



## **Regional and Local Plan**

**7/1/2021 – 6/30/2024**

Submitted by

RWDA: Northeast Minnesota – Region 2

LWDA: Northeast Minnesota – Local Area 3

## REGIONAL PLAN

*Local Elected Officials and Local Workforce Development Boards within each Regional Workforce Development Area must participate in a planning process to address the following-*

1. Describe the region's economic conditions including existing and emerging in-demand industry sectors and occupations and also the employment needs of employers in these sectors and occupations. Attach a copy of an analysis addressing these factors. It is acceptable and recommended to use the [regional analysis](#) and other information if desired that is available from DEED's Labor Market Information Division.

### Industry Employment

*Employment, which was relatively steady prior to the coronavirus pandemic, has declined in 2020 at rates greater than other areas of the state, largely due to the disproportionate impacts on service-providing sectors and industries that are relatively more concentrated in the Northeast region, and Local Area 4 in particular. The recovery has begun but remains uncertain for several sectors, particularly Leisure and Hospitality and Other Services.*

Prior to the onset of the coronavirus pandemic in March of 2020, Northeast Minnesota saw relatively stable employment levels. Employment in the combined 7-county Northeast region represented 4.9% of Minnesota's total jobs. The total payroll of \$4,741,932,769 through the first three quarters of 2020 equaled 3.7% of the statewide payroll. According to Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) data, from 2014 to 2019, Northeast Minnesota employment remained virtually the same. However, an average of the first three quarters of 2020 shows a substantial decline of 9.4% in Duluth from 2019 levels as a result of the pandemic and the efforts to control it. By comparison, employment in the surrounding Workforce Investment Area 3 – Northeast fell 8.3% and statewide employment declined 6.7%. Businesses in the area did not show the same declines as employment did. The number of establishments in Duluth through the three quarters of 2020 averaged 2,477, an increase of 0.6% from the 2019 annual average of 2,462.

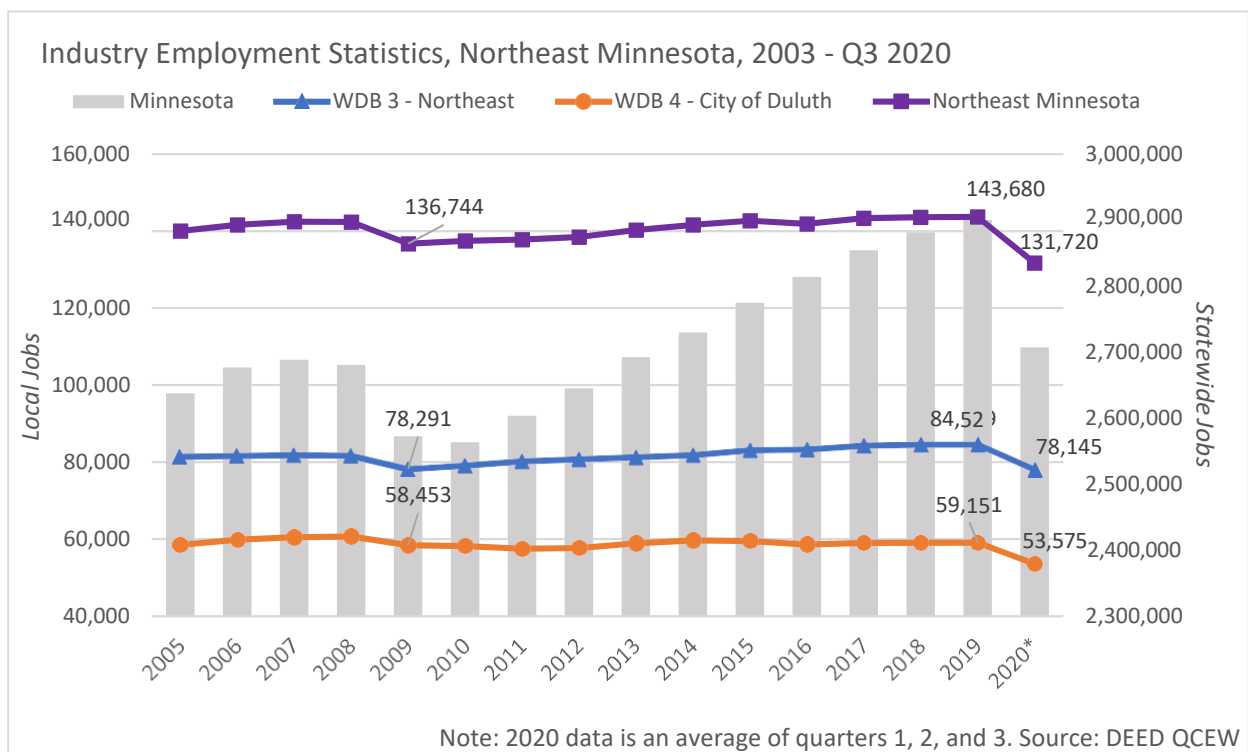


Table 1. Industry Employment Statistics, 2019-2020

|                        | 2020 Data (Q1-Q3) |                |                  |                   | 2014-2019      |                | 2018-2019      |                | 2019-2020*     |                |
|------------------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                        | Number of Firms   | Number of Jobs | Total Payroll    | Avg. Annual Wages | Change in Jobs | Percent Change | Change in Jobs | Percent Change | Change in Jobs | Percent Change |
| WDB 4 - City of Duluth | 2,477             | 53,575         | \$2,825,736,852  | \$52,832          | -535           | -0.9%          | -31            | -0.1%          | -5,576         | -9.4%          |
| WDB 3 - Northeast      | 6,437             | 78,145         | \$3,496,840,173  | \$44,748          | +2,605         | +3.2%          | +38            | +0.0%          | -6,384         | -7.6%          |
| State of Minnesota     | 180,739           | 2,707,353      | \$42,236,699,741 | \$62,539          | +171,752       | +6.3%          | +19,361        | +0.7%          | -192,937       | -6.7%          |

*\*2020 employment data is the average of quarters 1, 2, and 3. Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program*

### Industry Breakdown

*Through concentration or scale, there are several industries that play important roles in the economy of Northeast Minnesota, with healthcare and social assistance continuing to lead employment. The impacts of the pandemic fell on all industries, but especially on service-based industries such as Retail, Other Services, and Leisure & Hospitality.*

Healthcare and Social Assistance continues to be the largest industry in Northeast Minnesota, accounting for 33,102 jobs through Q3 2020 – more than a quarter of all employment in the region. Losing 4.3% of jobs through Q3 2020 under the pandemic, the industry has weathered the associated downturn better than the region’s average. Current Employment Statistics show that in the Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), the Education and Health Service supersector remained down -3.6% over the year, compared to -8.3% for all sectors.

The next largest industries in Northeast Minnesota are Retail Trade (12.2% of jobs), Educational Services (8.4%), Accommodation and Food Services (9.1%), and Public Administration (6.8%). Of those four industries, only Accommodation and Food Services experienced larger than average employment losses through the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2020. None of the 20 industries gained jobs over that period. The industries with the smallest percent declines from 2019 were Professional & Technical Services (-0.8%), Public Administration (-2.1%), Utilities (-2.4%), and Management of Companies (-2.7%).

Prior to the pandemic the industry that saw the largest growth was Transportation and Warehousing, which expanded by 14.4% between 2014 and 2019. Other Services, which expanded by 7.9%, Healthcare & Social Assistance and Accommodation & Food Service both expanded by 5.6%. Additionally, Construction expanded by 4.9%, Public Administration by 4.8%, and Manufacturing by 4.5%. Each of these industries also added jobs in the year prior to the pandemic, furthering their concentration in the area. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Other Services, and Real Estate and Rental Leasing also grew between 2014 and 2019.

In the five years leading up to the pandemic, the largest absolute employment declines occurred in Administrative Support and Waste Management Services (-666), Retail Trade (-554), Finance and Insurance (-546), and Mining (-375).

The industries in the area that are more concentrated in Northeast Minnesota relative to the rest of the state, were Mining (14.5 times as concentrated), Utilities (2.19), Public Administration (1.69), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (1.54), and Health Care & Social Assistance (1.40). The least concentrated industries relative to the state were Management of Companies (0.17), Wholesale Trade (0.46), Information (0.50), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (0.51), and Administrative Support and Waste Management Services (0.51).

Table 2. Industry Employment Statistics, 2014-2020

| Northeast Minnesota                | 2020 Data (Q1-Q3) |                |                 |                  | 2014-2019      |                | 2018-2019      |                | 2019-2020*     |                |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| NAICS Industry Title               | Number of Firms   | Number of Jobs | Percent of Jobs | Avg. Annual Wage | Change in Jobs | Percent Change | Change in Jobs | Percent Change | Change in Jobs | Percent Change |
| Total, All Industries              | 8,914             | 131,720        | 100.0%          | \$48,031         | +2,070         | +1.5%          | +7             | +0.0%          | -11,960        | -8.3%          |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt | 131               | 554            | 0.4%            | \$40,699         | -32            | -5.2%          | -25            | -4.1%          | -25            | -4.3%          |
| Mining                             | 33                | 3,824          | 2.9%            | \$89,111         | -375           | -8.2%          | +32            | +0.8%          | -394           | -9.3%          |
| Construction                       | 995               | 6,328          | 4.8%            | \$63,544         | +326           | +4.9%          | +321           | +4.8%          | -665           | -9.5%          |
| Manufacturing                      | 342               | 8,374          | 6.4%            | \$62,677         | +380           | +4.5%          | +172           | +2.0%          | -528           | -5.9%          |
| Utilities                          | 50                | 1,430          | 1.1%            | \$100,620        | -289           | -16.5%         | -95            | -6.1%          | -35            | -2.4%          |
| Wholesale Trade                    | 254               | 2,797          | 2.1%            | \$60,909         | -133           | -4.3%          | -41            | -1.4%          | -188           | -6.3%          |
| Retail Trade                       | 1,322             | 16,044         | 12.2%           | \$28,981         | -554           | -3.1%          | -352           | -2.0%          | -1,031         | -6.0%          |
| Transportation & Warehousing       | 350               | 3,893          | 3.0%            | \$53,213         | +531           | +14.4%         | +237           | +6.0%          | -324           | -7.7%          |
| Information                        | 130               | 1,154          | 0.9%            | \$50,648         | -340           | -20.6%         | -99            | -7.0%          | -157           | -12.0%         |
| Finance & Insurance                | 426               | 4,052          | 3.1%            | \$60,268         | -546           | -11.2%         | -166           | -3.7%          | -284           | -6.5%          |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing     | 281               | 1,159          | 0.9%            | \$32,656         | +50            | +4.0%          | -38            | -2.9%          | -131           | -10.2%         |
| Professional & Technical Services  | 557               | 4,325          | 3.3%            | \$62,677         | +182           | +4.4%          | +128           | +3.0%          | -35            | -0.8%          |
| Management of Companies            | 41                | 733            | 0.6%            | \$91,277         | -109           | -12.6%         | +16            | +2.2%          | -21            | -2.7%          |
| Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs. | 328               | 2,978          | 2.3%            | \$31,235         | -666           | -16.2%         | -83            | -2.4%          | -456           | -13.3%         |
| Educational Services               | 260               | 11,055         | 8.4%            | \$49,157         | +44            | +0.4%          | -229           | -1.9%          | -821           | -6.9%          |
| Health Care & Social Assistance    | 1,008             | 33,102         | 25.1%           | \$51,809         | +1,833         | +5.6%          | +147           | +0.4%          | -1,504         | -4.3%          |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation  | 253               | 2,880          | 2.2%            | \$25,411         | +78            | +2.1%          | +19            | +0.5%          | -891           | -23.6%         |
| Accommodation & Food Services      | 950               | 11,961         | 9.1%            | \$17,195         | +804           | +5.6%          | +49            | +0.3%          | -3,244         | -21.3%         |
| Other Services                     | 831               | 4,150          | 3.2%            | \$30,888         | +378           | +7.9%          | -53            | -1.0%          | -993           | -19.3%         |
| Public Administration              | 373               | 10,919         | 8.3%            | \$55,432         | +507           | +4.8%          | +68            | +0.6%          | -237           | -2.1%          |

\*2020 employment data is the average of quarters 1, 2, and 3. Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program

## Industry Projections

2018-2028 employment projections indicate a slight decline in jobs over the next 8-10 years in the Northeast Region.

DEED's Employment Outlook provides short and long-term projections for regions and by industry. Projections for the 2018-2028 period do not include pandemic effects. They are still helpful in indicating the estimated direction of each industry's employment prior to the coronavirus pandemic's onset. The largest growth is predicted in Construction (12.3%), Healthcare and Social Assistance (11.2%), Administrative Support and Waste Management (9.5%), and Mining (7.3%).

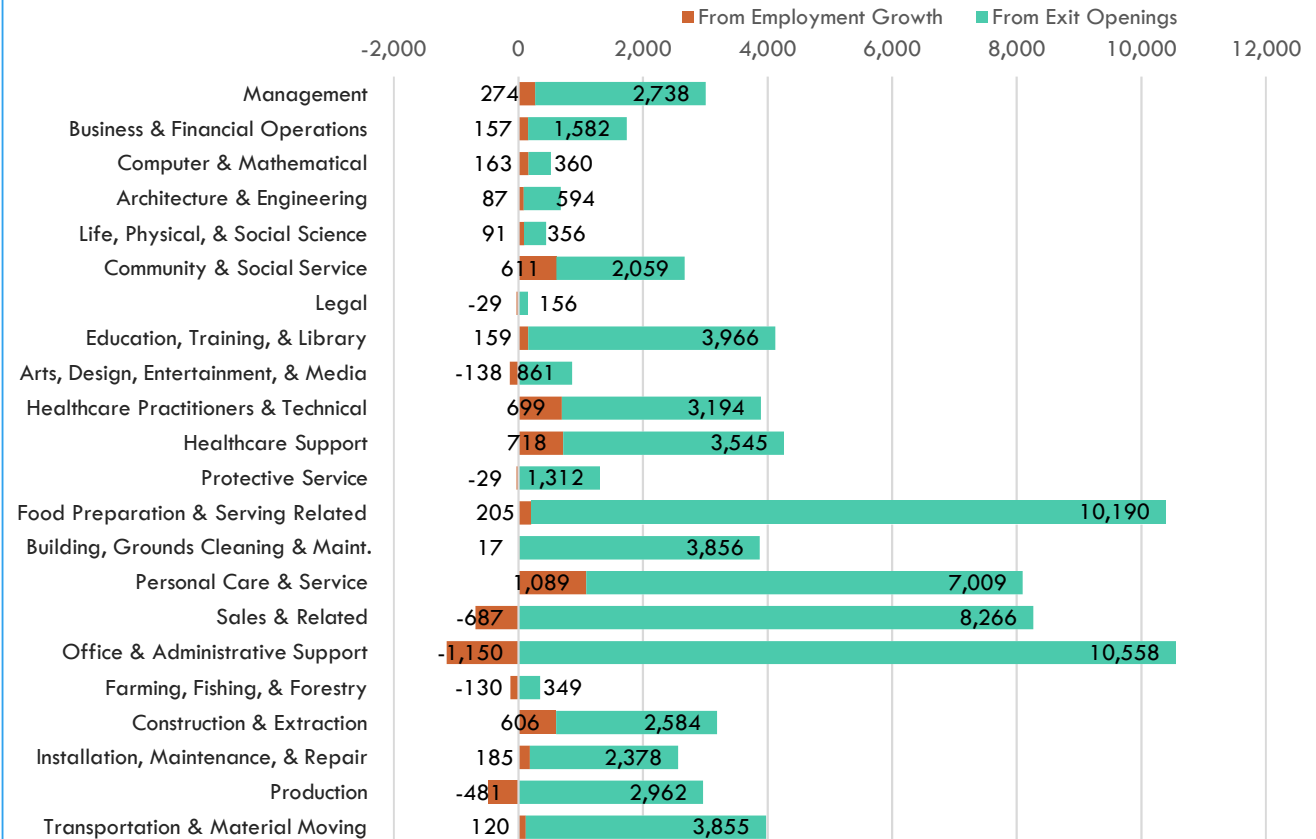
The largest declines are projected in the relatively small Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (-14.7%), Information (-11.8%), Management of Companies (-9.1%), and Manufacturing (-8.3%).

| Table 3. Regional Industry Employment Projections, 2018-2028 |                           |                           |                            |                            |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Northeast Minnesota  | Estimated Employment 2018 | Projected Employment 2028 | Percent Change 2018 - 2028 | Numeric Change 2018 - 2028 |
| Total, All Industries  | 160,443                   | 162,980                   | 1.6%                       | 2,537                      |
| Educational Services   | 12,797                    | 12,763                    | -0.3%                      | -34                        |
| Public Administration  | 15,345                    | 15,329                    | -0.1%                      | -16                        |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting                     | 1,388                     | 1,184                     | -14.7%                     | -204                       |
| Mining   | 4,208                     | 4,516                     | 7.3%                       | 308                        |
| Utilities  | 1,433                     | 1,405                     | -2.0%                      | -28                        |
| Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation                          | 3,510                     | 3,337                     | -4.9%                      | -173                       |
| Construction   | 6,363                     | 7,145                     | 12.3%                      | 782                        |
| Manufacturing  | 8,748                     | 8,024                     | -8.3%                      | -724                       |
| Accommodation and Food Services                              | 14,993                    | 15,114                    | 0.8%                       | 121                        |
| Other Services, Ex. Public Admin                             | 6,932                     | 6,692                     | -3.5%                      | -240                       |
| Transportation and Warehousing                               | 4,914                     | 4,991                     | 1.6%                       | 77                         |
| Information  | 1,406                     | 1,240                     | -11.8%                     | -166                       |
| Finance and Insurance  | 4,848                     | 4,765                     | -1.7%                      | -83                        |
| Real Estate and Rental and Leasing                           | 1,330                     | 1,294                     | -2.7%                      | -36                        |
| Professional and Technical Services                          | 4,436                     | 4,727                     | 6.6%                       | 291                        |
| Management of Companies and Enterprises                      | 748                       | 680                       | -9.1%                      | -68                        |
| Administrative and Waste Services                            | 3,282                     | 3,594                     | 9.5%                       | 312                        |
| Wholesale Trade  | 3,275                     | 3,208                     | -2.0%                      | -67                        |
| Health Care and Social Assistance                            | 33,615                    | 37,375                    | 11.2%                      | 3,760                      |
| Retail Trade   | 17,469                    | 16,467                    | -5.7%                      | -1,002                     |

*Source: DEED 2018-2028 Employment Outlook*

DEED's Employment Outlook tool also provides occupational projections for the period 2018-2028 including growth due to exit openings. This is an important data point, as 36.9% of the population in Northeast Minnesota is over age 55 and will reach retirement age in the next decade. This is expected to create a critical need for skilled workers, particularly in certain occupations where the majority of workers are older. Aside from occupations that traditionally see high turnover, like Food Preparation & Serving and Sales & Related, the projections for Northeast Minnesota show that Office & Administrative Support, Personal Care, Education & Training, and Healthcare Support occupations are expected to grow significantly by 2028. Construction & Extraction, Transportation & Material Moving, and Healthcare Practitioners & Technical are also projected to see large numbers of openings. Overall, all 22 occupational groups are expected to grow.

Figure 2. Regional Employment Projections, Northeast Minnesota, 2018-2028



Source: DEED 2018-2028 Employment Outlook

## Occupational Distribution and Projections

*Employment is less concentrated in a single occupational group than by industry, yet the same emphasis in service-oriented occupations is evident.*

Like the state, the largest share of employment in the 7-county Northeast region in 2020 was in Office and Administrative Support (12.3%). The next largest occupational group was Food Preparation and Serving Related (10.6%), which was more concentrated than in the rest of Minnesota. Healthcare Support and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical accounted for a combined 16.3% of regional jobs, again, more concentrated than the corresponding statewide share (13.3%). Construction and Extraction (5.0%) and Farming, Fishing, and Forestry (0.2%) employment were also more concentrated in the region. Sales and Related occupations made up 9.5% of employment, equal to the statewide share.

Relative to the state, the Northeast region had notably smaller employment shares in Production (5.0%), Transportation and Material Moving (6.1%), Management (4.6%), Business and Financial Operations (3.6%), and Computer and Mathematical (1.3%).

The regional median wage for all occupations was \$19.03, more than \$2 lower than the statewide median. 23.1% of regional employment was in occupational groups with median wages below \$15 and 17.1% of employment was in occupational groups with median wages greater than \$30.

Table 4. Occupational Employment Statistics, 2020

| Occupational Group                   | Region 3           |                               |                           |                   | State of Minnesota |                                |                           |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
|                                      | Median Hourly Wage | Estimated Regional Employment | Share of Total Employment | Location Quotient | Median Hourly Wage | Estimated Statewide Employment | Share of Total Employment |
| Total, All Occupations               | \$19.03            | 144,320                       | 100.0%                    | 1.0               | \$21.49            | 2,880,650                      | 100.0%                    |
| Management                           | \$41.52            | 6,680                         | 4.6%                      | 0.8               | \$52.70            | 170,650                        | 5.9%                      |
| Business & Financial Operations      | \$29.24            | 5,190                         | 3.6%                      | 0.6               | \$33.87            | 171,550                        | 6.0%                      |
| Computer & Mathematical              | \$33.91            | 1,910                         | 1.3%                      | 0.4               | \$42.71            | 97,960                         | 3.4%                      |
| Architecture & Engineering           | \$35.05            | 2,310                         | 1.6%                      | 0.8               | \$38.00            | 55,520                         | 1.9%                      |
| Life, Physical & Social Science      | \$31.36            | 1,510                         | 1.0%                      | 1.1               | \$34.35            | 27,070                         | 0.9%                      |
| Community & Social Service           | \$21.01            | 4,970                         | 3.4%                      | 1.7               | \$23.34            | 57,200                         | 2.0%                      |
| Legal                                | \$34.59            | 500                           | 0.3%                      | 0.5               | \$37.35            | 20,050                         | 0.7%                      |
| Education, Training & Library        | \$24.48            | 8,160                         | 5.7%                      | 1.0               | \$24.38            | 165,310                        | 5.7%                      |
| Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media  | \$18.49            | 1,500                         | 1.0%                      | 0.8               | \$24.52            | 38,540                         | 1.3%                      |
| Healthcare Practitioners & Technical | \$31.08            | 11,950                        | 8.3%                      | 1.3               | \$36.07            | 190,800                        | 6.6%                      |
| Healthcare Support                   | \$14.26            | 11,020                        | 7.6%                      | 1.3               | \$14.81            | 163,160                        | 5.7%                      |
| Protective Service                   | \$24.96            | 3,080                         | 2.1%                      | 1.4               | \$22.45            | 45,030                         | 1.6%                      |
| Food Preparation & Serving Related   | \$11.95            | 15,270                        | 10.6%                     | 1.2               | \$12.43            | 244,300                        | 8.5%                      |
| Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.  | \$14.63            | 5,260                         | 3.6%                      | 1.3               | \$15.23            | 83,860                         | 2.9%                      |
| Personal Care & Service              | \$14.42            | 3,520                         | 2.4%                      | 1.0               | \$13.65            | 70,290                         | 2.4%                      |
| Sales & Related                      | \$12.77            | 13,640                        | 9.5%                      | 1.0               | \$15.37            | 277,000                        | 9.6%                      |
| Office & Administrative Support      | \$18.02            | 17,750                        | 12.3%                     | 1.0               | \$20.03            | 363,800                        | 12.6%                     |
| Farming, Fishing & Forestry          | \$21.55            | 320                           | 0.2%                      | 1.6               | \$17.72            | 4,060                          | 0.1%                      |
| Construction & Extraction            | \$28.03            | 7,180                         | 5.0%                      | 1.4               | \$28.97            | 104,900                        | 3.6%                      |
| Installation, Maintenance & Repair   | \$25.29            | 6,500                         | 4.5%                      | 1.3               | \$24.31            | 100,060                        | 3.5%                      |
| Production                           | \$20.37            | 7,250                         | 5.0%                      | 0.7               | \$19.03            | 212,650                        | 7.4%                      |
| Transportation & Material Moving     | \$17.27            | 8,840                         | 6.1%                      | 0.8               | \$18.06            | 216,890                        | 7.5%                      |

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2020

### Occupations in Demand

Led by Healthcare, a wide array of occupations, with varying wages and educational requirements, were in demand in 2020.

According to DEED’s Occupations in Demand Tool, in 2020 there were about 250 occupations with moderate-to-high demand in the region. Of the 83 occupations considered to have the most favorable demand conditions, 33 were in Healthcare, Personal Care, Sales and Related, Office and Administrative Support, and Transportation and Material Moving occupations. The in-demand occupations were spread across most industry sectors, with some concentration in Education and Health Services, and Trade, Transportation and Utilities. The most in-demand occupations also showed varying education requirements, however the seven with the most projected openings in the region all required a high school diploma or equivalent.

**Table 5. Occupations in Demand by Typical Required Education in Northeast Minnesota with Median Wage, 2020**

| High School or Equivalent  | Vocational Training  | Some College or Assoc. Deg.   | Bachelor's Degree or Higher                                      |
|--|--|---|--|
| Retail Salespersons<br>\$25,240  | Nursing Assistants<br>\$33,249   | Registered Nurses<br>\$66,583   | Nurse Practitioners<br>\$117,194                                 |
| Home Health and Personal Care Aides<br>\$27,244                            | Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics<br>\$45,930   | Forest and Conservation Technicians<br>\$50,158   | Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education<br>\$72,265 |
| First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers<br>\$38,482                 | Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses<br>\$45,331  | Computer Network Support Specialists<br>\$63,488  | Child, Family, and School Social Workers<br>\$53,625             |
| Pharmacy Technicians<br>\$36,308   | Electricians<br>\$70,602   | Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers<br>\$49,180  | Pharmacists<br>\$145,283   |
| Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners<br>\$28,945                                | Medical Assistants<br>\$41,349   | Veterinary Technologists and Technicians<br>\$36,328  | Foresters<br>\$64,293  |
| Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators<br>\$63,769 | Health Information Technologists, Medical Registrars, Surgical Assistants, and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other<br>\$78,372 | Surgical Technologists<br>\$57,416  | General Internal Medicine Physicians<br>\$186,875                |
| Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers<br>\$28,573                         | Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Powerhouse, Substation, and Relay<br>\$95,333  | Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians<br>\$69,548   | Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists<br>\$87,008       |
| Customer Service Representatives<br>\$34,760                               | Dental Assistants<br>\$48,543  | Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health<br>\$52,184  | Substitute Teachers, Short-Term<br>\$32,249                      |
| Construction Laborers<br>\$41,749  | Industrial Machinery Mechanics<br>\$69,061   | Calibration Technologists and Technicians and Engineering Technologists and Technicians, Except Drafters, All Other<br>\$57,832 | Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists<br>\$59,122   |
| Pharmacy Aides<br>\$26,517   | Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines<br>\$58,102   | Mechanical Engineering Technologists and Technicians<br>\$61,935  | Training and Development Managers<br>\$109,221                   |

*Source: DEED Occupations in Demand*

### Job Vacancy Survey

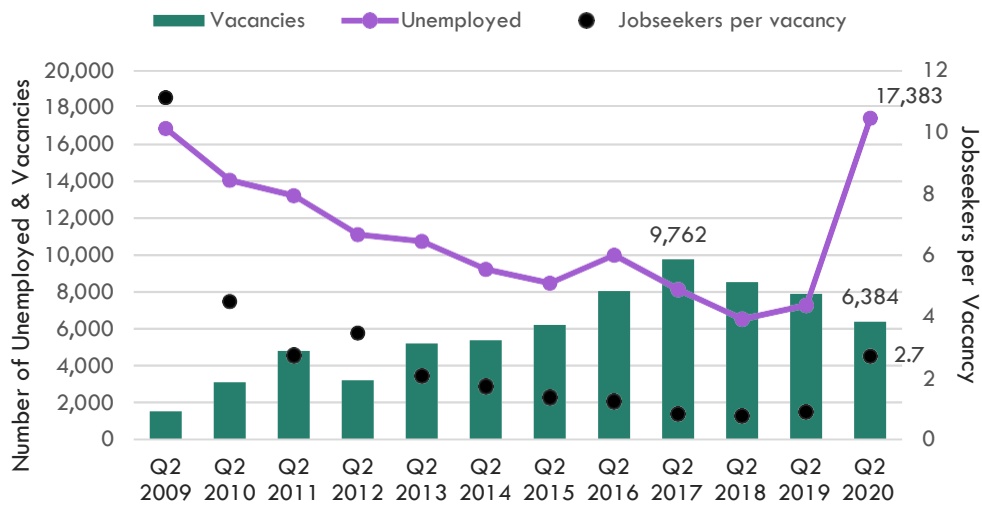
*Job vacancies in the region continued the trend of decline from 2019 into 2020. A tight labor market showed signs of slackening during the pandemic.*

2020 ended a seven-year run of the number of jobseekers per vacancy being under two, as the number of unemployed more than doubled. However, the number of jobseekers per vacancy remains lower than



during the Great Recession in 2009 and 2010. The overall job vacancy rate (the number of vacancies divided by the number of vacancies plus total filled positions) fell from 5.5% in 2019 to 4.4% in 2020.

