

Regional and Local Plans

7/1/2021 – 6/30/2024

RWDA:

(Regional Workforce Development Area name/number)

LWDA:

(Local Workforce Development Area name/number)

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.

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.

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.

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?

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

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

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.

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.

Stearns-Benton Employment & Training Council (SBETC), DBA Career Solutions local board designated a single CareerForce (CF) location to serve Stearns and Benton Counties. CareerForce is strategically located in the St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) in Stearns County, closely bordering Sauk Rapids, the largest city in Benton County. CareerForce is easily accessed by public transportation and offers free parking.

CareerForce St. Cloud includes the following core partners:

- Career Solutions – Title I
- Job Service – Wagner-Peyser
- State Services for the Blind (SSB)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)
- MFIP/TANF and SNAP Consultant from Avivo.

Space is available for community partners as requested. For example, Adult Basic Education utilizes the computer lab for trainings on an as needed basis. Also, many community meetings, including those for core title providers, are held at CareerForce St. Cloud.

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

St. Cloud has one CareerForce location to serve Stearns and Benton Counties.

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

Monthly meetings are held amongst the CareerForce Partners to strive for a proactive approach to customer service, safety, cost allocation planning, facility management and security. In addition to addressing the basic needs of the center, leaders work towards optimizing staffing levels and share programmatic changes. Strategic initiatives are brainstormed and planned in formal meeting settings as well as informally on an ad hoc basis. Career Solutions and the other St. Cloud CareerForce partners re-evaluated the CF location in 2019 and reviewed space

needs in order to maximize efficiency. The group determined it was best to remain in the current location and completed this work prior to signing a 5 year lease with SCTCC. Requests and adjustments were made in the renewal process to improve the facility and daily operations. The Facility Director from the St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) also attend the monthly partner meetings to increase communications and to provide a seamless service approach from a facilities standpoint.

A monthly meeting is held with SCTCC leadership and deans to strengthen the working relationship and build synergy between programs. The Executive Director of Career Solutions and the area Job Service Manager represent CareerForce St. Cloud at these meetings.

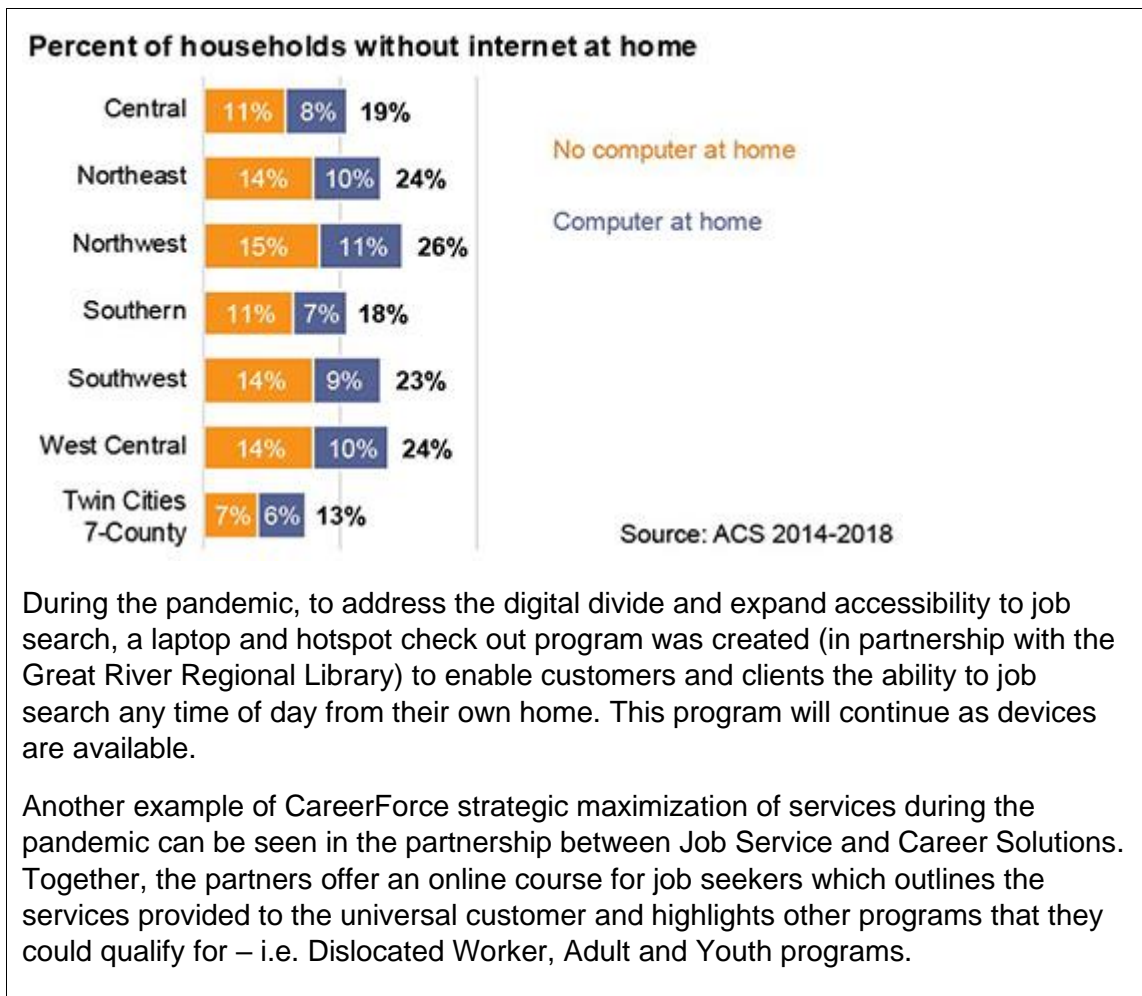
Career Solutions facilitates quarterly meetings with Community Partners who are included in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU Partners) in efforts to communicate and update partner agencies on the work that is being planned and completed by their organizations. Partners are encouraged to provide programmatic updates, increasing communication, avoid duplication of services in the area and identifying opportunities for collaboration.

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

The St. Cloud CareerForce current hours of operation are 8am – 4:30pm, Monday through Friday. CareerForce participates at job fairs and events in the area at any time of day. Also, special sessions are held outside of business hours to support Career Solutions programs, occasionally held at a partner's facility or business location. Frequently, special arrangements can be made to meet the needs of clients outside of the normal hours of operation.

Career Solutions staff also provide services to the universal customer at strategic locations throughout the community – such as LaCruz Community Center, the Community Out Post (COP House), St Cloud Library, and Islamic Center. During the Pandemic, the Career Solutions team have staffed an extra computer lab at the Library while CareerForce St. Cloud has been closed.

With 19% of households in Central MN not having internet or computers at home, the need to access devices in CareerForce is a necessity for this area.



- 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.

Career Solutions demonstrates excellent capacity for providing career pathway services to participants. 1:1 career planning provides in-depth career assessment and exploration identifying marketable and strategic career goals. Not all career goals can be met due to limitations in funding and participant life needs/limitations such as limited financial resources for long-term training. In these situations, credentialed training to begin a career pathway is identified and supported. Support services exist within program funds to assist individuals while in training. Job search and placement preparation assistance is available from Career Planners, who direct participants to access many job placement assistance opportunities including Minnesotaworks.net. Additionally, follow up contact is maintained for six months, with helpful retention information shared with individuals. Career Solutions coordinates with other LWDA's through the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards.

Career Solutions provides equitable and unrestricted job information to all customers and clients. This includes referral activities that are not based on stereotypes of what is considered traditional women's and men's work. Shortly after enrolling in a

program, clients attend Career Trek, a program designed by Career Solutions. This program helps clients find career paths that are a fit with their personal interests and aptitudes, which does not focus on gender when determining career options. Individual client Career Trek results are reviewed with their career planner. Using labor market information, Career Planners discuss the feasibility of non-traditional occupations since in many cases, pay a higher wage. Local success stories are shared in order to encourage clients to consider non-traditional work.

Career Solutions has been convening partners in the development of career pathways since the inception of WIA and "School-to-Work." Career Solutions has worked with partners to offer "Academies" through ABE and SCTCC partners. Many of these programs are offered through adult competitive grants (i.e. P2P) or through resources received from foundations or other funders.

Youth in the area may enroll in the WIOA Youth program, where they will receive individualized attention in planning their career, navigating their education plans, and preparing to find a job. Career assessments, career plans, training scholarships, supportive services, and work experience related to their career pathway (when possible) are some of the services available. If necessary, community referrals are provided. Services are provided year-round.

Other programs are offered to support at risk/historically underserved youth, such as Youth at Work, and Outreach to Schools programs are efforts to introduce career exploration opportunities. CareerONE is an intensive summer offering that provides at risk/historically underserved youth ages 14-17 work readiness skills, training in a safe, nurturing and learning rich environment. The purpose of the summer program is to give at-risk youth a realistic and positive work readiness training experience and to keep youth from regressing academically during the summer months. Summer components include: teamwork, contextual academic enrichment, career exploration, work readiness skills, workplace safety, financial literacy, reflections and journaling, and work projects for community based organizations and agencies.

CareerONE is not only a paid (Stipend) work experience opportunity, it's a place to explore careers and set a vision/goals for the future. For students who are interested in healthcare, manufacturing/construction or business, a special track has been designed to expand their ability to explore that career field. 20 students are enrolled in each track. At completion, students may receive up to three college credits for the work performed throughout CareerONE. With CareerONE being held on a college campus, the program is preparing many potential first generation college students by giving them an opportunity to earn three credits and become comfortable in the college setting. The goal is to ease their transition from high school to a local post-secondary institution.

Career Solutions also provides the Youthbuild Program to the community, operated in collaboration with the St. Cloud Area School District 742 and Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity. Youthbuild provides an opportunity for high school dropouts and potential dropouts to focus on completing high school while working part-time on projects. Youthbuilders learn basic safety and construction skills while improving the availability of low-income housing in the community.

Through a partnership with VRS, Career Solutions offers Pre-ETS services to youth with disabilities. This work is assigned by VRS councilors and youth career planners

plan and coordinate the completion of tasks with individuals or in group settings as appropriate.

Job Service: Job Service, Wagner Peyser staff coordinates closely with CareerForce co-located partners to provide basic career services to universal customers. When appropriate referrals are made to eligibility-based programs/services of co-located partners (i.e. WIOA Adult, DW, Vocational Rehabilitation services, Veterans Services, etc.).

Basic Career Services include the following:

- Eligibility determination;
- Outreach, intake and orientation;
- Initial assessment of skill levels and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services including: job search, job placement and provision of in demand industry and occupation information and nontraditional employment opportunities;
- Referrals to other programs and services;
- Provision of workforce and labor market information.

Job Services also provides virtual and interactive services for job seekers, to include workshops, one to one visits and virtual career fairs.

<https://www.careerforcemn.com/virtual-interactive-services-career-seekers> On-line and virtual services were incorporated into our service delivery model during the pandemic.

VRS: Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) assist youth, ages 14-21, who have disabilities. Youth who are still in school and have not graduated from high school are eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services. These services can include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, workplace-readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. They can be provided for students whether or not they have applied for services. In July 2017, VRS began partnering with the Career Solutions Youth Team to provide these services across LWDA 17.

VRS also provides services to transition-aged youth who apply for services and fall within the state's priority for service. Individuals in this group can be either in school or out of school and can receive any service VRS offers if that service is necessary to help the student to achieve their educational and employment goals.

SSB: SSB assists all eligible clients to explore their unique career potential. This would include eligible individuals considering career pathways programs.

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

Career Solutions has completed a restructuring of its technology infrastructure in order to be more mobile, supporting the need to be a service rather than a place. This restructure will allow Career Solutions the ability to expand outreach and conduct work outside of its physical location.

All Career Planners have smart phones allowing them to text, meet virtually or call clients from any work location to increase accessibility.

Large group sessions are offered in a hybrid model, allowing clients to choose between attending in person or virtually.

A mobile lab is available to continue our work outside of CareerForce/Career Solutions. Through a partnership with the Great River Regional Library (GRRL), a laptop lab is utilized to host intake sessions, computer classes, college classes for a cohort, etc. at a variety of locations in the community.

Career Solutions has also rebranded as of August 2017. This rebranding included improving the agency's website and adding social media platforms to the marketing and outreach plan. Testimonials and informational videos have proven to be the strongest form of marketing. Greater connections and positive feedback has been received by job seekers, community leaders, employers and board members. Many resources and forms, some fillable PDF's have been added to the website for easy customer access.

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.

Career Solutions only issues supportive services to clients with a financial barrier to employment. Support Services are given based on financial need and are dependent upon funding availability. Clients are made aware of this at their initial orientation session. During intake, each client completes a monthly financial budget form that determines their need for support in relation to their employment or training plan. A need is classified by a deficit between the total money in and money out each month. All sources of household income for the family unit are included in determining whether or not a need exists.

If a client is approved to pursue a training pathway, they must detail how they will meet their monthly financial obligations prior to final approval of the training plan. Per Local policy, support services cannot exceed \$2,000.00 per client per program year. This policy can be waived by the Career Solutions Program Director. Waivers are reviewed quarterly by the Career Solutions leadership team and Workforce Development Board. There are also limits for support for different categories such as transportation, housing, clothing, tools, childcare, mental health & financial counseling and healthcare. Career Solutions chooses to issue supportive services on a "first come, first serve" basis and assist clients as the need arises and as funds are available. The Program Director, team leaders and agency staff monitor the amounts very closely and make adjustments as needed. For example, there are times when,

as a team, it has been decided to only allow payments to be made to cover travel expenses related to job search or to reach approved training programs.

Career Solutions contracts with Catholic Charities to provide mental health & financial counseling through their Client Assistance Program. A licensed independent social worker from Catholic Charities Caritas Mental Health Clinic will provide individual mental health counseling services to help referred Career Solutions clients transition from job loss to training and employment and/or identify barriers preventing them from securing and maintaining successful long-term employment (above and beyond career counseling).

Experienced financial and housing counselors are also available through Catholic Charities to guide referred clients and help them make the best choices during the critical time in their lives. The procedure for one-on-one client financial counseling services begins with a thorough assessment of the client's financial situation. One-on-one financial/ housing counselor assessment sessions average between 1-1.5 hours. Additional financial/ housing counseling services depend on the client's individual financial situation and his/ her ability to address barriers to financial stability.

To support clients with their computer skills, Career Solutions partners with Avivo to provide computer training at all levels. Both credentialed and non-credentialed training options are available. Also, Adult Basic Education provides an introduction to computer basics on an as-needed basis in Career Solutions' computer lab, at CareerForce St. Cloud.

To assist with transportation issues, clients are provided with bus passes when needed. If they have issues with their car, connections are made with the St. Cloud Technical and Community College automotive program, where clients may receive free or reduced cost car repairs. Referrals to other community resources and agencies, such as Tri-CAP, who provides support to those facing transportation challenges.

Other resources/connections made are:

- Depending on TABE results, referrals are made to Adult Basic Education to help those who score low work on improving their math and reading ability.
- Referrals are made to Vocational Rehab and MFIP as needed. Some clients may be co-enrolled between agencies.
- Suggestions are made to connect with their personal place of worship as many faith based organizations have supported their members with food, clothing, etc.
- Lutheran Social Services is also provided as a potential housing resource.
- Ruby's Pantry and Fair for All are shared with clients in order to increase access to low cost, quality foods.

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.

A Memorandum of Understanding endorsed and signed by the current Local Area Board Chair and all current CareerForce partners. An Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) is agreed upon and in place, signed by CareerForce partners and reviewed by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED). The Cost Allocation Plan is updated as required and any changes in cost allocations due to discrepancies or disagreements are addressed at that time.

CareerForce partners work collaboratively to make improvements, research costs associated with maintenance, enhancements, etc., striving to improve the overall customer experience, while focused on the goals of a customer centered design.

The MOU and IFA are being revised in accordance with DEED's IFA policy. Revisions will be made and approval sought by June 2021.

In the event of a discrepancy or disagreement, the regularly scheduled MOU meeting would convene and take up the issue.

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.

