



Regional and Local Strategic Plan

7/1/2021 – 6/30/2024

RWDA: Northeast Minnesota – Region 2

LWDA: City of Duluth – Local Area 4

DRAFT for Public Comment

03/16/21

REGIONAL PLAN

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

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

Industry Employment

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

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

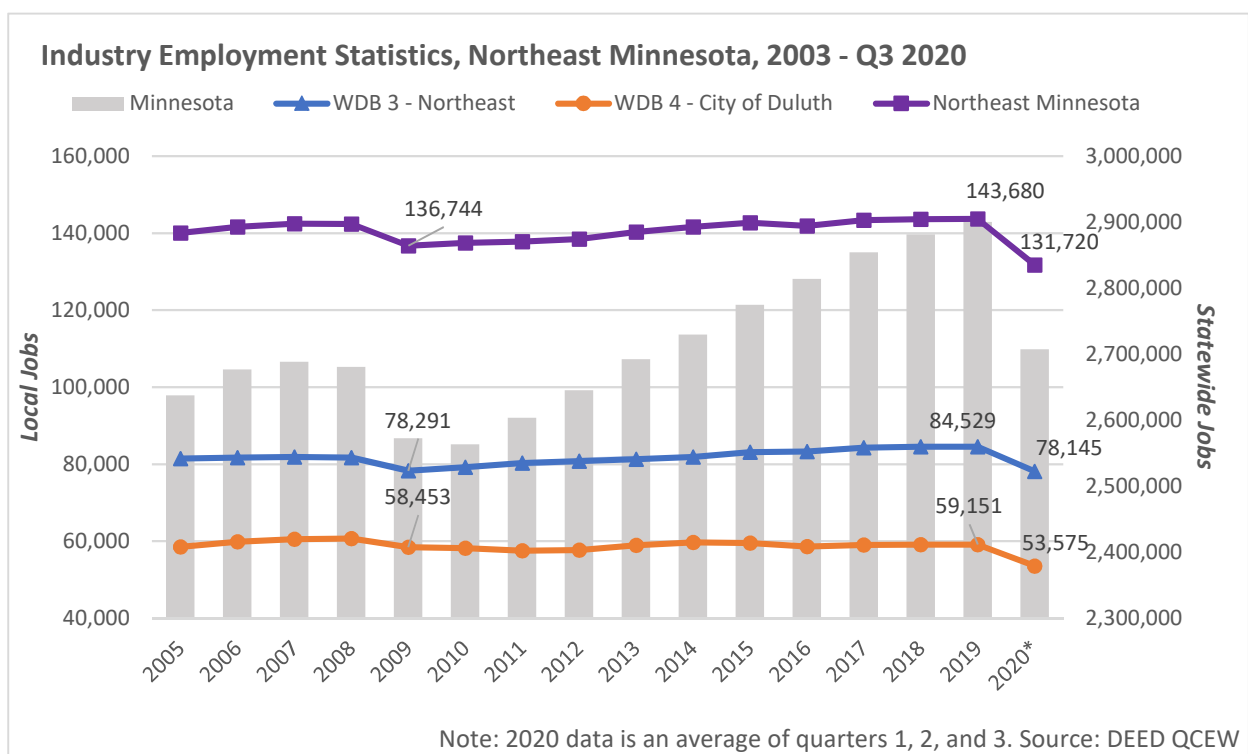


Table 1. Industry Employment Statistics, 2019-2020

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

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

Industry Breakdown

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

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

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

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

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

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

Table 2. Industry Employment Statistics, 2014-2020

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

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

Industry Projections

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

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

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

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

Source: DEED 2018-2028 Employment Outlook

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

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



Source: DEED 2018-2028 Employment Outlook

Occupational Distribution and Projections

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

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

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

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

Table 4. Occupational Employment Statistics, 2020

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

Source: DEED Occupational Employment Statistics, Qtr. 1 2020

Occupations in Demand

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

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

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

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

Source: DEED Occupations in Demand

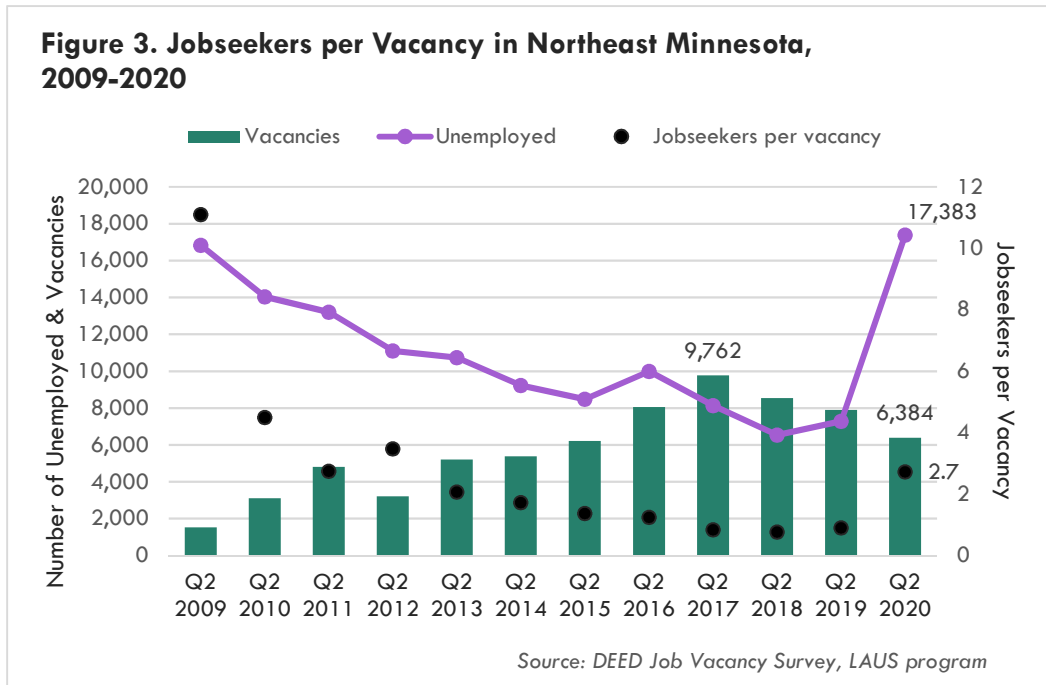
Job Vacancy Survey

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

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

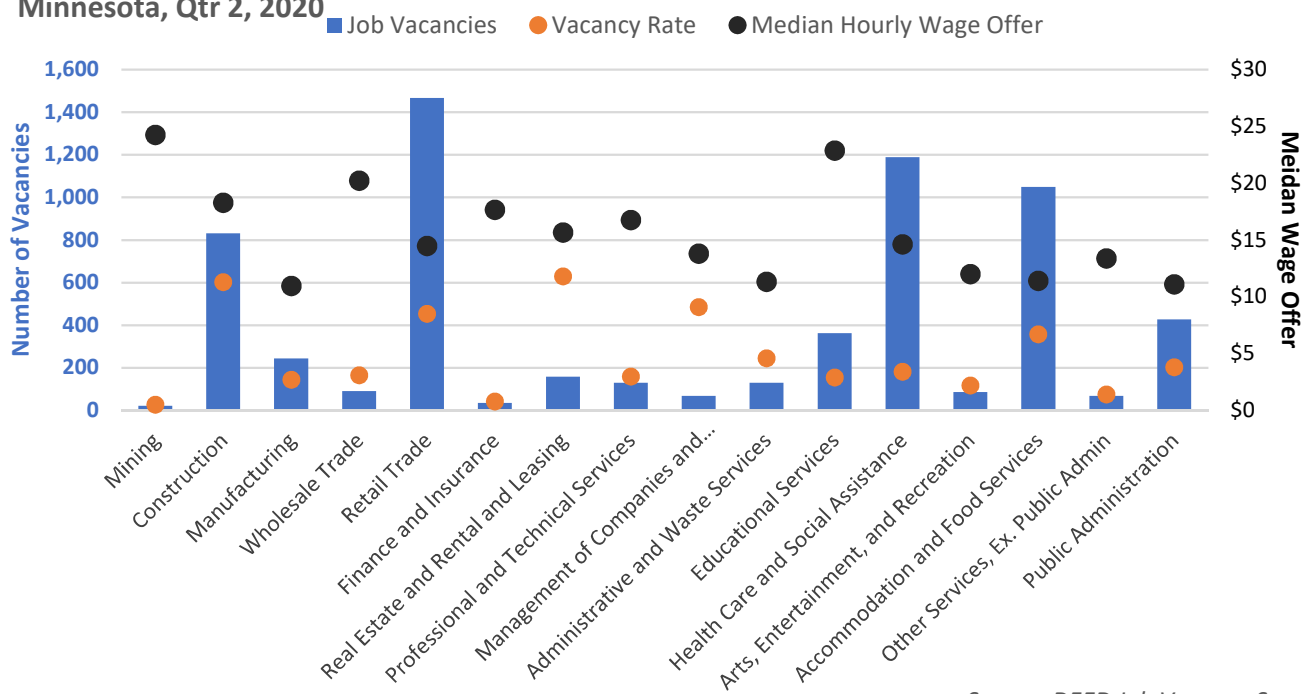
during the Great Recession in 2009 and 2010. The overall job vacancy rate (the number of vacancies divided by the number of vacancies plus total filled positions) fell from 5.5% in 2019 to 4.4% in 2020.

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



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

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



Source: DEED Job Vacancy Survey

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

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

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

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

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

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

Healthcare Sector

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

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

Construction Sector

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

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

Manufacturing Sector

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

Transportation & Logistics Sector

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1) Coordinated professional development for staff and boards.

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

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

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

3) Coordinated Career Pathways Efforts

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

There is only one comprehensive CareerForce location in Duluth, and all core title providers are co-located within the building except for Adult Basic Education which is housed within the school district building a few blocks away. Adult Basic Education is exploring the possibility of also locating at CareerForce Duluth, and will finalize this decision at some point in 2021.

The location was chosen because it is highly accessible. CareerForce Duluth is in the center of town, across from City Hall and on or near several major bus lines. The location is near the Government Services Center, which is the hub for St. Louis County human services. It is also within walking distance of many other community-based service providers that frequently refer clients for employment-related services.

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

Partners located within the CareerForce location in Duluth maintain connectivity and coordination through monthly Partner, Operations, and Duluth Area Business Team (DABT) Committee meetings.

- Operations Committee meetings involve at least one staff member from each core partner organization and occur monthly. Committee members monitor overall operational effectiveness of the CareerForce location and discuss matters that include but are not limited to: flow, process, safety, continuous improvement, and customer service. They are also charged by management to fulfill certain responsibilities including documentation of procedures, supply ordering, and other tasks as assigned. Members of the committee all work directly with program participants and serve as the eyes, ears and voice of what is happening. They will often bring communication back to partner managers if they believe any action is needed.
- Monthly partner meetings involve management from each core partner organization that forms part of the One Stop Operator consortium. Partner meetings provide an opportunity to discuss items that impact all partners. Topics may include discussion of key issues related to the operation of CareerForce locations within the region, information-sharing, programmatic or funding updates, opportunities for collaboration, agency needs, cost-allocation-planning, policy review, and more. These meetings promote open dialogue among partners and facilitate positive working relationships across agencies. Partners also review Operations Committee reports and provide

direction and/or feedback as needed.

- The Duluth Area Business Team (DABT) meets monthly and includes representatives from all Duluth Workforce Center partners (AEOA, Duluth Workforce Development, NEMOJT, SSB, Veteran's Rep, Wagner Peyser, VRS) who work with employers. Discussion focuses on employment trends, recent successes and challenges, and forecasted needs of area employers. Meetings provide opportunities for collaboration and sharing of resources.

CareerForce Duluth recently began hosting CareerForce Huddles. These are monthly meetings for all staff at the location, featuring a different organization, program, or topic each month. These are delivered virtually, to allow staff who primarily work remotely or in the field to attend. Huddles ensure all staff stay up-to-date on opportunities for cross-referral between programs. All staff also receive regular email communications about various employment and referral opportunities for clients.

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

As indicated in #2, partners located within the Duluth CareerForce location have established monthly meetings to ensure connectivity and coordination.

Strategies to promote connectivity and coordination among service providers who are within the local workforce development area, but not physically located in the CareerForce location include:

- 1) Participating in Duluth Workforce Development Board committees;
- 2) Actively engaging in workshops and community conversations focused on key issues;
- 3) Utilizing the State digital communication platform (Gov Delivery) as well as email lists to inform service providers and interested community partners of programs and events hosted by CareerForce.
- 4) Collaborating on grant-funded projects;
- 5) Participating in events hosted by other service providers and organizations;
- 6) Facilitating information sharing – i.e. sharing notices of activities that could benefit the service provider or those they serve;
- 7) Hosting focus groups or forums to discuss key issues and gather input;
- 8) Visiting service provider worksites to better understand what they do and who they serve;

In 2020, Duluth Workforce Development, SOAR Career Solutions, Community Action Duluth, and LISC Duluth formed the Wealth, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Sustainability (WEES) Working Group, which also included representatives from the African Heritage and Indigenous Communities. This group worked together over the course of a year to develop an action plan for ensuring the workforce development and entrepreneurship support systems in our community adequately support BIPOC individuals. Many of the strategies outlined in this plan are aimed at improving

connectivity and coordination of service providers, and will guide a next implementation phase in 2021-2022.

