

DRAFT

LOCAL PLAN- STRATEGIC OPERATIONS

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 Center per local workforce development area as comprehensive and make recommendations on recognizing affiliate and standalone partner sites.

In the Northwest Workforce Development Area, the local board has previously designated a comprehensive Workforce Center now called CareerForce located in Thief River Falls. This location is centrally located in the seven county local area and the physical office is located on the Northland Community and Technical College campus. The board has also designated an affiliate site in Crookston and Roseau.

Local staff at the Workforce Center now CareerForce includes the following core partners:

- Northwest Private Industry Council (local board and WIOA administrative entity)
- Inter-County Community Council (contracted provider for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth career services, as well as independent recipient of Minnesota Youth Program and Senior Employment Services funding)
- State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development/DEED
 - o Job Service Staff/Wagner-Peyser
 - o Contracted provider of MFIP/TANF and SNAP employment services for several local counties
 - o Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Adult Basic Education (ABE) is a Title II provider under WIOA. There are two ABE consortia in LWDA#1: Northwest Service Cooperative (NWSC) ABE is based out of Thief River Falls and oversees 16 ABE classrooms in 27 school districts located within LWDA's #1 & 2. Tri County Community Corrections ABE is based out of Crookston, with classrooms in Fosston and at the county jail in Crookston. Adult Basic Education has a seat on the Workforce Development Board, represented by a member of NWSC ABE who assists in representation of ABE partner programs.

Adult Basic Education also has one classroom co-located on the Northland college campus, but does not co-locate in the same office suite. Workforce Center and ABE staff are trained to make appropriate referrals between agencies. Other ABE classrooms outside the WFC are available for phone referral.

Other core services that are available for phone referral include:

- Veterans Services
- Business Services

The local board will continue to work with core providers on site selection and discuss methods to designate affiliate sites. Our core partners have physical locations in the many area communities in the local area as described in Attachment F.

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

Since we currently have one full Workforce Center now CareerForce in our service area, and two affiliate sites coordination and proper connectivity among the physical sites within the local workforce development area will be executed based on the agreed upon local area one memo of understanding.

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

The Northwest Private Industry Council has amended bylaws to include the addition of a one-stop committee. This committee works, and the members collectively act to coordinate the work of the service providers within our local workforce development area. Members will also consider ways in which the core partners can best share information, and coordinate staffing levels to avoid the duplication of services. Members review and consider state guidance on this issue and look to other workforce development areas for ideas on best practices.

Coordination and connectivity between service providers (such as the Workforce Center now CareerForce and the DEED offices in Roseau, East Grand Forks and Crookston) is achieved through itinerant staff that travel between locations with Roseau and Crookston serving as affiliate sites. Service providers are knowledgeable about ABE services in their areas, and are able to connect and refer clients to ABE classrooms in the communities within their workforce service areas.

ABE established a classroom that is co-located with the DEED office in Crookston. Physical co-location of partner services in that community will allow for better referral and seamless educational services delivery to all clients.

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

The current hours of operation at our Workforce Center and partner sites is from 8 am to 4:30pm, Monday through Friday. Non-traditional hours are available to accommodate special needs such as evening facilitation of workshops, including recently introduced Job Search Workshops at public libraries on Saturdays. Additional strategies that can maximize client services, especially those with barriers will be considered. Due to Covid we are working remotely with clients.

ABE programs are located throughout the region in a variety of locations, including county jails, churches, schools, community centers, college campuses and libraries. Services are offered at varied times throughout the week, and online learning platforms provide access to content and instruction during non-traditional hours.

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.

WIOA identifies specific areas of Career Services. The local board, either by staff or through contracts and MOUs with local partners, provides the following services to individuals who are adults or dislocated workers through the one-stop delivery system:

- Outreach,
- intake and orientation
- Initial assessment
- Labor exchange services
- Eligibility for services
- Referrals to programs
- Performance and cost information
- Information on unemployment insurance
- Financial aid information and
- Follow-up services

Recent regional planning efforts have emphasized the importance and desire for customers of the WorkForce Center now CareerForce and its partner agencies to create a service delivery system where there is “no wrong front door.” The vision behind this goal is to eliminate barriers to accessing services.

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

Our local board recognizes the entire workforce development system needs to enhance online services that virtualizes the WorkForce Center now CareerForce experience and augment services provided at WorkForce Centers now CareerForce. However, due to the size of technological investment that is necessary to accomplish this goal, the local board is unable to make significant contributions as a single entity. However, with the change of operating because of Covid this past year we have done some of this.

ABE programs embed technology in all classes and continue to expand access to distance learning platforms throughout the state. Access to digital platforms allows students with mobility challenges to access technology based instruction. The North Star Digital Literacy assessment is available to all ABE consortia classrooms statewide to help assure that learners master basic computer skills in a variety of areas, and students have the option of taking the assessment under a proctored environment to earn a portable North Star Digital Literacy certificate. All ABE sites within the region meet accessibility standards.

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.

One of the benefits of having Inter-County Community Council (ICCC) as the provider of program services for our WIOA programs is the ability of staff to more easily blend other supportive services available in the area. Inter County Community Council is a private, non-profit Community Action Organization that was established in 1965. Its mission is to provide services, assistance and other activities of sufficient scope and magnitude to give promise of progress toward the alleviation of poverty, its symptoms and its causes. ICCC is the contracted program provider for WIOA Adult, DW, State DW and WIOA Youth activities. In addition, ICCC assists families and individuals throughout our service area by offering a number of programs designed to help people meet their basic needs while supporting their movement toward greater economic self-sufficiency. These supportive services consist of:

- The Family Service Department
 - Homeless Youth
 - MNSURE Enrollment
- The Food Shelf
- Energy Assistance

- Crisis Fuel
- Weatherization
- Minnesota Youth Employment and Training program (direct grant recipient)
- Senior Employment
- Early Head Start and Head Start

ICCC's core service area includes Pennington, Red Lake, East Polk and Clearwater counties. ICCC works closely with the two other Community Action Organizations in our area (Northwest Community Action in Badger and Tri-Valley Community Action in Crookston) to help clients living in those service areas access these same 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.

Upon receipt of these policies from our state partners, the local board reviews, consults with our local partners, and works to implement policies on the local level to ensure compliance with infrastructure funding.

At the present time we utilize a cost allocation plan for the Thief River Falls WorkForce Center now CareerForce that is coordinated with our partners from Job Service and Vocational Rehabilitation. This plan includes calculations for costs associated with space, communications, reception area and resource area usage, as well as a site manager. This plan is updated annually to reflect changes in staffing, lease increases and program participation. We are currently working to implement an Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA).

In the event that the local board, chief elected officials, and our local partners are unable to reach consensus agreement on methods of sufficiently funding the costs of infrastructure of one-stop centers for a program year, we will utilize the methods identified in WIOA law. However, currently we have reached a consensus agreement.

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.

We are co-located, participating fully, and operating our local area's agreed upon memorandum of understanding.

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

The local board further understands that the WIOA law calls for our local board, with the agreement of the chief elected officials, to develop new Memorandums of Understanding with our local partners concerning the operation of the one-stop delivery system in the local area. This has been done and was negotiated on the local level through Zoom meetings, telephone conference calls, and via email. An IFA is actively underway and in final stages of completion.

As final regulations are announced and state policies are provided, our local board will review, consult with our local partners and then begin work to implement policies on the local level to ensure compliance with infrastructure funding.

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

The local board under WIOA is working to engage key stakeholders to execute the Functions of the Local Board vision and mission for the seven county area. In doing so, the goal will be to develop strategies alongside key community partners that will better connect community, government, business and education to implement the state's vision statement: *a healthy economy, where all Minnesotans have or on the path to meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage, and all employers are able to fill jobs in demand.*

The Northwest WDB has engaged in a focus area discussion in place of a full strategic planning process. Part of this work also included efforts that coincide with the larger statewide effort to build brand awareness and support of the larger workforce development system. The goals outlined in Minnesota's State Plan cannot be accomplished through the work of one agency, but need to be part of a multisystem effort. The local board acknowledges this and will continue to build relationships with key stakeholders within the region, including job seekers, employers, WorkForce Center now CareerForce Partner agencies, institutions of higher education, and community-based organizations.

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

Connecting individuals to education, and providing support services for those in education including career navigation, employment placement and retention is the foundation of existing programs. When a WIOA-eligible client, including an eligible youth who is seeking training first talks with a Career Counselor, the first thing that occurs is a discussion of the ultimate goal of the client, or identifying the field they wish to enter or 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 obtaining that ultimate goal. Because of the limitations of WIOA funding of no longer 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 WIOA clients, including youth, have plans to eventually build upon their vocational training, whether by finishing a bachelor's degree or other specialized training. Ensuring that WIOA services provide the necessary foundation for those future plans precisely illustrates our capacity to provide career pathway services to youth.

Another way to consider this capacity is through our partnership with ABE. Often clients, including youth with barriers to employment come to us wishing to enter a post-secondary training program but don't have a diploma or 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 youth are not set up for failure but rather have the appropriate skills in place before they set out on their pathway.

All WIOA-funded youth will be closely followed through their career pathway and provided a myriad of necessary supports to keep them going. Critical among these supports for many students is the provision of transportation assistance for those that travel a great distance to attend school. Chief among our services is the provision of placement assistance upon graduation. Local Workforce Centers offer a series of placement services including resume development, mock interviews, Creative Job Search, and other workshops designed locally. Incidentally these workshops and services are also available to universal customers who may have been working on their own career pathway independently. Identifying both career pathways and stackable credentials for career planning helps youth to chart a viable path for life-long learning and career development. Stackable credentials and clearly identified career pathways like these that exist in health care occupations allow youth to start careers with entry level employment and move upwards with additional skill attainment. Close working relationships formed by counselors within business and industry

provide insights and credible information about the skills they desire from their workers.

ISEEK.org has a number of tools to assist youth in the process of choosing an appropriate and achievable career pathway.

ICCC has long standing partnerships with providers of Adult Basic Education, Alternative Learning Centers, high school counselors, and special education teachers. The local college counselors, Homeless Youth services (ICCC), DW/Adult, MFIP, DWP caseworkers, VIP, the Department of Corrections. Headstart Staff (ICCC), are just a few of the partners who may also serve/come in contact with young adults with barriers.

- 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.

For purposes of this local plan, NWPIC will provide the PY21 performance indicators until which time PY22 Measures have been negotiated.

- 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.

The strategic goals and vision of the local board are carried out per WorkForce Investment and Opportunity Act Functions of Local Board. Career Pathways Education and the establishment of a Business Services committee will be developed as agreed upon by the board. As those broad goals are created in collaboration with our core partners, we will look for improved methods of service delivery and implementation in our local area.

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.

Despite the reduction in funding for the in-school youth population under WIOA, activities related to the outreach and recruitment will continue. These actions will include:

- Strengthened connections with school districts in the service area, including Alternative Learning Centers to educate and inform school staff about WIA/WIOA programs with an emphasis on guidance counselors, social workers' and special education teachers, to ensure program information is available to students most "at risk."

- Encourage present and past participants to share program information with their friends and family members.

- Participate in community events such as career expos, including the Northern Valley Career Expo, as well as other community outreach events in the service area.

- Establish regular contact with county employment services staff in the area to determine if they have any clients or their family members who may benefit from youth services. This includes working with county social services and other agencies that serve "at risk", youth and their families such as food shelves, mental health services, homeless youth and domestic violence advocates to identify youth that could benefit from services.

The local workforce development partners are crucial partners with post-secondary entities and business, working to helping untrained workers obtain skills that lead to meaningful careers. Every effort will be made to link job seekers with academic and technical training relevant to their career goals, across secondary and postsecondary education.

According to DEED's Occupations in Demand tool, about 150 occupations are showing relatively high demand in the region, with training and education requirements ranging from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education to advanced degrees. These occupations are spread across different sectors but are also concentrated in the region's major industries. For example, nursing assistants, secondary school teachers, and light truck drivers are the top three occupations based on the consistent need for workers in these industries. Six of the top 25 jobs are in health care, and 5 are production-related. Examples of education and credentials that individuals may need to find employment in the industry sectors listed above are contained in the table below.

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 structural barriers to employment.

According to our Regional DEED report, the Employment characteristics (2013, most recent available) for our seven county area is defined as follows:

With just 67.6 percent of the population aged 16 years and over in the labor force, Region 1 had lower labor force participation rates than the state's 70.3 percent. However, the region actually had higher labor force participation rates than the state for most age groups, yet the overall rate was lower because a higher percentage of Region 1's labor force was older.

In contrast, the region had lower participation rates than the state for all but two race groups; and

Employment Characteristics

	WDB 1 - Northwest			Minnesota	
	In Labor Force (available workers)	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Labor Force	45,164	67.1%	3.0%	69.7%	3.6%
16 to 19 years	2,419	57.3%	2.3%	53.2%	11.0%
20 to 24 years	3,995	83.4%	4.7%	84.6%	6.0%
25 to 44 years	16,907	88.4%	2.4%	88.8%	3.2%
45 to 54 years	9,506	89.0%	4.0%	87.6%	2.7%
55 to 64 years	9,322	74.8%	4.5%	73.0%	2.8%
65 to 74 years	2,525	29.9%	3.3%	27.9%	2.2%
75 years & over	474	6.3%	3.6%	6.6%	2.4%
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin					
White alone	42,716	67.1%	2.4%	69.3%	3.0%
Black or African American	499	65.6%	9.2%	71.3%	8.8%
American Indian & Alaska Native	523	55.0%	11.7%	58.9%	12.6%
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	581	74.2%	21.4%	71.2%	4.3%
Some Other Race	317	81.5%	22.7%	77.7%	6.1%
Two or More Races	502	69.7%	6.9%	73.6%	7.4%
Hispanic or Latino	1,828	76.1%	5.1%	76.5%	6.1%
Employment Characteristics by Disability					
With Any Disability	2,588	54.1%	10.0%	53.0%	8.6%
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment					
Population, 25 to 64 years	35,739	84.5%	2.5%	84.5%	3.0%
Less than H.S. Diploma	1,713	72.9%	3.5%	66.3%	4.2%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	10,518	80.9%	1.6%	78.5%	2.6%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	14,776	86.2%	1.7%	85.3%	3.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8,731	89.2%	1.5%	90.0%	1.7%

had large unemployment rate disparities for most minority groups, with the exception of American Indians and workers of Two or More Races. Region 1 had about 2,800 veterans and 2,700 workers with disabilities in the labor force, with both having much lower unemployment rates in the region than the state.