All current CareerForce partners and contracted providers that have a presence in CareerForce St. Cloud are required to participate in a Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) to fund the infrastructure of CareerForce St. Cloud. The Local Workforce Development Board, through the Program Committee, maintains an active role in monitoring service delivery by assisting the service provider in developing credential criteria and establishing policies. The Program Committee also reviews program performance, service evaluations, customer satisfaction and other reports to ensure quality of service delivery. Performance information is also presented to the Local Workforce Development Board on a consistent basis.

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.

Career Solutions has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) partner group and another with the CareerForce partners. This group includes leadership representatives from CareerForce St. Cloud and multiple community service providers who meet quarterly to exchange information on new initiatives, updates on existing services, and to discuss opportunities to collaborate, while avoiding duplication of services in the area.

The purpose of the MOU is to confirm the understanding of the Parties regarding the operation and management of Local Workforce Development Area 17 (LWDA 17), its One-Stop delivery system, and to define the roles and responsibilities as mutually agreed by the Parties for the operation of the CareerForce Center delivery system in

LWDA 17 as required under the Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act (WIOA) of 2014.

The MOU is to coordinate resources to prevent duplication and ensure the effective and efficient delivery of workforce services in the Career Solutions Workforce Development Area. In addition, the MOU establishes joint processes and procedures that enable partners to integrate the current service delivery system resulting in a seamless and comprehensive array of education, human service, job training, disabilities and other workforce development services to the Career Solutions Workforce Development Area.

The sharing and allocation of infrastructure costs among one-stop partners is governed by WIOA sec. 121(h), its implementing regulations, and the Federal Cost Principles contained in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance) at 2 CFR part 200.

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

The Career Solutions Joint Powers Board was created by the Board of Commissioners of Stearns and Benton Counties. The Joint Powers Board maintains the fiduciary responsibilities for the Workforce Development Area (WDA).

The Career Solutions Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is the required Workforce Investment Board under federal legislation, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The LWDB is appointed by the Joint Powers Board. The LWDB is employer-led, with an employer majority representing industry sectors targeted for growth. Other Council members include representatives from post-secondary education, community-based organizations, county programs, organized labor, and adult basic education.

The LWDB:

- Provides leadership on current and emerging workforce issues and needs and seeks solutions.
- Collaborates to maintain the economic health of Stearns and Benton Counties.
- Creates partnerships to serve the needs of businesses and job seekers.
- Oversees publicly-funded workforce programs in Stearns and Benton Counties.
- Identifies and seeks additional resources which may be retained for Council projects or which may be used to purchase products and services or support the work of community partners.

MISSION: We exist to provide comprehensive workforce development, helping community members acquire the skill, training, and experience to achieve economic security while meeting the human resource needs of local business and industry.

GOALS:

- 1) Grow the economic vitality of our communities by investing in strategic industries and occupations;
- 2) Ensure Minnesota (Stearns & Benton Counties) workers have opportunities to improve earning potential by acquiring, advancing and transferring their skills; and
- 3) Ensure compliance with the requirements of the Local Workforce Development Board per federal and state legislation.

The Workforce Development Board and Program Committee, through research, identified target industries in the local and regional areas. These industries constitute sectors where there are high-demand and high-wage employment opportunities. While other high-opportunity employment and training plans are also supported, Career Solutions LWDB members are particularly committed to supporting training for, and placing workers in, jobs within the identified targeted industries:

Business Services: Office Assistant, Accounting Clerk, Administrative Secretary, Network Administrator, Finance Manager, Legal Secretary, Computer Software Analysis, Software Developers/Applications...

Health Services: Nursing Assistant, Dental Assistant, Health Care Technician, Emergency Medical Technician, Surgical Technology, Practical Nursing, Pharmacy Technician, Medical Secretary....

Manufacturing: Assembly, Production Worker, Boiler Maker, Packaging, Welder, Industrial Engineers, Machine Operator.

Transportation: Delivery Driver, CDL, Bus Drivers, Material Movers...

Agriculture: Farming

Stearns and Benton LWDA	2019 Annual Data			
NAICS Industry Title	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll (\$1,000s)	Avg. Annual Wage
Total, All Industries	5,357	104,821	\$4,983,211	\$47,540
Health Care & Social Assistance	538	18,693	\$1,019,363	\$54,532
Manufacturing	333	15,580	\$810,360	\$52,013
Retail Trade	761	13,494	\$417,026	\$30,905
Educational Services	121	8,525	\$409,909	\$48,083
Accommodation & Food Services	411	7,192	\$118,427	\$16,467
Construction	673	6,778	\$454,796	\$67,099
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svc	206	4,852	\$154,620	\$31,867
Wholesale Trade	214	4,594	\$262,771	\$57,199
Transportation & Warehousing	240	4,356	\$223,272	\$51,256
Finance & Insurance	299	3,871	\$252,300	\$65,177
Other Services	621	3,332	\$98,787	\$29,648
Public Administration	100	3,308	\$195,562	\$59,118
Professional & Technical Services	268	2,360	\$165,844	\$70,273
Management of Companies	23	1,958	\$140,746	\$71,883
Information	78	1,605	\$94,007	\$58,571
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	124	1,213	\$45,489	\$37,501
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	183	1,056	\$33,426	\$31,653
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	113	1,012	\$15,707	\$15,521
Mining	6	143	\$9,687	\$67,742
<i>Source: DEED Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program</i>				

This local area strategy moves forward in sync with state priorities under WIOA. The LWDB's strategic vision coincides with the goals established by the Governor's Workforce Development Board and includes outreach to businesses in these five industry sectors. Career Solutions Business Services Manager and DEED's regional workforce strategy consultant are tasked with gathering "leading indicators" of area businesses—where these companies are headed and what hiring they expect to do in the near future. This process provides forward-looking data the LWDB can use to further advance their goal of getting Minnesotans back to work, via a meaningful career pathway, and supporting business needs. DEED's labor market analyst is also consulted to gather data on the local workforce changes, demographics of job seekers and industry data.

Table 10. Employment Characteristics, 2019					
	WDB 17 - Stearns-Benton			Minnesota	
	In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Labor Force	112,689	71.9%	4.7%	69.7%	3.6%
16 to 19 years	8,009	62.3%	14.1%	53.2%	11.0%
20 to 24 years	16,929	88.1%	7.3%	84.6%	6.0%
25 to 44 years	44,008	90.3%	5.0%	88.8%	3.2%
45 to 54 years	20,981	90.1%	2.7%	87.6%	2.7%
55 to 64 years	17,685	73.5%	3.3%	73.0%	2.8%
65 to 74 years	4,178	26.6%	3.1%	27.9%	2.2%
75 years & over	848	6.6%	4.8%	6.6%	2.4%
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin					
White alone	101,477	71.5%	3.8%	69.3%	3.0%
Black or African American	5,832	77.2%	17.3%	71.3%	8.8%
American Indian & Alaska Native	152	47.0%	10.9%	58.9%	12.6%
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	2,439	77.7%	15.2%	71.2%	4.3%
Some Other Race	1,054	71.5%	-1.0%	77.7%	6.1%
Two or More Races	1,714	71.5%	4.9%	73.6%	7.4%
Hispanic or Latino	2,936	74.5%	4.2%	76.5%	6.1%
Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status					
Veterans, 18 to 64 years	3,889	76.6%	4.3%	79.5%	4.0%
Employment Characteristics by Disability					
With Any Disability, 20 to 64 years	5,762	55.4%	10.8%	53.0%	8.6%
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment					
Population, 25 to 64 years	82,673	86.0%	3.4%	84.5%	3.0%
Less than H.S. Diploma	4,552	73.0%	3.8%	66.3%	4.2%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	19,136	80.2%	2.3%	78.5%	2.6%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	34,006	88.3%	3.7%	85.3%	3.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	24,967	90.9%	1.6%	90.0%	1.7%

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

The Career Solutions Workforce Development Board's focus is on maximizing ALL available labor, including new labor force entrants, mature workers, English language learners, youth and job seekers entering or returning to workforce. This board appreciates that the focus needs to be on preparing not just the entry level worker or retraining the dislocated worker, but increasing the skills of incumbent workers and low wage, entry level workers to increase productivity and advance their positions on their career ladder.

Principles of the LWDB include:

1. Outcome Driven

- "We may not guarantee employment but will guarantee employability."
- Clients will be equipped to make career/job changes. Clients will learn about personal career goal setting; thereby learning independence.

2. Asset-based

- We will build on client assets/strengths
- We will maximize all available resources by accessing community

assets/services to meet goals

- We encourage client choice within program limits and the prudent use of resources
- We will maximize all available labor – irrespective of age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, etc.
- Staff will strive to establish and maintain a professional caring relationship that honors and encourages clients and provides them the best chance to succeed
- We nurture the diversity that enriches our community and we look for opportunities and exchanges to promote joint learning, increasing diversity within our areas workforce.

3. Learning rich and promotes lifelong learning

- Services and resources are an investment in our clients and in our community for both strategic and long-term impact
- Clients will get credentialed training at a minimum; ideally they will start a college transcript with credit-based training so they may continue life-long learning;
- The use of technology is to be incorporated to the degree possible in class offerings to promote skills
- Technology will also be used to build capacity by providing distance learning;
- ABE and post-secondary should connect and address education gaps so that the transition is seamless for students. (CASAS score gaps, Accuplacer/ABE gaps); post-secondary financial aid should not be used for developmental education courses (acceptable expenditure for youth training funds);
- Contextual learning with a vocational content should be the format for remediation/ABE
- Clients who are pre-literate in any language should learn daily living skills as they relate to employability. ESL courses must incorporate daily English speaking exchanges, demonstrations, presentations (practice, practice, practice).

The LWDB acknowledges the expectation that occupational skills training be linked to in-demand employment opportunities in the local area or planning region. To maximize opportunities for jobseeker success, the board uses several sources of data to analyze the regional economy and uses that information to prepare and educate a skilled workforce.

Sources used for decision-making include:

- industry concentration and growth patterns
- commuting patterns
- political jurisdictions and alignments
- unemployment, vacancy, and other traditional labor market indicators
- population and workforce demographics

In the course of service delivery decision-making, the LWDB often identifies specific economic issues within the local area that require attention. The board's Program Committee meets monthly to review current economic and labor force conditions

within LWDA 17, as well as in the surrounding areas, which have an impact on our regional economy. This committee works closely with DEED's regional analyst and LWDA partners to focus on conditions, trends, and patterns that will influence workforce development activities.

A VRS Rehabilitation Area Manager sits on the LWDB, along with the Job Service field operations regional manager who is responsible for Job Service, Wagner-Peyser, and Veterans Employment Services in LWDA 17. These two seats offer the board a more comprehensive look at the work being performed in the area.

DEED's regional labor market analyst provides labor market information reports to the LWDB and Program Committee and offers assistance on how to determine and fill the high-demand, high-wage occupations present in the region.

The mission of the LWDB's Youth Council is "to help youth make a connection between learning and earning." This includes the council's responsibilities to:

- Coordinate LWDA 17 youth activities through program development, resource and referral, and coordination with other community-based organizations.
- Provide assistance with the development of effective practices for youth services, including follow-up service, internships/work experience, incentives, and youth development models.
- Recommend youth services providers by reviewing any request for proposal applications. Evaluating products, services, and programs for youth by monitoring programs and identifying best practices and quality performance standards.

As part of the process of approving funds for occupational skills training programs that lead to recognized credentials, LWDA 5 will give priority to programs that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.

Career Solutions led the Immigrant Employment Connection group, which includes representation from Central MN Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS), Job Service, Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation (economic development), United Way, St. Cloud Technical and Community College, the Initiative Foundation, Morgan Family Foundation, Avivo, (MFIP), DEED, Filsan Consultant, LLC., SCSU, Hands Across the World, Central MN Community Empowerment Organization and other Somali community leaders as well as Viking Coke representing business in the community. This group was assembled to educate employers and the community on how to overcome barriers to hiring the immigrant population in St. Cloud. In addition to the work with employers, connection is being made with potential job seekers to understand their experience, in order for the Immigrant Employment Connection group to provide feedback to employers. Ultimately, this group provided training and other resources to help connect employers with job seekers, alleviating concerns and disparities of the immigrant population in Central Minnesota.

Over time, this group has recognized that they made an impact in the community ("moving the needle"). Further, the Immigrant Employment Connection knew the best way to keep companies progressing toward hiring the immigrant population was to take a consultative approach working individually with companies still struggling with

barriers (real or perceived) to hiring. The team at Career Solutions developed an Immigrant Services program which provides recruitment assistance, training for employees, supervisors and leadership to ensure new hires feel welcome, and medication services if/when issues arise. This work continues to evolve. Program information, including testimonials can be found on the website - CareerSolutionsjobs.org.

In addition to the youth programs that Career Solutions offers, Career Solutions Executive Director is a board member for EPIC, an annual hands-on career exploration event for high school students in Central MN, is a member of the Greater St. Cloud Development Corporations "Expand Talent" advisory committee and is a member of the St. Cloud Rotary as a board member where she also coordinates the recruitment of Junior Rotarians.

Job Service: Job Service staff work with universal customers, UI recipients and Veterans to provide a wide range of facilitated workshops, both in person and virtually that address the various facets of their job search.

One of the core tasks WIOA assigns to the Wagner-Peyser program is to provide Basic Career Services to our customers. Job Service has strengthened its services by implementing more direct individual assistance to customers. Individual services include a direct conversation where the customer shares some of their experience, difficulties and background. Career-related assistance, assessments such as the Employment Readiness Profile are used, resume and interview coaching and additional resources and referrals are provided during these individual sessions.

Wagner-Peyser is a core program and its basic purpose is to improve the functioning of the nation's labor markets by bringing together individuals seeking employment and employers who are seeking workers.

Wagner-Peyser administers a public labor exchange system providing services to all employers and career seekers with a special emphasis on veterans, Unemployment Insurance (UI) applicants and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers. These services are made available through self-service, facilitated self-help service or staff-assisted service delivery approaches. During the pandemic these services are offered virtually via phone, internet or video chats.

Wagner-Peyser employment services provide a variety of employment-related labor exchange services, including, but not limited to, job search assistance, job referral, job placement assistance, eligibility based program referrals, re-employment services for unemployment insurance claimants, and recruiting assistance to employers with job vacancies.

- 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.

Career Solutions is graded in the above criteria. Year after year, Career Solutions continues to shine and exceed assigned performance measures. DEED leads

negotiating performance measures with the Department of Labor. DEED then passes the performance measures on to the local providers for discussion/negotiation/agreement. Performance measures are monitored monthly by the Career Solutions Program Director and Team leaders, then reviews the outcome at team meetings. Current outcomes are reported on and discussed quarterly at the WDB Executive Committee meetings. The Career Solutions Program Committee also receives quarterly updates. The Program committee is responsible for ensuring performance measures are met. Outcomes are reported annually to all other committees unless there is a reason to report them sooner.

Strong performance measures allow the agency to acquire additional grants to support workforce development initiatives that are in alignment with current services. These initiatives support economic growth in our area.

- 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.

Career Solutions: Work continues in developing Career Solutions strengths to address talent needs of the region. The Program Committee reviews all customer satisfaction reports, monitoring reports, evaluation summaries for this LWDA and responds as it relates to trends or needs. The Youth Council performs this for providers of youth services. LWDB members provide updates from their respective sectors at LWDB meetings and offer presentations for partners.

Career Solutions is a member of the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB). This membership assists this region in capacity building, evaluation and reporting, and continuous improvement.

Career Solutions also participates in the MAWB Secret Shopper initiative to gauge and strive to improve customer service and the overall customer experience when interacting with the CareerForce. Additional customer satisfaction work is also included in the One Stop Operator meetings, held bi-monthly, serving Region 3.

Career Solutions has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) partner group. This group includes leadership representatives from multiple community service providers who meet quarterly to exchange information on new initiatives, updates on existing services, and to discuss opportunities to collaborate.

Career Solutions Career Planners have a Global Career Development Facilitator Certificate. All WSA staff annually receive training in HIPAA and Mandatory Reporting. WSA staff participate in Reception and Career Lab Training from DEED. The WSA participates in the regional Human Services Council to remain current about available community resources.

Career Solutions staff attend weekly staff meetings, which includes staff development. Individual staff performance is reviewed annually and an improvement plan is developed to include necessary training. Staff who attend training on behalf of Career Solutions are required to share lessons learned upon completion with their

colleagues in the agency. Career Solutions staff also participate in DEED conferences.