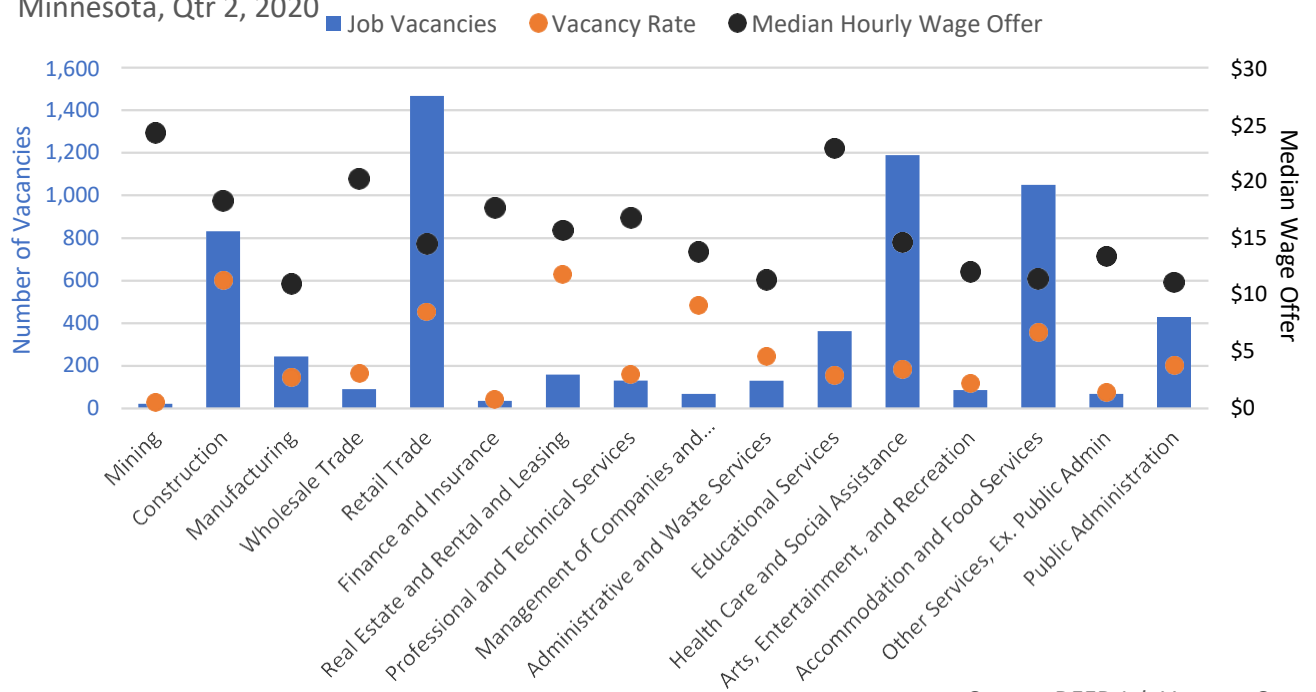
Figure 3. Jobseekers per Vacancy in Northeast Minnesota, 2009-2020



Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey, LAUS program

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2020 the industries with the highest vacancy rates were Real Estate Rental and Leasing (11.8), Construction (11.3), Management of Companies (9.1), Retail Trade (8.5), and Accommodation and Food Services (6.7). Many of these industries have seasonal workforce trends and as a result have higher turnover. The industries with highest share of part-time vacancies were Management of Companies (66%), Educational Services (59%), and Accommodation and Food Services (52%). The industries with the highest share of vacancies for temporary positions were Educational Services (59%), Administrative and Waste Services (84%), Public Administration (72%), and Manufacturing (71%).

Figure 4. Job Vacancies and Median Wage Offers by Industry, Northeast Minnesota, Qtr 2, 2020



Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey

2. What is the regional strategy to coordinate efforts to address existing and in-demand industry sector and occupations workforce needs? Describe the methodology for outreach to these industry sectors and how they will be connected with the workforce system in the region.

The previous regional plan outlined two in-demand industry sectors where we have been focusing our efforts through sector strategy initiatives. Shawn Herhusky, our region's Workforce Strategy Consultant, has been a key leader and connection point for this work across the region. Addressing the needs of in-demand occupation involves a strategy of employer and community engagement, programming aligned to industry needs, and timely revisions to the strategic vision given the often-volatile nature of some of the principal industries in the region, particularly mining and wood products.

By using both regional Labor Market Information provided by DEED and real-time hands-on outreach activities, as well as being an active partner with memberships and engagement with Chambers of Commerce and industry associations in the region, a community-based approach will be used in combination with proven statistical modeling to target existing and emerging industry sectors. The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training (NEMOJT) and Duluth Workforce Development (DWD) have an on-campus presence in most regional community and technical colleges, as well as partnerships with regional universities. Both organizations also have staff dedicated to business outreach and engagement.

As an engaged community partner many in-demand careers fairs have been organized, several of which have been successfully held virtually. These events also provide a "pulse" for the immediate needs of business and industry within our region.

For in-demand industry sector occupations and workforce needs, engagement meetings are coordinated to bring in employers to CareerForce locations, and for counselors and staff to learn of labor market needs and hiring forecasts. These sessions provide an opportunity for CareerForce partners to gain real-time labor market knowledge and expedites the process of meeting workforce needs.

Focusing a greater awareness on other in-demand industries has led to the launch of Healthcare Pathways initiative and 218 Trades in an effort to meet the needs and demands of our region. In the coming year, we plan to add the manufacturing sector as a key industry on which to focus our efforts.

### **Healthcare Sector**

A series of regional summits took place over the past three years to convene healthcare employers and discuss some of their greatest workforce challenges. The result of these conversations has been a number of regional efforts to support the healthcare industry. The Duluth workforce board's Healthcare Working Group meets monthly, and is comprised of employers, workforce providers, and post-secondary education providers. The group developed a career pathway infographic and occupation one-pagers for use by career counselors in high schools, post-secondary schools, and CareerForce locations across the region, and will continue to add to this information resource as well as promote its use. In the coming year, a website will be developed where students and jobseekers can explore healthcare careers in the region. There is also a regional effort to expand Scrubs Camp, a week-long summer camp for middle school students to explore healthcare careers. This camp will be offered virtually in 2021, with significant expansion around the region. There are also plans to organize a hands-on healthcare career fair for both high school students and adults, where employers can offer exposure to different healthcare occupations.

One innovative effort coming out of the regional summit is the idea of a shared float pool, with a focus on long term care facilities. This is an employer-led creative solution to some staffing challenges. The workforce system has helped convene experts to answer questions, and facilitate design mapping to work toward implementation. Employers have also been active participants in designing career pathway training, with workforce system involvement in offering training classes through Pathways to Prosperity as well as working with post-secondary institutions to map out new stackable credential models to be rolled out in the next few years.

### **Construction Sector**

The hub of regional construction sector work is 218 Trades, led by NEMOJT in collaboration with regional partners including both unions and contractors. The core of 218 Trades is a website with substantial information resources to help students and jobseekers explore different career pathways in construction. There are also handouts, including occupation one-pagers and information about apprenticeships, which help students, parents, teachers, and career counselors explore and discuss career pathway options. Staff also visit classrooms in high schools to talk about construction careers, as well as arranging field trips to apprenticeship training centers. There are also two large construction career fairs each year in the region, which are visited by hundreds of high school students and adult jobseekers.

Workforce system partners are also coming together to offer construction apprenticeship prep training to jobseekers, to help them prepare for entry into apprenticeship. This training is designed with active collaboration from both unions and contractors, with strong ties to projects that carry workforce goals.

### **Manufacturing Sector**

A new focus for Region 2 will be a manufacturing sector initiative. Manufacturing is a key employment sector across the region, with anticipated growth in several occupations. A manufacturing sector initiative will focus on raising awareness among students about various career pathways, with a focus on high-wage, high-demand occupations. It will also focus on opportunities to expose jobseekers to manufacturing careers through job fairs and career pathway training classes. To launch this effort, we are working with APEX, a regional economic development partner, to connect with employers and gather information about their workforce needs and challenges. Key to manufacturing sector strategies will be incumbent worker training, and working with employers to build their internal infrastructure to train existing employees through apprenticeship or other on-the-job training models.

### **Transportation & Logistics Sector**

Transportation and logistics will be added as another area of focus for Region 2. This sector saw the largest rate of job growth in the region prior to the pandemic, and is anticipated to be a major focus of economic development over the next few years. Duluth has already distinguished itself as a primary hub for transporting wind turbines from sea to land. The Duluth Port Authority, APEX, and other regional partners are actively working to renovate and repurpose port facilities, and attract shipping and industrial companies. This is anticipated to create many more jobs in transportation and logistics throughout the region, and offers a unique opportunity to collaborate with our workforce partners in Northwest Wisconsin to meet workforce needs.

3. Describe how the local boards will direct regional workforce system alignment through shared policies and practices. In this description include any cooperative service arrangements being planned for the region and how they will promote consistency within the regional workforce development area and with state policy.

There are two types of formal agreements which outline the roles and responsibilities of each partner. The One Stop Operator for CareerForce locations in the region has typically been a consortium of co-located partners, with a Memorandum of Understanding defining the nature of the partnership. The one-stop MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement detail how all partners in the region will work together to provide consistent and quality services, as well as share costs.

Existing informal agreements between CareerForce partners in the northeast region that continue to work effectively will also remain in place. For example, determination of which WIOA provider at the Duluth Workforce Center serves Duluth residents vs. non-Duluth residents is clear and referrals occur seamlessly: Duluth Workforce Development staff work with City of Duluth residents, and NEMOJT and AEOA staff work with non-Duluth residents. If situations arise that necessitate adjustments to the established process, partners simply maintain open lines of communication and adjust accordingly to ensure the needs of program participants are met.

Both NEMOJT and DWD are committed to system alignment through shared policies and practices. Both are the providers of WIOA services in southern St. Louis County, which necessitates consistency in how services are delivered. In the past, level of support services and processes between the two agencies were dissimilar and those receiving services were aware of the differences between the agencies, neither good nor bad, but different. In the spirit of partnership many of the processes

and levels of support services and Individual Training Account (ITA) funding for WIOA training have come into alignment between both entities.

To further support regional priorities, cooperative efforts in the following areas are also taking place:

**1) Coordinated professional development for staff and boards.**

Each year, the Northeast Region sets aside regional planning funds to support a full-day professional development conference for all CareerForce staff. We also host a joint workforce board meeting, where the Duluth and Northeast workforce boards meet to discuss issues and trends that pertain to the region. Equity is a top area of focus for these regional sessions – two years ago all staff and both boards completed the Intercultural Development Inventory and participated in a series of workshops building on these results that focused on cultural fluency. Over the next three years, we will build on this foundation by offering additional equity-focused professional development for staff, and by integrating equity topics as an agenda item at board meetings.

**2) Coordinated marketing and communication of CareerForce programs, events and initiatives.**

While each organization maintains its own identity, we are unified by and lead with CareerForce as a shared identity. We regularly promote programs and events hosted by all partner organizations in the region through the CareerForce email list and event calendar. We also have a strong social media presence in the region, which is an increasing source of connection to our programs and services. And we have good connections with local earned media, which is very supportive and willing to share information about our programs and services.

**3) Coordinated Career Pathways Efforts**

Strong, employer-led sector partnerships are critical to meeting the needs of job seekers and employers across the entire NE region, specifically in the areas of healthcare, skilled trades/construction, and manufacturing. To maximize the time and effort employers are willing and able to invest, joint working groups have been established to work on pathway development in each of the two areas. A cooperative service arrangement documenting these ongoing efforts will be formalized.

Collaboration has also occurred between NEMOJT and DWD through convening multi-agency trainings and events serving the entire region. Two examples are the Intracultural Diversity Inventory and related equity and diversity trainings. Regional partners also convene a Professional Development Day on a semi-annual basis to provide training for all CareerForce staff and strengthen regional partnerships. Duluth Workforce Development, NEMOJT, and Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA) are also collaborating on a Dislocated Worker Project tied to the closure of the Verso paper mill in Duluth. With a workforce residing in many communities outside of the city limits of Duluth, a collaborative approach was implemented to meet the needs of impacted workers residing in other communities. This partnership has further served to align services and processes and has enhanced the delivery of services to participants from its coordinated delivery. Regional WIOA Youth partnerships also exist between NEMOJT and DWD, with the sharing of community resources for both providers through Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) Pre- Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).

Partners in the northeast region also work collaboratively on special projects and frequently facilitate cross-referrals and co-enrollments between agencies. For example, individuals served through WIOA programs may also co-enroll with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). Job counselors may promote program eligible participants to training opportunities available through another partner's special project (i.e. Duluth's career pathway training classes).

4. Describe how the regional approaches used will ensure that it includes diverse representation, specifically among populations experiencing the greatest barriers to employment or communities facing the greatest levels of economic disparities?

Equity and diversity are priority areas of focus for both workforce boards in the northeast region. When vacancies occur, both boards actively work to fill open seats with individuals who represent diversity. The Duluth board has intentionally chosen to increase its membership to create seats for organizations that have connection with communities facing economic disparities, and has opened committee membership to the broader community as a first connection point for board engagement.

The three employment and training partners in the region, AEOA, DWD And NEMOJT are also providers of employment and training services for public assistance programming in northeast Minnesota, including MFIP and SNAP. This aspect of our work aligns our full spectrum of services for those with the greatest economic disparities in the region. Strategic co-enrollments in WIOA programming and opportunities provided by Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) leverage resources to allow opportunities to those with the greatest levels of economic disparities.

The Duluth workforce board has also begun a concerted effort over the past couple of years to recruit more diverse members and connecting with organizations led by and/or serving BIPOC individuals as well as those with disabilities, to build new partnerships and gain insight into key issues and priorities. These connections are evolving into meaningful partnerships, which will allow us to utilize our resources to focus on those issues generating the greatest disparities. One aspect of this work has been the Wealth, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Sustainability working group, which is a collaboration between BIPOC community leaders and workforce organizations to improve how our community and the workforce system serves people of color.

The Northeast workforce board has also sought to engage and recruit the missing voices at the table. A recent example is the mindful engagement with a diversity perspective through the regional 218 Trades initiative, where we were invited to present to the regional NAACP to gather insight and provide guidance and resources for African Heritage community members to find careers in the trades. In addition, intentional efforts are being made to connect and collaborate with the Indigenous community through direct outreach to tribal leaders and community members. One specific, successful outreach initiative recently occurred in partnership with Enbridge to engage Indigenous community members in our upcoming Virtual Job Fair, which has generated a connection to potentially thirty contractors.

The pandemic has in many ways exacerbated already-existing disparities in the region. People of color, especially African Heritage and Indigenous people were much more likely to file unemployment insurance (UI) claims. They were also more likely to

be filing for UI longer than their white counterparts and more likely to be permanently separated from their jobs. This puts them at an even greater disadvantage when seeking to re-engage in employment. To address this challenge, the Northeast region will develop and implement strategies specifically targeting these hardest-hit groups for economic recovery. The Northeast region will also increase its focus on the digital divide as a critical component of accessing education, employment, and CareerForce services.

5. Describe how performance negotiations will be managed among the local workforce development areas within the region.

Performance negotiations occur between DEED and each agency offering workforce services. For WIOA programs, DEED initiates a formal negotiation every two years with local providers, after completing its statewide performance negotiations with the US Department of Labor. Providers offer a proposed performance level, which DEED either accepts or counters, and a discussion takes place from there until agreement is reached with all providers in the state. For competitive grants, performance levels are set by the provider as part of their project proposal, which DEED accepts if they choose to fund the project.

6. Describe how the region's workforce development efforts will be coordinated with economic development services and providers.

The northeast workforce system actively collaborates with economic development entities in our region, including IRRRB, the Blandin Foundation, APEX, ARDC, and city and county economic development offices. Both the Duluth and Northeast workforce boards are active collaborators in developing strategic economic development plans, all of which contain workforce development as core strategies for the region. When economic development entities are working with specific businesses seeking to locate or expand in the region, they regularly call in workforce system representatives to develop strategies and access resources to meet their workforce needs. Both NEMOJT and DWD are active with Chambers of Commerce, economic development agencies, trade unions, and foundations, providing direct connection to workforce as a key component of economic development strategy. Additionally, as the region works on economic recovery, both workforce boards in the region will actively engage with economic development entities and efforts.

One collaborative effort focuses on talent attraction, as a strategy to help employers meet their workforce needs. The Northeast Regional Leadership Team has utilized regional planning funds to support Northforce in their targeted marketing of employment opportunities to attract candidates from outside the region. Additionally, with input from workforce system providers, Northforce launched the North by Choice website, which is a resource hub employers can use to assist with talent attraction. Jobseekers can also use the website to find information and resources they need to settle into life in the region. There is also interest in exploring immigration as a resource for talent attraction, including both retention of international students after they graduate from area colleges and attracting immigrants from other parts of the state. The Regional Leadership Team will continue discussing strategies to both enhance employer understanding of visas and other steps to employ immigrants, and to ensure communities in Northeast Minnesota are welcoming of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Broadband access is another area where there will be expanded regional collaboration over the next few years. Prior to the pandemic, there was a strong focus, led by the Blandin Foundation, on expanding broadband access in rural communities across the Northeast region. COVID has made disparities in digital access more apparent and acute, and regional economic development entities are coming together to identify additional strategies to expand access and enhance digital literacy skills.

7. Describe any regional coordination of administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs, as appropriate. Also, please describe regional coordination of transportation and other supportive services.

As stated above, co-located partners utilize an Infrastructure Funding Agreement to outline how costs of operating each CareerForce location will be shared. This agreement includes space, IT/phones, and other shared costs, as well as a shared staffing model to cover the front desk and Career Lab. Required partners who are not co-located within CareerForce locations are included in the IFA as in-kind contributors, primarily focused on cross-referrals between agencies.

We make a continual effort to compare service and funding policies and share staff time based on Individualized Funding Agreements (IFA) to reduce duplicative administrative costs. In addition, we work collaboratively and share in efforts to develop policies, forms, and training materials which can be utilized consistently by both entities in our region.

Regional partners AEOA, DWD, and NEMOJT are entities that often offer support services to participants through WIOA, DHS, and other grants. In a highly collaborative and coordinated effort, providers have been able to utilize similar support service guidelines and utilize whenever possible complementary community-based programming for housing, transportation, and healthcare. An example would be the use of AEOA's Rural Rides program to support the needs of an enrolled participant receiving NEMOJT services, or co-enrollment of NEMOJT and DWD WIOA clients in career pathway training classes funded by Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) grants.



## SECTION B: LOCAL PLAN

**Strategic Operations:** *The core elements of strategic operations focuses on operating policies and procedures related to the one-stop system and physical locations of service delivery.*

1. *Describe how local area boards will work with each other, core title providers and available data to designate at least one CareerForce per local workforce development area and make recommendations on recognizing affiliate and standalone partner sites.*

Both directors from Region 2 participate on the Joint MAWB/DEED WIOA One Stop Operations Committee, where the WIOA criteria for comprehensive CareerForce locations has been reviewed. This effort includes examination of the regulations regarding comprehensive centers, affiliate sites, and standalone partners. Based on this, the designated comprehensive center for WDA #3 is the Hibbing CareerForce location. Of the 6 current CareerForce locations in the Northeast region, only one, Aitkin, has always operated as an affiliate site.

All CareerForce locations, including comprehensive and affiliate, will continue to provide:

1. Career Labs for the general public to access career and program services, access to LMI and job listings, and information on filing a UI claim
2. Access to persons with disabilities
3. A non-discriminatory and welcoming environment to all customer groups
4. A site that complies with statewide branding policies
5. Services to businesses
6. Services to job seekers

The Board will adhere to the Minnesota CareerForce System Certification Standards policy which states that each Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) must operate at least one comprehensive CareerForce in their local area that provides access to the required programs designated in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. LWDBs may also designate CareerForce Affiliate sites and provide services in stand-alone partner sites.

In order for a site to obtain certification as a comprehensive or affiliate CareerForce:

1. The Center must be identified in the LWDB's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the local One Stop system.
2. Co-location of programs (Wagner Peyser, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth, Minnesota Youth, State Dislocated Worker, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services) is required in comprehensive sites and co-location of additional partners is encouraged for more efficient customer access to programs and financial savings. Staff from these programs must be physically present on site and available on a regular and predictable schedule.

3. The comprehensive CareerForce site must also provide access to the other required One-Stop System partners outlined in WIOA. At a minimum, “access to” means that CareerForce staff is trained to make appropriate referrals. “Access to” also means that program staff can be physically present or direct links to program staff using technology are available. LWDBs may require a financial contribution from other partners for the operations or staffing of the Comprehensive CareerForce if partner program regulations allow for the contribution. These programs include:

- Jobs for Veterans
- Unemployment Insurance programs
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- State Services for the Blind
- Adult Basic Education
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (i.e. Federal TANF program)
- Job Corps
- Youthbuild
- Native American programs
- Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Carl D. Perkins career and technical education programs
- Community Services Block Grant programs
- Department of Housing and Urban Development employment and training activities

4. Procedures are in place to assure coordination of and avoid duplication among CareerForce system partner programs.

5. Facilities, programs, websites and documents must be accessible to all populations including people with disabilities.

The Board will also follow recommendations for designating affiliate sites, based on the criteria below:

1. Providing access to one or more of the following:
  - WIOA Career Services
  - Training services
  - Services or programs from CareerForce system partner agencies
  - Workforce and labor market information
  - Access to job listings
  - Job search resources
2. Accessibility to persons with disabilities

3. A non-discriminatory and welcoming environment to all customer groups
4. Provision of procedures that promote a safe environment for customers and employees.

2. *Describe the strategies to ensure proper connectivity and coordination among the physical sites within the local workforce development area.*

Connectivity and coordination occurs throughout the workforce service area through monthly meetings of partner program management, known as the Partner Group. Since the inception of the one-stop system under WIA, Northeast region partner management has met monthly to discuss center operations, determine and clarify policy, deal with staffing or programmatic issues, identify opportunities for collaboration, ensure appropriate access to programs and services, and provide updates on what is happening within each represented agency. This group includes local WIOA providers from both WDA 3 and 4 (the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training and Duluth Workforce Development), DEED Job Service, Vocational Rehabilitation and State Services for the Blind management, and Arrowhead Economic and Opportunity Agency (AEOA), the largest community action program provider in the region and long-time partner in the CareerForce system. All these partners also contribute to the infrastructure costs at each center in the region.

At each meeting, partner management also reviews minutes from Operations Committees from each CareerForce location in the region, further ensuring consistent coordination among physical sites. These Operations Committees consist of front-line staff from each partner in a specific CareerForce location who meet monthly to discuss operations, staffing, programs, and opportunities for coordination. Where the Operations Committee ensures connectivity and coordination within a CareerForce, it is up to the Partner Group to ensure there is connectivity and coordination between physical sites.

Further coordination and connectivity between physical sites is achieved through the itinerant staff that routinely travel between CareerForce locations, such as REA staff, Veterans representatives, and Job Service staff who conduct workshops like Creative Job Search at many local sites. These staff members are often sources of ideas of how to collaborate differently within a center as they see how various centers operate regarding referrals, cooperative staffing, and service delivery tactics.

3. *Describe the strategies to ensure proper connectivity and coordination among the service providers within the local workforce development area.*

The same tactics mentioned above regarding connectivity and connection among physical sites applies to coordination among service providers in the Northeast region. The Partner Group includes decision-makers from all the relevant service providers and the Operations Committees includes front-line staff from service providers and programs and services are routinely discussed to ensure effective coordination. Examples include streamlining referral systems, developing common intake procedures or forms, ensuring cooperative staffing of Career Labs/Reception,

workshop facilitation and sharing knowledge or resources that would benefit other service provider program participants. These face-to-face monthly meetings will continue to be the mechanism by which connectivity and coordination among service providers will be achieved.

4. *Describe other strategies that will be used to maximize services and access to services, such as non-traditional hours or using partner facilities.*

Strategies to maximize access to services often revolve around special circumstances, such as setting up temporary satellite locations for dislocated worker projects or providing services during non-traditional hours for dislocated worker groups prior to their anticipated layoff. As the Northeast region includes many remote areas where large-scale layoffs have occurred, staffing an office that is located in the town where the layoffs have occurred has been an effective way to reach workers and can sometimes lead to greater participation in programming.

Additionally, many CareerForce partner staff hold regular hours at local community colleges, including WIOA and ABE staff. These staff usually have dedicated space within a community college and are there to support existing clients attending school, but also to encourage others to access CareerForce services and resources. It has proven an effective mechanism for increasing the visibility of CareerForce as well as strengthening relationships with training providers. Other ways services have been expanded include delivering workshops at local libraries and schools, providing virtual intake, orientation, and enrollments, holding virtual trainings and Job Clubs, and also strengthening partnerships with community stakeholders.