Given this data, the local board, together with our core partners, will be considering how we can develop strategies that target opportunities for young people, minorities, workers with disabilities, and people with lower educational attainment. A primary strategy in this regard will be to expand the use of career pathways methods and models, including the identification of career ladders and lattices within the key sectors or occupations in demand within the region. One core partner, Northwest Service Cooperative Adult Basic Education, provides a range of educational options throughout the region, aimed at increasing a student's access to employment. These include: development of basic literacy skills, instruction aimed at attaining an adult high school diploma or GED, English as a Second Language, digital literacy instruction, and college and career readiness preparation. Industry specific training opportunities have taken place in a number of areas, including Certified Nursing Assistant programming, Manufacturing Certificate training for New Americans, pre-Healthcare, and pre-Welding math instruction. ABE has been co-located on several college campuses, including Thief River Falls and East Grand Forks, for a number of years, and works extensively to remediate learners experiencing barriers to college success, including Accuplacer prep courses and support of instruction within Developmental Education classrooms. 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 student co-enrolled in public assistance and workforce programming.

- 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 structural barriers to employment.

A new support services policy is in place.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines supportive services in WIOA Sec. 3(59) as services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments, that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under this Act. Supportive services for Adults and Dislocated Workers are further referenced in WIOA Secs. 134(d)(2) and (3) and for WIOA eligible Youth in section 129(c)(2)(G) and are governed by 20 CFR 680.900 through .970.

Policy

All WIOA enrolled adults, dislocated workers, and youth are eligible for supportive services as defined in WIOA Section 3(59). Supportive services are provided to eligible WIOA participants when the supportive service will assist the participant in reaching his/her employment and training goals as laid out in their individual employment plan/individual service strategy (IEP/ISS).

Supportive services are not entitlements and must be supported by demonstration of financial need.

Supportive services may be provided to eligible WIOA participants who:

1. Are adults and dislocated workers enrolled in WIOA career or training services; WIOA funded youth participants; **AND**,
2. Are unable to obtain the supportive service through any other resource or program providing such services.

WIOA supportive services are LIMITED and must be coordinated with other community resources. In every instance of providing supportive services, caseworkers must ensure that no other resource exists or that the need is so urgent that referrals to other resources would delay the provision of support service and create a hardship to the participant.

Procedure

1. All support services are administered through WIOA staff. The use of these funds is based on funding availability. It is the responsibility of staff to ensure allowable, reasonable, and appropriate utilization of supportive service funds and determine if such assistance is available through other community service programs.
2. WIOA program staff must determine supportive services needs during the initial objective assessment. As part of the assessment and development of the individual employment plan (IEP)/individual service strategy (ISS) staff should develop a plan with the individual for how barriers will be addressed. The planning process must include exploration with the customer of viable alternative resources and programs available in the community before approval of supportive service funding.
3. Participant files and case notes must adequately document that all supportive services are allowable, reasonable, and justified, and, when feasible, not otherwise available to the participant. Files must show evidence of referrals to other resources and outcomes of referrals.
4. Supportive service requests should be initiated as part of the IEP/ISS or through a request from the participant. Supportive services requests should be based on the barriers identified within the initial intake and/or development of the IEP/ISS. If a customer's requests supportive services beyond barriers originally identified, the customer must provide justification for a change in barriers to the staff. Staff should document this change in case notes.
5. Supportive services are contingent upon the customer's satisfactory

performance while participating in and completing WIOA career services or training activities, as well as available funding. To maintain satisfactory performance, a customer who is in training must maintain good attendance and passing grades and be in compliance with all other program requirements. For a customer who is participating in career services, they must be in compliance with program requirements, including active participation during the period of supportive service delivery.

6. Support services are intended to support customers' efforts in training or career services or to assist with job placement needs. These funds are not intended to fully cover all costs associated with certain activities, rather to reduce barriers to such activities. Staff may only approve funds for the types of supportive services and amounts described in this policy. The NWPIC Executive Director must approve all requests for services or costs that exceed the limits in this policy.
7. Allowable supportive services, may include but are not limited to:
 - Assistance with transportation;
 - Assistance with child care and dependent care;
 - Linkages to community services;
 - Assistance with housing;
 - Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities;
 - Referrals to health care;
 - Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eye glasses and protective eye gear;
 - Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in post-secondary education classes;
 - Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications; and,
 - Legal aid services.
8. Disallowed costs for supportive services:
 - Expenses incurred prior to the participant's enrollment into a WIOA program.
 - Food
 - Fines and penalties such as traffic violations, late finance charges and interest payments
 - Taxes
 - Child support
 - Bail or restitution
 - Entertainment including tips
 - Contributions or donations
 - Refundable deposits
 - Alcohol or tobacco products
 - Pet food

- Items for family members or friends

9. Limitations

- Funding Limit
 - a. The supportive service limit is \$3500 for the duration of the customer's enrollment. The NWPIC Executive Director has the authority to increase this limit on a case-by case basis if additional supportive services allocation would significantly benefit the participant's ability to continue and complete the program. Authorization to increase the supportive service limit above \$3500 must be documented in case notes and the participant's file.
- Child Care
 - a. This service is provided to help clients meet their family care needs during participation. Child care is a crucial element for many of our local clients and should be identified in the client case notes as a potential need. The client's assessment should also include information on family members who may be available to provide child care and eligibility for child care assistance from county social services, MFIP or any other non-WIOA provider. Because child care can consume program funds at a very rapid rate, all other providers of child care must be exhausted prior to authorizing child care assistance under WIOA.
 - b. Child care providers must be licensed or be relatives of the WIOA participant.
 - c. The maximum child care assistance provided to any client will not exceed a weekly rate of \$125 for one child in daycare or a weekly rate of \$150 for two or more children in daycare. The maximum amounts may be exceeded with the authorization of the NWPIC Executive Director. The participant and case worker must demonstrate the need for exceeding the limits and the NWPIC Executive Director will grant this variance only in extreme and unusual situations.
- Transportation Expenses
 - a. Support services funds used for transportation are for the participant to travel between home and their employment or training location(s). Examples would be public transit fares, gas, oil, tires, vehicle repairs and maintenance and insurance.
 - b. Payments for vehicle repairs or insurance may only be paid on vehicles owned and driven by the participant. Documentation needs to be in the client record verifying ownership of any vehicle used by the client before any support service funding can be spent on vehicle expenses, with the exception of gasoline purchases.

- c. Vehicle repair requests should be accompanied by a quote from an accepted vendor in our area. Accepted means that repair is performed at a professional level even though this may not be the least expensive. “Do-it-Yourself” repairs by the client or by friends are not allowed. Vendors should be aware up front that anything not on the original quote by the vendor or is added after the quote will not be paid without pre-approval. Crucial vehicle systems are to receive priority. Brake systems, tires, or components that have a direct and immediate impact on the safety of the client should have priority immediately after repairs that allow the vehicle to operate.
 - d. Vehicle repairs may not exceed 80% of NADA or Kelly Blue Book value of vehicle.
 - e. Vehicle repairs may not exceed \$750.
 - f. Public Transportation Assistance – Case workers may issue bus passes where available. Bus passes are not to exceed the number of days of work/training.
 - g. Transportation Assistance – Case workers may issue gas vouchers not to exceed \$25 per week. with a maximum of \$500 per customer to cover driving expenses to and from training sites, required employment or training-related appointments, interviews, or employment/work experience sites. Customers may be reimbursed for driving expenses in the amount of the federal business mileage rate as set by the US Internal Revenue Service for mileage reimbursements to and from training sites, required employment or training-related appointments, interviews, or employment/work experience sites. Any mileage over 350 miles per day round trip is reimbursable up to a maximum of \$500 per customer.
 - h. Payment of up to a maximum of three months’ auto liability insurance for clients is permissible. Case managers should assist clients in planning for their insurance coverage after the three months.
- Clothing Costs
 - a. A service which will allow the client to improve job search and interview potential or to provide items required for training or as a condition of employment, upon completion of training. Clothing for work, interviews and school are allowed costs. The case manager and the client need to agree on the specific items of clothes authorized and the maximum cost allowed to the client for approved clothing. The use of thrift shops are ways to maximize the assistance provided to clients. All receipts submitted for payment need to be carefully scrutinized to ensure that clients or vendors are not billing for non-authorized items of clothing or non-clothing items.

- Housing
 - a. Housing assistance includes one-time supportive service payments for rent or mortgage assistance. Customer should have a plan for how they will fund the following month's housing. When supportive services funds are used to pay this expense, documentation must be submitted with payment process that verifies the address and rental amount.
 - b. Payment of the first month's rent for relocation for a job would be acceptable even though rent had previously been paid. The employment must be verified and documented in the client record prior to authorizing payment of rent in this situation.
 - c. Housing assistance one-time payment may not exceed \$1000.

- Licenses and endorsements
 - a. Drivers licenses and endorsements can be paid.
 - b. Occupational licenses and certifications such as Nursing licenses, teaching licenses, Nursing Assistant Certification needed by the client to obtain employment are allowable.

- Moving Expenses
 - a. Relocation expenses that involve transportation of self and possessions to another community for the expressed purpose of beginning new employment are permissible. The employment must be verified and documented in the client record. Payment of moving expenses without verified employment is not allowed.

- Telephone and Utilities
 - a. Telephone and prepaid cellular must be shown that the services are a necessity to client performance or employment, or that the client is dependent on the phone to summon emergency medical help for an existing condition, or if the client safety requires assistance because of a dangerous or abusive environment.
 - b. Prepaid cell phone cards are acceptable in 30 day increments.
 - c. Utilities are not covered unless the client is in danger or having electrical or gas service shut off and is unable to get assistance from other sources. Notice from the utility company threatening service shut off must be retained in the client record.

- Medical Costs
 - a. As a rule, medical costs are not allowed.
 - b. Exceptions would be services are directly related to employment or training outcomes, and include medical services necessary to successfully complete training, gain licensure or certification, or

obtain employment. Services include a physical examination or drug testing for employment or training purposes.

- Tools
 - a. The case manager must work with the employer (or the training provider) to identify only those items necessary for training or employment.
 - b. The case manager must determine that the required tools cannot be provided by any other source, such as the prospective employer or training provider.
 - c. Funds should not be used to purchase tools or related items that are over and above what is initially needed to adequately perform their job duties or to meet their training requirements.
 - d. Extreme discretion should be exercised when deciding to authorize a tool purchase.
 - e. Support services may not exceed \$3000 to purchase tools required for work and/or training.

10. Training related expenses for WIOA eligible adults or older youth that may be covered by an Individual Training Account do not count against the supportive services limit for each participant. ITA training related expenses may include, but are not limited to: assistance with the purchase of tools required for a specific course; current school admission fees, computer and lab fees; books and supplies.

11. Post Enrollment Supportive services:

- Adults and dislocated workers are not eligible for supportive services after exit.
- WIOA youth participants are eligible for supportive services as a follow-up service for up to 12 months after exit from the WIOA youth program.

12. Supportive Service payment should be issued directly to the party providing the service. Any supportive services payments paid directly to the vendor/provider must have a receipt from the vendor/provider that clearly shows the amount of the service.

13. Supportive Service funds may also be reimbursed to the participant, provided prior authorization and proper documentation is received to verify funds were used for their intended purpose. Reimbursement payments will be made only with the submission of original receipts that show itemization of the service and products provided.

14. Supportive Service payment will follow the written fiscal process for the payment, distribution and tracking of supportive service funds. Please

reference WIOA Providers financial procedure manual for submission of supportive service payments processes.

15. Supportive Service payments will be entered in Workforce One at the time of the payment.

- 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.

Connecting participants to education, providing support services, case management, job search and placement assistance are all essential components of the services and programs provided by sub-contractors of the Northwest Private Industry Council. The Northwest Workforce Service Area acknowledges that for career pathways programs to be successful, they need to be part of a multi-system effort and not the responsibility of a single agency. As such administrative and program staff have worked toward establishing positive working relationships with other agencies that provide services to adult learners, such as DEED, local MnSCU institutions, community based organizations and the Northwest Service Cooperative ABE. While the inter-agency relationships needed for implementation exist, we have been very limited in our success of getting all of the necessary partners on the same page to pursue additional funding opportunities that would support those learners with the most barriers in meeting their educational and employment goals. The Northwest WIB and the Northwest Service Cooperative Adult Basic Education fully support the concept of career pathways and continue to advocate the importance of this type of programming with area partners. However, we do not believe that a successful, sustainable career pathways system can be developed in our region until all of the necessary partners fully support this type of system and are willing to invest the resources necessary for sustainability. During the next year we will continue to focus on education and professional development with regard to Adult Career Pathways for NWPIC staff, members of the WDB, and staff of partner agencies. We will also be conducting outreach with local area employers to determine training needs and encourage interest and participation in career pathway 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.

Local employers are engaged as active board members and as key members of the working groups described above. (Discussed the New American and HealthCare Career Pathways Working Group). New board members have been targeted for recruitment from in-demand industry sectors to ensure those industry needs are represented at a board level. In addition, several board members are also active within their own industry in gathering input and sharing regional concerns across among local area professionals. We are also working to establish a business services committee.

Board Members also serve on the Northwest Minnesota Manufacturers Association. This group meets ten times during the year and includes Marvin, Polaris, Central Boiler, Wabanica and QC Techniques, plus professionals from the local banking industry who provides information and insight regarding other industry sectors. This group includes HR representatives, CEO's, Presidents and other executives from each company in similar discussions.

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.

Our local businesses are in dire need of skilled and entry level workers with strong soft skills. Local businesses have for a significant amount of time recruited outside the local area for jobs that require certain levels of education or training. For example, engineering positions are much more difficult to fill than entry level positions. However, during the past several years our larger local employers, specifically in manufacturing, are increasingly recruiting outside of our region to fill even entry level positions. While commitment to the region remains strong, several of our larger manufacturers have been compelled to expand their operations to other communities outside of our region due to the lack of available workers locally.

The workforce shortage is not a problem limited to our large employers. Our larger local businesses offer competitive benefits and wages and are hiring on a consistent basis. This in turn creates hiring difficulties for smaller local businesses who perhaps cannot afford to offer similar hiring incentives. In recent years, an increasing number of local retail and food establishments have increased their starting wage above minimum wage as an effort to attract and retain workers in these entry level jobs.

Our local businesses have developed strong recruitment strategies and offer competitive wages and benefits and other incentives (sign on, relocation bonuses, commuter incentives, and lodging offers) however; they continue to have difficulty in getting new workers to move to the area because of the lack of available housing. This issue is especially prevalent in the communities of Thief River Falls, Roseau and Warroad, but effects many of the communities in our region to some degree. Businesses need quality, affordable housing options that will assist them in their efforts to recruit and retain their workers. Also concerning is the childcare availability in the local area that matches shift work and hours of operation.

There is increasing concern and vocalization regarding workplace values (soft skills). Because of the current workforce shortage, most local businesses are willing to invest time and resources to train workers for entry level positions. However, for many employers retention of workers has become an issue and turnover remains a concern.

Retirement of workers age 55 and older continues to contribute to the local area workforce shortage. These retirements create challenges for employers because of the knowledge and experience that is lost when these individuals leave the workforce. Businesses need to develop succession planning strategies that will allow at least a portion of this knowledge to transfer to incoming workers. This problem is compounded further by the outward migration of youth from the local area leaving to pursue post-secondary educational opportunities. Many youth do not return to the area after they have completed their educational programs.