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

Staff from all programs frequently visit community organizations in person to share information about CareerForce services with both potential clients and staff who might make referrals. WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth staff hold regular office hours at Lake Superior College, where they meet with potential and currently enrolled clients. These staff have also established strong referral relationships with the College of St. Scholastica, University of Minnesota-Duluth, University of Wisconsin-Superior, and WITC to facilitate referral of future and current students who could benefit from Adult, DW, and/or Youth services.

YES Duluth staff serving in-school youth typically work on-site at both Denfeld and Duluth East high schools. There, they present in classes and meet with students one-on-one and in groups. They also connect with teachers and other school staff to create a web of support for students who are struggling. We have explored a similar relationship with Harbor City International School, as well as the Area Learning Center credit recovery program.

There are several actions we are taking to make CareerForce services in Duluth more accessible. Since April 2020 we have been providing all services virtually. While we intend to return to in-person services as soon as possible, we plan to continue offering program enrollment, individual assistance, program services and workshops virtually for those who prefer this approach. We also piloted office hours at the Duluth Public Library main branch, and at offices of community organizations like Family Rise Together and Lifehouse where staff can meet with current and potential participants on-site. We intend to explore expansion of this approach to offer neighborhood access points where customers can initially connect with our services, with a particular focus on creating one or more access points in western Duluth.

We have also increased efforts to market CareerForce Duluth services and programs in a variety of ways. We work with the City communications office to market through earned media, and are regularly featured in local newspapers and on TV news shows. Duluth Workforce Development and YES Duluth both have an active social media presence on Facebook and Instagram, and regularly use paid boosts as a way to reach targeted audiences. Duluth Workforce Development, AEOA, and NEMOJT all updated their websites to make connection with CareerForce more accessible. And we have done direct mailing through Comfort Systems utility bills, which go to all households in Duluth.

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

All elements of Career Services defined in WIOA are available, with a mix of in-person and online options.

- Basic Career Services
 - Eligibility determination typically takes place during an Individual Assistance conversation over the phone or in person, or during Re-Employment Sessions through Unemployment Insurance. Clients may also submit an online Request for Services to indicate initial interest and eligibility.
 - Intake and orientation to services available through the CareerForce system takes place once eligibility is established and a referral is made to a job counselor.
 - Initial assessment of skills, aptitudes, abilities, skill gaps, and support service needs are completed one-on-one with job counselors as part of program enrollment. For programs that require assessment of math and reading levels, Adult Basic Education offers on-site TABE and/or CASAS testing at CareerForce in Duluth.
 - Information about available supportive services is provided to enrolled clients by job counselors, based on assessments of needs and barriers to employment. Participants are given support service policies, and must sign acknowledgement of receipt of this information as part of enrollment paperwork. Where clients are identified as eligible for SNAP, Earned Income Tax Credit, Child Care Assistance, Medicaid, or other public benefit and assistance programs, referrals are made to St. Louis County or community partner agencies to assist with enrollment.
 - Job search and job placement assistance is available to the general public on a drop-in basis through our Career Lab, or one-on-one through in-person or virtual Individual Assistance appointments.
 - Recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers takes place during on-site and virtual hiring events and job fairs coordinated by CareerForce partners.
 - Referrals to and coordination of activities and other programs and services is frequently offered through the Career Lab or Individual Assistance appointments.
 - Labor market information is provided by a DEED Labor Market Analyst housed within the Duluth CareerForce location. The Labor Market Analyst publishes reports and data summaries, and offers in-person and recorded presentations summarizing local and regional labor market characteristics, employment trends, job vacancy rates, and information about in-demand occupations.
 - Performance and cost information is reported to the Duluth Workforce Development Board on an annual basis.
- Individualized Career Services
 - Comprehensive skill level and service needs assessments are conducted by job counselors as part of intake for program enrollment.
 - Assessment results are used to develop Individual Employment Plans, which set goals and objectives and map out service needs.
 - Individual counseling and career planning happens one-on-one with job counselors in person or by phone or web meeting.

- Group counseling takes place at monthly Job Club sessions, which typically occur in person.
- Pre-vocational services include both in-person and virtual workshops on resumes, interview skills, Creative Job Search, computer skills, and more.
- Internships and work experiences are available to youth, adult, and senior participants, and are coordinated by CareerForce partner agencies in partnership with area employers.
- Introductory financial literacy workshops are offered one-on-one during counseling appointments, and in-person in group workshops at the CareerForce location. More intensive needs for financial coaching and credit repair are referred to Community Action Duluth.

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

Because today's workforce is comprised of multiple generations of workers, our learning and language strategies must take into account their diverse needs, abilities, and preferences when it comes to learning materials and delivery. Technology not only makes this possible, it challenges us to become more responsive, flexible, mobile and agile. For this reason, we will continue working toward the following both locally and in partnership with DEED:

- Live and recorded virtual workshops available through the CareerForce website.
- Program applications, timesheets, manuals and other materials that can be accessed and completed online;
- Use of social media to extend connectivity (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn)
- Expanded computer literacy training for staff, program participants and the general public;

Additionally, we will ensure compliance with accessibility standards by:

- Providing assistive technology at the Workforce Center;
- Meeting established standards for IT accessibility, including access to local provider websites for all users.

Our local board recognizes the entire workforce development system must continue to enhance online services that virtualizes the CareerForce Center experience to augment services provided in person at CareerForce locations. Due to the size of technological investment that is necessary to accomplish this goal, the local board is unable to make significant contributions as a single entity. We support the increased state set-aside amount to accomplish this goal for all providers in the state, and will work with our state partners in testing promising strategies for their effectiveness in our local area. In the past year, significant gains have been made in this arena, as DEED has moved to a virtual format for all career workshops and many services, and these efforts will continue to be refined and optimized in order to reach and adequately serve as many job seekers as possible.

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.

Integrated case management is an effective strategy for helping individuals navigate across systems to access a range of services. At CareerForce in Duluth, individuals work closely with a single job counselor who helps them identify the services they need rather than multiple people each working to connect them with different resources. CareerForce Duluth partners coordinate with each other to avoid duplication and maximize services for program participants, and they also connect with the broader network of supportive service providers in the community. By doing this, providers can maximize resources and potentially serve populations who they may not otherwise reach.

To connect participants with needed support services, job counselors must have a broad understanding of the resources available in their community, including those provided by workforce system partners, community-based organizations, state or local agencies, and other organizations. The 2-1-1 Information and Referral program is available 24 hours/day, 365 days/year and is a valuable resource for case managers. Additionally, St. Louis County maintains a comprehensive online database of services and supports available in the community. Job counselors reach out to staff at community organizations on a regular basis to ensure there is mutual understanding of programs available, and that there can be a warm handoff when a client is referred.

Duluth Workforce Development, AEOA, and NEMOJT are all MFIP Employment Service Providers co-located within the Duluth CareerForce location. This offers direct connection to cash assistance, child care support, and other resources available through the County. Duluth Workforce Development and AEOA are also SNAP Employment & Training providers, which helps connect enrolled participants to SNAP benefits and vice versa.

Our Career Pathway Training programs offer a unique collaboration and coordination of resources by engaging multiple program and partners. Each pathway involves workforce partners, employers, higher education, Adult Basic Education, community-based organizations and others who work together to ensure individual progress. Each partner brings its own resources and supports that can be woven together to leverage available resources in a manner that provides exactly what the individual needs to be successful.

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

All required partners under WIOA are included as part of an Infrastructure Funding Agreement, which maps out both cash and in-kind contributions toward the operation of the Duluth CareerForce location. A Memorandum of Understanding governs partner roles, and outlines how cross-referrals and co-enrollments will take place.

Discrepancies and disagreements are first discussed by One-Stop Operator consortium partners in monthly Partner Meetings.

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

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

N/A

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.

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

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

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

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

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

State priorities focus on ensuring every Minnesotan has access to meaningful employment and a family-sustaining wage. This is accomplished through building a career pathway system that aligns local, state, and federal resources, policies and services to meet the workforce needs of business and industry and improves access to employment, education, and training services. The goals outline in the state

workforce strategic plan include reducing disparities, and building inclusive and employer-led industry sector partnerships.

With direct tie-in to the state's mission and goals, the Duluth Workforce Development Board (Duluth WDB) is committed to building partnerships that ensure employers have access to a skilled workforce to fill available jobs and that all people, regardless of background, can achieve meaningful employment and a family sustaining wage.

In service of this vision, the Duluth Workforce Development Board's current strategic priorities are to:

- Reach as many jobseekers as possible, and connecting them to training and/or employment;
- Use all the tools at our disposal to help employers meet their workforce needs;
- Continue building new partnerships to make our services more inclusive and accessible;
- Continue our focus on closing disparities in employment, educational attainment, and wealth;
- Continue leading efforts to address the digital divide;
- Serve as an active partner in rebuilding our local and state economy as part of pandemic recovery.

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 Duluth Workforce Board's goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce are to:

- i. Partner with local employers to increase awareness of career opportunities among youth and adult jobseekers, and connect them to career pathways in high-demand fields;
- ii. Work with local education and training providers to increase the availability of and access to programs that meet the needs of employers and job seekers;
- iii. Integrate workforce development into the K12 system to engage youth in career exploration, work readiness training, soft skills development, exposure to career pathways, work experience, and connection to post-secondary education and training while still in school;
- iv. Develop new and strengthen existing relationships with local service providers to deliver client-centered services through a coordinated and collaborative model;
- v. Reduce educational, skills training and employment disparities based on factors including race, disability, gender, and criminal background.

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.

All programs track the number of individuals served and exited each year, and whether the exit was successful. Youth program indicators are similar to those for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, but with greater emphasis on educational

development and credential attainment. These also align with a career pathways system approach, correlate with Duluth workforce board goals outlined in the previous section, and reflect identified strategies for preparing an educated and skilled workforce.

WIOA Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

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

Additional performance measures are tracked under other programs offered at CareerForce in Duluth:

- The Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Employment Services program tracks: Work Participation Rate, the percent of Universal Participants who fulfill participation requirements; and Self-Sufficiency Index, which measures the number of clients exited who remain off cash assistance three years later.
- Career Pathway Programs are funded through a variety of state competitive grants, and measure the number of enrolled participants completing training, obtaining employment, and achieving a certain wage increase over wage at enrollment.
- Youth programs funded through state formula and competitive grants track participation in career pathway exposure and employment readiness training, participation in work experience, and satisfactory performance reviews from work experience supervisors.

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

There are several strategies in place to align resources and achieve the strategic vision and goals of the local area board:

- Core program partners sign Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) outlining shared responsibility for operating the CareerForce location and offering workforce services.
- Partners communicate regularly to ensure resources in the local workforce development area are coordinated and leveraged to achieve maximum impact and support the vision and goals of the local workforce development board.
- Monthly partner meetings, membership on the local board, or involvement on committees facilitate information-sharing and keep partners informed of new and emerging initiatives, funding streams, and opportunities for collaboration and alignment.
- Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (REA) activities bring individuals receiving unemployment insurance benefits into the CareerForce location for personalized assessments and referrals to reemployment services. The goal of REA is to provide unemployed workers with early access to specific strategies that can help get them back into the workforce faster.
- Staff have a strong understanding of how different funding sources can be leveraged for specific purposes and utilize this strategy frequently. It is not uncommon for staff to braid funding to pay for all of the services needed by a given individual.
- CareerForce partners work with individuals and organizations in the community to maintain connectivity and facilitate alignment of resources. This is often accomplished through participation on boards and committees, engaging in community conversations, partnering on grant proposals, and other activities.
- Where clients are shared across organizations, a Release of Information is signed to allow case managers to communicate and coordinate with each other in the best interest of that client.

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

The Duluth Workforce Development Board actively collaborates with the Lake Superior Carl Perkins Consortium. Perkins is included as a required partner in the Duluth CareerForce location's Infrastructure Funding Agreement, providing in-kind support toward the operation of the one-stop center. Both the Secondary and Post-Secondary coordinators sit on the board's Emerging Workforce committee, and are involved with both the Healthcare and Construction working groups. The Director of Duluth Workforce Development also sits on the advisory committee for the Lake Superior Consortium.

There are a number of initiatives that Duluth Workforce Development and the Lake Superior Perkins Consortium work on together each year:

- Construct Tomorrow, a hands-on career fair focused on the construction industry which is attended by 1,200+ high school students and 250+ adults from around the region. Perkins assists with transportation costs so that students may attend the event.

