

Regional and Local Plans

7/1/2021 – 6/30/2024

RWDA:

Regional Workforce Development Area #1

LWDA:

Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. LWDA #2

REGIONAL PLAN

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

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

Northwest Minnesota is a mostly rural, 26-county region located in the central, northern and northwest areas of the state bordering North Dakota, South Dakota and Canada. The region covers four Economic Development Regions (EDRs) and is the third largest of the six planning regions in the state, accounting for 10 percent of the state's total population.

The Northwest Planning Region covers the following counties: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomon, Marshall, Morrison, Norman, Otter Tail, Pennington, Polk, Pope, Red Lake, Roseau, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, and Wilkin.

Northwest Minnesota is also a very diverse region in terms of geography, as well as economics. To the north there are trees and lakes, to the south and west there are prairies and farmland. Yet, given the large land mass yielding numerous economic benefits, there are still many challenges in the region in the area of Workforce Development. As with the rest of the world, nation and state, the pandemic has had a jarring effect on the people and economy of the region.

The following narrative will help to identify and explain these challenges in greater detail.

Unemployment/Poverty:

Northwest Minnesota experienced employment gains every year since the 2009 recession and had 223,144 workers as of 2019. In the past five years, the planning region gained 6,750 jobs, a 3.1 percent increase. This is considerably lower, however, than the 6.3 percent growth rate in the State of Minnesota during that time.

According to the Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program, over the last ten years the annual unemployment rate has fluctuated from a high of 7.3 percent in 2011 to a low of 3.8 percent in 2018. Between April 2020 and November 2020, the monthly unemployment rate was as much as 4.8 percent higher than in the same period in 2019 due to the effects of the pandemic on the economy. Northwest Minnesota consistently reports higher unemployment rates than the rest of Minnesota. The unemployment rate in the Northwest typically hovers about 1 percent above the statewide rate. In 2020, however, the annual average unemployment rate in Northwest Minnesota was 5.5 percent, compared to the statewide average of 5.8 percent. Of note, however, is that the drop in the unemployment rate was due in no small part to the fact that the labor force in Northwest Minnesota dropped 1.8 percent. The Minnesota statewide labor force dropped 1.1 percent. With the recent decrease, the labor force of Northwest Minnesota has only increased by 1,035 people in the last five years (0.3 percent),

while the state labor force grew by 2.5 percent during this time frame. If labor force rates are constant, and populations projections accurate, it is projected that the planning region will see its labor force decrease by about 6,000 people, a 2 percent decline, over the next ten years.

Overall, the Northwest's poverty rate is 11.5 percent, which is slightly above the statewide rate of 9.7 percent. Poverty levels vary widely by race and origin. According to the 2015-2019 American Community Survey-5 Year Estimates 46.7 percent of the region's Black or African American population were below the poverty level in 2019, compared to just 9.7 percent of the white population. Likewise, poverty levels hovered around 34 percent for American Indians, which was above statewide rates in both cases. Over 22 percent of people of two or more races and of Hispanic or Latino origin also were below the poverty level in 2019.

Household Incomes:

According to the 2020 Regional Profile, household incomes are also lower in Northwest Minnesota than in the statewide average. At \$57,757 compared to \$68,411 statewide, the Northwest Region has the second lowest median household income of the six planning regions in the state. Almost half (45.1 percent) of the households in the region had incomes below \$50,000 in 2018, compared to just 36.4 percent statewide. About one-third (33.8 percent) of households earned between \$50,000 and \$100,000 in the Northwest Region. Only 21.1 percent of households earned over \$100,000 per year compared to nearly 31.5 percent of households statewide.

Incomes also vary widely by race in the Northwest Region, with the highest incomes reported by White, Asian, and households of some other race and the lowest incomes reported for American Indians and Black or African American households. There is a nearly \$25,000 per year difference in the median income for those two groups.

Wages:

According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages program, Northwest Minnesota was home to 17,145 businesses providing 223,144 jobs in 2019, with a total payroll over \$9.3 billion. That represented about 7.7 percent of total employment in the state of Minnesota. Average annual wages were \$41,721 in the region, which was approximately \$18,000 lower than the state's average annual wage.

The median hourly wage for all occupations in Northwest Minnesota was \$18.38 in the first quarter of 2020. The Northwest Region is tied for the second lowest median wage level of the six planning areas in the state. The Northwest Region median wage was over \$3 below the state's median hourly wage, and nearly \$5 below the median hourly wage in the Twin Cities metro area. This amounts to over \$10,000 per year for a full-time worker. Compared to surrounding areas, the Northwest Region's median hourly wage was 90 cents per hour less than in Central (\$19.28) and 65 cents less than Northeast (\$19.03). Within the Northwest Region, EDR 5 - North Central had the lowest median wage, despite having the highest cost of living. EDR 1 - Northwest had the highest wages in the region, at \$19.11.

Northwest Minnesota also had a lower cost of living than the state average according to the [DEED Cost of Living Tool](#). An hourly wage of \$13.44 is required for a single person living alone in Northwest Minnesota to meet basic needs, compared to an hourly wage of \$15.07 statewide. A family of two adults and one child would require an hourly wage of \$15.57 in Northwest Minnesota, while the hourly wage required statewide would be \$18.20.

Demographics:

Northwest Minnesota has welcomed about 16,200 new residents since 2010. In addition to a natural increase – more births than deaths – of 10,634 people, an estimated 5,925 more people migrated to the area than moved out, including a net in-migration of 2,283 people from other counties or states, as well as 3,642 additional foreign-born Minnesotans.

Just over half – 14 of 26 – of the counties in Northwest Minnesota have grown in population so far this decade, while the other 12 declined. Eight of the 11 counties in the region with less than 10,000 residents declined in population from 2010 to 2019. In contrast, the larger counties in the region have had more population growth. As part of the fast-growing Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Statistical Area, Clay County added 5,000 new residents, an 8.9 percent increase, making it the 8th fastest growing county (of 87) in the state. Crow Wing County, the largest county in the region with 65,055 people in 2019, was the 27th fastest growing county in the state. Seven of the eight counties in the region with more than 30,000 residents saw population growth. The population in the region is expected to grow from 2020 to 2030. The 1.3 percent increase will be smaller than the statewide rate of change (5 percent).

The median age in Planning Region 1 is 42.8 years compared to 28.3 years statewide. Over one-third (35.4 percent) of the population is over the age of 55, compared to 29.7 percent statewide. In contrast, the region had a smaller percentage of people in the 25 to 54-year age group - typically considered the “prime working years.” A large portion of Northwest’s population is a part of the “Baby Boom” generation, which is creating a significant shift in regional demographics over time. While the number of residents under 25 years of age declined, the number of people aged 55 years and over increased by over 61,000 between 2000 and 2019.

Diversity:

The overall population in Northwest Minnesota is less racially diverse than the rest of the state. Northwest Minnesota is, however, becoming more diverse over time.

In 2019, an estimated 91 percent of the region’s residents reported White alone as their race, compared to 83.3 percent of residents statewide. However, at 4.1 percent, Northwest had the highest concentration of American Indian and Alaska Natives of the six planning regions in Minnesota. Census data shows that the number of residents of other races increased much more rapidly than the region’s White population, jumping nearly 60 percent since 2000. In particular, the number of Black or African American residents nearly quadrupled in that time, and the population of two or more races and of Hispanic or Latino origin doubled.

The Northwest Region is home to 12,963 foreign-born residents, or 2.3 percent of the total population. The largest number of immigrants in the region have come

from Asia, followed by Europe and then Africa. However, the fastest increase in immigrants came from Africa, which increased more than 85 percent since 2010. In total, the number of immigrants in the region rose by 22.3 percent from 2010 to 2018. This is slower than the statewide growth rate of 28.9 percent.

About 47 percent of immigrants in the region settled in the U.S. prior to 2000. Foreign-born residents have a younger age profile than the native-born population, with 53.7 percent being between 25 and 54 years of age, compared to 34.3 percent of the total population. While a similar percentage of foreign-born residents had a bachelor's degree or higher compared to native born residents, immigrants were also much more likely to have less than a high school diploma.

The Headwaters Region (EDR 2) had the most diverse populace in the region, due in large part to 15.5 percent of residents identifying as American Indian or Alaska Natives. In contrast, over 93 percent of residents in EDR 1, EDR 4, and EDR 5 were White alone. With the largest total population, EDR 4 is still home to the highest number of minority residents, followed closely by EDR 2.

Industry Projections:

The largest and fastest growing industry is expected to be health care and social assistance, which may account for nearly half of total projected growth in the region between 2018 and 2028. **The region is also expected to see significant employment growth in administrative support, waste management services, education, wholesale trade, and construction.**

Manufacturing, the second largest industry, is expected to see a slight decrease in jobs, but still having employment levels over 29,000. The effects of the pandemic on retail employment are expected to be severe.

Like other parts of Greater Minnesota, **agriculture is also a key industry in the Northwest**, with 19,830 farms producing just under \$4.2 billion in the market value of products sold in 2017 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. That was the second highest value of the six planning regions in the state. EDR 4 led the way with 7,857 farms, followed by EDR 1 with 4,891 farms.

Occupations in Demand:

Northwest Minnesota has a lower percentage of adults with at least a high school diploma than the state (92.4 percent), and a lower percentage of people with at least some college experience. Northwest Minnesota also has a higher percentage of people with an Associate's degree and a lower percentage of people with a Bachelor's degree or higher. The COVID-19 Pandemic has resulted in job loss, but there are still many opportunities in demand occupations at all education levels in the region.

In Northwest Minnesota, data from DEED's Occupational Employment Statistics program shows that only around one-third of jobs in the region require postsecondary education for entry. The other two-thirds can be obtained with a high school diploma or less and some amount of on-the-job training.

Certain careers – such as dentists, lawyers, and teachers – require a college education, while other jobs – including cost estimators, sales representatives, and correctional officers – do not. High wages are also not always dependent on a 4-year or post-graduate college degree. Many occupations categorized as “High

Wage High Demand” in Northwest Minnesota only require a certificate of completion or a 2-year diploma. Yet, college is an excellent way to move up career ladders and open windows of opportunity to fields that would otherwise be closed, such as nursing or engineering. Many of these occupations offer high wages and are in high demand in the marketplace. According to DEED’s Occupations in Demand tool, demand occupations exist in every sector. For example, eight of the top 40 jobs are health care related, seven others are education related, and another four are in production/manufacturing. The Regional Workforce Alliance (RWA) and the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) utilized state data and their expertise to identify priority industries with occupations in demand including manufacturing, healthcare, transportation and education.

While education is typically a worthwhile investment, college can be expensive – with average annual expenses ranging between \$15,000 and almost \$50,000 per year in Minnesota. For those who go to college, choice of major matters – different programs lead to different jobs that earn different amounts of money. This is true in the Northwest Region as well.

Effects of the Pandemic:

According to DEED’s Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), the economy of Planning Region 1 lost over 13,000 jobs from 2019 to the average of the first three quarters of 2020 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This is a 5.9 percent decrease in jobs. The impacts of the pandemic were widespread with 18 of the 20 industry sectors recording job losses. The Accommodation and Food Services industry had the most job losses over the year with 4,087, an 18.3 percent decrease in employment. Educational services lost 2,031 jobs and Manufacturing lost 1,628 jobs. The Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry lost 671 jobs, which equates to nearly 20 percent of the industry’s employment in the region.

Another way to measure the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic is to analyze the Unemployment Insurance (UI) claims that were filed in the planning region. DEED’s UI statistics detail demographic characteristics of initial and continued claims for UI, 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 in the Northwest Minnesota labor force had filed for a continuing unemployment claim while only about 10 percent of Whites in the region’s labor force had filed for a continuing UI 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 percent had filed a continuing claim for UI. While the continued claims as a percent of labor force have dropped for all race groups as the recovery continues, racial disparities still exist.

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 UI in April of 2020. Meanwhile, only 5.8 percent 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. The discrepancy between those with less education still existed as of February 2021, however, as about 10 percent of those with a high school diploma or less have filed a continuing claim in the region, while 1.3 percent of Bachelor's degree holders have had to file a continuing claim.

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

Developing strategies to address in demand sectoral and occupational needs has been conducted under the purview of the two LWDBs in the Northwest Region for decades. These boards worked with the local Regional Labor Market Analyst to pioneer the process of identifying regional Occupations in Demand. Local business, education, labor, government and non-profit leaders meet in each EDR to use the statistics and personal knowledge to identify industry workforce needs and project occupations in demand.

Starting in 2018, under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Regional Planning, a regional summit strategy was enacted in the 26-county region of Northwest Minnesota to bring a wide range of stakeholders together to discuss occupations in demand and the underlying conditions causing the shortages of an available workers. The emphasis was on methodology to validate the data surrounding occupations in demand, and for workforce development professionals to become more aware of the specific challenges affecting business in each of the four EDRs in the Northwest Region. Keeping in mind that each EDR is distinctly unique, it was important to listen more than talk; therefore, the underlying design was to provide a business panel as well as a roundtable discussion at each summit for an uninhibited exchange of ideas. An emphasis of these meetings has been on the efficacy of developing inclusive and equitable recruiting and retention strategies. Since inception, a dozen regional summits have been planned and executed.

While the intent of prior business engagement was to validate the underlying data representing occupations and sectors in demand, the results of the summits identified many underlying foundational factors in recruitment and retention of a qualified regional workforce. These factors include: Housing, childcare, transportation, and to a lesser extent - workforce recruitment, retention, job skills and education.

Moving forward from the regional summits, each EDR has developed a "Core Team" of committed business, workforce and economic development professionals coming together on a monthly basis to discuss issues and to plan for actionable intents to help solve some most pressing issues. Specific workforce deliverables include "Infographics," Inclusive Workforce Employer Designation," and the "Employability Skills Certification."

Infographics are a tool to provide data on occupations in demand and career paths to high school job seekers in a visually interesting and easy to understand format.

The Inclusive Workforce Employer (I-WE) Designation is awarded by the RWA to

employers who demonstrate a commitment to a diverse workplace which welcomes individuals of a wide range of backgrounds.

The Employability Skills Certification is awarded to job seekers who possess the following basic work skills such as positive attitude, teamwork, diversity and cultural awareness, communication and listening, appearance and etiquette, critical thinking and problem solving and leadership.

Continuation of summits and regional planned events are part of the ongoing plans for serving the needs of the region's businesses. Many future activities have already been funded the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB). The intent is to stay current with business needs and to be able to react in a timely manner for development and implementation of innovative ideas.

In addition, the Regional Career Counseling Coordinating (RC3) staff for the region will play a key role in bringing together business and industry with the workforce system to address workforce needs. RC3 staff improve coordination and communication of workforce development programs and services through connecting stakeholders and partners; assessing and compiling information about all workforce development programs and services offered in the area; sharing best practices among stakeholders; and promoting available workforce development and career counseling programs and resources in the area. RC3 staff are instrumental in disseminating information on occupations in demand.

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

The Northwest Private Industry Council (NWPIC) and Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (RMCEP) began sharing policies and best practices prior to the implementation of WIOA Regional Planning. Since that time, both LWDBs have made strides in formalizing processes through sharing of policies, adapting practices and providing training. Each Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) describing how each will work together toward a cohesive regional approach to providing regional workforce development services.

Alignment and coordination of efforts has continued through establishment of an Executive Leadership Committee. This committee is comprised of leaders of the WIOA administrative entities and service providers in the region. Alignment and coordination between the two LWDBs will continued by sharing of best practices, and through open lines of communication.

Additional coordination of regional workforce development efforts has been strengthened through establishment of a Regional Workforce Alliance (RWA). The RWA is comprised of members from each LWBD along with appointees representing special interest groups, business and diversity. The RWA meets quarterly to plan for coordination of workforce development activities within the greater Northwest Region.

Along with the RWA structure, several committees have been formed to address specific needs within areas of workforce development. RWA Committees include:

Business Sector Initiatives, Customer Center Design, Community Engagement (Diversity) and Policy/Systems/Funding. These committees meet on a quarterly basis to assure continuity of effort and continuation of planned initiatives.

Alignment is also achieved through the efforts of RC3 staff, who provide support to the RWA and its subcommittees. The RC3 staff serve both LWDBs and serve as a conduit of information. RC3 staff arrange the RWA meetings, retain speakers and take minutes. RC3 staff also arrange many of the regional summit meetings. In addition, they carry out the regional service initiatives developed by the RWA such as the I-WE, Employee Skills Certification, Infographics, and planning.

Each LWDA has also committed to standardization of staff training. Each LWDA has sponsored "Global Career Development Facilitator" (GCDF) training. In the coming year, plans have been made to provide staff training in each LWDB within the area of "Mental Health Awareness." With an increasingly challenging environment in workforce development recruitment and retention, "Mental Health in the Workplace" has been identified as a high need for regional business.

All of the activities and specifics identified in this section will continue in the future WOIA Regional Planning Process, as these are foundational for continued success.

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

A regional approach supporting diversity has been the hallmark of past efforts within the WIOA Regional Plan. Elements of our past and future initiatives call for an increase in the awareness of diversity in the workforce in the 26-counties in Northwest Minnesota. While both LWDBs in the region have taken specific actions to address diversity, specific attention to diversity and the development of an action plan was developed in 2017. This plan has helped identify various sectors that make up local diversity and set forth a plan to address diversity on a region-wide approach. Specifics of our past and future workforce planning include:

Past Interactions:

In 2016, an early intervention into diversity included a partnership with the Minnesota State Chamber of Commerce to deliver a message of "Why We Need Immigration Reform to Support a Future Workforce." This presentation was well received in the rural regions due to the developing workforce shortages. This helped set the stage for additional conversation in many of the region's rural communities.