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

Our long-standing Memorandum of Understanding with the seven county boards in our local area calls for the use of the executive committee of the Northwest Regional Development Commission to act according to a joint powers agreement as the Chief Elected Official. This allows for a natural coordination of programs and services with the regional economic development organization. We are considering ways how we can further strengthen this cooperation in the future.

Another broad initiative that coordinates the activities of our regional economic development providers is through the participation and work of IMPACT 20/20. This is a group of public and private sector business leaders brought together to develop a business driven vision for the regional economy. The members of this group represent 12 counties in Economic Development Regions I and II. Taskforces,

consisting of IMPACT 20/20 members and their support staff, have been formed to complete the work required to achieve several strategically focused objectives that have been defined by the group. The initiatives and objectives of IMPACT 20/20 are as follows:

Education IMPACT:

- ☑ Improve four year on-time graduation rates in high schools in Northwest Minnesota, and
- ☑ Increase the number of local college students obtaining two- and four-year degrees from local institutions.

Broadband IMPACT:

- ☑ Ensure that all communities in the region of 500 or more residents will have business-grade broadband access speeds of greater than 20Mb-download/10Mb upload within five years, and
- ☑ That all residents of the region will have access to broadband speeds of 10Mb-download/5Mb-upload within the same time frame, and
- ☑ The Federal Universal Service Fund (USF) will be expanded to recognize the inclusion of broadband service within five years.

Workforce IMPACT:

- ☑ The goal of the Workforce Impact taskforce is to enhance the career success skills of students preparing to enter the workforce.
- ☑ Identify key players/partners and define their roles, including the role of the WDB.

The Northwest Minnesota Foundation has taken on the responsibility of organizing and convening the activities of the Leadership Council and its Taskforces. The Leadership Council is composed of representatives from the Northwest Department of Natural Resources, University of Minnesota-Crookston, Red Lake School District, the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, the Northwest Regional Development Commission, University of Minnesota Extension Service, Red Lake Reservation, North Region Health Alliance, Northwest Technical College, Sjoberg Cable, the Agriculture Utilization Research Institute, Titan Machinery, Mahube Community Council, Ottertail Power, the Northwest Service Cooperative, Northland Community and Technical College, Headwaters Regional Development Commission, the White Earth Nation, Rural Minnesota CEP, Northwest Mental Health Center, the Praxis Strategy group, and the Northwest Private Industry Council.

Each Taskforce is composed of members from the Leadership Council and their support staff. The NWPIC Executive Director has been an active participant on the IMPACT 20/20.

- 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 board is very interested in strengthening the linkages with the unemployment insurance programs. In fact, one of our key recruitment strategies for our dislocated worker programs has been for our program staff to provide a brief overview of dislocated worker services during the UI reemployment sessions. Unfortunately, these sessions are no longer offered at any physical location in our seven county service area. The local board would support a system-wide approach that would include the re-introduction of these regular UI sessions being offered at a minimum of one location in our service area. The Executive Director has engaged with MAWB to improve this connection with unemployment offerings.

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 Northwest WDB is supportive of entrepreneurship as a valid method of re-entering the workforce after dislocation. In many cases, individuals pursuing entrepreneurship can benefit from career guidance, business related training, assistance in the development of a business plan, and/or assistance in obtaining needed startup financing. The Northwest WIB and its service providers will provide assistance and/or referrals for other services based on the goals/needs identified in the person's Individual Service Strategy.

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

The Northwest WDB is committed to providing staff development opportunities for program staff and the staff of contracted services providers. At this time, the following areas are targeted for staff training:

- Program Performance Measures
- WorkForce One • Labor Market Information and Tools

- Creative Job Search Train the Trainer
- Occupations in-demand Section B - Page 30 Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development 2016-2017 Regional and Local Plan Northwest Private Industry Council – LWDA #1
- Resource Area and Reception Certification Training
- Social Media in Job Search
- Customer Service
- Career Pathways
- Customer Registration System Training
- MN Performs and Rosters Training
- PWIR and CSWIR Training
- Rapid Response Process and Reporting Requirements
- Reintegration of ex-offenders
- Mental Health in the Workforce
- Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Understanding in the Workforce

This is by no means an exhaustive list, and will be revisited as other training opportunities arise. Career counselors from the Workforce Center now CareerForce centers are invited to ABE programs, and may benefit from some of the training that is being developed by ABE.

The WDB will continue to support training that can be done locally and will continue to encourage staff to attend quality statewide training and conferences. In addition, regional partnerships with Rural Minnesota CEP will be developed to expand staff training throughout the region.

The Northwest Private Industry Council administrative staff conducts monthly desk reviews of program spending and performance. Reports are provided to the WDB on a quarterly basis. Administrative staff also conducts internal monitoring of participant files for each program annually. This provides program staff and contracted service providers with feedback on their performance. The reports generated from the internal monitoring are then shared with the WDB. The purpose of this monitoring is helpful for both the program provider and the WDB so that together we can refine our internal processes and identify any existing training needs.

Administrative staff meet with program and contracted service provider staff on a regular basis to review program performance and standards, provide training,

update staff on new and updated policies and procedures, and discuss program and service related issues.

NWPIC is also a member of the Minnesota Association Workforce Boards (MAWB). This membership assists this region in capacity building, evaluation and reporting, and continuous improvement. One of the activities of MWCA is the Mystery Shopper program. The reports generated from this evaluation of services are shared with the WDB and also with the members of the WorkForce Center now CareerForce management team. The management team meets regularly to discuss common issues, customer services, and to identify joint training needs and opportunities.

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

Employers

Our local employers are in dire need of skilled and entry level workers with strong soft skills. Local businesses have for a significant amount of time recruited outside the local area for jobs that require certain levels of education or training. However, during the past several years our larger local employers, specifically in manufacturing, are increasingly recruiting outside of our region to fill even entry level positions. While commitment to the region remains strong, several of our larger manufacturers have been compelled to expand their operations to other communities outside of our region due to the lack of available workers locally.

The workforce shortage is not a problem limited to our large employers. Our larger local businesses offer competitive benefits and wages and are hiring on a consistent basis. This in turn creates hiring difficulties for smaller local businesses who perhaps cannot afford to offer similar hiring incentives. In recent years, an increasing number of local retail and food establishments have increased their starting wage above minimum wage as an effort to attract and retain workers in these entry level jobs.

Our local businesses have developed strong recruitment strategies and offer competitive wages and benefits however; they continue to have difficulty in getting new workers to move to the area because of the lack of available housing. This issue is especially prevalent in the communities of Thief River Falls, Roseau and Warroad, but effects many of the communities in our region to some degree. Businesses need quality, affordable housing options that will assist them in their efforts to recruit and retain their workers.

There is increasing concern and vocalization regarding workplace values (soft skills). Because of the current workforce shortage, most local businesses are willing to invest time and resources to train workers for entry level positions. However, for many employers retention of workers has become an issue because a significant number of job seekers lack the “soft skills” needed to be successful in the workplace.

Retirement of workers age 55 and older continues to contribute to the local area workforce shortage. These retirements create challenges for employers because of the knowledge and experience that is lost when these individuals leave the workforce. Businesses need to develop succession planning strategies that will allow at least a portion of this knowledge to transfer to incoming workers. The population has decreased so far this decade, ranking as the 14th fastest growing of the 16 Workforce Service Areas in the state from 2010 to 2019. It is now the 15th largest in the state. We have an older median age than the state and a larger percentage of people aged 65 years and older. The population is aging, especially as the Baby Boom generation moves through the population pyramid.

This problem is compounded further by the outward migration of youth from some of the counties in the local area leaving to pursue postsecondary educational opportunities. Many youth do not return to the area after they have completed their educational programs.

The local board is currently in the process of establishing a business services committee to implement strategies to enhance meeting the employment needs of local employers, workers, and job seekers.

Workers

There is great need for incumbent worker training to grow the work skills of the worker on the job. As businesses and their equipment become more technically and mechanically advanced, workers will need continued training and updating of skills. The need for continued training also relates to defined career laddering within businesses that provide a worker with the opportunity to advance to other positions within a firm as the worker’s skill level and experience grow. This is especially true for the small businesses that may lack the resources to provide a great deal of incumbent worker training. Many of the larger employers have been able to devote time and resources to develop internal training or to seek professional level training through outside resources.

Job seekers

Job seekers in the local area need and want good career planning information. They want to be provided with industry specific information about the qualifications needed to obtain high-demand, high-growth, and high-wage jobs with employers in the local area. Job seekers have also indicated the need for low cost, short term training that would allow them to enter the work place sooner or that

would allow them to obtain better employment. Many job seekers feel that they are in dead end jobs but find it difficult to move into something better because of their lack of experience or because of their lack of specific work skills.

Current job seekers need good “soft skills.” Many employers have expressed that they are willing to invest the resources needed to train individuals with good “soft skills.” There are quality jobs available but employers want to hire individuals who have good communication skills and a strong work ethic. Job seekers who do not have a good understanding of standard workplace expectations like timeliness, regular attendance, and workplace behavior are at a distinct disadvantage compared to job seekers who do understand these expectations. Addressing the lack of “soft skills” in job seekers is not any easy task as behavioral norms are often established early in life.

Basic computer skills are becoming increasingly important for job seekers as businesses become more dependent on technology. Most jobs today require some level of interaction with computers or other types of technology, and many organizations are moving to online job applications. To address this issue, job seekers will need affordable training opportunities that will allow them to develop their computer knowledge and skills.

The board and local area workforce partners held a virtual services career fair.

- 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.

Due to the small size of our local area and limited resources available for significant investments in technology, our local one-stop looks forward to working with our statewide partners in their continued work on an integrated case management system for all one-stop partners.

- 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.

Due to the small size of our local area and limited resources we look to the state DEED office for technical assistance and guidance in meeting these provisions. On a statewide level, an accessibility assessment is completed at each WorkForce Center now CareerForce, prior to certification and at intervals on an ongoing basis. The WorkForce Center now CareerForce is equipped with accessible equipment and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) monitors this equipment to ensure it is current and in working order. Software developed by DEED for the WorkForce Centers now CareerForce are designed to be fully accessible. All programs within the Minnesota WorkForce system are expected to be fully accessible to all Minnesotans. Vocational Rehabilitation Services located within the WorkForce Centers now CareerForce are available for consultation with other programs, should unexpected issues of accessibility occur. There is co-enrollment and collaboration between Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the other partners, which further enhances overall accessibility.

- E. Describe the roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners, (you may attach your MOU and IFAs to this plan to answer this question if you wish).

Local staff at the Thief River Falls Workforce Center now CareerForce includes the following core partners:

- Northwest Private Industry Council (local board and WIOA administrative entity)
- Inter-County Community Council (contracted provider for WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services, as well as independent recipient of Minnesota Youth Program and Senior Employment Services funding)
- State of Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development/DEED
 - o Job Service Staff/Wagner-Peyser
 - o Contracted provider of MFIP/TANF and SNAP employment services for several local counties
 - o Vocational Rehabilitation Services

These three agencies are or will be part of the Interagency Funding Agreement (IFA) for the Workforce Center now CareerForce space. Costs are determined on space usage and customer/program visits, among other factors outline in the IFA.

Other core services that are available for phone referral include:

- Veterans Services
- Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
- State Services for the Blind

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

Local Labor market information on high-growth, high-wage occupations is available to all job seekers through the local WorkForce Center now CareerForce, NWPIC and DEED offices. Also, all program staff are trained and kept up to date on regional occupations in demand. Case Managers who work directly with job seekers are responsible for incorporating information on high-growth, high wage occupations into their career counseling sessions with program participants. This information is used to better inform job seekers of the opportunities available within the local region and allows job seekers to make informed decisions about their future career choices.

Those individuals who are pursuing training and placement in high-growth, high demand and high-wage industries and occupations that are supported by the local labor market are the first persons selected for occupational skill training funding, once all priority of service conditions for veterans have been satisfied. Once veterans and persons pursuing training in high-growth and high-demand industries in the local area are selected, training for other occupations will be considered as funding permits. The same selection process is used when contracting with local businesses for on-the-job training opportunities.

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.

Dropouts and potential dropouts: Our ultimate goal for out-of-school youth will be placement and retention in unsubsidized employment at livable wage in high growth, demand occupations as well as the completion of an occupational skills training.

Strategies we will employ to help youth meet that goal include:

- Assistance in obtaining a high school diploma/GED
- Basic Skills: Ensure youth have the basic skills necessary to succeed in education/employment.
- Occupational Skills: Youth to obtain a credential in an occupational skills training
- Work Readiness Skills: Ensure youth have job seeking and job keeping skills

These strategies will require the coordination of services with local school districts, Adult Education programs that offer GED prep and adult diploma programming, college prep programs, post-secondary education and WorkForce Centers now CareerForce.

Youth will be encouraged and supported to complete their high school diploma or GED and attain some type of post-secondary education. A four-year college degree is not for everyone so youth will be informed of other training opportunities such as two year degrees or one year certificates at community and technical colleges, apprenticeships, On-The-Job Training, and occupational licensures or certifications.

For potential high school dropouts, services will be individualized to address their specific needs. As significant barriers are identified, a service strategy is developed to overcome the barrier. Depending on the needs of the youth, the strategy may be more frequent contact for intensive one-on-one services. Often the strategy includes a referral or coordinating other community resources such as Rehabilitation Services, Adult Basic Education (ABE/ESL/GED/ADP), Human Services, corrections.

There are three ABE consortia in LWDA#1: Northwest Service Cooperative (NWSC) ABE is based out of Thief River Falls and oversees ABE classrooms in 12 communities and 30 school districts located within LWDA's #1 &2. Tri County Community Corrections ABE is based out of Crookston, with classrooms in Fosston and at the county jail in Crookston. Lakes Area ABE is based out of Detroit Lakes and oversees 10 schools districts located within LWDA's #1 &2.

Adult Basic Education has a seat on the Workforce Development Board, represented by a member of NWSC ABE who assists in representation of ABE partner programs.

NWSC Adult Basic Education also has 1 classroom co-located on the Northland college campus in Thief River Falls but does not co-locate in the same office suite with CareerForce. Workforce Center and ABE staff are trained to make appropriate referrals between agencies. Other ABE classrooms outside the WFC are available for phone referral.

Youth in foster care and aging out of foster care: Youth staff will work closely with several organizations to identify youth that could benefit from these services including: Human Services, corrections/probation, foster care agencies, foster parents, mental health professionals and schools.

Homeless youth or runaways

ICCC provides assistance to homeless youth or runaways through the Family Services department, a department of ICCC. Currently ICCC is partnering on a project to create a comprehensive homeless response system in the Northwest Minnesota Region for unaccompanied youth, ages 16-24 years, making youth homelessness rare, brief and non-recurring. The proposed project would serve the Northwest Minnesota Continuum of Care (CoC) 12-county geographic area including: Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Roseau, and Red Lake. A specific component of this comprehensive response system is working on employment with homeless youth. This project will coordinate, build on and expand the existing collaboration with the employment and training services dedicated to serving the youth in the region. These would include working with WIOA in school and out of school partners as well as the Minnesota Youth Program. They will

also work with other mainstream and private market employers and training programs to develop on-the job training and foster new relationships and programs. Staff and homeless case managers currently meet with participants simultaneously to reduce the amount of times the participant needs to come to a local office and approach case management as a team approach. ICCC, as a member of CoC, was awarded the Homeless Youth Demonstration Grant from HUD and will work to provide wrap around services, not just employment and training, to homeless youth.