- Professional development and externships for Career Technical Education teachers, to ensure they are up to date on skills and technology for our area's most in-demand career pathways.
- College and career fairs, hosted by Perkins and attended by Duluth students, including YES Duluth participants, for exposure to post-secondary education options in the area.
- SCRUBS camp, a hands-on summer program for high school students and young adults which exposes them to career pathways in the healthcare sector.

In addition to these annual events, there are a number of initiatives we are exploring in partnership with the Perkins Consortium. One is a project that aligns post-secondary training programs with the Minnesota career wheel infographic, so that students, parents, and advisors can better understand how different degree and certificate programs link to in-demand career pathways. This project may also include interactive elements like videos and websites to assist with career exploration. We are also exploring ways to strengthen Career Technical Education, and build better linkages with employers in the community. And we will continue to work together to deepen integration of career pathways into middle and high school across all subject areas, and provide stronger advising and support for students as they chart their post-graduation path.

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.

A variety of strategies will be implemented to expand access to employment opportunities for eligible individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment. The most significant of these is continued expansion of career pathway training, which packages technical skill development for in-demand occupations with academic and case management support. These short-term training classes offer participants an entry point for career-track employment, in a supportive learning environment. Partners, including both SOAR Career Solutions and Adult Basic Education, as well as Duluth Workforce Development, offer on-ramps to training, which provide various work readiness workshops and opportunities to resolve barriers to employment. Employers are actively involved in career pathway training, helping identify in-demand occupations, design curriculum, provide exposure to the job, and conduct mock interviews. This allows participants to build a direct connection to employment opportunities once they complete training. It also builds a connection between employer and job counselor, which allows them to work together to support success after hire.

In addition to career pathway training, each core program partner also plays a unique role in expanding access to employment for individuals with barriers to employment.

Duluth Workforce Development (DWD): As the administrator of WIOA programs in Local Workforce Development Area 4 (City of Duluth), DWD has engaged in new methods for increasing enrollment in dislocated worker, adult and youth

programming, specifically for those with a range of barriers to employment. One key strategy is to build new and strengthen existing partnerships with organizations who provide direct services to people of color and individuals with barriers to employment. In some instances, this partnership includes funding for direct outreach and engagement of populations who suffer the greatest employment disparities.

The Duluth Workforce Development Board also approved a new fourth priority of service for WIOA Adult clients, which allows Duluth Workforce Development to enroll priority populations who face the greatest employment challenges, including people of color, women seeking non-traditional careers, individuals with a criminal background, individuals who are or recently have been homeless, and others. The new Opioid National Emergency Grant will expand Dislocated Worker services to address individuals impacted by the opioid crisis, including disaster-related employment and connection to Peer Recovery Navigators and other services.

Our Older Worker program serves low-income individuals over the age of 55, providing connection to training and employment as well as referrals to other services to ensure participants are able to retain employment. Over the past year, this program has increased its focus on computer access and digital literacy training, significant barriers to accessing employment, health care, and other services.

YES Duluth also makes significant efforts to engage out of school youth, a population with a high incidence of barriers to employment, as a partner in the Opportunity Youth of Duluth collaborative. As part of this collective effort, YES Duluth seeks to connect youth with employment and/or paid work experience, offers incentives to complete a GED, and works with youth on employment readiness. YES Duluth is currently building new partnerships with community organizations on the front lines of connecting with disengaged youth, by providing work experience opportunities that are integrated with mentoring and supportive services.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS): The mission of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to empower Minnesotans with disabilities to achieve their goals for employment, independent living and community integration. Employment for those with disabilities is in integrated, competitive positions in the community, at or above minimum wage. Wages are not less than that customarily paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by non-disabled individuals. All of the individuals that VRS serve have at least one disability that has an impact on employment. In addition, many VRS clients are from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, as well as individuals with criminal histories. Barriers related to poverty are common as well.

VRS has expanded services to high school and transition aged youth, in the areas of job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, career exploration, and 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.

Job Service: Job Service /Wagner-Peyser staff coordinate with Unemployment Insurance staff delivering Reemployment Assistance sessions to increase awareness of CareerForce programs and services, aimed at individuals most likely to exhaust benefits. These sessions, held virtually and in person multiple times per week, reach individuals seeking employment and/or training. In addition to serving unemployment

insurance recipients, Job Service staff serve veterans and those not enrolled in eligibility based programs. Veterans with barriers to employment are case managed by the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program staff to find appropriate employment. The Senior Veteran Employment Representative works with regional businesses to promote veteran employment as well as monitor, report on, and ensure that performance standards are met or exceeded as specified in the Jobs for Veterans State Grant.

State Services for the Blind (SSB): SSB's Workforce Development staff provide counseling, training, job skills, and placement services for individuals who are blind, visually impaired, DeafBlind, or experiencing vision loss and looking for work. SSB also assists employers with pre-employment services, connecting future employees with companies through internships, mentoring opportunities and training that is customized to the business need or delivered on the job. CareerForce Duluth also has assistive and adaptive technology readily available for those who need it.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services: The Duluth Workforce Center utilizes State Relay and Interpreter Services (711) to assist those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The Northeast Region Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services office is also located in Duluth, just a few blocks from the CareerForce location.

- 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.

To expand access to supportive services for eligible individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, the local area board will work with entities carrying out core programs to ensure effective systems are in place to effectively meet the needs of individuals entering the public workforce system.

All CareerForce partners have policies on supportive services that ensure eligible individuals have access to the supports they need for both training and employment. Supportive services such as transportation, child care and dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized and consistent with the provisions of WIOA. The need for and provision of supportive services is documented in the participant's IEP (Individual Employment Plan).

Core partners determine need for supportive services by conducting an initial assessment to identify an individual's skill levels (including literacy, numeracy and English language proficiency) and aptitudes and abilities (including skills gaps) as well as barriers to employment. This assessment provides information that allows job counselors to facilitate referrals to and coordinate with other programs and services, including those within the one-stop delivery system and those provided by other organizations and agencies in the local area. Information and referral about specific programs and services provided by external partners may include, but is not limited to: Childcare Assistance, TANF, Child Support, SNAP, health insurance, transportation assistance, GED completion, and Earned Income Tax Credit.

A resource plan is also developed for each participant to identify and track the exact mix of funds planned to be used to pay for training and supportive services. Should

future funding become available that is more appropriate and/or takes priority over original resource plan funds, the resource plan may be modified. Additionally, the resource plan helps ensure that WIOA funds are not used to pay for training or services already covered by other sources.

- 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 pathways align education and training programs with industry needs and direct employer involvement to help individuals develop skills for in-demand jobs and advance in their careers, while helping employers access the skilled workers they need to compete.

Career pathways are at the center of the Duluth Workforce Development Board's work, at both a local and regional level. Center to this work are employer-led working groups focused on two of our primary industries – healthcare and construction. These working groups identify current and future workforce needs, and design strategies to meet those needs. They also foster collaboration between training providers, community-based organizations, and industry employers. Some of the outcomes of our work to date include infographics outlining career pathways and occupations, job fairs and career exploration events, and testing new strategies to help employers move internal candidates into hard-to-fill positions.

We also offer career pathway training, in partnership with SOAR Career Solutions, Adult Basic Education, Lake Superior College, and construction trades unions. Key components of this training model include:

- Shorter-term training opportunities that are available during nontraditional school hours or online;
- One-on-one career navigation that includes assessment of skills, strengths, and barriers to employment as well as access to supportive services;
- Entry-level “rungs” that focus on work readiness and that are accessible to adults with low reading and math skills and/or an unstable work history;
- Contextualized training that integrates adult basic education (ABE) and with occupational skills;
- Technical training that leads to industry-recognized post-secondary credentials that are portable and stackable;
- Engagement of employer partners to provide input on curriculum, expose participants to networking opportunities, and connect graduates to employment;
- Blending or braiding of funding streams to maximize results, including co-enrollments (as appropriate) with MFIP and WIOA programs.

In the future, we will seek out ways to integrate career pathway training with GED, credit recovery, and high school CTE to allow students working toward high school completion to simultaneously earn industry-recognized credentials and have exposure to paid work experience opportunities. Duluth Public Schools and Lake Superior College are both key partners in this endeavor.

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.

Employers are key customers, and form the foundation of our work at CareerForce. We engage and assist employers in a number of ways:

- Assistance with recruiting:
 - Assist with posting jobs through Minnesota Works
 - Invite to present at Job Club
 - Host hiring events at CareerForce
 - Host large job fairs, including the annual Northland Job Fair
 - Assist CareerForce customers with completing online job applications
- Assistance with hiring:
 - Allow employers to conduct interviews on-site at CareerForce
 - Allow CareerForce customers to participate in virtual interviews at CareerForce
 - Connect employers to resources like On the Job Training subsidies and the Work Opportunity Tax Credit
 - Provide subsidized work experience opportunities through YES Duluth and SCSEP
- Strategic workforce development
 - Support incumbent worker training through the Talent Development Program
 - Connect employers to MJSP, JTIP, and other state resources to support training
 - Work with employers to develop strategies to meet their workforce needs, such as apprenticeship and career pathway training
 - Engagement with regional talent attraction efforts that include work on housing, child care, broadband access, and community connection

Employer engagement is facilitated by CareerForce Employer Navigators. These individuals network through the Chambers of Commerce, industry associations, and other business groups to make connections and inform employers about our services.

Employers also engage through their involvement on the Local Workforce Development Board, where at least 51% of membership is from private business. Board members provide oversight of workforce development activities, share information on targeted sectors or occupations, establish credibility and access to employer networks, and/or engage other employers in program activities. As previously mentioned, the Duluth workforce board hosts two employer-led working groups focused on two key industry sectors – healthcare and construction.

The Duluth Workforce Development Board also engages employers to lead and/or participate in efforts to reduce disparities in employment. The Duluth and Northeast workforce boards co-hosted the Workforce Solutions Series, five large forums over three years that addressed topics like demographic trends, hiring people with disabilities, and strategies for diversity and inclusion. The Duluth board's Equity Committee created an Employer Action Guide which offers tools to assist employers with diversity and inclusion in recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and retention. The committee's next step is to host a series of smaller conversations on specific equity

topics, and to work one-on-one with employers who are committed to being equity champions.

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

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

The local workforce development system plays a key role in meeting the needs of business and there are multiple ways the local board can influence the workforce development system's effectiveness in this area.

The first step is to *better understand what they are experiencing*. To accomplish this, the Duluth Workforce Development Board partners with economic development and business organizations, including APEX, the Duluth Chamber of Commerce, the Lincoln Park Business Group, the Greater Downtown Council, Northforce, and the City Planning and Economic Development Department to learn about pain points in recruiting, hiring, and retention. The board's Construction and Healthcare working groups also provide deep insight into workforce challenges. There are often common themes that emerge across business sizes and types, for example: Difficulty finding applicants with the necessary qualifications, lack of diversity in the candidate pool, difficulty attracting qualified extra-regional candidates due to challenges finding housing, child care, and community connection, challenges managing a multi-generational workplace, and difficulty retaining diversity.

Once challenges are identified, the board *helps create an aligned and coordinated approach that conveys the full strength of the system and increases its efficiency*. The board plays a critical role in coordinating services and connecting partners to develop a comprehensive approach to business services. The end goal is to create single entry points for businesses, where they can connect with a broad range of services and resources. This requires all entities and staff responsible for business engagement to become familiar with the range of workforce services available to employers through CareerForce, and to have a point person they can bring in to assist with workforce strategy.

The board also works to ensure that local businesses clearly understand the benefits of engaging with the public workforce system. From posting employment opportunities at www.minnesotaworks.net, accessing current labor market information, utilizing training services, or getting assistance with hiring and recruitment, there are multiple ways the local workforce development system can support employers and their workers. Board members who are business representatives are the best advocates for what the workforce system has to offer, and play a key role in connecting their peers with workforce services.

The board also has a responsibility to *track and introduce new and innovative strategies to meet employer workforce demand*. For example, Registered Apprenticeship is an employer-driven model that combines on-the-job training with job-related instruction, which progressively increases an apprentice's skill level and wages. While most often associated with the skilled trades, there are currently more than 1,000 occupations – including careers in health care, information technology,

transportation, and energy – in which apprenticeship is used to meet business needs for qualified workers. Apprenticeship offers an industry-proven approach for preparing workers for careers while meeting employers' need for a highly-skilled workforce.

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

As stated above, the local area board works closely with regional economic development entities to coordinate services and facilitate connection between businesses and the workforce system. Workforce is increasingly the top issue for business attraction and expansion. Duluth Workforce Development staff and the DEED Workforce Strategy Consultant often get called in by economic development partners to discuss workforce resources and strategies.

Specifically, the local board works collaboratively with regional economic development providers by:

- Engaging economic development providers on the local board and/or committees;
- Participating on the Mayor's Economic Development Coalition;
- Working in close partnership with the City's Planning and Economic Development Department;
- Involving economic development providers in development of career pathways and sector specific initiatives;
- Serving on economic development advisory boards and committees, including those of Duluth LISC and Northforce;
- Actively participating in regional economic development planning, including the City of Duluth Comprehensive Plan, the APEX Regional Talent Forecast, and the Arrowhead Regional Development Corporation's strategic plan.