In 2017, continued efforts to consider diversity as an element of workforce development emerged as a coalition effort in Clay County in the border region between Minnesota and North Dakota. This effort involved a partnership of workforce, education, social service and community partners. This group came together to address issues around points of entry to employment of the New American Population in the Fargo/Moorhead communities. A "New American Team" was developed with the goal of developing a set of data to help determine

the barriers to employment for diverse populations. A “New Americans Report” was also developed, which helped create an awareness of the foundational needs of the New Americans population in workforce participation.

In 2019, additional efforts were made to implement recommendations and goals identified in the “New Americans Report.” Focus efforts included a validation of past assumptions, and the development of multi-year plan for the border regions of Minnesota and North Dakota. The “New Americans Plan” was completed in December 2019. This plan is being used to guide discussions throughout the entire Red River Valley Region. In order to foster collaboration, the Community Workforce Inclusion Council (CWIC) was formed in the western part of EDR 4. The CWIC is a group of community partners who champion a robust and diverse workforce. The success of this group has led to the creation of a CWIC in EDR 5.

Future Interactions:

The Northwest Region will continue to focus initiatives on persons not currently equitably participating in the workforce. Specific initiatives include:

Support and increase outreach for disability through the Ticket to Work Program (T2W) in LWDA 2. In the area of youth interaction, LWDB 2 will continue a substantial commitment to providing high school and Alternative Learning Center youth with career advising services.

LWDB 1 has made a substantial commitment to providing stable housing for homeless and at-risk youth. LWDB 1 is also in support of business interaction in support of strategies to address “Mental Health in the Work-Place.”

Both LWDBs have a commitment to continued development and outreach to support the “Inclusive Workforce Employer (I-WE) Designation” which was initiated by the CWIC and developed by the RWA. The I-WE Designation is awarded to employers which exhibit a commitment to reducing regional disparities, promote equitable workforce practices, and foster an inclusive culture in their businesses and communities. The I-WE Designation informs job seekers that an employer is committed to creating and maintaining a culture which is welcoming and supportive of people from diverse backgrounds. As a result, individuals will be encouraged to seek employment or better jobs with those employers and increase their job satisfaction, job retention and income. At the same time, the designation will increase the ability of employers to hire and retain workers.

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

Performance is negotiated at the individual LWDB level in coordination with DEED and the Federal Department of Labor. Each LWDB negotiates performance levels based on prevailing local economic conditions. While there are some distinct differences, there are also many similar conditions that exist for the entire 26-county region that drive the overall performance negotiations and future outcomes. Some of these on-going considerations are described below:

Past Negotiations:

Typically, rates for wage performance are achieved at a lower level in the rural areas

compared to the metropolitan areas where competition for workers is greater. Exacerbating wage performance is the large geographic dispersal of the few population centers in the region. Annual incomes in Northwest Minnesota are only 84.4 percent of the statewide average. The median hourly wage is nearly \$5 below the median hourly wage in the Twin Cities metro area. While the current labor shortages have driven wages higher in some areas due to the need for specialized skills, the existence of fewer metropolitan areas, combined with a greater regional dispersal, reduces the competition for workers in the Northwest Region. This is often a contributing cause for lower prevailing wage rates.

In addition, with just 64.1 percent of the region's population over 16 years of age participating in the labor force, the Northwest had a much lower labor force participation rate than other areas in the state. Contributing to the lower labor force participation rate is the higher percentage of the region's labor force in the oldest age groups. Older workers often work part-time or on an occasional basis.

Future Negotiations:

Ongoing negotiations between LWDA's and DEED will continue using regional data to support the development of consistent performance standards to measure work. Additionally, a dashboard for future consideration of how diversity affects performance is being developed by DEED. We hope to incorporate both the existing performance standards and newly developed diversity standards into our daily work.

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

Since inception of the WIOA Regional Planning concept, Regional Development Commissions have been the key point of contact in an identifiable effort to combine economic development efforts with WIOA Regional Planning.

In the 26-county region of Northwest Minnesota, there are four specific EDRs with regional economic development commissions. Each EDR implemented different strategies in their specific region to serve the identified needs. The WIOA Region Planning effort has recognized each region's unique characteristics and has developed specific plans to serve each EDR. Some of the noted efforts include:

EDR 1 – Development and support of the key industries and employers in the region to help promote future inward migration of workers to the remote parts of far northwest corner of Minnesota. Current and future efforts include plans to build additional workforce housing, along with business sector support for workforce retention utilizing incumbent worker training. The Joint Powers Board, which serves as the Chief Elected Official for the Workforce Development Area, is also the Joint Powers Board for the Economic Development Region.

EDR 2 – Development of methods to increase worker recruitment, retention and business culture. Specific current and future efforts include the development and implementation of an "Employment Skills Certificate," offered through the regions' CareerForce offices.

EDR 4 – Development of an effort to increase the acceptance of existing and new populations of New Americans. Local CareerForce staff are working with the

CWIC to develop an action plan to implement the goals identified in the Removing Barriers to Employment for New Americans report.

EDR 5 – Development of an effort to increase awareness of diversity in rural communities, through the development of “Welcoming Communities.” CareerForce staff have also worked with local stakeholders to establish a CWIC to advance workforce equity in the area. In addition, CareerForce staff serve on the Regional Development Commission.

All activities noted in this section will continue to develop into the future in coordination and with support of the LWDBs and RWA.

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

While largely operating as separate administrative entities, both LWDBs contribute to the ongoing regional planning efforts effort to reduce duplication of services and support. The following are examples of these efforts:

Regional Planning:

Since 2016, a single “Regional Planning Coordinator” has served each LWDB to develop, implement and evaluate the WIOA Regional Plan. Sharing of this functionality allows for pooling of administrative costs, with far less duplication of effort.

Career Pathways:

Creation, outreach, and administrative support for implementation of a Career Pathways Methodology is shared by both LWDBs through the support of the RC3 initiative. RC3 funding is provided by DEED to help tie together career pathway outcomes under one umbrella serving the entire 26-county regional planning area. Each LWDB relies on a shared RC3 Coordinator to plan and implement identified strategies.

Additional partnership development with other rural planning regions utilizing RC3 Funding has evolved supporting the development of “Info-Graphics” depicting career pathways in all demand sectors. Each of the seven rural regions participating in RC3 efforts has contributed funding to support existing and future development of the Info-Graphics program.

All of these partnership/sharing methods contribute to a more efficient system. The results of these actions allow for a reduction in areas of duplication, resulting in fewer administrative costs. These efforts will go forward into the future.

Transportation and Supportive Services:

Although each LWDB is specifically tied to regional/county transit, supportive efforts are starting to emerge in each region in the form of Regional Transit Coordination Councils (RTCCs). Workforce Development professionals have been asked to sit on various committees and councils to help plan the future look of a regional transportation system. These efforts tie together “Communities of Practice,”

where sharing of policies, and sharing of best practices come together to streamline transportation support within the regions employment and training programs. Both LWDBs provide support for RTCCs within their service areas.

Future:

While coordination of WIOA Regional Planning activities with RTCCs efforts have just started, there is a concerted effort to continue working together to explore gaps, recommend solutions and to coordinate development and expansion of regional transportation systems to serve job seekers and business interests. These efforts will continue into the foreseeable future, as the RTCCs are part of a 4-year State of Minnesota Department of Transportation Regional Plan. LWDBs are not directly funding these efforts. In support of these plans, LWDBs have contributed staff resources for development of these regional approaches.

The results of these actions will dramatically benefit the Northwest Region through coordination of effort resulting in far fewer support service dollars supporting job seeker transportation needs. This will ultimately be a great benefit to the region business as well.

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.

The Workforce Development Board (WDB) meets monthly and includes the core title providers in membership. Additionally, the CareerForce Area Managers (CAM) have formed a small group several years ago that meets on a regular basis to discuss issues, initiatives and other business affecting all partners at any one of the nine CareerForce locations in our service area.

When considering CareerForce locations, affiliates, and standalone partner sites, the WDB, the CAM, and the Local Elected Officials will jointly determine locales and consider demographics, labor market data, local industries and community need. Community input and support are critical components of the location analysis.

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

The CareerForce locations in LWDA 2 are primarily staffed by Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (RMCEP), however, it is important to note that partners are either co-located or provide itinerant services in the nine CareerForce locations in this region. This co-location and periodic service provision allows for almost daily connectivity and coordination among the partners. Connectivity and coordination with other partners are also achieved through communications with the Workforce Development Board and the CAM. As noted in #1 above, the CareerForce Area Managers have formed a small group that meets on a regular basis to discuss issues affecting all partners at any one of the CareerForce locations, including Mobile Workforce Services, in our service area. There are nine CareerForce offices, including Mobile Workforce Services, in our region. The managers include Julie Sachs, representing Job Service/Wagner-Peyser, Jeri Lynn Werner, representing Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS), along with local area VRS managers, Anne Lindseth and Curt Anderson of Workforce Impact, Vicki Leaderbrand and Tina Jaster of RMCEP, and when available, a representative from State Services for the Blind. Together we call this group the CareerForce Area Managers (CAM) group. During these meetings, we develop solutions and strategies, depending on the issue, to ensure proper connectivity and coordination among the physical sites and services provided. A strong, positive relationship exists among the partners and communications are frequent.

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

RMCEP is the service provider partner for WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, WIOA Youth, State Dislocated Worker, Minnesota Youth Program, and the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP). Through the CAM and MOUs with partner agencies, services are coordinated by local staff. Wherever possible, service providers are co-located in the CareerForce locations. We will explore the opportunities to have a greater Adult Basic Education (ABE) presence at the CareerForce locations with a common referral for similar clients.

This co-location allows for ease of connecting with and coordinating services among and between the partners. Partners work together to provide appropriate referrals and services to our mutual customers and clients. We also work closely with Rehabilitative Services through the Ticket to Work and SOAR programs in providing benefits analysis to rehabilitative customers on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) who are seeking to return to work or need assistance in applying for benefits. A close relationship has also been developed with Job Service, RMCEP, and Unemployment Insurance (UI) in which the referrals have become more seamless for the customer and integrated into the regular service delivery of each partner. During these times of the pandemic however, with no DEED staff on site, RMCEP stepped up to provide UI and Wagner-Peyser referrals and information on the partner's behalf.

As noted in #1 and #2 above, the CareerForce Area Managers have formed a small group that meets on a regular basis to discuss issues affecting all partners at any one of the CareerForce locations, including Mobile Workforce Services, in our service area. There are nine CareerForce offices, including Mobile Workforce Services, in our region. The managers include Julie Sachs, representing Job Service/Wagner-Peyser; Jeri Lynn Werner, representing Vocational Rehabilitation Services; along with local area VRS managers, Anne Lindseth and Curt Anderson of Workforce Impact; Vicki Leaderbrand and Tina Jaster of RMCEP; and when available, a representative from State Services for the Blind. Together we call this group the CareerForce Area Managers (CAM) group. During these meetings, we develop solutions and strategies, depending on the issue, to ensure proper connectivity and coordination among the physical sites and services provided. A strong, positive relationship exists among the partners and communications are frequent.

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

Core partners conduct outreach in the communities we serve through the use of technology that we call the Mobile Office. We provide services on an itinerant basis in county facilities, college campuses or K-12 facilities. Non-traditional hours are available to accommodate specific events. Additionally, we maximize services through relationship development and cross-referral with other external agencies and entities. The pandemic has provided us with opportunities to serve customers and clients via virtual or remote means through the use of technology. Additionally, we refer customers to the CareerForceMN.com platform and use the resources available to us on the site to provide virtual services.

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.

Partners maintain staff at most of the CareerForce locations who are trained professionals providing all elements of career services. These professionals may include job counselors, job search instructors, youth counselors, rehabilitation counselors, Wagner-Peyser staff, and REAs. This group of partners provide all elements of career services as a functioning team at the local CareerForce or through mobile, virtual and remote services. For a comprehensive explanation of career services provided and availability, please see response to questions #17 and #18.

All Career Services are available at all service locations and can also be accessed online. We have assistive technologies and trained personnel on staff in their use to serve individuals with disabilities as needed. Access for youth and individuals with barriers to employment are designed as appropriate based on individual need. Additionally, DEED Job Service has developed *CareerForceMN.com*, a service delivery guide to ensure that career services are offered to all customers.

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

CareerForce staff are well-versed in the use of technology for services and to ensure compliance with accessibility standards. We utilize assistive technology devices for persons with disabilities and have been certified as ADA compliant at all sites through DEED. Additionally, we have established strong relationships with agencies such as PACER as external resources. We use Mobile Office technology to ensure accessibility to outlying areas

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.

Supportive Services are provided in support of the Individual Service Strategy Plan (Employment Plan) and are based on individual need. We use a team approach to approve supportive services and the type of service and the need rationale is cased noted.

Each CareerForce location develops and maintains local community connections and networks with whom to coordinate needed services. Examples of these connections include relationships with Adult Basic Education, secondary and post-secondary education, HUD, homeless organizations, county social services, community action organizations, culturally specific agencies, juvenile justice system, veterans' resources and services, and many others.

Our local CareerForce partner teams are familiar with services provided by other agencies and work regularly with them to incorporate services into the individual employment plan. All partners meet regularly with other agencies to share updated information on available 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.

The Workforce Development Board ensures that all partners adhere to state policy. Discussions on discrepancies or disagreements are resolved through the CAM, who then make recommendations to the WDB. Ultimately, resolutions to disagreements are decided by the WDB. Additionally, DEED partners follow their prescribed methods and forms and coordinate to complete the paperwork process. Approval is negotiated and requested of all local partners.

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.

RMCEP does not sub-contract for provider services.

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.

All partners follow state policy regarding Memorandums of Understanding (MOU). Core partners use state policy as a guideline when negotiating commitment of resources that lead to the development of the MOU.

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

The WDB and RMCEP Board of Directors have developed a strategic vision for LWDA 2. We are focusing on Diversity and Inclusion and Employer Services. Good jobs, serving persons with disabilities and other employment barriers, employer engagement, and developing and maintaining effective partnerships are also focus areas in the Boards' strategic vision. These focus areas, in turn, align with the priorities and vision of the Sector Strategies outlined in our Regional Plan, which align with the state strategies. As we look at business led strategies, we can see the common threads of workforce development issues carrying through from the macro-regional level to the micro-local levels

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

Partners in LWDA 2 believe that the key to a successful life is employment and the key to a successful business is trained employees. Successful businesses, in turn, result in vibrant local economies. The mission in LWDA 2 is to provide employers with the skilled workers that they need to succeed. Through development of extensive partnerships; the creation of innovative strategies, projects, and delivery systems; the strong administration of WIOA, State, and grant programming; and working together with System and Community Partners, we are able to provide services and programming that meet the needs of today's consumers and businesses, as well as strengthen our local economies.

We constantly work with employers, institutions of higher education, Adult Basic Education, and other partners to ensure we are able to leverage the strengths of each entity in order to provide our customers with the skills needed to meet the demands of employers and enter into career pathways in demand. We regularly review Occupations in Demand data, Labor Market Information, and informally survey our business members of the Workforce Development Board and site supervisors to keep abreast of local area economic and employment trends. This information is used throughout our system and partnerships to provide career planning and counseling services designed to meet the employment needs of this region.

Using a client-centered, strengths-based approach, we address any barriers to employment on an individual basis.

- 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.

As described in Question "B" above, by focusing on employer and individual needs, local and regional occupations and career pathways in demand, developing strong partnerships and delivery systems, and using a client-centered approach, RMCEP has consistently met or exceeded performance measures. By maintaining the resiliency to change to meet new needs and continually to improve our services and delivery, we will support individual self-sufficiency, regional economic strength and growth. The current year has been particularly challenging with the impactful effects of the pandemic on our local economies and availability of the workforce. Nevertheless, we continue to concentrate on employers and individuals using a person-centered, individualized approach. These strategies have had a positive effect on our performance accountabilities.

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

As stated earlier in this document, we have developed and maintained strong, positive relationships with our partners. Each partner is represented on the WDB. All partners participate in the development of the strategic vision and goals.

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.

The primary training providers in our service area are institutions within the Minnesota State College and University System, each of which have programs of study authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act. Additionally, many RMCEP staff serve on various local college campus advisory boards. A Perkins Consortia representative serves on our Youth Council and another serves on our Workforce Development Board. We have developed and maintained strong relationships with our colleges over the years on many initiatives and projects.

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.

As stated elsewhere, RMCEP is the provider of Title I core programs in our area. We use community outreach, a client-centered approach, technology, and assistive technology to expand access to employment opportunities for all eligible individuals, including those with barriers to employment. We also focus on continuous improvement and always look for new ways or strategies to increase access or enhance access to employment opportunities. Some of these continuous improvement initiatives have resulted in the development of Certified Work Incentive Practitioners to assist in SSI/SSDI Benefits Planning under the Ticket to Work program, the implementation of the Guideposts for Success, and the TANF Innovative Program. RMCEP is the MFIP provider for 19 counties. RMCEP is also currently working with VRS in providing Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) services.

We conduct joint staff training regarding reducing disparities for underemployed and underserved populations. DEED has close partnerships with county jails, providing pre-release workshops to inmates to prepare them to get a job upon release. We provide the "New Leaf Workshop" and have two Certified Community Workforce Development Professionals in our region. DEED does outreach to Probation Officers for referrals and does workshops at Halfway Houses. The Regional Workforce Alliance (through Regional Planning efforts) help provide information and best practices to employers about hiring tomorrow's workforce with an emphasis on hiring people from disparaged communities. Of particular note is our emphasis on providing a systemic curriculum to earn certification for employers as an Inclusive Workforce Employer.

