an employer panel with local carpenter and housing development companies. The employer panel provided students the opportunity to ask hiring managers questions about the hiring process and potential job openings, learn about local business and industries, and lastly a chance to introduce themselves to people hiring right now in their local community. Prior to the panel, students discussed seven workplace skills that are the building blocks of employer expectations. Students select three workplace skills to focus on, developed a seven second resume which they shared with the employers on the panel ending with one question for the panel to answer. This framework has been successful because it allows immediate contact and engagement for both employers and job seekers.

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

Leveraging resources and braiding funding with our partners is customary and embedded in the way the Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council do business allowing our projects to be both wide and deep. Lower Sioux has received \$1.45M from the HUD Indian Development Block Grant and \$500,000 from FHLB Des Moines to build 10 new green homes and the tribe is integrating work experience for the construction trades apprentices into these new construction projects. Additionally, WIOA Region 5 was awarded a Career Pathway Pilot Project dollars to support a new Career Pathway initiative and due to the nearly two decades of successful career pathway approaches in southwest Minnesota, the PIC was lucky enough to have Pathways to Prosperity and Youth Support Services dollars to provide these opportunities for adults too.

Attach guidance and/or template which provides a roadmap for other areas to replicate the practice.

The roadmap for the program really starts with an assessment of community needs and bringing partners together to see what can be done. The Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (PIC) had partnered with the Lower Sioux Community in other programs prior to this project so when the community identified their strategic goals, the PIC was contacted along with other partners to see if we could be of assistance. When the funding opportunity for local workforce boards was presented, the PIC advocated to propose a project with the Lower Sioux Community in partnership with Minnesota West Community and Technical College. We worked through the details of grant requirements and expectations and decided to fund both a PIC counselor to fulfill the functions of the WIOA grant (e.g. write IEPs, casenotes, employer relations, etc) and for the Lower Sioux Community's Education Coordinator to assist with culturally and community responsive programming. A large portion of the grant also paid for the training. It worked great with each partner shining in their expertise.



#10

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA _____ #8 _____

Submitted by _____ Workforce Development, Inc _____

**Attach a description (no more than two pages) describing the innovative practice.
Please address the following points (template attached):**

- Overview describing the innovative practice
- Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)
- Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)
- Identification of those involved, including collaborators
- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources
- Ideas for replication/lessons learned

Information can be emailed to:
Jeanna Fortney, jfortney@mncounties.org

DUE DATE: Monday, July 20, 2020

Scoring Criteria for Selection of Outstanding Practices	Maximum Points
Overview describing the innovative best practice	20
Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)	20
Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)	20
Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	15
Ability for use or replication by others	10
TOTAL	100

Program/Initiative Title: Essential Skills Videos
LWDA Name:

Overview describing the innovative practice

The Essential Skills team at Workforce Development (WDI) is made up of Career Planners and staff who work to build a library of common materials that job seekers can access and use in a way that meets them where they are. As the pandemic hit and we were forced to close our offices to the public this team pivoted to create short, educational videos on commonly asked questions by job seekers. These were posted on our social media channels as well as our website and YouTube page so that they can be used by jobseekers from not only our service region, but anywhere.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

This resource is intended for all jobseekers and available on whatever device they have available to them, laptop, cellphone or tablet. The videos are short and concise with tips and advice on common job seeker issues such as Interview Etiquette, References, and even Interview Thank You Notes. Job seekers can select and play each one when they have reached that point of their interviewing process and then follow the action steps provided in the video. At the end of each video there is contact information for each of the WDI offices so that anyone watching with more questions can reach out and schedule an appointment (in person or virtual) with a local Career Planner.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

The videos are available on demand through our website and social media channels for use by anyone. These can be used by high schools, colleges, or anyone who has a vested interest in teaching a person the steps in interviewing and accepting a new career.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

The Essential Skills team is made up of Workforce Development staff who have volunteered to be part of this effort.

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

We utilized free technology platforms such as Facebook and YouTube Channels. The videos were created using Prezi software which enabled us to have professional text and graphics appear on screen while the presenter is speaking on screen. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_hTZOk4QGAD07DA3d9tLXA

Ideas for replication/lessons learned

This is something that any Workforce group can recreate using their own staff, materials, and branding. Creating the script ahead of time for review and edits helped keep the videos short and on point. Offering references and resources at the end of each video adds to the credibility of the material presented.