- 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.).

Our local area's Dislocated Worker program works closely with Unemployment Insurance at the local level, regularly connecting with individuals attending Re-Employment Sessions. As the structure of these sessions adjusts due to COVID, we will look for new opportunities to screen UI recipients for Dislocated Worker eligibility, and ensure a soft handoff. Dislocated Worker counselors also reach out directly to businesses experiencing layoffs of less than 50 people, to promote Dislocated Worker services. Services are also marketed via social and earned media coverage.

MinnesotaWorks also provides a connection to CareerForce services through Job Service (Wagner-Peyser) staff who periodically review the job bank for new registrations and connect with those individuals to provide information about available services. Additionally, Job Service staff will search the database for qualified job seekers to match relevant business job openings. Online resume review

assistance is available to anyone, and is specifically offered to all UI recipients to help them build employer-friendly, searchable content in MinnesotaWorks.

We also continue to promote Incumbent Worker Training, and have experienced high demand this past year as employers have become champions of this important program. We partner with the Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training to pool our resources, allowing more employers to be served through IWT across the region. Over the past few years, we have directed IWT funds toward high-need sectors, including both manufacturing and child care. As our region continues to face a workforce shortage, we will promote IWT as a solution to retain and upskill an existing workforce to meet employers' evolving needs.

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

The Duluth Workforce Development Board has been, and will continue to be, actively engaged in local and regional economic development activities. To begin, key economic development entities are members of the workforce board – APEX, Duluth LISC, and the University of Minnesota Center for Business and Economic Development. Additionally, the Director of Duluth Workforce Development serves on the board of Duluth LISC, and on the Mayor's Economic Development Coalition. These connections help ensure that workforce remains a key aspect of economic development across the city and region.

The City of Duluth made Workforce Development its own department three years ago, with a Director at the head. The Director serves as part of the Mayor's leadership team, and represents the needs of both employers and workers in all conversations. Workforce development features heavily in the economic development section of the City's Comprehensive Plan, and there is active collaboration between the Workforce and Planning & Economic Development departments on a wide variety of issues. Additionally, the Workforce Development Department holds responsibility for implementing the City's community benefits program, which attaches workforce goals to City-supported construction projects. This is a powerful tool to help build career pathways into construction for women, people of color, and disadvantaged workers.

Duluth Workforce Development is increasingly engaged in efforts to support entrepreneurship. For some time we have enrolled several participants per year in CLIMB, a component of the state Dislocated Worker program that supports laid-off workers in starting their own business. Demand for this program has increased during the pandemic, and will likely continue in the coming year. As part of the Wealth, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Sustainability (WEES) working group, we participated in the design of specific strategies to support entrepreneurs of color. Through YES Duluth, we have built new partnerships with BIPOC-led organizations helping develop young entrepreneurs, some of whom are co-enrolled in our youth program. And we are helping the City create a new BIPOC business directory to increase support for local small businesses.

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

To ensure continuous improvement of eligible providers of services through the system, the local area board will work in partnership with the State to:

- Connect with educational institutions and training providers to ensure they are familiar with the Eligible Training Provider List and the WIOA certification process, and provide assistance as needed;
- Work with new and existing training providers and programs of training services to ensure accurate eligibility criteria and performance information has been documented prior to submission DEED for final approval;
- Provide technical assistance for one-stop operators and partners, and eligible training providers, on the provision of services to individuals with disabilities;
- Make recommendations for approval or denial of providers and programs to the State as needed;
- Facilitate completion of eligible training provider performance reports as directed.

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

The local area board will facilitate connectivity between eligible training providers and employers as part of industry and sector partnerships to ensure employers have the ability to directly influence training/educational program design and content to guarantee it will meet their needs.

In addition to utilizing Individual Training Accounts to support job seekers in pursuing training through eligible providers, the local area board will work collaboratively with our local post-secondary education institutions to promote strategies that integrate training of existing workers for new and high-demand occupations. These strategies are essential in a time of workforce shortage, where both employers and workers benefit from investment in skill development to meet current needs. Strategies include incumbent worker training, Registered Apprenticeship, and customized training, as well as On-the-Job Training (OJT) and paid work experience.

The local area board will also track state trends toward expansion of eligible providers to include online training programs that meet Eligible Training Provider standards and offer greater flexibility as well as access to industry-recognized certifications not available through local programs.

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

The Duluth Workforce Development Board recognizes technology must play a greater role in service delivery in order to increase access to programs. Over the past year, we have built our capacity for virtual services and will continue to foster partnerships and processes to facilitate access for all. In coordination with all CareerForce offices in our region, we will ensure access to services through

seamless virtual access points, including staffed phone lines, email, social media messaging, virtual workshops, and web-based forms. To facilitate enrollment, CareerForce program staff have developed online, fillable application forms with an electronic signature option, methods of submitting and filing documentation electronically, and online assessment tools. This has not only streamlined the enrollment process, but has also addressed transportation and child care barriers that sometimes prevent individuals from accessing services.

Nearly every service offered in person will also be offered alternatively via telephone, e-mail or on-line through live and/or recorded workshops on a permanent basis. "CareerForce from Anywhere" provides workshops open to the public with no required eligibility. All of DEED's workshops are available on the state's YouTube channel 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Customers who do not have access to the internet are encouraged to access the on-line services through our network of willing public partners such as local libraries, Adult Basic Education facilities, and community-based organizations. Those who do not have access to high speed internet are able to receive services over the telephone during regular working hours. We recognize that this is not a perfect solution and support the border-to-border broad band efforts of our state to close the digital divide.

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

All programs within the Minnesota Workforce system are expected to be fully accessible to all Minnesotans. For this reason, Workforce Centers are equipped with accessible equipment that is monitored by the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to ensure it is current and in working order. Software developed by DEED for Workforce Centers is also designed to be fully accessible.

As required by DEED, an accessibility assessment is completed annually at the Duluth CareerForce location. Upon satisfactory completion of the assessment, DEED certifies the Duluth CareerForce location as ADA compliant. In addition, we have assistive technology devices available for persons with disabilities. Necessary paperwork, meetings and workshops are all offered with an option of alternative formats. Staff have been trained in the use of the adaptive technology for services to ensure compliance and equal access.

The Duluth CareerForce location is equipped with accessible equipment, which is monitored by DEED to ensure it is current and in working order. Software developed by DEED for CareerForce locations is also designed to be fully accessible. Additionally, all programs within the CareerForce system are expected to be fully accessible to all Minnesotans. Vocational Rehabilitation Services located within the Duluth CareerForce location is available to program staff for consultation, should unexpected issues of accessibility occur. There is co-enrollment and collaboration

between Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the other CareerForce 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).

One-stop partners work together to offer universal basic career services to all customers, as well as more intensive services to enrolled clients. All required partners under WIOA are part of an MOU and Infrastructure Funding Agreement to outline roles, resource contributions, and cost sharing agreements. Partners not housed within the CareerForce location may make in-kind contributions toward operation of the one-stop center, also outlined in the IFA. Both the MOU and IFA are re-negotiated every three years, with opportunity for IFA revisions annually due to staffing or other changes.

Duluth Workforce Development

The City of Duluth's department of workforce development provides a number of employment, job training, and career assistance programs for individuals who live *within the city limits of Duluth*.

- The **Youth Employment Services (YES) Duluth** program provides education and employment services for youth 16-24 years of age. YES Duluth participants can receive assistance with: GED completion, education and career planning, job search, paid work experience, education (including funding for eligible training programs), follow-up, and related services including mentoring and connection to other supports.
- The **Older Worker** program helps individuals who are 55 or older to build the experience and confidence they need to find permanent employment under the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Older Worker participants can receive assistance with skill and interest assessments, work readiness skill development, job search, and paid internships.
- The **WIOA Adult** Program serves individuals 18 years old or older who fall under one of our Priority of Service categories and are eligible to work in the United States. Male participants born after 1960 must be in compliance with Military Selective Service requirements, and all participants need to have a willingness and ability to make a commitment to staying in regular contact with a Job Counselor while in the program. WIOA Adult enrollees can receive assistance with: career planning, job search, job training (including funding for eligible training programs), follow-up, and related services.
- The **Dislocated Worker** Program offers services to help individuals who have lost a job through no fault of their own and need help returning to work find suitable employment. Services provided may include career planning and counseling, job search assistance, vocational assessments, and funding for counselor-approved training, as well as assistance in starting a business for those who select the CLIMB track. This program also serves individuals eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA).

- **Career Pathway Training** offers short-term career & technical education focused on in-demand occupations, with direct connection to employers and a wraparound support model.

Duluth Workforce Development also provides employment and training services for the **Diversionsary Work Program (DWP)**, **Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)**, and for **SNAP** (food stamp) recipients. DWP is a 4 month program that provides services and support to eligible families to help them move immediately to full time work rather than go on to MFIP. MFIP is a *Work First* focused program designed to assist public assistance recipients and enhance their efforts so they can successfully transition from Welfare-to-Work. Structured job search coupled with a *Work First* training curriculum, job club support network, and resume development, prepares individuals for work and emphasizes the importance and values of work.

AEOA (Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency)

AEOA is a private not-for-profit agency that provides various programs throughout the Arrowhead region of Minnesota. Each of AEOA's 13 offices provides unique services to the area it serves. The Employment Counselors located at CareerForce in Duluth provide Employment and Training services to families accessing SNAP, MFIP, and DWP in Southern St. Louis County. AEOA also provides State Dislocated Worker services.

Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training

The Northeast Minnesota Office of Job Training (NEMOJT) provides a number of employment and training services to the unemployed, underemployed, and those seeking new or different job opportunities within the seven counties of Northeast Minnesota (Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis *excluding the City of Duluth*).

Services available to eligible dislocated workers, youth, or adults include personalized career assessments and guidance, job search assistance and resources, funding for education, work experience, on-the-training opportunities, and support services.

State of Minnesota

Job Service is the program through which several of DEED's key services to job seekers are delivered. Services target three main areas: Universal Customers, Veteran's and Reemployment Assistance for recipients of Unemployment Insurance. Staff also assist customers utilizing services in the Career Lab and facilitate a variety of workshops. Job Service also provides services to the re-entry population through Second Chance Act programs.

State Services for the Blind (SSB) helps people who are blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind to live and work as independently as possible. Services include training people to adjust to blindness and vision loss, exploring assistive technology, and teaching adults how to prepare for, find and keep jobs.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) specializes in working with individuals with disabilities that impact employment, post-secondary training, independent living and community integration. VRS provides pre-employment transition services, vocational assessments, job tryouts, community-based evaluations, job search assistance, job

coaching, case management, tuition assistance and supportive services. Staff from Vocational Rehabilitation Services are available as needed, to consult with partners who happen to be working with individuals with disabilities.

Adult Basic Education

ISD709 Adult Basic Education provides math and reading skills assessments required for program enrollment, as well as GED preparation and testing. ABE also provides contextualized math and reading skills instruction as part of career pathway training.

Community Services Block Grant Employment & Training

Community Action Duluth (CAD) is our local CSBG E&T provider, and a frequent referral partner for a number of services. CareerForce programs refer clients to CAD for financial literacy training, transportation assistance, GED completion, and tax filing assistance. CAD refers clients to CareerForce for job search assistance, career pathway training, and WIOA program enrollment.

Housing & Urban Development Employment & Training

HUD funds employment and training through Community Development Block Grants, which are administered by the City of Duluth. The Duluth Workforce Development Board provides critical input into priorities and workforce needs, and CDBG E&T grantees are required to partner with CareerForce as a component of their program model.

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

Duluth Workforce Development's Adult Career Services provides career counseling, job search assistance, and when appropriate, education and training funding to eligible adults. Participants work one-on-one with a counselor to determine eligibility based on our priorities of service and, if eligible, enrolled in WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, or one of our Career Pathway Training programs. Across our Adult Career Services, activities can include:

- Identifying skills and strengths via structured interview and appropriate skills and vocational assessments;
- Career exploration using online tools like O*Net Online, Career One Stop and My Skills My Future;
- Researching labor market information to determine a match between interests, abilities and opportunities in our area including marketability of skills;
- Developing a plan as to steps the participant will take to achieve their goal and what support the counselor and program will provide while they are working towards their job goal;
- Connecting with training that leads to occupations in sectors of the economy that have a high potential for sustained demand or growth in our area including researching training options and financial aid options for the student and funding for tuition, books and fees for approved training programs;
- Case management including barrier identification and reduction while the student is upskilling or retraining;

- Assistance with job search during and after training including resume development and tailoring, interview practice, job search techniques and guidance;
- If appropriate, internship or work experience to build resume content during or after training;
- On the job training funding for those with job goals that could be learned while working in partnership with an area employer;
- Supportive services to overcome barriers identified in plan development;
- Job retention counseling to ensure employment fits job goal and participant is on track for success prior to successful exit from the program.