- 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.

Access to supportive services has been expanded through outreach to various partners to leverage the availability of supportive services based on individual need. Examples include providing SSI and SSDI Benefits Analysis under Ticket to Work and SOAR programming. Additionally, we provide SNAP and Emergency Assistance services. We have strong partnerships with other entities that provide needed services that are not within our realm to provide, such as housing assistance programs, community action partners and others.

- 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.

RMCEP has led the way in the development of career pathways over the years through our involvement with sector work, identification of local Occupations in Demand, development of Career Pathway programming and other initiatives involving the input of both industry and Minnesota State Colleges and University partners. We continue to maintain these partnerships in the development of career pathways, co-enrollments with both our College and ABE partners, and other activities that lead to industry-recognized credentials that can be built upon.

It has long been the practice of RMCEP to co-enroll participants in programs in which they could benefit from those program offerings.

The Regional Workforce Alliance is a strategy group representative of our regional stakeholders and employers. Business-led sector strategies have been formed with a Private-Sector champion for each one in each LWDA and this will also facilitate these efforts on a more local basis as well.

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.

Our WDB is comprised of a majority of private sector employers. RMCEP and CareerForce staff are involved in local boards, sector partnerships and Trade Associations, which create a catalyst for influence to foster workforce development initiatives. When the pandemic guidelines are lifted, the WDB will again sponsor listening sessions every two years at which we engage businesses in discussion with Labor Market analysts to provide accurate data about the sectors in demand in our region. Healthcare, Manufacturing, Agriculture and Transportation are the local key industry sectors identified in our Regional Plan. Career pathway partnerships will

continue to strengthen our ability to increase the number of qualified applicants for those jobs in demand.

Additionally, RMCEP staff host job fairs, including occupationally specific job fairs, diversity focused job fairs and industry specific job fairs. This year included the introduction of "Drive-In," "Trunk," and "Virtual" job fairs as well. Employers are invited on site when available through such activities as Jobs n Java to discuss their needs and openings with job seekers. We will resume these activities when Covid guidelines allow. RMCEP works one-on-one with individual employers to develop job sites and OJT opportunities.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, we have been focused on providing Employer Services in a stronger sense in our local region. We have a trained Employer Navigator at each location, continually train, coordinate and share with Liz Jennings (Employer Engagement Specialist for DEED).

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

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

The WDB will continue to support MinnesotaWorks.net and CareerForceMN.com. The Workforce Strategy Consultant (WSA) works alongside RMCEP to assist businesses on a broad scale to identify and resolve issues they are facing. The state and RMCEP share the priority to address the disparities gap which would include assisting minorities and persons with disabilities enter, advance and retain employment. RMCEP addresses this issue through consistently training staff, partnering with demographically focused agencies, providing Ticket to Work programming and the Inclusive Workforce Employer certification.

The activities of the WSA and RMCEP staff, as well as other partners, are coordinated within the LWDA. The Wagner-Peyser program also provides services to businesses with the focus of contacting businesses in the key industry sectors identified in the local and state plans, help the business solve their workforce issues, and promote job openings to job seeking customers in the CareerForce locations.

RMCEP is involved with sector work, helping industries identify root causes of workforce issues. We are involved with industry associations and have developed local employer committees. We are active in Chambers of Commerce; attend Business after Hours events and other activities that allow us to understand the needs of businesses in the local workforce development area, and work with our partners to address those needs.

Through our Regional Planning efforts, the Regional Workforce Alliance specifically focuses on issues and root causes that cause barriers in the local workforce. In addition, staff will be trained at a basic level to respond to basic needs including job

orders, information and referrals. Additionally, local Veterans Employment Representatives conduct outreach to employers on behalf of veterans.

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

Key partner staff are actively engaged with our regional economic development providers. We have representation from our regional economic development providers on our WDB. Additionally, we maintain strong partnerships with local economic developers and share in initiatives and strategies on the local level. We are also on the Board of Impact 2020, West Central Labor Force Development Council, trade associations and many others. Through these connections and partnerships, we continue to develop new initiatives and strengthen ones in place that are effective. Regional economic development providers are also members of our Regional Workforce Alliance.

- 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 WDB intends to reserve and use not more than 20 percent of the funds allocated to the local area to pay for the Federal share of the cost of providing training for incumbent workers for the purpose of upskilling to retain employment or avert a layoff. RMCEP and Job Service staff work closely together to ensure services are provided to businesses to help avert lay-offs and to dislocated workers. RMCEP operates the WIOA and the State Dislocated Worker program and provides On the Job Training for dislocated workers. RMCEP and Job Service also work closely to engage the state's Rapid Response if necessary. This past year we have seen a marked increase in demand for incumbent worker training services and with our available funds and focus on employer needs, we have increased our offerings in this area as well.

UI sessions are not conducted in person this year due to the Pandemic. They are conducting re-employment sessions individually over the telephone with UI beneficiaries. Rural MN CEP and Job Service staff are doing outreach to Unemployment Beneficiaries over the telephone to introduce them to CareerForce services and services provided over CareerForcemn.com. We have an effective referral process in place to ensure that customers who desire more services get them from the appropriate partner.

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.

RMCEP and Job Service have strong relationships with the local economic development agencies and the Economic Development Regions in its service area (EDRs 2, 4 and 5). One of our WDB members is a member of a regional Economic Development Board, and two members of our WDB are representative of economic development. We meet with our Economic Development Representatives on a regular basis and work in conjunction on various initiatives, including promotion of entrepreneurial training and assistance for small businesses.

RMCEP also operates the CLIMB program, which is designed to assist aspiring entrepreneurs in the state-funded Dislocated Worker program with training and consulting to assist in a successful business launch or growth.

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

As stated elsewhere in this plan, RMCEP and the WDB have a focus on continuous improvement in all its operations. Most recently, RMCEP has been engaged in a concentrated effort to increase knowledge, efficiencies and partnerships with agencies providing services to persons of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), immigrants, refugees and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) population. Two additional areas of continuous improvement are the focus on providing employer services and referrals, and the use of technology to provide services and coordinate and refer services to other agencies. Staff training on a continual basis also promotes service delivery improvement. Many RMCEP staff are on the state WIOA committees and staff are actively engaged with DEED personnel in terms of developing and clarifying DEED policies and procedures. RMCEP is also an active member in the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) and the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB).

The WDB and Local Elected Officials of LWDA 2 will be developing and updating the Vision Statement and Strategic Plan for the agency in 2022-2023.

Performance measures are key in determining the success of program outcomes. The Board of RMCEP has developed a proxy measure system in which RMCEP can monitor the progress of performance measures long before official results are published. This allows us to identify and correct any performance issues in a more timely fashion. Additionally, the Board has set higher internal expectations in terms of performance measures than those required of the state, thereby enhancing the ability of the agency to meet or exceed the measures.

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

The WDB sets the direction of the local workforce system and provides valuable input and feedback into the activities designed to meet the needs of employers and participants. They review performance measures and results, are active in environmental scanning, and enable us to structure program components, plan service levels and prioritize services to participants. The WDB also serves as oversight for the local workforce system and approves various measures, budgets and initiatives. All providers provide regular reports to the WDB on data, activities, and initiatives.

As the WDB is largely composed of employers, it is well-positioned to help the local workforce system with employer linkages, apprise the CareerForce Center partners of local business trends, and bring innovative ideas to the system. One of our members also serves on the Governor's Workforce Development Board. The WDB members participate in Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards and the National Association of Workforce Boards Conferences.

Employers are again experiencing labor and skills shortages in specific occupations as the economy begins to strengthen. While more disenfranchised job seekers are beginning to re-enter the labor market, they do not possess the skills needed by employers. Aging baby boomers continue to leave the workforce, creating a vacuum of expertise and institutional knowledge.

Employers continue to remark on the lack of basic soft skills and work readiness skills found in entry-level employees. Additionally, employers are seeking additional resources to provide training for their workers to meet the continual advances in technology and to promote workers to fill the gaps in skill sets lost to attrition or retirements. Employers also remark on the lack of a transportation infrastructure in the rural communities and affordable housing/childcare. These issues make it difficult to attract and retain workers.

RMCEP has ramped up its efforts offering On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Incumbent Worker Training services based on the increased needs of employers, largely as a result of the effects of the Pandemic on the local labor force.

Job seekers continue to need assistance with setting career goals, focusing their job search or choosing appropriate training. Job-seekers are not necessarily aware of the occupations in the region that can offer a living wage and economic stability. It is for this reason that LWDA 2 remains focused on providing occupation information for high-growth, high-pay jobs in the region.

Job-seekers request assistance with the job search process and preparing for job search, such as resume writing, job search strategies, finding job leads, and interviewing techniques. Older workers are also seeking assistance with job search and retraining as well as dealing with unemployment issues unique to the older worker.

Clients who have a desire to enter post-secondary training may need basic skill remediation and instruction from ABE. If or when clients need academic skills to be successful in the college classroom, they are directed to ABE. ABE can provide academic bridge and pathway support.

In sum, job-seekers need assistance with career exploration and guidance, occupational information, access to resources, information about and access to

training options, job search assistance, work experience, and education in soft skills and workplace behaviors. Supports that remove barriers to employment success and identify strengths will continue to be a strong need.

The Workforce Development Board has determined that funds are not limited and therefore a priority in the WIOA Adult Program eligibility for intensive and training services will continue to include those whose income does not exceed the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL). This action to expand eligibility beyond 70 percent of the LLSIL is allowed at in WIOA law. Additionally, up to 10 percent of participants may exceed the LLSIL if they have significant barriers to employment.

RMCEP will consider anyone enrolled in any other RMCEP program to be eligible for the WIOA Adult program, for example, older workers participating in SCSEP will be eligible for WIOA Adult services. Dual enrollment in programs, if warranted, allows for the leverage of funding available to ensure jobseekers receive all services necessary to prepare to enter employment.

The WDB has stated that individuals participating in a Minnesota Jobs Skills Partnership (MJSP) OR a Career Pathway program will be eligible for WIOA Adult services. Those who are employed but require intensive services to achieve self-sufficiency are also appropriate for these components.

Workers: Many workers cannot expect to work for the same employer over their career or that an employer will necessarily take a vested interest in their professional development and future. Because of this, workers will need to become increasingly responsible for their own employability. As noted above, the need to master new technologies in the performance of one's job will become increasingly important. For this reason, workers will require incumbent worker training or accessible and affordable training tied to their workforce needs.

Increasingly, workers and their employers are requesting additional training in both soft skills, leadership skills, inclusion and diversity skills, and specific occupational skills. Workers need applied occupational training specific to their jobs. Request for additional training is the primary request from both groups.

Workers are also expressing a concern over competitive wages in the region and lack of affordable health care benefits as these issues become increasingly difficult for area employers to provide.

LWDA 2 will make available up to 20 percent of the formula WIOA Title I-B Adult and Dislocated Worker Program available allocations for training incumbent workers or as allowed by WIOA and DEED regulations.

The above labor market picture outlines the major issues on which the LWDB has placed focus. Through initiatives, service delivery, partnerships, developments of career pathways and other activities, LWDA 2 will continue to work to address these issues in our workforce development strategies.

- 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.

RMCEP and partners have implemented the use of “Mobile Offices” to provide services in remote areas. Counselors have access to a laptop computer, a portable printer, a jet pack (or WI-FI hotspot) and a portable scanner. Counselors are able to use this technology to connect with the RMCEP network to assist clients at remote sites.

In a few selected community sites, we have installed a computer that allows customers to access job seeking sites, Win-Way resume builder, and similar job seeking software. Staff travel to remote communities to meet with clients as necessary. This is in addition to the technology resources available on site in the Career Labs, as well as assistive technology devices designed to facilitate access for persons with disabilities.

The Pandemic has provided us with new opportunities to utilize more technology in service delivery. We have been conducting outreach and actual services through telecommunications, virtual meetings and utilizing the many resources on CareerForceMN.com.

ABE classrooms located throughout the region can access distance learning platforms in rural areas to decrease barriers.

- 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.

All of the CareerForce offices in LWDA 2 have been certified as ADA compliant by DEED. The RMCEP Human Resources Manager and the ODEO of DEED have worked closely over several years to ensure RMCEP is in compliance with section 188, and applicable provisions of the ADA of 1990 in terms of physical access, program access and training through policy. Over the last few years, RMCEP staff have been trained by PACER and other experts in the use of assistive technology to assist persons with disabilities access needed services and resources.

Through RMCEP’s tenure in implementing the Disability Employment Initiative, we have integrated the Guideposts for Success model to provide a holistic approach to serving all customers, including those with disabilities. This has also allowed us to develop and maintain a stronger relationship and collaboration with our Vocational Rehabilitation Partners as well. This **best practice** continues to this day.

Finally, as a Ticket to Work provider, our staff are versed in the resources available to assist social security disability recipients to develop and follow a plan to re-enter the workforce.

- 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).

There are four main one-stop partners within LWDA 2. They include Job Service, whose primary role is to work with individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance and Veterans with significant barriers to employment. They also work with businesses on workforce shortage solutions through the Workforce Strategy Consultant. Vocational Rehabilitation Services, whose primary role is to assist consumers with disabilities; State Services for the Blind, whose primary role is to assist consumers with sight-impairments; and RMCEP, whose primary role is to operate the Employment and Training Programs such as WIOA Adult, State and WIOA Youth programs, State Dislocated Worker Programs, MFIP, SNAP and similar programs, as well as serve as the WIOA administrative entity. All partners have a strong role in workforce development.

The resource contributions will be determined through the MOU and cost allocations that will be development under state policy. Our most current Partner MOU and IFA are on file with DEED.

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

ADULT SERVICES

BACKGROUND: The purpose of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) is to (1) provide a system of employability services that will increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants; (2) improve the quality of the workforce; (3) reduce welfare dependency; and (4) enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation's economy. WIOA authorizes career and training services which are based on the customer's need. Services are provided through the one stop CareerForce. Providing excellent customer service will be our focus.

WIOA services provided by RMCEP include career and training services. There are three types of career services: basic career services, individual career services, and follow-up. Enrollment is not required for adults to access basic career services. Individualized career services and training services require enrollment. WIOA enrollment is available to individuals who are unable to obtain employment or retain employment leading to self-sufficiency through basic career services as determined by RMCEP staff **and** who meet the WIOA priority for services.

A. BASIC CAREER SERVICES:

1. Basic Career Services primarily involve direction to facilitate self-service or are informational in nature. The following Basic Career Services will be available:
 - a. Eligibility determination
 - b. Outreach, intake and orientation
 - c. Initial assessment (literacy, numeracy, English as a Second Language (ESL), aptitudes, abilities, supportive service needs)

- d. Labor Exchange such as job search and placement assistance; career counseling (in-demand or non-traditional occupations)
 - e. Workforce programs referral/coordination
 - f. Labor Market Information (LMI)
 - g. Training program performance and cost
 - h. Our performance
 - i. Supportive service information and referral
 - j. Assistance with financial aid eligibility for non-WIOA training
 - k. Assistance with Unemployment Insurance (UI)
2. Basic Career Services will be provided mainly in the CareerForce Career Lab.
 3. Group services such as career planning and job search or job club are also available as Basic Career Services.
 4. Career planning as a Basic Career Service does not include staff-assisted development of a career or employment plan. The expectation for Basic Career Service is that the customer uses the information provided to self-serve. Customers who need staff assistance to develop their plan must be enrolled to access an Individualized Employment Plan.
 5. Job search information can be provided as a group activity. Those customers who need individualized staff support to conduct their job search should be enrolled in individualized career services for case management.

D. INDIVIDUALIZED CAREER SERVICES:

1. Individualized Career Services do require program enrollment. Individualized Career Services are available to people whom the CareerForce has determined will be needed to obtain or retain employment. The following Individual Career Services will be available in all CareerForce locations.
 - a. Comprehensive and specialized assessment (for example: NCRC, Benefit Planning)
 - b. Development of Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
 - c. Group/individual counseling/mentoring
 - d. Career planning (case management)
 - e. Pre-vocational services: Includes employability skills such as time management, professional communication skills and worksite expectations. In some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as

short-term pre-vocational services. Workshops such as resume writing, interviewing techniques, online job searches, career exploration or interest assessments are available as pre-vocational services.

- f. Internships/work experience linked to careers
 - g. Workforce preparation activities (Referral to ABE)
 - h. Financial literacy
 - i. Out-of-area job search
 - j. ESL; integrated education/training programs
 - k. Work Readiness Services: assist an individual to acquire a combination of basic academic, critical thinking, digital literacy, and/or self-management skills. These include services that build competencies in:
 - Utilizing resources;
 - Using information;
 - Working with others;
 - Understanding systems;
 - Skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education or training, or employment; and
 - Other employability skills that increase an individual's preparation for the workforce
2. Priority of service applies. The staff-assisted assessments are completed with customers. The customers' needs are assessed through a formal guided interview. Staff will present the assessment information to the team. The team will recommend additional basic services, referral to other agencies, or enrollment for Individual Career, and/or Training Services. This consists of using the assessment tool in a guided interview to identify strengths, barriers, employability development needs, and a completed application. It also includes literacy assessment and one-on-one interpretation of interest and/or aptitude assessment results.
 3. Every participant in individualized career services will have an Employment Plan which identifies the employment goal, appropriate objectives, and the services needed for the participant to achieve those objectives. Workforce One Employment Plan will be used.
 4. Staff Assisted Job Placement consists of any of the following three services:
 - a. Job Development: Staff seek job openings with the skills and employment objectives of a particular job seeking customer in mind. This includes talking with employers about their needs and interest in interviewing the specific job seeking customer.
 - b. Job Referral: Staff refer job seekers to job openings that are currently available.

