



## Workforce Development Board

402 West First Street  
Duluth, Minnesota 55802

 218-730-5241

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## Meeting Minutes

Monday, November 18, 2023

Duluth Public Library, Green Room, 520 W. Superior St, Duluth, MN 55802

### Present:

Corey Cusick, Community Services Director, United Way  
Kayla Dietzmann, Director of HR & Marketing, SCS Interiors  
Brian Durand, Project Executive, McGough  
Emily Edison, Executive Director, SOAR Career Solutions  
Claire Farmer-Lies, Marketing & Communications Specialist, Residential Services Inc.  
Angie Frank, Manager, Duluth Adult Education  
Susie Gilbertson, Sr. Recruiter, Maurices Corporation  
Lindsey Growette Stingle, Human Resources Director, National Bank of Commerce  
Monica Haynes, Director, UMD Bureau of Business & Economic Research  
Duane Hill, District Engineer, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Julie Johnson Atkinson, Vice President of Sales, Visit Duluth  
Linda Kingston, Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, Lake Superior College  
Jennifer Oakes, DEED Job Service Site Supervisor, Duluth CareerForce  
Vance Okstad, Director of Outreach, Cirrus Aircraft  
Paul Pedersen, Director of Outreach, MAC-V  
Scott Vezina, Director of Communications & Marketing, Goodwill  
Amanda Yates, Assistant Director Economic Services and Supports, St. Louis County  
Shayla Drake, Workforce Strategy Consultant, DEED  
Elena Foshay, Director, Duluth Workforce Development  
Carson Gorecki, Northeast Regional Labor Market Analyst, DEED  
Carol Turner, Operations Manager, Duluth Workforce Development  
Alex Ren, Youth Representative

**Meeting called to order at 2:00 p.m. The Workforce Development Board successfully established a quorum.**

**Welcome new members:** Alex Ren, Youth Representative

**Public Comment:** None

**PROWD Grant-Mark Schultz, Cheryl Turitto, Rachel Okerlund**

- Unique, 3-phase project—the first time the Department of Labor and Bureau of Prisons have worked together

- Phase 1
  - Mark Schultz oversees phase 1.
  - Cheryl Turitto will be working in prisons. Topics include how to talk about backgrounds, how to create a resume, networking, and skills identification.
  - With partners, a 16-credit certification business and entrepreneurship class will be offered. There is no technology allowed in jails/prisons, so the final business computer class must be completed after release.
  - Other partnerships have been formed to provide training with the laborers union, bricklayers union, and heavy highway construction.
  - Program starting in Duluth in December 2023.
- Phase 2 and 3
  - Rachel Okerlund oversees stage 2.
  - They will be working in three federal prisons--Waseca, Sandstone, Duluth.
  - Some individuals will be released in MN, some to other states.
  - After the sixth session with Cheryl, then they'll work with Rachel.
  - Identifying barriers and strengths, connections.
  - What does a fresh start look like?
  - The team will continue working with them when they're released to half way houses, etc.
  - Adding computer labs to some half-way houses (not in Duluth).
  - Help assist with finding houses, child care, social services.
- Employers can connect with PROWD by reaching out to Rachel Okerland.
- 10 on PROWD staff team, statewide.
- In Phase 3, WIOA funds will provide flexible funding as needed for stipends, housing, child support, college, etc.
- Cheryl Turitto will have an office at the Duluth CareerForce.
- Paul Pederson noted that MAC-V has very similar project, and they already partner with DEED with dual enrollment. They could work together to serve veterans.
- Lake Superior College Program
  - 16 credit certificate
  - Intentionally chose courses that met the requirements of the grant and is also the beginning of the business transfer pathway
  - It would give participants marketable skills for employment and increase ability to enter transfer programs
  - Waiting on approval from state
- Adult Basic Education would like to talk about partnering.
- Contact Info:
  - Rachael Okerlund, [Rachel.okerlund@state.mn.us](mailto:Rachel.okerlund@state.mn.us), 651-539-4139
  - Cheryl Turitto, [Cheryl.turitto@state.mn.us](mailto:Cheryl.turitto@state.mn.us), 651-259-7639
  - Mark Schultz, [mark.schultz@state.mn.us](mailto:mark.schultz@state.mn.us), 651-259-7621

#### **Action Items:**

- September 18, 2023 meeting minutes approved by all members in attendance.
- Request for subsequent designation approved by all members in attendance.
- 2024 meeting calendar approved by all members in attendance.