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

Youth workforce investment activities are provided by Duluth Workforce Development's Youth Employment Services (YES) Duluth program, serving youth and young adults ages 14 to 24, with a goal of increasing access to career pathways. The program's mission and outcomes align with local economic priorities to meet labor market demands while serving and supporting marginalized youth populations including youth with disabilities. Support is provided through effective collaboration across systems addressing the needs of youth including career development, work readiness, addressing individual health needs and the provision of support services.

YES Duluth program elements support success in education and employment goals through a variety of activities.

Education activities include:

- Basic skills development in math and reading.
- Classroom training including secondary, alternative secondary, GED and post-secondary.
- Prioritizing supports leading to credential attainment.
- Supporting youth in their transition from secondary to post-secondary education and occupation skills training.

Employment activities include:

- Work readiness skill building.
- Individualized strengths-based identification of skills transferable across positions and occupations.
- Work experience including subsidized employment opportunities, on the job training, job shadowing and entrepreneurial skill building.
- Transition to employment including job search skills, labor market research and financial literacy.

Identifying and overcoming barriers to success in education and employment includes the following program model:

- The development of an Individual Service Strategy with a youth-centered strengths-based approach.
- Long-term mentoring.
- Collaboration with education systems and employers, as well as supportive service agencies to address independent living skills and health needs.
- Incentives that reinforce learning to encourage participation in activities and/or achievement of goals.
- Follow-up services to assist youth sustaining a successful transition.

Workforce investment activities are delivered effectively through the development of sustainable public-private partnerships between government, education institutions, employers, and the existing and emerging workforce. Youth serving agencies and workforce development entities connect with these stakeholders as we support and improve our workforce system.

Key partners that support youth with disabilities are part of coordinated efforts. YES Duluth actively works with providers of physical and mental health services, disability services in secondary and post-secondary institutions and Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Coordinated strategies address aspects of identity and ability by assessing and building skills in self-awareness, goal-setting and self-advocacy. Youth are given access to a variety of vocational assessments such as interest inventories, aptitude testing, and functional capacities testing, as well as employment opportunities that provide feedback and skill building.

Commitment to accessibility for marginalized groups includes addressing the willingness of potential employers to hire youth. Our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion includes the development and strengthening of partnerships with employers. The adoption of the Diversity and Inclusion Tool Kit in our employer outreach and training practices will move the needle from seeing youth as “too risky” to seeing youth as a viable asset and investment in our community. Implementation of the Tool Kit will be used as a means to collaborate on training and teaching practices to increase hiring and retention of youth deemed “at-risk.”

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.

Coordination with secondary and post-secondary education programs is critical to the success and impact of our WIOA activities. We serve students at both levels of education who are not otherwise being assisted, providing one-on-one assistance provided in exploring career pathways and training options, enrollment in certificate and credential programs, assistance with scholarship applications and completing the FAFSA, and an array of support services. All is provided through a person-centered approach.

More specifically, we partner with the following entities to ensure we avoid duplication of services.

Secondary education partners include:

- Truancy Action Program through Lutheran Social Services located at Denfeld High School
- Check and Connect through Denfeld's Social Workers
- ISD709 Office of Education Equity Integration Specialists at East, Denfeld, and Area Learning Center
- Denfeld Full-Service Community Schools
- Social Work, Guidance Counselors, and Special Education staff
- GED and Credit Recovery initiatives through ABE and ISD709

Post-secondary partners include:

- Disability Services at Lake Superior College
- TRIO Services
- College Advisors at Lake Superior College
- Adult Basic Education

One feature of our WIOA activities that sets us apart from our partners is our ability to maintain services across the educational lifespan of the student. We stay in touch with the student if they have dropped out, transferred, or made changes during summer break. This ensures ongoing contact with a caring adult who helps keep the student on-track and working toward their educational and career goals. We also continually assess students' changing needs for supportive services, and frequently make referrals for assistance with housing, mental health, child care, and other work supports.

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.

In 2021, the Duluth Transit Authority is conducting a study to help it better meet the needs of the community. Duluth Workforce Development (DWD) will be a key member of the study's Stakeholder Committee. This will allow us to offer input on the bus routing and schedules to best support our participants.

Providing access to supportive services for eligible individuals is an important element of Duluth Workforce Development program case management. Program participants complete a strengths assessment at intake and supportive services are provided in response to identified needs to increase participants' stability and reduce their barriers to employment. Supportive services provided include transportation assistance, vouchers to purchase clothing or tools required for work, financial assistance for participants to attend training programs, housing and emergency financial assistance.

During the pandemic, programs have increased accessibility to supportive services by expanding the options for transportation assistance, providing eGift cards, as well as expanding the availability of one-time emergency assistance. As the digital divide became even more evident, Duluth Workforce Development also expanded support for the technology needs of the community, partnering with PCs for People to purchase low-cost laptops for CareerForce participants.

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.

System coordination is threaded through every level of CareerForce through a variety of regularly planned meetings with partners, staff and in some cases stakeholders. Training and information regarding initiatives and regulations are provided at Job Service Managers meetings and are then brought to local CareerForce staff through regular bi-weekly meetings and e-mails. Directors of the Workforce Development Areas meet monthly through the Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards and have regular updates from DEED leadership. A new quarterly meeting between MAWB and DEED CareerForce partners at the management level has been developed to ensure an understanding of the services provided and information sharing regarding service delivery and relevant updates. Local and regional partner and staff meetings are held monthly to discuss service delivery, CareerForce operations, initiatives and plans. A recently developed referral and resource database will be accessible to all staff electronically to facilitate referrals for each CareerForce partner and staff throughout the state. This means that no matter which CareerForce office a customer calls, we will be able to provide a warm handoff to the person within the system who can best serve their needs.

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.

Duluth Adult Education provides a number of services that qualify as workforce investment activities that are recognized and coordinated with the local board.

The Duluth Adult Education Manager holds a seat on the Duluth Workforce Development Board. The manager also is the chairperson of the Emerging Workforce Committee (Youth Committee) which meets monthly and acts as an advisory committee to Duluth Youth Employment Services. The Duluth Adult Education Manager also serves on the Workforce Development Board Executive Committee that helps define agenda for the Board.

Duluth Adult Education provides academic testing in the form of CASAS assessment for participants of various programs provided through the one-stop system at the CareerForce Center in Duluth. This basic academic assessment process determines a participant's basic reading and math level as a component of enrollment into various programs. This service can result in co-enrollment opportunities for participants that may need to brush-up skills, gain computer literacy skills or who may need to complete a GED or credit-recovery for a High School Diploma.

The Local Workforce Development Board also invests in career pathway trainings through various grant opportunities such as Pathways to Prosperity and Department of Labor and Industry LEAP grants. Partners in this training model consist of the City of Duluth, SOAR Career Solutions, Duluth Adult Education and Lake Superior College.

Industry trainings selected are done so with LMI local data in mind and currently consist of Certified Nurse Assistant, CDL, Health Service Certificate, Construction Trades. Duluth Adult Education provides academic basic skill testing for participant entrance into this training model using the CASAS assessment. Duluth Adult Education also provides a 30 to 40 hour long industry-contextualized Bridge class for all participants selected into a Career Pathway training. Bridge instruction provides foundational skills in digital literacy, reading, and math as well as improvement in study skills, test taking skills and basic employment skills that are needed to be successful throughout the training. Finally, Adult Education provides integrated instruction alongside Lake Superior College instructors or Industry instructors to support participants' successful completion of the short-term training. This training model has proven highly successful, and has great potential to expand to other occupations and industry sectors.

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

Vocational Rehabilitation Services collaborates 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 within the CareerForce location and offered virtually. Each CareerForce location provides an orientation to services available to assist job-seekers make an informed choice of service provider. Direct service staff participate in cross-training to ensure they understand the services offered by the various partners, and the eligibility criteria for each program.

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

CareerForce agency partner managers, including VRS managers, meet monthly to identify and implement regional services including career, training, and/or follow-up services for jobseekers. These meetings allow for discussions leading to program alignment of goals. Assigned VRS staff attend monthly DABT (Duluth Area Business Team) meetings to collaborate among agencies on job leads and identifying needs of area businesses and job seekers to increase effectiveness of CareerForce services and reduce duplication of services. Partners also offer monthly staff trainings (CareerForce Huddles) to provide updates and descriptions of services and programs so that all

CareerForce staff are well informed about partner services. In 2021 “bite-sized disability modules” will be available to staff on the CareerForce website. VRS managers and staff attend and participate in meetings and committees of the Duluth Workforce Development Board and contribute to many initiatives, including initiatives to promote and enhance diversity and inclusion.

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

WIOA Section 107 (d)(12)(B)(i)(I) states that the chief elected official in a local area shall serve as the local grant recipient for, and shall be liable for any misuse of, the grant funds allocated to the local area. In Local Workforce Development Area 4 (City of Duluth), this is Mayor Emily Larson.

WIOA Section 107 (d)(12)(B)(i)(II) states that the chief local elected official may designate an entity to serve as a local fiscal agent to assist in the administration of grant funds. The entity that has been designated under this provision that serves as the local fiscal agent is the Duluth Workforce Development Department of the City of Duluth, under the oversight of Director Elena Foshay. Duluth Workforce Development staff are located in the Duluth CareerForce location. Fiscal management and accounting of grant funds is done by the City of Duluth’s Auditor’s office, with oversight from the City Auditor, Josh Bailey.

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.

Duluth Workforce Development adheres to uniform administrative requirements pertaining to procurement for sub-grantees and vendored services, listed in 29 CFR 97.36. The Duluth Workforce Development Board (Duluth WDB) shall make recommendations to the Mayor of Duluth on the most effective designation of administrative entities, grant recipients and program operators for the area with the exception of the State of Minnesota Job Service, as the administrative entity and grant for Wagner-Peyser, Veterans Title 38 programs and unemployment insurance.

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

The board will soon be working on selection of the One Stop Operator by July 1, 2021, as required under WIOA. As required by WIOA, the board will conduct a competitive

process that includes a cost contribution analysis to ensure bids accurately reflect the cost of operating the one-stop center.

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

Overall performance accountability measures for the state are negotiated every two years between DEED and the U.S. Department of Labor, covering all WIOA programs. Local Workforce Development Area 4 – City of Duluth – then works with DEED to set local performance targets to track and demonstrate progress toward our goals. These targets are based on past performance and local conditions, and are balanced with performance targets elsewhere in the state to ensure fair contribution toward statewide goals.

Targets for state formula and competitive grants are set in negotiation with DEED. LWDA 4 proposes performance targets, which are approved by DEED as part of annual reviews of work plans. These targets may be adjusted through work plan modifications throughout the year if needed.

Targets for subgrantees are assigned based on negotiated program goals approved by DEED.

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.

Since 2016, the Workforce Board's Governance Committee has undertaken a number of initiatives to help ensure board remains aligned with the standards for a high-performing board.

- Set a Board vision and goals that align with the Governor's Workforce Development Board vision and goals, as well as local workforce priorities.
- Created DWDB Bylaws to ensure compliance with WIOA (April 2016), updated to reflect changes to state policies in September 2019
- Developed:
 - Conflict of Interest policy (July 2016)
 - DWDB Task Calendar, which outlines annual tasks (e.g. update policies, chair/vice-chair nominations, term renewals, new member orientation) (August 2016)
 - Board attendance policy (September 2019)
- Created onboarding process for new members, which includes:
 - Orientation with Workforce Director (January 2017)
 - Online application (March 2019)
 - Interview between interested candidates and governance committee member (January 2021)
- Conducted board assessments related to:

- Member satisfaction/engagement (February 2017)
- Committee engagement and participation (January 2019)
- Board and Committee diversity (June 2019)
- Developed job descriptions for Board members, Board chair, Secretary, and Vice-chair (May 2018)
- Worked with committee chairs to develop, for each committee:
 - Committee chair job descriptions (March 2019)
 - Committee descriptions (September 2020)
 - Member rosters (September 2020)
- Developed Workforce Board Appointment Process Map to guide recruitment efforts. The map outlines the step-by-step process for reaching out to interested members, reviewing applications, recommending members to the executive committee, approving members, and orientation (January 2020).
- Created:
 - Exit interview (January 2020), for members who recently retired from board
 - Board member onboarding interview (December 2020), for newer members who have served for 6 months to a year
- Developed an annual calendar to help the board stay on top of yearly monitoring and implementation tasks
- Participated in the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) process, where all board members took a self-assessment and had an individual review session, and then participated in a series of three workshops to build cultural competency
- Convene two employer-led sector initiatives focused on healthcare and construction
- Participate in an annual meeting of both workforce boards in the region to discuss regional issues and priorities

In addition, the governance committee continues to work on member recruitment, with a special focus on increasing board representation among people of color. Part of this work includes building new strategic partnerships with organizations led by people of color in the community, with a focus on board committees as a key nexus for relationship building.

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.

