



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:
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: 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/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.