CareerForce St Cloud All Staff meetings are held to increase information sharing, relationship building, program updates, etc. in hopes to build connections that support referrals and improve client services. Feedback from staff has confirmed these meetings are valuable to their work.

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.

Career Solutions is co-located with the St. Cloud Technical & Community College (SCTCC) and partners regularly with all post-secondary schools in the area. To support talent retention and provide meaningful work opportunities to post-secondary students, Career Solutions identified a need and organized a workshop about securing post-secondary interns. A panel of post-secondary internship contacts provided information to 40+ business and non-profit representatives. This activity will now be sustained by the Greater St. Cloud Development Talent Corps. Career Solutions has partnered regularly with SCTCC in FastTRAC or Pathways to Prosperity programming and SCTCC has developed transition programming for adult learners accessing training after layoff that better serves all learners.

Perkin V's requires a Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment (CLNA) to be done by each consortium. The findings in a CLNA are to help the consortium identify programs of study with careers having high wage, in-demand jobs in our consortium area. One of those programs of study identified by the Great River Perkins Consortium's (GRPC) CLNA was healthcare. Career Solutions is supporting this work by offering a healthcare track in CareerONE and CareerTWO, and is working with the Boys and Girls Club to enroll any CareerONE participants that were not accepted into CareerTWO into their CNA program. A healthcare discovery day is being planned for summer 2021 to educate clients and the general public on some of the career fields available in healthcare and explore how positions like a CNA or Pharmacy tech can be an entry point into a career pathway within healthcare. These are a few great examples of how Career Solutions is helping build/grow future healthcare workforce.

Career Solutions has partnered with Adult Basic Education (ABE) in FastTRAC and other programming and hosts ABE on-site. Career Solutions has offered to work with ABE and the library to explore how we can maximize resources in the community. SCTCC, St. Cloud State University (SCSU) and ABE are MOU partners. ABE, SCTCC and SCSU are members of the WDB, alternating voting authority annually. Career Solutions has secured interns from public and private post-secondary institutions to assist with the Outreach to Schools program activities as well as developing community outreach initiatives.

DEED/Job Service staff refer universal customers to Adult Basic Education (ABE) service to upgrade their basic skills, computer skills and to learn/improve English skills. High schools and post-secondary schools request labor market and career information which Job Service staff present to students. Job Service also provides an online resume review service to universal customers and to area high school students.

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.

The LWDB brings many separate partners together to more effectively and efficiently deliver an array of services, including job preparation, job search assistance, job placement, and supportive services. All required partners in the LWDA 17 One-Stop collaborate to ensure strong relationships with business, industry, and post-secondary education as well as the continued support of the LWDB.

Partner managers, supervisors, and staff meet often and in a variety of settings to discuss activities, results, and opportunities for further collaboration to benefit the LWDA.

Additionally, the LWDB and subcommittee membership includes many service providers, including Wagner-Peyser, Adult Basic Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Table 4. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2019	WDB 17 - Stearns-Benton				Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Change from 2000-2019 Numeric Percent		Percent	Change from 2000-2019
Total	198,581	100.0%	31,189	18.6%	100.0%	13.1%
White	175,825	88.5%	15,060	9.4%	82.8%	4.7%
Black or African American	11,818	6.0%	10,442	758.9%	6.4%	107.6%
American Indian & Alaska Native	408	0.2%	-119	-22.6%	1.0%	5.5%
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	3,723	1.9%	1,166	45.6%	4.9%	87.8%
Some Other Race	2,445	1.2%	1,692	224.7%	1.9%	58.1%
Two or More Races	4,362	2.2%	2,948	208.5%	3.0%	99.9%
Hispanic or Latino origin	6,323	3.2%	4,189	196.3%	5.4%	108.9%

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

To serve the growing Black or African American population, through staff turnover, Career Solutions hired bilingual staff to better reflect the clients served in the CareerForce. Career Solutions continues to build on the foundation started by the Immigrant Employment Connection group to address the issues with a large portion of the unemployed Immigrants who have language and skill barriers. This work has and continues to evolve into the Immigrant Services offered, which is funded through foundation grants as the work performed does not align with current state and federal grant requirements.

Childcare, housing, transportation are all barriers to employment. During the pandemic, lack of access to technology and broadband has escalated to become one of the biggest barriers to employment. Career Solutions has representation on local and/or statewide committees working to address these barriers to employment.

In addition to the Job Search Activities provided by Job Service outlined below, Career Solutions has developed a Human Resources Networking group. These employers share job postings with staff to see if they have clients that are candidates for the positions and referrals are made. Also, clients attend the networking meetings to introduce themselves and share their resume with HR Professionals. Many successful matches have been made through this process.

Clients may receive support services to help alleviate/mitigate barriers to employment. (See response to question #7 above for details)

Partners are encouraging staff to strengthen referrals to partner agencies by including a personal connection – via phone, facetime or other technology (during the pandemic) or in person to increase action taken on the clients part to receive services. Discussions are taking place through the One Stop Operator group to explore how to obtain client consent to share information between core partners.

Job Service

DEED delivers key services to jobseekers and businesses through Job Service. The focus of all services, which are available through Minnesota's statewide network of CareerForce locations, is to help jobseekers find work and help employers find and retain qualified employees.

DEED's Job Service staff guide jobseekers through all steps of job search and career planning.

Job Service Activities

Provide virtual and interactive services for job seekers, to include workshops, one to one visits and virtual career fairs.

<https://www.careerforcemn.com/virtual-interactive-services-career-seekers>

Inform jobseekers about CareerForce services, including eligibility-based employment and training programs including Title 1 Adult programs such as the Dislocated Worker program, Youth programs and Career Pathway grant programs.

Educate jobseekers on how to use MinnesotaWorks.net and CareerForcemn.com, DEED's online job bank, to search for and apply for jobs

Offer 1:1 job search advice and assisting with writing effective résumés

Provide free workshops and training on job-search fundamentals, including up-to-date strategies online and social media strategies, to jobseekers

Recommend other community-based resources and services

Jobseekers who are veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training, as well as special employment services and assistance

Wagner-Peyser staff attend each UI RESEA workshop and provide follow-up services with the intent of helping each participant create a viewable résumé on MinnesotaWorks.net. During the pandemic referrals are made to Job Service staff to provide this follow-up service.

RESEA participants also receive information and referrals to eligibility-based programs (such as WIOA Dislocated Worker), orientations to CareerForce services, and workshops

Encourage co-enrollment with Title 1 programs for Public Assistance recipients to access additional education and support services.

DEED/Job Service instituted a new program Good Jobs Now contacting UI recipients to provide outreach services to this population and provide career guidance along with referrals to WIOA Dislocated Worker, VRS and community partners.

- 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.

Providing access to supportive services for eligible individuals is an integral part of the existing case management system for all core partners in the area. Available supportive services, such as access to transportation resources, assistance with child care expenses, and housing, enable individuals to participate in activities and maintain successful progress.

Most programs offered by core partners also include provisions for clothing or equipment required for a new job and resources for medical needs, relocation, and emergency financial assistance during training and/or job search.

In many cases, before support services funds are used, staff provide alternative suggestions to assist clients with their issue – i.e. suggesting client call the SCTCC automotive program to see if they can assist with car repairs, reducing or eliminating the demand for support services funds. Local resources are outlined within the client enrollment information, including resource and referral information for community-based organizations, including:

- County human service departments
- Food shelves
- Energy assistance
- Weatherization/winterization
- Housing
- Head Start
- Counseling and therapy

Through the MOU meetings, program updates, funding levels and/or deadlines for applications from local providers are shared with agency staff – i.e. heating assistance updates from Tri-CAP.

Career Solutions has a long standing history of coordinating services through pathway programs for low income and New American recipients of public assistance. Recent pathway programs include pre-manufacturing and welding. These pathway programs have been very beneficial to the recipients and have provided access to support services and postsecondary credentials.

- 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.

Career Solutions services revolve around the development of career pathways for clients on an individual basis, as well as programs when available (i.e. P2P Competitive Grant funding) that provide participants with stackable credentials. Career Solutions has long required that a majority of training funds be committed to industry accepted credentialed training which leads to employment in targeted high-growth, high-wage, demand driven, and/or career laddering occupations in our area.

CareerForce customers are directed to appropriate online resources to investigate career pathways and given career guidance by CareerForce staff or, when enrolled, by Career Planners.

The LWDB and Program Committee continues to be concerned about the ability of the system to secure credentialed training in an employment/skill market requiring increasing educational and skill attainment that is also increasingly specialized in a fiscal environment of declining resources and increasing costs of credentialed training (including books, tools, tests/exams required to obtain credentials).

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.

The LWDB regularly receives updates from DEED's Regional Labor Market Analyst as to the status of in-demand industry sectors and occupations. WDB members provide updates at LWDB meetings as do representatives from economic development. Board members participate in the Community Priorities and in the work of the Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation (GSDC), and in various industry specific activities related to their constituency so that information about employer needs is current. Representatives of strategic industries provide presentations about their industry, challenges and opportunities at board meetings to keep the LWDB informed of the local climate.

Career Solutions staff are directed to grow capacity in the region to develop the local workforce. An example is Manufacturing: Career Solutions, SCTCC, ABE and the Central Minnesota Manufacturer's Association (CMMA) previously developed the "Manufacturing Futures" FastTRAC program that was used as the "On-Ramp" to the

DOL TAA/CCCT grant in which SCTCC was a participant. Career Solutions, SCTCC and ABE have worked collaboratively on the Careers In Manufacturing and Production (CMAP) Adult Competitive grant and a FastTRAC incumbent worker grant that also involved GNP Company which is a local employer. Staff used labor market information, employer input and reports, asset mapping and community resources, client skills/aptitudes/interests/needed, wage and other job seeker information to define a career goal. Staff assessed any gap between current skills and those needed to obtain the career goal, and develop a service plan to address the gap. Staff also used information obtained from employer visits. Another example is input received from employers about training investments. Historically, more funds have been used to “upskill” the labor force during a recession by investing in classroom training; and in a recovery, more is used for “on-the-job.” Employers have now indicated that a combination of the two is required to meet demands for increasing customization and cross-training of the workforce. This is leading to increasing interest in apprenticeship.

In 2017, Career Solutions worked with District 742 and the Carpenter’s Union to introduce a certificate program which would allow youth who complete specific projects at level 1, 2 or 3 and participate in soft skills training, and complete their OSHA 10 will receive certificates that will advance them to higher levels within the apprenticeship career pathway when entering an apprenticeship program. This allows the youth/apprentice to start at a higher rate of pay and decrease the amount of classroom time expected to achieve their credential.

Career Solutions also partners with ABE and local employers to create a “learn and earn” program to help youth who are aging out of high school find employment and continue to work towards their GED or High School Diploma. This program has been in the manufacturing sector, however in 2021, the program will focus on the commercial construction sector.

According to the most recent Regional Profile from DEED, construction is expected to grow by more than 24% by 2026, making it the fastest-growing industry in Central Minnesota. In fact, 3,981 new construction jobs are projected in the next five years.

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.

Career Solutions: The WDB continues in the role of convener as well as participating in efforts convened by others that address the “system” needs; to identify needs/gaps and plan how to address them. This may mean that the WDB challenges “system partners” to be innovative and to take risks - not usually encouraged with taxpayer funding. The WDB defined “meeting the needs of participants” to include “meeting the needs of employers”. This includes mapping community resources, integration at

the co-located SCTCC facility, supporting needs identified as being critical to maximizing available labor. The WDB continues its role as provider of service. At the class level, employers, including WDB members, develop the curriculum and the “credential” criteria as well as assist in teaching the classes. This creates a “value added” service for both the job seeker and the employer. The Program Committee of the WDB reviews program performance, service evaluations, customer satisfaction and other reports to ensure quality of service delivery.

In 2017, Career Solutions partnered with Adult Basic Education, a Somali Elder and a business, Coleman Manufacturing, to find a solution to a new issue facing students who were ‘aging out’ of High School. District 742 had 17 youth who have been in country one to five years and did not have enough credits to graduate before the end of the school year. A program was developed where participants spend half the day in the classroom and the other half working to obtain work experience. The outcomes from this five week program were stellar for both the participant and the employer. Funds are being sought to recreate this program in future years with each group aging out of High School. Many employers have shown interest in partnering in order to tap into another pool of job seekers.

Career Solutions offers a Human Resources Networking meeting on a monthly basis. Standing items on the agenda include highlighting one of Career Solutions’ programs, two clients are invited to showcase their talents to HR professionals, and business best practices and challenges are shared by all participants. Business professionals, and LWDB members have expressed that this meeting is a valuable resource which fills a need in the business community. Participation has grown to over 125 companies on the group list. Career Solutions Business Services Manager meets periodically with employers to review their hiring practices, needs recruitment and training needs, networking opportunities, etc. and provides an overview of menu of services provided. Connections are made to DEED’s Regional Workforce Strategy Consultant for grant information and other economic development opportunities. Career Solutions also offers Incumbent Worker training programs to assist employers with credentialed training for their current workforce and promotes the OJT program for new hires as well as services for their immigrant workforce.

Businesses are recognizing Career Solutions as source of innovative workforce development initiatives and are willing to invest time and resources into developing a creative program that meets their needs and in turn benefits local job seekers.

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

Connections have been made with the Benton County Economic Partnership, as well as the Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation (GSDC) which serves as the regional economic development provider. GSDC has four Strategic Imperatives – Engage Leaders, Expand Talent, Grow Business and Shape Tomorrow. Career Solutions Executive Director is a member of the talent core to ensure that resources

are used wisely and do not overlap with the work of Career Solutions. A collaborative approach is taken to create synergy between the two organizations.

Business attraction/retention visits and presentations – When Economic Development partners are working with prospective companies to relocate or expand in the St. Cloud area, Career Solutions is a part of the team to share information about the local workforce. In collaboration with DEED's Labor Market Analyst, data is shared to provide a clear assessment of the workforce available to support their company. CareerForce is promoted to businesses as a resource to use as an extension of their recruitment office – job fairs/Employer of the Day events, application drop off site, interview area, etc.

Career Solutions and CMJTS are collaborating with the four counties of Stearns, Benton, Sherburne and Wright, which make up Economic Development Region 7W, to complete a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) report for this region. This will enable CMJTS to apply for federal economic development funding for 7W. CMJTS will be the fiscal agent for this important initiative and write the CEDS grant and submit for federal approval. This action will complete the regional initiative to add these last four counties to the current MADO 10 Minnesota Regional Development Organization's strong network of RDOs. Approval of the CEDS will highlight the strong partnership between economic development and workforce development across Central Minnesota.

- 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.).

As the selected local provider, Career Solutions provides services to dislocated workers. State UI reps pass on information about Career Solutions programs during re-employment sessions. It is also one of the UI requirements that participants inquire about the dislocated worker program. Career Solutions has a representative present and is available after each re-employment session to answer questions should they arise.

Career Solutions offers and promotes all of the above mentioned programs. Career Solutions, along with the State Rapid Response team and UI, responds to potential lay-offs as early as possible. This could mean lay-off aversion if possible, but usually means getting to the affected workers to provide information on available services to allow for a quicker, less stressful, transition back into suitable employment. Career Solutions partners with many local employers on specific projects as well as provides services under allocated grant funds. Career Solutions conducts business visits when possible and in some cases the DEED Regional Workforce Strategy Consultant attends, depending on the employers interests.

GSDC, responsible for local economic development, has brought any known layoffs/closures of their members to the attention of Career Solutions to ensure

connections are being made with recent laid-off workers. New leadership at the Benton County Economic Partners has been briefed on the programs and services provided by Career Solutions to ensure proper referrals are made to businesses in transition.

Career Solutions utilizes both state and federal funding, up to 20 percent, to provide Incumbent Worker Training programs to employers to upskill and retain current employees.

Whenever possible, On-The-Job Training opportunities are maximized, utilizing training dollars. OJT's have helped employers hire clients that may not have been a perfect match for the position knowing they have the resources needed to provide training to fill in the skills gap. Some companies have reported that the additional savings to their budget has allowed them to hire a second staff person. OJT's are set up for 2-4 months, depending on the training needed to meet the demands of the job description and reimburse the company 50% of the employees' wages.