Homeless youth or runaways: ICCC is the service provider for the Family Homeless Prevention Assistance Program (FHPAP) and also Homeless youth up to age 21. The goal of these program is to stabilize families or individuals in their current housing unit or re-house without a day of homelessness. The program also assists families or individuals who are homeless find permanent housing and maintain that housing. FHPAP provides case management services and support services to assist with rent, other housing costs, transportation, or education expenses. Youth ages 14-21 are a priority group to receive these services. Youth offenders and at-risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system: In addition to the work readiness, basic skills (including high school diploma/GED) and occupational skills training that is assessed and addressed, we will pay particular attention to the barriers that youth face due to their adjudication. We may provide the youth a work experience or internship in their local community or connect them with opportunities in another community if there are reputation issues.

Our youth providers will work with youth one-on-one to explore issues that may have caused adjudication and refer them to other community resources as needed such as drug/alcohol, mental health, financial and legal counseling. Also important are other provided services such as:

- Intensive job search assistance
- Assistance developing employment plans and goals
- Resume workshops and personal resume development assistance
- Mock interviews, interview practice and coaching
- Short-term training resulting in credentials
- Internships, work experience, On the Job Training and volunteer work
- Promotion of the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) and Federal Bonding Program incentives for employer
- Ongoing support services to ensure/encourage job retention
- Referral to support services

Youth with disabilities: In addition to the work readiness, basic skills (including high school diploma/GED) and occupational skills training that is assessed and addressed,

staff will identify barriers that need to be addressed due to disabilities. Staff work closely with special education at high schools in the area.

Teen parents: In addition to the work readiness, basic skills (including high school diploma/GED) and occupational skills training that is assessed and addressed, staff will identify barriers that need to be addressed due to being a teen parent. Our youth providers will refer and coordinate with other community resources such as county human services, Public Health, Women Infants and Children (WIC), Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE), etc.

ICCC has long standing partnerships with providers of Adult Basic Education, Alternative Learning Centers, high school counselors, and special education teachers. The local college counselors, Homeless Youth services (ICCC), DW/Adult, MFIP, DWP caseworkers, VIP, the Department of Corrections. HeadStart Staff (ICCC), are just a few of the partners who may also serve/come in contact with young adults with barriers.

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.

In addition to the Outreach to schools that is done by Inter-County staff as part of their Minnesota Youth grant work, the NWPIC works with the following additional events:

Northern Valley Career Expo - The objectives of the Northern Valley Career Expo are:

- To expose secondary students to regional in-demand occupations and training programs that will help them prepare for employment in the region in high-wage rewarding careers.
- To educate the youth of the Northern Valley about Workplace Values and the importance they play not only in business but in life in general.
- To enhance collaboration between business, education, and the public sector.
- To highlight shared assets that make our communities and region a dynamic place to live and work.
- To provide an avenue for business and industry to showcase their products and services to help educate youth about the career opportunities within the region.

The planning committee for the Career Expo is a small sub-set of the original North Dakota/Minnesota Collaborative. Minnesota group members include representatives from the East Grand Forks Economic Development and Housing agency, Northland Community and Technical College, East Grand Forks Public Schools, and the Northwest Private Industry Council. North Dakota partners include representatives from the Grand Forks Region Economic Development Corporation, Job Service North Dakota, Grand

Forks Public Schools, UND Office of Workforce Development, and the UND Office of Lifelong Learning and Professional Development.

The University of North Dakota representatives have taken the lead on planning logistical details and have assigned a staff to act as coordinator for the event. Representatives from the North Dakota Economic Development Corporation and UND have taken the lead in recruiting sponsors and exhibitors for the event, but all partners continue to work on garnering support through their individual agency contacts. All partners are responsible for marketing the event to local businesses as an opportunity to connect and educate local youth on the opportunities that are available within the region.

The NWPIC Executive Director and the Job Service North Dakota representative work closely with the Grand Forks and East Grand Forks Public Schools to assist with the development/selection of the pre-expo career exploration activities and also to ensure that the Expo's events are focused on high-wage, high-demand career opportunities within the region.

The Northwest WDB and Youth Committee fully support this initiative.

The Northern Valley Career Expo is the local area and region's premiere career exploration event with exposure, learning activities, and speakers. Over 70 companies and nearly 2000 high school students attend each year. The Expo continues to gain momentum thus attracting the attention of several additional schools and many new sponsors/exhibitors each year. The planning group continues to focus on continuous improvement as it moves into its third year of the planning process.

The WDB has been involved in this initiative since its beginning. The Northwest Private Industry Council Executive Director regularly attends full group planning sessions.

This event serves students and schools that are west of Highway 32. Though coordination with the Impact 20/20 project with the Northwest Minnesota foundation, a similar event is planned and hosted for schools east of Highway 32 in Bemidji.

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.

Public transportation is extremely limited in scope and geographic reach in our area. NWPIC and ICCC utilize public transportation where available to purchase rides for individuals involved in training and work related activities. Clients also have access to other support services available through ICCC for ex. heating assistance and more.

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.

Transportation issues remain a major barrier to many job seekers in our region. The distance and cost for job seekers to transport themselves long distances are additional challenges to worker recruitment and retention. This is exacerbated by the limited availability of public transportation in Northwest Minnesota. However, there have been some inroads made to provide public transportation in the Crookston and Thief River Falls areas for those persons commuting each day for employment.

Finding adequate child care and the cost of this service are other issues that are barriers for job seekers especially for those individuals living in rural areas or small communities. Finding child care for children less than a year old is extremely difficult in all parts of the region.

The availability of housing is an increasing issue for job seekers within the region. Housing shortages prevent the mobility of our local workforce and those wishing to move to the region. The lack of quality affordable housing is especially prevalent in the communities of Roseau, Warroad, and Thief River Falls, but also affects the surrounding communities as workers expand their housing search when they have exhausted their efforts to find housing in the community in which they want work. The lack of housing is directly related to transportation issues as many workers are required to travel long distances to reach their place of employment.

Job seekers are also looking for jobs that provide them with benefits, especially health care benefits. Many small employers or employers providing low wage employment do not offer health care benefits. This has become even more important due to rising health care costs throughout the nation.

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.

A member of the local Adult Basic Education Consortia is a member of the LWDB. Additionally, ABE has entered into an MOU with the partners in the One Stop Delivery System. The purpose of this collaboration is to enable all entities to have a seamless partnership in which referrals for adult education and literacy activities can be

coordinated through a client-centered approach. We have worked together on several initiatives and projects related to Pathways to Prosperity, the introduction and implementation of Soft Skills Pro Certifications collaboratively, and the local provision of literacy activities. We will continue to build upon this partnership and coordination established in this region.

Once every five years, each ABE program in the state of Minnesota must provide a program narrative to the State Department of Education/Adult Basic Education. This narrative outlines their service delivery model and the programming that is offered within Section B - Page 40 Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development 2016-2017 Regional and Local Plan Northwest Private Industry Council – LWDA #1 the consortium. In the future, 5 year narratives will include provisions for local ABE programs to provide evidence that their programming aligns to the local and regional WIOA plans. These components may include evidence of a common referral process, alignment of assessments and assessment processes, co-location of services, collaborations of programming, and evidence that ABE is included in the selection and design of key occupational sectors and pathways within the region. All ABE consortia will re-compete for federal funding in 2022, and a new 5-year rotation will begin the following year. Northwest Service Cooperative ABE will submit its next five-year narrative in June, 2024 and Tri-County Community Corrections ABE in June of 2026, and Lakes Area Adult Education in June of 2025. Under this provision of WIOA, it is expected that once approved by MDE, the narrative will then be shared with the local WDA board for review and comment, therefore creation of this narrative will occur with local and regional workforce strategies in mind. Once submitted there is a time for public comment and reviewed by the local boards.

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.

ABE has been a strong and active partner in the local and regional workforce development system throughout LWDA #1. One of the three ABE consortia in the region has long been co-located on two college campuses, and down the hall from the region's

comprehensive Workforce Center now CareerForce. ABE administers CASAS and TABE assessments for dislocated workers throughout the region, co-enrolls and cross refers students to employment service programs, and provides basic literacy skills development, digital literacy training, and core literacy skills development through career pathways partnerships across the region.

While many of these career pathway programs are in their infancy, ABE is eager to continue this work more closely with the local area board to build upon the foundations that have been laid across the region. Once every five years, each ABE program in the state of Minnesota must provide a program narrative to the State Department of Education/Adult Basic Education. This narrative outlines their service delivery model and the programming that is offered within Section B - Page 40 Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development 2016-2017 Regional and Local Plan Northwest Private Industry Council – LWDA #1 the consortium. In the future, 5 year narratives will include provisions for local ABE programs to provide evidence that their programming aligns to the local and regional WIOA plans. These components may include evidence of a common referral process, alignment of assessments and assessment processes, co-location of services, collaborations of programming, and evidence that ABE is included in the selection and design of key occupational sectors and pathways within the region. All ABE consortia will re-compete for federal funding in 2022, and a new 5-year rotation will begin the following year. Northwest Service Cooperative ABE will submit its next five-year narrative in June, 2024 and Tri-County Community Corrections ABE in June of 2026, and Lakes Area Adult Education in June of 2025. Under this provision of WIOA, it is expected that once approved by MDE, the narrative will then be shared with the local WDA board for review and comment, therefore creation of this narrative will occur with local and regional workforce strategies in mind

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

Pursuant to WIOA, and in order to assist in administration of the grant funds, the chief elected official or the Governor, where the Governor serve as the local grant recipient for a local area, may designate an entity to serve as a local grant subrecipient for such funds or as a local fiscal agent.

The current Memorandum of Understanding between the Local Elected Officials Board and the Northwest Private Industry designate the NWPIC as the as the grant recipient and administrative entity for activities under the Workforce Investment Act. This MOU is renewed every two years and that process was completed for June 30, 2020.

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 local board uses a competitive Request for Proposals process to solicit and award sub-contracts. This process was most recently started in July 2015 for Adult and Dislocated Worker program services. August of 2015 ICCC completed a full RFP and then it was up again in March and ICCC was the only one that turned in an intent to apply for the RFP so the full RFP was not needed to be completed. For Adult and DW program services March of 2019 the RFP process was completed and ICCC was awarded the contract.

The local board published a notice in each of the official newspapers in each county in the service area. In response, the board received three full proposals for consideration of Adult and Dislocated Worker services. A sub-committee of the local board scored and reviewed the proposals, and made a recommendation to award the contracts to the organization that scored the highest. In September, the local board voted to follow the recommendation of the review committee the awarded the contract to Inter-County Community Council.

In November 2015, the local board announced again announced a request for proposals for Youth services by publishing a notice in each of the official newspapers in each county in the service area. The board received a single letter of intent from its current provider, Inter-County Community Council. Having received no other proposals, the board voted in January to contract with ICCC for youth services. This competitive Request for Proposals process for youth is due.

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 local board expects that it will review performance on a quarterly basis, as well as a more in-depth performance year at the close of each program year. Staff will provide board members with a dashboard of key performance indicators, allowing board members to identify and manage potential issues early in the program year. In the event that adjustments to local policy or service delivery need to be made, the local board will work with contracted providers and one-stop partners early and often on developing strategies to correct any deficiencies. This practice has been reinstated.

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.

The local board looks forward to receiving these factors from the Governor's Workforce Development Board and providing input on the development of these factors. The local board would specifically request comprehensive training and orientation for board members.

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.

Information on high-growth, high-wage regional occupations is available at the local WorkForce Center now CareerForce and DEED offices. Job seekers and program participants interested in pursuing classroom training are made aware of this Labor Market Information and encouraged to pursue these occupations. Career counselors assist the customer in aligning their interests, aptitudes and values with occupations in-demand in the region. As the occupational goal is identified, customer research is done and provide an understanding of the occupation, its wages, and the demand in the region. Career counselors provide access to information on training providers in the area and their outcomes in order to allow the customer to make an informed choice on the selection of training programs. Staff provide assistance when needed for the completion of the FASA to identify financial aid resources that are available.

The local WSA will use funds WIOA funds for incumbent worker training if there is a local need that meets State and Federal guidelines regarding the use of WIOA Funds for Incumbent Worker Training.

The local WSA has identified that there is a need for incumbent worker training. These needs do not always correlate with a potential or eminent layoff but frequently occur as employers grow their businesses, update equipment/technology, or seek to replace workers who are leaving the workforce. The Northwest WDB would certainly utilize funds and support any initiatives that would provide additional resources for businesses looking to update the skills of their current workforce.

The local WSA utilizes On-the-Job Training in the WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, State Dislocated Worker, and Out-of-School youth programs. We utilize On-the-Job Training as an alternative training option for individuals who are not interested in a traditional classroom training program. On-the Job Training can assist job seekers in getting back into the workforce more quickly and can also greatly benefit our local employers.

At this point there has been minimal interest expressed in apprenticeship programs from area job seekers. However, the Northwest WDB would certainly support apprenticeship training as a viable means of training for job seekers and program participants. We have had apprenticeship staff from the Department of Labor at our board meetings, and they have held conference calls with local area companies to generate interest and share benefits.

The WDB recognizes that ABE has been a strong and active partner in the local and regional workforce development system throughout LWDA #1. One of the two ABE consortia in the region has long been co-located on two college campuses, and down the hall from the region's only Workforce Center now CareerForce. ABE administers CASAS and TABE assessments for dislocated workers throughout the region, co-enrolls and cross refers students to employment service programs, and provides basic literacy skills development, digital literacy training, and core literacy skills development through career pathways training partnerships across the region.

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

Following the requirements of WIOA, our local board will, at a minimum, take the following steps to provide opportunity for public comment on the development of this local plan:

- 1) make available copies of a proposed local plan to the public through electronic and other means, such as public hearings and local news media;
- 2) allow members of the public, including representatives of business, representatives of labor organizations, and representatives of education to submit to the local board comments on the proposed local plan, not later than the end of the 30-day period beginning on the date on which the proposed local plan is made available; and
- 3) include with the local plan submitted to the Governor under this section any such comments that represent disagreement with the plan.

On April 6, 2021, a draft of the local and regional plan was be made available to the public via a PDF accessible file on our website. Comments will be accepted until May 6, 2021

LEGAL NOTICE: Public Review and Comment Notice April 6, 2021 – The initial draft of the Northwest Private Industry Council Local Plan is now available for a thirty (30) day public review and comment period. The WIOA Local Plan can be viewed in hard copy version at the Thief River Falls Workforce Center, located at 1301 Hwy 1 East in Thief River Falls or electronically at <http://www.nwpic.net>.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law by President Obama on July 22, 2014. WIOA seeks to more fully integrate systems to better serve employers and job seekers. Under WIOA the Northwest Minnesota Workforce Development Board is required to submit a local plan to the State of Minnesota.