- c. Out of Area Job Search: Supportive services for job seekers who have staff verified job interviews or job offers that would require relocation.
5. Staff Assisted Job Search System: This activity is for individuals who need a guided job search, including supportive services to participate in the Job Search System (JSS). Staff monitor the implementation of skills learned in JSS.
6. One-on-one career counseling is available to help the participant reach a successful outcome. Career Counseling is focused on issues such as career exploration, career change, personal career development and career related issues. It is the process of helping individuals explore career options, or experienced professionals contemplating a career change to select a course of study that may help them to obtain a job or make them employable. A career counselor helps individuals to get into a career that is suited to their aptitude, personality, interest and skills.
7. Non-Credentialed Training: which is an organized program or course of study but does not result in an industry-recognized credential when successfully completed.
8. GED: The participant is working with ABE to obtain a GED or high school diploma.
9. Work Training: Adult Internship or Work Training including Transitional Jobs. Some adults benefit from hands on experience to try out a job, or to gain recent work history and a local reference, or to apply skills they have discussed in a classroom. Work experience activities can be customized to the needs of the job seeker.
10. National Career Readiness Certificate Testing: This activity is used when an enrolled individual is taking the three (3) WorkKeys tests to obtain a National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC).
11. Planned Extended Leave: Individuals in this activity do not enter the administrative separation process explained below.
 - a. This activity for individuals who will enter training but will experience a planned gap in service greater than eighty-nine (89) days due to a delay in the start of training.
 - b. This activity also signifies a planned extended leave for individuals who have been called to active duty in a branch of the military. Individuals will remain in this activity until they return home and can again begin participation in their WIOA service plan.

12. Partnering: Partnering indicates that the customer is currently receiving WIOA authorized services which are not paid for through WIOA funds (i.e., DRS assessment and plan; Veterans Employment Assistance; TAA).

- a. Non CareerForce agencies may also be partners to serve the needs of WIOA customers if the services they provide are authorized in WIOA such as adult basic education or occupational skills training programs that we are not funding. The participant's Employment Plan will document the partnering agency, the WIOA service that is being provided and the planned duration of the partnering service.
- b. Staff must identify the partnering program on the status change when enrolling a participant in Partnering.
- c. RMCEP staff will maintain contacts with participants in partnering to determine progress and the need for any changes to the participant's plan (ISS).

13. Financial Literacy

E. TRAINING SERVICES

1. Participants interested in attending training first complete a training proposal in consultation with their job counselor. A training proposal determines if a particular training is needed. The proposal will compare training institutions, cost, availability/start date, length of training and labor market data related to that specific training. Short-term training is supported with a focus on training that results in a credential.

Services are documented in the participant's Employment Plan. A participant is not required to receive career services before receiving training services.

All participants seeking training funding will have a documented interview, evaluation or assessment AND career planning or other means by which eligibility for WIOA-funded training services can be determined.

Training services may be provided if the participant:

- a. is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services alone; and
- b. is in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment; and
- c. has the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services; and

- d. selected a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the individual is willing to commute or relocate; and
- e. is determined eligible in accordance with the priority system in effect for adults (WIOA Adult program participants only; see the Employment and Training Division's policy on WIOA Adult Eligibility and Priority of Service.

Additionally, a determination should be made whether the participant:

- a. is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training, including state-funded training funds or Federal Pell Grants; or
- b. is currently waiting for a Trade Adjustment Assistance petition determination. If the petition is denied, the participant can still continue training under WIOA.

Training services include:

- Registered Apprenticeships
- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment (also known as Credentialed Training or Classroom Training)
- On-the-job training
- Incumbent worker training
- Training programs operated by the private sector
- Occupationally-specific skill upgrading and retraining
- Entrepreneurial training programs that assist qualified unemployed individuals who are seriously interested in starting a business and becoming self-employed (note: TAA participants cannot have a goal of self-employment, and entrepreneurial activities are not allowed under TAA law)
- Job readiness training provided in combination with any of the above training services, with the exception of registered apprenticeships (note: job readiness training alone does not constitute a training service)
- Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training
- Non-credentialed training, which is an organized program or course of study that provides occupationally-specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at intermediate or advanced levels but does not result in an industry-recognized credential when successfully completed.

2. When WIOA funds are used to pay for training services the training provider must be listed on the State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) unless the training is on-the-job training, customized training, or incumbent worker training, which are excluded under federal law. Internships, transitional jobs or unpaid work experience opportunities, which are career services, are also excluded. To

be considered a training course that qualifies for a WIOA credential, the training must be WIOA certified. Paying for training courses that have not been certified will be considered a Non-Credentialed Training.

3. The following services provide specific job/occupational skills for participants **and all require credential attainment**. Staff must obtain a copy of the credential and keep it in the client's field file.
 - a. Other Academic Classroom Training (Not Funded by RMCEP WIOA). Staff use this activity when TAA or another source is paying for the training and RMCEP staff will need to obtain verification of the credential for performance measure.
 - b. WIOA Certified Classroom Training. This activity is classroom training that provides a license or credential upon completion. This includes entrepreneurial training (training is allowed but start-up business costs are prohibited).
 - c. Credential Attained without Training: A course of study has been completed prior to request for assistance with license or certification. Assistance is being provided to obtain a license or certification now.
 - d. On-the-Job Training (OJT) (Public or Private).
 - e. Customized Training: The contract will identify the specific training to be provided, RMCEP paid costs, employer paid costs, the training schedule, and a list of employees who will be trained.
4. Credentials: Programs' providers have a number of sources they can use to collect data needed to calculate the credential attainment rates. Credentials may include degrees, diplomas, certificates, licenses, other forms of certification for certain skilled and professional occupations, employer attestations, and job placement. For this WIOA Adult program, an updated case note documenting contact and confirmation from a school or institution official verifying the date of graduation and credential type is allowed.
5. On-the-Job Training: The standard employer reimbursement is 50%. Contracts which meet all of the following factors may be increased up to 75%.
 - The characteristics of the participants – long-term unemployed or having barriers to employment as defined under WIOA.
 - The size of the employer – small and medium businesses having fewer than 250 employees.
 - The quality of employer-provided training and advancement opportunities – training for in-demand occupations as defined by the local Workforce Development Board.
 - Participants successful in OJT's will submit measurable skills gains.

F. FOLLOW-UP SERVICES

WIOA participants who enter employment at termination will have access to non-financial support services for 12 months after exiting the program.

DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICES

BACKGROUND: Dislocated worker programs provide assistance to dislocated workers as a result of plant closings, layoffs, failure of individual businesses or farm operations, and displaced homemakers. Federal and State regulations require notice of plant closing, union consultation, Expeditious Response or coordination with the State Rapid Response Unit.

Dislocated workers are to be encouraged to enroll immediately and made aware that these services exist to be customer centered and job-driven. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

The needs of dislocated workers vary considerably. While some individuals will have a substantial need for program services, others can succeed in finding good jobs with limited assistance. This policy formalizes general guidelines for determining which dislocated workers are appropriate for Individualized Career or for Training Services.

A. Expeditious Response

1. RMCEP and DEED/Job Service initiate contact within one week of receiving notification of a layoff or plant closure of 49 or fewer people to begin expeditious response. If 50 or more people are affected, the local Team Leader (as site supervisor), must notify the Director of Operations, (RMCEP's designated state rapid response coordinator), who will then contact the State Rapid Response Unit. The Rapid Response Unit may request that RMCEP take the lead with the business in situations where there is no competition for layoffs larger than 50.
2. The RMCEP Director of Operations will appoint a RMCEP staff to coordinate with the DEED representative to jointly plan an orientation meeting for the affected workers. The orientation planning will include:
 - a. a method for the identification of community resource people
 - b. conducting worker needs assessment surveys
 - c. a liaison plan with local economic development agencies to assist in efforts to avert the dislocation
 - d. established roles and methods for providing program information to the dislocated workers
 - e. established time frame for prompt intervention

- f. and when feasible, development of a layoff aversion plan to present to the business owner/officials.
3. Layoff Aversion Strategies will be discussed with the business owner/official to determine if the layoff or closure can be averted or minimized. Layoff aversion may include a wide array of possible strategies or activities, including but not limited to:
 - a. Ongoing engagement, partnership, and relationship-building activities with businesses in the community, in order to create an environment for successful layoff aversion efforts and to enable the provision of assistance to dislocated workers in obtaining reemployment as soon as possible;
 - b. Providing assistance to employers in managing reductions in force, which may include early identification of firms at risk of layoffs, assessment of the needs of and options for at-risk firms, and the delivery of services to address these needs;
 - c. Funding feasibility studies to determine if a company's operations may be sustained through a buyout or other means to avoid or minimize layoffs;
 - d. Developing and managing incumbent work training programs or other worker up skilling approaches;
 - e. Connecting companies to state Short-Time Compensation or other programs designed to prevent layoffs or to quickly reemploy dislocated workers, business loan programs for employee skill upgrading; and other Federal, state and local resources as necessary to address other business needs;
 - f. Establishing linkages with economic development activities at the Federal, state and local levels including Federal Department of Commerce programs and available state and local business retention and expansion activities;
 - g. Partnering or contracting with business-focused organizations to assess risks to companies, propose strategies to address those risks, implement services, and measure impacts of services delivered;
 - h. Conducting analyses of the suppliers of an affected company to assess their risks and vulnerabilities from a potential closing or shift in production of their major customer;
 - i. Engaging in proactive measures to identify opportunities for potential economic transition and training needs in growing industry sectors or expanding businesses; and
 - j. Connecting businesses and workers to short-term, on-the-job, or customized training programs and apprenticeships before or after layoff to help facilitate rapid reemployment.
4. Economic development agencies will be contacted to prevent or mitigate the loss of jobs.
5. Workers will be informed of available services. Only Basic Career Services are

B. Basic Career Services

1. RMCEP will perform the following services:
 - a. outreach of potential applicants;
 - b. intake and eligibility determination; and
 - c. provide Expeditious Response.
2. Early intervention for eligible dislocated workers is critical. Services are to be made available as soon as possible upon notification that employees will be terminated due to business closure or layoff.
3. Basic Career Services such as orientation, career lab assistance and job club will be available to all dislocated workers.
4. RMCEP staff will complete the needs assessment with dislocated workers who express interest in services.
5. Before any client may receive Individualized Career or Training Services, the client must be enrolled using the standard RMCEP process.
6. The Reading and Math Test must be administered to each Dislocated Worker prior to enrollment.

C. Individualized Career Services:

1. The following Individual Career Services will be available to Dislocated Workers in need of such services to assist them to obtain or retain employment:
 - a. Comprehensive and specialized assessment (for example: NCRC, Benefit Planning)
 - b. Development of individual employment plan
 - c. Group/individual counseling/mentoring
 - d. Career planning (case management)
 - e. Short term pre-vocational services
 - f. Internships/work experience linked to careers
 - g. Workforce preparation activities (Referral to ABE)
 - h. Financial literacy
 - i. Out-of-area job search
 - j. ESL; integrated education/training programs

2. Persons selected for dislocated worker services will be enrolled, complete a staff assisted assessment, Employment Planning and have their Employment Plan developed within two weeks of selection. Every participant in individualized career services will have an Employment Plan which identifies the employment goal, appropriate objectives, and the services needed for the participant to achieve those objectives. Workforce One Employment Plan will be used.

3. Services are provided in the following manner:

The staff person will develop an individual employment plan with the dislocated worker based on the dislocated worker's readiness for immediate work or desire to redirect his or her life. Dislocated workers who select immediate work will complete an assessment with a focus on immediate staff assisted job development for the most job ready, or training services through the development of an appropriate OJT. The OJT should include a way to achieve a credential. A credential is needed as the OJT itself does not qualify as a credential.

Dislocated workers who need skill upgrading will have a plan developed to include skill upgrading.

Whenever possible, participant retraining should build on existing skills of an individual to more quickly facilitate reemployment. Shorter length of training to provide credential or licensure needed for reemployment is preferred over longer retraining programs. In determining whether retraining services will be provided, staff must consider financial need, client commitment, client selection of a demand occupation, client skills, training needs, and the likelihood of employment being obtained in a field chosen by the client. These services include: Academic Training, Occupational Skills Training and OJT.

4. Staff Assisted Job Placement consists of any of the following three services:

a) Job Development - Staff seek job openings with the skills and employment objectives of a particular job seeking customer in mind. Includes talking with employers about their needs and interest in interviewing the specific job seeking customer.

b) Job Referral - Staff refer job seekers to job openings that are currently available.

c) Out of Area Job Search - Supportive services for job seekers who have staff verified job interviews or job offers that would require relocation.

5. Staff Assisted Job Search System - This activity is for individuals who need a guided job search either in or out of the area, including supportive services to participate in the Job Search System (JSS). Staff will monitor the implementation of skills learned in JSS.

6. One-on-one career counseling is available to help the participant reach a successful outcome. Career Counseling is focused on issues such as career exploration, career change, personal career development and career related issues. It is the process of helping individuals explore career options, or experienced professionals contemplating a career change to select a course of

study that may help them to obtain a job or make them employable. A career counselor helps individuals to get into a career that is suited to their aptitude, personality, interest and skills.

7. Non-Credentialed Training: which is an organized program or course of study but does not result in an industry-recognized credential when successfully completed.
8. GED Training - The participant is working with ABE to obtain a GED or complete a high school diploma.
9. Work Training Linked to Careers; Adult Internship Linked to Careers. These activities are allowed for dislocated workers when the activities are linked to careers. Work experience activities can be customized to the needs of the dislocated worker to try out a career, to gain relevant work history or to apply skills discussed in a classroom.
10. WorkKeys NCRC Testing: Referrals will be made on an individual basis to the local ABE site for those whose skills need to be upgraded for NCRC testing outcomes desired and/or training/employment sought.
11. Planned Extended Leave: Individuals in this activity do not enter the administrative separation process explained below.
 - a. This activity is for individuals who will enter training but will experience a planned gap in service greater than eighty-nine (89) days due to a delay in the start of training.
 - b. This activity also signifies a planned extended leave for individuals who have been called to active duty in a branch of the military. Individuals will remain in this activity until they return home and can again begin participation in their WIOA service plan.
12. Partnering: Partnering indicates that the customer is currently receiving WIOA authorized services which are not paid for through WIOA funds (i.e., DRS assessment and plan; Veterans Employment Assistance; TAA).
 - a. Non CareerForce agencies may also be partners to serve the needs of WIOA customers if the services they provide are authorized in WIOA such as adult basic education or occupational skills training programs that RMCEP is not funding. The participant's individual Employment Plan will document the partnering agency, the WIOA service that is being provided and the planned duration of the partnering service.
 - b. RMCEP staff will maintain contacts with participants in partnering to determine progress and the need for any changes to the participant's employment plan (EP).

D. Training Services

1. Individuals who are unable to obtain or retain employment through intensive services will be referred to training if they meet the following requirements:

- a. The goal in the Employment Plan can only be met with the proposed training.
- b. Labor Market Information (LMI) supports employment opportunities after training in the geographic location that the individual is willing to reside.
- c. Average wage can lead toward self-sufficiency.
- d. Individual is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to fully cover the comprehensive cost of the training.
- e. The individual can meet the admission requirements.
- f. There is reasonable expectation based on assessment that the individual will complete the training.

2. Training eligibility.

- a. **Importance of the Employment Plan (EP).** Just as not every laid off worker is automatically eligible for the Dislocated Worker program, not every Dislocated Worker program customer is automatically eligible for training. All training that RMCEP pays for using Dislocated Worker funds must have a basis in the employment and training plan (EP) that the customer and counselor have agreed upon.
- b. **Training with a Credential** Participants must have the skills and qualifications necessary to successfully participate in the selected program of training and have selected a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the individual is willing to commute or relocate.

Training services, when determined appropriate, will be provided through a training contract. Only training providers listed on the State Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) are used. The exceptions are: on-the-job training, customized training, or incumbent worker training, which are excluded under federal law. Internships, transitional jobs or unpaid work experience opportunities, which are career services, are also excluded. Training services paid for using state Dislocated Worker funds must be licensed, registered, or legally exempt by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education (OHE) or other appropriate state agency. It is a best practice to use the ETPL for all training services regardless of the funding source.