5. *Describe the strategic approaches to ensure all elements of Career Services are available at service locations or online, including services for youth and individuals with barriers to employment or service access.*

Both directors from Region 2 participate on the Joint MWCA/DEED WIOA One Stop Operations Committee, where Career Services required under WIOA are discussed and best practices are shared. CareerForce locations in the region operate comprehensive Career Labs to assist job seekers in a variety of ways, including internet access, the provision of labor market information, and access to workshops. Career Services are routinely provided to youth and individuals with barriers to employment already, and strategies to develop additional Career Services will also be made available to these groups. In addition, we offer a variety of online resources through our NEMOJT, 218 Trades, and CareerForce websites, along with social media platforms and virtual engagement and informational events.

All elements of Career Services defined in WIOA are available, through both in-person, virtual, and online resources. These include basic career service and individualized career services involving eligibility determination, intake and orientation to programs, initial assessment of skills, aptitudes, and interests, support services and assessment of barriers, job search and job placement assistance, referrals, labor market information, individual counseling and career planning, development of individual employment plans, virtual and in-person workshops, and internship and work experience opportunities. Specific career service areas we have highlighted in recent years are listed below.

Assistance with establishing eligibility for non-WIOA financial aid programs:

Staff are accustomed to advising eligible clients on the breadth of financial aid available to supplement program funds and we have created a mechanism of advising the general public on these opportunities through providing staff training and collaborating with the local high schools and community colleges to host events on financial aid opportunities. We have financial aid workshops developed for other purposes (i.e. for the Career EdVenture initiative to provide career planning services to local schools) which we share with the public through our weekly Job Clubs and other regular workshop at each CareerForce. This four-part series includes units on education costs; completing the FAFSA; grants, loans, and work study; and scholarships.

- Financial Literacy Services: Financial literacy can be delivered by ABE partners as well as WIOA program staff using a variety of tools. Similar to the financial aid workshop mentioned above, we have developed a financial literacy and money management series that is being used in area schools that has been adapted into a workshop for the universal customer. This resource was developed using Wells Fargo curriculum and includes a four-part progressive series focused on such topics as introduction to the basics of financial literacy, basic money management, taxes and credits, financial aid, investing, and protecting your money. Our ABE partner utilizes the Four Cornerstones of Financial Literacy curriculum to address personal budgeting; savings; debt reduction and asset building; building good credit; consumer protection; and how to engage with financial institutions. These workshops are available throughout the region.
- Certain business services: As outlined in WIOA, there is an expectation for expanded services to business, including HR consultation services such as writing/reviewing job descriptions and employee handbooks, developing performance evaluation and personnel policies, creating orientation sessions for new workers, honing job interview techniques, analyzing employee turnover, and explaining labor laws to comply with wage/hour and safety/health regulations. The region is not currently equipped to meet these demands as there is no DEED Business Services Representative in the service area; however we do have staff dedicated to providing business services along with their other program and operational duties. As an organization, we are committed to delivering consistently growing services to the business community.

Our 218 Trades initiative has developed and continues to develop relationships with local unions, businesses, and contractors. We work closely with the skilled trades sectors to build relationships and programs to create career pathways for youth and adults in our service area. Our 218 Trades campaign and social media presence highlights the opportunities to work in the trades and connect with businesses and employers in a variety of fields, including carpentry, pipefitting, welding, electrical, iron working, and plumbing.

In addition to the business services referenced here, we also offer customized assistance/referral in the development of registered apprenticeship programs and our 218 Trades team has skill and expertise in connecting with businesses to develop these opportunities.

6. *Describe strategies that will be used to leverage technology for services and ensure compliance with accessibility standards.*

Technology is currently used in a variety of ways in the region. The Cybrarian system is used on all Career Lab computers, including preloaded tabs and bookmarks of appropriate career services. Gov Delivery is used to communicate with over 2,000 business and job seeker subscribers in the region to broadcast information on community events and job resources and the CareerForce website is a comprehensive location with information for partner staff and customers.

We have created electronic intake systems, such as online applications, Individual Service Strategies, resume worksheets, and MFIP plans. We are examining each aspect of our enrollment process in the effort to streamline intake using technology – both for the convenience of our clients as well as counselors. We currently have all of our enrollment materials available in electronic format. Our website is compliant with accessibility standards to ensure that any online process is available to everyone who wishes to access services.

Local service providers are also working with a local community-based newspaper, Hometown Focus, to develop a 'Jobs' component to their DiscoverMN app. DiscoverMN was developed as a mobile tool to access a myriad of services and resources in the Northeast region, such as auto services, restaurants, realty, shopping, health providers, education providers, gas stations, lodging, and many more. We are working with them to add a 'Jobs' button to these resources which will include information on CareerForces (including partner resources such as OJT, program services, workshops, etc.), as well as links to a variety of topics such as career research and job search assistance, including links to sources of employment opportunities. These include CareerForce, MinnesotaWorks, Northforce, and other job banks, as well as direct links to employment pages of numerous private and public entities like schools, counties, and municipalities.

CareerForce locations are also utilizing social media resources like Facebook and LinkedIn to connect with the wider community. Many CareerForce locations in the region have developed dedicated Facebook pages as a way of staying in touch with program participants and general job seekers. They use this tool to share information about job openings, workshops, and available program resources. Also, social media has become an invaluable follow up tool for staying connected with program participants as they exit services and obtain employment.

The Office of Job Training broadcasts information in a monthly electronic newsletter that is sent to nearly 1,000 subscribers which generates a communication mechanism as well as expands the network of individuals connected to programs and services. We have also recently been selected to be a Soft Launch Provider for the Workforce One Connect App and will be implementing this region-wide.

AEOA uses their Agency Facebook page to post information related to seeking and retaining employment, training opportunities, and program eligibility criteria. Additionally, the Adult Education program maintains its own Facebook page to connect with learners across the region as well as a page specifically for distance learners within the program. ABE also engages learners via multiple online resources such as iPathways, SkillsTutor, GoToMeeting, Skype and Google applications. These platforms allow for outreach and engagement into remote communities that otherwise may struggle to access workforce resources.

With such a vast region with many isolated communities, maximizing the use of technology to increase access to services is an issue that has been addressed through agency-wide initiatives and proactive delivery methods. In addition, we were pursued and were awarded CARES Act funding to upgrade technology region-wide to ensure we have the means to deliver services to all individuals, communities, and businesses in our area.

7. *Describe how supportive services, such as transportation and other needs, will be coordinated to better serve individuals with specific barriers to training, education and employment.*

In the Northeast region there is a high degree of existing coordination among service providers, including the provision of supportive services. Supportive service needs for individuals seeking employment or participating in training are coordinated through close working relationships among front-line program staff, who are aware of supportive services offered through all partner programs. Often cross referrals and co-enrollment is used to ensure that participants in any one program benefit from other service provider resources.

In such a rural area with the absence of mass transit options, transportation is a major barrier for many of the people we work with and we are fortunate to have strong partnerships with AEOA, the region's largest CAP agency. AEOA operates Arrowhead Transit, a dial-a-ride service available throughout the entire region. Routes are available between the region's cities and even to farther destinations like Brainerd.

Staff also often work with non-CareerForce providers of support services to support the success of program participants. Because we live and work in small communities, available resources are generally well-known and referrals to those services are made often. An example of how this is accomplished are monthly 'cross-functional' meetings with both northern and southern St. Louis County Department of Health and Human Services and many of these community partners to discuss needs common among programs and agencies, often leading to opportunities to partner to deliver services across organizations. We work with

non-profit and community partners to connect participants to resources such as professional clothes closets, the Sharing Fund which provides funds for emergencies that aren't covered through CareerForce programs, food shelves and other community-based supportive services.

8. *Describe how local area boards will ensure state policies on infrastructure funding requirements are adhered to and the process for addressing any discrepancies or disagreements.*

All required partners under WIOA are included as part of the Infrastructure Funding Agreements, which map out both cash and in-kind contributions toward the operation of the Cloquet, Grand Rapids, Hibbing, International Falls, and Virginia CareerForce locations. A Memorandum of Understanding governs partner roles and outlines how cross-referrals and co-enrollments will take place. Discrepancies and disagreements are first discussed by One-Stop Operator consortium partners in monthly Partner Meetings.

Per DEED policy, if the partners are not able to reach agreement on an IFA, the local workforce development board will convene all partners and attempt to resolve the dispute. If an agreement still cannot be reached, the local workforce development board must notify DEED that an impasse has been reached. DEED will review the process and make a dispute resolution recommendation. If this is not successful the State Funding Mechanism will take effect, taking into consideration the distribution and allocation of services of all required partners within the local area.

9. *Describe how local area boards, who contract out for provider services, will ensure that providers fully participate in infrastructure funding requirements and the alignment of service delivery within the local workforce development area.*

N/A: The Northeast Minnesota Board does not contract for services.



10. Describe how the Memorandum of Understanding will be developed and used to ensure commitment of resources from service providers and required partners.

One-stop partners in WDA #3 sign an MOU that accurately reflects the services to be provided by each partner and how they will be coordinated and delivered through the system.

Elements in the MOU will include but are not limited to:

- How the costs for services and operating costs will be funded including funding through cash and in-kind contributions, as well as infrastructure costs;
- Methods to ensure the needs of workers, youth and individuals with barriers to employment are addressed, including access to technology and materials made available through the One-Stop system;
- The duration of the MOU and the procedures for amending the MOU, including assurances that the MOU shall be reviewed at least every three years.

The Northeast Workforce Board reviews the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) every three years to ensure it clearly describes operations, services provided and coordinated, funding, and referrals.

11. A. Describe the local area board's strategic vision and how it aligns with the designated state priorities under WIOA.

The Northeast Minnesota Workforce Board is committed to ensuring employers have access to a skilled workforce to fill available jobs and that all people, regardless of race or background, can achieve meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage.

This strategic vision is well aligned with the designated state priorities under WIOA including development of a "Career Pathway System" that aligns with the needs of Minnesota's business and workforce. As part of the regional effort to develop sector initiatives and corresponding career pathway programming, the Board will be closely engaged with the Duluth Board to align our local and regional strategic vision for a skilled workforce with state priorities under WIOA. This effort includes:

- Convening business and industry sector leaders, educators and community-based organizations to identify and create sector-based, career pathway programs for skill development.

- Working to create a bridge between educational institutions and business and industry by identifying skills needs and communicating them to educational partners.
- Developing and supporting initiatives which increase the labor supply for high demand industries, both current and future, in cooperation with state and local economic development partners.
- Providing support to existing or emerging business/industry clusters, and to help generate and implement strategies that expand these types of business in the area.

The Northeast Board also understands the complexities of workforce development and is acutely aware of how important stakeholder engagement is to identify and implement local strategies that will positively affect workforce equity issues and employment disparities. The Board will reach out to and coordinate with local service providers and representatives from disparate communities to identify barriers and develop specific strategies that address barriers to success.

The alignment and coordination of local employment, education and training programs and providers is an integral component of the Northeast Board's strategic vision. To facilitate this, the Board took part in a resource mapping process with to assess the capacity of employment and training system; the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and gaps within the region's workforce system to meet industry needs; and the wrap-around and support services available. All of this information guides career pathway-based programming by identifying potential partners as well as where additional resources may need to be developed.

It is our goal to utilize this foundation to discuss specific strategies for increasing coordination of services among agencies and identifying opportunities for leveraging financial and human resources. Additionally, it will help local providers better understand what each public and private organization contributes to ensuring all people can achieve their career goals.

*B. Describe the local area board's goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment.*

The Northeast Board's goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce for all individuals, including youth and individuals with barriers to employment, revolves around developing strong career pathway programming for key sectors of the local economy. As a prevailing theme under WIOA, the career pathway model offers a holistic approach to providing vocational training specifically to groups experiencing barriers to employment. Part of this process is to more deliberately engage the employer community in the development of career pathways programming, which inherently will strengthen the ability of the public system to prepare an educated and skilled workforce. Central to this theme is cultivating the existing relationships we have with educational organizations and working in concert to design training programs that meet the variety of needs experienced by the populations that we serve.

Specific goals related to the development of career pathways programming include:

- Well-developed career ladders and lattices in targeted sectors vetted with private sector;
- Deep understanding of career pathway systems & philosophy shared between workforce system and higher education;
- Comprehensive cataloging of all regional training programs and providers and the specific credentials their programs award;
- Developed educational options that are progressive, modular, accelerated and contextualized, including short-, moderate- and long-term training options, that lead to industry-recognized and/or stackable credentials;
- Identification of entry points into career pathways, including corresponding certifications/credentials that lead to employment; and
- Continue growing work on the identified sectors of healthcare and construction trades and develop initiatives based on additional identified regional sectors.
- Develop measures to determine whether or not career pathways models have met employer expectations and whether participant expectations were met as well.

C. Describe how these goals relate to the performance accountability measures based on the primary indicators in order to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

The CareerForce system is accustomed to working within the parameters of performance accountability measures, particularly through Adult and Dislocated Worker programming, and is proud of the consistent achievement of these standards.

#### **WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs**

1. Initial Employment Indicator - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
2. Subsequent employment retention - The percentage of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the fourth quarter after exit from the program.
3. Initial Earnings - The median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program.
4. Credential Attainment - The percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (subject to clause 4 (iii)), during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program. *This includes the attainment of: a high school diploma or equivalence; pathway license, industry certification, or apprenticeship certificate; pathway certificate and diploma; or pathway associate degree attainment.*
5. Measurable Skill Gain - The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains toward such a credential or employment.

Additional performance measures are tracked under programs offered in WDA #3:

- The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Employment Services program tracks: Work Participation Rate, the percent of Universal Participants who fulfill participation requirements; and Self-Sufficiency Index, which measures the number of clients exited who remain off cash assistance three years later.
- Youth programs funded through state formula and competitive grants track participation in career pathway exposure and employment readiness training, participation in work experience, and satisfactory performance reviews from work experience supervisors.

*D. Describe the strategy to work with the entities that carry out the core programs to align resources available to the local workforce development area, to achieve the strategic vision and goals of the local area board.*

As referenced in questions 2 (connectivity and coordination among physical sites), 3 (connectivity and coordination among service providers), and 7 (coordination of supportive services), there is already a strong system of aligning core program resources in the local area. Framing these program resources using a career pathways lens will be an integral part of achieving the strategic goal of a strong career pathways system in Northeast Minnesota. As active members of CareerForce governance via the Partner Group as well as active members of the Board, core program partners will be a part of the development of the local career pathways system and identify precisely where they can contribute resources to the various components of the career pathways system. This includes core partners such as:

- ABE: just-in-time contextualized literacy “bridges”; college and career preparation; co-enrollment of students in workforce programming and basic referral of participants.
- Job Service: labor market intelligence needed in the development of career pathways systems; referrals of job seekers and veterans; facilitation of job search workshops at end of programming.
- Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training: provision of WIOA training and support service funding to support eligible participants in career pathways programming; referrals to career pathways programming; role of navigator.
- AEOA: referrals to career pathways programming; leverage of Agency resources to further develop programming that connects with the overall regional plan; provision of support services such as transportation, fuel assistance, and other supports for individuals with barriers to employment.
- Vocational Rehabilitation: referrals to career pathways programming; provision of support services for eligible individuals, collaboration and coordination through the Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program.

12. *Describe how the local workforce development system will work with entities carrying out core programs to align and support services with programs of study authorized under Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act.*

Programs of study authorized under Carl D. Perkins represent a wide range of sectors important to the economy of Northeast Minnesota. There are four Perkins consortiums that operate within the region and efforts are currently underway to identify opportunities to align their core programs of study with the career pathways efforts of the Northeast and Duluth boards, specifically related to skilled trades and healthcare sectors. The largest consortium operating in the region, the East Range School-to-Work and Tech Prep Partnership, represents 12 schools in 9 districts. Through their programs of study, this consortium is closely aligned with the Applied Learning Institute (ALI), an innovative educational partnership that provides technical and vocational training to high school students through higher education instructors and facilities, which will also be aligned with regional career pathways efforts in healthcare and skilled trades (and others as career pathway development progresses).

This work will be accomplished in part through the efforts between key CareerForce staff and career and technical education staff who has participated in a day-long training session sponsored by the East Range School-to-Work and Tech Prep Partnership developed for school counselors, Perkins instructors, secondary principals, and Perkins college representatives. The purpose of this training was for state-level Career and Technical Education staff to provide an overview of programs of study and technical skill assessment, including the history and current and future expectations for Perkins consortiums. To have staff from the CareerForce system participate in this training provides an excellent opportunity to not only learn about programs of study, but also to meet the players from both the secondary and postsecondary levels with whom we hope to work closely with on the development of career pathways in the region. Information gleaned from this training along with strategies for aligning core program supports across all CareerForce programming.

CareerForce staff are also engaged with regional Tech Prep consortium boards and have assisted with the development of consortium plans. Additional to this effort to align with Perkins programs of study, consortium staff also participate in the ongoing Northeast regional NGA policy forum to assist in establishing youth experiential learning policy among technical education entities, including Perkins programs. Their feedback on ways for secondary and postsecondary students to gain work skills and industry exposure will help to further this important partnership, hopefully leading to opportunities for the CareerForce system to play a critical role in the development of experiential learning opportunities related to programs of study.

13. A. *Describe how the local area board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to employment opportunities for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.*

Several strategies are being used to expand access to employment opportunities for

eligible individuals. Chief among them is the expanded use of career pathways methodology, including the identification of career ladders and lattices within key sectors. Often it is simply the lack of accurate and compelling information about how to access good career opportunities that prevents individuals from preparing for and entering the workforce. Under a career pathways system, better information will be available to the general public and eligible program participants about in-demand opportunities, with the goal of increasing access to these opportunities.

One key sector where this methodology has been implemented is the skills trades sector through our regional 218 Trades initiative which broadcasts information widely through existing core program networks and beyond, including CareerForce counselors, school districts (both students and personnel) via the Northeast Career EdVenture initiative, and through technological resources including social media and local provider websites. The type of information that is broadcast will include the progression of occupations within a career pathway, entrance and exit points into corresponding training, the kinds of employers who hire individuals along a pathway, wages and progressive earning potential, and opportunities to learn more about careers along a pathway. As these career pathway efforts will be led by the Board, where all core partner programs are represented, coordinating efforts to expand access to employment for eligible individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, can be accomplished.

Another initiative that may shed light on how the system can help expand access to employment is the Blandin Foundation study of unemployment in Itasca County that is currently underway. Part of this study is to identify issues that prevent public assistance recipients from seeking or obtaining work, a population with a host of barriers to employment. This information promises to help inform both county health and human service programs and the public workforce system on the need for different strategies to address identified issues, including identifying possible gaps in workforce services. Also included in this study is the intent to determine what preconceived notions held by the unemployed affect their willingness to seek work within specific sectors that are particularly in need of workers in Itasca County, such as retail and service sectors. Gaining these insights presents a unique opportunity to design service delivery strategies to increase access to employment opportunities.

Additionally, the Range Area Business Team (RABT), an inter-program team of representatives from all partners in the local system, meets monthly to share information that each partner has learned from the business community, from job openings to skill and education requirements. Identified openings are then broadcast to program customers in a concerted effort to refer system participants.

Specific to core program partners, each plays a unique role in expanding access to employment for individuals with barriers to employment:

AEOA: Being one of the largest community action agencies in the state, AEOA has a long history of working with a broad range of people facing unemployment and underemployment. Services specific to this work include the following programs:

The Senior Community Service Employment (SCSEP) is designed to promote part-time, temporary employment through which program participants are engaged in community service and receive work experience and job skills that can lead to unsubsidized employment. We believe that older workers provide a valuable resource to assist employers in meeting the needs of the current workforce.

Lives in Transition is a program designed to assist individuals who have not been in the workforce for at least two years, have provided unpaid household services and lost their primary source of income due to separation, divorce, death or disability of a spouse or partner. We provide counseling and assistance in helping the individual determine a future path whether it be work or education.

The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is a Work First focused program designed to assist public assistance recipients and enhance their efforts so they can successfully transition from Welfare-to-Work.

The Diversionary Work Program (DWP) is a four-month program that provides services and supports to eligible families to help them move immediately to work rather than go on public assistance.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is designed to assist low-income individuals, generally without dependents and ineligible for cash assistance, with job search and employment enhancing activities that will lead to self-sufficiency and an exit from public assistance.

Blandin Adult Scholarship Program, through the support of the Blandin Foundation, provides adults the financial support to pursue post-secondary degrees that are in career areas that have current needs as well as growth potential in the Itasca County area.

AEOA's Adult Education program provides a myriad of education options fashioned to increase the individual student's access to employment opportunities. These include GED education, basic skills training, college and career preparation, English Language Learning, and industry specific training opportunities including carpentry pre-apprenticeship, ServSafe Food Manager certification, paraprofessional certification, and more. Even though ABE eligibility does not include income limits, the program works to engage students most in need and performs outreach to high barrier populations such as those experiencing homelessness, people of color, women seeking nontraditional careers, and students co-enrolled in public assistance and workforce programming. ABE has been co-located on community college campuses for over 10 years and has participated in both FastTRAC and Adult Work career pathways programming across the region aimed at engaging individuals with barriers to employment.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services: The mission of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to empower Minnesotans with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment, independent living and community integration. Employment for those with disabilities will be in integrated, competitive positions in the community, at or above minimum wage. Wages are not less than that customarily paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by non-disabled individuals. All of the individuals that VRS serve have disability related barriers to employment at a minimum. In addition, many of those individuals are from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, are individuals with criminal histories, and or experiencing barriers related to poverty. Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides services to transition aged youth through the Pre-ETS program, in the areas of job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy.

Services for the Blind (SSB): SSB doesn't see limitations, only opportunities, for people with a significant vision loss who want to become employed or remain employed. Individuals who are blind, visually impaired or Deafblind can apply for services as early as age 14. SSB counselors work with eligible individuals to help them obtain the skills of blindness as well as the vocational training they require to become successfully employed. Once the person is stable on the desired job, their case is closed with SSB. However, should the person need future assistance with keeping their job, getting another job or advancing in their career field, they can reapply for services. Counselors are knowledgeable about the multiple electronic devices, both hardware and software, utilized by the blind/visually impaired and Deafblind to access print and be successful in school or work. SSB assistive technology specialists can provide comprehensive assessments of the technology skills and needs of a student on a statewide basis. These specialists will make detailed recommendations of the assistive technology a student would require to succeed in school or work.

Job Service: Job Service/Wagner Peyser staff will coordinate with Unemployment Insurance staff delivering Reemployment Assistance sessions to increase awareness of CareerForce programs and services to individuals identified as most likely to exhaust benefits. These sessions, held multiple times per week in most regional CareerForces, reach individuals seeking employment and/or training. In addition to serving those on unemployment insurance, Job Service staff serve veterans and those not enrolled in eligibility-based programs. Veterans with barriers to employment are case managed by the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) staff to find appropriate employment. The Senior Veteran Employment Representative, a new hire for our region, works with regional businesses to promote veteran employment as well as monitor, report on, and ensure that performance standards are met or exceeded as specified in the Jobs for Veterans State Grant.

Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training: As the administrator of WIOA programs throughout the region, NEMOJT will continually explore ways of increasing enrollment in dislocated worker, adult, and youth programming. Specifically with regard to youth, we are focusing efforts at expanding engagement of out of school



youth, including increased access to employment opportunities for this population with a high incidence of barriers. We also administer the Pre-EST program under Vocational Rehabilitation serving all schools in our region by providing group and individual lessons and work experience opportunities. In addition, NEMOJT uses income-based eligibility for enrollment in the Adult program, specifically serving individuals with a range of barriers to employment. Through this program, many strategies for addressing employment barriers are incorporated into the case management process. In conjunction with AEOA and higher education partners, NEMOJT has operated a number of FastTRAC projects that specifically serve to engage individuals with barriers to employment, an effort that will expand in the future under career pathways programming under WIOA.

- B. Describe how the local area board, working with the entities carrying out core programs, will expand access to supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly eligible individuals with barriers to employment.*

Providing access to supportive services for eligible individuals is an integral part of the existing case management system for all core partners in the region. There is no program offered through the local system that does not incorporate supportive services such as access to transportation resources, assistance with childcare costs, and a variety of supportive services for individuals attending training (tutoring, study skills, test prep, etc.). Most programs offered by core partners also include provisions for clothing or equipment required for a new job and resources for medical needs, relocation, and emergency financial assistance. Also, the Northeast region has a strong resource in the *United Way 211 First Call* for Help that allows staff to have a one-stop resource referral source and the ABE program screens every student with the MN Bridge to Benefits screening tool to ensure they are accessing all the resources available to them to help them achieve their program goals.

A regional effort that will help to identify expanded sources of support that can be accessed by system participants includes asset mapping initiative performed by the Northeast and Duluth Boards as part of the regional planning process. This initiative identified the depth and breadth of services related to supporting job seekers and uncovered sources of support resources that aren't presently accessed by CareerForce staff. Such sources will be introduced to the CareerForce system, leading to formal or informal MOUs in order to increase access to supportive services.

- C. Describe how the local area board will facilitate the development of career pathways, co-enrollments (as appropriate) and activities that lead to industry recognized post-secondary credentials that are portable and stackable.*

Region 2 has selected healthcare and skilled construction trades as the first two sectors around which to build career pathway partnerships and initiatives and have now added in manufacturing as a key industry sector to focus on. It is our intent to develop a model for building career pathways that can be honed through experience and applied to any sector. This includes identifying the career pathways, ladders and lattices within each sector and engaging service providers, training institutions, and employers within each sector in deliberate and meaningful ways. Employer engagement will focus on validating pathways and training opportunities,

assisting in the development of training curriculum, engaging in experiential learning opportunities and work experience, and sharing their industry expertise. The Northeast Board will lead the career pathway development efforts in skilled trades while the Duluth Board will take the lead on healthcare career pathways, while manufacturing will be a comprehensive, joint leadership effort.

Infused throughout this effort will be the identification of co-enrollment opportunities focused on the obtainment of industry recognized postsecondary credentials. Portability and stackability of training offerings will be determined as career pathway efforts progress to the education design phase; work in this realm has already begun by making a concerted effort to educate higher education partners on this aspect of career pathways. In the Northeast region, this will likely be accomplished through strong partnerships with the Minnesota State college system and corresponding customized training entities as they do have the capability of designing flexible and non-traditional models of education that can closely align with the career pathways under development.

14. A. *Describe how the local area board will facilitate engagement of employers, including small employers, and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations, in workforce development programs.*

Working closely with employers is the cornerstone of a successful career pathways program. Engaging employers in the healthcare and skilled trades is well underway in the career pathways process and has been accomplished through both the efforts of Board staff as well as the key partner staff who are focused on school-business coordination and advancement of current career pathway initiatives such as 218 Trades. This engagement began by delivering clear and concise reasons to engage in career pathways discussions, including helping targeted employers understand:

- How participating will allow the system to better meet workforce needs;
- How they may gain access to a wider pool of qualified applicants;
- How they will be helping to make the northeast region a more economically competitive place;

Part of this process will be to clarify the roles of participating key employers, which may include:

- Determining which occupations within targeted industries and sectors should be included within the career pathways system;
- Vetting the set of foundational academic, work readiness, and technical skills, abilities, and knowledge that are chosen as required for key occupations;
- Vetting the certificates and credentials that are required for key occupations
- Collaborating with training institutions to design education and training programs;
- Participating as instructors or training sites in the skill training programs;
- Providing training funds for individuals through tuition reimbursement or class-size training projects;
- Participating in the skill certification/credentialing process;
- Serving as mentors and job shadowing sites.