During the pandemic, DEED stopped conducting reemployment sessions, which had been the greatest referral source for the DW program. Career Solutions created a grass roots marketing plan to strengthen outreach efforts. This included offering job search sessions through Community Ed, providing informational sessions for other human service agencies to strengthen referrals, assisting Stearns and Benton County distribute CARES Act funding to individuals impacted by the pandemic (primarily hours cut or job loss) and distributed a number of programmatic press releases to gain media attention.

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.

Career Solutions has utilized the CLIMB (Converting Layoffs into Minnesota Businesses) Program offered to State Dislocated Workers to encourage and support clients interested in starting their own business. Connections with the Small Business Center, located on the St. Cloud State Campus are made to obtain additional consultation support in developing their business plan and other resources available. Connections are also made with other resources in the community – including Launch MN, Initiative Foundation, Great North Labs, Entrepreneur Fund, and gBETA Greater MN St. Cloud.

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

Career Solutions is a member of the MN Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) where best practices are shared amongst the board directors, program managers/directors, and WDB members at the Annual Summer and Winter

meetings. “Best practices” on continuous improvement processes for WIOA and other programs are shared during these meetings. Career Solutions has been a “Promising Practice” award winner in 2017, 2019 and 2020.

Many MAWB members represent our association/state on a variety of boards or are assigned to attend meetings with groups such as NAWB, US DOL, US DOE, DEED, and GLETA’s 10-state region to learn and share best practices on continuous improvement processes for WIOA service providers. Updates are given to the LWDB and Program Committee as needed to keep them informed of innovative ideas from across the US.

Career Solutions staff have the Global Career Development Facilitator Certificate. Annual training are required in HIPAA and Mandatory Reporting. Staff participate in Reception and Career Lab Training from DEED. Career Solutions also participates in the regional Human Services Council to remain current about available community resources.

Staff attend four staff meetings/month, which includes staff development. Individual staff performance is reviewed annually and improvement plans are developed to include necessary training. Staff who attend training on behalf of the LWDA are required to share lessons learned upon completion with their colleagues in the agency.

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

The LWDB is made up of at least 51% membership from local businesses. Their experience and guidance at the board level is a critical driver for planning and program development. Many LWDB board members are also members of the Program Committee where more detail is shared and discussions take place about programs development and offerings.

Career Solutions is held to very stringent yearly performance measures. These measures are reviewed several times per year by the different committees. Career Solutions continually meets and exceeds these measures. Career Solutions is devoted to high client satisfaction. Career Solutions has processes in place, and an appeal process, to ensure non-discrimination and fair client treatment. Career Services staff are trained to be an advocate for the client as well as educate them on all available community resources. This ensures that Career Solutions understands the needs of many of the local businesses and is able to promote the services that are available through CareerForce. Career Solutions also partners with many local employers to recruit potential employees and meet their needs through specific grants. Surveys are sent to local employers to ensure that their needs are being met. Career Solutions has participated in many projects and partnerships to help increase skills and abilities to become better employees and work toward wage increases and promotions within their respective place of work.

The HR Networking group is another way for Career Solutions to monitor the needs of local employers. During each meeting, employers share current events, challenges they are facing, etc. which guides the work we do as well as allows timely suggestions/solutions/recommendations to programs available through Career Solutions or DEED (MJSP, JTIP, etc.).

- 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.

Career Solutions WDB supported an initiative to revamp the technology framework to allow more flexibility for staff to access information outside of the office. This allows the potential for increased customer service by allowing Career Planners to meet clients where they are at rather than requiring them to visit CareerForce/Career Solutions. Numerous intake sessions have been held at businesses, high schools and other locations during the day and in the evening to serve the needs of our clients and the family members of our youth participants.

The board has a Transporting Client Files and Telecommuting policies in place to guide this work.

With these policies in place, Career Solutions was able to efficiently serve the Electrolux mass layoff, using their training center and various meeting spaces to connect with clients prior to layoff.

During the pandemic, Career Solutions quickly turned their business model to meeting with clients virtually, relying heavily on technology. Many forms have been added to the careersolutionsjobs.org website and a locked drop box is in place to accept documents from clients.

Access to technology has been an issue for some clients during the Pandemic. Career Solutions created a device checkout program and has partnered with the Great River Regional Library to include hot spots in the program.

Career Solutions also has a strong social media presence to connect with future and existing clients. The agency's website continues to evolve as a resource for employers and job seekers.

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

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

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

The St. Cloud CareerForce includes the following core partners:

- Career Solutions – Title I
- Job Service – Title III (Wagner-Peyser)
- Services for the Blind (SSB)
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Title IV (VRS)
- MFIP/TANF and SNAP Consultant from Avivo

Job Service

Wagner-Peyser, under the One Stop delivery system, provides universal access to an integrated array of labor exchange services so that workers, job seekers and businesses can find the services they need in under one roof in easy-to-find locations.

Wagner-Peyser Employment Service focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff assisted service delivery approaches. During the pandemic these services are offered virtually via phone, internet or video chats.

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) delivers key services to job seekers and businesses through Job Service. The focus of all services, which are available through Minnesota's statewide network of CareerForce locations, is to help job seekers find work and help employers find and retain qualified employees.

Wagner Peyser staff are typically the point person from CareerForce hosting job fairs, employer of the day and during the pandemic, virtual career fairs in the area and provide information to all CareerForce staff on events occurring in the local area.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) specializes in working with individuals with disabilities that pose barriers to employment, post-secondary training, independent living and community integration. VRS works with other partners to, contribute to the infrastructure of the WFC system. Resources contributed through VRS include pre-employment transition services, vocational assessments, job tryouts, community based evaluations, job search assistance, job coaching, case management, tuition assistance, and supportive services. VRS staff are available, as needed, to consult with partners working with individuals with disabilities. Additionally, VRS co-enrolls participants with other One-Stop partners to ensure collaboration and cohesive service delivery to the benefit of the consumer. Specifically, VRS provides access or referral to the following partner programs:

- Career & Technical Education
- Title V Older Americans Act
- Job Corps
- Native American Programs
- Migrant Seasonal Farmworkers
- Veterans
- YouthBuild
- Trade Act
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)
- Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- Unemployment Compensation
- Second Chance Programs
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) (Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP))
- Ticket to Work
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) employment and training Programs

All core partners included in a particular One-Stop location are included in the Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA)) to fund One-Stop overhead costs. Expenses are shared based on proportional benefit, space usage, number of staff present, and other factors.

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

Career Solutions provides an array of services to adult and dislocated worker clients. With dislocated workers, this starts pre-layoff if possible. Working around shift start/end times, Career Solutions attempts to provide on-site informational sessions. This allows for less intrusion or disruption of the employee's current work schedule and is more

convenient for potential clients. This also allows for the information to be received on familiar ground.

Once a client decides they want to participate in the dislocated worker program, they attend an intake session and are subsequently assigned a Career Planner. They participate in Career Trek, a 9-hour course including assessments, aptitude tests, job search tools, etc. that assist career services staff in ensuring the client will be happy and successful in their next chosen career path and validate training plans and expenditures. The Career Planner asks questions pertaining to the client's work history, education, experiences and anything else that helps them advise the client on their next move. If, after a lengthy conversation and assessment, it is deemed a client is fully employable, they are then placed into job search activities. The assigned Career Planner then helps the client obtain re-employment at the needed wage as soon as possible. If the client needs minor skill increases, in certain areas, that is explored as well. An example of this could be training on Microsoft Office software such as Word or Excel. If it is determined that a client's skills are obsolete, they have minimal education, or their previous sector of employment is decreasing in demand, the client may be eligible for retraining in a high demand, high wage area. During all of the processes noted above the client is required to maintain participation and contact with their assigned Career Planner. Plans are signed and agreed upon between the Agency and the participant.

For individual inquiries about the Dislocated Worker or Adult programs, Intake and Eligibility specialists work to determine edibility and if requirements are met, invite applicants to an intake session. Once paperwork is complete, clients are then assigned a Career Planner.

Note: the services described above are for a small layoff. For large layoffs, action will not occur until DEED's Rapid Response team has followed the process to determine who the DW provider will be for the project.

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.

Career Solutions provides youth services to youth between the ages of 14 and 24 under WIOA, MYP, Youthbuild, YAW, Pre-ETS and other special project youth models. Career Solutions enrolls youth that fall under one of the "at-risk" categories per the WIOA law. This includes youth with disabilities. Career Solutions does extensive outreach to other community agencies as well as presentations in schools and utilizes other Career Solutions grant specialists for recruitment. Career Solutions looks at our youth programs as a pathway model. A youth may start in one program, complete it and move into another program provided they meet eligibility requirements. This "pathway" model allows for the youth to be provided with a progression of service and allows them to continue to build on what is learned in the previous program. Ultimately, our goal is to enroll them into WIOA and assist them into a career pathway. Career Solutions does extensive assessment with the youth to ensure the career path of choice is a proper fit. From there, the youth goes through a progression of services somewhat similar to the

dislocated worker and adult programs depending on their individual needs. However, overall youth are harder to serve and may require a longer term commitment than an adult would. Many of the youth Career Solutions serves do not have a positive or committed role model in their life or stable housing. This requires Career Solutions youth staff to act as a mentor and to hold the youth accountable. Career Solutions utilizes incentive payments at times to ensure the youth follow through and attain benchmarks that are written into their individual plan.

In addition to individualized case management, many youth participants are offered work-based learning opportunities, On-the-job Training (OJT) and career exploration through CareerTrek.

In the last five years, Career Solutions has worked with CentraCare, the area's largest employer, to increase the size and locations of the CareerONE summer program. This employer has committed in more ways than just monetarily. They are committed, alongside Career Solutions, to providing a life altering experience the youth of Central Minnesota. This has come in the form of education to the youth, staff speeches to the youth, mock interviews, health screenings, tours of their campuses and providing supervisorial staff to work with the youth while on site. This has proved to be a very valuable relationship and will continue to grow in the future as to meet the needs of the hundreds of kids who need these vital services each year. As with all of the other programs, the need greatly exceeds the funding available.

In 2016, an abbreviated, two week CareerONE program was held in Sauk Centre, MN for 10 youth. Based on the success of this expansion, 20 youth were served in 2017 and another remote site was added in Paynesville, MN. Also, 10 youth mentors were offered 40 hour internships within the CentraCare Health System and other businesses and non-profits to further explore careers in healthcare.

Starting in summer 2018, CareerONE added a healthcare track – a focused program for 20 youth interested in a medical career. At the completion of the program, participants receive college credits. In 2019, a manufacturing and construction track was added and in 2020, a business track was added (hybrid camp due to the pandemic). In 2021, CareerONE students in the healthcare and manufacturing tracks will be offered a CareerTWO opportunity which starts promptly after CareerONE has ended. CareerTWO will continue the learning and increase the experience and credits earned.

By participating in CareerONE, students can work with their school guidance counselor to gain an elective credit for their participation in the program. Also, all track participants can earn up to three college credits for the work performed. CareerONE is held on the St. Cloud Technical and Community College campus.

In April 2018, Pathways 4 Youth, a day center for youth experiencing homelessness, opened in St. Cloud. Career Planners from Career Solutions assist youth on site with job applications, resumes, cover letters, etc. to achieve employment, allowing them to transition into stable housing. When appropriate, youth are enrolled into youth programs offered by Career Solutions.

Many youth have multiple encounters with Career Solutions. Co-enrollment in multiple programs is common. Youth might start off by attending CareerONE, then YAW or Youthbuild, then WIOA OSY to prepare them for employment with a credential.

In 2017, Career Solutions expanded its youth offering by becoming a recipient of the Pre-ETS grant to serve youth with disabilities. Through a partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services, school guidance counselors, SPED leadership, etc. 75-100 youth were served annually under this grant for the first two years. This grant was instrumental in increasing outreach efforts and strengthening connections between Career Solutions and VRS. In 2019, VRS switched Pre-ETS from a grant to a fee for service. Career Solutions worked to create a new fee for service model in order to continue providing services to youth with disabilities.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) assist youth, ages 14-21, who have disabilities. Youth who are still in school and have not graduated from high school are eligible for Pre-Employment Transition Services. These services can include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutions of higher education, workplace-readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy. They can be provided for students whether or not they have applied for services. In July 2017, VRS began partnering with the CMJTS Youth Team to provide these services across LWDA 17.

VRS also provides services to transition-aged youth who apply for services and fall within the state's priority for service. Individuals in this group can be either in school or out of school and can receive any service VRS offers if that service is necessary to help the student to achieve their educational and employment goals.

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.

Career Solutions is co-located in the St. Cloud Technical and Community College. Career Solutions and SCTCC collaborate on numerous projects and regularly provide each other input on services. Career Solutions and SCTCC meet regularly to discuss service strategies and how to best ensure any SCTCC students that are eligible for services receive services. Career Solutions has also built extensive relationships with the school districts within the service area and collaborate on projects with them also. Career Solutions plays a crucial role in ensuring that the schools meet the requirements outlined in the World's Best Workforce Legislation through the Outreach to Schools program. The guidance counselor to student ratio within the school districts is definitely alarming. For example, St. Cloud School District 742 has a ratio of 1 counselor per every 501 students.

CareerONE is held on the SCTCC campus to get youth comfortable being in a college setting, many of them potential first generation college students. College credit is given to those participating in one of the three tracks offered through CareerONE, providing motivation to these students to consider post-secondary, and relieving some of the costs in doing so. During CareerONE, campus tours and career exploration opportunities are provided by SCTCC. The tracks are developed in conjunction with and/or lead by SCSU

instructors as well. For those tracks, opportunities exist to visit SCSU through the program.

EPIC – Exploring Potential Interests in Careers event is held annually for high school sophomores in Central MN (60 mile radius of St. Cloud). Career Solutions Executive Director is an EPIC Board Member and staff are involved in event planning as a Career Cluster Leader or volunteers the day of the event to assist in hosting activities or providing guidance to students.

EPIC is a Hands-On Career Exploration Event supported through a Community-wide Collaboration. The goal is to create a high-quality career exploration annual event that effectively bridges education and industry for high school students in Central Minnesota, contributing to the fulfillment of the economic and workforce needs of the greater Central MN region. This event is also held on the SCTCC campus, getting youth comfortable with the post-secondary environment.

United Way of Central MN also leads Partner for Student Success – driving initiatives through collective impact,

The goal of our Post-Secondary Readiness network is that every student is ready for career training or post-secondary education. Members of our network continue to develop and implement plans to achieve this goal through community-wide work teams that coordinate and engage multiple constituencies and existing initiatives and efforts in the partnership area.

Career Solutions Executive Director is a member of the Career and Post-Secondary Readiness Network, guiding the work as well as ensuring connections are made to the youth programs offered by Career Solutions. A bilingual staff member is engaged in this work to ensure the voice of the Somali community are included in this work and to communicate updates to leaders in the Somali community.

This group is working to:

- Develop a peer network to connect 9th grade students with high school seniors for support during the transition year.
- Align and create curriculum and resources to support community partners to leverage college and career readiness plans for students through trainings and a toolkit that enhances what is being delivered within our three school districts.
- Develop a framework and program that provides internships, apprenticeships and other experimental opportunities with community partners and businesses.

Efforts in the area are well connected and are achieved through collaboration amongst agencies, business, non-profits and business leaders which greatly reduces the risk of duplicating services.

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.

Transportation, childcare and housing are the top three barriers to employment in Stearns and Benton County.

Public Transportation:

Career Solutions Program Committee, which reports to the WDB is well connected with St. Cloud's public transportation system. At least annually, status updates are presented to the Program Committee by public transportation and other support service organizations.

Public transportation passes are used to support clients in their job search activities.

Employer feedback is given to increase services to a broader area in the community as well as longer service hours to support second shift workers.

Housing:

Career Solutions Executive Director is a member of the Economic Development, Workforce, and Housing Policy Subcommittee. The subcommittee goals are to support legislative efforts to ensure a speedy, equitable, and sustainable economic recovery that aims to alleviate stresses borne by business owners, employees, landlords, homeowners, renters, and those without access to housing during the pandemic.