- c. **Classroom Training Providers** must be WIOA certified to provide a WIOA recognized credential.
- d. **Determination of Need.**
 - 1) Based on an interview, evaluation, or assessment and career planning, and
 - 2) Be unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment without training; and

- 3) Have skills and qualifications to successfully participate in selected program of training; and
 - 4) Select training for demand occupations.
3. The following services provide specific job/occupational skills for participants **and all require credential attainment**. Staff must obtain a copy of the credential and keep it in the client's field file.
- a. Academic Training (Not Funded by RMCEP WIOA): Staff use this activity when TAA or another source is paying for the training and RMCEP staff will need to obtain verification of the credential for performance measure.
 - d. WIOA Certified Classroom Training: This activity is classroom training that provides a license or credential upon completion. This includes entrepreneurial training (training is allowed but start-up business costs are prohibited).
 - e. Customized Training: The contract will identify the specific training to be provided, RMCEP paid costs, employer paid costs, the training schedule, and a list of employees who will be trained.
 - f. Credential Attained without Training: A course of study has been completed prior to request for assistance with license or certification. Assistance is being provided to obtain a license or certification now.
4. Credentials. Program providers have a number of sources they can use to collect data needed to calculate the credential attainment rates. Credentials may include degrees, diplomas, certificates, licenses, other forms of certification for certain skilled and professional occupations. For this WIOA Dislocated Worker program, an updated case note documenting contact and confirmation from a school or institution official verifying the date of graduation and credential type is allowed.
5. On-the-Job Training: The standard employer reimbursement is 50%. Contracts which meet all of the following factors may be increased up to 75%.
- a. The characteristics of the participants – long-term unemployed or having barriers to employment as defined under WIOA.
 - b. The size of the employer – small and medium businesses having fewer than 250 employees.
 - c. The quality of employer-provided training and advancement opportunities – training for in-demand occupations as defined by local WIB.
 - d. Successful OJT's will submit a measurable skill.

E. Coordination with DEED for Federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

1. Staff will coordinate services with the DEED TAA Unit for dislocated workers eligible for that program.

2. Dislocated workers remain open in this title until their TAA activity has been closed. Participants must be put into partnering when they are still receiving ATAA services as we are unable to close them on WF1.
3. Coordination of services may result in leveraging additional reimbursement for OJT. TAA provides 50% reimbursement and WIOA may provide an additional 25% reimbursement based on the criteria described above for On the Job Training.

F. Follow –Up Services

WIOA participants who enter employment at termination will have access to staff follow-up services, such as workplace counseling and non-financial supports for twelve (12) months after exiting the program.

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.

WIOA Young Adult

BACKGROUND: WIOA outlines a broader young adult vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework through which states and local areas can leverage other Federal, State, local, and philanthropic resources to support in-school young adults (ISY) and out-of-school young adults (OSY). WIOA affirms the Department of Labor’s (DOL) commitment to providing high-quality services for all young adults, beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, such as pre-apprenticeships or internships, and culminating with a good job along a career pathway, enrollment in post-secondary education, or a Registered Apprenticeship. All of DOL’s young adult-serving programs promote evidence-based strategies to assist in achieving high-levels of performance, accountability, and quality in preparing young people for the workforce.

ELIGIBILITY:

In-School Young Adult (ISY):

- (1) Attending school (as defined by State law); **and**
- (2) Not younger than 14 or (unless they are an individual with a disability who is attending school under State law) older than age 21 at time of enrollment; **and**
- (3) A low-income individual; **and**
- (4) One or more of the following:
 - (A) Basic skills deficient.
 - (B) An English language learner.

- (C) An offender (an individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system);
- (D) A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, a runaway, an individual who is in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act, or an individual who is in an out-of-home placement.
- (E) An individual who is pregnant or parenting.
- (F) An individual with a disability.
- (G) A youth who is a publicly supported foster child.
- (H) An individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. This is defined by the Workforce Development Board approved barriers.

The Workforce Development Board approved barriers which meet the required additional assistance area in (H) listed above:

- Single parent household member
- One or more grade levels behind their peers
- Unemployed more than 15 weeks
- Lacks significant work history
- Not in the labor force
- A history of substance abuse
- A refugee household member
- Geographically isolated
- English as a second language
- Migrant youth
- Incarcerated parent
- Behavior problems at school
- Family literacy problems
- Domestic violence
- Chronic health conditions
- High School Graduation Incentive (HSGI)
- Persons of color

ELIGIBILITY:

Out-of-School Young Adult (OSY):

- (1) Not attending any school (see definition of); **and**
- (2) Not younger than 16 or older than age 24 at time of enrollment. Because age eligibility is based on age at enrollment, participants may continue to receive services beyond the age of 24 once they are enrolled in the program; **and**
- (3) One or more of the following: (For C - G below, it doesn't matter if they have a H.S. Diploma or GED)

Non-Income related:

- (A) A school dropout (see definition of).
- (B) A young adult who is within the age of compulsory school attendance (see definition of) but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter. School year calendar quarter is based on how a local school district defines its school year quarters.
- (C) An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system.

- (D) A homeless individual, a homeless child or youth, a runaway, an individual who is in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance under section 477 of the Social Security Act, or an individual who is in an out-of-home placement.
- (E) An individual who is pregnant or parenting.
- (F) An individual with a disability.
- (G) A youth who is a publicly supported foster child.

Or

Low-income related:

- (H) A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual **and** is:
 - 1) either basic skills deficient; **or**
 - 2) an English language learner.
- (I) A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program **or** to secure or hold employment (See Note 1 below).

Program Elements. WIOA section 129(c)(2) includes 14 program elements which consist of the following which we have incorporated into our service delivery:

- (1) Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential;
- (2) Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;
- (3) Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:
 - summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
 - pre-apprenticeship programs;
 - internships and job shadowing; and
 - on-the-job training opportunities.
- (4) Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA sec. 123;
- (5) Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- (6) Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors;

- (7) Supportive services;
- (8) Adult mentoring for the duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation;
- (9) Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation;
- (10) Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual young adult;
- (11) Financial literacy education;
- (12) Entrepreneurial skills training;
- (13) Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
- (14) Activities that help young adults prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training.

Minnesota Youth Program

BACKGROUND: The Minnesota Youth Employment Program (MYP) is designed to provide meaningful work and skills training to eligible 14 through 24-year-olds so that their future employability will be enhanced. The primary activity will be work training. Youth will be enrolled in a variety of activities that demonstrate the breadth of service youth receive in MYP.

The performance measures and outcomes for this program are:

1. Attained Work Readiness and Education Goals in Individual Employment Plan (EP);
2. Received Academic Credit or Service Learning Credit;
3. Obtained High School Diploma or GED;
4. Obtained a Certificate or Degree;
5. 80% of the youth will remain/return to school, enter employment or enter another training program; and
6. Youth customer satisfaction.

Definition of “at-risk”

MYP eligibility can also occur through the definition of **at-risk** youth. For purposes of determining eligibility, the following list of individuals are considered to be at-risk for MYP:

- pregnant/parenting youth;
- youth with Limited English Proficiency;
- dropouts or potential dropouts (as identified by school professional);
- juvenile offenders/diversion program youth;
- youth receiving public assistance and/or group home services;
- youth with disabilities including learning disabilities;
- homeless or runaway youth;

- chemically dependent or children of drug or alcohol abusers/dependents;
- youth with basic skills deficiency;
- youth with educational attainment one or more levels below grade level appropriate to age; and
- foster children.

Youthbuild

BACKGROUND: The Minnesota Youthbuild program provides education and training services to targeted youth who have not been effectively served by the current educational system. The program is to include a work experience component that results in the rehabilitation, improvement, or construction of:

- (1) Residential housing for homeless or very low-income individuals or families;
- (2) Improvement to energy efficiency and environmental health of residential units or other green job purposes;
- (3) Facilities to support community gardens; or
- (4) Public or non-profit education, social service, or health facilities principally serving homeless or very low-income individuals or families.

Youthbuild is a community-based pre-apprenticeship program that provides job training and educational opportunities. Targeted youth are at-risk persons, ages 16-24, who are economically disadvantaged or eligible for the high school graduation incentives program; and are at risk of dropping out of school or not attending any school and have not received a diploma or equivalent.

Youth learn vocational skills in construction. Youth also provide community service through the required construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing for low-income or homeless families in their own neighborhoods. Youth split their time between the vocational training work site and the classroom, where they earn their high school diploma or equivalency degree, learn to be community leaders, and prepare for post-secondary training opportunities, including college, apprenticeships, and employment. Youthbuild includes significant support systems, such as a mentoring, follow-up education, employment, and personal counseling services, and participation in community service and civic engagement.

ELIGIBILITY:

- (1) All eligible Youthbuild applicants must be:
 - a. ages 16 through 24 at enrollment and be economically disadvantaged, or eligible for the High School Graduation Incentives (HSGI) Program.
 - b. If HSGI eligible, they must fall within one of the two following categories:
 1. Not attending any school and have not received a secondary school diploma or GED, or
 2. Currently enrolled in a traditional or alternative school setting or a GED program and, in the opinion of an official of the school, are in danger of dropping out of school.

Youth at-risk for dropping out of school may include:

- A pregnant or parenting youth,

- A youth with limited English proficiency,
- A potential or actual school dropout,
- A youth in an offender or diversion program,
- A public assistance recipient or a recipient of group home services,
- A youth with disabilities including learning disabilities,
- A chemically dependent youth or child of drug or alcohol abusers,
- A homeless or runaway youth,
- A youth with basic skills deficiency,
- A youth with an educational attainment of one or more levels below grade level appropriate to age, or
- A foster child.

Note: A signed letter from the school will be required of going the “eligible for the High School Graduation Incentive Program,” route as listed in b. above.

- (2) A 5% window request can be made for all non-economically disadvantaged applicants who are:
- a. eligible for High School Graduation Incentives Program, **and** be part of one of the following:
 - b. not attending any school and have not received a high school diploma or GED, **or**
 - c. currently enrolled in an education program and are at risk of dropping out of school.

TANF Innovation Project

BACKGROUND: DEED's Office of Youth Development has announced the availability of funding provided by the Minnesota Department of Human Services for projects to provide work experiences to teen parents receiving Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) and youth aged 14 - 18 who are on a grant in MFIP households. Funds may be used for work experience activities and associated staff costs. Administrative costs are limited to 5%. Work experiences may be in the private sector, the for-profit sector, the non-profit sector or the public sector.

Eligibility for Services:

Youth must fall into one of two categories below to be served with these funds.

- Teen parents, ages 16-24, who are receiving MFIP benefits; and
- Younger youth, ages 14-18, who are on the grant in MFIP households.

Project Objectives:

- To provide direct services in the form of work experiences and related support services to youth on MFIP.
- To demonstrate effective interagency collaborations and local partnerships that better meet the varied needs of teen parents on MFIP.
- To identify best practices that can be shared across states and local workforce system providers and other youth-serving agencies across the country.

Performance Indicator: Work Readiness Indicator

The work readiness indicator of the skill attainment rate will be the performance indicator used for youth who participate in the program.

Building Trades Career Pathways Programs

BACKGROUND: This program will provide ten (10) students with hands-on experience within the building trades industry. Upon successful completion, students will earn industry-recognized credentials and be prepared to apply for a competitive apprenticeship. The components of this program include the following:

MODULE	DESCRIPTION
Career Advisor Program	A trained Career Advisor will work with each student and worksite in individual sessions regarding the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Career assessment• Individual career counseling• Career exploration• Internship training plan• Worksite supervisor training• Worksite development• Orientation to the workforce
Bridges Career Academy	Hands-on classroom instruction and project-based-learning including: Construction Trades-Framing, Construction Trades-Finishing, and CAD I or II. Students will be recognized with a green cord at graduation
Internship	Student interns will work a minimum of 10 hours per week within the building industry, with a trained professional as their mentor and supervisor. This hands-on industry experience is coupled with academic instruction with primary focus on entrepreneurship and employability skills.
How to Get an Apprenticeship Course	Prepares students to successfully compete for an apprenticeship. Course includes the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experiential learning: Business tours, info interview, job shadow, etc.• Development of a professional portfolio• Interviewing skills, resume and application writing• Assistance with apprenticeship search• Completion of the NCRC
Pre- Apprenticeship Online Class	Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Association (PHCC) online course including the following modules: Introduction to the Trades, Soft Skills, Basic Math, Tools, Safety, and Introduction to Construction Drawings
Industry-Recognized Credential	Students will be prepared to earn the OSHA 10 industry-recognized certification and AutoCAD certification
Recognition Ceremony	Students will be recognized with certificates earned, industry-related gift (tool belt), and signing ceremony for those accepted into an Apprenticeship program

PROGRAM OUTCOMES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• HS graduates prepared and equipped to apply for a competitive apprenticeship• Serve as an Apprentice Ambassador to increase awareness of apprenticeship opportunities with high school students• Upon earning Journeyworker status, mentor and train other Apprentices, host an internship or apprenticeship, and/or become an entrepreneur

Career Advising

BACKGROUND: RMCEP's curriculum for Career Planning provides information on selecting post-secondary education or employment, financial aid for education, and career pathways as well as individualized assessment and occupational information. Our career advisors meet with students individually or in groups to help them explore careers, assess their interest, skills, research occupations, industries, organizations and become familiar with job seeking strategies.

We develop individual plans with students to meet their needs and to identify a starting point for their career development activities. We start with career interest assessments when developing the individual plan based on their career pathway of interest. The RMCEP career counselor will guide students in the use of the Internet for the career planning process using tools such as MCIS, ISEEK, MnCareers, Naviance, UScience, MinnesotaWorks.net, and other career tools introduced by the Department of Labor. Sophomores may need beginning career planning; Juniors build on what they have already explored; Seniors continue to develop their post-secondary plans. We can provide a career exploration curriculum in the classroom or individually.

1. Deliverables and Strategies:
 - A. Career Exploration
 - 1) Provide instruction based on curriculum from Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.
 - a. Interest, Values, and Skills Assessment (may use previous assessment results)
 - b. Integrate instruction with tools and classes that are offered at the school
 - c. Career research tools and procedures (Career Ready 101, ISEEK or school based MCIS and Naviance access)
 - d. Tour or Job Shadow
 - 2) Document the Career Exploration Process
 - a. Establish or continue a Career Plan/Portfolio
 - b. Document experience and accomplishments unique to students with limited or no work experience
 - c. Promote career development/planning as a lifelong process
 - B. College Information
 - 1) Provide College Exploration Information
 - a. Introduce concepts of value of continued education/training using labor market information
 - b. Introduce concepts of high demand occupations using labor market information
 - c. Introduce concepts of post-secondary education/training costs, financial aid and scholarships
 - 2) Provide College Preparation Information
 - a. Assistance with college and scholarship applications
 - b. Developing a plan for college
 - c. Assist with college financial aid applications
 - C. Job Search Assistance
 - 1) Provide Instruction on Job Search Strategies
 - a. Tools for locating job openings, CareerForce office, ISEEK
 - b. Approaches for locating job openings, networking, hot and cold

contacts

- c. Expose students to an array of resources through the CareerForce offices
 - 2) Provide Instructions on Job Search Processes
 - a. Resume
 - b. Interview Skills
 - c. Common or key interview questions, and the right answers
 - d. Job Application
 - 3) Document Job Search Processes
 - a. Registration on the Minnesota Works Job Bank
 - b. Completion of resume, job application and practice interview
 - 4) Job Fair/CareerForce Office
 - a. Seniors who plan to work after graduation will be invited to a Job Fair held at the nearest CareerForce office. RMCEP staff can facilitate CareerForce orientations for groups of students
- D. Skills for Education or Employment
- a. Prepare students to test for the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)

Higher Education and Career Advising Project (HECAP)

BACKGROUND: RMCEP has developed a career advising model to increase the following: number of students preparing for the future; number of youth of color and disability; number of business connections; and the sustainability of the overall RMCEP Career Advising Program in the greater region.

We will base our services on the Career Advising (Light) Navigator Partner Model.

Under this project, schools and students will participate in career planning, career pathways, Occupations in Demand, connection to business, experiential learning, and job placement activities (internships, apprenticeships, etc.).

The following services can be offered by a RMCEP Youth Coordinator, Career Counselor, and RC3 Specialist on an intermittent basis:

- Orientation for participating students including a pre-program survey
- Career Cluster Inventory to identify interests/skills and explore a wide variety of careers
- Comprehensive review of post-secondary options to include entering the workforce, military, AmeriCorps, apprenticeships, technical college, and university
- Based on assessment results, arrange work-based-learning opportunities for students including job shadow, informational interview, classroom speaker, business tour, and/or internship
- Summary of program to include student evaluation and post-program survey
- Program review to include summary of evaluations and results from pre/post surveys

Guideposts for Success Integrated into service delivery:

The Guideposts are based on the important following assumptions:

1. High expectations for all youth, including youth with disabilities;
2. Equality of opportunity for everyone, including nondiscrimination, individualization, inclusion, and integration;
3. Full participation through self-determination, informed choice, and participation in decision making;
4. Independent living, including skills development and long-term supports and services;
5. Competitive employment and economic self-sufficiency, which may include supports; and;
6. Individualized, person-driven, and culturally and linguistically appropriate transition planning.

The five (5) Guideposts are:

1. School-Based Preparatory Experiences,
2. Career Preparation & Work-Based Learning Experiences,
3. Youth Development and Leadership,
4. Connecting Activities,
5. Family Involvement & Supports.

The Guideposts for Success Model (brief description):

Building on thirty (30) years of research and experience, the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth), in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), created the Guideposts for Success, a comprehensive framework that identifies from a developmental perspective what all youth need to succeed during the critical transition years. There are also areas of focus to include the following populations: youth in foster care, who have involvement in the Juvenile Corrections system, those with learning disabilities, and mental health needs. This model contains five (5) guideposts that all youth need to transition from youth to adulthood.

These five (5) areas of focus as taken directly from the Guideposts for Success second edition are:

Guidepost 1 – School-based preparatory experiences – In order to perform at optimal levels in all education settings, all youth need to participate in educational programs grounded in standards, clear performance expectations, and graduation exit options based upon meaningful, accurate, and relevant indicators of student learning and skills.

Guidepost 2 – Career preparation and work-based learning experiences – are essential in order for youth to form and develop aspirations and to make informed choices about careers.