- Review Chair/Vice Chair election process/timeline
  - Kayla Dietzmann appointed at last meeting as Chair, Claire Farmer-Lies Vice Chair
  - If you would like to propose nominees, please let Monica know
  - The Chair and Vice Chair must be representative of a private business
  - We have from now until January meeting to make nominations, reach out to Elena
  - Vote at January meeting
- Discussion: Election Results and role of Mayor under WIOA
  - Local elected official (LEO) is Mayor in LWDA #4-Duluth
  - LEO has a formal role as outlined in WIOA. Mayor appoints members to workforce board, signs off on request for subsequent designation, signs MOU and IFA, approves local/regional plan.
  - LEO is a voting member of MAWB.
  - City Council approves all contracts and City auditor's office is responsible for fiscal oversight.
  - Change in leadership January 2024. The new Mayor will need orientation regarding the role of LEO
  - Opportunity for us to highlight the role of the board. We have been talking about raising the visibility of workforce boards statewide and we can start doing that in Duluth at the local level.
  - Important for new Mayor to see the board as convener of business community, higher education, the school district and other partners around the workforce system.
  - Board can advocate for the value of the new library project.
  - We will also have five new city council members.
    - Elena proposes we host an open house and invite state reps, city council members, and Mayor.
  - Budget presentation to City Council next week.
  - Housing and child care will be hot topics related to workforce development.
  - Elena will make sure board has talking points.

#### **Updates & Announcements:**

- Legislative open house
  - Plan in late January, early February
  - Do it before state reps are in session if possible – session starts February 12
  - Board members on committee to plan
    - Shayla Drake, Julie Johnson Atkinson, Executive Committee
- Debrief of Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB)/Governor's Workforce Development Board (GWDB) joint meeting
  - Heard presentation by the person who coordinates sector strategy initiatives for state of Colorado.
    - Sector strategy initiative is focused on a specific industry sector, employer or industry led, convenes partners that include both employers and workforce/education organizations to build a workforce pipeline (short and long term).
    - We have two, almost three sector strategy initiatives here—Construction Working Group, Healthcare Working Group, and we're working to get the Manufacturing Working Group off the ground.
    - Based on best practices shared in the presentation, we have a solid start. We're in a really good position.
  - Also heard presentation about job quality initiative
  - Discussed service delivery--how do we create a no wrong door approach for employer services?

- Verso Grant recap
  - First large layoff in a while in Duluth.
  - Review of Rapid Response process
    - When an employer decides to lay off a large number of employees, they write a letter to state.
    - The state Rapid Response Team reaches out right away to discuss layoff aversion and dislocated worker services.
    - If more than 50 people laid off are interested in dislocated worker services, then there's additional funding available to local providers to serve those employees.
  - In July 2020, Verso announced it was laying off 275 people.
  - DWD was called in, received additional state funding to serve them.
  - Grant was extended because we were serving so many people. It ended June 2023.
  - We contracted with JET and AEOA to help serve clients.
  - In total, 132 people served. (Some of the 275 laid off employees retired early or found other work). 86 exited to employment. 30 still enrolled and are in school finishing degree. Some are working for ST Paper or Sappi and are benefitting from OJT, which is a reimbursement for the employer for part of their wages as an incentive to hire and train.
  - Project approved for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), which allows impacted employees access to additional benefits.
  - In total, \$41,000 in state Dislocated Worker funds spent on training. (TAA also provided tuition assistance). Customized computer classes and other training workshops provided.
  - \$18,000 in support services provided
- MOU/IFA negotiations
  - No updates at the moment

#### **Budget Presentation:**

- We have many grants starting and ending at different times of you, this is year to date.
  - The city budget runs on a calendar year. Our grants run on various different calendars.
- Services Inventory
  - 2782 people served at CareerForce in Duluth in 2022 (no duplicates).
  - Lower number than previous years-- RESEA sessions moved online and over the phone now. (RESEA offered by MN Unemployment Insurance.)
  - Almost 30% served are people of color, 26% under age 25, 18% older workers.
  - 83% served and counted live in Duluth. In the past we served more people outside Duluth due to in-person RESEA sessions.
  - 2024 proposed revenues and expenses
  - 2023 Accomplishments
    - 188 served through P2P grant
    - 132 served at Verso
    - Office hours at colleges
    - ABCs program with Family Freedom Center
    - Good Jobs Great Cities
    - 85 employers at job fairs
  - Challenges

- Tight labor market
- Housing
- Those who are unemployed have significant barriers
- Child care
- Opportunities
  - Consistent job growth
  - 2100 people added to Duluth's labor force (includes those returning after pandemic layoffs)
  - Stronger partnership with school district
  - Growth of green economy jobs
  - Manufacturing and construction, workforce pipelines
  - Library project

### **Local/Regional Plan**

- Reviewed previous mission statement/goals/vision
  - Revise in response to state's vision and goals
- Are 2021 goals still relevant?
  - COVID wording - Is it still relevant?
  - Align local with state goals
  - Form committee to drive planning process
    - Executive committee for sure a part of this, Linda Kingston will help as available, Alex (youth member), Amanda, Vance
    - Public facing version, Scott Vezina

**Adjourn 3:59 p.m.**

**Next full board meeting:** January 29, 2:00-4:00 p.m., Duluth Public Library, Green Room, 520 W. Superior St, Duluth, MN 55802