To maximize informed customer choice and to provide training services, Duluth Workforce Development staff, working with the individual, identify possible eligible training providers and upon the individual's selection of a training provider, coordinate funding sources and arrange for payment to the training provider through an individual training account if the training services are directly linked to a locally in-demand career. It is anticipated that all training services for WIOA Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker participants will be provided through individual training accounts, and that the local board will not provide training through a training contract unless the local board

determines that providing training through a contract is necessary and that the requirements for implementing a training contract have been met.

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.

To help focus and strategize, the board gathered stakeholder input in a variety of ways:

- Participated in at least five listening sessions hosted by the City of Duluth and other community organizations, where community members shared needs that have emerged as a result of COVID-19.
- Co-convened the Duluth Digital Inclusion Partnership, which brings together community organizations, the school district, and local foundations to tackle the digital divide.
- Met with the City of Duluth Indigenous, African Heritage, Human Rights, Disabilities, and Community Development commissions to discuss community needs and how workforce development can better serve most affected populations.
- Hosted a facilitated virtual discussion with youth-serving agencies in the community to identify and strategize around youth needs related to the pandemic.
- Hosted facilitated virtual discussions with the full workforce board and all committees to identify community and employer needs and strategies to address them.
- Hosted facilitated virtual discussions with the Construction and Healthcare working groups to identify workforce challenges and opportunities related to the pandemic.
- Hosted a facilitated discussion with manufacturing employers to identify workforce challenges and discuss strategies to address them.
- Participated in a regional economic development virtual strategic planning session to identify workforce trends emerging from the pandemic and determine strategies to support economic revitalization.

Public comment was solicited by posting the draft plan on the City of Duluth website for 30 days. Notification of the public comment period was sent to workforce board members, CareerForce and community partners, and other key stakeholders. Comments received were logged, and revisions were made to the final plan based on input received.

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.

Since all CareerForce locations in the northeast region closed to in-person services in April of 2020, we have made incredible strides in transitioning to technology-enabled intake and case management. All workforce providers utilize Workforce One as their primary online case management system. Providers are currently working toward utilization of Electronic Document Storage, with the goal of eliminating the need for paper client files in the next couple of years. Job counselors regularly use electronic means for document submission, and utilize Docusign to obtain client signatures. One-on-one counseling is provided by phone, email, and webinar depending on client needs and technology skills/access. Workshops are currently all offered virtually, with enrollment through Minnesota Works. When we return to in-person services, we will continue to offer these options for virtual intake, case management, and service delivery as an option to all CareerForce clients.

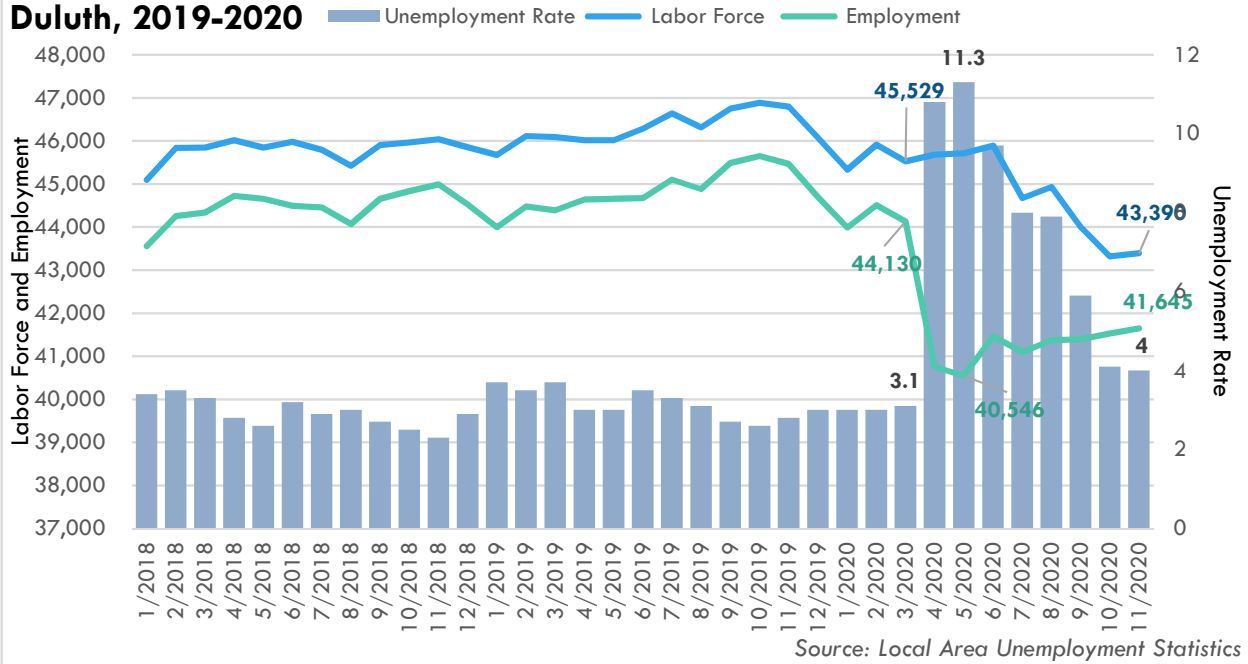
31. Describe how the workforce needs of your area have been impacted as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. What specific industry sectors and what specific populations (by race/ethnicity, age, and educational attainment) have been most affected and how?

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

Unemployment Rates and Labor Force

Prior to the onset of the coronavirus in March of 2020, the unemployment rate in Local Area 4 was 3.0. Two months later in May, the unemployment rate in the City of Duluth peaked at 11.3 before declining consistently through November to 4.0. However, the size of the labor force in Duluth decreased considerably from before the pandemic. In Duluth, 2,521 people left the labor force between February and November 2020, a decline of 5.8%. In the entire Northeast region, the labor force declined by 4.5% or 7,400 workers. The decline in the labor force contributed more to the fall of unemployment rates than the actual decrease of the number of unemployed workers. Since the peak of unemployment in May 2020, the number of unemployed fell by 3,419, 68% of which was attributed to a decline in the labor force and only 32% of which was due to an increase in employment.

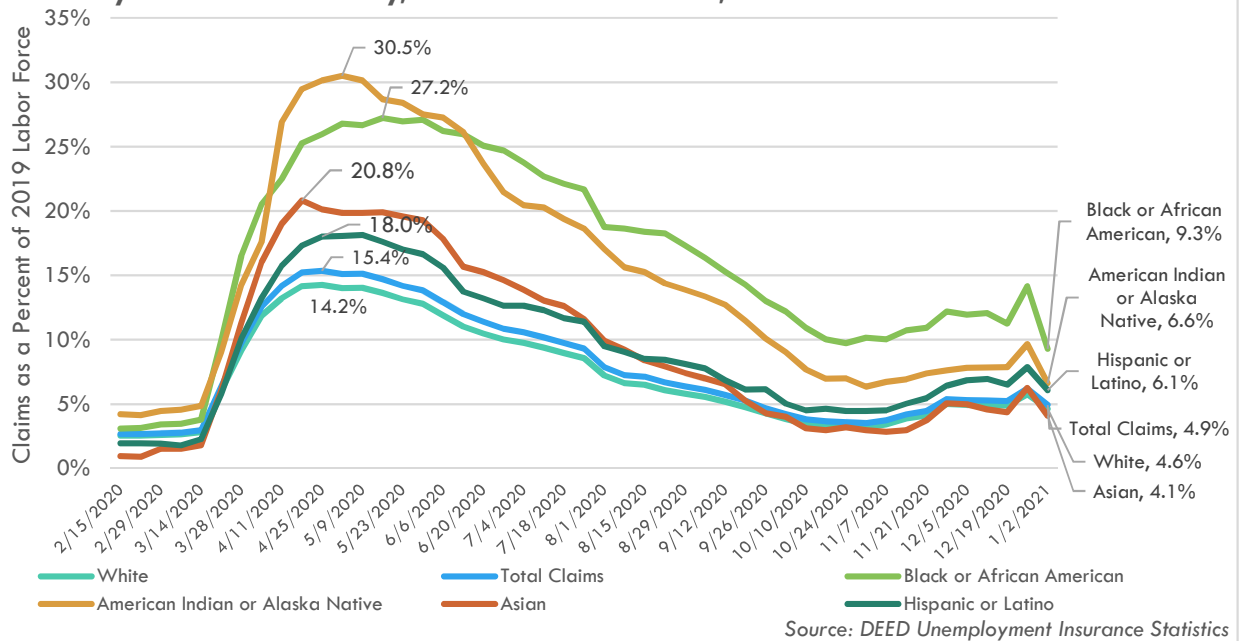
Figure 1. Labor Force, Employment and Unemployment Rate in Duluth, 2019-2020



Unemployment Claims

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

Figure 2. Continued Unemployment Claims as a Percent of Labor Force by Race and Ethnicity, Northeast Minnesota, 2020



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

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

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

Continued claims were distributed similarly by occupation. A fifth of all claims filed since the pandemic were made by workers in Food Preparation and Serving Related occupations. An additional 21.7% were filed by the combined Construction and Extraction and Sales and Related occupational groups. With average weekly claims as a share of jobs, the most impacted occupational groups were Farming, Fishing, and Forestry (39.7%), Construction and Extraction (23.8%), Food Preparation and Serving Related (17.8%), Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media (10.5%), and Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance (10.3%).

Risk of Long-Term Unemployment

DEED's Profile of Risk of Long-Term Unemployment helps to identify which types of workers and sectors could be at higher risk of prolonged unemployment since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020. In Minnesota, the share of women claimants was larger relative to the

share of women in the labor force and the average number of weeks on unemployment insurance (UI) for women was larger than for men.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For information about this tool contact alessia.leibert@state.mn.us

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

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

Demographics | Job and firm characteristics | Wage and work status | Top 65 occupations by UI spell

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

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

Additional Workforce Characteristics

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

Prior to the pandemic, demographic trends pointed toward a tightening labor market as the population and workforce continued to age. The population of Duluth is projected to decline slightly over the next 20 years. According to the Minnesota State Demographic Center, the largest declines are expected in the 55-64 and 65-74 age groups as many in the Baby Boomer generation age into older age groups and out of prime working ages. Correspondingly, the 75-84 and 85+ age groups are expected to grow the most over the same period.

Table 1. Population Projections, 2020-2040				2020-2040 Change	
WDB 4 - City of Duluth	2020 Projection	2030 Projection	2040 Projection	Numeric	Percent
Under 5 years	3,784	3,812	3,487	-298	-7.9%
5-14 years	8,953	7,615	7,594	-1,360	-15.2%
15-24 years	12,312	11,350	10,385	-1,927	-15.7%
25-34 years	11,401	10,168	9,606	-1,795	-15.7%
35-44 years	9,727	10,944	10,114	387	4.0%
45-54 years	9,244	9,376	10,984	1,740	18.8%
55-64 years	12,515	8,884	9,365	-3,149	-25.2%
65-74 years	11,364	12,067	8,899	-2,464	-21.7%
75-84 years	5,575	9,706	10,472	4,897	87.8%
85 years & over	2,221	2,695	4,659	2,438	109.8%
Total	87,096	86,616	85,566	-1,531	-1.8%

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center

Mirroring the population trends, Duluth's labor force is also projected to shrink in size and get older through 2030. The 75+ age group of workers is expected to expand the most, followed by the 65-74 age group. Meanwhile, the 55-64 age group of workers is expected to decline -29% as Baby Boomers age out of the labor force. Workers aged 16 to 24 years old are also expected to decline in number over the next decade.

Table 2. Labor Force Projections, 2020-2030				
WDB 4 - City of Duluth	2020 Labor Force Projection	2030 Labor Force Projection	2020-2030 Change	
			Numeric	Percent
16 to 19 years	2,509	2,305	-204	-8.1%
20 to 24 years	5,568	5,146	-422	-7.6%
25 to 44 years	18,589	18,575	-14	-0.1%
45 to 54 years	7,562	7,670	108	1.4%
55 to 64 years	8,298	5,890	-2,408	-29.0%
65 to 74 years	2,625	2,787	162	6.2%
75 years & over	343	546	203	59.1%
Total Labor Force	45,493	42,919	-2,575	-5.7%

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

The City of Duluth become more diverse since 2000. While the White population declined 4.3%, the share of people of color grew 2,453 people or 38%. The only group of color that declined was that of American Indian and Alaska Natives. The largest group of color in the city was those of Two or More Races at 4.1%, followed by people of Hispanic or Latino origin (2.3%), and Black or African Americans (2.3%). Duluth's future workforce is even more diversity. While people of color make up just over 10% of the city's population as of 2019, they make up just under 25% of K-12 students in Duluth Public Schools.