Guidepost 3 – Youth development and leadership – is a process that prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood through a coordinated, progressive series of activities and experiences which help them gain skills and competencies. Youth leadership is part of that process.

Guidepost 4 – Connecting activities – Young people need to be connected to programs, services, activities, and supports that help them gain access to chosen post-school options.

Guidepost 5 – Family involvement and supports – Participation and involvement of parents, family members, and/or other caring adults promotes the social, emotional, physical, academic and occupational growth of youth, leading to better post-school outcomes.

Integrated Resource Teams

The Guideposts will be used as the basis for creating Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs) whereby each of the Guideposts are represented by a person(s) who can assist with strategies and services. These representatives will work together towards a common goal and take ownership of their actions to meet the need of the youth.

Creating new or augmenting existing IRTs is the primary strategy for providing intensive services for school year youth along with an employment experience. The IRT is led by the participant. The core members of the IRT will include the participant, family members (family includes adult mentors), and the RMCEP Youth Coordinator. Other members will vary depending on the individual youth's needs. Examples of possible IRT members include case managers, vocational rehabilitation counselors, teachers, or employers. The members of the IRT will engage the participant as partner in the youth's decision making leading to an increase in skills, abilities, and employability. The Youth Coordinator will identify, facilitate and strengthen any new partnerships that may improve employment outcomes for each participant.

The Youth Coordinator will conduct an intake interview by going through a Youth Profile which will identify the characteristics, strengths and supports of the youth. While completing the form, the Youth Coordinator will gather the contact information (e.g., phone numbers, emails) from all partners so the Youth Coordinator can gather additional information and upon completion, distribute both a draft and finalized copy of a visual Roadmap for Success.

Upon completion of the intake, the RMCEP Youth Coordinator will gather all available academic, occupational, behavioral, cognitive and emotional assessments while developing an individualized and collaborative Roadmap for Success. This time period should not exceed thirty (30) days for high school seniors, post-secondary students, or out-of-school youth. High school juniors and below should be done within sixty (60) to ninety (90) days depending on IRT member availability. Within this timeframe, the RMCEP Youth Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the next IRT meeting ensuring that the family and professional stakeholders can attend.

During the second (follow up) IRT meeting, the Youth Coordinator will facilitate a discussion by reviewing the Roadmap for Success. The Youth Coordinator will present each activity to the participant who will make a decision on whether the activity will remain on the final product. All members of the IRT, including the participant, can suggest additions, deletions or modification to each activity. This discussion will guide the participant, in collaboration with the rest of the IRT, in the creation and implementation of a Youth Action Plan (i.e., a Collaborative Individual Employment Plan or EP). The Guideposts for Success model will provide a pathway in the development of this transition plan. This plan will include high expectations for achievement centered on an occupational goal beyond the initial job placement. The plan will include achievable

milestones that, if achieved, will focus the participants towards a career pathway or provide skills within a desired career cluster.

The IRT will assist the participant with identifying and enrolling in academic classes, programs or trainings that will improve both basic and occupational skills needed for the successful attainment of the participant's occupational goals. The IRT will identify and develop work experience that logically follow the participant's chosen career pathway. The Youth Coordinator will facilitate a review of the Youth Action Plan during each IRT meeting and update as necessary. The Youth Coordinator will update the participant's EP when the changes require an action step/activity that the youth need to complete as part of the participant's career pathway goals.

Upon completion of the second IRT meeting, the Youth Coordinator will send out the final revised copy of the Roadmap for Success for review. Once this review is complete, the Youth Action Plan will also be sent out. All activities on the Roadmap will be added to the Action Plan.

Unless otherwise included in the Roadmap and Action Plan, no further IRT meetings are necessary as long as there are no significant changes or disruptions. If the plan needs to be revised because of the participant's choices, the participant's actions, or a lack of availability/access to programs included in the plan, the Youth Coordinator will coordinate another IRT to revise the Roadmap and the Action Plan.

A structured needs assessment and Individual Service Strategy

The Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is based on an objective assessment of academic level, interests, and service needs of each participant. The ISS identifies those services that address the youth's individual needs. The purpose of these services is to prepare youth for post-secondary educational opportunities, link academic and occupational learning, prepare youth for employment, and provide connections to the job market and employers. Staff interaction with youth is based on the individual needs and values of each youth, who voice preferences for goal setting, plan development, work site experience, and future career direction. Staff model the identification and accessing of resources, and support youth to do the same to build self-advocacy skills.

The Youth Assessment used at intake has been updated to be more inclusive of the five (5) areas listed in the Guideposts for Success. This allows staff to gather information about the youth and their current situation as well as attachment to various supports or providers to better determine the needs and strengths of the participant and include them in the ISS. Updates are provided to the ISS as the youth proceeds through the transition steps towards self-sufficiency.

The use of the Resource Mapping Tool we used with our past Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) will also assist staff in determining barriers that need to be addressed and solutions implemented for successful activity participation and outcomes desired. This tool has been incorporated for use with all youth program participants.

Through the use of the Integrated Resources Team (IRT) concept, youth who need additional support can benefit from this partner collaboration to identify and develop a plan for solutions to employment or school barriers. This integrated plan lays out a path to achieve the youth's career goal even beyond where many of the IRT members' service plans with the youth would end. By enlisting the support and ideas of the youth's parent's, guardians and advocates as well as providers of resources and services within

the youth's community, we can collectively work together to assist the youth with the steps in their individual plans and provide them the support that will allow them to successfully complete their plan and reach their goals.

Youth at Work

BACKGROUND: RMCEP seeks to improve its ability to help youth learn these skills by focusing on Career Pathways in Occupations in Demand and coupling this training with a work-based learning program in an entry-level position within their chosen career pathway. The primary goal in this initiative will be to provide and recognized credential in one of the identified career pathways and pair the training with a related work-based learning experience. Each youth participant who is placed in work-based learning will be mentored for development of employability skills.

To support completion of educational programs this grant will develop incentives for those participants that complete planned training and/or earn an industry recognized credentials. Work based learning will be provided to further develop employability skills and build work history in high demand occupations.

The focus for participants in this program will be youth aged 16-24 with the priority of service to youth from a community of color, a youth with a disability, or a youth who meets the priority for enrollment into WIOA OSY/ISY or Minnesota Youth Program. Additionally, all participants, work site supervisors, and staff involved in the project will receive training on Racial Equity and Inclusion.

RMCEP proposes to serve a total of 100 youth over a two-year period with individual or cohort-based training and a work-based learning experience that will provide for the development of essential work skills needed by today's employers. Fifty (50) youth will be served during this time period. There is an opportunity for a second year of this grant at which.

The outcomes expected for this project are:

- 80% will Attain Work Readiness or Education Goals in the Individual Service Plan.
- 80% of youth remain or return to school, enter employment, or enter another training program.
- 100% of all participants will receive Racial Equity and Inclusion awareness training.

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.

Youth activities such as work experience are coordinated with local school districts to ensure activities are aligned with education and career goals. RMCEP relies on ABE to provide education in basic skills to adults as well as within career pathway bridging activities.

Minnesota State Community and Technical College is our primary post-secondary partner and provides the majority of certificate and degree training to WIOA participants. RMCEP and its educational partners continue to seek innovative ways to collaborate.

We recently co-located the CareerForce office in Fergus Falls at the M-State campus in that town.

Through the regional planning efforts, we plan to continue to assess current strategies as well as seek new strategies for collaborative efforts. We have very close relationships with the secondary and post-secondary institutions and often collaborate on strategies and services such as training for occupations in demand, incumbent worker training, job fairs, or career advising. The WDB has been instrumental in working with Central Lakes College in developing a new program of student in meat-cutting, an occupation in demand in our region with no other training opportunities currently in existence.

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.

RMCEP provides supportive services necessary to enable an individual to participate in employment and training activities. Supportive services are based on individual need. The participants' needs are assessed, community resources are utilized, assistance is provided equitably, and accountability of funds are maintained.

DEFINITIONS:

Financial Supportive Services: Payments to provide services such as transportation, health care, special services and materials for individuals with disabilities, job coaches, child care and dependent care, temporary shelter, assessment or counseling services not covered by other means, and other reasonable expenses required for participation in program services and to continue employment. Other examples of supportive services include:

- Personal grooming items;
- Household goods such as towels and cooking utensils;
- Translator services;
- Relocation expenses when necessary for employment;
- Car payments when the automobile is owned by the participant.

Please note that some individual program policies may allow or prohibit specific supportive services.

It is imperative to note that there is little to no public transportation infrastructure in the rural areas that lend well to the job seeker or the worker. In some of the larger towns, there are public bus systems. Some of the smaller towns have a "Friendly-Rider" bus service, but this service runs on limited hours and not during non-traditional hours to assist those on shift work. Therefore, car repair and maintenance is the primary transportation related support service need in this region. Also of note is the lack of adequate child care, again especially for those on shift-work.

Working with Economic Development Agencies, Chambers of Commerce our Regional Workforce Alliance and other entities, RMCEP has been involved in discussions regarding innovative practices and solutions to the transportation issue. Although no solution has been implemented, these discussions are on-going and promising.

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.

- MN DEED is focusing on economic and employment recovery for individuals and our communities as we emerge from the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Peacetime Emergency Declaration has meant that we needed to shift our service methods to accommodate required protocols. Wagner-Peyser Job Service has done this well, and our customer service methods have been adapted to virtual platforms.
- The Creative Job Search Workshop has been parsed out into five mini workshops which can be taken one at a time depending on the customer's needs. In addition, several new emerging workshop topics are available as live workshops or recorded webinars which are available 24/7 on the state's YouTube channel. New Leaf sessions are offered on a statewide basis for justice involved individuals to make the most they can out of their job search.
- Wagner Peyser staff work with CareerForce partners for planning and implementation of virtual and drive through job fairs.
- The Good Jobs Now campaign is DEED's comprehensive model bringing employment and economic development services to job seekers and employers. In this two- pronged approach, WorkForce Strategists reach out to employers to explain the resources and services available to them and then follow up with DEED Small Business Assistance office and other resources, to provide a list of jobs to Job Service staff for job seeker referrals. The Unemployment Insurance division and Wagner-Peyser Job Service staff call individual Unemployment beneficiaries to explain CareerForce services and when appropriate make a job referral based on the list that we have received from the WF Strategists.
- This campaign is in place of the in-person re-employment sessions that were provided at CareerForce offices pre-pandemic. Unemployment manages the list of UI recipients receiving a scheduled appointment. Job Service staff are assigned a list of individuals to call each week. Job Service and Re-employment Specialists call the individuals to conduct a brief assessment and give an orientation to CareerForce Services. We connect them with referrals and resources that will help them prepare for and get a job.
- Information is given about CareerForceMN.com, how to register for the state's labor exchange system MinnesotaWorks.net, and about service providers and programs available to assist with job preparation and job search.
- The Wagner-Peyser staff role has evolved significantly over the past year, and we continue to follow the Career Services Guide for Job Service staff regardless of the method of our services.

These activities are coordinated with the programs and partners within the LWDA.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State assures the following:

1. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service is co-located with one-stop centers or a plan and timeline has been developed to comply with this requirement within a reasonable amount of time.

2. The State agency is complying with the requirements under 20 CFR 653.111 (State agency staffing requirements) if the State has significant Migrant Seasonal Farm Worker one-stop centers;
3. If a State Workforce Development Board, department or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner-Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and
4. State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

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

A member of the local Adult Basic Education Consortia is a member of the LWDB. Additionally, RMCEP has entered into an MOU with each entity in the ABE Consortia. The purpose of this collaboration is to enable both 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 such as FastTRAC, Pathways to Prosperity, Career Pathways and the local provision of literacy activities. We will continue this partnership and coordination that has been well-established in this region. We intend to explore the possibilities of including ABE in the MFIP orientation and other program orientations as appropriate, which will allow for seamless delivery in the access to adult basic education and literacy activities.

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

The local Workforce Development Board and Vocational Rehabilitation Services collaborate to enhance services to individuals with disabilities, individuals with other barriers to employment, and individuals living in poverty. To the extent possible, services are co-located in CareerForce offices to provide access to a wide variety of services. Each CareerForce location provides an orientation to services available to assist job-seekers make an informed decision on choice of service provider. Direct

service staff participate in cross-training to ensure they understand the services offered by the various partners, and the eligibility criteria for each program.

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

The Workforce Development Board consults with Vocational Rehabilitation Services as they are developing initiatives such as incumbent worker training programs, customized training programs, career pathways initiatives, youth services, and other business services.

Local Workforce Development Boards sponsor local Job Fairs. Vocational Rehabilitation participates in the Job Fairs and other community events. The local partners also share job leads. RMCEP provides Social Security Administration (SSA) certified benefits planning and financial education services as part of the Ticket to Work program.

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

The Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. Board of Directors is the entity responsible for the disbursement of grant funds described in section 107(d)(12)(B)(i).

- A.** The Board of Directors' membership shall consist of a maximum of fifteen (15) members.
- B.** The Board of Directors shall include as members:
 - ◆ Nine (9) individuals representing the public at large.
 - ◆ Representation for each of the Leech Lake, Red Lake and White Earth Tribal Nations. We will actively recruit and ask for volunteers.
 - ◆ Three (3) members from the Rural Minnesota CEP Workforce Development Board, one (1) of whom shall be the Chairperson of that Board.
- C.** Each member listed above shall be entitled to one (1) vote, to be cast only when present at scheduled meetings.
- D.** Members of the Board of Directors shall not be represented by a proxy or substitute in any Board function or activity.
- E.** Employees of Rural Minnesota CEP shall not concurrently serve as members of the Board of Directors and are not bound by these Bylaws except as indicated herein.

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.

All services are provided by RMCEP according to the MOU developed with the LWDB and RMCEP.

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.

As mentioned elsewhere, RMCEP has developed an internal system using proxy measures to enable the agency to monitor performance progress in real time. This system is used to identify areas of concern and allows enough time to conduct follow-up activities to ensure performance. Additionally, the RMCEP Board of Directors has implemented higher internal expectations to ensure the agency meets or exceeds the negotiated measures.

Performance measures and fiscal accountability are compared against the goals via a monthly report. Results are reported to the WDB and the Board of Directors (LEO). Staff are held accountable for meeting performance measures.

Monitoring is also done by DEED for both performance measures and fiscal accountability. Additionally, RMCEP has an annual audit conducted by an independent auditor.

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.

RMCEP will follow the factors outlined by the state board. We will remain a high-performing agency through our internal monitoring, constant staff training, and taking advantage of appropriate educational opportunities in all aspects of workforce development.

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.

Through our Career Planning and Exploration activities, clients are informed about local occupations in demand and explore the various educational options that align with their career pathway. In this manner, the client is able to make an informed choice in the selection of both their career pathway, as well as their training program.

The purpose of Classroom Training is to assist those individuals with the greatest need for vocational training or retraining for employment and who are least likely to obtain it without RMCEP intervention. While the participant's financial and training needs will be the primary determination of selection, the participant's chances of successfully completing the training objective will be taken into consideration in the selection process.

WIOA authorizes Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for adults and dislocated workers to support their training in demand occupations. ITAs allow eligible adults and dislocated workers to choose a certified training program that best meets their needs. This choice is to be made after full consultation and agreement with the training counselor at the local CareerForce office.

The WDB and DEED Regional Labor Market Analyst identify Occupations in Demand in the three economic development regions of the RMCEP Workforce Service Area to inform the workforce development system. Training services must be linked to occupations in demand.

Selection for training is a decision based on the participant's need for occupational skills, financial need, and ability to benefit from vocational instruction methods, as assessed during the customer's interaction with RMCEP staff. The NCRC is used as a tool for determining ability to benefit.

The need for training must be justified and documented in the individual's Employment Plan (EP) on Workforce One.

ITAs can only be used for eligible adults and dislocated workers in accordance with adult and dislocated worker eligibility policies. Individuals who are eligible for WIOA services must meet additional requirements to be eligible for an ITA:

- a. The goals in the individual's employment plan can only be met with the proposed training; and
- b. Based on available labor market information, there is a reasonable expectation that there is a demand for full-time employees where the participant will (or is willing to) reside upon completion of the program; and
- c. The average wage for employees with this training can lead toward self-sufficiency; and
- d. The participant is unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to fully cover the comprehensive cost of such training; and
- e. The participant can meet the requirements for admission into the program; and
- f. There is a reasonable expectation that the participant will complete the training program based on current assessment information.

The ITA is signed off by both the customer and the RMCEP classroom training counselor. The signed copy is given to the customer.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) is another method of training provided to RMCEP clients. Through assessment, an OJT may be determined by the Counselor and the client to best fit the training needs and is documented and justified in the Employment Plan. OJT must be provided through a written contractual arrangement. OJT contracts may be written with employers in the private sector, the private non-profit sector, and public employers.

The OJT contract must identify the occupation, the skills and competencies to be learned, and the length of time the training will be provided. The OJT contract is a training alternative suitable for participants who may benefit from, or prefer, a “hands-on” learning environment over a classroom situation.

The reimbursement to the employer is compensation for the extraordinary costs associated with the training of participants. Some of these costs include more intense supervision, above average material wastage, abnormal wear on tools, down time, and a lower rate of production. Extraordinary costs need not be documented. The OJT participant/employee is considered to be an employee on a “hire-first and train-later” basis. The participant/employee must receive wages and fringe benefits equal to those similarly employed by the employer. The reimbursement is not a wage subsidy. It is a reimbursement of the extraordinary costs of training incurred by the employer in preparing the employee for successful entry level employment. It is expected that the participant/employee will be retained on a full-time basis after successful completion of contract. It is also expected that the participant/employee will continue to receive compensation and benefits commensurate with his/her job performance.