- Providing paid or unpaid internship positions for students; and/or
- Hiring individuals who have obtained the required certificates and credentials.

The key employers are engaged in every step along the way in the design of a career pathways system, from validating labor market information to the design of education and training programs. Employers are already closely involved with the local higher education system through General Program Advisory Committees, a springboard for conversations about engaging in a career pathways development process.

## Complete attachment G - **Local Workforce Development Area Key Industries in Regional Economy**

*B. Describe how the local area board will support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local workforce development area.*

The Northeast Minnesota Workforce Investment Board brings community leadership together with the common goal of ensuring that all customers are provided with a comprehensive array of services to enable them to become successful in the workforce. In northeastern Minnesota, collaborative efforts have created service strategies that can effectively meet the needs of the area's employers and participants. One example is the Range Area Business Team (RABT), a cross-program team of individuals from all partners in the local system. The RABT meets monthly to share information that each partner has learned from the business community, from job openings to skill and education requirements, to ensure there is no duplication of employer services among partner staff. These workforce investment activities and strategies are closely linked to the local labor market needs as well as assessment of employer needs.

An important way the Workforce Development Board will ensure the local workforce system meets the needs of employers is the upcoming career pathways effort, which is entirely based on the needs of employers in key sectors. The first sectors we engaged in for career pathways development were healthcare and skilled trades/construction and we are now adding manufacturing. The first step in this process is to vet labor market information with employers within these sectors and identify ways of maintaining engagement throughout the process. This might include:

- Determining which occupations within targeted industries and sectors should be included within the career pathways system;
- Vetting the set of foundational academic, work readiness, and technical skills, abilities, and knowledge that are chosen as required for key occupations;
- Vetting the certificates and credentials that are required for key occupations
- Collaborating with training institutions to design programs;
- Participating as instructors or training sites in the skill training programs;
- Providing training funds for individuals through tuition reimbursement or class-size training projects;
- Participating in the skill certification/credentialing process;
- Serving as mentors and job shadowing sites

- Providing paid or unpaid internship positions for students; and/or
- Hiring individuals who have obtained the required certificates and credentials.

The key employers will be engaged in every step along the way in the design of a career pathways system, from validating labor market information to the design of education and training programs, to ensure the system meets their needs for workers.

Additionally, the new sector initiative staff will work to ensure that the wider workforce development system, including CareerForce providers and higher education, meet the needs of local employers through strategic engagement. These staff are closely tied to the Board and are charged with assisting with the development of regional sector initiatives, including key employer outreach.

*C. Describe how the local area board will better coordinate programs and services with regional economic development providers.*

Members of the Board are currently engaged in many ways with economic development throughout the region, including involvement with a host of economic development entities including:

- The Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB): most Workforce Development Board meetings are held at IRRRB headquarters (when held in-person); Workforce Development Board membership includes key representatives from this organization, including Roy Smith, Regional Workforce Director employed by IRRRB (Mr. Smith is also a member of the GWDB). CareerForce programs are included as part of the workforce services packaging for new business recruits and staff are often included in meeting with prospective employers to speak to workforce availability.
- The Arrowhead Growth Alliance: a unique collaborative between regional economic development players, higher education, and workforce development. Members include the Commissioner of the IRRRB, Director of the Northland Foundation and Vice President of the Blandin Foundation, Presidents of the Northeast Higher Education District and Lake Superior College, Director of the Natural Resources Research Institute, the Executive Director of the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, the Economic Development Director of the City of Duluth, Economic Development Directors of Minnesota Power and Great River Energy, the Executive Director of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, the President of the Northspan Group, the Duluth Port Authority, the UMD Center for Economic Development, St. Louis County Community Development, and the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund. The group meets quarterly to identify strategies to align economic development efforts as well as to ensure that all members are kept up to date on important key initiatives.
- The Iron Range Economic Alliance: a group of county and municipal economic

developers which includes representation from the CareerForce system, the Small Business Administration and other related entities. Often opportunities to partner with these smaller economic development entities are identified at quarterly meetings, including the promotion of CareerForce services like On-the-Job Training and hiring/recruiting services available through the one stop system.

Another example of how the Board coordinates programs with economic development is the creation of a workforce programs and services unit of the UMD Center for Economic Development training program, a nationally recognized educational program for new and mid-level economic developers. Staff from the local CareerForce system facilitate this unit and share local best practices on economic development working together with workforce development as well as general system overviews and resources that can be found in any one stop center across the United States.

In addition to holding all Board meetings at the offices of the IRRRB (when held in-person), other ways the Board coordinates with economic development is through Board membership which include senior members from IRRRB's economic development team. All these alliances and partnerships will continue in order to better coordinate programs and services with regional economic development providers.

*D. Describe how the local area board will strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system and unemployment insurance programs by offering services to laid-off workers and possible lay-off preventative services for businesses, such as incumbent worker training that up-skills the workers and meets the needs of employers (can include but not be limited to, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, etc.).*

The local Workforce System will strengthen links with unemployment insurance programs by working more closely with local REA staff. This includes ensuring that program staff present in each REA session across the region to ensure that REA participants are aware of the services available through the Dislocated Worker program. Highlighted services include On-the-Job Training and access to training and education, along with the supportive services available to program enrollees. We have designated weekly Dislocated Worker orientation and enrollment sessions in each CareerForce in the region where REA participants can learn details about the program and how to enroll. Attendees at these orientation sessions are introduced to the array of services available through the CareerForce system, including Adult Basic Education. The coordination of these two opportunities – REA sessions and Dislocated Worker orientations – has proven successful in capturing a higher degree of laid off workers and will continue into the foreseeable future.

Addition to this work with REA staff and UI orientations, the Office of Job Training routinely partners with state-level unemployment insurance to communicate with dislocated workers who could benefit from program services. A recent example of this effort is the Good Jobs Now Campaign where Unemployment Insurance/Job Services staff are making personal phone calls to individuals about to exhaust their

benefits to encourage them to utilize services through the dislocated worker program and to promote weekly dislocated worker program orientations held at each CareerForce.

While ABE does provide some work-based programming to employers to up-skill their workers, the Northeast region utilizes incumbent worker training to assist local employers in upskilling their labor force and preventing layoffs. With experience with our incumbent worker training grant, dubbed the Northeast Talent Development Program, along with a partnership with IRRRB to potentially administer a wage subsidy grant, we are well positioned to support employers in this capacity.

15. *Describe how the local area board will coordinate workforce investment activities with economic development activities, including the promotion of entrepreneurial skills training and microenterprise services.*

The answer to this question can also be found in the response to question 14 C above (*'Describe how the local area board will better coordinate programs and services with regional economic development providers'*).

The Northeast region has a successful history of facilitating small business development and entrepreneurial activities from prior involvement with Project GATE and GATE II. Both initiatives were delivered in area CareerForce locations and built a delivery system that provides the foundations for business start-up training, career counseling and entrepreneur assessments, core activities needed for entrepreneurs. Partnerships with The University of Minnesota, Duluth, Center for Economic Development and the Northeast Entrepreneur Fund leveraged the regional expertise and business start-up resources. Services involved business mentoring opportunities, related classroom training offerings, and financial literacy activities.

Additionally, our Northeast Career EdVenture initiative to provide career exploration and work readiness resources to area schools includes a workshop on entrepreneurialism using Junior Achievement curriculum. These sessions have been delivered to groups of 11 and 12 graders using staff from local SBA offices in order to inspire youth to start thinking about entrepreneurship as they consider their future.

AEOA's Adult Education program has partnered with the Entrepreneur Fund to assist low-income individuals who want to launch or grow their businesses. The ABE program provides an expanded version of the CORE FOUR business planning course that walks individuals through researching, designing, and writing their own business plan including the needed personal and professional financial components. Learners are then connected with the Entrepreneur Fund to continue their progress toward owning their own business. A real innovative spin on the CORE FOUR curriculum is the local ABE's initiative to adapt this curriculum to be culturally accessible for Native Americans by working closely with a sector of the Bois Forte Band of Chippewa in Nett Lake.

16. A. Describe how the local area board will ensure continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system.

Often opportunities for continuous improvement are relatively spontaneous as we become aware of activities, seminars, and training that occur throughout the year. Staff are encouraged to participate in any training that further hones their customer service and service delivery skills. In the Northeast region, continuous improvement activities are coordinated on behalf of the Board by the Partner Group, a coalition of all the managers of CareerForce partners. The Partner Group routinely discusses opportunities to improve coordination of services, which often include cross-agency training on topics that are common among programs. The most recent example of this effort to ensure continual improvement is the two-day Bridges Out of Poverty training facilitated by well-known trainer Jodie Pfarr. This training focused on the impact of poverty on an individual's processing and response to situations and provides practitioners with concrete understanding of how to more effectively work with this population. As many of our programs serve individuals striving to climb out of poverty, offering this collectively to all CareerForce partner staff as well as to county financial and social workers made sense and served to strengthen the local system as a whole. In addition, all CareerForce partner staff participated in the Intercultural Diversity Inventory (IDI) training which has laid the foundation for our ongoing equity and diversity work.

In addition to the Partner Group, each CareerForce has an Operations Committee that meets monthly and consists of two representatives from each partner agency. CareerForce operations are discussed from a front-line staff perspective and meeting minutes are forwarded to the Partner Group for review and discussion. Each Partner Group meeting includes discussion of specific questions, issues, or requests as identified by the Operations Committee from ordering supplies to continuous improvement activities or requests. While at first glance this arrangement may seem complicated, it in fact engages staff at every level and is an effective way of sharing information across the region and represents a system staying in touch with CareerForce operations, including the identification of continuous improvement opportunities.

B. Describe how the local area board will ensure that eligible providers meet the employment needs of local employers, workers and job seekers.

This closely corresponds to the response to question 14 B., 'describe how the local area board will support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local workforce development area' related to ensuring providers are meeting the needs of local employers.

On the job seeker front, connecting individuals to education, providing support services for those in education, providing career navigation to ensure individuals are entering the appropriate training program for them, and providing employment placement and retention services after credential attainment is the foundation of what

eligible providers do. When a WIOA-eligible individual who is seeking training sits down with a Career Counselor, the first thing that occurs is determining the ultimate goal of the client, identifying the field they wish to enter, and the skills they wish to improve or gain. Sometimes that goal requires several steps to reach, steps along a 'career pathway', where supports are built in along the way to improve the chances of reaching that ultimate goal. Because of the limitations of WIOA funding no more than two years of training expenses, we must identify the full career pathway at the outset in order to determine where WIOA resources are best plugged in. Many clients have plans to eventually build upon their vocational training, whether by finishing a bachelor's degree or other specialized training. Ensuring that CareerForce services provide the necessary foundation for those future plans precisely illustrates our capacity to fully meet the needs of job seekers.

Further evidence of this capacity is through our partnership with ABE. Often WIOA-eligible clients come to us wishing to enter a post-secondary training program but don't have the skills and discipline necessary to initially succeed in that environment. Instead of discouraging that client from their goal, we first ensure they have the developmental tools necessary to succeed in basic areas like math, reading for information, and critical thinking strategies. Part of a successful career pathways strategy is ensuring clients are not set up for failure but rather have the appropriate skills in place before they set out on their pathway.

All WIOA-funded clients are closely followed through their career pathway and provided a myriad of necessary supports to keep them going. Critical among these supports for many non-traditional students is the provision of childcare assistance and transportation assistance for those that travel a great distance to attend school. Chief among our services is the provision of placement assistance upon graduation. We offer a series of placement services including resume development, mock interviews, Creative Job Search, and other workshops designed locally including 'Accessing the Hidden Job Market' and 'Job Searching with Social Media'. Incidentally these workshops and services are also available to the unemployed who may have been working on their own career pathway independently.

Meeting the needs of incumbent workers has been successful for us and we are excited to continue to develop resources and effective processes for assisting employers and workers utilizing WIOA funds. The opportunity to gain skills that enhance one's current position or lead to positions of greater responsibility or pay is critical not only to those workers who participate, but also the competitiveness of the participating business, enhancing the economic stability of that employer.

- C. *Describe how the local area board will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means.*

The Northeast Board recognizes that technology must play a greater role in service delivery as we attempt to increase access to programs in more remote areas of the



region. One of the ways the region has increased access is by creating an online intake system, including electronic enrollment documents like the program applications and other documents like individual service strategies and employment plans. Using technology to better enable the enrollment process will also help to streamline the case management process, allowing technology as an avenue for addressing the all-too-common transportation barrier that sometimes prevents individuals from accessing services. ABE services are provided in almost 30 classrooms throughout the region allowing for workforce program outreach in even very rural communities. Additionally, ABE is able to provide services utilizing online distance learning platforms including advising and case management via Zoom, Teams, and other virtual platforms.

Local system providers are also in the process of developing a mobile app with a local community newspaper, Hometown Focus (HTF). HTF has developed a mobile app called DiscoverMN which is positioned as the definitive guide to Northeast Minnesota resources such as restaurants, auto repair/purchase, realty, shopping, healthcare, education, lodging, gas stations, churches, and events. The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training and AEOA, two of the largest partners in the local CareerForce system are collaborating on adding a 'button' to these offerings entitled 'jobs' where users can access information about a host of workforce services. At the top of the list are programs and resources available through the CareerForce system, but will also include links to a host of job posting sources, including municipal and county jobs, job banks (including MinnesotaWorks), and jobs in the education and nonprofit sectors.

We look to DEED to assist in the effort to increase access to services using technology through initiatives like the virtual one stop to help local providers increase access to services provided through CareerForces. Most small providers do not have the expertise or resources to develop regional portals to services, so collaboration with state-level partners is critical to increase access via technology.

*D. Describe how entities within the one-stop delivery system will comply with section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities.*

On a statewide level, an accessibility assessment is completed at each CareerForce prior to certification and at intervals on an ongoing basis. CareerForces are equipped with accessible equipment and the Department of Employment and Economic Development monitors this equipment to ensure it is current and in working order. Software developed by DEED for the CareerForces are designed to be fully accessible. All programs within the Minnesota CareerForce system are expected to be fully accessible to all Minnesotans. Vocational Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind located within the CareerForces are available for consultation with other programs, should unexpected issues of accessibility occur. There is frequent co-enrollment and collaboration between

Vocational Rehabilitation and the other partners, which further enhances overall accessibility.

AEOA ensures all Adult Education facilities comply with all federal and state guidelines regarding accessibility of facilities and programming. All ABE staff are provided quarterly professional development training on engaging with students with perceived and documented physical and learning disabilities. The State ABE Office also provided ongoing resources to ABE staff via supplemental service provider PANDA that provides disability support, knowledge and resources to increase academic opportunities for students.

*E. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners.*

Job Service: With limited Wagner Peyser staff in Northeast Minnesota, services will be primarily focused on providing reemployment assistance to Wagner Peyser's targeted population of UI claimants. A Wagner Peyser staff person will attend Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (REA) sessions that the UI program offers across the service area. These services are offered to applicants who are at risk of exhausting their benefits. The REA and Wagner Peyser staff will conduct a quick assessment of participants to determine who will most likely need additional services from the CareerForce. Additionally, the Wagner Peyser staff person will conduct an overview of CareerForce services (currently being done virtually) that includes information on how to register for the state's labor exchange system MinnesotaWorks, and information about services such as the Dislocated Worker program that they may be eligible for.

The Wagner Peyser staff person will assist the REA customer with creating an initial registration and enrolling in the Creative Job Search workshop. Creative Job Search is typically the first job finding/job placement service that is offered to UI applicants. The workshop consists of training on how to find a job that includes career planning, preparing for the job hunt, skills identification, resumes and cover letters, applications and references, social media, interviewing skills, and more. Wagner Peyser will then follow up with REA participants who are not enrolled in a program to ensure that they have a complete registration and resume in MinnesotaWorks and that they are taking advantage of job placement services.

In addition to supporting REA activities, Wagner Peyser staff will assist with customers utilizing services in the Career Lab. Additional workshops will be offered where staff is available. The Wagner Peyser program also provides services to businesses by assisting with job postings and recruiting events in the region.

State Services for the Blind State Services for the Blind provides the tools, training and technology to help people who are blind, visually impaired, DeafBlind or experiencing vision loss to live independently and to prepare for, find and keep a job. The mission of State Services for the Blind (SSB) is to facilitate the achievement of vocational and personal independence by Minnesotans who are blind, visually

impaired or DeafBlind. The Workforce Development Unit of State Services for the Blind (SSB) ensures delivery of rehabilitation services individuals need to prepare for, seek, gain or retain employment. Services take many forms and may include: vocational assessment and counseling; training in adjustment-to-blindness, braille, use of assistive technology; job seeking skills and vocational skills; job placement assistance; and job adaptation assistance. The customer and counselor work together to produce the right mix of services for an employment plan. A new customer, for example, may need the full spectrum of services, including assessment, cane travel, braille and adjustment to blindness training before enrolling in an educational program that will lead to employment. In the Northeast region, these services are provided throughout the region by staff located at the Hibbing CareerForce.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Vocational Rehabilitation Services specializes in working with individuals with disabilities that create barriers to employment, post-secondary training, independent living and community integration. All partners, including Vocational Rehabilitation Services, contribute to the infrastructure of the CareerForce system. Resources contributed through Vocational Rehabilitation Services include pre-employment transition services, vocational assessments, job tryouts, community-based evaluations, job search assistance, job coaching, case management, tuition assistance and supportive services. Staff from Vocational Rehabilitation Services are available as needed, to consult with partners who happen to be working with individuals with disabilities. Additionally, VRS regularly co-enrolls consumers with other one-stop partners to ensure wrap around services for the consumer.

AEOA: As a regional provider of employment and training services AEOA is a partner in the CareerForces throughout the region. Services provided include state dislocated worker programming; displaced homemaker services; MFIP, DWP, and SNAP programming; SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program); and FAIM (Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota). In addition, AEOA's transportation department provides administers Arrowhead Transit which supports the transportation need of participants seeking work or attending training. Resources contributed through these programs include job search assistance, case management, tuition assistance and supportive services. AEOA staff also contribute time to staff Career Labs along with the staff of other CareerForce partners.

ABE: AEOA's Adult Education program is co-located at most regional CareerForces except Grand Rapids (located two blocks away) and International Falls (down the hall in Rainy River Community College). At these locations ABE provides GED, college, and career preparation, just-in-time literacy skills, contextualized industry recognized learning opportunities, English Language Learning, and computer skills. ABE also provides Bridge to Benefits screening and access to support services including payment of GED test and college entrance fees.

The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training is the WIOA Title I provider at each CareerForce in the region, including the provision of Dislocated Worker, Adult and Youth programming. In addition, NEMOJT is the administrator of the state dislocated worker and Minnesota Youth programs as well as one of two MFIP

employment and training providers along with AEOA. Resources contributed through these programs include job search assistance, case management, tuition assistance and supportive services. NEMOJT staff also contribute time to staff Career Labs along with the staff of other CareerForce partners.

17. *Describe and assess the type and availability of adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities in the local workforce development area.*

The Office of Job Training is the provider of adult and dislocated worker programming under WIOA and State-funded programs, including WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker and the Minnesota Dislocated Worker Program. AEOA's Employment and Training program operates a Small Layoff Independent Grant (SLIG) program, which defines other program providers who receive Dislocated Worker program funds, but are not the designated WIOA provider. In addition, they also operate the Displaced Homemaker program, the Senior Community Service Employment program, the SNAP program, MFIP and DWP programs, and the Blandin Adult Scholarship program. AEOA also operates Adult Basic Education in almost all CareerForce locations and regional community colleges, serving both adults and dislocated workers to increase basic skills and prepare to enter further education or the workforce. AEOA has provided specialized career pathway programming for unemployed and underemployed individuals via DEED Adult Worker grants, a Department of Commerce Innovative Training Strategies grant, and special allocations under the Women's Economic Security Act and MN Women's Foundation to assist women in entering nontraditional trades occupations. Both agencies provide employment and training services to adults in the Minnesota Family Investment Program and have collaborated on a number of FastTRAC projects to serve a variety of adult populations using a career pathways approach. Rehabilitation Services offers career development and placement services to adults with Disabilities, and Job Service provides job search assistance to any adult regardless of program eligibility through the provision of Creative Job Search and other workshops (including Reemployment Assistance workshops for dislocated workers collecting unemployment), and Veterans Services.

Each core partner offers a host of resources connected to these programs, which are available at each CareerForce in the region (Aitkin, Cloquet, Hibbing, International Falls, Grand Rapids, and Virginia). Generally, these include:

- Assessment of career-related interests, abilities, aptitudes, values and personality, with corresponding recommendations of appropriate careers/occupations that match results;
- Case management to include mapping out individual service strategies based on the unique goals and characteristics of each individual;
- Connection to community resources including transportation, housing or fuel assistance, emergency financial assistance, and charitable organization resources;
- The provision of supportive services that include mileage assistance for job search or education, out of area job search assistance, relocation assistance, expenses related to short-term out of area training, emergency financial assistance, and tools and equipment required for training or a job;
- The provision of tuition assistance for career or vocational training, including the completion of a bachelor's degree. Generally, only educational programs that lead

to readily available occupations paying family sustaining wages are considered for funding. When clients propose training programs, part of the case management process is to determine the job prospects upon credential attainment in order to ensure that clients are truly preparing to meet their goals. Also, all clients who wish to attend training must first undergo the assessment process, including a reading and math assessment, in order to ensure that an individual is suited to that occupation and ready for the rigor of postsecondary education.

- Placement assistance, including teaching job search strategy (resumes, interviewing, accessing the hidden job market, communicating with employers) and job development
- Follow up services after placement to mitigate unexpected barriers to retain employment.

18. Describe and assess the type and availability of youth workforce investment activities in the local workforce development area, including youth with disabilities, which description and assessment shall include an identification of successful models of such youth workforce development activities.

There are a wide variety of youth programs operating in the region, each with a suite of supportive services to ensure the success of program participants.

***Regional youth investment activities:***

**Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training**

As the provider of WIOA and State youth employment and training activities, The Office of Job Training offers a host of services and resources for area young people. WIOA requires a renewed focus on serving out of school youth, with at least 75% of funding to be spent to be spent on this population. With youth services under WIOA, the Office of Job Training has consistently achieved over 80% of expenditures dedicated to out of school youth. This is due in large part to two factors: 1) being able to serve youth up to the age of 24, and 2) strong partnerships with judicial and corrections systems, community-based organizations (such as AEOA's Homeless Youth Foyer, ABE and GED), and higher education institutions. Services to both in-school and out-of-school youth include:

- Placement in paid work experience to gain employability skills and understanding of employer expectations, including temporary or seasonal jobs and internships and permanent placements through On the Job Training
- Develop and achieve personal goals, including work readiness goals
- Prepare to compete in the job market, including job search strategy
- Pursue and achieve a high school credential
- Identify options for postsecondary training, including traditional short- and long-term programming, vocational programs, and apprenticeship

Northeast Career EdVenture, a program to provide career exploration and work readiness resources to area school districts, was developed by the Office of Job Training and is in its fourth year of operation. This program provides schools with a host of resources to educate all students, regardless of program eligibility, about career options, accessing postsecondary training, and the needs of employers. Both individual and group services are available.

One-on-one career counseling is available to individual students, including:

- Assessment of personality, ability/aptitude, and interests as they relate to careers
- Job search assistance and strategy
- Postsecondary planning (one of the tenants of this program is the message that all students need some kind of postsecondary training, which could include vocational training or apprenticeship as well as the achievement of a four-year degree).

Group/classroom resources include:

- A four-part Financial Literacy series
- FAFSA/Financial Aid workshop
- Career Assessments/results review
- CEOs in the Classroom (local business leader speakers in 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms)
- Navigating Business Culture: a four-part series covering generations in the workplace, communication, employer expectations, and the future world of work
- Industry-specific speakers and panels
- A variety of popular games and gameshows adapted with career exploration themes, including Interview Pictionary and Career Feud
- Social Media and the Job Search

#### Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Vocational Rehabilitation Services provides to youth with disabilities from the age of 14-21. Youth who are still in school and have not graduated from high school are eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). These can include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. These services can be provided for students whether or not they have applied for services.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services also provides services to transition-aged youth who apply for services and meet the state's current priority for service. Individuals in this group can be either in school or out of school youth and can receive any service Vocational Rehabilitation Services offers if it is necessary for the student to reach their educational and employment goals.

The Applied Learning Institute (ALI) ALI was formed in 2006 to enhance technical education in northeast Minnesota by providing experiential learning that combines hands-on training and technology. The goal of ALI is to help create highly trained, knowledgeable workers who are equipped with the technical and problem-solving skills needed by employers everywhere. ALI has a membership of 17 northeast Minnesota school districts with 25 high schools, and the five colleges of the Northeast Higher Education District (NHED). Nearly 1500 students enroll in ALI programming each year. With an eye toward the future and help from local industry, ALI programs are collaborative efforts between high schools and community/technical colleges in northeast Minnesota. Classes are scheduled to meet a variety of student needs, including online classes, daytime classes, and late-afternoon classes. Programs of study available through ALI include Transportation / Mechanical Systems, Construction Trades, Healthcare, Industrial Technology, and Pre-Engineering.

Iron Range Science and Engineering Festival is a Regional three-day event that held in April each year at the MN Discovery Center. The event attracts approximately 1200 7<sup>th</sup> grade students from schools across the region to learn about science and engineering through hands-on activities. This is a satellite event of the Annual USA Science & Engineering Festival.

***Sub-regional youth investment activities:*** These programs are occurring in smaller subsets of the region and represent promising models of youth workforce development activities:

AEOA provides multiple programs aimed at engaging high barrier youth in employment and training opportunities:

The *Free at Last* program in Itasca and Koochiching Counties focuses on teaching at-risk youth independent living skills through experiential education, teamwork, and individual counseling for youth in foster care and at-risk youth. HUD and Homeless Youth Act funds also provide youth ages 17 - 21 that are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and are in need of structured support to increase their self-sufficiency. The program also provides housing for homeless young people. In Cook, Lake, and St. Louis Counties, AEOA's Housing Department runs programming for youth experiencing homelessness or who are precariously housed. Components include case management, support services, and connecting youth to employment and education opportunities to ensure their success.

AEOA's DEED Youth at Work funded *Pathways to Employment Readiness for Youth* (PERY) program is a comprehensive training program serving youth aged 14-24 in St. Louis and Itasca Counties who are at-risk of dropping out or have already dropped out of the traditional school setting. The PERY program includes case management, specialized training while part of a paid work experience, and post-program job placement. Each participant is provided life- and work-skills training; basic literacy skills and financial literacy. Industry sectors targeted for PERY are hospitality and construction trades.