Race and Hispanic Origin, 2019	WDB 4 - City of Duluth				Minnesota	
	Number	Percent	Change from 2000-2019 Numeric Percent		Percent	Change from 2000-2019
Total	85,915	100.0%	-1,003	-1.2%	100.0%	13.1%
White	77,076	89.7%	-3,456	-4.3%	82.8%	4.7%
Black or African American	1,959	2.3%	544	38.4%	6.4%	107.6%
American Indian & Alaska Native	1,565	1.8%	-557	-26.2%	1.0%	5.5%
Asian & Other Pac. Islander	1,388	1.6%	370	36.3%	4.8%	87.8%
Some Other Race	443	0.5%	192	76.5%	1.9%	58.1%
Two or More Races	3,484	4.1%	1,904	120.5%	3.0%	99.9%
Hispanic or Latino origin	1,981	2.3%	1,060	115.1%	5.4%	108.9%

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

The poverty rate for residents of Duluth is nearly double that of the state of Minnesota. The poverty rates for people of color are in some instances double again that of the poverty rate for the entire population of Duluth. Black or African Americans and American Indians have the highest poverty rates, at nearly 50%.

	Total Population	Income below the poverty level	Poverty Rate (% below pov. level)	Income at or above the poverty level	Minnesota Poverty Rate
White Alone	72,706	11,586	15.9%	61,120	7.3%
Black or African American Alone	1,572	767	48.8%	805	28.6%
American Indian Alone	1,503	745	49.6%	758	31.3%
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	1,170	407	34.8%	763	13.7%
Some Other Race Alone	433	179	41.3%	254	19.7%
Two or More Races	3,116	959	30.8%	2,157	16.3%
Hispanic or Latino	1,642	445	27.1%	1,197	18.6%
Total Population	80,500	14,643	18.2%	65,857	9.7%

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

Labor force participation was lower and unemployment rates higher for the youngest people in the labor force, workers of color, veterans, the disabled, and those with the lowest levels of educational attainment. Workers of Two or More Races and American Indian and Alaska Native workers, in particular had unemployment rates three and four times that of the labor force average. Those with less than a high school diploma were also more than three times as likely to be unemployed. Duluth labor force participation was lower and unemployment rates higher, than in the state as a whole.

	WDB 4 - City of Duluth	Minnesota
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	In Labor Force	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate	Labor Force Partic. Rate	Unemp. Rate
Total Labor Force	48,403	67.0%	4.4%	69.7%	3.6%
16 to 19 years	3,574	55.2%	13.1%	53.2%	11.0%
20 to 24 years	9,989	81.9%	5.3%	84.6%	6.0%
25 to 44 years	18,581	88.9%	3.2%	88.8%	3.2%
45 to 54 years	7,428	82.3%	4.8%	87.6%	2.7%
55 to 64 years	6,712	66.2%	2.0%	73.0%	2.8%
65 to 74 years	1,853	24.9%	1.7%	27.9%	2.2%
75 years & over	261	4.3%	6.9%	6.6%	2.4%
Employment Characteristics by Race & Hispanic Origin					
White alone	44,598	67.6%	3.9%	69.3%	3.0%
Black or African American	944	59.2%	5.3%	71.3%	8.8%
American Indian & Alaska Native	652	52.6%	16.9%	58.9%	12.6%
Asian or Other Pac. Islanders	757	62.7%	11.7%	71.2%	4.3%
Some Other Race	159	65.4%	0.0%	77.7%	6.1%
Two or More Races	1,309	65.9%	12.3%	73.6%	7.4%
Hispanic or Latino	866	66.8%	7.3%	76.5%	6.1%
Employment Characteristics by Veteran Status					
Veterans, 18 to 64 years	1,605	71.2%	6.1%	80.4%	3.5%
Employment Characteristics by Disability					
With Any Disability	2,825	47.8%	9.6%	53.0%	8.6%
Employment Characteristics by Educational Attainment					
Population, 25 to 64 years	32,735	81.7%	3.3%	84.5%	3.0%
Less than H.S. Diploma	1,085	55.2%	13.1%	66.3%	8.3%
H.S. Diploma or Equivalent	5,710	72.2%	6.0%	78.5%	4.2%
Some College or Assoc. Degree	11,458	80.0%	3.6%	85.3%	3.0%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	14,458	91.1%	1.4%	90.0%	1.7%

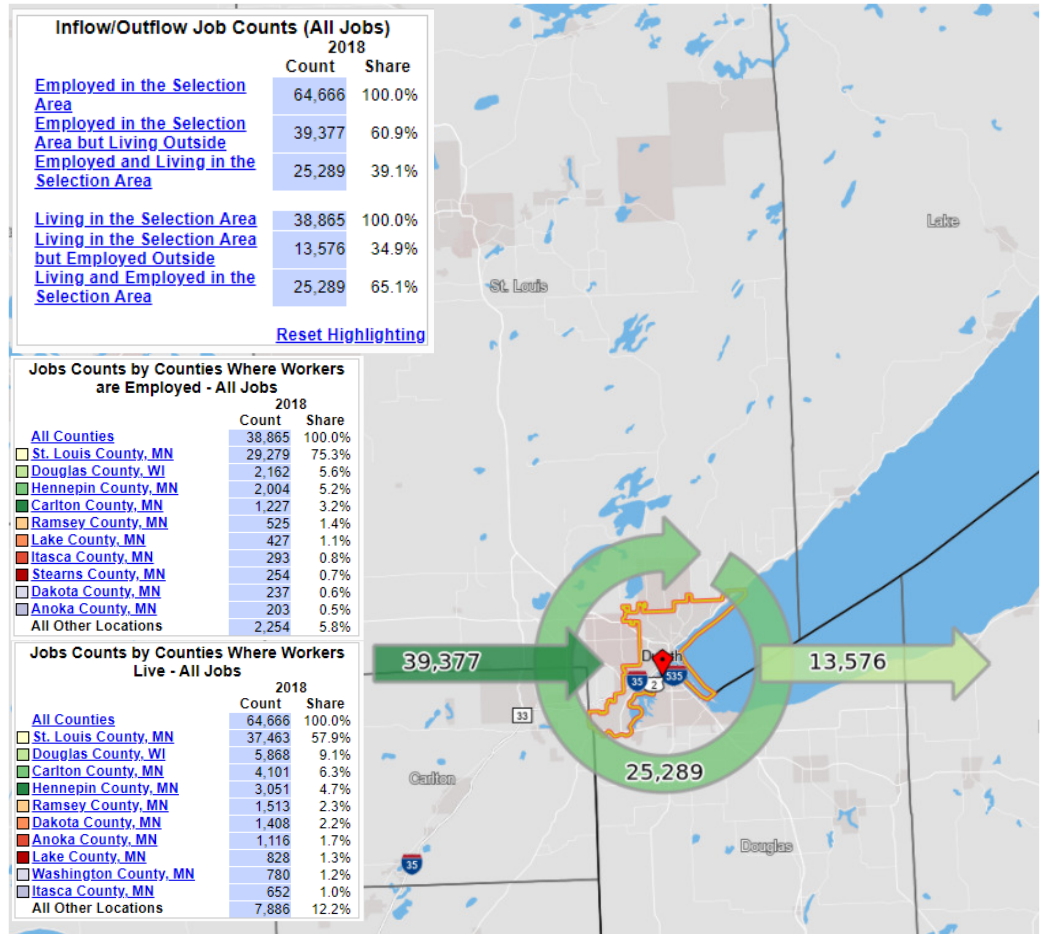
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates

Job Flows

The U.S. Census' OnTheMap tool shows the commuting patterns for workers that are employed in the City of Duluth as well as those that live in Duluth and are employed elsewhere. Of the 64,666 jobs in the city in 2018, 39.1% were held by workers that lived in Duluth and 60.9% of workers lived elsewhere and commuted in. A total of 38,865 workers lived in Duluth in 2018, 65.1% of which were also employed within the city limits. A total of 25,289 jobs were held by people that both lived and worked in Duluth.

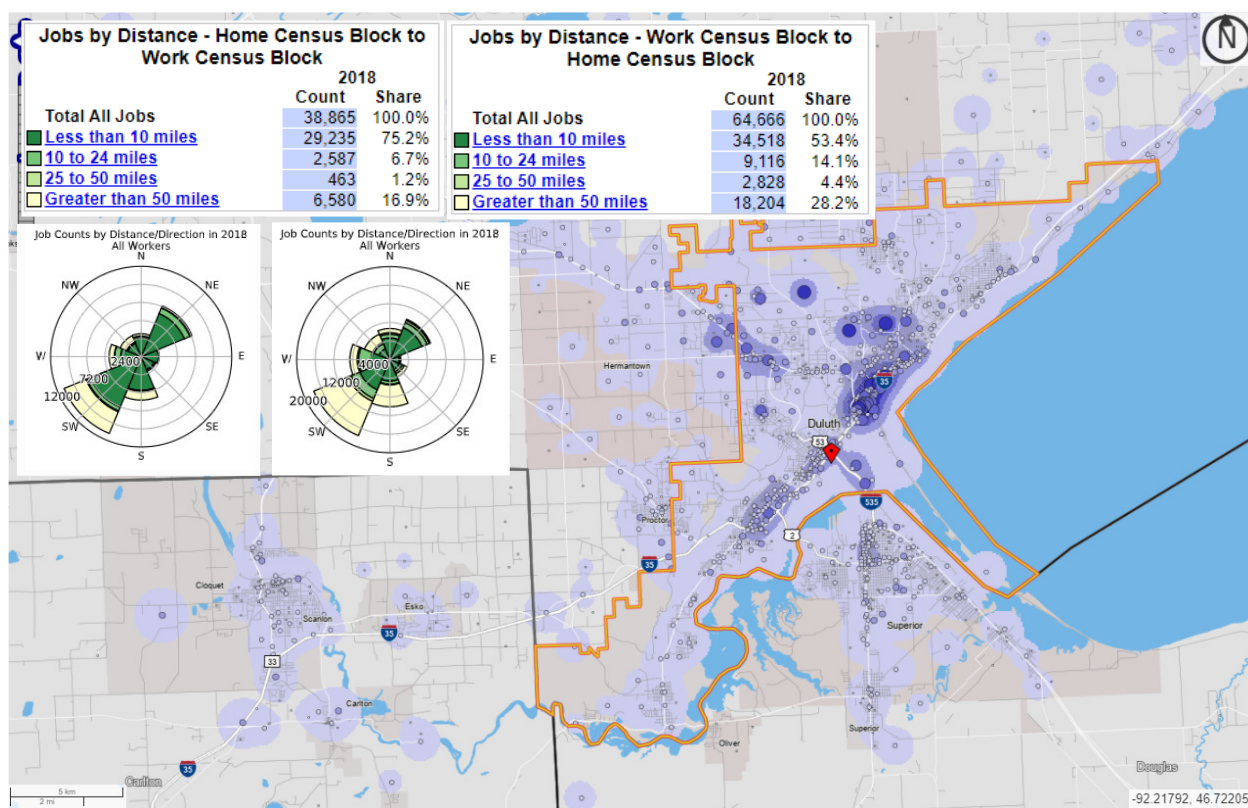
Of the jobs in Duluth, most were held by residents of St. Louis County. The next largest shares (9.1%) lived in Douglas County, Wisconsin, Carlton County (6.3%), or Hennepin County (4.7%). At least 13% of Duluth's jobs were held by residents of the Twin Cities Metro and over 8% of workers that live in Duluth were employed in the Twin Cities. It is expected that Duluth will attract a greater share of remote workers as a result of changing work patterns due to the pandemic.

Figure 5. Job Flows for those Employed or Loving in Duluth, 2018



More than 75% of the workers living in Duluth live within 10 miles of their job. Workers that live outside of Duluth but are employed in the city are more likely to have longer commutes, but over half still live within 10 miles of their jobs. If employers retain more remote work options, this could have a significant impact on commuting patterns.

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



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

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

Some of the key workforce needs that have emerged include:

- **Digital inclusion:** Many households in our community lack computers and internet access. Our initial focus was on leveraging resources to provide free devices and subsidized internet connection to students, jobseekers, and seniors. That focus is now shifting toward improving digital literacy skills, connecting more people to career pathways in the IT sector, and planning to improve broadband access.
- **Women leaving the workforce:** Large numbers of working age women left the workforce to care for school-age children during the pandemic. As schools

reopen, we will need a focused strategy to help them re-enter the workforce, including potentially training for new careers or identifying different career paths that allow more flexibility.

- **Older adult unemployment:** Many older adults left or were forced out of the labor force at the start of the pandemic. Some will need to return to earn additional income, but will likely experience a lack of the technical and digital literacy skills needed. We will continue our focus on digital literacy training for older adults paired with employment counseling and paid internships.
- **Skill training:** There is a clear mismatch between the skills of the available, unemployed workforce and the skills needed by employers who are hiring. The board will continue working with employers to re-envision minimum qualifications and build in on-the-job training. The board will also work with local two- and four-year colleges to identify short-term credentials that will quickly upskill workers for available jobs.
- **Youth engagement:** Youth and young adults in our community have become completely disengaged from both school and work, and are struggling with food, housing, and mental health. Much effort needs to go toward outreach and re-engagement, meeting youth where they are at with bundled services with the goal of reconnecting them to education and/or employment.
- **Barriers to employment:** The pandemic has moved many families deeper into poverty, which means they will face even more difficult, stacked barriers to employment. Workforce staff will train on Trauma Informed Care, and will take a more comprehensive approach that combines supportive services with stronger connections to programs and supports offered by partner agencies to address challenges like housing, child care, transportation, mental health, and substance abuse.