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.

The Board provides an opportunity for public comment by publishing the below announcement and a copy of the DRAFT plan on the agency’s website. In addition, comments are solicited through the WDB membership, which includes representatives of business and labor organizations.

PUBLIC NOTICE ANNOUNCEMENT PUBLIC NOTICE to submit the 2021-2024 Workforce Annual Plan for the utilization of State and Federal Employment and Training Funds in Local Workforce Development Area 2 (LWDA2) and 30-day opportunity for Public Comment.

LWDA 2 encompasses the following counties: Becker, Beltrami, Cass, Clay, Clearwater, Crow Wing, Douglas, Grant, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, Mahnomon, Morrison, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Todd, Traverse, Wadena, and Wilkin. Services will be provided to employers, job seekers and workers through one-stop shopping at local CareerForce Centers. The operator of the centers is a partnership consisting of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Rural Minnesota CEP (RMCEP), Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind. The Workforce Development Board will ensure that the workforce investment system meets the labor market needs of its customers. RMCEP will provide Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), State Dislocated Worker Program, Minnesota Youth Program (MYP) and Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) services. WIOA is a federal funded program designed to increase the occupational skills attainment, employment, job retention and earnings of participants to improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation. The State Dislocated Worker Program assists workers who lose their jobs because of layoff or plant closing. MYP provides summer jobs and basic work skills training for youth age 14-21. SCSEP provides part-time jobs for individuals age 55 and older. DEED utilizes Wagner-Peyser funds to provide a labor exchange, connecting job seekers with potential employers. Unemployment Insurance

(UI), Veterans, Work Opportunities Tax Credit and Trade Adjustment Act programs are also accessed through DEED. The local plan is incorporated with economic development, education and local entities identified by the Workforce Development Board. RMCEP fully endorses the promotion of equal opportunity and non-discrimination in all aspects of employment and training including recruitment, selection, appointment, promotion, compensation and any other personal or programmatic action for RMCEP staff, participants or subcontractors. Comments should be submitted by May 26, 2021, to: Vicki Leaderbrand, Executive Director, Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc., 803 Roosevelt Avenue, P.O. Box 1108, Detroit Lakes, MN 56502-1108. Full Plan can be found on the website at www.rmcep.com

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.

Minnesota is compliant with an integrated technology-enabled case management information system.

RMCEP is fully engaged in the Workforce One (WF1) system and uses this system as an integrated intake and case management information system. Additionally, several of our staff members were on the WF1 re-write team and remain active as field staff advisory to DEED in WF1 updates. Vets and Job Service use WF1 software.

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?

According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), the economy in the RMCEP area lost over 11,000 jobs from 2019 to the average of the first three quarters of 2020 due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This represents a 5.9 percent decrease in jobs. The impacts of the pandemic were widespread with 18 of the 20 industry sectors recording job losses. The Accommodation and Food Services industry had the most job losses over the year with 3,768, an 18.7 percent decrease in employment. Educational Services lost 1,741 jobs and Manufacturing and Health Care and Social Assistance lost nearly 1,000 jobs. The Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation industry lost 536 jobs which equates to nearly 20 percent of the industry's employment in the local area.

Another way to measure the impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic is to analyze the Unemployment Insurance claims that were filed in the region. 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 RMCEP area.

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

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 filed for unemployment insurance in April of 2020. Meanwhile, only 5.8 percent of those with a Bachelor's degree or higher had filed continuing claims in the area. The summer of 2020 saw those continuing claims drop for all education attainments. The discrepancy between those with less education still existed as of February 2021, however, as about 10 percent of those with a High School diploma or less filed a continuing claim in the region while 1.3 percent of Bachelor's degree holders have had to file a continuing claim.

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

The Board and RMCEP staff have developed a variety of means to reach out to those most affected:

- Employers on both the Local Workforce Development Board and Regional Oversight Board provide input at every meeting on the effects of the pandemic on the economy and organizations.
- RMCEP is coordinating with Unemployment Insurance and Job Service staff to reach out to individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance to apprise them of CareerForce and dislocated worker services.
- RMCEP staff are cold calling employers to ascertain need and offer assistance in recruiting employees.
- RMCEP staff are meeting regularly with other entities to seek referrals. This includes education, social services, community-based agencies, food share programs and others to apprise them of available services, job opportunities, training and support services that may benefit their clients.
- RMCEP staff are making extensive use of social media to advertise available services and resources. Employers who have openings are also highlighted in RMCEP social media.
- RMCEP is also utilizing traditional media to outreach affected populations.

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.

It is RMCEP's policy to provide Equal Opportunity to all employees and applicants for employment, customers, and participants in accordance with all applicable Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action laws, directives and regulations of Federal, State and Local governing bodies or agencies thereof.

RMCEP will not discriminate against or harass any employee or applicant for employment, customer or participants because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, familial status, membership or activity in a local human rights commission, or status with regard to public assistance.

RMCEP will take Affirmative Action to ensure that all employment practices are free of such discrimination. Such employment practices include, but are not limited to, the following: hiring, upgrading, demotion, transfer, recruitment or recruitment advertising, selection, layoff, disciplinary action, termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. We will provide reasonable accommodation to applicants and employees with disabilities. This also applies to our customers and participants.

RMCEP will evaluate the performance of its management and supervisory personnel based on their involvement in achieving these Affirmative Action objectives as well as other established criteria. In addition, all other employees are expected to perform their job responsibilities in a manner that supports equal employment opportunity for all.

In order to promote diversity and inclusion RMCEP played a key role in developing the Inclusive Workforce Employer (I-WE) as part of the Regional Workforce Alliance. The I-WE designation was created to recognize and promote inclusive employers, reduce regional disparities, and bring awareness to the value and methods of increasing workforce diversity. In order to receive the I-WE designation, a company must:

- Express a commitment to an inclusive workplace in their stated values, mission, or policies.
- Assess how diversity, equity and inclusion influence of their work and culture.
- Provide diversity, equity and inclusion education for staff and leadership.
- Allocate resources to support and sustain an inclusive and equitable workplace.

RMCEP continues to provide staff to support the I-WE and was one of the first organizations in the area to meet these criteria and be recognized as an Inclusive Workforce Employer.

See: <https://www.dl-online.com/business/6682973-Rural-Minnesota-CEP-becomes-certified-Inclusive-Workforce-Employer>

Also: <https://www.rwa-nw.org/inclusive-workforce-employer>

As part of the ongoing effort to address employment disparities the local and regional boards envision the formation of local Workforce Community Inclusion Councils (CWICs) in each of the three economic development regions of the area. CWICs will consist of local business, community based and governmental leaders. An emphasis will be made on including leaders of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities. Two are already meeting. The mission of the CWICs is to champion a robust and diverse workforce that meets the needs of regional employers. CareerForce personnel provide staffing for the CWICs.

Access to employment and training resources available at RMCEP is based on need, and an objective assessment of skills, abilities and interests. RMCEP supports individual career goals for occupations in demand. An occupation in demand must provide a living wage. Services are tailored to meet employment goals as determined in partnership with the individual. In order to ensure that RMCEP services are made available in an equitable manner, the agency has provided, and will continue to provide extensive training on diversity issues. RMCEP retains trainers to provide information to staff on issues and challenges faced by BIPOC communities in obtaining and retaining employment and how to address those challenges. Trainers are typically from those communities. Further, staff receive training on how to make the workplace welcoming to individuals underrepresented in the workplace.

RMCEP also works to increase employment and retention of BIPOC individuals through community engagement. This includes partnering with other organizations to sponsor and/or participating in events which increase understanding among employers and others of the issues faced by BIPOC individuals in the workplace.

In order to grow economically this area will need to ensure the success of the BIPOC communities in the workplace. The RMCEP board believes that equity and diversity issues must be addressed on multiple levels. The strategies described here will be implemented with individuals, organizations, and communities.

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?

As described below, RMCEP has identified one Rapid Response liaison to work with the Rapid Response office. This person is tasked with knowing the relevant policies and procedures well and ensuring staff and partners follow the processes outlined in DEED's Dislocated Worker Policies, which include communicating with Rapid Response and participating in the competitive process as appropriate.

- 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)?

RMCEP has identified one Rapid Response liaison to work with the Rapid Response office. This system has allowed for greater efficiencies in service coordination. When a mass dislocation occurs in LWDA 2, RMCEP or partner staff inform the RMCEP Rapid Response liaison. The liaison immediately contacts the State Rapid Response office to inform them of the event and to provide the company's contact information.

In the event where the State Rapid Response office is the first point of knowledge, a representative from that office contacts the RMCEP liaison either directly or through announcements. The manner of communication may depend on whether or not a competitive process will be required.

At that point, the RMCEP liaison and the State Rapid Response staff work together to provide information to the company and the dislocated workers. As the Rapid Response administers and tabulates the dislocated worker needs assessment and develops the Employee Planning Committee, this information is provided to the RMCEP liaison. Service delivery strategies are then developed with the Planning Committee and RMCEP.

- 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 RMCEP Rapid Response liaison works with each site supervisor, manager and the State Rapid Response team very closely to ensure information is gathered and disseminated to the appropriate parties. Because the site supervisor is most closely connected to their local businesses, this person is involved early in the process and works directly with the company, the Rapid Response Team, and the LWDA Rapid Response liaison. We are fortunate in that the LWDA has developed and maintains a positive and close working relationship with the State Rapid Response Team that

allows all of us to collaborate in securing and disseminating information at the earliest possibility and begin planning the next steps.

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 RMCEP staff and State Rapid Response Team begin working with the affected companies and their dislocated workers early in the process. The potential of a TAA certifying event is discussed and explored. The RMCEP staff and/or the State Rapid Response Team provide the State Trade Act contact information and informs the State Trade Act contact as soon as possible.

- 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 Team Leader (Site Supervisor) at each CareerForce location is identified as the local contact person. TAA works with the Team Leader whenever possible to arrange for meetings with the affected dislocated workers to explain the TAA program and benefits. The Team Leader and/or local staff also attend these meetings to begin the coordination of services. To maximize the efficiency of funding under dislocated worker programs and TAA, RMCEP will assist clients to access TAA for classroom training, TRA income support, job search cost, and relocation. DEED will provide benefit administration from their main office in St. Paul. RMCEP case management services will be funded through dislocated worker program funding. RMCEP staff attend training by the TAA staff to better understand expectations and increase communications.

- 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.

Support Services are provided based on individual need and are consistently applied throughout the agency for all participants. RMCEP has a comprehensive policy to ensure allowable costs and describes a detailed internal process. A part of this process which ensures consistent application is the venue of the team approach. The team reviews each request for a support service and approves or denies with explanation. Additionally, if approved, the request goes to the Operations Services Department which is tasked with quality assurance and checks each request against policy requirements. The identification and need for support services is documented on the individual employment plan and are made available during the 12-month post-term (follow-up) period. A full range of support services, including financial support services, are available to youth during this 12-month post-term period, and non-financial support services are available to adults and dislocated workers during this post-term period.

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?

RMCEP has developed internal policy based on TEGL 7-20 that defines the WIOA priority of services. WIOA enrollment will be available to individuals who are unable to obtain employment or retain employment leading to self-sufficiency through basic career services, as determined by RMCEP staff and who meet the WIOA priority for services.

WIOA priority:

- a. 1st: Veterans and eligible spouses who are recipients of public assistance, low-income or basic skills deficient.
- b. 2nd: Public assistance, low-income or basic skills deficient individuals.
- c. 3rd: Veterans and eligible spouses that are not in WIOA's 1st priority group.
- d. 4th: Individuals at or below the 100% LLSIL.
- e. 5th: Other program enrollees. (co-enrollment).

All veterans and eligible spouses must be given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority service. All veterans - by law - are judged to have a priority need for services whether or not any additional factors apply. Their veteran's status is sufficient documentation of priority. This is also true for spouses of certain veterans. The language that defines who these spouses/veterans are is as follows:

- a. Spouses of a veteran who died of a service-connected disability;
- b. Spouses of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty, who has been listed for a total of more than ninety (90) days as missing in action, or who has been captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained by a foreign government or power;
- c. Spouses of any veteran who has a total (100% rating) disability resulting from a service-connected disability;
- d. Spouses of any veteran who died while a disability so evaluated was in existence.

Veteran spouses meeting the above definition should be identified as meeting the 10% window on the RMCEP Intake form for AS400 data collection.

The Workforce Development Board has determined that funds are not limited, and therefore, a priority in the WIOA Adult Program eligibility for individualized career services and training services will continue to include those whose income does not exceed the LLSIL. Additionally, up to 10% of participants may exceed 100% LLSIL if they have significant barriers to employment. These individuals must fall into an at-risk category to meet the 10% window: high school dropout, pregnant or parenting youth age 18-21, poor work history, geographically isolated, underemployed, long-term unemployed, not in labor force, homeless, disabled, limited English proficient, offender/felon, not married at birth of first child, one or more applicant's parent received TANF assistance, victim of domestic violence, drug/alcohol dependency, or an eligible veteran's spouse.

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?

LWDA 2 complies with Policy Guidance from DEED on Veterans and Dislocated Workers. All staff understand appropriate service delivery and priority of service to veterans. Veterans have priority of service in all employment and training programs in accordance with the Job for Veterans Act (P.L. 107-288, November 7, 2002), and all succeeding appropriate laws, rules and regulations. Priority service to veterans is also outlined in internal policies. The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire is used to identify veterans. We ask customers that come to the CareerForce Center if they ever served in the U.S. military. If the answer is yes, we ask them to complete the Veterans Questionnaire. Non-JVSG staff do the initial assessment/review of the questionnaire, and make appropriate referrals based on the responses on the questionnaire. On-site signage helps the customers to self-identify themselves as U.S. military members.

RMCEP has established that veterans and their eligible spouses (hereafter, together referred to as "veterans") who meet program eligibility requirements have the first

priority for all services. CareerForce Career Labs are the primary entry point into employment and training services. Career Lab personnel are specifically trained to assist all customers to include assessing customers' needs and confirm expectations as a part of the initial greeting. During this process, veterans are identified either through self-identification or staff inquiry.

All veterans coming to the reception desk have the option of self-identifying and asking for specific services such as referral directly to a veterans' staff representative. They may also receive initial assessment or services and be referred to RMCEP staff to pursue eligibility for programs and services as needed.

Career Lab resources and services are readily visible and available to veterans. Staff serve veterans one-on-one for core services, so veterans are aware of resources designed specifically to meet their needs. For example, many on-line and hard copy resources are available specifically targeted to assisting veterans. Community resource brochures are readily available. Another example is a link on the resource area organizer, <http://www.careeronestop.org/militarytransition>, designed to assist veterans' transition back to civilian life. RMCEP has taken proactive measures to provide training for staff with the issues faced by many veterans returning from active duty. We work closely with Veterans Services partners. Staff have attended Veteran Reintegration Training to better assist veterans and their families return to normal life after combat.

DEED Job Services works with the REA staff to identify veterans who are currently UI Applicants. DVOP's are scheduled to attend all UI Orientations that have veterans on the invitee list.

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

LWDA 2 complies with Policy Guidance from DEED on Veterans and Dislocated Workers. All staff understand appropriate service delivery and priority of service to veterans. Veterans have priority of service in all employment and training programs in accordance with the Job for Veterans Act (P.L. 107-288, November 7, 2002), and all succeeding appropriate laws, rules and regulations. Priority service to veterans is also outlined in internal policies. Veterans are identified through staff inquiry or self-identification. Staff inform current or former Military Service Members of priority of service as soon as the veteran or current service member is identified.

Signage in the CareerForce offices 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 PL 107-288.

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?

RMCEP's website includes a message about veterans having priority of service. Additionally, all websites associated with the CareerForce offices provide information regarding veteran's priority of service.

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

Through program eligibility determinations, an Initial Assessment is conducted through a formal guided interview. Staff present the assessment information to the RMCEP client services team. The team recommends veterans for additional core services, referral to other agencies, or intake for intensive services based on eligibility, need, and availability of resources. As stated above, this policy also covers those spouses of veterans identified by law as having priority for services.

Veterans also receive services from Wagner-Peyser and WIOA funded staff. Staff are trained by veteran's staff on veterans' preference and priority of service. Veterans' staff may either provide or work with other partners to provide assistance with registration, referrals to jobs, counseling, referrals to supportive services, job development, Creative Job Search workshops, resume preparation assistance, and other services. Veterans are given maximum exposure to suitable jobs and priority assistance in competing for those jobs.

Individuals leaving active duty from the regular armed forces, National Guard or Armed Forces Reserves, for reasons other than dishonorable discharge, are eligible for Dislocated Worker Services.

Dislocated Worker services eligibility for veterans will consider the following:

- a). The individual no longer has a civilian job upon his or her return; or
- b). The civilian job still exists but is no longer appropriate because of the individual's increased skills obtained in the military, leaving the individual essentially underemployed given his or her skills; or
- c). The civilian job still exists but it pays significantly less than the military paid during the time of active service.

Job Services will provide all veterans that attend the REA Orientation with the opportunity to take the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) assessment and to receive advice and training on how to use the NCRC in their job seeking efforts.

The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire, a DOL approved standard process, is used to identify veterans with a significant barrier to employment (SBE). The questionnaire identified DOL designated SBE's per VPL03-14, including Change 2.

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?

The guided interview Initial Assessment is the key that allows us to appropriately refer a veteran to program staff or, as appropriate, to a Local Veteran Employment Representative and/or to Disabled Veterans Outreach Personnel. A referral may also be included in the development of an employment plan. The communication is usually virtual as there are not DVOPs in our CareerForce offices on a regular basis.