The *YouthBuild* program provides basic construction and carpentry training to young people who are struggling with education and other life challenges while helping her or him complete a high school equivalency. The program also works with each young person to develop their leadership and independent living skills. Each youth is provided hands-on instruction at a professional community worksite in construction skills. In addition, they spend up to 10 hours a week in an Adult Education classroom working toward their high school equivalency. Opportunities for community engagement and volunteering are also key to participant success.

There are several additional examples of smaller-scale youth workforce development efforts, including:

- The Range Engineering Council (REC), organized to support and facilitate educational programs and activities across the Iron Range that promote awareness of and encourage participation in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programs. The REC is directly involved in many programs; below are a few highlights:
  - *Iron Range STEM Showcase featuring the Michigan Tech Mind Trekkers* was a

Regional two-day event that has now occurred annually for the past 6 years. The first day is just open to students where approximately 2,000 5-6th grade students and 200 teachers attended from over 20 school districts. Michigan Tech and Iron Range Engineering provide the projects and students for the main event, but various other organizations are involved and provide hands on STEM related experiences for those participating.

- *Mentoring Night* is an evening program directed towards 9-12 grade students and their parents. The event is currently hosted in two locations, Hibbing and Virginia, though students are invited from across the Iron Range. Mentoring Night is designed to provide students and their parents with exposure to “real” engineers to have an open dialogue about what engineers do, discuss the amazing career opportunities that exist, and talk about college programs. Approximately 20 engineers of various disciplines from local businesses and engineering schools meet with approximately 75 students to discuss what it is they do and answer any questions they may have.
  - The *Engineering, Cool!* program is an after-school program directed to 6th graders. The course started as an 11-week program in the Hibbing School district and has expanded to a 16-week program. Engineering volunteers spend one two-hour session a week for approximately 16 weeks doing various hands-on experiments with the students such as rocket building and launching, water resources, facility design, and mining. The program has been taking place in Hibbing and was recently expanded to Virginia, and Chisholm in 2015 with plans to expand even further. The course is free for students to participate and includes two field trips, the Laurentian Environmental Center and the Wolf Ridge.
  - *Job Shadowing* is a program where students are given the opportunity spend a half day with Engineers at local companies, touring and understanding their work. Approximately twelve 11-12th grade students have been participating from Hibbing High School and we are working to expand to other school districts.
- Rotary in International Falls is active in two youth development initiatives, Interact and RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Awards) in partnership with the local school district and CareerForce staff. These programs focus on community service learning and developing leadership skills, teaching students valuable tools that can enhance employability.
  - STRIVE is a program operated in the International Falls school district. STRIVE is a motivational program for high school seniors who face academic challenges. STRIVE students are matched with volunteer mentors who attend monthly meetings together where speakers address topics mean to assist the student in transitioning from high school to the world of work and/or postsecondary training.
  - Several Chambers of Commerce in the region are operating youth workforce development initiatives, including *Teen Works* in Grand Rapids, a two-week work readiness bootcamp for eligible teens. The Cloquet Area Chamber is also actively engaged in finding ways to connect students with local business and industry by working with partners such as private employers, higher education, and CareerForce programs.
  - The Blandin Foundation has been facilitating an extensive effort in Itasca County called



the *Student Success Initiative*, working with school districts, community partners, local government, and employers. Part of this effort was to co-sponsor a series of community conversations focused on the question, “what can be done to better help all students succeed in the Itasca Area?” These conversations have since informed a host of community initiatives, including extensive student surveys that detail the perspective of 2,357 youth on a variety of topics from family and community support to academic confidence, from education plans after high school to measuring perseverance and positive identity. The results of this survey are currently being used to identify gaps in services to youth and developing efforts to assist with identified needs. The CareerForce has been involved in this effort from the beginning by hosting community conversations and bringing youth program resources to bear where applicable.

- Ramp up to Readiness, a school-wide advisory program that features an engaging and interactive series of Activities designed to help all students graduate from high school ready for postsecondary success developed by the U of M, is being used in several school districts in the region. Part of this curriculum includes Career Readiness (the ability to identify careers that match personal, financial, and other goals and an understanding of the skills, credentials, and experiences required to succeed in those careers) as well as financial literacy, academic readiness, admissions readiness, and personal and social readiness.

In recent years, the Board hosted a session of the National Governors Association Talent Pipeline Policy Academy through the GWDB to identify challenges and opportunities related to work-based learning for youth. Many local stakeholders participated in this listening session including K12 and higher education, ABE, CTE, employers, foundations, organized labor, and workforce development representatives. The goal of the session was twofold: 1) help identify ways in which state policy could be better aligned to support the developing of work-based learning models, and 2) assist the Board to identify partners who can participate in the development of career pathways, including the development of regional models for youth work-based learning opportunities like job shadowing, work experience, and mentoring.

19. *Describe how the local area board will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out under this title with relevant secondary and post-secondary education programs and activities to coordinate strategies, enhance services, and avoid duplication of services.*

Education and workforce investment activities under WIOA are coordinated with relevant secondary and postsecondary education programs in a variety of ways but also offer opportunities for achieving better alignment. One population of youth that has already been identified as one not currently connected to system resources in some way are homeschooled and online learning students. Part of the effort to coordinate youth services will be to identify the number of individuals in the region who are classified as such and find ways of connecting to these populations.

There are over 40 K12 districts in the region, the majority of who participate in progressive workforce investment activities such as the Applied Learning Institute (ALI) and Career EdVenture programming, efforts in which WIOA-eligible students participate along with the general student population. ALI is an innovative partnership between secondary and

postsecondary schools to provide technical training to high school students. This is done by providing secondary students access to postsecondary vocational programming by transporting students to local college campuses for credit-based classroom and applied training in a variety of sectors including healthcare, construction trades, and engineering. Though WIOA-eligible students most certainly participate in ALI classes, there is an opportunity for better alignment in several areas: 1) using ALI as a mechanism for program participant outreach and enrollment; 2) developing work-based learning opportunities for WIOA-eligible ALI students that align with their program of study; 3) providing Career EdVenture services to ALI students to help them understand the job market for which they are preparing. An additional opportunity for aligning more closely with secondary schools will be including Perkins Act consortium directors and information about their Programs of Study in the development of career pathways and sector initiatives under WIOA. The Board intends to explore these opportunities for better alignment as they develop a career pathways system.

Within higher education, there are 6 colleges that operate in the region, including the 5 campuses of the Northeast Higher Education District (Mesabi Range in Virginia and Eveleth, Hibbing Community College, Rainy River Community College in International Falls, Vermilion Community College in Ely, and Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids) and the Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet. Not only is the majority of WIOA tuition funding for a wide range of vocational training programs expended at these institutions, but each has collaborated on a number of workforce development initiatives, including those that are eligible for WIOA funding. Such collaborations include a number of FastTRAC projects, Adult Worker grants, Department of Commerce Innovative Training grants, and foundation-funded projects.

The Board is excited about the potential of the ongoing Minnesota State Two-Year Occupational Grant Pilot Program that will cover the cost of tuition and fees for high-demand two-year programs at local Minnesota State campuses, particularly the required mentorship component. Several programs through the Northeast Higher Education District will qualify for this program and the local CareerForce system is ready to collaborate on implementation, including referrals of students and assistance with mentorship.

AEOA's Employment and Training Department operates the Blandin Adult Scholarship program, which supports and promotes individuals living within the Itasca County region to further their education and employment opportunities through post-secondary education. The program offers supports which include career counseling, tuition, books, childcare, as well as support needed to maintain a household while attending school on a full-time basis.

CareerForce program staff coordinate with higher education in a variety of ways, from staffing regular office hours to advise current and prospective program participants to participating on program advisory boards. Local college academic advisors are connected to CareerForce staff and routinely communicate opportunities for funding under WIOA programs to students. Adult Basic Education is co-located on each community college campus allowing for coordination with higher education throughout the region. To that end, ABE provides integrated classes co-teaching with Minnesota State instructors on multiple campuses, is embedded in campus learning community courses providing learning labs, provides college prep bridges and boot camps to prepare students for entry into coursework, and acts as a resource for students struggling with basic literacy or English language learning.

These strong partnerships ensure that potentially program eligible students who register for training are connected with workforce system resources. Opportunities to increase alignment with higher education include: 1) educate a wider higher education audience about WIOA programs, including instructors and financial aid staff, in order to increase program participation and identify ways of better supporting mutual students; 2) continue to increase the presence of ABE at local campuses; 3) develop a more far-reaching navigation service to provide prospective and existing students with a better foundation for understanding occupational opportunities available in the region as they relate to education; and 4) develop a mentorship system using past WIOA participants as mentors to new students with similar occupational interests.

Embarking on the development of a career pathways system will help identify other opportunities for better alignment and ways of enhancing shared services, ultimately reducing duplication among service providers.

*20. Describe how the local area board will coordinate education and workforce investment activities carried out under this title with public transportation and other appropriate supportive services.*

As referenced in response to 13.B., providing access to supportive services for eligible individuals is an integral part of the existing case management system for all core partners in the region. There is no program offered through the local system that does not incorporate supportive services such as access to transportation resources, assistance with childcare costs, and a variety of supportive services for individuals attending training (tutoring, study skills, test prep, etc.). Most programs offered by core partners also include provisions for clothing or equipment required for a new job and resources for medical needs, relocation, and emergency financial assistance.

Transportation represents a widespread barrier that can prevent participants from accessing programs and services or attending training to gain skills needed to increase employability. A common barrier in rural areas, the Northeast region is fortunate to have innovative solutions to address this barrier through programs operated by CareerForce partner AEOA. AEOA is the region's largest CAP agency and operates many support programs, including Arrowhead Transit. Arrowhead Transit is a regional dial-a-ride service with regular routes between communities, including to area CareerForces. It has been in operation for 42 years, operates 96 buses, and serves eight counties and hundreds of communities. Annually, they provide over 570,000 rides and travel over 1,630,000.

AEOA also offers a host of other supportive services for which strong cross-referral mechanisms are in place. Examples include:

- Housing Services operates the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) which provided services to 8,569 households in 2015 and Minnesota Power's CARE Program provided

services to 5,000 households. Housing also offers services through the Fix Up Fund Home Improvement Loans Homeownership Program, Deferred Rehabilitation Loans, Rehabilitation/Emergency and Accessibility Loans, Weatherization Assistance Program, Small Cities Development Program, and Foreclosure Prevention and Homeless Services.

- Head Start provides comprehensive early childhood programming for low-income families in Cook, Lake and St. Louis counties. They partner with families to provide support, education/special education and community connections in education, school readiness, family literacy, employment, health/nutrition, mental health, self-sufficiency and self-esteem. They provide services to over 400 children and their families per year.
- Senior Services provides essential community-based services that allow older adults to maintain their health, independence, and quality of life at home in this community. In 2015, Senior Services provided over 402,000 nutritious meals to 6,700 seniors. Of those meals, 220,000 were delivered to older people who are homebound. The Northeast Minnesota Food Shelf Network provided food assistance to 6,400 families and distributed 890,144 pounds of food. Through Arrowhead's Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), 1,551 volunteers provided 177,572 hours of service to deliver meals, build homes, helped children to read, improved our environment and helped feed needy families.

A regional effort to identify expanded sources of support that can be accessed by system participants included an asset mapping initiative by the Northeast and Duluth Boards as part of the previous regional planning process. This initiative identified the depth and breadth of services related to supporting job seekers and uncovered some sources of support resources that aren't presently accessed by CareerForce staff. Such sources were introduced to the CareerForce system to enhance referral processes in order to increase access to supportive services.

*21. Describe the plans and strategies for, and assurances concerning, maximizing coordination of service provided by the state employment service under Wagner-Peyser Act, and services provided in the local workforce development area through the one-stop delivery system, to improve service delivery and avoid duplication of services.*

Services under the Wagner Peyser Act focus on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, promotion of the MinnesotaWorks website, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. The Northeast region has been operating under a cooperative system with the relatively few Wagner Peyser staff in the region for many years. Of the 6 CareerForce locations in the region, Wagner Peyser staff are housed in only 2, International Falls and Hibbing. Through informal cooperative service agreements, we have developed an efficient system of regularly scheduled visits or virtual offerings to each CareerForce to deliver services such as Reemployment Assistance workshops (REA), New Leaf, individual Veteran Services appointments, and Creative Job Search workshops on a predictable monthly basis. Master calendars of workshop dates are distributed to staff and CareerForce patrons in every CareerForce. Operations committees in each CareerForce, consisting of front-line staff from each partner agency, monitor this

that all staff are aware of new or additional offerings during any particular month. The Board plans to maintain this cooperative agreement and work with DEED to identify new ways of maximizing coordination if needed.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development has made the following assurances concerning the availability of Wagner-Peyser services in local CareerForces:

- The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with the one-stop center where feasible given the current staffing level.
- If a State Workforce Development Board, department or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and
- State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

*22. Describe how the local area board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out under this title in the local workforce development area with the provision of adult education and literacy activities under title II, including a description of how the local area board will carry out, consistent with subparagraphs (A) and (B)(i) of section 107(d)(11) and section 232, the review of local applications submitted under title II.*

AEOA's ABE program is an active partner in the local and regional workforce system, being collocated at almost all CareerForces and community college campuses. ABE administers the skills assessment (TABE) for dislocated worker and MFIP orientation sessions on behalf of area employment service providers, co-enrolls and cross refers students to employment service programs, and works to provide just-in-time literacy programming for career pathways across the region. ABE has built programming and partnerships to create multiple points of entry for students along several career pathways and is eager to work more closely with the local area board to embed this work further across the region.

Every Adult Education program in the state provides a program narrative to the State Department of Education every five years for approval of their service model and programming. Future 5-year narratives, the next due in 2022, will include provisions for local ABE program to provided evidence that programming aligns with the local and regional WIOA plan. These components may include evidence of common referral, co-location, program collaboration, alignment of assessment processes, and helping select and design key occupational pathways. Under this provision of WIOA it is expected that the narrative will be shared with the local area board once approved by the State Department of Education. Plan creation will occur with consideration of the local and regional workforce strategies in mind.

23. *Describe the replicated cooperative agreements (as defined in section 107(d)(11)) between the local area board or other local entities described in section 101(a)(11)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)(B)) and the local office of a designated state agency or designated state unit administering programs carried out under title I of such Act (29 U.S.C. 720 et seq.) (other than section 112 or part C of that title (29 U.S.C. 732, 741) and subject to section 121(f)) in accordance with section 101(a)(11) of such Act (29 U.S.C. 721(a)(11)) with respect to efforts that will enhance the provision of services to individuals with disabilities and to other individuals, such as cross training of staff, technical assistance, use and sharing of information, cooperative efforts with employers, and other efforts at cooperation, collaboration, and coordination.*

The Northeast Board and Vocational Rehabilitation Services collaborate to enhance services to individuals with disabilities, individuals with other barriers to employment, and individuals living in poverty. To the extent possible, services are co-located in CareerForces to provide access to a wide variety of services. Each CareerForce provides an orientation to services available to assist job-seekers make an informed decision on choice of service provider. Direct service staff participate in cross-training to ensure they understand the services offered by the various partners, and the eligibility criteria for each program.

Vocational Rehabilitation staff is available for consultation without the need for the person to apply for services. Typical topics include how and when to disclose a disability, effective use of assistive technology, Social Security work incentives, and benefits planning. There is currently a joint effort to provide joint financial planning and work incentives planning for individuals receiving Social Security Disability Insurance. Disability Benefits 101, a software program developed using Medicaid Infrastructure grant funding, is available to all partners to assist staff to inform job seekers about the impact earned income will have on federal and state benefits, including public health insurance.

The Northeast Board consults with Vocational Rehabilitation Services as they are developing initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, customized training programs, career pathways initiatives, youth services, and other business services. The local Board sponsors local job fairs and other events in which Vocational Rehabilitation participates. Local partners also share job leads, and Vocational Rehabilitation may purchase placement services from the local Board as part of a performance-based funding agreement.

24. *Describe and identify the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in section 107(d)(12)(B)(i).*

WIOA Section 107 (d)(12)(B)(i)(I) states that the chief elected official in a local area shall serve as the local grant recipient for, and shall be liable for any misuse of, the grant funds allocated to the local area. In the Northeast Region, this entity is the Local Elected Official board consisting of a county commissioner representing each county in the region: Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis.

WIOA Section 107 (d)(12)(B)(i)(II) states that the chief local elected officials may designate an entity to serve as a local fiscal agent to assist in the administration of grant funds. The

entity that has been designated under this provision that serves as the local fiscal agent is the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, a regional unit of county government formed under a Joint Powers agreement in 1974. The Office of Job Training has a presence at each CareerForce in the Northeast region.

25. *Describe the competitive process to be used to award the sub-grants and contracts in the local workforce development area for activities carried out under this title.*

The Northeast MN Office of Job Training adheres to requirements pertaining to the procurement for State and local governmental grantees and sub grantees of goods and services both competitive and non-competitive listed in 29 CFR 97.36. The Workforce Development Board shall make recommendations to the Northeast MN LEO Board on the most effective designation of administrative entities, grant recipients and program operators for the region with the exception of the State of MN Job Service, as the administrative entity and grant for Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Title 38 programs and Unemployment Insurance.

Should the Workforce Development Board wish to identify a new service provider, a competitive Request for Proposals process would be instituted. The RFP process includes solicitation for bids that request comprehensive information addressing the following elements: knowledge of identified need, experience of administration and staff, services to be provided, performance outcomes, commitment to partnership and collaboration, budget and costs, and operational capability. Each one of these criteria is assigned a point value and ranked for a total score. The solicitation contains a description of program requirements and basic design elements to which bidders respond. Eligibility for bidding includes organizations which have adequate administrative controls and personnel to achieve the goals and objectives of the program. This includes but is not limited to governmental units, public or private non-profit corporations, educational institutions, a tax supported organization or a private or for-profit entity.

The board will soon be working on selection of the One Stop Operator by July 1, 2021, as required under WIOA. As required by WIOA, the board will conduct a competitive process that includes a cost contribution analysis to ensure bids accurately reflect the cost of operating the one-stop center.

26. *Describe how the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and chief elected official will be used to measure the performance of the local workforce development area and to be used by the local area board for measuring the performance of the local fiscal agent, eligible providers under subtitle B and the One-stop delivery system.*

The Board expects that local service providers will, at a minimum, meet the performance standards negotiated with the Governor and chief elected officials, as they apply to each

program/Title. Overall performance accountability measures for the state are negotiated every two years between DEED and the U.S. Department of Labor, covering all WIOA programs. LWDA 3 then works with DEED to set local performance targets to track and demonstrate progress toward our goals. These targets are based on past performance and local conditions and are balanced with performance targets elsewhere in the state to ensure fair contribution toward statewide goals.

Targets for state formula and competitive grants are set in negotiation with DEED. LWDA 3 proposes performance targets, which are approved by DEED as part of annual reviews of work plans. These targets may be adjusted through work plan modifications throughout the year if needed. Historically the LWDA 3 has met or exceeded all performance standards under WIOA.

*27. Describe the actions the local area board will take toward becoming or remaining a high-performing board, consistent with the factors developed by the state board.*

Northeast Board will strive to achieve the expectations for local boards identified in each of the 6 areas of strategy described in the Combined State Plan. These areas are:

Area 1 – Business Engagement: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will select 1-3 sectors to pursue business-led sector partnerships. Drawing from State labor market information, these sector partnerships will focus on identifying occupations in demand that provide career pathways to family sustaining wages and support the workforce needs of businesses. The Northeast Workforce Development Board will work to align core program activities and coordinate sector partnerships that will engage businesses and employers in the process of developing effective programs and services. Under the guidance of the Board, career pathway information will be included in job search and career planning activities, and contextualized within Adult Basic Education, enabling greater "informed choice" by the general public and program participants who are seeking sustainable careers and family wages.

Area 2 – Community Engagement: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will identify socio-economically disadvantaged populations through the use of data and public engagement. The goal of this process is to identify what causes barriers to successful access to employment and training services and the outcomes that these services seek to achieve. The Northeast Workforce Development Board will facilitate workforce stakeholder engagement focused on identifying and recommending strategies that address barriers to success, including various population-centric perspectives of how the system itself impedes access to services, service design needs and a customer centric look at how the system is organized.



Area 3 – Customer-Focused Design: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will work with local system partners to identify the design needs across the available system partners that delivery employment, education and training activities which are customer-focused and customer-driven. A primary focus will be utilizing existing career pathway experiences to assist with understanding how local areas can build off of their past success and expand the capacity of their work overtime. Facilitated by the Northeast Workforce Development Board, the employment, education and training efforts will assist core program activity alignment with the Career Pathway approach.

Area 4 – Funding and Resource Needs: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will work with local system partners to map the local and regional resources that support understanding the gaps and assets to how the system is funded and coordinated at its broadest level. Facilitated by the Northeast Workforce Development Board, an assessment specific to the core programs will be conducted with an underlying emphasis of how the core programs interact within the one-stop centers and community related partnerships.

Area 5 – Policy and System Alignment: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will work to adopt local policies that support and encourage program alignment across system partners. Existing MOUs will eventually evolve into a central component of creating a Career Pathway system.

Area 6 – System Management: The local Workforce Development Boards in Region 2 will work with local system partners to integrate a system management approach that demonstrates the shared benefit and connections that programs have in working together.

28. *Describe how training services under chapter 3 of subtitle B will be provided in accordance with section 134(c)(3)(G), including, if contracts for training services will be used, how the use of such contracts will be coordinated with the use of individual training accounts under that chapter and how the local area board will ensure informed customer choice in the selection of training programs, regardless of how the training services are to be provided.*

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are used for everyone receiving training funds under WIOA, representing a payment agreement established on behalf of a participant with a training provider. Contracts for training services are rarely, if ever, used in the local area. ITAs are linked to in-demand industry sectors and occupations in the local area or in other regions to which the adult or dislocated worker is willing to relocate. Understanding all the options available for preparing for a specific occupation is an integral part of the case management process. Adult and Dislocated Worker participants work with their Career Counselor to select an appropriate training program that corresponds to their goals as they align with the opportunities within the local economy. Part of this process is to identify all the available training programs for the specified occupation, including a discussion of quality and performance information on the available training providers, allowing for making informed choices in the selection of training programs.

29. Describe the process used by the local area board to provide opportunity for public comment, including comment by representatives from businesses and comment by representatives of labor organizations; and input into the development of the local plan, prior to submission of the plan.

The Local Plan will be made available throughout the region for public viewing and comments utilizing the internet and electronic communication. The plan will be posted on the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training's website ([www.nemojt.org](http://www.nemojt.org)) and copy of the plan with how to access the document electronically will also be available at each regional CareerForce location. The Board will send the plan to their business and partner networks as well as organized labor communities. Stakeholders have been involved with the development and subsequent implementation of this plan via representation on the Board and by invitation to participate in upcoming development phases of sector-led career pathways systems.

30. Describe how the one-stop centers are implementing and transitioning to an integrated, technology-enabled intake and case management information system for programs carried out under this Act and programs carried out by one-stop partners.

Programs operated by the current workforce system use Workforce One for case management, utilizing all the tools that system provides, including case noting, tracking activities, documenting milestone achievements like credential attainment, and automatic follow up reminders. In addition, NEMOJT has been selected as a Soft Launch Provider for the Workforce One Connect with an anticipated full launch date of June 2021.

In addition, we have fully integrated electronic processes in the intake process, orientation, and enrollment processes. This included developing electronic, fillable-forms such as the application, employment plans, self-assessments, and individual service strategies that can be downloaded from a website, emailed, or shared through Office 365 and submitted back electronically to the appropriate personnel. We also have the ability to offer electronic signatures when acceptable, through Adobe software.

Also included in the effort to create a more technology-enabled system is expanding the ability to communicate with participants via text message, the Workforce One Connect app, and virtual platforms such as Teams and Zoom. To this end, CareerForce locations have instituted a communication form that is completed by drop-ins should their counselor not be available. This form specifically asks for the method of communication the client prefers counselors use to follow up with them – text, email, virtual meeting, or phone. The form includes instructions for counselors on how to send a text from an email to facilitate this form of communication, as many people are using smart phones as their primary way of communicating and often prefer the ease and expediency of texting or utilizing applications.

Other efforts at better integrating technology into the current system will be for local program providers to ensure their websites are accessible by individuals with disabilities or English language learners and are optimized for mobile platforms. These are two relatively simple strategies which have a large impact on greater accessibility of the system.

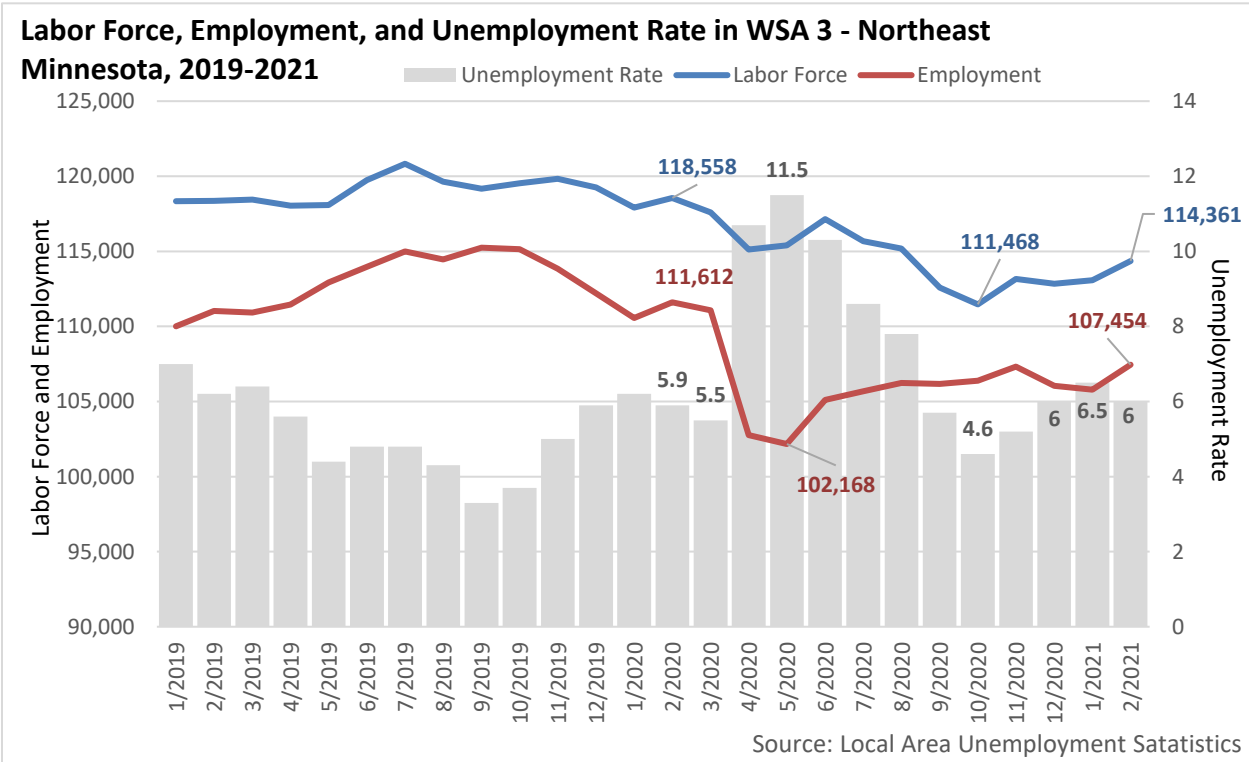
One of the limitations to moving toward a technology-enabled system in this largely rural region is the availability of broadband services to remote areas of the region.