Child Care:

Career Solutions Executive Director is also a member of the Childcare Strategies Committee, focused on improving access to affordable and quality childcare in the area.

Support Services:

Representatives from support service agencies, such as Tri-CAP, Catholic Charities and United Way present program updates to Career Solutions. Also, Career Solutions staff are engaged in committee and/or board work for local agencies to increase connection and communication with clients.

Other support services include financial assistance with the following items to lessen the burden for job seekers and students:

- Rent/ mortgage
- Utilities/ telephone
- Transportation (car repairs, gas vouchers/ bus passes to help clients get to interviews and training, auto insurance, car payment, car tabs)
- Mental health & financial counseling
- Health insurance
- Eyewear
- Childcare

Career Solutions has other vendors that are approved and are coordinated with to provide support services. These include certain reputable local gas stations for client gas vouchers and local auto repair shops for client car repairs.

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.

Wagner-Peyser, under the One Stop delivery system, provides universal access to an integrated array of labor exchange services so that workers, job seekers and businesses can find the services they need under one roof in easy-to-find locations.

Wagner-Peyser Employment Service focuses on providing a variety of employment related labor exchange services including but not limited to job search assistance, job referral, and placement assistance for job seekers, re-employment services to unemployment insurance claimants, and recruitment services to employers with job openings. Services are delivered in one of three modes including self-service, facilitated self-help services and staff assisted service delivery approaches.

Job Service

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) delivers key services to job seekers and businesses through Job Service. The focus of all services, which are available through Minnesota's statewide network of CareerForce locations, is to help job seekers find work and help employers find and retain qualified employees.

Job Service Mission:

To **inform**, **educate** and **connect** job seekers, career changers **and employers** through innovative, effective and customer-friendly services

We achieve our mission by:

- Facilitating access to services and resources that help businesses attract and retain good workers.
- Connecting Unemployment Insurance applicants, Veterans and others to good career opportunities.
- Operating as an enterprise to offer consistent and high quality services, leverage resources, improve efficiencies, and build capacity.
- Collaborating with our state and local partners to improve services to customers and minimize duplication.
- Using the most effective tools and latest data to serve our customers.
- Adapting quickly to changes in the economy and finding innovative ways to address the needs of our customers and communities.

DEED's Job Service staff guide job seekers through all steps of job search and career planning.

Job Service Activities:

- Informing job seekers about CareerForce (CF) services including eligibility-based employment and training programs.
- Educating job seekers on how to use MinnesotaWorks.net, DEED's online job bank, to search for and apply for jobs.
- Offering job search advice and assisting with writing effective resumes.

- Providing free workshops and training to job seekers on the fundamentals of a successful job search; including up-to date strategies using social media and online tools.
- Recommending other community-based resources and service.
- Job seekers who are Veterans receive priority referral to jobs and training as well as special employment services and assistance.
- Wagner-Peyser staff attend every UI RESEA workshop and provide follow up services with the intent of having every participant create a viewable resume in [MinnesotaWorks](#).
- RESEA participants also receive information and referrals to eligibility-based programs (such as WIOA Dislocated Worker), orientations to CF services, and workshop enrollments.

Business Service Activities:

- Providing information on MinnesotaWorks.net, our no-fee online job bank connecting job seekers and employers in Minnesota.
- Delivering proven recruitment and retention strategies through job fairs, recruitment events and employer workshops.
- Offering training on MinnesotaWorks.net to help find the best candidate by creating effective online job postings for access to the largest group of Minnesota job seekers.
- Providing education on labor market information, tax credits and hiring incentives.
- Connecting to local, state and federal business information and resources on education, training, exports, business expansion and human resources.

All CareerForce locations provide a staffed Career Lab to serve the public without regard for eligibility (*halted in St. Cloud during the pandemic*). Minnesota maintains strong, inclusive eligibility policies that also address services available to the universal customer, ensuring that all individuals can access services.

Continuous improvement is achieved by requiring all staff who work in the resource area are to complete the [Reception and Resource Area Certification Program](#) (RRACP). This program certifies staff in the knowledge and competencies needed to provide a high level of service in the roles of receptionist and/or Career Lab attendant. DEED also developed and maintains a [Reception and Resource Area Forum](#) (RRAF) website.

CareerForce uses the "customer service protocol" to simplify and clarify the process of assisting customers effectively in the Career Lab. The steps are to greet the customer, assess needs and expectations with the customer, take action on expressed needs and confirm customers' needs were met.

Other continuous improvement efforts include:

Classroom presentation skills training based on the state's Creative Job Search workshop will continue to be offered to all employees who facilitate workshops.

Staff will continue to be encouraged to attend the state's annual Job Counselor training event, which includes keynote speakers and breakout sessions on multiple topics related to their work with job seekers and businesses.

All Job Service employees have access to the Skillsoft online training platform. Training specific to each employee is documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan.

To avoid duplication of services, Job Service posts a monthly workshop calendar for all job seekers and partners to review in order to refer customers to available and appropriate workshops. All workshops are also entered online through the DEED website: <http://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/workforce-centers/workshops/> .

Quarterly partner manager meetings are held to discuss CareerForce program and operational practices to ensure program compliance, discuss concerns and/or improvements. Best practices are shared among partners and new ideas generated based on changes in employment practices, unemployment figures and business input.

Minnesota's WIOA State Plan describes the state's strategy for providing reemployment assistance to Wagner Peyser's targeted population of UI claimants. The strategy will be as follows:

A Wagner Peyser staff person will attend every Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) session that the UI program offers across the state. The UI program typically offers RESEA sessions to approximately 40,000 applicants per year to those who are at risk of exhausting their benefits. The REA and Wagner Peyser staff will conduct a quick assessment of every participant to determine who will most likely need additional services from the CareerForce. The Wagner Peyser staff person will conduct an overview of CF services either 1:1 or in a group setting (depending on the size of the group) that includes information on how to register for the state's labor exchange system [MinnesotaWorks](#), and information about programs such as the Dislocated Worker program that they may be eligible for.

The Wagner Peyser staff person will assist the RESEA customer with creating an initial registration and enrolling in the [Creative Job Search](#) workshop. Creative Job Search is typically the first job finding/job placement service that is offered to UI applicants. The workshop consists of training on how to find a job that includes career planning, preparing for the job hunt, skills identification, resumes and cover letters, applications and references, social media, interviewing skills, and more.

Wagner Peyser will follow up with RESEA participants who are not enrolled in a program to ensure that they have a complete registration and resume in MinnesotaWorks, and that they are taking advantage of job placement services.

NOTE: REA sessions have been halted due to the pandemic

DEED/Job Service instituted a new program Good Jobs Now contacting UI recipients to provide outreach services to this population and provide career guidance along with referrals to WIOA Dislocated Worker, VRS and community partners.

WAGNER-PEYSER ASSURANCES

The State assures the following:

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.

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;

If a State Workforce Development Board, department or agency administers State laws for vocational rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, that board, department, or agency cooperates with the agency that administers Wagner Peyser services, Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and Youth Programs under Title I; and

State agency merit-based public employees provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities in accordance with Department of Labor regulations.

During the pandemic, Career Solutions has developed a partnership with the Great River Regional Library to serve the universal customer who does not have access to technology. The pandemic has magnified the digital divide in the area, so access to technology is a significant barrier to employment, especially with CareerForce St. Cloud's Career Lab being closed to the public. Career Solutions staff are present at the Library during peak times – 2:30-4:30pm, M-F, to assist customers with online job applications, resumes, etc.

Career Solutions also created a device checkout program for the universal customer. The Library also offers hot spots for checkout which is promoted in the device check out program.

In lieu of the REA sessions, Career Solutions created an internal committee to explore outreach opportunities, in hopes of reaching/connecting with thousands of people experiencing job loss during the pandemic.

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.

The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Director from Dist. 742 (Consortium leader) is a member of the Career Solutions WDB, the ABE Manager leads the Youth Council and is also a member of the WDB and ABE staff are well connected with Career Solutions staff. There are frequent exploration meetings held between the two agencies to collaborate to serve clients. District 742's ABE leads a consortium which includes all school districts in the Career Solutions service area. Career Solutions has collaborated on many projects with ABE and continues to explore opportunities. ABE and Career Solutions youth staff work very strategically together to provide a steady stream of recruitment for Career Solutions youth programs. This allows for the needs of area youth to be met and allows them to access services that will provide them a fruitful career path.

With a growing population of immigrants that need English language courses, ABE's services are in high demand. Career Solutions continues to monitor service availability and to ensure referrals are made correctly and are appropriate.

In May 2017, ABE and Career Solutions partnered together to develop a program for youth aging out of high school, who had been in country 1-5 years, and were not on track to graduate. Career Solutions found an employer willing to host the group. The CareerONE model was utilized to develop a five week program to enhance participant learning and develop work readiness skills. The program, Learn and Earn, was a success and has gained attention in the community and by employers as an innovative program to generate skilled workers. Plans continue for this program, barring funding is received via foundation grants and/or youth are eligible for one of the youth programs.

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.

Cooperative Agreements between the local Workforce Investment Boards and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (the designated state unit providing services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended).

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 locations to provide access to a wide variety of services. Each CareerForce provides an orientation to services available to assist job-seekers make an informed decision on choice of service provider. Direct service staff participate in cross-training to ensure they understand the services offered by the various partners, and the eligibility criteria for each program.

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

The LWDB collaborates with VRS to enhance services to individuals with disabilities, individuals with other barriers to employment, and individuals living in poverty. Services are co-located in the CareerForce Center to provide access to a wide variety of services. Staff offer an orientation to services available to assist jobseekers, so they may make informed decisions when choosing a service provider. All staff participate in cross-training to ensure they understand the services and eligibility criteria for each program offered by the various partners.

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, and Vocational Rehabilitation may purchase placement services from the local Board as part of a performance-based funding agreement.

Career Solutions provides Pre-ETS services for VRS clients as needed.

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

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

There is an agreement between the Joint Powers Board and LWDB designate Career Solutions as the grant recipient and administrative entity for activities under the Workforce Investment and Opportunities Act.

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

The LWDA follows the OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 200.319-320 regarding competition and procurement and adheres to the requirements pertaining to the procurement for State and local government as defined in 29 CFR 97.36

1. Sub-grantee bids for program delivery are to be let every two years.
2. Career Solutions has adopted the five (5) methods of procurement as outlined at 2 CFR Section 200.320:
 - (a) Procurement by micro-purchases. Procurement by micro-purchase is the acquisition of supplies or services, the aggregate dollar amount of which does not exceed \$3,000 (or \$2,000 in the case of acquisitions for construction subject to the Davis-Bacon Act). To the extent practicable, Career Solutions must distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers. Micro purchases may be awarded without soliciting competitive quotations if the Career Solutions considers the price to be reasonable.
 - (b) Procurement by small purchase procedures. Small purchase procedures are those relatively simple and informal procurement methods for securing services, supplies, or other property that cost between \$3,000 and \$75,000 (CFR 200.320 requires if more than the Simplified Acquisition Threshold of

\$150,000). Career Solutions will adhere to all other current federal requirements related to procurement. If small purchase procedures are used, price or rate quotations must be obtained from an adequate number of qualified sources. Career Solutions may require a WSA Request for Proposal (RFP) process for any program services resulting in an anticipated cost of more than \$75,000.

- (c) Procurement by sealed bids (formal advertising). Bids are publicly solicited and a firm fixed price contract (lump sum or unit price) is awarded to the responsible bidder whose bid, conforming with all the material terms and conditions of the invitation for bids, is the lowest in price. The sealed bid method is the preferred method for procuring construction.
 - (d) Procurement by competitive proposals. The technique of competitive proposals is normally conducted with more than one source submitting an offer, and either a fixed price or cost reimbursement type contract is awarded. It is generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of sealed bids.
 - (f) Procurement by noncompetitive proposals. Procurement by noncompetitive proposals is procurement through solicitation of a proposal from only one source and may be used only when one or more of the following circumstances apply:
 - (1) The item is available only from a single source;
 - (2) The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from competitive solicitation;
 - (3) The Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity expressly authorizes noncompetitive proposals in response to a written request from the non-Federal entity; or
 - 4) After solicitation of a number of sources, competition is determined inadequate.
- 3. Program service deliverers shall be monitored and their effectiveness determined not less than annually.
 - 4. Program service deliverers shall be notified 60 days prior to the contract termination date regarding Career Solutions intent to renegotiate a contract or to provide open competitive bidding for service delivery.
 - 5. Demonstrated program effectiveness shall not guarantee continued contract for services due to changing program requirements, local needs, and/or budgets.
 - 6. Career Solutions retains the right to competitively bid any or all services annually.
 - 7. When a bid is issued, Career Solutions will issue a Request for Proposal package stating the requirements per OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards and utilizing the required written code of standards of conduct for contracting, written selection procedures and records to detail the history of procurement.

8. Proper consideration shall be given to community-based organizations and education agencies in the local area.
9. Career Solutions Workforce Development Board and/or Career Solutions Joint Powers Board members shall act on the recommendations of the Executive Director or his/her delegate. The Code of Ethics applied and shall be reviewed with all raters prior to participation.
10. A competitive bidding process and timeline will be maintained and updated as necessary.
11. Career Solutions will take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are used when possible.

When a competitive bid process is used the proposals are evaluated in detail, a summary evaluation is presented to the Joint Powers Board who approves the final selection and the corresponding contract.

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.

State performance is negotiated between the Department of Labor and the Department of Employment and Economic Development. The measures are then passed on to the local board and provider. Performance compliance is reported to all of the boards numerous times throughout the year and more often if there is an issue. If there is an issue, measures are taken to make changes. Actions are based on input from the provider as well as the governing boards. Performance measures are a top priority along with client service standards.

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.

As previously stated, performance is a top priority of the board and the local provider. Continuous examination of current practices is key to maintaining a level of high performance. Changes will be made when needed and the agency will continue to adapt to change in order to remain relevant. The local boards evaluate the programs, performance and the provider, yearly. The Joint Powers Board then certifies Career Solutions as the local provider based on meeting performance.

Local Labor Market information is also utilized to ensure innovative initiatives are meeting the needs of local businesses and job seekers. Additional grants and foundation funding are sought to develop programs and provide services to support workforce development in the community.

In addition to the work done at the board level, Career Solutions also has a Program Committee and Youth Council to look in more detail at the work being planned and performed.

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.

A participant who expresses interest in pursuing post-secondary education and has completed the required "Basic Criteria for Training" will be considered for an ITA (referred to as Certification). It is during this process the participant chooses their training institution, using the ETLP list on DEED's website to ensure funding is WIOA certified. The Basic Criteria for Training requires a thorough investigation of the training program by the participant including researching Labor Market Projections indicating it is a demand occupation. It is expected that the vast majority of training programs will not only be in demand occupations, but regionally selected strategic/targeted Industries.

Career Solutions has a local policy regarding classroom training which further defines the prerequisites and responsibilities. Each participant is required to complete a budget and apply for federal grants. When the participant's request for training is approved, a Training Authorization for Classroom Training is generated. The authorization will list the amount for tuition, fees, books, and supplies, needed for the specific semester. This authorization is signed by the Career Planner and Program Director. The post-secondary institution will submit a bill and the payment will be made by check directly to the institution. The certification is printed and kept in the participant's file. Payments are posted in the electronic accounting system. *When a Career Solutions Career Planner meets with a client, and a training program is decided on, the Career Planner advises the client on their options for training providers. At no time does Career Solutions decide for the client. Career Solutions does advise the client of available funding and what amount of support is available. It is up to the client to decide where they will pursue training based on the totality of the situation and all of the options available.*

Career Solutions does not contract for training services except when required or other options are not readily available. When this takes place, Career Solutions follows all procurement laws, rules and policies. A Request for Proposal is sent to at least three different providers. Career Solutions then chooses the provider based on their history of performance, cost, ability to provide the requested service and their history of providing excellent service to Career Solutions clients. For example, Career Solutions sends out an RFP for Microsoft Office training. This is short term training that is customized to the needs of the clients.

At no time does Career Solutions decide for the client. Career Solutions does advise the client of available funding and what amount of support is available. It is up to the client to

decide where they will pursue training based on the totality of the situation and all of the options available.