CareerForce staff work closely together as a team to provide customer service. Communication is both formal, at established CareerForce partner meetings, and informal through staff-to-staff discussion.

The team approach of the partners at our CareerForce locations is illustrated as follows: The local Veteran's Representative knows of a veteran who would be a likely candidate for a position opening or On-the-Job experience. RMCEP staff then writes an On-the-Job Training contract with the employer to get the veteran on the job.

Priority services to veterans and spouses of certain veterans are provided by Veterans Representatives and DVOPs. They oversee the provision of all services and actively promote integration with all CareerForce services. By doing so, they ensure preference to eligible veterans in the provision of workforce development services. They will also actively participate in employer marketing and public relations, coordinating with other staff involved in employer services, and job development. DVOPs promote recruitment of disabled vets and provide individual case management services. All CareerForce locations in LWDA 2 are served at least weekly by veteran's staff from within the region, either through permanent assignment or on an itinerant basis.

This local area had identified partner staff (in each CareerForce) 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 with 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?

RMCEP provides all services through the CareerForce offices whether or not a DEED Veterans Service Representative is located onsite. This partnership is ideal to ensure coordination and collaboration of services. Services include the full range of WIOA adult and dislocated worker services, in addition to the specific veterans services provided by the Veterans Representatives. In some areas, the Veterans Representatives come to the CareerForce office on a regularly scheduled itinerant basis. RMCEP staff maintain regular contact with them to ensure that veterans are informed of services available at the CareerForce locations and this allows for a seamless referral process.

The DVOPs are working in partnership with our local UI/REA representatives (where available) to identify all veterans. The DVOP will attend the REA events along with the

Job Service staff in order to provide customized veteran's services. Veterans are given priority service for Creative Job Search as well as the National Career Readiness Certificate.

Available local DVOP and/or LVER staff attends staff and partner meetings and orientation, participate on CareerForce teams, collaborate with CareerForce partners on various events and LVER staff provide training to partner staff and management regarding the JVSG program.

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?

All job-ready customers utilizing the Career Lab are assisted with registration in the Minnesotaworks.net system and are encouraged to complete a resume and have it uploaded into the system.

All job-ready enrolled customers participate in job seeking activities which include a component in which they register in Minnesotaworks.net and upload their resume.

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 X

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

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

Yes X

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 X

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 X

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

Yes X

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.

According to the bylaws of the local Workforce Development Board:

Members of the Workforce Development Board shall be appointed by the Board of Directors of RMCEP.

1. Membership terms shall be fixed and staggered. Members shall be appointed to serve a term of three (3) years. Membership years shall run from July 1 to June 30.
2. Should a vacancy occur during the member's term, the Board of Directors shall appoint a new member to complete the term.
3. Any member may be reappointed.

The Executive Director leads the recruitment process when terms have ended and new members are sought. Various recruitment venues are used including: local Chambers of Commerce, current or former members, and agencies or companies in a representative area (such as business, education, or labor). Persons who hold membership with terms expiring as of June 2021 may be reappointed. If they are not

reappointed or decline to continue to serve, the recruitment process will begin for their respective representative area.

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

SIGNATURE PAGE

Local Workforce Development
Area Name

LWDA #2 Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.

Local Area Board Name

LWDA #2 Workforce Development Board

Name and Contact Information for the Local Area Board Chair:

Name Ms. Carol Anderson

Title Owner/Operator

Organization Anderson Farms

Address 1 316 E. Broadway

Address 2 PO Box 356

City, State, ZIP Code Little Falls, MN 56345

Phone 320-632-5466

E-mail mcdc@fallsnet.com

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

Name Ms. Lori Schwartz

Title Executive Director

Organization Lakes & Prairies CAP

Address 1 715 11th St N

Address 2

City, State, ZIP Code Moorhead, MN 56560

Phone 218-512-1506

E-mail Loris@caplp.org

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

Name Carol Anderson

Title Local Area Workforce
Development Board Chair

Signature *Carol Anderson*

Date 4/28/2021

Local Elected Official

Name Lori Schwartz

Title RMCEP Board of Directors Chair

Signature *Lori Schwartz*

Date 4/28/2021

REGIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Regional Workforce Development Area

Regional Workforce Development Area 1

Local Workforce Development Area

Northwest Private Industry Council (LWDA #1) and Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc. (LWDA #2)

MEMBER	ORGANZIATION
Ahmed Shiil	United Way of Cass and Clay Counties
Angela Malone	Valley Home (LWDB1)
Anne Lindseth	Workforce Impact
Bonnie Stechman	CareerForce (LWDB1)
Brianna Efta	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Carol Anderson	Anderson Farms (LWBD2)
Catherine Johnson	Inter-County Community Council (LWDB1)
Chet Bodin	DEED
Don Martodam	Martodam Holdings (LWDB2)
Ed Bolas	DyCast Specialties (LEO WDA2)
Fern Johnson	CareerForce

Janelle Klinke	LEO WDA2
Janelle Wald-Kovar	NWPIC
Janet Green	Community Health Care
John Preuss	Inter-County Community Council
John Tormanen	CHI St. Francis Health (LWDB1)
Julie Sachs	CareerForce (LWDB2)
Kathy Guess	Guess Enterprises (LWDB2)
Kirsten Fuglseth	Northwest Service Cooperative (ABE) (LWDB1)
Laetitia Hellerud	Ubuntu Consulting
Michael Moore	LWDB1
Sally Erickson	Errico Manufacturing (LWDB1)
Sandy King	LEO WDA2
Sue Boehland	Perkins Consultant (LWDB2)
Tammy Schatz	Adult Basic Education (LWDB2)
Terry Blake	Ada-Felton Country Store (LWDB2)
Vicki Leaderbrand	RMCEP, Inc.

Catlyn Christie	City of Fargo
Jared Cuoco	Essentia Health
Angele Hartell	CareerForce
Denise Stone	White Earth Tribal Council

Attachment C

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA CONTACTS

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Rapid Response Liaison for Mass Layoffs	Tina Jaster	218-847-0720	tinaj@rmcep.com	Vicki Leaderbrand
Equal Opportunity Officer	Melissa Kain	218-847-0721	melissak@rmcep.com	Nancy Bisek
Program Complaint Officer	Melissa Kain	218-847-0721	melissak@rmcep.com	Nancy Bisek
Records Management/Records Retention Coordinator	Nancy Bisek	218-847-0732	nancyb@rmcep.com	Vicki Leaderbrand
ADA Coordinator	Melissa Kain	218-847-0721	melissak@rmcep.com	Nancy Bisek
Data Practices Coordinator	Nancy Bisek	218-847-0732	nancyb@rmcep.com	Vicki Leaderbrand
English as Second Language (ESL) Coordinator	Tina Jaster	218-847-0720	tinaj@rmcep.com	Vicki Leaderbrand

CareerForce Center in ___ Alexandria CareerForce _____

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Karen Schwieso	320-391-9262	karens@rmcep.com	Arlyce Cucich
Job Service Manager	Julie Sachs	218-396-0523	Julie.sachs@state.mn.us	Reggie Worlds
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Andrea Chirhart	320-249-1136	Andrea.chirhart@state.mn.us	Jeri Werner
State Services for the Blind Manager	Steve Larson	218-825-2185	Stephen.d.larson@state.mn.us	Natasha Jerde
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Vicki Leaderbrand	218-847-0718	vickil@rmcep.com	Board of Directors

Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Julie Fietek	320-762-3312	jfietek@alexschools.org	Lynn Jenc
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Carrie Hanson	320-762-4943	carrieh@alextech.edu	VP of Student Services
Adult	Same as Site Representative			
Dislocated Worker				
Youth				

CareerForce Center in _____ Bemidji CareerForce (Westridge) _____

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Billie Jo Greene	218-444-0732	billiejog@rmcep.com	Brian Gapinski
Job Service Manager	Julie Sachs	218-396-0523	Julie.sachs@state.mn.us	Reggie Worlds
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Randa Lundmark	218-333-8205	Randa.lundmark@state.mn.us	Jeri Werner
State Services for the Blind Manager	Steve Larson	218-825-2185	Stephen.d.larson@state.mn.us	Natasha Jerde
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Vicki Leaderbrand	218-847-0718	vickil@rmcep.com	Board of Directors
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Kirsten Fuglseth	218-681-0900	kfuglseth@nw-service.k12.mn.us	Bruce Jensen
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Sarah Behrens	218-755-4902	Sarah.behrens@ntcmn.edu	Dr. Richard Hanson
Adult	Same as Site Representative			
Dislocated Worker				
Youth				

Attachment C

CareerForce Center in Brainerd CareerForce

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Jama Davidson	218-828-2450	jamad@rmcep.com	Brian Gapinski
Job Service Manager	Julie Sachs	218-396-0523	Julie.sachs@state.mn.us	Reggie Worlds
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Randa Lundmark	218-333-8205	Randa.lundmark@state.mn.us	Jeri Werner
State Services for the Blind Manager	Steve Larson	218-825-2185	Stephen.d.larson@state.mn.us	Natasha Jerde
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Vicki Leaderbrand	218-847-0718	vickil@rmcep.com	Board of Directors
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Jess Cass	218-855-8165	Jessica.cass@isd181.org	Cori Reynolds
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Paul Preimesberger	218-855-8163	Paul.preimesberger@clcmn.edu	VP of Student Services
Adult	Same as Site Representative			
Dislocated Worker				
Youth				

CareerForce Center in Detroit Lakes CareerForce

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Kelley Nowell	218-847-0700	kelley@rmcep.com	Arlyce Cucich
Job Service Manager	Julie Sachs	218-396-0523	Julie.sachs@state.mn.us	Reggie Worlds
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Eric Wittbrodt	218-739-7565	Eric.wittbrodt@state.mn.us	Jeri Werner

State Services for the Blind Manager	Steve Larson	218-825-2185	Stephen.d.larson@state.mn.us	Natasha Jerde
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Vicki Leaderbrand	218-847-0718	vickil@rmcep.com	Board of Directors
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Amy Fish	218-844-5760	afish@detlakes.k12.mn.us	Mark Jensen
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Troy Haugen	218-737-6511	thaugen@lcsc.org	Jeremy Kovash
Adult	Same as Site Representative			
Dislocated Worker				
Youth				

CareerForce Center in _____ Fergus Falls CareerForce _____

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	David Smith	218-739-7675	davids@rmcep.com	Arlyce Cucich
Job Service Manager	Julie Sachs	218-396-0523	Julie.sachs@state.mn.us	Reggie Worlds
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Eric Wittbrodt	218-739-7565	Eric.wittbrodt@state.mn.us	Jeri Werner
State Services for the Blind Manager	Steve Larson	218-825-2185	Stephen.d.larson@state.mn.us	Natasha Jerde
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Vicki Leaderbrand	218-847-0718	vickil@rmcep.com	Board of Directors
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Tammy Schatz	218-284-3460	tschatz@moorheadschoools.org	Bruce Jensen
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Troy Haugen	218-737-6511	thaugen@lcsc.org	Jeremy Kovash
Adult	Same as Site Representative			

Attachment C

Dislocated Worker	
Youth	

CareerForce Center in _____ Little Falls CareerForce _____

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Samantha Froelich	320-232-2006	samanthaf@rmcep.com	Brian Gapinski
Job Service Manager	Julie Sachs	218-396-0523	Julie.sachs@state.mn.us	Reggie Worlds
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Lori Thorpe	651-274-8880	Lori.thorpe@state.mn.us	Jeri Werner
State Services for the Blind Manager	Steve Larson	218-825-2185	Stephen.d.larson@state.mn.us	Natasha Jerde
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Vicki Leaderbrand	218-847-0718	vickil@rmcep.com	Board of Directors
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Bryan Tollefson	320-732-4609	btollefson@fed.k12.mn.us	Jerry Nesland
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Paul Preimesberger	218-855-8163	Paul.preimesberger@clcmn.edu	VP of Student Services
Adult	Same as Site Representative			
Dislocated Worker				
Youth				

CareerForce Center in _____ Moorhead CareerForce _____

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Theresa Hazemann	218-287-5060	theresah@rmcep.com	Arlyce Cucich

Job Service Manager	Julie Sachs	218-396-0523	Julie.sachs@state.mn.us	Reggie Worlds
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Jeff Bjornson	218-333-8205	jeffrey.bjornson@state.mn.us	Jeri Werner
State Services for the Blind Manager	Steve Larson	218-304-8738	Stephen.d.larson@state.mn.us	Natasha Jerde
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Vicki Leaderbrand	218-847-0718	vickil@rmcep.com	Board of Directors
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Tammy Schatz	218-284-3460	tschatz@moorheadschoools.org	Bruce Jensen
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Troy Haugen	218-737-6511	thaugen@lcsc.org	Jeremy Kovash
Adult	Same as Site Representative			
Dislocated Worker				
Youth				

CareerForce Center in _____ Wadena CareerForce _____

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Evelyn Fowler	218-631-7665	evief@rmcep.com	Brian Gapinski
Job Service Manager	Julie Sachs	218-396-0523	Julie.sachs@state.mn.us	Reggie Worlds
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Eric Wittbrodt	218-739-7565	Eric.wittbrodt@state.mn.us	Jeri Werner
State Services for the Blind Manager	Steve Larson	218-825-2185	Stephen.d.larson@state.mn.us	Natasha Jerde
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Vicki Leaderbrand	218-847-0718	vickil@rmcep.com	Board of Directors
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Bryan Tollefson	320-732-4609	btollefson@fed.k12.mn.us	Jerry Nesland

Attachment C

Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Paul Preimesberger	218-855-8163	Paul.preimesberger@clcmn.edu	VP of Student Services
Adult	Same as Site Representative			
Dislocated Worker				
Youth				

LOCAL AREA BOARD MEMBERSHIP LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Regional Workforce Development Area 1

Local Workforce Development Area

Local Workforce Development Area 2 Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc.

MEMBER	POSITION/ORGANIZATION	TERM ENDS
REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS IN LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA	Terry Blake (Owner, Ada-Felton Country Store)	6/30/21
	Eloise Graves-Jallen, (COO/Comptroller, Red Lake Builders)	6/30/23
	Matthew Gordon (Vice President/Director of Operations, Gordon Construction, Inc.)	6/30/23
	Kathleen Guess (Owner, Guess Enterprises)	6/30/21
	Don Martodam (Owner, Martodam Holdings)	6/30/22
	Jerry Arneson (SVP/Ag Commercial Lender, Bell Bank)	6/30/21
	John Tormanen (Director of Mission & Human Resources, CHI St. Joseph's Area Health Services)	6/30/23
	Carol Anderson (Owner/Operator, Anderson Farm)	6/30/21
	Lori Meader (Human Resources Dir, Arvig Enterprises, Inc.)	6/30/23
	Teresa Johnson (Chief Human Resources Officer, Tri-County Health Care)	6/30/23
LABOR & COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS	Amanda Hanson (Human Resources Director, Midwest MN Community Development Corp)	6/30/22
	Darrell Lende (Business Agent, Cement Masons & Plasterers Local 633)	6/30/22
	Durant C. Thoen, Sr. (Business Agent, Plumbers & Pipefitters, UA Local 11, Zone 2)	6/30/22

Attachment C

	Sandy Voigt (Director, Women's Business Alliance Entrepreneur Fund)	6/30/23
EDUCATION & TRAINING	Sue Boehland (Central Lakes Perkins Secondary Coordinator, Perkins Consultants)	6/30/21
	Tammy Schatz (Program Manager, Adult Basic Education/Community Education)	6/30/22
	Rebekah Kent (Dean of Career & Technical Programs/Customized Training, Central Lks College)	6/30/22
GOVERNMENT	Julie Sachs (Field Operations Area Manager, Job Service)	6/30/22
	Eric Wittbrodt (Rehabilitation Area Manager, MN Dept of Employment & Econ. Dev)	6/30/22

CONTACT INFORMATION

NAME	ADDRESS/PHONE/EMAIL
CHAIR: Carol Anderson	Community Development of Morrison County 316 East Broadway P.O. Box 356 Little Falls, MN 56345-0356 320-492-1663 (C) mcdc@fallsnet.com
VICE CHAIR: Sue Boehland	Perkins Consultant 11205 494th Street Hewitt, MN 56453 218-639-1160 (C) Sttt6346@gmail.com
SECRETARY: Terry Blake	Ada-Felton Country Store 615 Sixth Street P.O. Box 595 Felton, MN 56536 701-212-7641 (C) Dblake539@feltontel.net

Attachment D

LOCAL AREA BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Regional Workforce Development Area 1

Local Workforce Development Area

Local Workforce Development Area 2 (Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc)

Committee Name	Objective/Purpose
<i>Youth Council</i>	Oversee the planning and funding of effective youth programs operated by WDA 2
<i>WDB Business Committee</i>	Review the funding and performance progress and status for all programs operated by WDA 2

Attachment E

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA SUB-GRANTEE LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Regional Workforce Development Area 1

Local Workforce Development Area

Local Workforce Development Area 2 (Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc)

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

Attachment F

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

Regional Workforce Development Area

Local Workforce Development Area

Name and Location (City)	Program Service Delivered
N/A	

Attachment G

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY INDUSTRIES IN REGIONAL ECONOMY

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

Key Industries in the Regional Economy for Northwest Minnesota are:

- *Healthcare/Social Assistance*
- *Manufacturing*
- *Education*
- *Transportation*
- *Agriculture*