31. Describe how the workforce needs of your area have been impacted as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. What specific industry sectors and what specific populations (by race/ethnicity, age, and educational attainment) have been most affected and how?

*While the pandemic has impacted virtually all areas of the labor market in some way, the effects of the pandemic have fallen disproportionately on lower-paying service-providing sectors, people of color, women, older workers, and those with lower levels of educational attainment.*

**Unemployment Rates and Labor Force**

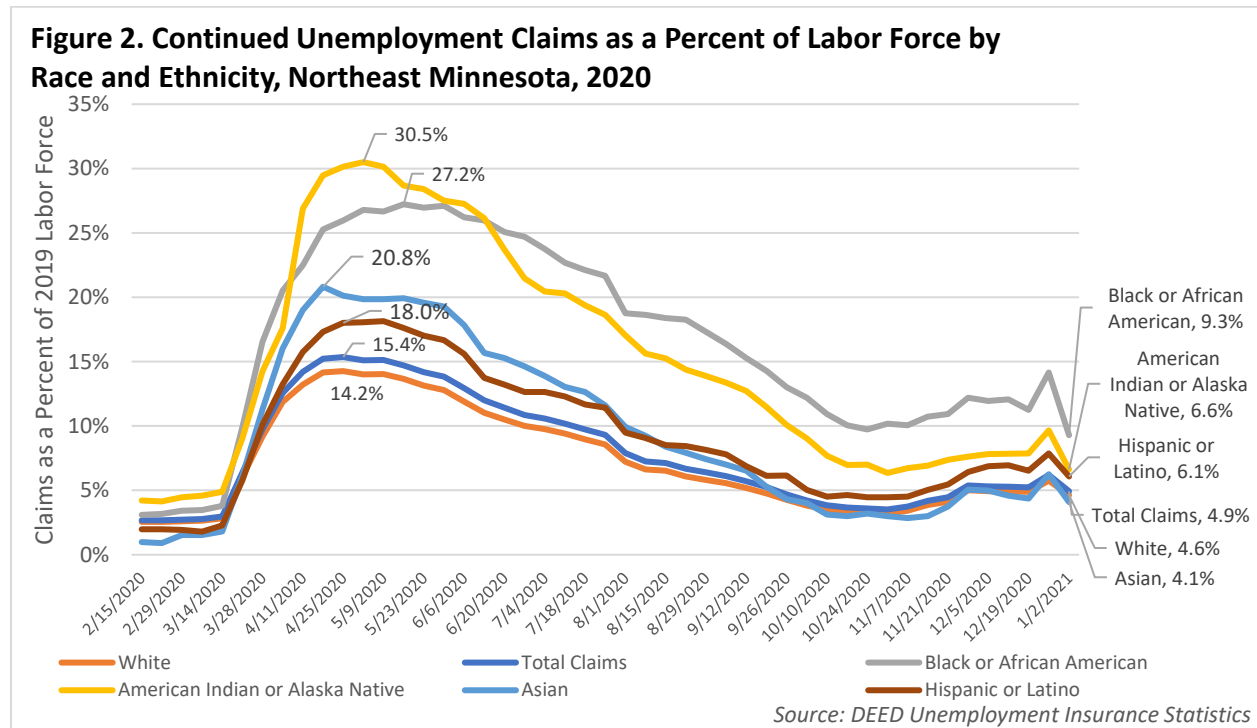
Prior to the onset of the coronavirus in March of 2020, the unemployment rate in Local Area 3 was 5.5. Two months later in May, the unemployment rate in WSA 3 peaked at 11.5 before declining consistently through October to 4.6. However, the size of the labor force in the area decreased considerably from before the pandemic. In WSA 3, 7,090 people left the labor force between February and October 2020, a decline of 6%. In the entire Northeast region, the labor force declined by 5.9% or 9,665 workers through October. As of February 2021, the WSA 3 labor force remained down -3.5% (-4,197 workers) over the year. From May to October 2020, the decline in the labor force contributed just as much to the fall of unemployment rates as the increase in employment did. Since the peak of unemployment in May 2020, the number of unemployed fell by 6,318, 16.3% of which was attributed to a decline in the labor force.



**Unemployment Claims**

DEED’s Unemployment Insurance Statistics show how workers of color have filed continued claims at higher rates than White workers. In April and May, the number of unemployment

claims as a share of the labor force peaked at 30.5% for Native American or American Indian workers, 27.2% for Black or African American workers, at 20.8% for Asian workers, and at 18.2% for Hispanic or Latino workers. In other words, anywhere from nearly a fifth to nearly a third of workers of color had filed claims over a single week early in the crisis. By comparison, the share of the White labor force that filed continued claims peaked at 14.2%. Since then the number of claims has dropped for all races and ethnicities, yet Black or African American workers remain, as of the end of 2020, twice as likely to be filing continued claims as White workers. In addition, claims started to climb slightly again for all groups since the end of October of 2020.



Monthly claims statistics show similar trends. As of November 2020, initial unemployment claims for Black or African Americans were more than 5 times greater than at the same point in 2019. Initial claims were up 192.7% for White workers, 112.2% for American Indian or Alaska Native workers, 270% for Asian workers, and 303% for Hispanic or Latino workers. Each of these numbers was greater than in October, indicating another rise in layoffs in the region.

Total continued claims in November 2020 were also more than double what they were in November 2019. The greatest increases were in claims made by Black or African American workers (397%) and Hispanic or Latino workers (205%).

As of the end of December 2020, 571,080 total continued claims had been filed in Northeast Minnesota since the start of the pandemic. The industries with the greatest shares of total continued claims were Accommodation and Food Services (19.8%), Healthcare and Social Assistance (15.7%), Construction (11.1%), and Retail Trade (9.4%), combining to account for 56% of all claims. As a percent of jobs, the average number of claims per week was highest in Management of Companies (22.7%), Construction (21.7%), Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting (20.9%), Accommodation and Food Services (17.8%), and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation (17.8%).

Continued claims were distributed similarly by occupation. A fifth of all claims filed since the pandemic were made by workers in Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations. An additional 21.7% were filed by the combined Construction and Extraction and Sales and Related occupational groups. With average weekly claims as a share of jobs, the most impacted

occupational groups were Farming, Fishing, and Forestry (39.7%), Construction and Extraction (23.8%), Food Preparation and Serving Related (17.8%), Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media (10.5%), and Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance (10.3%).

### Risk of Long-Term Unemployment

DEED's Profile of Risk of Long-Term Unemployment helps to identify which types of workers and sectors could be at higher risk of prolonged unemployment since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020. In Minnesota, the share of women claimants was larger relative to the share of women in the labor force and the average number of weeks on unemployment insurance (UI) for women was larger than for men.

By race and ethnicity, Black or African American workers were more than twice as likely as White workers to file for unemployment and more than 45% continued to file claims after October 3<sup>rd</sup>, more than 6 months into the pandemic. Black or African American Workers had the highest average number of weeks (16.8) filing unemployment claims and the largest share of workers that were permanently separated, at 10.5%.

American Indian workers had the second highest average number of weeks on UI (15.6) and 8.2% were permanently separated at some point since March 15. Mixed race workers were also more likely to file claims for more weeks than average and 8.2% of those that were unemployed at any point were permanently separated. White workers, relative to their representation in the labor force, were least likely to have filed claims, had the fewest number of average weeks on UI, and the smallest share continuing to file after October 3, 2020.

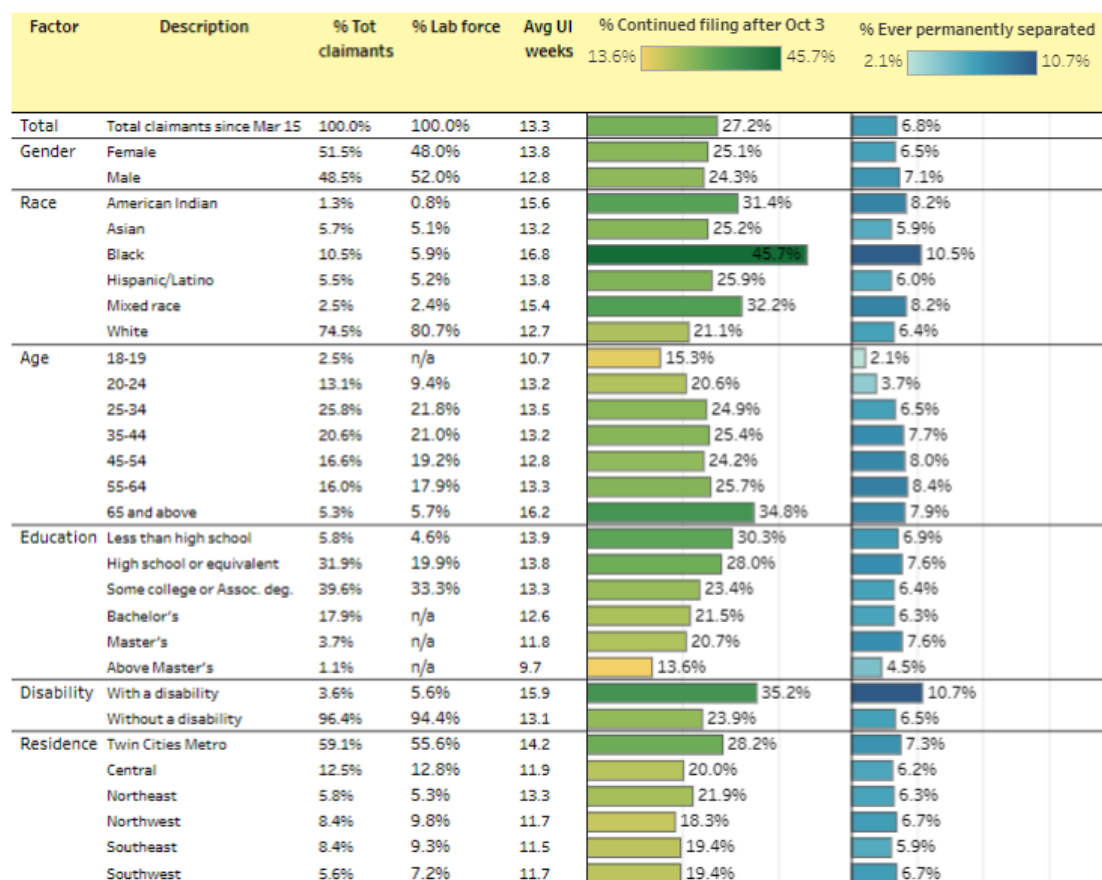
By age, the youngest workers were the most likely to be unemployed, but the oldest workers were on UI for the longest average number of weeks, and the most likely to still be filing after October 3.

By education, those workers with less than a high school diploma had the longest average stretch filing for UI and were most likely to be filing after October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Workers with a high school degree or equivalent were the most likely to file for UI and tied with those with Masters degrees for the largest share of workers permanently separated.

Disability also appeared to be a strong indicator of longer-term and permanent unemployment.

In addition to the Twin Cities Metro, Northeast Minnesota was the only region to have a share of claimants disproportionately larger than its share of the state labor force. The Northeast region had the second most average weeks on UI and the third largest share of unemployed workers permanently separated.

**Figure 3. Risk for Long Term Unemployment by Demographic, Minnesota, 2020**

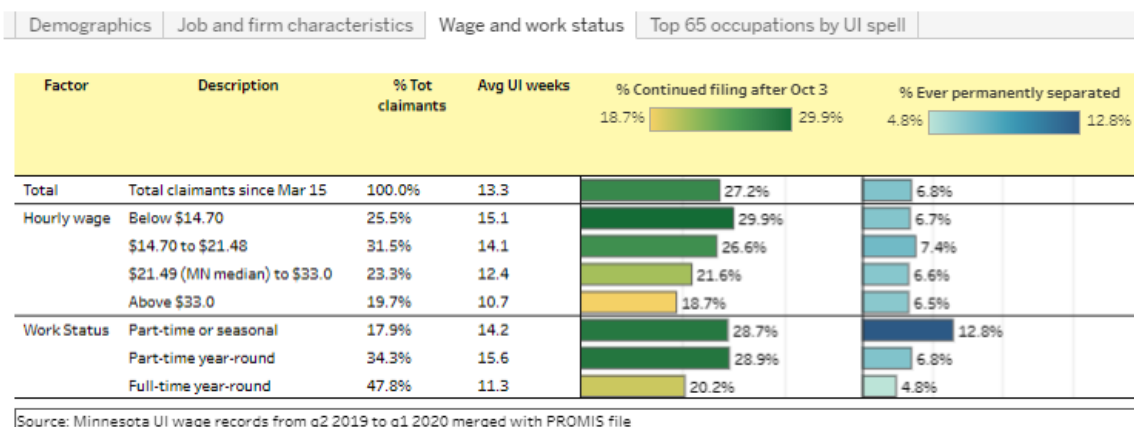


Source: Minnesota PROMIS file. These numbers exclude individuals who filed an initial claim not followed by a continued claim or who filed only under the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (self-employed) program. Individuals with invalid date of birth were also excluded.

For information about this tool contact [alessia.leibert@state.mn.us](mailto:alessia.leibert@state.mn.us)

Workers with wages under \$14.70, on average, had longer periods on UI and were more likely to still be filing after October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, when compared to higher wage workers. All wage groups were roughly equally likely to be permanently separated. Part-time workers were also more likely to be unemployed for longer than full-time workers.

**Figure 4. Risk for Long Term Unemployment by Wage and Work Status in Minnesota, 2020**



Source: Minnesota UI wage records from q2 2019 to q1 2020 merged with PROMIS file

## Additional Workforce Characteristics

Disparities in the local and regional workforce existed prior to the pandemic, many of which have been exacerbated since March of 2020.

Prior to the pandemic, demographic trends pointed toward a tightening labor market as the population and workforce continued to age. The population of WSA 3 - Northeast is projected to decline slightly over the next 20 years. According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, the largest declines are expected in the 55-64 and 65-74 age groups as many in the Baby Boomer generation age into older age groups and out of prime working ages. Correspondingly, the 75-84 and 85+ age groups are expected to grow the most over the same period. The number of 25-44 years olds is expected to increase, but the youth cohorts are expected to shrink by over 10%, restricting the potential future workforce.

| Table 1. Population Projections, 2020-2040 |                 |                 |                 | 2020-2040 Change |              |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| WDB 3 – Northeast                          | 2020 Projection | 2030 Projection | 2040 Projection | Numeric          | Percent      |
| Under 5 years                              | 10,109          | 10,971          | 10,802          | 694              | 6.9%         |
| 5-14 years                                 | 25,055          | 20,518          | 22,474          | -2,580           | -10.3%       |
| 15-24 years                                | 32,379          | 29,882          | 26,124          | -6,255           | -19.3%       |
| 25-34 years                                | 26,527          | 28,570          | 26,977          | 450              | 1.7%         |
| 35-44 years                                | 25,931          | 25,718          | 28,651          | 2,720            | 10.5%        |
| 45-54 years                                | 26,299          | 24,941          | 25,534          | -765             | -2.9%        |
| 55-64 years                                | 35,966          | 25,297          | 24,741          | -11,226          | -31.2%       |
| 65-74 years                                | 33,760          | 34,866          | 25,304          | -8,457           | -25.0%       |
| 75-84 years                                | 18,137          | 28,927          | 30,221          | 12,084           | 66.6%        |
| 85 years & over                            | 6,680           | 8,749           | 13,935          | 7,255            | 108.6%       |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>240,843</b>  | <b>238,440</b>  | <b>234,762</b>  | <b>-6,080</b>    | <b>-2.5%</b> |

*Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center*

Mirroring the population trends, WSA 3's labor force is also projected to shrink in size and get older through 2030. The 75+ age group of workers is expected to expand the most, followed by the 25-44 and 65-74 age groups. Meanwhile, the 55-64 age group of workers is expected to decline -29.7% as Baby Boomers age out of the labor force. Workers aged 16 to 24 years old are also expected to decline in number over the next decade.

| Table 2. Labor Force Projections, 2020-2030 |                             |                             |                  |              |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------|
| WDB 3 - Northeast                           | 2020 Labor Force Projection | 2030 Labor Force Projection | 2020-2030 Change |              |
|   |                             |                             | Numeric          | Percent      |
| 16 to 19 years                              | 6,228                       | 5,429                       | -799             | -12.8%       |
| 20 to 24 years                              | 14,301                      | 13,831                      | -470             | -3.3%        |
| 25 to 44 years                              | 44,085                      | 45,623                      | 1,538            | 3.5%         |
| 45 to 54 years                              | 21,906                      | 20,775                      | -1,131           | -5.2%        |
| 55 to 64 years                              | 21,860                      | 15,376                      | -6,484           | -29.7%       |
| 65 to 74 years                              | 6,160                       | 6,362                       | 202              | 3.3%         |
| 75 years & over                             | 1,040                       | 1,579                       | 539              | 51.8%        |
| <b>Total Labor Force</b>                    | <b>115,581</b>              | <b>108,975</b>              | <b>-6,606</b>    | <b>-5.7%</b> |

*Source: calculated from Minnesota State Demographic Center population projections and 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

The Workforce Service Area has become more diverse since 2000. While the White population declined 2,207 or 1.0%, the population of color grew 1,557 people, more than doubling. The largest group of color in the area were Indigenous People at 2.9%, followed by people of Two or More Races (2.3%), and Latinx people (1.4%). WSA 3's future workforce is even more diversity. While people of color make up just over 7% of the region's population as of 2019, they made up 14.6% of Hibbing Public School District, 14% of Grand Rapids Public School District, 5.1% of Lake Superior Public School District, 24.3% of South Koochiching School District, and 24.4% of Carlton County Public School District's enrollment<sup>1</sup>.

| Race and Hispanic Origin, 2019  | WDB 3 - Northeast |               |  |             | Minnesota     |                       |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|--|-------------|---------------|-----------------------|
|                                 | Number            | Percent       | Change from 2000-2019<br>Numeric   Percent |             | Percent       | Change from 2000-2019 |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>238,903</b>    | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>3,748</b>                               | <b>1.6%</b> | <b>100.0%</b> | <b>13.1%</b>          |
| White                           | 222,170           | 93.0%         | -2,207                                     | -1.0%       | 82.8%         | 4.7%                  |
| Black or African American       | 2,313             | 1.0%          | 1,557                                      | 206.0%      | 6.4%          | 107.6%                |
| American Indian & Alaska Native | 6,848             | 2.9%          | 628  | 10.1%       | 1.0%          | 5.5%                  |
| Asian & Other Pac. Islander     | 1,363             | 0.6%          | 642  | 89.0%       | 4.9%          | 87.8%                 |
| Some Other Race                 | 806               | 0.3%          | 404  | 100.5%      | 1.9%          | 58.1%                 |
| Two or More Races               | 5,403             | 2.3%          | 2,724                                      | 101.7%      | 3.0%          | 99.9%                 |
| Hispanic or Latino origin       | 3,385             | 1.4%          | 1,905                                      | 128.7%      | 5.4%          | 108.9%                |

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015-2019 American Community Survey*

<sup>1</sup> <https://rc.education.mn.gov/#mySchool/p--3>

The poverty rate for residents of WSA 3 is almost two percentage points higher than that of the state of Minnesota. The poverty rates for people of color are without exception higher than that of white alone residents. Black or African Americans and American Indians have the highest poverty rates, at over 36.4%. The poverty rate of American Indians is also nearly three times higher than for whites.

|                                 | Total Population | Income below the poverty level | Poverty Rate (% below pov. level) | Income at or above the poverty level | Minnesota Poverty Rate |
|---------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| White Alone                     | 217,996          | 22,568                         | 10.4%                             | 195,428                              | 7.3%                   |
| Black or African American Alone | 1,458            | 530                            | 36.4%                             | 928                                  | 28.6%                  |
| American Indian Alone           | 6,463            | 1,924                          | 29.8%                             | 4,539                                | 31.3%                  |
| Asian Alone                     | 1,190            | 224                            | 18.8%                             | 966                                  | 13.6%                  |
| Some Other Race Alone           | 737              | 79                             | 10.7%                             | 658                                  | 19.7%                  |
| Two or More Races               | 5,082            | 1,383                          | 27.2%                             | 3,699                                | 16.3%                  |
| Hispanic or Latino              | 3,045            | 489                            | 16.1%                             | 2,556                                | 18.6%                  |
| <b>Total Population</b>         | <b>232,926</b>   | <b>26,708</b>                  | <b>11.5%</b>                      | <b>206,218</b>                       | <b>9.7%</b>            |

*Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates*

Labor force participation was lower and unemployment rates higher for the youngest people in the labor force, many workers of color, the disabled, and those with the lowest levels of educational attainment. Workers of Two or More Races and American Indian and Alaska Native workers, in particular had unemployment rates three and four times that of the labor force average. The labor force participation rates for Black or African Americans, workers of Some Other Race, 65-74 year olds, workers with less than a high school degree, and disabled workers were particularly low compared to statewide rates. Those with less than a high school diploma



were also most likely to be unemployed. WSA 3 labor force participation was lower and unemployment rates higher, than in the state as a whole.

| <b>Table 5. Employment Characteristics, 2019</b>                |                          |                                 |                    |                                 |                    |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
|   | <b>WDB 3 - Northeast</b> |                                 |                    | <b>Minnesota</b>                |                    |
|   | <b>In Labor Force</b>    | <b>Labor Force Partic. Rate</b> | <b>Unemp. Rate</b> | <b>Labor Force Partic. Rate</b> | <b>Unemp. Rate</b> |
| <b>Total Labor Force</b>  | <b>114,221</b>           | <b>58.0%</b>                    | <b>4.7%</b>        | <b>69.7%</b>                    | <b>3.6%</b>        |
| 16 to 19 years  | 5,696                    | 51.9%                           | 11.2%              | 53.2%                           | 11.0%              |
| 20 to 24 years  | 9,583                    | 82.3%                           | 7.9%               | 84.6%                           | 6.0%               |
| 25 to 44 years  | 42,495                   | 84.0%                           | 5.8%               | 88.8%                           | 3.2%               |
| 45 to 54 years  | 25,156                   | 83.3%                           | 5.7%               | 87.6%                           | 2.7%               |
| 55 to 64 years  | 24,802                   | 60.8%                           | 5.7%               | 73.0%                           | 2.8%               |
| 65 to 74 years  | 5,567                    | 18.2%                           | n/a                | 27.9%                           | 2.2%               |
| 75 years & over   | 933                      | 4.2%                            | 2.1%               | 6.6%                            | 2.4%               |
| <b>Employment Characteristics by Race &amp; Hispanic Origin</b> |                          |                                 |                    |                                 |                    |
| White alone   | 107,496                  | 58.1%                           | 4.3%               | 69.3%                           | 3.0%               |
| Black or African American                                       | 640                      | 36.4%                           | n/a                | 71.3%                           | 8.8%               |
| American Indian & Alaska Native                                 | 3,020                    | 60.6%                           | 16.1%              | 58.9%                           | 12.6%              |
| Asian or Other Pac. Islanders                                   | 684                      | 62.8%                           | 7.7%               | 71.2%                           | 4.3%               |
| Some Other Race   | 322                      | 47.6%                           | 8.6%               | 77.7%                           | 6.1%               |
| Two or More Races   | 2,029                    | 60.6%                           | 12.3%              | 73.6%                           | 7.4%               |
| Hispanic or Latino  | 1,421                    | 61.0%                           | 8.7%               | 76.5%                           | 6.1%               |
| <b>Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status</b>             |                          |                                 |                    |                                 |                    |
| Veterans, 18 to 64 years  | 5,872                    | 67.6%                           | 8.0%               | 79.5%                           | 4.0%               |
| <b>Employment Characteristics by Disability</b>                 |                          |                                 |                    |                                 |                    |
| With Any Disability, 20 to 64 years                             | 7,057                    | 42.7%                           | 9.3%               | 53.0%                           | 8.6%               |
| <b>Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment</b>     |                          |                                 |                    |                                 |                    |
| Population, 25 to 64 years                                      | 92,423                   | 76.0%                           | 3.7%               | 84.5%                           | 3.0%               |
| Less than H.S. Diploma  | 3,042                    | 56.9%                           | 4.9%               | 66.3%                           | 4.2%               |
| H.S. Diploma or Equivalent                                      | 23,181                   | 68.1%                           | 3.2%               | 78.5%                           | 2.6%               |
| Some College or Assoc. Degree                                   | 41,708                   | 78.0%                           | 3.8%               | 85.3%                           | 3.0%               |
| Bachelor's Degree or Higher                                     | 24,509                   | 85.4%                           | 1.6%               | 90.0%                           | 1.7%               |

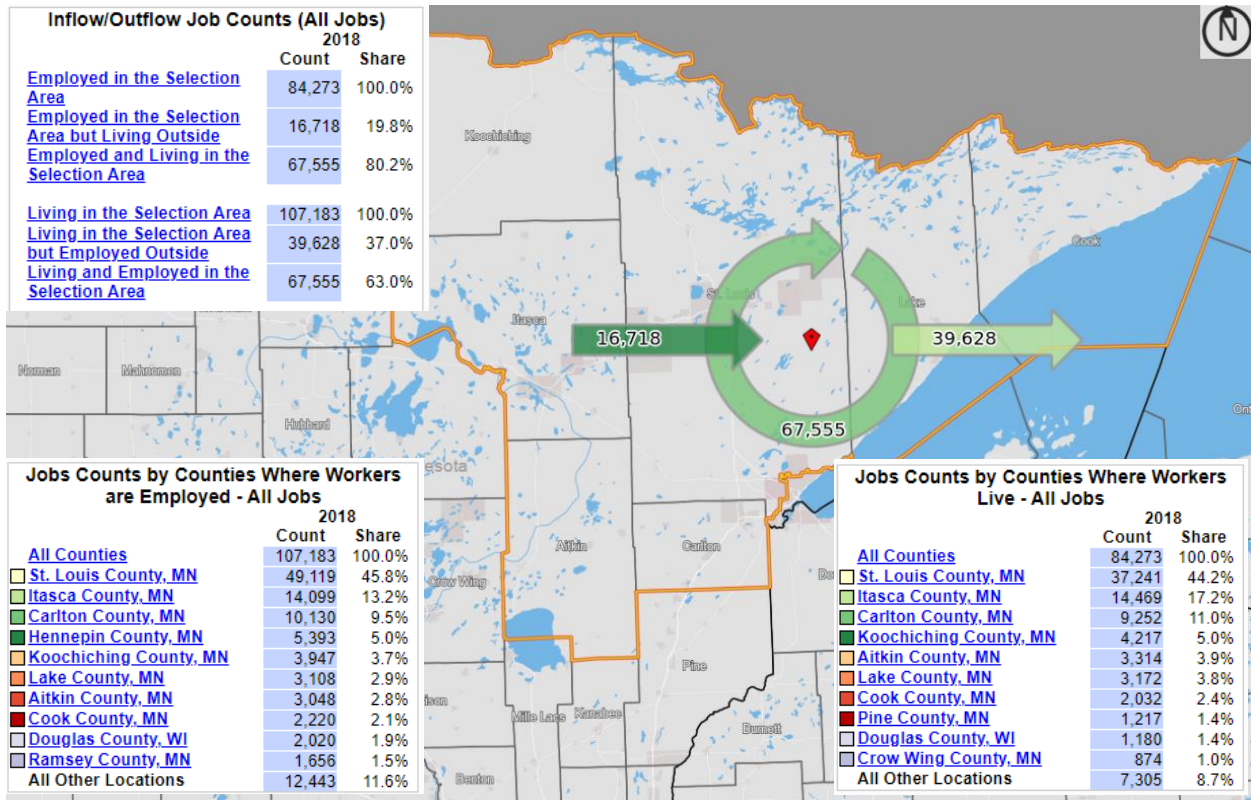
*Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates*

## Job Flows

The U.S. Census' OnTheMap tool shows the commuting patterns for workers that are employed in WSA 3 as well as those that live in the service area and are employed elsewhere. Of the 84,273 jobs in the area in 2018, 80.2% were held by workers that lived in WSA 3 and 19.8% of workers lived elsewhere and commuted in. A total of 107,183 workers lived in WSA 3 in 2018, 63% of which were also employed within the area's limits. A total of 67,555 jobs were held by people that both lived and worked in WSA 3.