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 Career Solutions Workforce Development Board publishes the availability of viewing the Local Plan 30 days prior to the end of the comment period. The local plan is placed on Career Solutions website, www.Careersolutionsjobs.org for viewing and comment. Printed copies or other accommodations will be made, if needed.

Notification is also sent out via email to all members of the Career Solutions Workforce Development Board and the Career Solutions Joint Powers Board. LWDB approval of the final document is sought after adjustments are made and suggestions are incorporated, prior to submission of the plan.

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, WorkforceOne (WF1). Programs operated by the current workforce system use WF1 for case management. Specifically, it is used for notation, activity and goal tracking, credential documentation, and follow up. WF1 promotes collaboration and co-enrollment by allowing One-Stop partners to see program information related to common participants when the appropriate releases and permissions are in place.

Career Solutions is working to transition to electronic data storage, starting with Youth Programs. Partners are also exploring electronic means of completing a universally accepted enrollment process to reduce paperwork barriers for applicants. A broader use of other electronic, fillable forms (e.g., employment plans and self-assessments) may also be incorporated.

For many years, the youth team has been given tools to text youth participants and enrollees to increase the likelihood of communication. During the onset of the pandemic, the adult team was also given the tools needed to correspond via text or FaceTime with clients.

A virtual meeting platform is also available for staff to use for client meetings, connecting with potential clients, etc.

Enhancements have been made to intake forms – making them fillable PDF's and accessible via the careersolutionsjobs.org website when possible/appropriate.

Career Solutions must remain aware of the population in the WDA that do not have access to technology and/or broadband. The pandemic has heightened awareness of

this population and that services need to be flexible to meet the customer where they are at.

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?

The Covid-19 Pandemic and the resulting policies placed many residents out of work, specifically in the accommodation and food services industry. This sector was easily the most crippled and workers employed at impacted establishments have bared the burden more than workers with other skillsets. The similar retail trade industry is also reeling from the pandemic, workers in the sector receiving UI benefits remain elevated through the Spring of 2021, more than a year after the initial surge of layoffs. The healthcare and social assistance industry is also contributing a persistent and unusually large number of continued unemployment insurance claims, indicating that large numbers of workers in that sector are either out of work or working reduced hours. Analyzing changes in third quarter employment it appears that most of this disruption has occurred in the social assistance component which includes vocational rehab services and child day care services, both were hit hard from employment loss during 2020.

Demographics for unemployed workers are not available for the Stearns and Benton Counties alone, but the EDR 7W does have available data and serves as the best proxy for what can be expected in the St. Cloud MSA. According to the most recent week of continued UI claims, 80% (6,057 workers) of unemployed workers receiving UI benefits in the week of 3/13/2021 were White, a smaller share than expected since 92% of the region's labor force is White. Black workers were overrepresented with 10.8% (815 workers) of continued claims in the most recent week while they represent just 3.2% of the labor force. Hispanic/Latino's were also over-represented in UI claims.

One of the largest disparities exist by educational attainment, where workers with less than 12 years of education represent 10% of continued claims in the week of 3/13/2021, a direct comparison cannot be made to the labor force, but workers between 25 and 64 years without a high school diploma represent just 4.3% of the labor force. Workers with a high school diploma also account for a significantly larger share of UI claims than expected, a function of the types of industries that were devastated by the Pandemic. Customer facing occupations at establishments that provide services (dining, accommodation, bars) also employ a higher percentage of younger workers and minorities both of which have lower levels of educational attainment.

Young workers have been receiving a large number of UI benefits through the most recent week (3/13/2021), accounting for 29% of continued UI claims paid out in the region (7W).

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.

CareerForce St Cloud is the only location in the WSA and is managed by DEED. With DEED's decision to keep CareerForce closed to visitors, Career Solutions has implemented a number of programs/services to attempt to fill the gap during this time.

- Serving the universal customer at the Great River Regional Library (GRRL) in St. Cloud, M-F from 2:30-4:30pm. This time was identified by library staff and computer usage as a peak time. An additional 5 computers in a separate area are open for reservations during this time because it is staffed by Career Solutions. Meetings with current clients are also scheduled during this time if there is a language or technology barrier that can be resolved through in person meetings.
- To help address the 'digital divide', Career Solutions offers laptops to clients and universal customers for checkout in order to allow them to job search and/or work on resumes from home if they do not have access to technology. In partnering with the GRRL, hot spots are also available for checkout if internet access is an issue.

With the decision to postpone REA Sessions during the pandemic, Career Solutions created an outreach plan, including:

- Present to other human services (counties, Tri-CAP, Catholic Charities, Legal Aid, etc) agencies to encourage referrals
- Network with GRRL staff to refer computer lab users as appropriate
- Created Community Education Class in partnership with Job Service/Career Solutions
- Assisted Stearns and Benton County in distributing CARES Act funding to individual families and offered services when appropriate
- Presented to the St. Cloud Rotary and to other business and community leaders
- Submitted PSA's to local media on the DW program as well as a one year recap on the Electrolux Project to bring attention to the DW program.
- Social media campaign
- Distributing and posting fliers throughout the community on bulletin boards, in food shelf packages, etc.

The WDB will leverage connections from the targeted industries like manufacturing and health care to find new jobs for dislocated workers. There are still hiring difficulties across most industries – just different during the pandemic verses prior to the pandemic, but the workers laid off are mostly lower skilled, and they will need an investment to help fill the area's most highly demanded occupations.

The largest impact will be targeting the workers with the highest risk of not returning to work, which is clearly marked by industry or occupation using the top 65 occupations by UI, <https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/profile-unemployment/>, identify types of workers who are least likely to return to work.

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.

The Career Solutions Workforce Development Board's focus is on maximizing ALL available labor, including new labor force entrants, mature workers, English language learners, youth and job seekers entering or returning to workforce. Focus needs to be on preparing not just the entry level worker or retraining the dislocated worker but also increasing the skills of incumbent workers and low wage, entry level workers to increase productivity and advance their positions on their career ladder.

Through staff turnover and agency growth, Career Solutions has hired bilingual staff to better reflect the demographics of our community. Currently, 20% of staff are from the BIPOC community. When hiring, additional emphasis is placed on marketing the position to increase diverse representation in the applicant pool. It is important for CareerForce customers to see diverse staff in the Career Lab. Hopefully in the future, DEED will be able to diversify their staff located in the St. Cloud office to increase diversity amongst staff working in the lab once it reopens (date TBD by DEED). Unfortunately, the reassignment of a diverse DEED staff member was noticed by the community prior to the pandemic.

Career Solutions continues to lead the Immigrant Employment Connection group to address the issues with a large portion of the unemployed Immigrants who have language and skill barriers. This work has evolved into the Immigrant Services offered, funded through foundation grants as the work performed does not align with current state and federal grant requirements.

Career Solutions has been recognized for efforts to support diversity in our community. The agency received the St. Cloud Area Chamber 2020 Diversity Award for promoting and celebrating equal opportunity in the Central Minnesota business community in May 2020.

In August 2020, Career Solutions received a Promising Practices Award for expanding the Immigrant Services provided to job seekers and employers.

Career Solutions has built strong relationships with a number of key community based organizations in the community, such as: Islamic Center, Yes Network, LaCruz, CMCEO, Promise Neighborhood and Pathways 4 Youth. Below are a few illustrations of the agency's outreach efforts.

Islamic Center – The center is open to staff for recruitment activities, hosting work experiences, job shadowing, etc. The relationship is so important to the center that they will be designating an assigned space for Career Solutions in the new Islamic Community Center that is in the planning phases for the St. Cloud area.

LaCruz Community Center – LaCruz provides crucial services for refugees, made up mainly of Somali families, who could benefit from English and basic education lessons, life and parenting skills and after-school activities for kids. Career Solutions staff host office hours within the center to help residents and community members with job search related activities.

Quarryview Education Center and Hillside – Staff visit these Adult Basic Education and Community Education facilities to provide services and recruit WIOA Youth and Adult participants.

Place of Hope - Place of Hope is a multi-faceted outreach program serving many people in our community who are in great need for support and services because of homelessness, poverty, previous incarceration, drug addiction, alcoholism and other crisis. Strong connections with the POH team help to recruit clients for programs where below poverty level income levels are a requirement. Prior to the pandemic, POH provided transportation to CareerForce St. Cloud.

The Workforce Development Board supports work and engagement by staff within the community – taking our services to the community, instead of expecting the community to come to CareerForce. The board sees these services to the general public as a recruitment effort for state and federally funded grant programs. Also, with transportation and childcare being two of the top barriers to employment in the community, these outreach efforts respect these barriers by providing personalized, local services.

The Joint Powers Board and Workforce Development Board was in favor of creating a nonprofit – Friends of Career Solutions (FOCS) in 2017 to support workforce development initiatives in the community that did not fit within the scope of current state and federal grants. Many initiatives performed by FOCS serve the immigrant population and youth in the area.

All of these efforts are notable in current 2021 program enrollment data below. All WIOA and State DW programs have at least 50% of enrollments from the BIPOC community.

Dislocated Worker Demographics:

American Indian or Alaska Native	2.06%
Asian	2.06%
Black or African American	47.42%
Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander	0.00%
Multi-Race	0.00%

White	48.45%
Did Not Self-Identify	0.00%

Adult Demographics:

American Indian or Alaska Native	5.88%
Asian	0.00%
Black or African American	52.94%
Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander	0.00%
Multi-Race	5.88%
White	35.29%
Did Not Self-Identify	0.00%

Youth Demographics (all programs):

American Indian or Alaska Native	0.00%
Asian	0.00%
Black or African American	66.67%
Hawaiian Native or Other Pacific Islander	0.00%
Multi-Race	6.67%
White	26.67%
Did Not Self-Identify	0.00%

Employers:

I-WE Initiative- Through the Region 3 Leadership and Planning Board, Career Solutions is partnering with Central MN Jobs and Training Services to launch the I-WE initiative in fall of 2021. The initiative was developed by the Northwest Private Industry Council and Rural MN CEP, which is an application process and “stamp of approval” for employers to become certified which indicates to the public, they are inclusive with their workplace practices. The goal of the initiative is to reduce disparities and raise awareness of the value of and methods for increasing diversity by creating a designation to recognize and promote inclusive employers.

Immigrant Services- this program bridges the gap between immigrant job seekers with employment barriers and employers who face obstacles when hiring immigrants. The program pilot is funded by the Otto Bremer Foundation and Friends of Career Solutions. This program started from the Immigrant Community Connection Group which had assisted employers and job seekers in large group settings. As the work evolved, it became apparent that work needed to be done on an individual, consultative manner to help employers move past real or perceived barriers to hiring the immigrant population.

This work is performed by Career Solutions staff. The team uses a community-centered approach to organizing, empowering, and educating underserved communities. They work with employers to mitigate cultural and language barriers in their recruitment, hiring and retention efforts.

Goals of these services are to:

- Increase workplace diversity;
- Assist immigrant and refugee job seekers in obtaining employment;
- Provide tools for employers to remove barriers to hiring the immigrant population;
- Address broad workforce issues in the community;
- Create meaningful connections in the community.

A Resource Guide, which is a directory of organizations (or departments within a larger organizations) working primarily with Immigrant Communities or Communities of Color is maintained, hosted and available on the Career Solutions website

(<https://careersolutionsjobs.org/employers/immigrant-employment-connection-group/resource-guide/>)

Career Solutions promotes a business community that is free from bias and discrimination in Stearns and Benton County. We work with employers as they remove barriers to hiring the immigrant population while addressing workforce issues in the community. The service creates partnerships between business, the award winning Career Solutions Immigrant Services and job seekers. We help with recruitment for expansion, training, retention and communication. Our services include assistance in:

Recruitment:

- Removing barriers and tapping into immigrant populations to fill open positions.
- Increasing workplace diversity.
- Creating meaningful connections between employers and job seeker. Cultural Training
- Developing cultural competency training for supervisors and management. Create an understanding of the company's culture, responsibilities and expectations.
- Resolving employer issues related to cultural misunderstandings.

Retention: Liaison / Communication Services:

- Solutions to ease communication barriers.
- Mediation services for employees to help with retention.
- Guidance regarding translation for human resources policies and procedures.

In 2021, Career Solutions partnered with a Sauk Rapids based commercial construction company to provide work experiences for six individuals from the BIPOC community. These efforts are to help increase knowledge about the construction industry, primarily within the Somali community. It's noted that CDL is a highly requested training program by the Somali community because of its short educational timeframe, quickly providing family sustaining wages. The goal of the "learn and earn" program being designed is to obtain success with participants, those who have 'pioneered' a new, respected career pathway for their community, broadening the interest in construction as a career that will also quickly provide family sustaining wages.

Business Services: Career Solutions helps businesses recruit, train and retain workers. Business Services focus on providing a pool of qualified workers who will help

businesses grow. Career Solutions connects businesses with qualified workers, and links businesses to state, federal and local resources.

Employer Spotlights – Employers are invited to present at all staff meetings to develop staff knowledge about jobs and companies hiring in the community.

The Career Solutions HR Networking Group was established in April 2017, which meets monthly. The purpose of this group is for HR professionals to share best practices, brainstorm, collaborate and network with other HR professionals as well as gain information about workforce development events, programs and training. Guest presenters and Job Seeker Spotlights are included (see info below). To model MAWB's Equity initiative at the local level, the HR Networking Group agenda will include a "Leading with Equity" segment where diversity, equity and inclusion resources will be shared, then added to the Career Solutions website.

Job Seekers:

Job Seeker Spotlights at Human Resources Networking group - Job Seeker Spotlight provides adult and youth clients a fantastic networking opportunity with a captive audience 120+ HR professionals. Job seekers share their resume and talk with the group for a few minutes about who they are, the type of work they are looking for, and why they would be a good candidate. Job seekers can be entry level to executive level.

I-WE Initiative – as described above, this initiative will help make positive connections between job seekers from the BIPOC community and employers.

Discovery Day - A new workshop model for employers and potential employees held in conjunction with the SCTCC. By attending a Discovery Day, individuals can assess whether a job would be a good fit before starting formal training, which in some cases can be funded through the DW program. Employers speak about the benefits of the trade and work for their company. Within each industry, the event happens every other month so a business can connect with 60 potential employees each year. CDL truck Driving is the 1st industry participating. Career Solution's goal in 2021 is to add regular, community wide, self-sustaining Discovery days for Healthcare, welding and automotive industries.

Incumbent Worker Training – The IWT program is growing in popularity with employers in the area, with the end result being additional credentials for workers, advancing them in the career pathway.

Digital Divide – Stearns and Benton Counties have rate of households without a device or internet than the state data. The board has recognized this as an issue, especially as CareerForce is closed to the public during the pandemic. Efforts to redeploy devices for checkout, partnering with the library for access to internet hot spots, acquiring new devices for client job search activities, and offering assistance to the universal customer and clients at the GRR Library are examples of the board's efforts to address the digital divide in the area.

Table 47. Presence of a Computer & Internet in Household by Age Group	WDB 17 - Stearns-Benton		Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total Population	190,001	100.0%	5,431,436	100.0%
Has a computer	180,232	94.9%	5,169,267	95.2%
<i>With dial-up Internet</i>	731	0.4%	22,703	0.4%
<i>With broadband Internet</i>	165,661	91.9%	4,837,723	93.6%
<i>Without Internet</i>	13,840	7.7%	308,841	6.0%
No computer	9,769	5.1%	262,169	4.8%
Under 18 years	46,696	24.6%	1,291,435	23.8%
Has a computer	46,214	99.0%	1,273,200	98.6%
<i>With dial-up Internet</i>	46	0.1%	2,305	0.2%
<i>With broadband Internet</i>	43,289	93.7%	1,207,592	94.8%
<i>Without Internet</i>	2,879	6.2%	63,303	5.0%
No computer	482	1.0%	18,235	1.4%
18 to 64 years	116,365	61.2%	3,315,456	61.0%
Has a computer	113,329	97.4%	3,224,354	97.3%
<i>With dial-up Internet</i>	338	0.3%	9,387	0.3%
<i>With broadband Internet</i>	104,787	92.5%	3,031,575	94.0%
<i>Without Internet</i>	8,204	7.2%	183,392	5.7%
No computer	3,036	2.6%	91,102	2.7%
65 years & over	26,940	14.2%	824,545	15.2%
Has a computer	20,689	76.8%	671,713	81.5%
<i>With dial-up Internet</i>	347	1.7%	11,011	1.6%
<i>With broadband Internet</i>	17,585	85.0%	598,556	89.1%
<i>Without Internet</i>	2,757	13.3%	62,146	9.3%
No computer	6,251	23.2%	152,832	18.5%
<i>Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates</i>				

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?