Anyone wishing to comment on the local plan must submit written comments by no later than May 6, 2021. The comments and ideas received will be used to develop the final local program plan and submitted to the State.

For more information or for questions on the public review and comment process you may contact: Janelle Wald Kovar jwaldkovar@nwpic.net or 218-683- 8074. All comments that represent disagreement with the plan will be shared with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development upon final submission.

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.

Due to the small size of our local area and limited resources available for significant investments in technology, our local one-stop looks forward to working with our statewide partners in their continued work on an integrated case management system for all one-stop partners.

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?

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, WDB 1 – Northwest’s economy lost over 2,000 jobs from 2019 to the average of the first three quarters of 2020, according to DEED’s Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), a 5.6% decrease in jobs. The impacts of the pandemic were widespread with 15 of the 20 industry sectors recording job losses with the Manufacturing industry having the most job losses over the year with 538, a 7.5% percent decrease in employment. The Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, Administrative and Support and Waste Management, and Accommodation and Food Services industry sectors lost more than 15% of all jobs in the local area. It should be noted that the Construction industry in the local area grew by 89 jobs in 2020, an 8.5% increase.

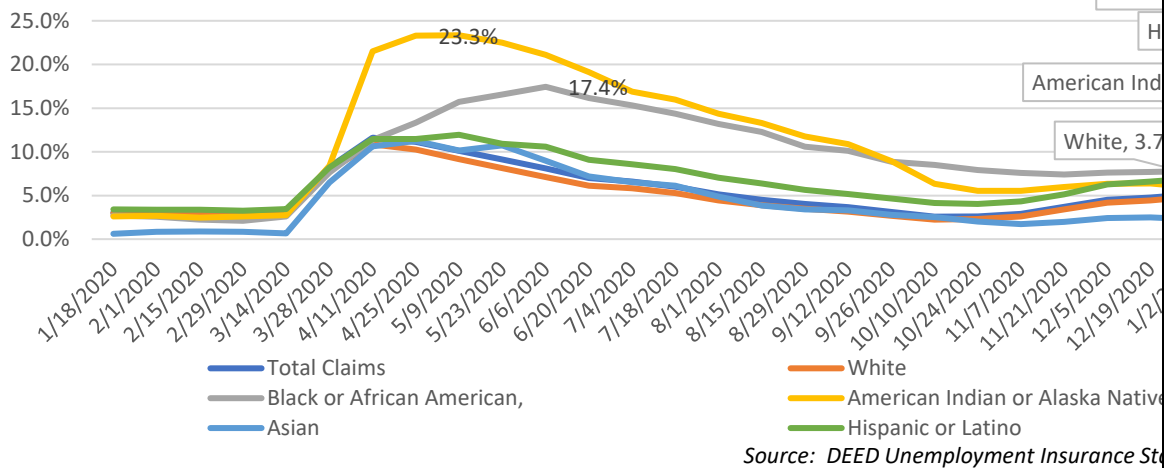
Table 5. WDB 1 Northwest Job Change from 2019 to 2020 (Q1-Q3)		
Total, All Industries	-2,051	-5.6%
Manufacturing	-538	-7.5%

Accommodation and Food Services	-319	-15.2%
Educational Services	-291	-8.5%
Retail Trade	-189	-5.3%
Other Services (except Public Administration)	-154	-14.9%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	-137	-18.6%
Health Care and Social Assistance	-135	-2.5%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	-105	-8.8%
Public Administration	-77	-3.4%
Transportation and Warehousing	-74	-6.5%
Administrative and Support and Waste Mgmt.	-72	-17.9%
Information	-33	-7.4%
Wholesale Trade	-32	-0.7%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	-6	-5.5%
Finance and Insurance	-3	-0.3%
Utilities	4	2.8%
Mining	4	12.1%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	5	6.1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	10	2.2%
Construction	89	8.5%
<i>Source: DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)</i>		

Another way to measure the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic is to analyze the Unemployment Insurance claims that were filed in the planning region and DEED's Unemployment Insurance (UI) Statistics detail demographic characteristics of initial and continued claims for unemployment insurance, as well as total applications for UI benefits. By comparing the continued unemployment claims by demographic to the percent those groups make-up of the labor force, we find that communities of color, lower educated, and younger workers were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic in the Northwest planning region.

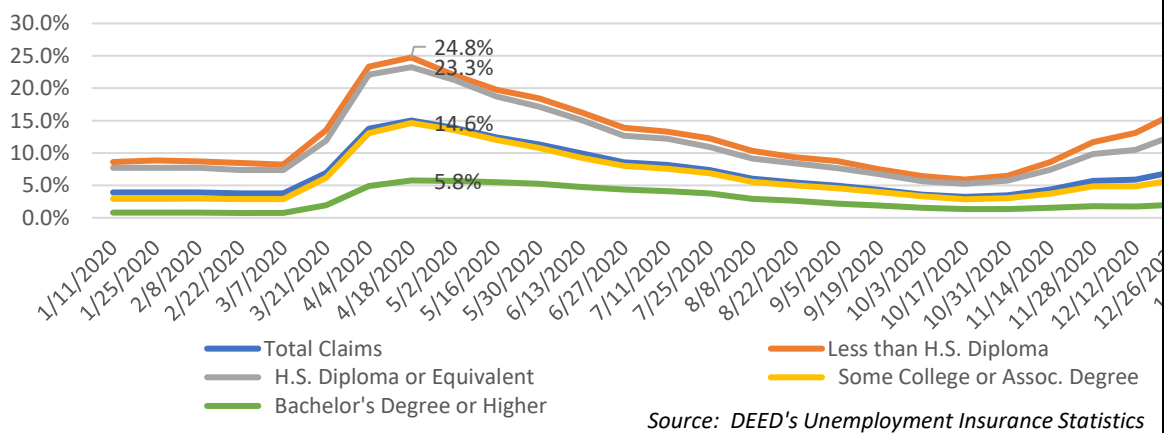
By the end of April 2020, nearly a quarter of American Indians or Alaska Natives in the Northwest Minnesota labor force had filed for a continuing unemployment claim while only about 10% of Whites in the region's labor force had filed a continuing unemployment insurance claim. Black or African Americans in the region were also disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic as by the end of June 17.4% had filed a continuing claim for unemployment insurance compared to less than 10% of Whites. While the continued claims as a percent of labor force has dropped for all race groups as the recovery continues, racial disparities still exist.

Figure 5. Continued Unemployment Claims as a Percent of Labor Force by Race and Ethnicity, Northwest Minnesota, 2020



The Covid-19 Pandemic has disproportionately impacted those with less education attainment as nearly a quarter of those with a High School diploma or less had filed for unemployment insurance in April of 2020. Meanwhile, only 5.8% of those with a Bachelor’s degree or higher had filed a continuing claim in Northwest Minnesota. The summer of 2020 saw those continuing claims drop for all education attainments but the discrepancy between those with less education still exist as of February 2021 as about 10% of those with a High School diploma or less have filed a continuing claim in the region while 1.3% of Bachelor’s degree holders have had to file a continuing claim.

Figure 6. Continued UI Claims as a Percent of Labor Force by Education Attainment, Northwest Minnesota, 2020



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.

We have been as a board devoting a portion of every meeting to getting feedback from members on the board on the pandemic on the workforce. ICCC employment and training has been reaching out to people that are unemployed to share information about training activities posting flyers, DEED has been calling unemployed workers, held a virtual job fair, reaching out to employers to refer workers that have been laid off.

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.

We have implemented the I-WE process and certification. We utilize incumbent work to close the gap and upskill the workforce as well as the Intercultural Understanding the Workforce Event was held to close the gap.

LOCAL PLAN- 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 Executive Director of the Northwest Private Industry Council is responsible for ensuring that staff, both internal staff and contracted service providers, are familiar with and aware of DEED policies and procedures for Rapid Response events. In the event of a dislocation event the policies will be reviewed with staff to ensure that they are aware of how rapid response activities will proceed. The Executive Director will maintain close contact with the state Rapid Response team to assist as needed and to communicate directives and decisions with program staff.

- 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)?

The Executive Director of the NWPIC notifies the State Rapid Response team by phone or email as soon as possible after the he or she becomes aware of a layoff or potential layoff. This notification either comes from the employer or staff will learn of the layoff through the local media. The Executive Director then provides the State Rapid Response team with as much information as possible about the layoff including the name and location of the business, the number of potential layoffs, and the ability of the local program staff to serve these workers under formula funding. If available, the Executive Director will provide the Rapid Response team with copies of press releases, newspaper articles, or any other pertinent information. The Executive Director will fully cooperate and provide all assistance requested by the State Rapid Response team.

- 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.

The NWPIC Executive Director has been designated as the rapid response liaison within the Northwest WSA. As such, the Executive Director will work directly with

the State Rapid Response office to coordinate all activities within the local area to effectively serve those workers affected by a mass layoff.

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 Executive Director of the NWPIC notifies the State Trade Act staff by phone or email as soon as possible when the WSA learns of companies that may be TAA certifiable. The Executive Director will provide the State Trade Act staff with all local information that is currently available and will assist in gathering any additional information needed for the State Trade Act staff to pursue an investigation.

- 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?

The NWPIC Executive Director would be the primary contact for the State Trade Act staff. As such, the Executive Director will work directly with the Trade Act staff to gather local information and to coordinate all activities within the local area to effectively serve those workers who may be TAA eligible.

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

Yes x

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

Yes X

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

Pursuant to Local Policy Letter 109, All client support service expenditures must be submitted to the NWPIC for approval and for payment utilizing the NWPIC Payment Invoice and by following these procedures:

- ☑ The payment invoice must be completed in full and the appropriate signatures must be completed
- ☑ All vendor payments must be supported by a receipt which clearly states what was purchased and other appropriate documentation, as necessary, describing the type of support and documenting that services were received by the client.
- ☑ Staff is to verify the actual costs that are being submitted for payment and to review previous authorizations in the client record to avoid duplication of services or double billing of the item
- ☑ Payment will be made directly to the participant ONLY in situations where vendor billing is not practical. The client record needs to document the reasons as to why vendor billing was not practical when a payment is made directly to the client.
- ☑ The NWPIC contracts with Inter-Community Council for accounting services.
- ☑ Inter-County will prepare and forward the check to the vendor once the above procedures are properly completed.

Support Services are typically offered to customer who clearly indicate financial need after completing a Financial Needs Analysis form. If a customer does not complete the form, they are not eligible to receive support services. Additionally, program policy expects that customers are in compliance with their Individual Employment Plan prior to receiving support services. All support is recorded by the Inter-County accounting department in WF1, and justified and tracked internally by the employment specialist in field files. All new staff received training regarding the support service policy and internal biannual file reviews ensure consistent compliance with this policy.

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

We work with DEED staff that run the programs in the local area to co-enroll.

We are giving priority to the populations mentioned in TEGL 7-20 to recipients of public assistance, low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Veterans and eligible spouses first.

Cross-train staff from different programs to understand other partner programs and to share their expertise about the needs of specific populations, including those most in need, so that all staff can better serve all customers. Both the Wagner-Peyser Act Staffing Flexibility Final Rule (effective on February 5, 2020) and the Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers Final Rule (effective on September 21, 2020) provide additional staffing flexibility to states.³ The flexibility also brings the programs into closer alignment and allows states the option to provide some services funded under WIOA, Wagner-Peyser, and TAA through streamlined staffing arrangements or to utilize cross-training for program staff so states and local areas can quickly react to changing customer needs. • Staff the center with career counselors skilled in advising job seekers of their options, who are knowledgeable about local labor market dynamics, aware of available services inside and outside the AJC, and skilled in developing customers' skills for employment success. • Develop and implement operational policies that achieve an integrated system of case management, using technology to achieve alignment in service delivery that meets customers' needs. • Partner across programs, including community-based and philanthropic organizations, to effectively maximize necessary services, including supportive

SECTION D: SYSTEM OPERATIONS AND ATTACHMENTS

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

Yes x

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 X

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

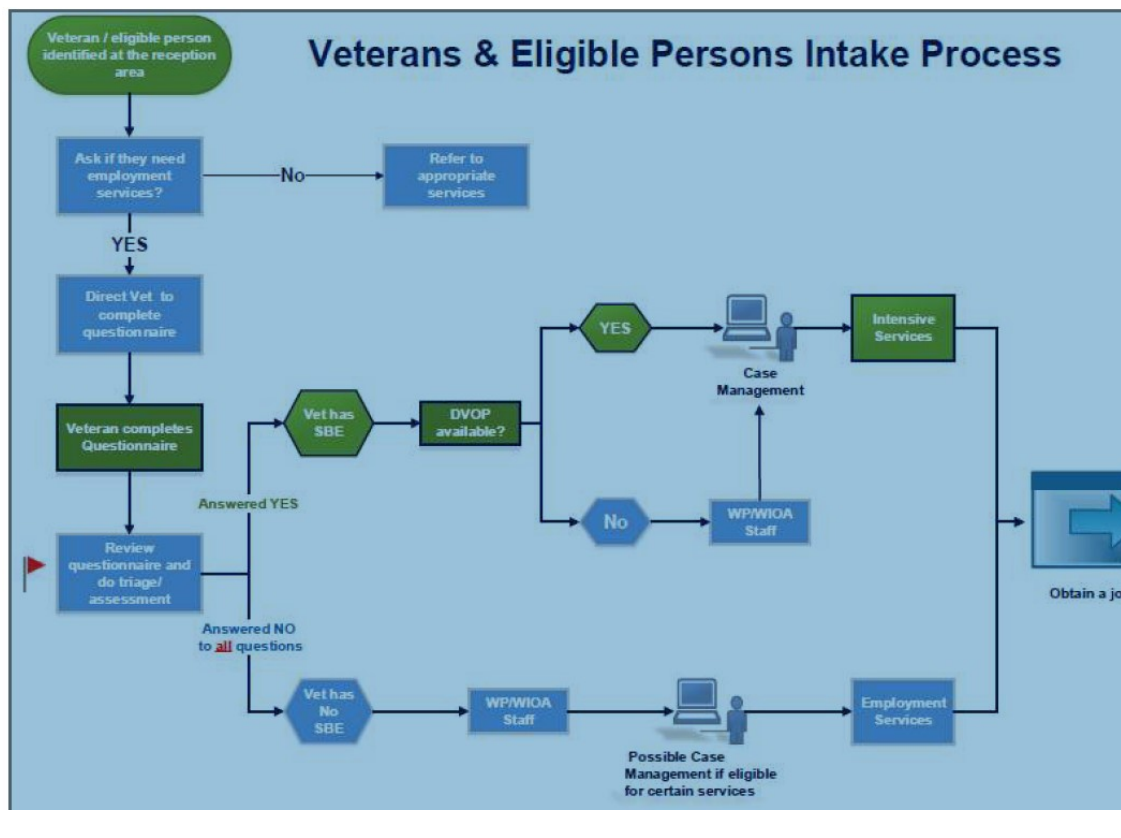
5. A. Does the local workforce development area have in place an agreed upon WIOA Program Complaint Policy per the regulations?