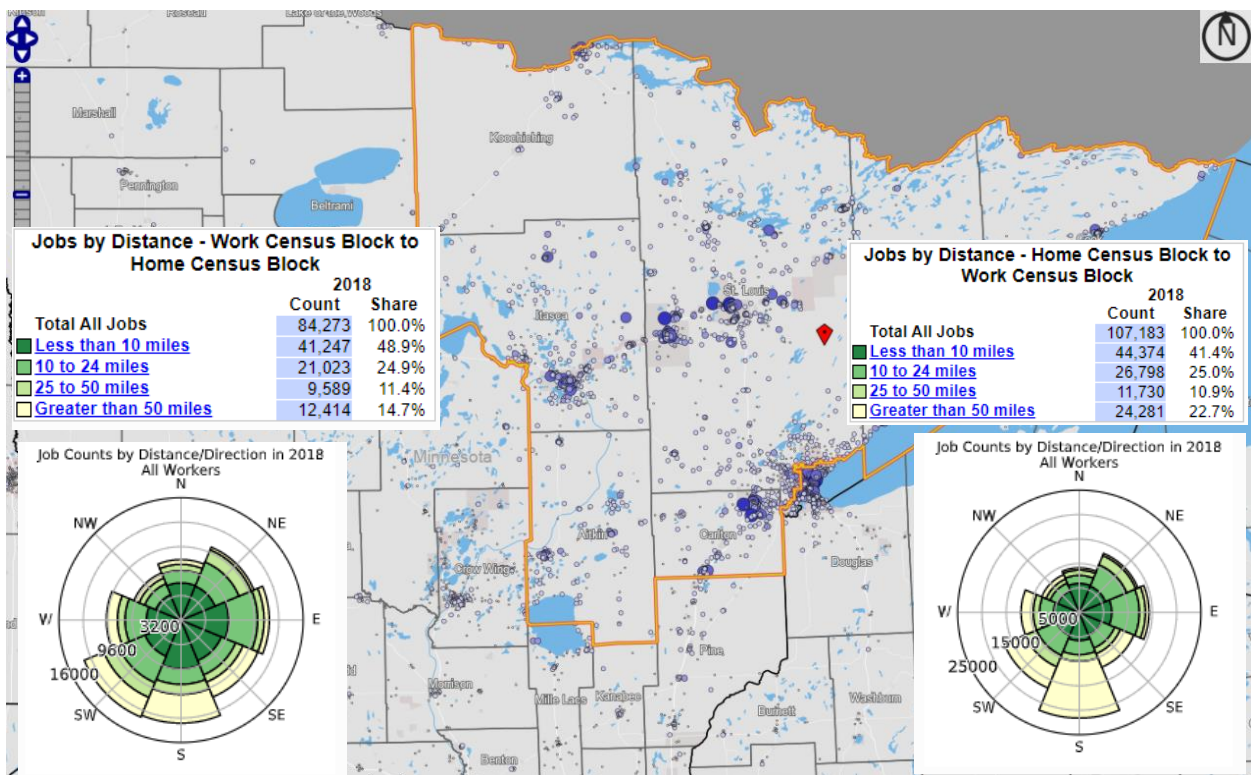
Of the jobs in WSA 3, the largest share (44.2%) was held by residents of St. Louis County. The next largest shares (17.2%) lived in Itasca County, Carlton County (11.0%), or Koochiching County (5.0%). While most jobs are held by residents of the region or nearby counties, it is expected that WSA 3 will attract a greater share of remote workers as a result of changing work patterns due to the pandemic. Almost 2,000 jobs in the area were held by residents of the Seven County Twin Cities Metro Area. Conversely, more than 10,000 jobs in the Twin Cities were held by residents of WSA 3.

Figure 5. Job Flows for those Employed or Living in WSA 3, 2018



Just over 40% of the workers living in WSA 3 live within 10 miles of their job. Workers that work in the area, regardless of where they live, tend to live closer to their place of work – almost half live within 10 miles. Those that travel more than 50 miles to work in the region most often commute from the south or southwest, which would be in line with workers living in the Twin Cities and/or Duluth.

Figure 6. Job Counts by Distance and Direction in WSA 3, 2018



32. What is the board's strategy to coordinate efforts to address workforce needs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? Describe the methodology for outreach to industry sectors and populations most affected.

The Northeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board will spend the next year or more with a significant focus on workforce needs that have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the key workforce needs that have emerged include:

- **Digital inclusion:** Many households in our community lack computers and internet access. Our initial focus was on leveraging resources to provide free devices and subsidized internet connection to students, jobseekers, and seniors. That focus is now shifting toward improving digital literacy skills, connecting more people to career pathways in the IT sector, and planning to improve broadband access.
- **Women leaving the workforce:** Large numbers of working age women left the workforce to care for school-age children during the pandemic. As schools reopen, we will need a focused strategy to help them re-enter the workforce, including potentially training for new careers or identifying different career paths that allow more flexibility. We have spent time enhancing our 218 Trades initiative with a focus on women in the trades.
- **Older adult unemployment:** Many older adults left or were forced out of the labor force at the start of the pandemic. Some will need to return to earn additional income but will likely experience a lack of the technical and digital literacy skills needed. We will continue our focus on digital literacy training for older adults paired with employment counseling and paid internships.
- **Skill training:** There is a clear mismatch between the skills of the available, unemployed workforce and the skills needed by employers who are hiring. The board will continue working with employers to re-envision minimum qualifications and build in on-the-job training. The board will also work with local two- and four-year colleges to identify short-term credentials that will quickly upskill workers for available jobs.
- **Youth engagement:** Youth and young adults in our community have become completely disengaged from both school and work, and are struggling with food, housing, and mental health. Much effort needs to go toward outreach and re-engagement, meeting youth where they are at with bundled services with the goal of reconnecting them to education and/or employment.
- **Barriers to employment:** The pandemic has moved many families deeper into poverty, which means they will face even more difficult, stacked barriers to employment. CareerForce staff will train on Trauma Informed Care and will take a more comprehensive approach that combines supportive services with stronger connections to programs and supports offered by partner agencies to address challenges like housing, childcare, transportation, mental health, and substance abuse.

33. State the Local Board's vision for utilizing the area's workforce development system to address employment disparities based on race/ethnicity, age, or educational attainment in your area. Please also include the following in this statement: strategies to address disparities; strategies to address diversity and inclusion among your workforce system's staff; strategies to ensure inclusion in the operation and service of the workforce system in your area.

Reducing employment disparities is a priority of the Northeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board. The board intends to deepen its efforts and continue to pursue a number of strategies to reduce disparities and improve diversity and inclusion in the workforce system in our local area.

LWDA #3 is located in a region with four major native communities and a greater metro area in and around Duluth, Minnesota all with diverse and underserved populations. However, greatest number of participants disparities are reflected in the tribal communities in and around Leech Lake (Deer River), Grand Portage, Fond du Lac, and Bois Forte. Overall, the northeast region is comprised of nearly 10% BIPOC populations with significantly higher concentrations in and around the four principle indigenous communities. Engagement with the native communities in the region has involved an on-campus presence at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College for student recruitment and career services and a presence on campus at Hibbing Community College, Mesabi Range College, Lake Superior College, Itasca Community College and Rainy River Community and Technical College. This on-campus presence imbeds our services and allows NEMOJT to strategically align services with the multicultural offices at each location.

As an agency NEMOJT has a Diversity and Equity Committee that has embraced the Intercultural Diversity Inventory (IDI) as a tool for professional development and personal insights. The IDI and subsequent individualized personal development plans are tool used by staff, managers, and governing boards to continually reassess program delivery, staffing decisions, and services while being mindful of meeting the needs of all groups with an inclusive approach.

Diversity and equity go far beyond race/ethnicity as the workforce continues to age and younger generation are now entering the workforce. From an inclusive perspective NEMOJT has provided outreach to educate employers, community organizations and educational institutions about generations in the workforce. The efforts NEMOJT has put forth has helped the workforce adapt to notion of retaining and cultivating multi-generational organizations. The northeast region also comprises one area in Minnesota with the largest segment of the population potentially reaching retirement age. A good example is in the crafts and trades where one-third of the workforce is 55 year of age or older. These potential needs align with regional programming to develop opportunities in the crafts and trades spearheaded by 218 Trades initiative. A strategic alignment with underserved and diverse groups has the potential to develop an overlooked and untapped workforce currently in the region. 218 Trades means opportunities do exist for all. The 218 Trades mission of work here, stay here, play here serves to build and enhance the communities in the region while providing inclusive opportunities and retaining available workforce.

**Additional specific areas of focus include:**

- **Professional Development:** As mentioned above, the board and all CareerForce staff in the region participated in the Intercultural Development Inventory, a self-assessment of cultural competency combined with a series of workshops on culture and inclusion. The board continues to include training on equity and diversity as part each meeting. Staff also participate in training on diversity and equity topics on an ongoing basis.
- **Participation in Stakeholder Groups:** Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training is making added efforts to connect with stakeholder groups of BIPOC leaders and community partners to improve the way the workforce system supports and serves people of color. Some of these efforts include connecting with the DEED Tribal Liaison, initiating conversations and attendance at meetings with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), and reaching out to present and partner with the Minnesota branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).
- **Board and Staff Diversity:** The Northeast Minnesota Workforce Development Board is actively working to add diversity to its membership, recognizing that not all voices impacted by our work are at the table. Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training also strives to create an inclusive workplace, with team dynamics and workplace culture as a continuous focus.
- **Employer Engagement:** The board's Equity Committee engages employers in advancing diversity and inclusion in recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and retention. The board and CareerForce staff have worked in partnership with LWDA #4 to host multiple workshops for employers, issued a tool kit, and will work one-on-one to help employers make changes to their practices and build a more inclusive organizational culture.
- **Digital Inclusion:** The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training continually searches out grants and support to bridge the digital divide through a variety of avenues and partnerships - providing devices to those who needs them, improving digital literacy, and expanding broadband access and affordability.
- **Career Pathway Training:** The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training's career pathway training programs have a primary focus on training low-income and BIPOC individuals, as well as training women for non-traditional careers. These programs create a supportive learning environment and include direct engagement with employers to open up entry points to in-demand careers to offer pathways to long-term career advancement and higher wages. One key focus has been on the construction industry with a focus on outreach and recruitment of women and BIPOC individuals for the construction industry, specifically through our partnership with the area tribes during our spring Virtual Job Fair.

## SECTION C: PROGRAM OPERATIONS

1. A. *How does the local workforce development area ensure staff comply with the policies and procedures for Rapid Response as communicated on DEED's website?*

The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training ensures that all staff comply with the procedures for Rapid Response as noted on the DEED website. Rapid Response policy has been integrated into the local Dislocated Worker Program handbook. Staff continue to stay abreast of changes with policies and procedures for Rapid Response through feedback from agency administration who is well connected to policy updates through the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards, as well as by receiving targeted e-mails, newsletters, reviewing the DEED website (hyperlinked in the local Dislocated Worker program handbook) , and attending state-sponsored workshops and the Job Seeker Conference.

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- B. *How does the local workforce development area inform the state Rapid Response team within 24 hours about an actual or potential dislocation event when there is possibility of a mass layoff (50 or more dislocations)?*

Timely communication is the key to success between the Office of Job Training and the State Rapid Response team. Within 24 hours of learning about a dislocation event, whether actual or potential, the Office of Job Training contacts the State Rapids Response Team. This contact can be in the form of a telephone call, e-mail, regular mail, or by personal contact. The Rapid Response team is a critical partner in any local layoff. All information about a specific event is shared by both partners, so that the service delivery can begin as soon as possible.

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- C. *Describe how the local area board will coordinate workforce investment activities carried out in the local workforce development area with statewide rapid response activities.*

When a closure of an area business is recognized either through state notification or by staff, the Rapid Response Team is an integral partner of the workforce investment activities and services provided to local dislocated workers. The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training and CareerForce partners have always worked very closely with the state's Rapid Response Team on all dislocated worker projects. The Rapid Response Team is considered one of the primary modes of gathering pertinent information about the needs and wishes of the affected workforce. The survey administered by the Rapid Response Team is essential to the development of the dislocated worker proposal and to the provision of services to the affected workers.

Rapid Response team members often conduct joint orientation meetings with partner staff where each partner in the dislocated worker project process presents program information and resources.

In many cases, NEMOJT staff members are able to begin the enrollment process at these initial meetings, completing paperwork and making individual appointments with workers. In addition to describing services and initiating enrollment, worker needs are begun to be evaluated.

The State's Rapid Response Team has been crucial to the overall development of Northeast Minnesota's workforce by being a responsive and flexible partner of the CareerForce system. The continued coordination with the Workforce Development Board, the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training, and the state's Rapid Response team is seen as integral to the future success of the CareerForce system and the provision of services to the dislocated workers.

**D. Complete Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts.**

2. A. *How does the local workforce development area inform the state Trade Act staff of companies that are potentially TAA certifiable?*

The Office of Job Training immediately contacts and informs the State Trade Act staff of the potential TAA certifiable company if there is any indication a population may be eligible based on how a layoff event is reported or insider information staff may collect through local networks. This contact can be in the form of a telephone call, e-mail, regular mail, or by personal contact. The State Trade Act staff can be a critical partner in any local layoff if the company can be certified by the Trade Act particularly because it can relieve local and state resources by proving funding for training and support services. All information about a specific event is shared by all partners, so that the service delivery can begin as soon as possible, even before TAA certification is complete.

- B. *How does the local workforce development area cooperate with the state Trade Act staff where the layoff involves a company that the DOL trade-certified?*

When a mass layoff occurs involving a company that is Trade Act certified, coordination begins immediately. Any and all dislocated worker activities that are scheduled are done in partnership with the local WSA and state TAA staff. TAA representatives are a crucial component of the local service team providing dislocated workers with critical information regarding approved activities, services, application process, reporting forms and training funds available to eligible workers under the TAA act.

All TAA-eligible individuals are co-enrolled with the dislocated worker program and all training plans must be approved through the local dislocated worker program counselors before being sent to St. Paul for final approval by TAA unit staff. Each eligible dislocated worker receives an individualized assessment and employment plan developed by local WSA staff. Local staff then act as a liaison between the TAA office and the client, gathering and submitting required documents, adjusting training plans, or communicating policy guidance. Dislocated worker counselors work closely with TAA staff to ensure that participants are granted the full complement of services available to ensure a successful reentry into the labor force.

C. *Is the local workforce development area willing to participate in TAA Counselor Training and TAA Participant Training when a trade-certification occurs?*

Yes

3. A. *The local workforce development area has developed and implemented local Supportive Service policies that are consistently applied for all participants.*

Yes

B. *Describe the steps taken to ensure consistent compliance with the policy.*

Staff of the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training adhere to a comprehensive Support Service manual that encompasses service guidelines for all programs, including WIOA programs, the Minnesota Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, and the Minnesota Family Investment Programs. All support service provisions are described in detail and include the maximum amounts that can be funded for each service by program. Requests for payment or reimbursement for supportive services are made using a 'Request for Reimbursement' form, which is completed by the Career Counselor, verifying that the amounts requested are within guidelines. These forms are submitted to the Operations Director or Executive Director for authorization and are once more checked for policy compliance by the fiscal staff that processes payment. If deviation from policy is discovered at any stage in this process, the request form is turned back to the Career Counselor to correct any discrepancies.

4. *How is the local board planning to prioritize WIOA Adult programming services to recipients of public assistance, individuals who are basic skills deficient, or those identified as being low-income as outlines in REGT 7-20?*

Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training staff give priority of service to those most in need when using WIOA Adult funds to program services. Priority groups include veterans and eligible spouses of veterans, recipients of public assistance, low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training staff prioritize services to these populations at all times regardless of available funding. Furthermore, the local board established additional policies and procedures for provision of WIOA Adult priority of service, to include specific target populations in highest need in our area. These policies and procedures define additional priority of service populations, and front-line staff apply priority of service policies to ensure those most in need receive WIOA program services. Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training staff also conduct outreach to local partner programs that serve priority populations, and staff work to identify opportunities for referrals and co-enrollment while minimizing duplication of services.



## SECTION D: SYSTEM OPERATIONS AND ATTACHMENTS

1. *The local workforce development area has processes in place to assure non-duplicative services, and avoid duplicate administrative costs.*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

2. A. *The local workforce development area and their partners are aware of the responsibilities of the Equal Opportunity Officer, including attending DEED sponsored EO Training?*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

- B. *The local workforce development area is aware and conducts annually a physical and program accessibility review?*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

3. *Does the local workforce development area have in place an agreed upon WIOA Discrimination complaint process per the regulations?*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

4. A. *Does the local workforce development area have in place an agreed upon WIOA Program Complaint Policy per the regulations?*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

5. *How do you identify current or former Military Service Members coming into your CareerForce?*

Career Counselors work closely with Veteran's Employment Representatives on a regular basis to identify veterans and facilitate the exchange of program information. It is common practice to automatically refer veterans identified during another program's intake process to local Veterans Employment Representative staff for vet-specific services. The process also works in reverse: when a Veterans Employment Representative works with a client seeking training or another service available through WIOA programs, she refers that client to an appropriate Office of Job Training Career Counselor .

All CareerForce staff have or will receive annual training on the Veteran's Priority of Service rule in order to best and most efficiently serve all veterans. There are a number of ways to identify Veterans in the CareerForce:

- As individuals enter the center, the receptionist greets customers at the front desk. Through a series of questions, we learn how to best serve the individual. Often during this exchange, veterans will self-identify their military background.
- Career Lab staff ask about Veteran status and encourage vets to complete a questionnaire to determine barriers and need (see attachment H). Persons applying for WIOA programs are asked about military service during intake/application. County Veteran's Service office refers individuals to CareerForce for services as well.
- Individuals signing into the Career Lab Cybrarian system indicating Military Service are flagged as Veterans and contacted via e-mail, phone or letter.

CareerForce staff and management support and actively work toward providing preference to all Veterans coming into the local CareerForce. Staff will continue to watch for opportunities to increase services to veterans and promote the hiring priority with area businesses. CareerForce staff from all partners will receive on-going training and updates at local CareerForce meetings to ensure that this executive order is clear and the action plan to address this is followed through.

6. *How do you inform current or former Military Service Members coming into your CareerForce about "Veteran Priority of Service?"*

As referenced in the response to the above question, individuals are asked about their status as a vet by resource room personnel. Self-identifying vets are referred to programs that suit their needs, including WIOA programs (see attachment I for a flow chart on how veterans move through the system). Provider websites clearly advertise the priority of service for veterans. No veteran is ever turned away for service, including enrollment into programs.

To ensure that all staff are deeply familiar with priority of service provisions for veterans, all staff participate in priority of service training throughout the region. Staff, particularly those who staff Career Labs and Reception areas, will also participate in online training through NVTI (National Veterans Training Institute) geared toward educating one stop staff about veteran priority of service.

7. *If your CareerForce has a presence on the Internet (outside of your local DEED CareerForce site) how do you promote Public Law 107-288, "Veterans Priority of Service" to veterans on that website?*

No CareerForce in the region has a unified presence on the internet outside of the DEED CareerForce site, but program providers all have their own websites. For providers who operate WIOA programs, each website clearly includes language regarding priority of service for Veterans, including a link to Public Law 107-288.

8. *How do you identify current or former Military Service Members with “significant barriers to employment?”*

Staff who work the Career Lab and/or Reception area at each CareerForce location in the region use a questionnaire to identify current or former military service members with significant barriers to employment, though this information is self-identified by the veteran (see attachment H). These questionnaires are given to each person who uses the CareerForce who affirms they are a military service member when asked by Career Lab and Reception staff. Veterans representatives are given all completed surveys and follow up with individuals who express a need for services.

9. *When a current or former Military Service Member with a significant barrier to employment is identified, how do you refer them to an appropriate intensive service provider when there is no Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) specialist in your CareerForces?*

All veterans, including those with significant barriers to employment, are referred to appropriate service providers by Career Lab or Reception area personnel to assist them with expressed needs that can be met by program services. They are never denied enrollment for any reason. See attachment I for the flow of referrals for veterans. The Northeast service area, including the local providers network, provides a systematic offering of services to veterans. The workforce and employability needs of all veterans, including those with significant barriers to employment will be met through variety of flexible strategies that lead to employment.

The Individual Service Strategy form (ISS) is the foundation for the entire case management strategy and is developed in partnership with the participant, reflecting their needs related to achieving their objective. This assessment expresses the interests and desires of the participating veteran and includes an examination of capabilities, vocational potential, barriers to employment, and supportive service needs and is used to develop a realistic employment goal and a service strategy. The objective assessment is an ongoing process and is not viewed as a one-time event. A comprehensive ISS is developed with the veteran, including both short- and long-term goals and how the skills they acquired in the military relate to civilian occupations. ISS goals and strategies are updated as short-term goals are achieved or the veteran's needs change.

WSA 3 also conducts, partners and supports Job/Career Fairs throughout our region and encourages veterans, including those with significant barriers to employment, to attend in order to practice networking skills and potentially meet their next employer. Private businesses in high demand industries are specifically recruited to attend these events, as well as educational institutions catering to high demand careers with a shared interest in training veterans.

10. *How are DVOP and/or Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) staff integrated into the overall service delivery strategy in your CareerForces?*

DVOP and LVER staff are centrally located in the Northeast region, primarily housed at the Hibbing CareerForce. They hold regular and predictable office hours at all CareerForces where they routinely connect with local program staff to ensure referrals are made, to follow up on common clients, answer any veteran-related

questions from clients or staff, and collect and follow up on completed

The region's LVER travels throughout the region visiting with businesses and clients responding to customer needs at each CareerForce location.

11. *Are all WIOA-funded partners complying with the guidance provided in the TEGE regarding Selective Service?*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

12. *What is your strategy to ensure that job-ready job seekers enrolled in your programs (including non-program universal customers) are registering in MinnesotaWorks.net and are making their resumes viewable to employers?*

All individuals who come into northeast CareerForce locations are asked if they are registered on MinnesotaWorks and if they have posted their resume in MinnesotaWorks so employers can view the resume. If a customer does not have a resume, staff informs the customer about the resume workshops held in each CareerForce location and encourages everyone to post to Minnesotaworks.net once a resume is developed. Also, a customer is given the opportunity to complete a worksheet questionnaire detailing their employment history to aid in the development of a resume. A component of all service delivery, whether through established programs or career services, include resumes posted on MinnesotaWorks that are closely linked to the local labor market needs and the labor needs of the area employers. Special care has recently been taken requiring that each program counselor ensures enrolled clients have a professional resume posted to the site.

13. ***Conflict of Interest and Integrity:*** *Local area boards must make decisions in keeping with several laws and regulations. Indicate below that your local area board is aware of DOL Training and Employment Guidance Letter 35-10 and Minnesota OGM 08-01 and its relevant federal laws and regulations.*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

14. *The local workforce development area's conflict of interest policies are in compliance with the above two references?*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

15. A. *The local workforce development area is aware of the referenced statute on Government Records.*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

B. *The local workforce development area is aware of the requirement to retain documentation for six years.*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

C. Complete **Attachment B – Local Workforce Development Area Contacts.**

16. **Handling and Protection of Personally Identifiable Information:** *The local workforce development area is complying with the guidance provided in TEGL 39-11.*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

17. **Human Trafficking:** *The local workforce development area is aware of TEGL 09-12 and will follow the procedures for working with trafficked persons.*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

18. **Gender Identification:** *The local workforce development area is aware of TEGL 37-14 and will follow the procedures for developing a similar policy including key terminology, and have in place regarding working with customers who may be lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Local workforce development areas will also participate in any related training.*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

19. **Uniform Guidance:** *The local workforce development area is aware of TEGL 15-14 regarding Uniform Guidance.*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_

20. A. *Briefly describe the local area board's policy and timetable for filling vacancies, replacing/reappointing individuals whose terms have come to an end.*

An extensive process is used to recruit new Workforce Development Board members who have major decision-making, ownership, or management authority, and represent the geographical industrial and cultural diversity of Northeast Minnesota. Consideration is given to women, minorities, the disabled and veteran nominees. Letters of recruitment describing the Workforce Development Board as an active, interesting group that meets six to nine times per year to design and oversee employment and training services as well as activities of the local CareerForce locations in Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis counties are sent to appropriate, representative organizations. Such organizations include both public and private entities including economic development and organizations that provide community services like housing and various support assistance. Businesses in high-growth occupations such as healthcare and finance are also targeted for recruitment.

All nominations are reviewed by the entire Local Elected Official Board. Discussion takes place regarding a candidate's merit and how they could contribute to the composition of the board. The Board then appoints members based on information supplied by nominees such as qualifications, interests, and how the applicant feels he/she can best

contribute to the goals of the Workforce Development Board. Applicants also provide information regarding their current duties and positions. Preference is given to nominees who have identified optimum policy-making authority and have the necessary expertise to contribute to developing and overseeing innovative and cost-effective employment and training activities.

Consideration is also given to nominees who could best donate time and energy to Workforce Development Board activities and who share a goal of developing a skilled workforce in northeastern Minnesota. The current composition of the board to is in compliance with board structure under WIOA.

