



## **MAWB Operations Committee Minutes**

October 28, 2021

The Chair called for approval of the agenda. Two Hot Topics were added to the agenda: Youth Symposium in Chicago and local activities for Healthcare Month. With these changes, Nicole Swanson moved approval of the agenda and the previous months' meeting minutes. Deb Bahr-Helgen seconded the motion. The agenda and minutes were approved.

### **I-WE Presentation**

Guest speakers shared information about the Inclusive Workforce Employer (I-WE) designation and the process for gaining the designation. Presenters reinforced that the goal is to help businesses become more inclusive and welcoming, not to promote or advertise certain businesses over others. [See slides for more details.](#)

- Questions came up surrounding marketing the program to businesses. Rural CEP and Northwest PIC have spoken directly to businesses about the program and have depended on word of mouth.
- Suggestion to pivot language when advertising from “business” to “employer” to bring in non-profits and other organizations.
- Other areas that wish to use the I-WE product should reach out to Vicki Leaderbrand, Chet Bodin, or Dan Wenner to have additional conversation.

### **DEED Updates**

- Training and Employment Notice No. 14-21 was released. Highlights:
  - “For the Employment Rate 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit and Median Earnings 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter after Exit performance indicators, the Departments have determined it is appropriate and reasonable to assess performance for the WIOA title I and III core programs.”
  - “The Departments will not impose associated sanctions on a state for PYs 2020 and 2021 when the available baseline data are not sufficient to produce reliable estimates using the statistical adjustment model. However, states still must submit timely and complete performance reports and will be sanctioned for failure to do so.”
- DOL recently completed a COVID-readiness assessment. Outcome was mostly positive although TA is needed in a few areas.
- ERAG and possible policy change: an email was sent out with more specifics. Further conversations have happened between DEED and local areas on communication.
- Targeted Community Capital Grant is in progress. The purpose of the grant is to help organizations with construction or finding space. There is up to \$18 million available, and up to \$1.5 million per organization. There are four years to encumber the funds and four years to expend. The grant can only be used for capital costs, not staffing.

- The CareerForceMN.com chat bot was demonstrated during the meeting. The bot was created in partnership with TAA and MNIT. Within the next few weeks, it will also have a chat bot teaser which will say “welcome to CareerForce, how can I assist you?” See bot on CareerForceMN.com. Will soon also be adding a restart button to refresh the selection choices completely.
  - Questions were asked regarding how effective the bot is at connecting jobseekers to local-level services. The bot is currently set up to provide the contact information of local CareerForce locations, but it falls to the jobseeker/employer to call or email the location.
  - Anyone with feedback on the bot should contact Lena Balk at [lena.balk@state.mn.us](mailto:lena.balk@state.mn.us).
- Updates on the Good Jobs Now calls were shared at the Policy & Issues and Executive Committees. The next step of engagement is in the works.
- DEED leadership had a conversation with Jeanna regarding the DEED-MAWB-DOL meeting – there was confusion on the intention of the meeting, so DEED will be meeting with representatives from MAWB to set the agenda for a meeting with DOL.
- Good Jobs Now calls are moving into a new phase to streamline the referral process. Training starts next week for the new phase.
  - Several local area directors asked to receive the script that is used for the Good Jobs Now calls. Mike Lang agreed to share the script/outline used for the initial conversation.
- Recent job vacancy survey has shown that Minnesota has the highest number of vacancies ever reported.
- Discussion ensued regarding how to translate referrals into enrollments. Nicole Swanson suggested setting up a small workgroup that can take the time to sit down, review the script for the Good Jobs Now calls, and determine next steps forward for increasing enrollments.
- Samantha Schalda, [samantha.shalda@state.mn.us](mailto:samantha.shalda@state.mn.us) will be leading the unit that handles IFAs. They are in process of hiring a person to specifically manage IFAs.
- The Governor’s Workforce Development Board is involved with a DEED/Office of Higher Education National Skills Coalition Policy Academy, and they are looking for a local Board representative for the working group. Contact Ben if interested.

#### **Update on Worker Experience Initiative – Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis**

- The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis has visited the Operations Committee meeting twice now regarding their research project to gather reports from workers and jobseekers to better understand their perspective on the current economic situation. They have recently administered a survey to the Minnesota Employment Services Consortium (MESC) and shared some early results from that survey.
- Several members of the committee expressed interest in sending out the survey to their local areas. Some suggestions were made for survey modifications.

#### **Introduction & Projects – Cassy LEEP, American Rescue Plan Program Development Specialist, State Library Services, Minnesota Department of Education**

- Shared information about the role and work plan. Putting together a strategy for spending American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars to expand library and workforce partnerships. “CareerForce Corner” would provide resources in libraries for jobseekers. The idea is to avoid

duplication. Grant funds may also be made available to libraries for workforce projects, and they plan to include a question on the grant application which requires applicants to reach out to local workforce providers to ensure they are not duplicating services.

### **Leading with Equity Updates**

[See slides.](#) Will likely be meeting on December 3<sup>rd</sup> for additional conversation about Leading with Equity.

### **Committee Updates**

- NACo
  - See written updates via email.
- Workforce One Connect App
  - Meeting again in December.
- Training Work Group
  - Identified and requested specific training sessions from DEED. Discussed 2022 Annual Summer Meeting; brainstormed themes for the conference. Training Work Group will discuss and decide theme at next meeting.
- Policy & Issues Committee
  - [See minutes.](#)
- Jobseeker Services
  - [See minutes.](#)
- Business Services/Economic Development Committee
  - [See minutes.](#)