Yes X

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

The Northwest Workforce Investment Board has established local policy in reference to the Jobs for Veterans Act (Public Law 107-288). This policy has established that veterans shall have priority of service for all Department of Labor programs within the local WorkForce Center System now CareerForce.

All job seekers entering the WorkForce Center now CareerForce are initially asked if they are a veteran by the receptionist or resource area staff. Upon a positive response, the veteran is provided with a questionnaire which provides staff with basic information about the veteran. All WorkForce Center now CareerForce staff and management support and actively work toward providing priority of service to all veterans coming into the WorkForce Centers now CareerForce. All staff are trained to solicit for and to identify veterans using services at the WorkForce Center now CareerForce. All staff work to ensure that veterans are made aware of all services available to them, that veterans are encouraged to use these services, and to ensure that the veterans receive preference or priority access to all appropriate services offered through the WorkForce Center now CareerForce.



7. How do you inform current or former Military Service Members coming into your CareerForce Center about “Veteran Priority of Service?”

Signage at the CareerForce locations advises Veterans and other eligible persons of Veterans Priority of Service (POS). Information on Priority of Service is also provided during various program orientations, from staff, and during workshops. LVER staff train and update local staff and management on the provisions of POS and PL107-288.

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

n/a

9. How do you identify current or former Military Service Members with "significant barriers to employment?"

Workforce Center now CareerForce and ICCC staff work closely with the staff of partner agencies to ensure that job seekers accessing services through the WorkForce Center System now CareerForce have access to all of the programs and services needed to meet their employment goals. All staff are trained regarding the basic programs and services provided by partner agencies so that they are able to make appropriate referrals to other programs based on the needs of the job seeker. Program and partner staff work closely together to provide coordination of services to those participants in one or multiple programs. This assists in the leveraging of funding to support job seekers and also ensures non-duplication of services.

10. 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 CareerForce Centers?

This local area has identified partner staff (in each CareerForce location) to provide services (including intensive services) to SBE Veterans in the absence of a DVOP. These staff have had training on serving Veterans via the NVTI Webinar "Helping Veterans to Meaningful Careers", and from LVER staff one on one, and during staff and partner meetings. CareerForce staff conducts an initial assessment with current or former Military Service Member with a significant barrier to employment and then refers them to the designated intensive service provider when the DVOP is not available.

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

The Northwest Local Development Area does not currently have a local DVOP in our service area. Referrals are made to regional representatives located outside of our seven

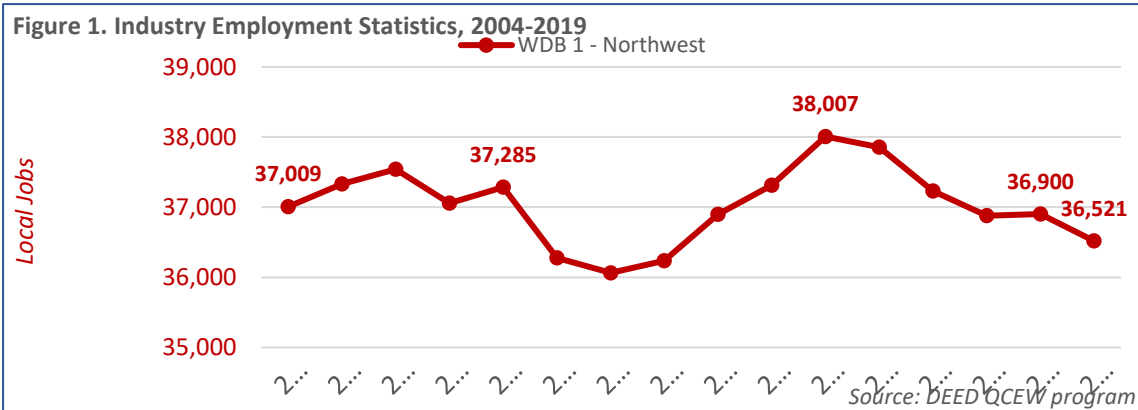
county service area. Local program staff and local DEED staff have made local contacts and work with the county veteran service officers.

12. Are all WIOA-funded partners complying with the guidance provided in the TEGL regarding Selective Service?

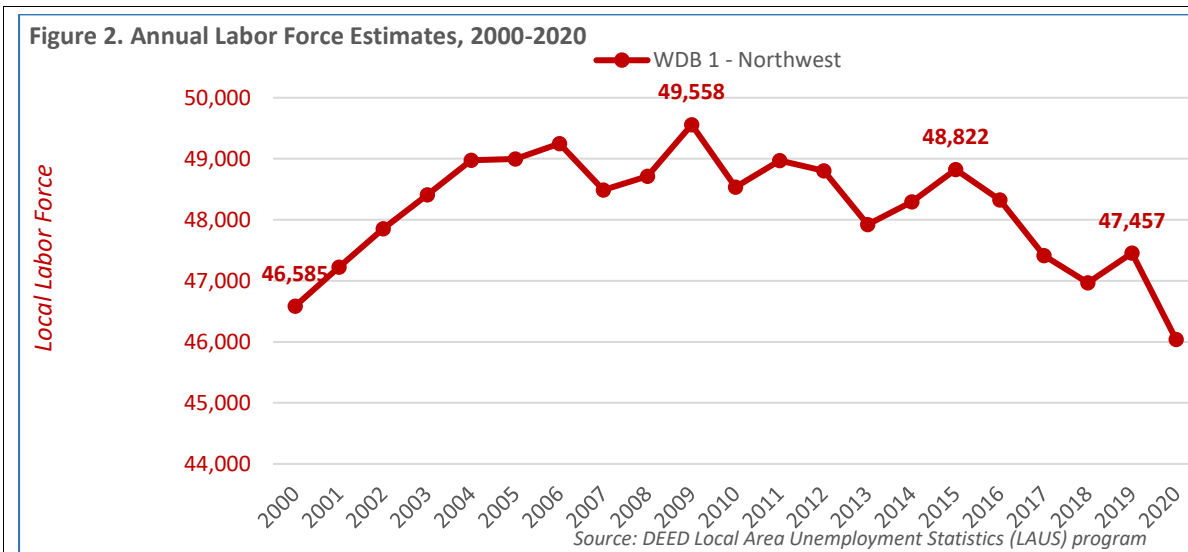
Yes X

13. 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?

Workforce Development Board 1- Northwest is a mostly rural, 7-county region. Northwest has recently seen its employment in the region drop prior to the Covid-19 pandemic as there were 36,521 jobs in 2019, a decrease of 1,486 jobs from 5 years prior, a 3.9% decrease. This decrease followed a span of increases after the 2008-2009 recession but the trend of losing jobs is opposite of the 6.3% growth rate that the state of Minnesota has enjoyed over the last 5 years.



Like the number of jobs in the area, the number of workers has also experienced recent decreases as the number of people employed or looking for work stands at 46,040 as of 2020. Due to Covid-19, the number in the labor force dropped 3.0% with the loss of 1,417 workers from the labor force estimate of 2019. Despite the pandemic impacting the labor force, WDB 1 – Northwest had been experiencing a decrease in its labor force since 2009 when it had 49,558 workers. If labor force rates remain constant and population projections are accurate, it is projected that the local area will see its labor force continue to decrease as it could lose another 2,000 people or nearly 5.0% of its labor force over the next 10 years.



Due to the seasonal nature of its economy and its makeup of industries, WDB 1 – Northwest typically has higher unemployment rates than the state of Minnesota as a whole. From 2015-2019, the unemployment rate in the local area was more than 1.0 percentage point higher for each year than that of the state. However, the average unemployment rate for 2020 of 5.4% was less than the state’s 5.8%, indicating that the local area may have been less impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic than the rest of the state.

14. 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 _____

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

Yes _____

16. 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

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

Yes

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

Yes

19. **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

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

Yes

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

The WDB's policy is to refill any vacancy as quickly as possible. The filling of WDB vacancies is really a three part process; recruitment, county review, and appointment or reappointment of a candidate by the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) Board.

Recruitment is the most difficult part of the process and depends a great deal on the vacancy the board is looking to fill. It is sometimes difficult to find the type of person the board is seeking on short notice. The recruitment process involves utilization of County Boards of Commissions, WDB members, local elected officials, DEED Business Service Specialists, and NWPIC staff to contact potential applicants. The time frame for this

process can vary and can last for some time. Once applicants are identified, the candidate's application is forwarded to the LEO Board for appointment. The LEO has the option of sending the nomination to the county board of residence if additional comments are sought. The Board of Directors of the Northwest Regional Development Commission, which serves as the LEO Board, meets every month.

Since the time of the draft plan, the WDB has approved to fill the two vacancies and is awaiting LEO approval May 4, 2021 to have a fully compliant WIOA board.

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.**

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

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

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 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 Northwest Workforce Development Area #1

Local Area Board Name

Northwest Private Industry Council, Inc.

Name and Contact Information for the Local Area Board Chair:

Name Mike Moore

Title Chair

Organization

Address 1 34643 E Trinity Point SE Mentor MN 56736

Address 2

City, State, ZIP Code Mentor, MN 56736

Phone 218-687-3637

E-mail

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

Name Warren Strandell

Title Board Chairperson, Northwest Regional Development Commission (CLEO)

Organization Polk County Board of Commissioners

Address 1 2024 10th St. SE

Address 2

City, State, ZIP Code East Grand Forks, MN 56721

Phone

218-773-0051

E-mail

strandell@gra.midco.net

We, the undersigned, attest that this submittal is the 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

Local Elected Official

Name

Name

Title

Local Area Board Chair

Title

Chair, NWRDC

Signature

Signature

Date

Date

REGIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Regional Workforce Development Area Northwest Regional Development Area - #1

Local Workforce Development Area Northwest Development Area - #1

MEMBER	ORGANIZATION
Carol Anderson	Owner – Anderson Farm
Janelle Wald Kovar	Executive Director – NWPIC
Terry Blake	Owner – Ada-Felton Country Store
Sue Boehland	Freshwater Education District
Kirsten Fuglseth	ABE Regional Coordinator
Janet Green	Executive Director, Ecumen-Detroit Lakes
Kathy Guess	Owner – Guess Enterprises
Catherine Johnson	Inter-County Community Council
Sue Johnson	Sanford Health Foundation

Sandy King	West Central Initiative
Vicki Leaderbrand	Executive Director – RMCEP
Michael Moore	Polk County Private Business
Julie Sachs	Minnesota DEED
Bonny Stechmann	Minnesota DEED
Dan Wenner	Regional Planner- RMCEP

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA CONTACTS

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Rapid Response Liaison for Mass Layoffs	Janelle Wald Kovar	218-683-8074	jwaldkovar@nwpic.net	Local WDB
Equal Opportunity Officer	Janelle Wald Kovar	218-683-8074	jwaldkovar@nwpic.net	Local WDB
Program Complaint Officer	Janelle Wald Kovar	218-683-8074	jwaldkovar@nwpic.net	Local WDB
Records Management/Records Retention Coordinator	Janelle Wald Kovar	218-683-8074	jwaldkovar@nwpic.net	Local WDB
ADA Coordinator	Jeff Bjornson, Vocational Rehabilitation Area Manager	218-304-8738	jeffrey.bjornson@state.mn.us	Minnesota DEED
Data Practices Coordinator	Janelle Wald Kovar	218-683-8074	jwaldkovar@nwpic.net	Local WDB
English as Second Language (ESL) Coordinator	Kirsten Fuglseth	218-681-0900 x117	kfuglseth@nw-service.k12.mn.us	Northwest Service Cooperative Executive Director/Board of Directors

CareerForce Center in _____

Attachment C

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Bonny Stechmann	218-304-8738	bonny.stechmann@state.mn.us	Mike Lang/Reggie Worlds Minnesota DEED
Job Service Manager	Bonny Stechmann	218-304-8738	bonny.stechmann@state.mn.us	Mike Lang/Reggie Worlds Minnesota DEED
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Jeff Bjornson	218-304-8738	jeffrey.bjornson@state.mn.us	Jeri Werner Minnesota DEED
State Services for the Blind Manager	Steve Pesola	218-231-8594	steve.pesola@state.mn.us	Minnesota DEED
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Janelle Wald Kovar	218-683-8074	jwaldkovar@nwpic.net	Local WDB
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Kirsten Fuglseth	218-681-0900 x 117	kfuglseth@nw-service.k12.mn.us	Northwest Service Cooperative Executive Director/Board of Directors
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Tom Leuther	218-253-4393	pine.prairie.coop@gvtel.com	Executive Committee of 3 superintendents, and a 10 member board made up of representatives from

				the original Pine to Prairie schools.
Adult	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@intercountycc.org	Catherine Johnson
Dislocated Worker	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@intercountycc.org	Catherine Johnson
Youth	John Preuss	218-796-5144 ext 1018	jpreuss@intercountycc.org	Catherine Johnson

Attachment C

LOCAL AREA BOARD MEMBERSHIP LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Northwest Regional Development Area - #1

Local Workforce Development Area

Northwest Development Area - #1

MEMBER	POSITION/ORGANZIATION	TERM ENDS
<p>REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS IN LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA</p>	Mike Moore Chair Polk County Private Sector	6/30/2022
	Sally Erickson Vice Chair Marshall County Private Sector	6/30/2022
	Tim Hagl Treasurer Red Lake County Private Sector	6/30/2022
	Shane Zutz Private Sector At Large	2/5/2023
	Ardell Larson (Accepting Applications) Kittson County Private Sector	6/30/2020 9/30/2022
	Dawn Ganje Norman County Private Sector	6/30/2022
	Angela Malone (Accepting Applications) Pennington County Private Sector	6/30/2020
	Jarod Reiersen (Accepting Applicatons) Private Sector at Large	6/30/2022
	Mark Karl Roseau County Private Sector	6/30/2021
	Marcus Waterworth Private Sector at Large	

LABOR & COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS	Catherine Johnson Community Based Org.	6/30/2022
	Bradley Levasseur Apprenticeship and Organization Labor	2/5/2023
	Loren Leaker Organized Labor	6/30/2022
	Joel Ziegler Organized Labor	2/5/2023
EDUCATION & TRAINING	Kirsten Fuglseth Adult Literacy	9/30/2022
	Brian Huschle Higher Education	6/30/2024
GOVERNMENT	Sean Ranum Economic Development	6/30/2022
	Bonny Stechmann Public Employment Agency	6/30/2022
	Jeff Bjornson Rehabilitation Agency	6/30/2022

CONTACT INFORMATION

NAMEz	ADDRESS/PHONE/EMAIL
CHAIR Mike Moore	34643 E. Trinity Point Road Mentor, MN 56762 218-681-7387 Mooremichael 785@gmail.com
VICE CHAIR Sally Erickson	21005 220th Ave NW, Viking, MN 56760 218-689-1069 sally@ericcomfg.com

Attachment C

SECRETARY Catherine Johnson

207 Main Street
Oklee, Minnesota 56742
218-796-5144 x 1027
cjohnson@intercountycc.org



Attachment D

LOCAL AREA BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Northwest Regional Development Area - #1

Local Workforce Development Area

Northwest Development Area - #1

Committee Name	Objective/Purpose
Executive Committee	As directed by the Northwest Private Industry Council Board of Directors at its regularly scheduled meetings, the business, property and affairs of the corporation shall be managed by its Executive Committee. All other standing committees may only make recommendations for adoption by the Board of Directors.
One-Stop Operations	This committee is to provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to the one-stop delivery system; it includes as members representatives of the one-stop partners. This committee also provides information and assists with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, including issues relating to compliance with section 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding providing programmatic and physical access to the services, programs, and activities of the one-stop delivery system, as well as appropriate training for staff on providing supports for or accommodations to, and finding employment opportunities for, individuals with disabilities.
Youth Committee	This committee provides information and assists with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth.