#11

SUBMISSION FORM

LWDA: 8- Southeast Minnesota

Submitted by Beth Christensen

**Attach a description (no more than two pages) describing the innovative practice.
Please address the following points (template attached):**

- Overview describing the innovative practice
- Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)
- Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)
- Identification of those involved, including collaborators
- Leveraging/alignment of outside resources
- Ideas for replication/lessons learned

Information can be emailed to:
Jeanna Fortney, jfortney@mncounties.org

DUE DATE: Monday, July 20, 2020

Scoring Criteria for Selection of Outstanding Practices	Maximum Points
Overview describing the innovative best practice	20
Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)	20
Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)	20
Identification of those involved, including collaborators	15
Leveraging/alignment of outside resources	15
Ability for use or replication by others	10
TOTAL	100

Program/Initiative Title:

LWDA Name:

Overview describing the innovative practice

In July of 2020 WDI was notified that we were the recipient of a Department of Labor, Pathways Home Grant. This 1.5 Million Dollar funding opportunity would provide invaluable connections for currently incarcerated individuals as they navigated the last 20-180 days of incarceration and made their way back home. Our Career Navigators begin working with individual's pre-release to build a rapport, identify challenges and game plan their lives after release. There is also the opportunity to offer training, which is the reason for this submission.

Serving individuals from 10 Department of Corrections Prisons, as well as a few local county jails presents some significant challenges when it comes to training. Not only are the participants spread out across the entire state there are multiple potential training providers to choose from. Shortly after receiving notice of the award the WDI team pulled together the customized training partners from Riverland Community College, Rochester Community and Technical College and Southeast Technical college, and the magic started to happen. The Customized Training representatives mentioned that they hadn't had to work together much in the past. They offered similar curriculums but with different focuses, different costs and different audiences, but they were more than willing to streamline processes, curriculums and funding streams so that our participants could receive the same training from anywhere in Southeast Minnesota. They began leveraging each other's classes, and even tapped into one another trainers to build an incredibly successful program. Coursework has been offered in a traditional format at college campuses, but it's also been offered virtually within both jail and prison facilities. The process has not been easy, there have been barriers with schedules, pods, transportation and let us not forget, Covid, but between the WDI Pathways Home Team, the in-jail/prison champions, the instructors and our customized training victors, trainings have been held, credentials have been earned, jobs have been obtained and lives have been changed.

Jobseeker impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for jobseekers)

This program serves the hardest to serve- those with backgrounds and countless barriers to employment. By supporting individuals in earning an industry recognized credential and giving them skills and connections to an industry, they have the tools necessary to break the cycle, obtain employment and finally find success. The impact for the jobseeker is immeasurable. Not only are there tangible benefits like credentials and paychecks, but there is also the immense benefit of being successful in something. The self-esteem that comes with accomplishment is powerful.

Employer/Community impact (ie: benefits, outcomes for non-jobseekers)

There has been huge employer and community impact. We have employers attending trainings to talk about their line of work and to meet the prospective employees. Upon release and/or completion of training the participants have a name and contact information for potential job leads, and the baseline skills for entering that particular field. The employer gets a job filled, and the employee gets the chance to earn a living wage.

Identification of those involved, including collaborators

Customized Training Representatives:

Cassie Ray, Rochester Community and Technical College

Peggy Young, Riverland Community College

Katie Hardyman, Southeast Technical College

Department of Corrections/Local Jails:

Faribault DOC: Nancy Rosman
Owatonna Jail: Cindy Fowler and Anthony Buttera

Workforce Development, Inc. Staff:

Career Navigator: Molly Titchenal
Career Navigator: Becky Zoubek
Career Navigator: Nate Jensen
Education Coordinator: Susan Boehm
Grant Coordinator: Beth Christensen

Leveraging/alignment of outside resources

The DOL Pathways Home grant made this all possible. It's the key funding source for the training and programming.

Ideas for replication/lessons learned

Get all the training partners on board and at the same table. We found there was almost a little bit of competitiveness amongst the providers that fueled the process moving forward. They were eager to say "well, we can do that too!". Conversations, meetings, communication.