



MAWB Business Services/Economic Development Committee Minutes

August 12, 2021

Summary of Special Presentation

Ryan Vesey joined the meeting to share information about the [One Million Cups chapter in Mankato](#) and to discuss the purpose of the organization. [One Million Cups](#) is an entrepreneurial support organization that hosts meetings in local areas to hear presentations from individuals starting businesses. A majority of presenters are not at a stage in business development where they are looking to hire staff. During COVID, it has been difficult to find people to present even though the number of business startups have increased dramatically. The meetings have been held virtually during COVID and will likely continue to have a virtual option.

Ryan's chapter in Mankato is dedicated to building a pipeline of opportunities for entrepreneurs to better connect them to resources. Coordinated regional efforts may be a good strategy for local areas who are trying to start a One Million Cups chapter.

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

- M State
 - [Skill Up Minnesota](#) is in an intermediate stage. Trying to figure out the best way to present information that gets people into the workforce quickly. Also redesigning resources for the M State webpage, boosting visibility for non-credit instruction. Large employer foundations have reached out about partnerships.
- Minnesota Association of Professional County Economic Developers (MAPCED)
 - Members are in the same general phase of figuring out how to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARP or ARPA) dollars. There is an urgency and interest to use some of the funds to address workforce needs. Some MAPCED members were recently featured in an article about rural broadband, which remains a key issue at the nexus of workforce and economic development.
- Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers (MCCD)
 - Trying to see how they can collaborate with local areas on ARP spending.
- State Agencies
 - DEED
 - CareerForce has just one Help Desk phone number now to help streamline the process and facilitate a handoff to local areas. Also still working on replacing MinnesotaWorks/state labor exchange. Hopefully making announcement soon. Continuing to add employer resources to CareerForceMN.com.
 - Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) continue to receive calls from employers who are looking for staff. Still working on a big push for hiring transition-age youth. Starting to work with employers to set up training

- programs for youth. Bite-Size Learning Modules (discussed in previous committee meetings) will be rolled out in October in conjunction with [National Disability Employment Awareness Month](#). They will also start planning an event to take place during October.
- Chet Bodin and Dan Wenner have been working on a workforce program with the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. Housing studies have shown a need for a few thousand houses in the community. I-WE program is being replicated around the state.
 - DoLI
 - Youth skills training summer experiences are wrapping up. The Dual-Training Pipeline is still trying to expand into IT and are discussing the most in-demand IT trainings. Holding [an event on September 21 for employers on effective workplace communication](#). Some Pipeline grant recipients were not able to recruit this summer, and so could not use their full grant amount.
 - Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) Economic Development, Workforce, and Housing Policy Subcommittee
 - Will be holding a meeting at the AMC Fall Policy Conference in conjunction with the General Government policy committee. Part of the session will likely be presentations about what local areas are doing with ARP dollars. A general session at the conference will also feature a panel on the same topic.
 - Local Areas
 - Rural Minnesota CEP
 - Diversity job fair in Moorhead had 63 jobseekers attend. [Bridge Bash](#) is coming up: a community event for college students returning to school for the fall semester. Rural CEP will be there talking about career opportunities. [Amazon is also opening a fulfillment center in Fargo](#) and are looking to hire 700 people. Employers are already raising wages in anticipation. Discussion ensued about other locations in Minnesota with Amazon centers.
 - City of Duluth
 - Planning a walk-through job fair to include backpacks for kids, connections to social services, etc. Schools are going back in the fall but uncertainty about COVID-19 remains a problem. Mentioned that Gen Z may not be looking for the same types of customer service jobs that previous generations have sought at their age.
 - Anoka County
 - Trying to figure out new Pathways to Prosperity (P2P). Region 4 Virtual Services won a [Promising Practices](#) award at the MAWB Summer Meeting last week. Planning to open their Career Lab soon.
 - Ramsey County
 - [Ramsey County Means Business](#) website added a new section on [School District Career Pathways](#). Have an initiative going on to elevate hospitality career pathways.
 - [Right Track Plus](#) is a career internship program in partnership with St. Paul. 15-week paid experience program for youth. Ramsey is paying all wages.

- Dakota-Scott
 - Recently held a job fair which was advertised to include remote work opportunities. The job fair had a lower employment engagement rate than previous events, but a higher jobseeker turnout – which is in line with recent reports about current patterns in workforce.

How areas are looking to use ARP funds (focus on workforce-related items)

- Primarily still TBD. Pine County is doing an interesting project related to workforce. More information is still to come.
- Many counties are still in a stage of working through the budget to determine what funds are available. More projects may be set after that time.