B. *Is your local area board currently in compliance with WIOA?*

Yes  \_\_\_\_\_ No  \_\_\_\_\_

*If No, what steps will be taken to bring your local area board into compliance?*

C. Complete **Attachment C – Local Area Board Membership List.**

D. Complete **Attachment D – Local Area Board Committee List.**

21. If applicable, complete **Attachment E - Local Workforce Development Area Sub-Grantee List.**

22. If applicable, complete **Attachment F - Local Workforce Development Area Non-CFC Program Service Delivery Location List.**

### **Attachment G**

## **LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY INDUSTRIES IN REGIONAL ECONOMY**

*Based on your most recent analysis of regional economies, provide a list of the key industries in your regional economy.*

An industry's importance can be measured several ways, including concentration of employment, growth, demand, and wages. Based on these measures, key industries in Workforce Service Area 3 include **Mining, Construction, Utilities, Educational Services, Healthcare & Social Assistance, and Public Administration.**

Among the 20 industry sectors, five paid above average wages *and* were more concentrated in WDB 3 when compared to the entire state: Mining, Construction, Educational Services, and Public Administration. Of those, Educational Services and Public Administration accounted for the most jobs, about 19% of the area's total employment. Mining and Construction combined to account for an additional 10.7% and Utilities jobs represented only 1% of employment.

Healthcare and Social Assistance was the largest industry in the area, accounting for just over 19% of employment. The next largest industries were Retail Trade (14%), Accommodation and Food Services (9.5%), and Public Administration (9.3%).

Despite accounting for 23.5% of area jobs, the average annual wages of Retail Trade (\$28,943) and Accommodation and Food Services (\$16,805) are two of the lowest in the region. The average wage for Healthcare and Social Assistance (\$43,270) is also below the area average, but just barely and employment is more concentrated in the area.

The most concentrated industries in WSA 3 are Mining (24.3 times more concentrated), Utilities (2.1), Public Administration (2.0), Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (1.4), and Retail Trade (1.4). The least concentrated industries are Management of Companies (0.1), Information (0.3), and Professional & Technical Services (0.3).

Every industry, with the exception of Management of Companies, lost jobs from 2019 through the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2020. Mining (-9.3%) and Construction (-8.7%) saw greater employment losses than the area average. Educational Services (-7.2%), Utilities (-6.6%), Public Administration (-3.1%), and Healthcare & Social Assistance (-2.6%) fared better than the average industry. From 2014-2019 Construction grew the most (+514 jobs, 11.6%) followed by Public Administration (+524, 7.5%), Educational Services (+426, 6.4%), and Healthcare & Social Assistance (+372, 2.5%). Mining declined 8.2% (-375 jobs), and Utilities employment fell by 172 jobs or about -17% over the five-year period. Of all industries, the fastest growing was Transportation & Warehousing which grew 15.8% from 2014-2019. The largest decline was in Information which declined 20.5%.

Occupational definitions can often cross industry lines, yet the most in-demand occupations are another helpful indicator of key industries in the area. Eleven of the top 50 in demand occupations in Northeast Minnesota are in either Healthcare Support or Healthcare Practitioners or Technical occupational groups. Educational Instruction and Library Occupations, typically aligned with the Educational Services industry, accounted for an additional four of the 50 most in-demand occupations in 2020. Three of the top 15 most in demand occupations were in the Building and Grounds Maintenance occupational group, which has overlap with the Other Services industry. Construction and Extraction and Transportation and Material Moving occupations also accounted for five and four of the top 50 in-demand occupations, respectively.

**Industry Employment Statistics for WSA 3 – Northeast, 2019 and 2020**

| NAICS Industry Title                       | 2020 Data (Q1-Q3) |                |                  |                       |                |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
|  | Number of Firms   | Number of Jobs | Avg. Annual Wage | Percent of Employment | Change in Jobs |
| <b>Total, All Industries</b>               | <b>6,437</b>      | <b>78,145</b>  | <b>\$44,748</b>  | <b>100.0%</b>         | <b>1.0</b>     |
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt         | 131               | 554            | \$41,453         | 0.7%                  | 0.9            |
| <i>Mining</i>                              | 33                | 3,824          | \$89,914         | 4.9%                  | 24.3           |
| <i>Construction</i>                        | 851               | 4,517          | \$63,609         | 5.8%                  | 1.2            |
| Manufacturing                              | 255               | 5,325          | \$60,891         | 6.8%                  | 0.6            |
| <i>Utilities</i>                           | 43                | 752            | \$94,545         | 1.0%                  | 2.1            |
| Wholesale Trade                            | 177               | 1,845          | \$61,764         | 2.4%                  | 0.5            |
| <i>Retail Trade</i>                        | 936               | 10,927         | \$28,943         | 14.0%                 | 1.4            |
| Transportation & Warehousing               | 287               | 2,480          | \$42,994         | 3.2%                  | 0.8            |
| Information                                | 87                | 453            | \$41,705         | 0.6%                  | 0.3            |
| Finance & Insurance                        | 280               | 2,504          | \$54,248         | 3.2%                  | 0.6            |
| Real Estate & Rental & Leasing             | 168               | 484            | \$26,744         | 0.6%                  | 0.5            |
| Professional & Technical Services          | 323               | 1,487          | \$55,657         | 1.9%                  | 0.3            |
| Management of Companies                    | 16                | 283            | \$84,945         | 0.4%                  | 0.1            |
| Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.         | 250               | 1,920          | \$30,942         | 2.5%                  | 0.5            |
| <i>Educational Services</i>                | 193               | 6,540          | \$46,601         | 8.4%                  | 1.1            |
| <i>Health Care &amp; Social Assistance</i> | 669               | 15,075         | \$43,270         | 19.3%                 | 1.1            |
| Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation          | 173               | 2,088          | \$26,510         | 2.7%                  | 1.4            |
| Accommodation & Food Services              | 700               | 7,420          | \$16,805         | 9.5%                  | 1.2            |
| Other Services                             | 557               | 2,391          | \$31,868         | 3.1%                  | 1.0            |
| <i>Public Administration</i>               | 312               | 7,277          | \$50,320         | 9.3%                  | 2.0            |

Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages



## CERTIFICATIONS

By signing and submitting this plan, the local area board is certifying on behalf of itself and the subgrantee, where applicable:

- A. That this ***Regional and Local Workforce Development Area Plan*** was prepared and is in accordance with all applicable titles of the WIOA Act of 2014, Title V of the Older Americans Act, applicable Minnesota state statutes and that it is consistent with Minnesota's current and future state plans;
- B. that it has provided at least a thirty day period for public comment and input into the development of plan by members of the local area board and the public (including persons with disabilities) and has provided information regarding the plan and the planning process, including the plan and supporting documentation, in alternative formats when requested and that any comments representing disagreement with the plan are included with the local plan forwarded to DEED (as the Governor's representative) Section 118(c); Section 108 (d)
- C. that the public (including individuals with disabilities) have access to all of the local area board's and its components' meetings and information regarding the local area board's and its components' activities;
- D. that fiscal control and fund accounting procedures necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid through the allotments funded through the contract/master agreement issued by DEED have been established;
- E. that it is, and will maintain a certifiable local area board;
- F. that it will comply with the confidentiality requirements of WIA Section 136 (f)(3) and WIOA Section 116 (i)(3)
- G. that it will ensure that no funds under its discretion are used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing;
- H. that this plan was developed in consultation with the local area board;
- I. that it acknowledges the specific performance standards for each of its programs and will strive to meet them;
- J. that the local area board members will not act in a manner that would create a conflict of interest as identified in 20 CFR 667.200(a)(4), including voting on any matter regarding the provision of service by that member or the entity that s/he represents and any matter that would provide a financial benefit to that member or to his or her immediate family;
- K. that local area board and staff are aware of local CareerForce Center services, and are working with and referring to the CareerForce Center services as appropriate;
- L. that all staff are provided the opportunity to participate in appropriate staff training;
- M. that, if applicable, the local area board must maintain the currency of its information in the System Award Management until submission of the final financial report or receive the final payment, whichever is later;
- N. that sponsored (in whole or in part) conferences are charged to the grantee as appropriate and allowable; and
- O. that funds are not used for the purpose of defraying costs of a conference unless it is directly and programmatically related to the purpose of the award.
- P. that the local area board and its sub-grantees must also adhere to the same certifications and assurances that DEED must assure.

# SIGNATURE PAGE

Local Workforce Development  
Area Name Northeast

Local Area Board Name Northeast Workforce Development Board

Name and Contact Information for the Local Area Board Chair:

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Name</b>                  | <u>Bud Stone</u>                             |
| <b>Title</b>                 | <u>President</u>                             |
| <b>Organization</b>          | <u>Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce</u> |
| <b>Address 1</b>             | <u>28650 Hidden Point Trail</u>              |
| <b>Address 2</b>             | <u></u>                                      |
| <b>City, State, ZIP Code</b> | <u>Grand Rapids, MN 55744</u>                |
| <b>Phone</b>                 | <u>(218) 326-6619</u>                        |
| <b>E-mail</b>                | <u>bud@grandmn.com</u>                       |

Name and Contact Information for the Chief Local Elected Official(s):

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Name</b>                  | <u>Kevin Adee</u>                      |
| <b>Title</b>                 | <u>Koochiching County Commissioner</u> |
| <b>Organization</b>          | <u>Koochiching County</u>              |
| <b>Address 1</b>             | <u></u>                                |
| <b>Address 2</b>             | <u></u>                                |
| <b>City, State, ZIP Code</b> | <u></u>                                |
| <b>Phone</b>                 | <u></u>                                |
| <b>E-mail</b>                | <u></u>                                |

We, the undersigned, attest that this submittal is the Program Year 2021-2024 Local Plan for our Workforce Development Board and Local Workforce Development Area and hereby certify that this Local Plan has been prepared as required, and is in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws, rules and regulations.

## Local Area Board Chair

Name Bud Stone

Title Local Area Board Chair

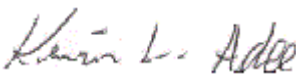
Signature 

Date May 27, 2021

## Chief Local Elected Official

Name Kevin Adee, Chair

Title Koochiching County  
Commissioner

Signature 

Date May 27, 2021

## REGIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Regional Workforce Development Area

2

Local Workforce Development Area

Northeast and Duluth

| MEMBER                                   | ORGANZIATION   |
|--|--|
| <b>Allen Rasmussen</b>                   | Higher Education   |
| <b>Jeri Werner</b>                       | Rehabilitation Services Regional Administrator           |
| <b>Bud Stone, NE WDB Chair</b>           | President, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce         |
| <b>Julie Sachs</b>                       | Job Service Manager                                      |
| <b>Stan Paczynski</b>                    | Organized Labor Rep/Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers    |
| <b>Mary Ferguson, Duluth Board Chair</b> | Essentia Health  |
| <b>Ian Vincent, Duluth Board</b>         | Arrowhead Partnership for Economic Expansion (APEX)      |
| <b>Patty Fleege, Duluth Board</b>        | Adult Basic Education                                    |
| <b>Brad Vieths, Duluth Board</b>         | Duluth Public Schools & Superior Carl Perkins Consortium |

**Attachment B**

**LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA CONTACTS**

| ROLE   | Contact Name | Phone        | Email  | Reports to (name only) |
|--|--------------|--------------|--|------------------------|
| Rapid Response Liaison for Mass Layoffs (see section C.2.D.)           | Randy Back   | 218/735-6102 | <a href="mailto:randy.back@nemojt.org">randy.back@nemojt.org</a> | Marie Domiano          |
| Equal Opportunity Officer (see section D.3.B.)                         | Tara Helms   | 218/735-6170 | <a href="mailto:tara.helms@nemojt.org">tara.helms@nemojt.org</a> | Marie Domiano          |
| Program Complaint Officer (see section D.5.B.)                         | Tara Helms   | 218/735-6170 | <a href="mailto:tara.helms@nemojt.org">tara.helms@nemojt.org</a> | Marie Domiano          |
| Records Management/Records Retention Coordinator (see section D.16.C.) | Tara Helms   | 218/735-6170 | <a href="mailto:tara.helms@nemojt.org">tara.helms@nemojt.org</a> | Marie Domiano          |
| ADA Coordinator (see section D.22.)                                    | Tara Helms   | 218/735-6170 | <a href="mailto:tara.helms@nemojt.org">tara.helms@nemojt.org</a> | Marie Domiano          |
| Data Practices Coordinator (see section D.22.)                         | Randy Back   | 218/735-6102 | <a href="mailto:randy.back@nemojt.org">randy.back@nemojt.org</a> | Marie Domiano          |
| English as Second Language (ESL) Coordinator (see section D.22.)       | Randy Back   | 218/735-6102 | <a href="mailto:randy.back@nemojt.org">randy.back@nemojt.org</a> | Marie Domiano          |

**Official Name of CareerForce** Virginia, Hibbing, Grand Rapids, International Falls, Cloquet

| ROLE                                       | Contact Name  | Phone  | Email  | Reports to (name only)   |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Site Representative                        | Randy Back/Virginia<br>Cindy Slater/Cloquet<br>Jeremiah Olson/Grand Rapids<br>Sheila Demenge/Int'l Falls<br>/Hibbing<br>/Duluth | 218/735-6102<br>218/878-5004<br>218/322-6083<br>218/283-9427 | <a href="mailto:randy.back@nemojt.org">randy.back@nemojt.org</a><br><a href="mailto:cindy.slater@areoa.org">cindy.slater@areoa.org</a><br><a href="mailto:jeremiah.olson@aeoa.org">jeremiah.olson@aeoa.org</a><br><a href="mailto:sheila.demenge@state.mn.us">sheila.demenge@state.mn.us</a> | Marie Domiano<br>Jan Francisco<br>Jan Francisco<br>Julie Sachs |
| Job Service Manager                        | Julie Sachs   | 218/396-0523   | <a href="mailto:julie.sachs@state.mn.us">julie.sachs@state.mn.us</a>   |  |
| Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager | Sonia Vinnes (Virginia, IFalls)<br><br>Randa Lunkmark (Grand Rapids, Cloquet)   |  | <a href="mailto:sonia.vinnes@state.mn.us">sonia.vinnes@state.mn.us</a><br><br><a href="mailto:randa.lundmark@state.mn.us">randa.lundmark@state.mn.us</a>   | Jeri Werner  |
| State Services for the Blind Manager       |   |  |  |  |

**Attachment B**

|   |               |              |  |               |
|---|---------------|--------------|--|---------------|
| Local Workforce Development Area Director | Marie Domiano | 218/735-6172 | <a href="mailto:marie.domiano@nemojt.org">marie.domiano@nemojt.org</a> | LEO Board     |
| Adult Basic Education (ABE)               | Tracy Chase   |              | <a href="mailto:tracy.chase@aeoa.org">tracy.chase@aeoa.org</a>         | Jan Francisco |
| Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager       | Chris Vito    | 218/749-7754 | <a href="mailto:c.vito@mesabirange.edu">c.vito@mesabirange.edu</a>     |               |
| Adult                                     | Randy Back    | 218/735-6102 | <a href="mailto:randy.back@nemojt.org">randy.back@nemojt.org</a>       | Marie Domiano |
| Dislocated Worker                         | Randy Back    | 218/735-6102 | <a href="mailto:randy.back@nemojt.org">randy.back@nemojt.org</a>       | Marie Domiano |
| Youth                                     | Randy Back    | 218/735-6102 | <a href="mailto:randy.back@nemojt.org">randy.back@nemojt.org</a>       | Marie Domiano |

Attachment C

**LOCAL AREA BOARD MEMBERSHIP LIST**

Regional Workforce Development Area

2

Local Workforce Development Area

3 - Northeast

| MEMBER   | POSITION/ORGANZIATION   | TERM ENDS  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS IN LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA (must be majority)</b></p> <p>Bud Stone<br/>1 NW 3<sup>rd</sup> St, Grand Rapids MN 55744<br/>218/326-6619 <a href="mailto:bud@grandmn.com">bud@grandmn.com</a></p> <p>Terri Nystrom<br/>1101 9<sup>th</sup> St N Virginia, MN 55792<br/>218/742-8691<br/><a href="mailto:Theresa.Nystrom@EssentiaHealth.org">Theresa.Nystrom@EssentiaHealth.org</a></p> <p>Kelly Hertling<br/>1414 E 37th St<br/>Hibbing MN 55746/263-8993<br/><a href="mailto:Khertling@mesabi.com">Khertling@mesabi.com</a></p> <p>Kelly Zink<br/>225 Sunnyside Dr, Cloquet MN 55720<br/>218/879-1551 <a href="mailto:kzink@cloquet.com">kzink@cloquet.com</a></p> <p>Kelsey Johnson<br/>324 W Superior St, Suite 502, Duluth MN 55802<br/>651/402-2475 <a href="mailto:kjohnsonl@taconite.org">kjohnsonl@taconite.org</a></p> <p>Jeff Lee<br/>P O Box 409, Grand Rapids MN 55744<br/>218/326-9414 <a href="mailto:Jeff.lee@grsb.com">Jeff.lee@grsb.com</a></p> <p>Josh Goutermont<br/>30 W Superior St, Duluth, MN 55802<br/>218/723-7552 <a href="mailto:jgoutermont@allete.com">jgoutermont@allete.com</a></p> <p>Todd Scaia<br/>8373 Unity Dr, Mt. Iron, MN 55768<br/>218/748-7480 <a href="mailto:todd.scaia@slhduluth.com">todd.scaia@slhduluth.com</a></p> | <p>President/Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Senior HR Business Partner- Essentia Health</p> <p>Human Resources Supervisor/L&amp;M Radiator</p> <p>President/Cloquet Area Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>President/Iron Mining Association of MN</p> <p>Senior Vice-President/Grand Rapids State Bank</p> <p>Manager Employee &amp; Labor Relations/Allete, Inc.</p> <p>Clinic Manager/St. Luke's</p> | <p>12/1/23</p> <p>6/30/23</p> <p>3/15/24</p> <p>6/30/23</p> <p>5/25/21</p> <p>9/25/21</p> <p>12/14/23</p> <p>5/25/21</p> |

## Attachment C

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p>Wayne Kangas<br/>2632 7th Ave E, Hibbing MN 55746 218/290-7273<br/><a href="mailto:Wayne.s.kangas@gmail.com">Wayne.s.kangas@gmail.com</a></p> <p>David Ulrich<br/>380 St Peter St #705, St Paul MN 55201<br/>612/325-2126 <a href="mailto:dulrich@twin-metals.com">dulrich@twin-metals.com</a></p> <p>Stephanie Skraba<br/>316 Lake Street West, Chisholm, MN 55719<br/>218/254-7960 <a href="mailto:sskraba@ci.chisholm.mn.us">sskraba@ci.chisholm.mn.us</a></p>   | <p>Business Consultant/Namhae consulting</p> <p>Vice-President/Twin Metals MN</p> <p>Director/Chisholm Economic Development Authority</p>   | <p>5/25/21</p> <p>10/10/22</p> <p>6/30/23</p> |
| <p><b>LABOR &amp; COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS</b><br/>(20% Minimum and 2 or more nominated by state labor federations and one joint labor-management apprenticeship program labor organization or training director)</p> <p>Jan Francisco<br/>702 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave S, Virginia MN 55792<br/>218/748-7332<br/><a href="mailto:jan.francisco@aeoa.org">jan.francisco@aeoa.org</a></p> <p>Jason Quiggin<br/>107 S 15<sup>th</sup> Ave W, Virginia MN 55792<br/>218/741-2482 <a href="mailto:Lu589bm@uanet.org">Lu589bm@uanet.org</a></p> <p>Stan Paczynski<br/>3529 Stebner Rd, Duluth MN 55812<br/>218/724-8374 <a href="mailto:spaczynski@bac1mn-nd.org">spaczynski@bac1mn-nd.org</a></p> | <p>Director of Employment and Training/Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency</p> <p>Business Manager/Plumbers &amp; Pipefitters Local 589</p> <p>Business Rep/Bricklayers &amp; Allied Craftworkers Union 1 MN/ND</p> | <p>5/06/23</p> <p>9/24/23</p> <p>9/24/23</p>  |
| <p><b>EDUCATION &amp; TRAINING</b><br/>(Required: ABE; Higher Education)</p> <p>Jan Francisco<br/>702 3rd Ave S, Virginia MN 55792<br/>218/748-7332 <a href="mailto:jan.francisco@aeoa.org">jan.francisco@aeoa.org</a></p> <p>Mike Raich<br/>1001 Chestnut St W, Virginia MN 55792<br/>218/471-0016 <a href="mailto:wmaki@nhed.edu">wmaki@nhed.edu</a></p> <p>Allen Rasmussen<br/>116 Park Avenue, International Falls MN 56649<br/>218/283-8111 <a href="mailto:allen.rasmussen@rainyriver.edu">allen.rasmussen@rainyriver.edu</a></p>  | <p>Director of Employment and Training/Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency</p> <p>President/NE Higher Education District</p> <p>Education Consultant/Self-Employed</p>  | <p>5/06/23</p> <p>6/30/21</p> <p>6/30/23</p>  |

## Attachment C

| <b>GOVERNMENT</b><br>(Required: Economic Development; Job Service; Rehabilitation)  |  |         |
|---|--|---------|
| Jeri Werner<br>402 W 1st St, 2nd Floor Duluth, MN 55802<br>218/302-8430 <a href="mailto:Jeri.lynn.werner@state.mn.us">Jeri.lynn.werner@state.mn.us</a>        | Northern Regional Manager/Vocational Rehab Services              | 9/6/23  |
| Julie Sachs<br>303 22 <sup>nd</sup> Ave W Suite 107 Alexandria, MN 56308<br>218/396-0523 <a href="mailto:Julie.Sachs@state.mn.us">Julie.Sachs@state.mn.us</a> | Field Operations Manager/Job Service                             | 4/22/22 |
| Roy Smith<br>4261 Hwy 53 S, Eveleth, MN 55734<br>218/735-3039 <a href="mailto:Roy.Smith@state.mn.us">Roy.Smith@state.mn.us</a>                                | Director, Education & Workforce Development/Iron Range Resources | 5/25/21 |
| Lynn Krall<br>1810 12th Ave E, Hibbing MN 55746<br>218/262-6010 <a href="mailto:krall@stlouiscountymn.gov">krall@stlouiscountymn.gov</a>                      | Financial Worker Senior/St Louis County Social Services          | 7/1/23  |
| Sonia Vinnes<br>402 West 1st St. Duluth MN 55802<br>218/302-8421 <a href="mailto:sonia.vinnes@state.mn.us">sonia.vinnes@state.mn.us</a>                       | Vocational Rehabilitation Area Manager/DEED                      | 6/30/23 |



**Attachment C**

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

| <b>NAME</b>                         | <b>ADDRESS/PHONE/EMAIL</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>CHAIR</b><br>Bud Stone           | 1 NW 3rd St, Grand Rapids MN 55744<br>218/326-6619 bud@grandmn.com                        |
| <b>VICE CHAIR</b><br>Kelly Zink     | 225 Sunnyside Dr, Cloquet MN 55720<br>218/879-1551 kzink@cloquet.com                      |
| <b>SECRETARY</b><br>Allen Rasmussen | 116 Park Ave, International Falls MN 56649<br>218/283-8111 allen.rasmussen@rainyriver.edu |



Attachment E

**LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA SUB-GRANTEE LIST**

Regional Workforce Development Area

2

Local Workforce Development Area

3 - Northeast

| Name of Sub-Grantee | Services Provided | Funding Source | Sub-Grantee located in which CAREERFORCE? | If not in CAREERFORCE, provide Address, City, State, ZIP Code |
|---------------------|-------------------|----------------|---|---|
| N/A                 |                   |                |   |   |
|                     |                   |                |   |   |
|                     |                   |                |   |   |
|                     |                   |                |   |   |
|                     |                   |                |   |   |
|                     |                   |                |   |   |
|                     |                   |                |   |   |
|                     |                   |                |   |   |
|                     |                   |                |   |   |
|                     |                   |                |   |   |

## LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA NON-WFC PROGRAM SERVICE DELIVERY LOCATION LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

2

Local Workforce Development Area

3 - Northeast

| Name and Location (City)                   | Program Service Delivered   |
|--|---|
| Aitkin CareerForce Office, Aitkin MN 56431 | WIOA/WIA Adult, In-school/Out-of-school Youth, Federal and State Dislocated Workers, MFIP, DWP, MYP |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |
|  |   |

**LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY INDUSTRIES IN REGIONAL ECONOMY**



# Minnesota Veteran Questionnaire

**TO BEST SERVE YOU, PLEASE FILL OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.**

The information you provide is voluntary and will be kept confidential. You don't have to provide the information, but failure to do so could affect your eligibility for additional veteran program benefits.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Military Service Dates: From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

|    |  | PLEASE CIRCLE |    |
|----|--|---------------|----|
| 1. | Do you have a service connected disability rated 10% or higher from the Veterans Administration, or have you filed a claim for a service connected disability?   | YES           | NO |
|    | Were you discharged or released from active duty because of service-connected disability?  | YES           | NO |
| 2. | Have you left the military within the past three years AND been unemployed for at least 27 weeks at any time in the past year?   | YES           | NO |
| 3. | Are you homeless? OR lacking a fixed, regular, adequate nighttime residence? OR is your primary nighttime residence a shelter?   | YES           | NO |
|    | Based on section 103 of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, are you fleeing or attempting to flee, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking, or other dangerous or life-threatening conditions in your current housing situation, including where the health and safety of children are jeopardized, and you have no other residence and you lack the resources or support networks to obtain other permanent housing. | YES           | NO |
| 4. | Are you 18 to 24 years old?  | YES           | NO |
| 5. | Is your education level less than a high school diploma or GED?  | YES           | NO |
| 6. | Are you, or your immediate family that you live with, currently receiving public assistance, and/or are you at a lower-income level according to the chart below?  | YES           | NO |
| 7. | Are you an offender who is currently incarcerated or have you been released from incarceration?  | YES           | NO |
| 8. | Have you participated in the Transition Assistance Program, and <i>been identified as in need of additional career services?</i>   | YES           | NO |
| 9. | Are you an <b>active service member</b> who is ill, or wounded and receiving treatment in a military treatment facility or warrior transition unit?  | YES           | NO |

**For spouses of military members and veterans:**

|    |   |     |    |
|----|---|-----|----|
| 1. | Are you the spouse of a veteran rated at 100% disabled by the VA? Or the spouse of a military member who was POW, MIA, KIA or who died of their service connected disability? | YES | NO |
| 2. | Are you the spouse or other family caregiver of a wounded, ill or injured active duty member?   | YES | NO |

| INCOME LEVEL |            |           |
|--------------|------------|-----------|
| Family Size: | Metro Area | Non-Metro |
| 1            | \$ 9,111   | \$ 9,006  |
| 2            | \$14,931   | \$14,752  |
| 3            | \$20,498   | \$20,252  |
| 4            | \$25,300   | \$24,998  |
| 5            | \$29,860   | \$29,505  |
| 6            | \$34,919   | \$34,504  |

Metro area counties include:  
Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, Washington

| FOR STAFF USE ONLY      |              |              |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| DATE RECEIVED:          | RECEIVED BY: | REFERRED TO: |
| ADDITIONAL STAFF NOTES: |              |              |



*Thank You for Serving.*

DEED is an equal opportunity employer and service provider.  
 Upon request, this information can be made available in alternate formats for individuals with disabilities.



April 2016

# Veterans & Eligible Persons Intake Process

