



Workforce Development Board

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Duluth, Minnesota 55802

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Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 24, 2022; 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Virtual Meeting, via WebEx

Present:

Brian Durand, Project Executive, McGough
Emily Edison, Executive Director, SOAR Career Solutions
Chiamaka Enemuoh, President, Lifestone Health Care
Claire Farmer-Lies, Marketing & Communications Specialist, Residential Services Inc.
Angie Frank, Adult Basic Education (ABE) Manager, Duluth Adult Education
Lindsey Growette Stingle, Human Resources Director, National Bank of Commerce
Marla Halvorson, HR Director, St. Luke's
Monica Haynes, Director, UMD Bureau of Business & Economic Research
Shawn Herhusky, Workforce Development Manager, Essentia Health
Duane Hill, District Engineer, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Julie Johnson Atkinson, Vice President of Convention Sales, Visit Duluth
Thomas Kriske, Workforce Development Director, Lake Superior College
Laura Krollman, Manager, Minnesota Power
Jennifer Oakes, DEED Job Service Site Supervisor, Duluth CareerForce
Vance Okstad, Director of Talent Acquisition, Cirrus Aircraft
Paul Pedersen, Director of Outreach, MAC-V
Rick Revoir, Dean of Strategic Development, College of St. Scholastica
Ian Vincent, Senior Business Developer, APEX
Sonia Vinnos, Rehab Manager, DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Amanda Yates, Financial Services Manager, St. Louis County
Elena Foshay, Director, Duluth Workforce Development
Carson Gorecki, Northeast Regional Labor Market Analyst, DEED
Carol Turner, Operations Manager, Duluth Workforce Development

Meeting called to order at 2:02p.m. The Workforce Development Board successfully established a quorum.

Welcome New Members:

- Rick Revoir, Dean of Strategic Development, College of St. Scholastica

Action Items:

- November 15, 2021 board meeting minutes were approved by board members in attendance.

- Reminder to fill out form with additional contact information.
- Reminder to complete Oath of Office in person at City Clerk's Office, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- Committee meeting reminder.

Public Comments: None

Land Acknowledgement Discussion:

- Equity Committee would like to start board meetings with an indigenous land acknowledgement.
 - Do not want it to sound performative. It should reflect the land we are all living on, that is not our indigenous land.
 - It should be directly tied to work that we're doing, the mission of this group and the impact we can have.
 - It should be an acknowledgement of the past and present day impact. It should include our dedication to improving education and employment inequities.
- Next steps—watch video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9y1SonLVouU>), do research on background on what it means and why people do it, share examples that have been used in other places, and think about second part of acknowledgement regarding what we are committed to doing. Will follow up at next meeting.

Updates & Announcements:

- Denfeld and East High Schools are planning career exploration fairs for late March. Looking for folks who are willing to volunteer to talk to students.
- CareerForce operations update:
 - Services provided by appointment only.
 - Offering 45 in-person appointments a week and serving some of the largest numbers of people in the state.
 - Working towards getting the computer lab reopened to the public.
- We were awarded over \$1.1 million in grants from DEED to support career pathway training. Thank you to Duluth Adult Education SOAR, Lake Superior College, Community Action Duluth, and employers.
 - Four Pathways to Prosperity (P2P) awards received.
 - On-Ramp is focused on those who score below a sixth grade level in reading or math. SOAR will be leading that effort in partnership with Duluth Adult Education.
 - Participants graduate into employment or bridge training. There are two pathways in our bridge training classes—construction and health care.
 - The Individualized program provides tuition assistance and paid internships in manufacturing, health care, construction and IT.
 - It will support our career pathway training for the next 18+ months.
- The state is funding CNA training. Effort led by MDH. Classes are being held locally.

- Construct Tomorrow, construction career fair event at DECC, may be postponed until May due to COVID. For high school students and adult job seekers.
- Marie Damiano and Elena Foshay met with Congressman Pete Stauber. Shared workforce trends and WIOA. Discussed Build Back Better and support funding for workforce development.
- Driving the Narrative--media event to address the misconception that people don't want to work. We need employers to talk about strategies they've used in these areas—talent attraction, diversity and inclusion, attracting and retaining older workers, and family friendly workplace. MNDot volunteered, and we would love to have other employers involved.

Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Program Overview-Jose Cabrera

- What is WIOA? It can be a resource of support, help, and hope for the members of our community who are most in need of assistance to get into a high demand, high paying career. Tuition assistance is paid directly to schools to help offset the fees of tuition, fees, and textbooks. We can also provide support service assistance—other costs like transportation, tools, and work clothes. Clients also have access to time and training with career counselor.
- In a year we serve around 40 people. This year we've served over 60 people. We're responding to changes in the workplace and marketplace.
- WIOA adult program serves adults, 18 and older.
- What are we training them to do? Most clients go to LSC and train for healthcare careers. We also serve students at UMD and CSS, Fond du Lac and Northwood. Other industries present in our population include transportation, social work, IT, and marketing.
- What kind of results does WIOA achieve? Credential attainment, employment retention after program exit, and median hourly rate after program exit. 93% clients completed credential, exceeding state average of 72%. Six months after exit, 78% retained employment. 12 months after exit, 87% maintained employment. (COVID may have influenced those percentages.) Average salary after exiting is \$44,000 a year.
- Another way we can help is by subsidizing unpaid internships, serving students at UMD and CSS. Many degrees require internships. Doing unpaid work can be a financial hardship for many students. We also do co-enrollments with other grants.
- Priority of service is given to veterans and spouses of veterans, those who are low income or receiving public assistance, people of color, and/or those at risk of homelessness. Clients do not have to be in one of those priority of service categories though. The best fit for WIOA is someone who wants to work immediately after program exit and retain employment. Must be Duluth resident.
- Child care barriers can be helped through this program.

Update on status of the labor market-Carson Gorecki

- Labor force participation—who is working and looking for work, has fallen and remained flat, not a lot of growth.
- Unemployment has declined, but workforce has not bounced back. The unemployment rate in NE MN was the lowest we've seen since 1990.
- People who are unemployed are re-entering the workforce but we aren't adding to the labor market. It's getting harder to find job seekers, many have left labor force.

- Employee turnover is high (more people quitting jobs) but seeing fewer layoffs.
- Who has left the workforce and who has joined? MN has older than average population and it's safe to assume that is a factor in NE MN. Duluth has a larger younger labor force due to colleges which is a benefit, but in NE MN as a whole we have a smaller, younger population. There is an imbalance in older workers leaving the work force and younger available workers.
- Typically many people retire and go back to work part time. The rate of people doing this has fallen.
- Long-term outlook for US population (next 10-20 years) projects that deaths are on track to surpass births (some of that has to do with pandemic), and migration and immigration has fallen significantly for last five years. The long-term overall demographic trends are not allowing us to address a lot of these workforce stressors we see now and that we're expecting to continue to see in the future. It's important for people to know and understand the longer-term outlook because you can't work towards solutions without understanding how important these trends are and heading.

2022 strategic planning discussion-added notes to work committees have done

- Goal One: Increase Awareness
- Goal Two: Increase Availability and Access
- Goal Three: Support Youth and Young Adults
- Goal Four: Coordinated Service Model
- Goal Five: Reduce Disparities

Meeting adjourned: 3:57 p.m.

Next meeting is Monday, March 21, 2022, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.; via WebEx