Career Solutions is fully aware of and committed to complying with all policies and procedures for Rapid Response including the two specific policies cited. Career Solutions Program Director ensures that all program and administrative staff working within the Dislocated Program review the two policies at the onset of the program year, and that compliance is maintained with each dislocation event coordinated by Rapid Response. The Executive Director and Program Director ensures compliance with all policies by taking a lead role with Rapid Response.

- 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)?

Immediate contact with Rapid Response is made via email (with more than one Rapid Response staff) and/or phone by Career Solutions to upon hearing fact or alleged actual or potential dislocation event.

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

When Career Solutions is informed of a mass layoff from an employer primarily located in Stearns and/or Benton County, contact is immediately made with the Rapid Response office indicating willingness to provide services locally. The board then awaits follow-up instructions and information from Rapid Response.

Career Solutions works closely with Rapid Response in ascertaining whether a project is needed or if formula funds are more appropriate to be used to serve the workers. Career Solutions will comply with Dislocated Worker Policies 13.09 and 13.10 in delivering Dislocated Worker Services in coordination with State Rapid Response.

When Rapid Response issues an email Broadcast of mass layoff, Career Solutions administrative staff evaluate interest and resources to serve an employer inside of the WSA area.

- 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?

Immediate contact will be made with Sarah Saito TAA Program Coordinator at DEED via email and/or phone by Career Solutions upon hearing any facts that could signal potential TAA certification. Email will also be sent to TRA Unit (deed.tra@state.mn.us). Close WSA contact with Rapid Response Unit also ensures State Trade Act staff be brought into the loop as quickly 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?

Career Solutions cooperatively coordinates TAA/TRA services for participants with State Trade Act Staff. State Trade Act Staff take the lead and signal to Career Solutions what specific activities/services are needed to be performed by Career Solutions. These may include communication with eligible clients, provision of space and technology for TAA Informational Meetings, staff in attendance at TAA informational Meetings etc. State Trade Act staff is invited to personally present information at large layoff DW Orientations. If that is not possible, Career Solutions staff will present this information. Since each layoff is unique, WSA will coordinate with TAA in whatever unique manner is needed for each layoff.

- 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.

Per Local policy, support services cannot exceed \$2,000.00 per client per program year. This policy can be waived by the Career Solutions Program Director. Waivers are reviewed quarterly by the Career Solutions leadership team. There are also limits

for support for different categories such as transportation, housing, clothing, tools, childcare and healthcare. Career Solutions chooses to issue supportive services on a “first come, first served” basis and assist clients as the need arises and as funds are available. The Program Director and agency staff monitor the amounts very closely and make adjustments as needed. For example, there are times when, as a team, it has been decided to only allow payments to be made to cover travel expenses related to job search or to reach approved training programs.

The Deed Policy requirement to identify the need for support services on the Individual Employment Plan and that support services are made available during the 12 month follow up period are adhered to.

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?

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Dislocated Worker, Minnesota Dislocated Worker and WIOA Adult program service providers must implement a written priority of service policy for program enrollment and delivery of services that incorporates required priority of service for specific populations. At written policy is vital during times of limited resources. In addition, Career Solutions follows DEED's Priority of Service Policy.

Relevant Laws, Rules, or Policies

Training and Employment Guidance Letter WIOA No. 19-16

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Section 134(c)(3)(E)

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regulations 20 CFR Part 680.600 through .660.

Definition

Priority of Service is a system for screening and enrolling participants who are most in need when resources are limited.

Priority of Service

1st Priority – Veterans and eligible spouses (covered persons) who are:

- ☐ Low income, or
- ☐ Recipients of public assistance, or
- ☐ Who are basic skills deficient

*Note: military earnings should not be included when calculating income for veterans or transitioning service members for this priority

2nd Priority – Individuals (non-covered persons) who are:

- ☐ Low income, or
- ☐ Recipients of public assistance, or
- ☐ Who are basic skills deficient

3rd Priority – Veterans and eligible spouses who are:

- ☐ Not low income, or
- ☐ Not recipients of public assistance, and
- ☐ Are not basic skills deficient

4th Priority – Priority populations established by the Governor and/or Local Workforce Development Boards as outlined in the State, Regional, and Local Plans.

- ☐ Individuals of color;
- ☐ Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities (as defined in WIOA sec. 3(25) (includes individuals who are in receipt of Social Security Disability Insurance);
- ☐ Individuals seeking employment to reduce gender inequities;
- ☐ Individuals with barriers to employment as identified under WIOA:
 - o Displaced homemakers (as defined in WIOA sec. 3(16));
 - o Low-income individuals (as defined in WIOA sec. 3(36));
 - o Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians (as defined in WIOA sec. 166(b));
 - o Older individuals (age 55 and older) (as defined in WIOA sec. 3(39));
 - o Ex-offenders (“offender” as defined in WIOA sec. 3(38));
 - o Homeless individuals or homeless children and youths (see Attachment III);
 - o Individuals who are:
 - 1. English language learners (WIOA sec. 203(7)),
 - 2. Individuals who have low levels of literacy (an individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, or in the individual’s family, or in society); and
 - 3. Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers;
- ☐ Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined in WIOA sec. 167(i)(1-3);
- ☐ Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility;
- ☐ Single parents (including single pregnant women);
- ☐ Long-term unemployed individuals (unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks);

Priority Populations under WIOA

Services provided to adults and dislocated workers under title I of WIOA can be a pathway to the middle class and to maintain and build skills to remain in the middle class. Across all titles, WIOA focuses on serving “individuals with barriers to employment”, defined in WIOA section 3(24) and seeks to ensure access to quality services for these populations. The WIOA Final Rules discuss priority and special populations for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs at 20 CFR 680.600 through .660.

Statutory Priority for Adult Funds

Section 134(c)(3)(E) of WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. Under this section, American Job Center staff when using WIOA Adult funds to provide individualized career services, as described in Section 4 of this TEGL, training services, or both, as described in Section 7, must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. WIOA sec. 3(36) defines “low-income individual” and WIOA sec. 3(5) defines “basic skills deficient” (see Appendix IV for full definition). ETA notes that individuals who are English language learners meet the criteria for “basic skills deficient” and must be included in the priority populations for the title I Adult program. Under WIOA, priority must be implemented regardless of the amount of funds available to provide services in the local area. States are required to develop policies

and procedures for applying this priority, including monitoring local areas' compliance with this priority.

Under WIOA, there is no exclusion of payments for unemployment compensation, child support payments, and old-age survivor's insurance benefits from the income calculations for determining if an individual is low-income. These exclusions that were previously provided under WIA sec. 101(25) no longer apply.

The priority established in the previous paragraph does not necessarily mean that these services may only be provided to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. The Local WDB and the Governor may establish a process that also gives priority to other individuals eligible to receive such services, provided that it is consistent with priority of service for veterans (see 20 CFR 680.650) and the priority provisions of WIOA sec.

134(c)(3)(E) and §680.600. Any additional priority populations identified by the State and Local WDB should be reflected in the State's WIOA Unified or Combined Plan, as well as the local area plan(s). Additionally, entitlement must be exhausted before the veteran or eligible spouse can be enrolled in WIOA funded training. However, VA benefits for education and training services do not constitute "other grant assistance" under WIOA's eligibility requirements. Therefore, eligibility for VA benefits for education or training services do not preclude a veteran or the veteran's eligible spouse from receiving WIOA funded services, including training funds. Similarly, WIOA program operators may not require veterans or spouses to exhaust their entitlement to VA funded training benefits prior to allowing them to enroll in WIOA funded training.

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?

CareerForce staff actively support providing a priority of service for all veterans coming into our CareerForce through the multiple services offered by partners. Upon meeting a customer, staff are trained and will ask for the information to determine their veteran status to then be able to expedite the services they are interested in receiving and need to assist them to be re-integrated into the civilian workforce or the veteran will self-disclose their veteran status. Programs funded by the Department of Labor are covered by Section 4215 of the "Jobs for Veterans Act" (PL 107-288). These programs include Wagner Peyser, WIOA Title One Adult and Dislocated Worker, Trade Adjustment Act,

National Emergency Grants, Migrant/Seasonal Farmworker, WIOA Demonstration Grants, H-1B Technical Skills Training/Grants, Youth Opportunity Grants, WIOA Youth Formula program and Labor Market Information.

The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire is used to identify Veterans. We ask all customers that come to the CareerForce if they ever served in the US 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.

Job Service: If a customer is a veteran, the staff will “thank” them for their service to our country. The veteran will receive information about the availability of the Local Veteran Representative on-site whose primary job is to assist the veteran to receive information regarding CareerForce services/community resources and to assist him/her in their career selection and to obtain the skills needed to become re-employed. All veterans are provided one on one interviews upon their initial visit or are contacted to arrange for a future meeting on a timely basis. The veteran is encouraged to register and submit their resume on the labor exchange job listing MinnesotaWorks. They are also informed about the job preparation workshops offered by Job Service to universal customers at the CareerForce.

The law states that Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) are to provide services to veterans with a barrier to employment. This means that not all veterans coming into a CareerForce will (need to) see a DVOP or an LVER.

All CareerForce staff are responsible for the delivery of Gold Card services to veterans.

Career Solutions: Career Solutions Intake and Outreach Specialist inquires of all individuals seeking services as to their veteran status to ensure priority of services is afforded these individuals. Even if a waiting list exists for services, Veterans are immediately served. As funds permit, veterans receive direct client training and support services within eligibility based programs as a priority. All Career Solutions Career Planners make a point of reviewing the Veteran Status of participants at the first meeting.

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

Signage in CareerForce advises veterans and other eligible persons of the Veterans’ Priority of Service

Section D - Page 41 Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development 2016-2017 Regional and Local Plans Service (POS). Information on Priority of Service is also provided during various program orientations, by WFC resource room staff, and

during workshops. LVER staff train and update local partner staff on the provisions of POS and PL 107-288.

Career Solutions: For Title IB – Career Solutions, self-disclosure is used for any initial barrier to employment. Meetings with the Career Planner identify and plan for addressing and finding solutions to the presenting barriers and any additional barriers that are identified as the Veteran participant receives services. An Individual Service Strategy is developed for each Veteran participant. Coordination with the Job Service Veteran’s Representative is required. Career Solutions has identified a Career Planner as a Veteran’s Specialist. Career Solutions also has a Dislocated Worker Veterans project which provides additional funds including training and support for veterans.

Job Service: At their initial visit to the CareerForce, the veteran will either self-disclose their veteran status or staff will inquire if they are a veteran. The veteran is then given a self-assessment questionnaire available at the reception desk. Upon completion of the self-assessment form, the veteran will either meet with the Local Veteran Representative immediately or he/she will be contacted by the Veteran Representative staff to set up an appointment to be seen. During this meeting, the Veteran Representative will inquire about their current situation to determine if there are barriers to the veteran returning to work or address the information on the questionnaire regarding the barriers the veteran has self-disclosed. Veteran Representatives are knowledgeable about the programs and services available in the CareerForce and are aware of the community resources that the veteran may be eligible to access for further assistance. The veteran is assisted in registering on and submitting their resume on MinnesotaWorks.net and informed of the universal workshops offered by Job Service staff.

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?

All websites associated with the CareerForce locations provide information on and notice of Veterans Priority of Service.

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

In the CareerForce, it is a phone call or personal visit to the service provider. Because every provider of service has an eligibility criteria, the veterans are moved to the next intake session and eligibility is determined. If the veteran is unable to schedule at their convenience, at a minimum the appropriate paperwork may be given to the veteran to complete and return or they will see someone from the service provider that will personally explain the process to the veteran. Services are provided depending on the need of the veteran and may include scheduling a workshop, resume writing assistance, career guidance, discussion of local employers and economy, research regarding

training opportunities, and referral to supportive services (such as a County Veterans Service Officer or VA contact depending on the need such as Voc. Rehab.), referral to training programs, basic unemployment insurance information, referral to educational contacts, etc.

The Minnesota Veterans Questionnaire, a DOL approved standard process, is used to identify Veterans with a significant barrier to employment (SBE). The questionnaire identifies DOL designated SBE's per VLP 03-14, including change 2.

In regards to Veterans Retraining Assistance (VRAP), referrals are made by DEED/Veteran Representatives to the local post-secondary contact person, the Higher Education Veterans Program representative from the Minnesota Department of Veteran Affairs for information and enrollment. We do help veterans navigate the website and give them copies of the application and the list of growing occupations to those interested in pursuing the VRAP training and also refer to the appropriate technical college to assist with career choice or assist them ourselves with career plans.

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 local area has 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 when the DVOP is not available.

Job Service: For referrals to the appropriate program staff, the Veteran Representative will give the veteran the specific contact information and/or often directly contact the program staff person with the referral information. The Local Veteran Representative provides outreach services at the Veteran's Administration Hospital and works closely with their staff to provide services to those veterans who are in transition to employment. Outreach services are also provided in the western part of Stearns County in Sauk Centre, MN on a bimonthly basis by appointment. Coordination of services and referral also occurs with the County Service Officers in both Stearns and Benton Counties as well as with the local VFW and American Legion.

The Local Veteran Representative takes a lead in organizing the local "Stand Down" event where multiple services are provided by the various community organizations for veterans. Information about the Stand Down event is well publicized throughout the community as well as at the CareerForce. This WSA has an active "Warrior to Citizen"

program that includes the Local Veteran Representative as well as many of the community leaders to plan events to educate area business representatives and the general public on ways to assist veterans to re-integrate into civilian life and our workforce. Veteran Representatives and Job Service management participate in the local "Call to Action" effort to identify and coordinate local services for veterans and their families. We will continue to explore opportunities to provide and expand the provision of information and services to veterans in our area by promoting the hiring of veterans on a priority basis. CareerForce staff will continue to receive updates and training at our local meetings to insure that veterans will be provided the best service and information available in our continual commitment to the priority of service to those that served our country.

Career Solutions: An excellent referral and coordination process is in place between Local Veteran's Representative and Career Solutions Eligibility and Outreach Specialist. During the Career Solutions Intake process, if the Veteran is not aware of the local Veteran's Employment Representative, the Eligibility and Outreach Specialist conducting the intake, supplies the name and phone number of this individual. This is in addition to, but not in lieu of program specific services from Career Solutions. Any Veteran with a self-disclosed permanent disability is referred to Rehabilitation Services. Career Solutions services are available to complement the plan instituted by Rehab Services and the veteran.

LWDA 17 has identified partner staff in CF to provide services (including intensive services to SBE veterans. These staff have been trained on how to effectively serve veterans via the NVTI Webinar "Helping Veterans to Meaningful Careers," and from LVER staff. CF staff conduct initial assessments with current and former military service members with significant barriers to employment and refer them to the designated intensive service provider.

CF St Cloud has a State Veteran Service Officer in-house every Tuesday. This individual shares information and provides assistance with Veteran Assistance and state veteran benefits applications. This includes applications for service connected disability compensation, pensions, home loans, education benefits, burial benefits, surviving spouse benefits, health care, long-term nursing home care, emergency financial grants, and other benefits.

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

Local DVOP and/or LVER staff attend staff and partner meetings and orientations participate on CF teams, collaborate with CF partners on various events, and provide training to partner staff and management regarding the JVSG program.

Career Solutions: Staff ask each veteran accessing services, veterans being a priority.

Job Service: As identified previously, we use the Veterans Job Search Assessment and ask each veteran visiting the CareerForce to self-identify themselves. The first question

is "Are you a Post 9/11 Veteran?" and veterans are asked for active duty dates, etc. Each veteran visiting the CareerForce is then seen individually by staff. All staff provide services to veterans on a priority basis. Services are explained face to face and the opportunity for the veteran to ask questions is provided. Veterans staff will typically follow up with a phone call or a follow up interview to ensure the veteran has received the information they are seeking. As needed, they are referred to the appropriate resource for additional services.