Attachment E

Attachment F

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA NON-CFC PROGRAM SERVICE DELIVERY LOCATION LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Northwest Regional Development Area - #1

Local Workforce Development Area

Northwest Development Area - #1

Name and Location (City)	Program Service Delivered
MN DEED Job Service (Roseau)	MN DEED Job Service (Roseau)
MN DEED Job Service (Crookston)	MFIP, SNAP, DWP
MN DEED Job Service (East Grand Forks)	MFIP, SNAP, DWP
Inter-County Community Council (Oklee)	WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Senior Employment
Inter-County Community Council (Thief River Falls)	WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Senior Employment
Inter-County Community Council (Roseau)	WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Senior Employment
Inter-County Community Council (East Grand Forks) Inter-County Community Council (Crookston)	WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Senior Employment

Attachment E

MN DEED Vocational Rehabilitation (Roseau) MN DEED Vocational Rehabilitation (Crookston) MN DEED Vocational Rehabilitation (Thief River Falls)	

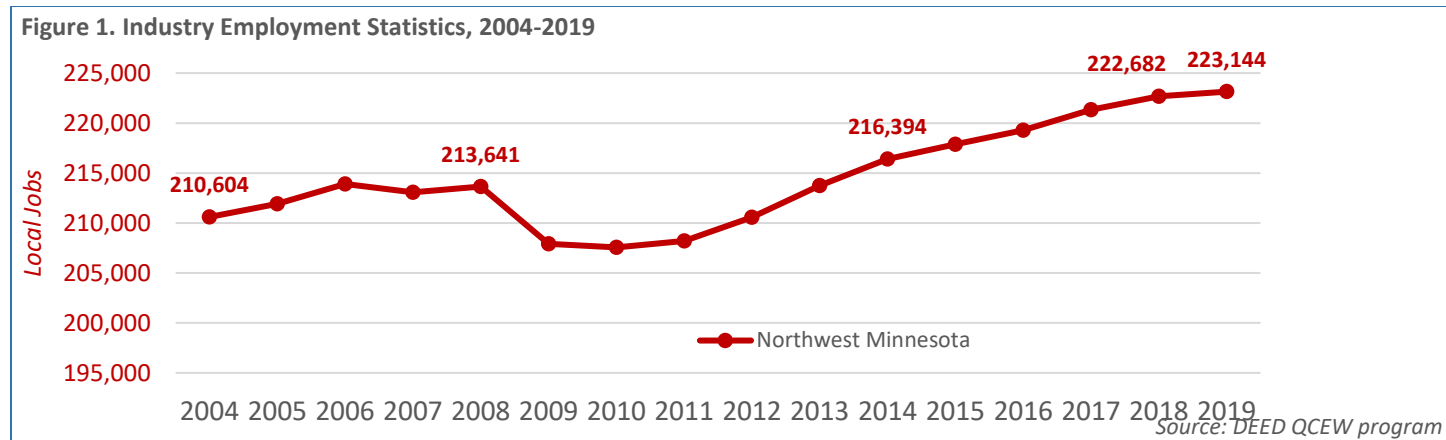
LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY INDUSTRIES IN REGIONAL ECONOMY

Northwest Minnesota Planning Region

Northwest Minnesota is a mostly rural, 26-county region located in the northwest and central part of the state, bordering North Dakota and Canada and covers the following counties: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnommen, Marshall, Morrison, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, and Wilkin

Employment Statistics

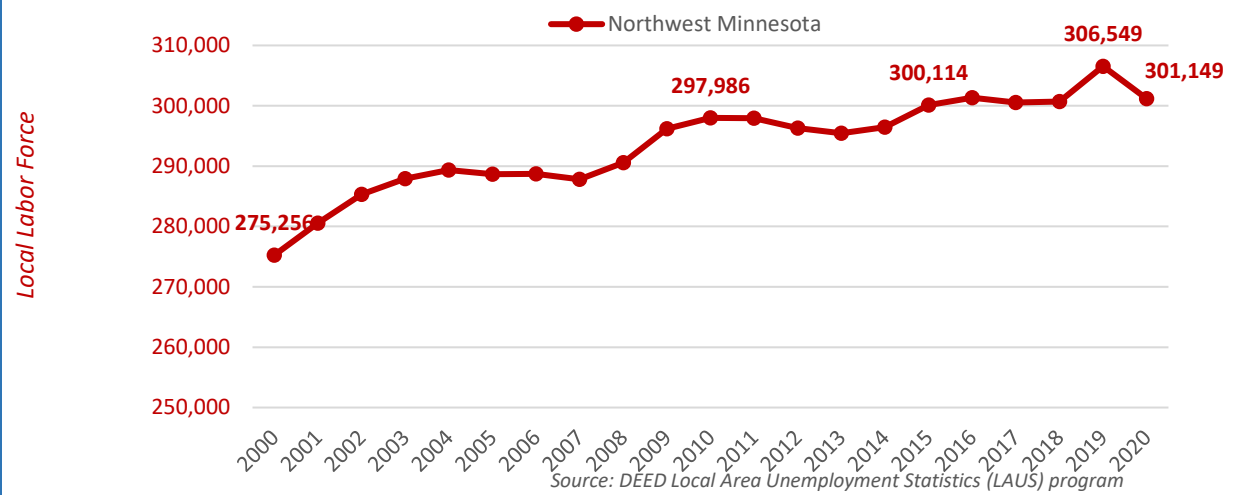
Northwest Minnesota has experienced employment gains every year since the 2009 recession and has 223,144 jobs as of 2019. In the past 5 years, the planning region has gained 6,750 jobs, a 3.1% increase, which is considerably less than the 6.3% growth rate of the state of Minnesota during that time.



Like the number of jobs in the area, the number of workers has also experienced recent increases as the number of people employed or looking for work stands at 301,149 as of 2020. However, due to Covid-19, the number in the labor force dropped 1.8% with the loss of 5,400 workers from the labor force estimate of 2019. With the recent decrease, the labor force of Northwest Minnesota has only increased by 1,035 people in the last 5 years, while the state of Minnesota's labor force grew by 2.5% during this time frame. If labor force rates remain constant and population projections are accurate, it is projected that the planning region will see its labor force decrease by about 6,000 people, a 2.0% decline, over the next 10 years.

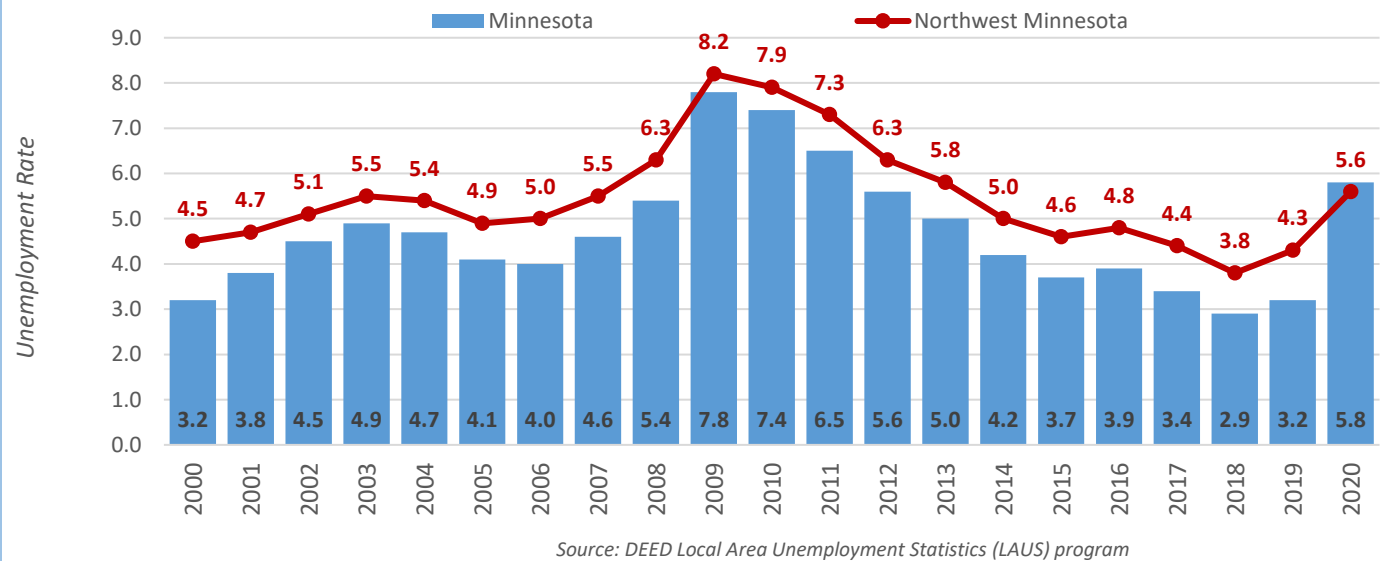
Attachment G

Figure 2. Annual Labor Force Estimates, 2000-2020



Due to the seasonal nature of its economy and its makeup of industries, Northwest Minnesota typically has higher unemployment rates than the state of Minnesota as a whole. From 2015-2019, the unemployment rate in the local area was close to 1.0 percentage point higher for each year than that of the state. However, the average unemployment rate for 2020 of 5.6% was less than the state's 5.8%, indicating that the planning region may have been less impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic than the rest of the state.

Figure 3. Unemployment Rates, 2000-2020



Industry Statistics

The largest industry in Northwest Minnesota is Health Care and Social Assistance with 1,614 firms that offer 39,260 jobs accounting for 17.6% of all jobs in the area. While there was a slight decrease in employment for this industry from 2018-2019, the five-year trend shows a 6.7% growth rate with the addition of 2,450 jobs. The next largest industry in the region is Manufacturing with 29,473 jobs but had smaller 5-year growth rates than Health Care and Social Assistance but did gain 303 jobs the year prior

to the pandemic. Retail Trade is the third largest industry in the area with 27,829 jobs and 2,329 firms but has wages that are considerably less than Health Care and Social Assistance and Manufacturing with average annual wages of \$27,740.

Educational Services and Accommodation and Food Services round out the top 5 industry sectors in the region with the former with 22,674 jobs and the latter with 22,272 jobs. Both sectors had experienced substantial gains in jobs prior to the pandemic with Accommodation and Food Services growing by 9.1% from 2014-2019 and Educational Services gaining 1,328 jobs. Other sectors that have gained considerable employment from 2014-2019 is Public Administration (1,636) and Construction (830).

8 of the 20 industry sectors had recorded job losses from 2014-2019 with Administration Support and Waste Management and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation recording over 1,000 jobs lost for the time period of 2014-2019, a more than 25% decline in employment for each. Management of Companies is another industry that had lost 20% of its employment during the 5-year span prior to the pandemic with the loss of 173 jobs. Meanwhile, Wholesale Trade lost more than 350 jobs from 2014-2019, a 3.1% decrease.

Table 1. Industry Employment Statistics, 2019								
Northwest Minnesota	2019 Annual Data				2014-2019		2018-2019	
NAICS Industry Title	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll (\$1,000s)	Avg. Annual Wage	Change in Jobs	Percent Change	Change in Jobs	Percent Change
Total, All Industries	17,145	223,144	\$9,309,828	\$41,721	6,750	3.1%	462	0.2%
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,614	39,260	\$1,785,569	\$45,481	2,450	6.7%	-102	-0.3%
Manufacturing	827	29,473	\$1,553,194	\$52,699	933	3.3%	303	1.0%
Retail Trade	2,329	27,829	\$771,976	\$27,740	177	0.6%	-379	-1.3%
Educational Services	377	22,674	\$980,190	\$43,230	1,328	6.2%	177	0.8%
Accommodation & Food Services	1,525	22,272	\$383,649	\$17,226	1,859	9.1%	1,336	6.4%
Public Administration	702	16,465	\$799,672	\$48,568	1,636	11.0%	340	2.1%
Construction	2,244	11,341	\$615,391	\$54,263	830	7.9%	221	2.0%
Wholesale Trade	631	11,135	\$619,268	\$55,615	-356	-3.1%	-174	-1.5%
Other Services	1,576	6,698	\$157,115	\$23,457	333	5.2%	54	0.8%
Transportation & Warehousing	880	6,108	\$255,182	\$41,778	-96	-1.5%	-258	-4.1%

Attachment G

Finance & Insurance	853	5,963	\$344,855	\$57,833	213	3.7%	94	1.6%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	862	5,273	\$226,947	\$43,040	428	8.8%	39	0.7%
Professional & Technical Services	848	4,739	\$253,691	\$53,533	391	9.0%	201	4.4%
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	645	4,073	\$133,230	\$32,711	-1,587	-28.0%	-179	-4.2%
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	385	3,541	\$67,643	\$19,103	-1,188	-25.1%	-958	-21.3%
Information	243	2,602	\$122,049	\$46,906	-395	-13.2%	-49	-1.8%
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	440	1,510	\$51,191	\$33,901	17	1.1%	-38	-2.5%
Utilities	69	1,283	\$115,839	\$90,287	-18	-1.4%	-26	-2.0%
Management of Companies	55	693	\$60,264	\$86,960	-173	-20.0%	-145	-17.3%
Mining	43	210	\$12,913	\$61,490	-32	-13.2%	8	4.0%
<i>Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program</i>								

2018-2028 employment projections from DEED's Employment Outlook indicate modest growth in jobs over the next 8-10 years in the Northwest Minnesota Planning Region. It should be noted that these projections do not include pandemic effects and that they are for the planning region and not just the local workforce area. Overall, Northwest Minnesota is projected to increase employment by 3.2% with an increase of 8,311 jobs by 2028. The largest industry in the planning region, Health Care and Social Assistance, is projected to grow by more than 10% with a projected job growth of over 4,100 jobs. The next largest industry, Manufacturing, is projected a slight decrease of jobs by 2028 but still having employment levels over 29,000.

While Management of Companies, and Mining have projected growth rates over 15%, they have small employment estimates to begin with and the number of new jobs is 173 and 31 respectively. Meanwhile, the Construction industry has over 10,000 jobs in the region and is projected to grow by 10.2% percent with a projected increase of 1,049 jobs. Overall, 14 of the 20 Industry sectors are projected to grow in the Northwest Planning region with projected substantial decreases in Information and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation.