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

Reducing employment disparities is a top priority of the Duluth Workforce Development Board. The board has deepened its efforts over the past two years, and will continue to pursue a number of strategies to reduce disparities and improve diversity and inclusion in the workforce system in our local area.

- **Professional Development:** The board and all CareerForce staff in the region participated in the Intercultural Development Inventory, a self-assessment of cultural competency combined with a series of workshops on culture and inclusion. The board continues to include training on equity and diversity as part each meeting. Staff also participate in training on diversity and equity topics on an ongoing basis. Most recently, Duluth Workforce Development obtained a grant to build a trauma-informed approach to our work. This approach will help us better serve individuals who have experienced trauma, both recent and historic, with a holistic and empowerment-based focus.

- **Participation in Stakeholder Groups:** Duluth Workforce Development is a participant in the Wealth, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Sustainability (WEES) working group. This stakeholder group convenes BIPOC leaders and community partners to improve the way the workforce and entrepreneurship support systems in Duluth serve people of color. WEES developed an initial action plan, and will spend the next two years focusing on implementation, with ongoing active community outreach and engagement throughout. The Duluth Workforce Development Board also engages with City commissions representing key stakeholder groups, to provide input and insight into needs and priorities. These commissions include the Disabilities Commission, Human Rights Commission, African Heritage Commission, Indigenous Commission, and the new LGBTQ+ Commission.
- **Board and Staff Diversity:** The Duluth Workforce Development Board is actively working to add diversity to its membership, recognizing that not all voices impacted by our work are at the table. Duluth Workforce Development has also prioritized hiring more diverse staff, and has made changes to its recruiting, hiring, and onboarding process to that end. Duluth Workforce Development also strives to create an inclusive workplace, with team dynamics and workplace culture as a continuous focus.
- **Employer Engagement:** The board's Equity Committee actively engages employers in advancing diversity and inclusion in recruiting, hiring, onboarding, and retention. The committee has hosted multiple workshops for employers, issued a tool kit, and will work one-on-one to help employers make changes to their practices and build a more inclusive organizational culture.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Duluth Workforce Development helps lead the Duluth Digital Inclusion Initiative, a community-wide partnership focused on bridging the digital divide through providing devices to those who need them, improving digital literacy, and expanding broadband access and affordability.
- **Career Pathway Training:** Duluth Workforce Development's career pathway training programs have a primary focus on training low-income and BIPOC individuals, as well as training women for non-traditional careers. These programs create a supportive learning environment, and include direct engagement with employers to open up entry points to in-demand careers to offer pathways to long-term career advancement and higher wages.

One key focus has been on the construction industry. The City's community benefits program requires that a certain percent of work hours be performed by women, people of color, and/or disadvantaged workers. The Minnesota Department of Transportation has similar goals which apply to the Twin Ports Interchange project. As part of this project, MNDOT is supporting a new partnership between Duluth Workforce Development and community consultants to conduct outreach and recruitment of women and BIPOC individuals for the construction industry.

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?

Local staff have over 10 years of experience working closely with Rapid Response and continue to participate in trainings and updates as available to ensure compliance with policies and procedures. The Partner Express email is a valuable resource for counselors to stay up-to-date as well.

- 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)?

As soon as we are notified of or we hear about a mass layoff event of any size occurring in Duluth we notify the Rapid Response team through their established process. If it is after hours we notify them first thing the following day.

- 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.

Dislocated Worker Counselors regularly deliver information on-site or virtually about the dislocated worker program and available CareerForce services. This is done in partnership with the Rapid Response team in the case of a large layoff, or independently after Rapid Response has determined the layoff does not meet the 50-person threshold. Duluth Workforce Development will also assist in making contact with the employer if Rapid Response is unable, including visiting the work site in person. Dislocated Worker Counselors are often in contact with Rapid Response staff to coordinate information sessions, and provide a local contact to affected employers and employees.

- 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?

Workforce Development staff will notify TAA staff immediately via email if they think there is a company that may be potentially TAA certified. Staff have helped laid off workers to file TAA petitions as needed as well. We then continue to follow the petition to find out if it's been certified, even involving elected officials as needed.

- 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?

Local staff attend information sessions before and after a company is Trade Act certified, in partnership with Rapid Response and/or Trade Act staff. We then work with the employer to ensure that updated employee lists are available and supplied to TAA staff. If appropriate, we partner with other agencies to best serve the workers.

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.

Counselors are trained in our local and state policies to ensure understanding. Counselors use our internal voucher system to track and issue support, a budget spreadsheet to track obligations and use of support services and documentation in the Workforce One support services log for transparency with partner agencies and DEED. Our voucher system provides the framework for issuing supportive services in categories allowed under our local and state policies. File review and monitoring ensure adherence to policy.

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

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

SECTION D: SYSTEM OPERATIONS AND ATTACHMENTS

1. The local workforce development area has processes in place to assure non-duplicative services and 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?

Staff at the CareerForce reception desk and in the CareerLab are trained to ask probing questions and have customer service skills to determine how we can help the individual obtain their goals. They refer to on site signage and the veteran's questionnaire to draw out information regarding military service. That in addition to signage posted in visible places throughout our public spaces help us to determine their status.

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

Veterans and their spouses have priority of service in every CareerForce office. Signage is visible at points throughout our public spaces. We thank them for their service and tell them verbally that Veterans and their spouses have priority of service. We coach them to register on Minnesotaworks.net and check the box that indicates they are a veteran. This simple detail assigns them special status on Minnesotaworks.net. When they enter their resume on Minnesotaworks.net and to make it viewable to employers, their resume will come up first when an employer searches for skills that match their resume and will be flanked by an American Flag symbol indicating to the employer that they served our country and are a priority for hire

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?

Duluth Workforce Development maintains a page on the City of Duluth website, as well as a presence on social media through Facebook and Instagram. A Veterans Priority of Service statement is included on the front page of the website, and noted on both social media pages.

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

We request that that they answer the Veterans Service questionnaire to be reviewed by staff to see who can best serve them to meet their needs. We rely on self-disclosure for them to answer the questions honestly but recognize that until we have built rapport, they may not feel comfortable doing so. We build relationships through customer service and eventually, they may disclose things that were not brought to light initially.

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?

If they qualify for services with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, we immediately give or scan the questionnaire to the DVOP who contacts the Veteran for services. DVOPS do outreach services and every office has a DVOP assigned. We also make sure to meet any immediate needs through one of our CareerForce staff. We are all able to guide them with information, services and resources to reach their employment goals, and immediate assistance is always a priority.

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

DVOP and LVER staff are an integral part of our team, and participate in meetings and services in the office. LVERs are the direct contact with employers in the region to help with Veterans job placement and job referral services. The DVOPs provide intensive case management services and often refer the customer to CareerForce partners for

appropriate services based on their individual needs such as WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs for a training plan or to VRS for services to accommodate a disability. LVERs and DVO's are invited to all CareerForce staff meetings, and to present information to our staff when they have programmatic or information to share. The LVER also participates in the Duluth Area Business Team to share insight on employer engagement with other employer-focused staff.

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?

Our strategy to ensure that job ready job seekers are registering on Minnesotaworks.net and making their resume's viewable is to demonstrate the benefits of the system and encourage them to use this tool to maximize their job search success. All CareerForce customers utilizing the CareerLab and all workshop attendees are given a brief orientation which includes information about our states premier labor exchange system that is free for both employers and job seekers. We encourage job seekers to create a complete profile with up to 5 targeted resumes and to make them viewable for employers. All unemployment insurance recipients are required to create their account and create a viewable resume as a condition of continued unemployment insurance benefits. Wagner-Peyser staff do outreach to follow up with unemployment recipients and help them with this task if it is not completed. We also encourage employers to post their job openings and to create their account on Minnesotaworks.net to be able to search the database for job seekers who have the targeted skills they are looking for. Employers can reach out to the job seekers directly for recruitment purposes.

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.

As stated in board bylaws, when vacancies occur, the board in collaboration with the Workforce Development Director, shall solicit and receive nominations. The Governance Committee and Director shall 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 Duluth’s economy, targeted industry sectors and occupations, and businesses, workers, and job seekers. Final recommendations will be submitted to the Mayor for review and consideration. He/she will make appointments from the list of candidate nominations submitted by the Executive Committee and Director.

The term of membership on the board shall be for three (3) years. The term of appointments will be staggered to the extent possible to ensure only a portion of the membership expire in a given year. Members may choose to renew their term, as long as they have remained in compliance with the board’s attendance policy.

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?

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.**

Attachment G

LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AREA KEY INDUSTRIES IN REGIONAL ECONOMY

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

An industry's importance can be measured several ways, including concentration of employment, growth, demand, and wages. Based on these measures **Healthcare and Social Assistance** is the key industry in the region and the City of Duluth. Other key industries include **Accommodation and Food Services, Public Administration, Other Services, Educational Services, Construction, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Retail Trade, and Manufacturing.**

Compared to the rest of Minnesota, the industries that are more concentrated in Workforce Service Area 4 – Duluth are: Utilities, Healthcare and Social Assistance, Public Administration, Accommodation and Food Services, Other Services, Educational Services, and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation. In addition, Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services, Management of Companies, Information, and Finance and Insurance were significantly more concentrated in Duluth when compared to the rest of the Northeast Minnesota region.

Of the industries more concentrated compared to the state, Healthcare and Social Assistance is both the largest, grew the most (8.3%) in the period of 2014-2019, and pays above average wages. Other Services (+5.3%) and Accommodation and Food Services (+1.7%) are also more concentrated and added employment, despite paying below average wages.

While not as concentrated, Manufacturing pays above average wages and grew the most of any industry (+26.1) from 2014-2019. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services with a location quotient of 1.63 is more concentrated compared to the Northeast region, has above average wages, grew the last five years, and was one of only two industries to not lose jobs through Q3 2020. Utilities was the most concentrated in the area, more than two times as prevalent as in the rest of the state, and on average was the highest paying industry with an annual wage over \$100,000 a year.

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

Industry Employment Statistics, 2020					
WDB 4 - City of Duluth	2020 Data (Q1-Q3)				
NAICS Industry Title	Number of Firms	Number of Jobs	Percent of Jobs	Avg. Annual Wage	Location Quotient (MN)
Total, All Industries	2,477	53,575	100.0%	\$52,832	1.00
Construction	144	1,811	3.4%	\$64,246	0.70
Manufacturing	88	3,049	5.7%	\$65,797	0.50
Utilities	7	678	1.3%	\$107,345	2.56
Wholesale Trade	77	952	1.8%	\$59,401	0.38
Retail Trade	385	5,117	9.6%	\$29,137	0.95
Transportation and Warehousing	63	1,413	2.6%	\$70,911	0.69
Information	43	702	1.3%	\$56,316	0.75
Finance and Insurance	145	1,548	2.9%	\$70,113	0.53
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	113	674	1.3%	\$36,920	1.00
Professional and Technical Services	240	2,870	5.4%	\$66,369	0.93
Management of Companies	25	449	0.8%	\$95,143	0.26
Admin. Support and Waste Mgmt. Svcs.	83	1,117	2.1%	\$32,413	0.47
Educational Services	67	4,515	8.4%	\$52,173	1.06
Health Care and Social Assistance	339	18,027	33.6%	\$58,968	1.88
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	81	793	1.5%	\$22,429	1.04
Accommodation and Food Services	250	4,542	8.5%	\$18,096	1.26
Other Services	273	1,759	3.3%	\$29,397	1.16
Public Administration	60	3,642	6.8%	\$65,693	1.39

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

The Duluth Workforce Development Board will also track Green Jobs as a key component of the regional economy. Green jobs are those jobs that spend at least 50% of their time on tasks and services related to reducing the impacts of climate change or improving climate resilience. According to Clean Jobs Midwest's 2019 report, there were more than 61,800 clean energy jobs in Minnesota before the COVID-19 pandemic. In that year, clean energy jobs grew 2.5 times faster than the state's overall employment. The vast majority of clean energy jobs in Minnesota are focused on energy efficiency. These are often traditional occupations such as HVAC technicians, electricians, and building operators who are now installing or operating efficient equipment. Renewable energy is the second largest segment of clean energy jobs. This includes solar panel manufacturing and installation, as well as wind turbine shipping and maintenance. As Duluth and Minnesota take even greater steps to combat climate change, there is great potential for job growth, and for existing occupations to evolve to meet demand for new skills and technologies. The Duluth Workforce Development Board can play a key role in ensuring our community has the workforce it needs to respond to climate change and build climate resilience.