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?

Career Solutions: Career Solutions requires registration of all participants funded by WIOA and State Dislocated worker funds prior to intake. This is also reiterated at the first meeting with the job seeker client and is part of their Action Plan with Career Solutions.

Job Service has MinnesotaWorks.net information available in the CF reception and Career Lab area. This information provides complete registration instructions for customers to register with Minnesotaworks.net. Staff who assist customers in the Career Lab inform customers about Minnesotaworks.net and provide individual assistance to help them become registered and enter their résumé's so they are viewable to employers. For jobseekers participating in the MFIP and Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, customers are required to register and enter their viewable résumé on Minnesotaworks.net.

UI recipients enrolled in Re-employment Assistance are also required to register on Minnesotaworks.net and are provided information on creating viewable résumé's. Staff who provide workshops and facilitate networking groups inform all participants about Minnesotaworks.net and provide registration instructions, Veterans receiving case management services are also required to be registered on Minnesotaworks.net. In addition to MinnesotaWorks.net registration, work-ready jobseekers are encouraged to attend local résumé workshops.

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.

The WDB Executive Committee addresses membership recruitment, orientation, and annually surveys for process improvement. The roster of members is reviewed in committee in Fall. Any member whose term is expiring is identified and contacted by Committee members to inquire about their desire to continue on the WDB. Those continuing are presented by roster to the WDB and Joint Powers Board for approval no later than the Annual Meeting held in January. Any member resigning or any member not wishing to renew is asked to submit a letter to the Membership Committee indicating that decision. The resignation/vacancy is accepted by both the WDB and Joint Powers Board and recruitment begins. Meeting calendar impacts the timeline.

For recruitment, the notice of vacancy is published and provided to WDB members and business/employer organizations. WDB members identify and recruit members for the constituency and industry the vacancy represents. Completed nomination forms are presented to the Workforce Council for consideration and recommendation to the Joint Powers Board for appointment.

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

Yes X No

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

When vacancies occur, the WDB in collaboration with the Executive Director, shall solicit and receive nominations. The Director shall interview/consider the candidate nominations and make recommendations to the Executive Committee based upon meeting the federal and state Board composition requirements and the appropriateness and degree of fit for the needs of the local economy, targeted industry sectors and occupations, and businesses, workers, and job seekers.

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

Region 3 – Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board

Local Area Board Name

Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

Name and Contact Information for the Local Area Board Chair:

Name	Teresa Bohnen
Title	President
Organization	St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce
Address 1	1411 W. St. Germain Street, Suite 101
Address 2	PO Box 487
City, State, ZIP Code	St. Cloud, MN 56302
Phone	320.656.3804
E-mail	TBohnen@stcloudareachamber.com

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

Name	Steve Heinen
Title	Benton County Commissioner
Organization	Benton County
Address 1	531 Dewey Street
Address 2	
City, State, ZIP Code	Foley, MN 56329
Phone	320.267.1255
E-mail	SHeinen@co.benton.mn.us

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 Teresa Bohnen

Title Workforce Development Board
Chair

Signature 

Date May 18, 2021

Local Elected Official

Name Steve Heinen

Title Joint Powers Board Chair

Signature 

Date May 18, 2021

REGIONAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Regional Workforce Development Area

Region 3 – Region 3 Leadership & Planning Board

Local Workforce Development Area

Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

MEMBER	ORGANIZATION
Rick Green, Chair	Central Minnesota JPB Chair, Chisago County Commissioner
Steve Heinen, Vice-Chair	Career Solutions JPB Chair, Benton County Commissioner
Harlan Madsen	Central Minnesota JPB Vice-Chair, Kandiyohi County Commissioner
Teresa Bohnen	Career Solutions Workforce Development Board Chair
Kelly Hansen	Career Solutions Workforce Development Board Vice-Chair
Jeff Mergen	Career Solutions JPB Vice-Chair, Stearns County Commissioner
Loren Nelson	Career Solutions Workforce Development Board Chair
Brian O'Donnell	Career Solutions Workforce Development Board Vice-Chair
Tammy Biery	Career Solutions
Barb Chaffee	Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services, Inc.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA CONTACTS

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Rapid Response Liaison for Mass Layoffs				
Rapid Response Liaison for Mass Layoffs	Audrey O'Driscoll	320.308.5712	Audrey.ODriscoll@csjobs.org	Tammy Biery
Equal Opportunity Officer	Tammy Biery	320.308.5702	Tammy.Biery@csjobs.org	Career Solutions Joint Powers Board
Program Complaint Officer	Tammy Biery	320.308.5702	Tammy.Biery@csjobs.org	Career Solutions Joint Powers Board
Records Management/Records Retention Coordinator	Tammy Biery	320.308.5702	Tammy.Biery@csjobs.org	Career Solutions Joint Powers Board
ADA Coordinator	Andrea Chirhart	320.308.4163	Andrea.Chirhart@state.mn.us	Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
Data Practices Coordinator	Michael Vaughn	651.259.7113	Michael.Vaughn@state.mn.us	Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
English as Second Language (ESL) Coordinator	Adam Holm	320.257.3810	Adam.Holm@isd742.org	Willie Jett

CareerForce Center in ____ Saint Cloud_____

ROLE	Contact Name	Phone	Email	Reports to (name only)
Site Representative	Tammy Biery	320.308.5702	Tammy.Biery@csjobs.org	Career Solutions Joint Powers Board
Job Service Manager	Joan Berning	320.441.6572	Joan.berning@state.mn.us	Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manager	Andrea Chirhart	320.308.4163	Andrea.Chirhart@state.mn.us	Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

State Services for the Blind Supervisor	Sara Kreiling Edward Lecher	612.394.3000 651.539.2324	Sara.L.Kreiling@state.mn.us Edward.Lecher@state.mn.us	Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
Local Workforce Development Area Director	Tammy Biery	320.308.5702	Tammy.Biery@csjobs.org	Career Solutions Joint Powers Board
Adult Basic Education (ABE)	Adam Holm	320.257.3810	Adam.Holm@isd742.org	Willie Jett, Superintendent, District 742
Carl Perkins Post-Secondary Manager	Susan Jordahl	320.308.3435	Susan.Jordahl@sctcc.edu	Kenneth Matthews, Interim VP of Institutional Effectiveness, Assessment and Research
Adult	Audrey O'Driscoll	320.308.5712	Audrey.ODriscoll@csjobs.org	Tammy Biery
Dislocated Worker	Audrey O'Driscoll	320.308.5712	Audrey.ODriscoll@csjobs.org	Tammy Biery
Youth	Audrey O'Driscoll	320.308.5712	Audrey.ODriscoll@csjobs.org	Tammy Biery

Attachment D

LOCAL AREA BOARD MEMBERSHIP LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area

Regional Workforce Development Area 3

Local Workforce Development Area

Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS IN LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA

(must be a majority)

MEMBER	POSITION/Representative	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	TERM ENDS
Teresa Bohnen, Vice-Chair	Private Sector	President, St. Cloud Area Chamber of Commerce	01/2023
Kelly Hansen, Vice-Chair	Private Sector	Vice President, Human Resources, Park Industries, Inc.	01/2024
Jill Magelssen, Past Chair	Private Sector	Franchise Owner, Express Employment Professionals	01/2023
Brent Bultema	Private Sector	HR Director, CentraCare Health	01/2024
Les Engel	Private Sector	Metallurgical Engineer, Engel Metallurgical Ltd.	01/2022
Jeff Haviland	Private Sector	Owner/President, Seitz Stainless	01/2023
Kathy Kirchner	Private Sector	Director of Human Resources, Sysco Western Minnesota	01/2024
Sara Lommel	Private Sector	Director of Human Resources, Marco, Inc.	01/2024
Heidi Peper	Private Sector	Sr. Funder Leader, Stantec	01/2024
Bernie Perryman	Private Sector	CEO, Batteries Plus Bulbs	01/2023
Michelle Sininger	Private Sector	HR Manager, Simonson Properties	01/2022
Tohow Siyad	Private Sector	President, National Home Healthcare Transportation	01/2024
Chad Staul	Private Sector	Attorney, Quinlivan & Hughes, P.A.	01/2023
Meghan Woods Lehrer	Private Sector	VP of Human Resources, Falcon National Bank	01/2024

LABOR & COMMUNITY – BASED ORGANIZATIONS

(20% Minimum and 2 or more nominated by state labor federations and one joint labor-management apprenticeship program labor organization or training director)

MEMBER	POSITION/Representative	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	TERM ENDS
Don Hickman	Community Based Organization	Vice President for Community and Workforce Development, Initiative Foundation	01/2023
Ken Huling	Organized Labor	Business Representative, North Central State Regional Council of Carpenters	01/2024
Brandon Schauer	Organized Labor	Business Agent, Pipefitters Local 539	01/2024
Lori Schultz	Community Based Organization	Executive Director, Tri-CAP	01/2022

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Mary Swingle	Community Based Organization	President/CEO, Boys & Girls Club of Central Minnesota	01/2022
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EDUCATION & TRAINING (Required: ABE; Higher Education)			
MEMBER	POSITION/Representative	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	TERM ENDS
Maria Burnham	K-12 Education	Supervisor, St. Cloud School District 742/Central Minnesota Adult Basic Education (ABE)	01/2022
Adam Holm	Adult Basic Education	Community Education Director, Central Minnesota ABE	01/2022
Jennifer Erickson	Post-Secondary Education	Director of Customized Training, St. Cloud Technical and Community College	01/2023
Gail Ruhland	Post-Secondary Education	Director, Center for Continuing Studies, St. Cloud State University	01/2022

GOVERNMENT (Required: Economic Development; Job Service; Rehabilitation)			
MEMBER	POSITION/Representative	TITLE/ORGANIZATION	TERM ENDS
Joan Berning	Job Service	Area Manager of Job Services, St. Cloud CareerForce Center	01/2023
Andrea Chirhart	Vocational Rehabilitation	Rehabilitation Area Manager, St. Cloud CareerForce Center	01/2024
Robert Cornelius	Human Services	Benton County Human Services Director, Benton County Human Services	01/2023
Gail Cruikshank	Economic Development	Talent Director, Greater St. Cloud Development Corporation	01/2022
Janet Goligowski	Human Services	Division Director, Stearns County Human Services	01/2022

NAME	ADDRESS/PHONE/EMAIL
JOINT POWERS BOARD CHAIR: Steve Heinen	531 Dewey Street, PO Box 129, Foley, MN 56329 320.267.1255 SHeinen@co.benton.mn.us
JOINT POWERS BOARD VICE CHAIR: Jeff Mergen	705 Courthouse Square, St. Cloud, MN 56303 320.293.2111 Jeff.Mergen@co.stearns.mn.us
JOINT POWERS BOARD SECRETARY: Tammy Biery	1542 Northway Drive, St. Cloud, MN 56303 320.308.5702 Tammy.Biery@csjobs.org

LOCAL AREA BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE LIST

Attachment D**Regional Workforce Development Area**

Regional Workforce Development Area 3

Local Workforce Development Area

Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

Committee Name	Objective/Purpose
Youth Council	<p>Youth Council Mission: To lead and bring together community resources to focus on youth becoming capable and satisfied workers.</p> <p>Youth Council Purposes: Guide Youth Policy and Coordinate Youth Services in Local Area.</p> <p>Youth Council Functions/Responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strategic Planning• Leveraging Resources• Overseeing Programs. <p>To coordinate youth activities in WSA; develop portions of local plan related to eligible youth as determined by Local Board; recommend eligible youth service providers subject to Local Board approval; conduct oversight with respect to eligible providers of youth activities in local area subject to approval of Local Board; carry out other duties as authorized by the chairperson of local board. The purpose of the Youth Council is to provide expertise in youth policy and to assist the local board in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing and recommending local youth employment and training policy and practices;• Broadening the youth employment and training focus in the community to incorporate a youth development perspective;• Establish linkages with other organizations services youth in the local area; and• Talking into account a range of issues that can have an impact on the success of youth in the labor market.
Program Committee	<p>Mission: Create a collaborative partnership between the CareerForce Center, jobseekers, employers, and the community partners that assist people to acquire skills, advance and transfer employable skills while building economic vitality and prosperity.</p>

Attachment D

	<p>Vision: Educate, prepare, and assist job seekers by building and strengthening their skills and knowledge through active participation from the CareerForce Center, job seekers, employers, and the community partners using their expertise and resources.</p> <p>To provide input to, review performance of, and report to Boards and Community about the programs available through the CareerForce Center, partnership (the “core” business of the WIB), the Memorandum of Understanding partners, and other community resources. Includes input into local plans, review of local performance, Customer Satisfaction reports and Annual Report, recommendations to local boards on certification of training providers. Receive reports from Local CareerForce Center Site Manager and “core” CF partners. Recommend and approve subject to approval of local board service providers.</p>
Executive Committee	<p>Comprised of the Current Workforce Development Board Chair, the past Workforce Development Board Chair, Chair-Elect, the Workforce Development Board representative to the Joint Powers Board, and the chairs of the standing committees, to coordinate the work of the Local Workforce Development Board. To market and communicate needs of employers and job seekers, needs identifications, outcomes to the public and stakeholder groups. To recruit and train Board and Committee members, evaluate member experiences (at minimum annual satisfaction survey and review of attendance records), recommend slates of members and officers for full Workforce Council Board consideration. With Joint Powers Board, to provide guidance and oversight of Executive Director of Career Solutions.</p> <p>Duties of the Executive Committee shall include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Member Recruitment;• Orientation and Development;• Performance;• Career Solutions Executive Director Hire and Performance Reviews;• Day-to-Day Governance of Career Solutions as LWSA Administrative Entity;• Oversight of the One-Stop Operating Consortium;• And Oversight of Memorandum of Understanding.

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA SUB-GRANTEE LIST

Regional Workforce Development Area 3
Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

Career Solutions Workforce Development Board
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[illegible]

Attachment F**LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA NON-CFC PROGRAM SERVICE DELIVERY LOCATION LIST****Regional Workforce Development Area**

Regional Workforce Development Area 3

Local Workforce Development Area

Career Solutions Workforce Development Board

Name and Location (City)	Program Service Delivered
ISD # 742 (St. Cloud)	Youth at Work (YAW)
ISD # 47 (Sauk Rapids)	Youth at Work (YAW)
Sauk Centre High School (Sauk Centre) and Paynesville High School	MYP (CareerONE)
St. Cloud Technical & Community College (St. Cloud)	MYP (CareerONE)
St. Cloud Technical & Community College (St. Cloud)	Youth Build CareerTWO
CentraCare Health (St. Cloud)	CareerONE
Schools in the Stearns and Benton County Area	Outreach to Schools (depending upon funding)

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.

Central Minnesota	2019 Annual Data			
NAICS Industry Title	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Total Payroll (\$1,000s)	Avg. Annual Wage
Total, All Industries	18,183	278,111	\$12,468,040	\$44,831
Health Care & Social Assistance	1,797	49,129	\$2,275,333	\$46,313
Manufacturing	1,180	41,961	\$2,305,541	\$54,945
Retail Trade	2,283	36,558	\$1,046,943	\$28,638
Educational Services	355	24,182	\$1,099,740	\$45,478
Accommodation & Food Services	1,248	23,927	\$426,796	\$17,837
Construction	2,779	18,830	\$1,192,767	\$63,344
Public Administration	473	13,363	\$687,845	\$51,474
Transportation & Warehousing	858	9,981	\$469,792	\$47,069
Wholesale Trade	654	9,652	\$575,775	\$59,653
Admin. Support & Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	805	9,595	\$353,338	\$36,825
Other Services	2,086	8,695	\$235,039	\$27,032
Finance & Insurance	838	7,128	\$452,156	\$63,434
Professional & Technical Services	1,083	6,494	\$415,731	\$64,018
Agriculture, Forestry, Fish & Hunt	463	4,731	\$182,845	\$38,648
Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation	361	3,295	\$49,149	\$14,916
Information	221	3,119	\$152,027	\$48,742
Management of Companies	68	3,002	\$222,833	\$74,228
Utilities	64	2,230	\$242,043	\$108,539
Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	541	1,896	\$61,352	\$32,358
Mining	26	337	\$20,996	\$62,304
<i>Source: DEED Quarterly Census</i>				