Table 2. Northwest Minnesota Planning Region Industry Projections, 2018-2028

Industry	Estimated Employment 2018	Projected Employment 2028	Percent Change 2018-2028	Total Change 2018-2028
Total, All Industries	263,134	271,445	3.2%	8,311
Health Care and Social Assistance	38,050	42,165	10.8%	4,115
Manufacturing	29,207	29,064	-0.5%	-143
Retail Trade	28,148	28,190	0.1%	42
Public Administration	23,300	23,980	2.9%	680
Educational Services	23,141	23,679	2.3%	538
Accommodation and Food Services	20,661	21,248	2.8%	587
Wholesale Trade	12,153	12,545	3.2%	392
Construction	10,281	11,330	10.2%	1,049
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	10,196	10,174	-0.2%	-22
Transportation and Warehousing	6,934	7,284	5.0%	350
Finance and Insurance	6,003	6,287	4.7%	284
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	5,627	5,766	2.5%	139
Professional and Technical Services	4,771	5,123	7.4%	352
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	4,570	4,416	-3.4%	-154
Administrative and Waste Services	4,369	4,978	13.9%	609
Information	2,506	2,128	-15.1%	-378
Utilities	1,185	1,155	-2.5%	-30
Management of Companies and Enterprises	847	1,020	20.4%	173
Mining	206	237	15.0%	31

Source: [DEED's Employment Outlook](#)

Occupation Statistics

The largest occupation group in Northwest Minnesota is Education, Training, and Library occupations with an estimated regional employment of 27,570 or 12.3% of all jobs in the region. With a location quotient of 2.2, this occupation group is much more concentrated than it is statewide, where it only makes up 5.7% of all jobs. Production and Office and Administrative Support occupations have over 25,000 jobs with the former much more concentrated in the region than statewide as its 1.6 location quotient is greater than 1.0. Those occupation groups that are less represented in the region than they are for the state include: Food Preparation and Serving Related, Management, Personal Care Service, Computer and Mathematical, and Legal.

The regional median hourly wage for all occupations was \$18.38 which is \$3.11 less than the statewide median hourly wage for all occupations and only Protective Services and Farming, Fishing, and Forestry occupations had higher median hourly wages in the local area than compared to statewide average with large discrepancies in higher paying occupation groups.

Attachment G

Occupational Group	Northwest Minnesota				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	\$18.38	223,440	100.0%	1.0	\$21.49	2,880,650	100.0%
Education, Training & Library	\$22.83	27,570	12.3%	2.2	\$24.38	165,310	5.7%
Production	\$18.74	26,260	11.8%	1.6	\$19.03	212,650	7.4%
Office & Administrative Support	\$18.16	25,860	11.6%	0.9	\$20.03	363,800	12.6%
Sales & Related	\$13.62	20,630	9.2%	1.0	\$15.37	277,000	9.6%
Transportation & Material Moving	\$17.38	17,260	7.7%	1.0	\$18.06	216,890	7.5%
Healthcare Support	\$14.46	15,710	7.0%	1.2	\$14.81	163,160	5.7%
Healthcare Practitioners & Technical	\$29.92	14,340	6.4%	1.0	\$36.07	190,800	6.6%
Food Preparation & Serving Related	\$12.15	10,030	4.5%	0.5	\$12.43	244,300	8.5%
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	\$22.15	9,190	4.1%	1.2	\$24.31	100,060	3.5%
Management	\$41.18	8,780	3.9%	0.7	\$52.70	170,650	5.9%
Building, Grounds Cleaning & Maint.	\$14.79	8,670	3.9%	1.3	\$15.23	83,860	2.9%
Construction & Extraction	\$22.17	8,600	3.8%	1.1	\$28.97	104,900	3.6%
Business & Financial Operations	\$27.76	6,650	3.0%	0.5	\$33.87	171,550	6.0%
Community & Social Service	\$21.38	5,590	2.5%	1.3	\$23.34	57,200	2.0%
Protective Service	\$23.22	3,890	1.7%	1.1	\$22.45	45,030	1.6%
Architecture & Engineering	\$30.86	3,690	1.7%	0.9	\$38.00	55,520	1.9%
Personal Care & Service	\$12.33	3,660	1.6%	0.7	\$13.65	70,290	2.4%
Arts, Design, Entertainment & Media	\$17.11	2,490	1.1%	0.8	\$24.52	38,540	1.3%
Computer & Mathematical	\$31.64	2,130	1.0%	0.3	\$42.71	97,960	3.4%
Life, Physical & Social Science	\$29.46	1,600	0.7%	0.8	\$34.35	27,070	0.9%
Legal	\$26.91	500	0.2%	0.3	\$37.35	20,050	0.7%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	\$18.85	360	0.2%	1.1	\$17.72	4,060	0.1%

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2020

DEED's Employment Outlook tool also provides occupational projections at a planning region level for the period of 2018-2028 and shows that much of the job opportunities in the planning region are going to come from labor force exit openings as opposed to employment growth within the occupation groups. In fact, the largest occupation group in the region is Office and Administrative Support but is projected to decline by 940 jobs over the next 8-10 years. However, there are projected to be 16,166 openings in this occupation during the time frame due to workers leaving the occupation, whether retiring or getting a new job, and thus opening a new hiring possibility in that occupation group. Production is another occupation group that is projected to decline in total jobs in the region but due to labor force exits is projected to have an additional 8,253 openings to fill.

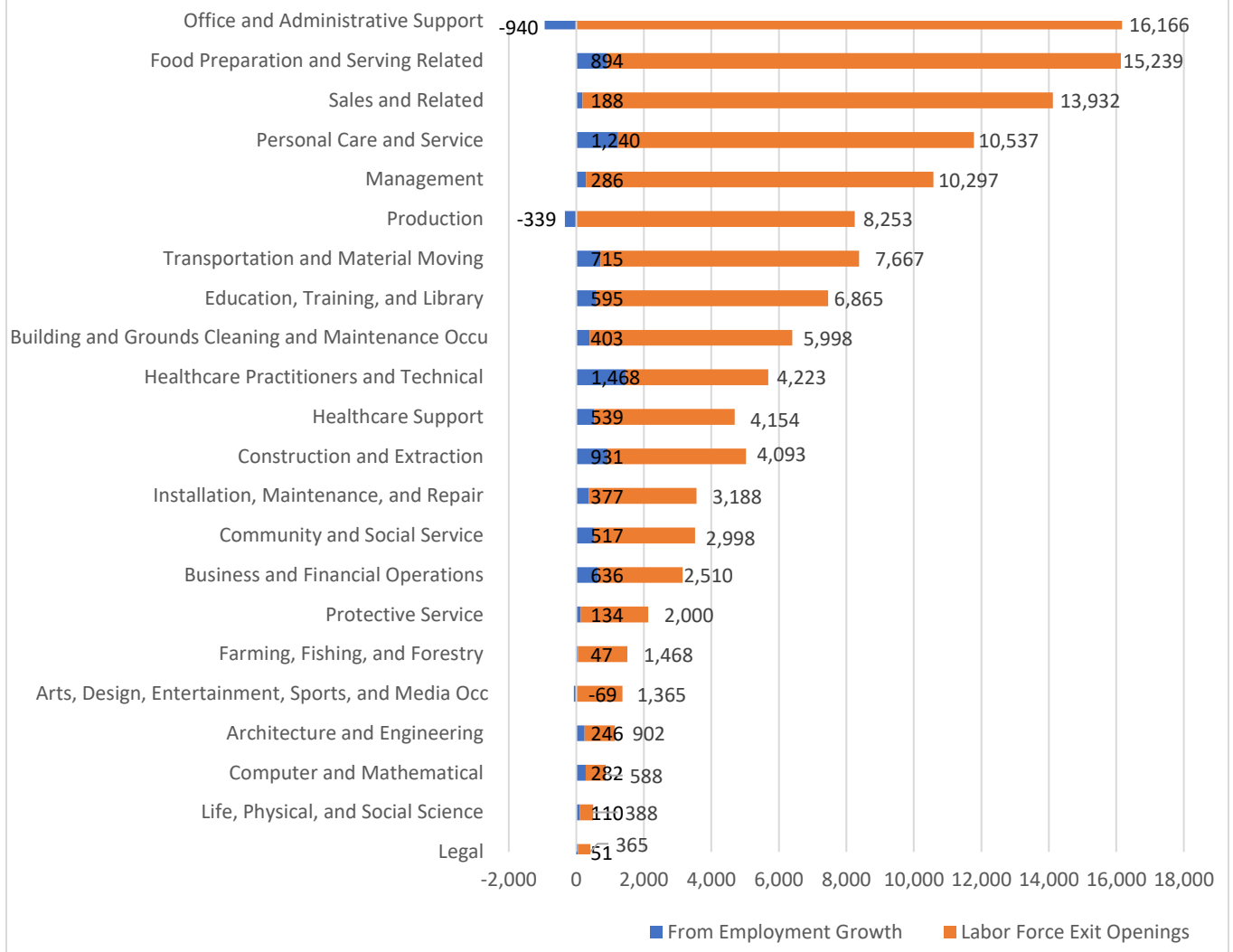
Table 4. Regional Occupations in Demand, 2020

Northwest			
High School or Less	Vocational Training	Associate Degree	Bachelor's Degree or Higher
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners \$29,059	Nursing Assistants \$33,192	Registered Nurses \$70,869	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education \$55,653
Home Health and Personal Care Aides \$27,537	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses \$44,853	Veterinary Technologists and Technicians \$35,815	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education \$57,557
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand \$33,677	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics \$43,383	Surgical Technologists \$50,177	Substitute Teachers, Short-Term \$36,299
Teaching Assistants, Except Postsecondary \$31,147	Computer User Support Specialists \$48,506	Computer Network Support Specialists \$60,416	Accountants and Auditors \$59,318
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers \$45,816	Dental Assistants \$44,363	Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technologists and Technicians \$50,325	Education Administrators, Kindergarten through Secondary \$101,280
Pharmacy Technicians \$35,018	Computer Numerically Controlled Tool Programmers \$62,623	Agricultural and Food Science Technicians \$38,083	General Internal Medicine Physicians NA
Interviewers, Except Eligibility and Loan \$32,542	Emergency Medical Technicians and Paramedics \$35,744	Civil Engineering Technologists and Technicians \$63,159	Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists \$53,033
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners \$30,581	Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines \$59,788	Forest and Conservation Technicians \$49,367	Nurse Practitioners \$117,222
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators \$38,150	Health Information Technologists, Medical Registrars, Surgical Assistants, and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other \$56,465	Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers \$65,205	Career/Technical Education Teachers, Secondary School \$57,777
Operating Engineers and Other Construction Equipment Operators \$50,500	Electricians \$57,871	Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians \$46,625	Rehabilitation Counselors \$34,434

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

Attachment G

Figure 4. Northwest Minnesota Employment Projections, 2018-2028



According to DEED’s Occupations in Demand tool, there are over 400 occupations in demand (OID) in the Northwest Planning region, and over 250 occupations showing relatively high demand. Training and education requirements range from short-term on-the-job training to postsecondary education and advanced degrees. Most OID require a high school diploma or less, but nearly one-quarter require a bachelor’s degree or higher. While OID exist in every sector, the region’s major industries are well represented. For example eight of the the top 40 jobs are health care-related, seven others are education related, and another four are in production/manufacturing.

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.

Figure 7. Risk for Long Term Unemployment by Demographic, Minnesota, 2020

Factor	Description	% Tot claimants	% Lab force	Avg UI weeks	% Continued filing after Oct 3		% Ever permanently separated	
					13.6%	45.7%	2.1%	10.7%
Total	Total claimants since Mar 15	100.0%	100.0%	13.3		27.2%		6.8%
Gender	Female	51.5%	48.0%	13.8		25.1%		6.5%
	Male	48.5%	52.0%	12.8		24.3%		7.1%
Race	American Indian	1.3%	0.8%	15.6		31.4%		8.2%
	Asian	5.7%	5.1%	13.2		25.2%		5.9%
	Black	10.5%	5.9%	16.8		45.7%		10.5%
	Hispanic/Latino	5.5%	5.2%	13.8		25.9%		6.0%
	Mixed race	2.5%	2.4%	15.4		32.2%		8.2%
	White	74.5%	80.7%	12.7		21.1%		6.4%
Age	18-19	2.5%	n/a	10.7		15.3%		2.1%
	20-24	13.1%	9.4%	13.2		20.6%		3.7%
	25-34	25.8%	21.8%	13.5		24.9%		6.5%
	35-44	20.6%	21.0%	13.2		25.4%		7.7%
	45-54	16.6%	19.2%	12.8		24.2%		8.0%
	55-64	16.0%	17.9%	13.3		25.7%		8.4%
	65 and above	5.3%	5.7%	16.2		34.8%		7.9%
Education	Less than high school	5.8%	4.6%	13.9		30.3%		6.9%
	High school or equivalent	31.9%	19.9%	13.8		28.0%		7.6%
	Some college or Assoc. deg.	39.6%	33.3%	13.3		23.4%		6.4%
	Bachelor's	17.9%	n/a	12.6		21.5%		6.3%
	Master's	3.7%	n/a	11.8		20.7%		7.6%
	Above Master's	1.1%	n/a	9.7		13.6%		4.5%
Disability	With a disability	3.6%	5.6%	15.9		35.2%		10.7%
	Without a disability	96.4%	94.4%	13.1		23.9%		6.5%
Residence	Twin Cities Metro	59.1%	55.6%	14.2		28.2%		7.3%
	Central	12.5%	12.8%	11.9		20.0%		6.2%
	Northeast	5.8%	5.3%	13.3		21.9%		6.3%
	Northwest	8.4%	9.8%	11.7		18.3%		6.7%
	Southeast	8.4%	9.3%	11.5		19.4%		5.9%
	Southwest	5.6%	7.2%	11.7		19.4%		6.7%

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

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 3rd, 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

Attachment G

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 3rd. 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.

Figure 8. Risk for Long Term Unemployment by Wage and Work Status in Minnesota, 2020

Factor	Description	% Tot claimants	Avg UI weeks	% Continued filing after Oct 3		% Ever permanently separated	
				18.7%	29.9%	4.8%	12.8%
Total	Total claimants since Mar 15	100.0%	13.3	27.2%		6.8%	
Hourly wage	Below \$14.70	25.5%	15.1	29.9%		6.7%	
	\$14.70 to \$21.48	31.5%	14.1	26.6%		7.4%	
	\$21.49 (MN median) to \$33.0	23.3%	12.4	21.6%		6.6%	
	Above \$33.0	19.7%	10.7	18.7%		6.5%	
Work Status	Part-time or seasonal	17.9%	14.2	28.7%		12.8%	
	Part-time year-round	34.3%	15.6	28.9%		6.8%	
	Full-time year-round	47.8%	11.3	20.2%		4.8%	

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

Workers with wages under \$14.70, on average, had longer periods on UI and were more likely to still be filing after October 3rd, 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.