




Workforce Development Board

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Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 16, 2024

Government Services Center, Lake Superior Room, 320 W. 2nd St., Duluth, MN 55802

Present:

Andrea Chartier, Workforce Development Specialist, Essentia Health
Andrea Chirhart, Rehab Manager, DEED Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Nicole Christiansen, Human Resources Manager, Aspirus/St. Luke's
Corey Cusick, Community Services Director, United Way
Kayla Dietzmann, Director of HR & Marketing, SCS Interiors
Brian Durand, Project Executive, McGough
Emily Edison, Chief Mission Officer, True North Goodwill
Chiamaka Enemuoh, President, Lifestone Health Care
Claire Farmer-Lies, Marketing & Communications Specialist, Residential Services Inc.
Angie Frank, Manager, Duluth Adult Education
Monica Haynes, Director, UMD Bureau of Business & Economic Research
Kathy Koch, Manager of Human Resources, Allele
Vance Okstad, Director of Outreach, Cirrus Aircraft
Rick Revoir, Dean of Strategic Development, College of St. Scholastica
Danette Seboe, Principal Career and Tech Education & Career Readiness, ISD 709
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

Meeting called to order at 2:05 p.m.

Welcome: Classie Dudley, Executive Director, Community Action Duluth

Public Comment: None

Updates & Announcements

- Governance committee openings
 - Looking for 1-2 more members
 - If interested in board operations, please reach out to Kayla Dietzmann, Elena Foshay, or Monica Haynes
- SOAR/Goodwill merger
 - True North Goodwill and SOAR merged in July 2024

- A presentation for the board on their strategic plans will occur in upcoming months
- Workforce summit
 - DEED held statewide workforce summit in Duluth last week with around 300 attendees
 - Workforce development efforts of Duluth highlighted
 - We are leaders on cutting edge of workforce development
 - More networking opportunities needed
- New Americans workshop
 - Our agency hosted a workshop for employers and community stakeholders, along with DEED Assistant Commissioner for Immigrant and Refugee Affairs
 - Discussed some of the things we've discussed in our meetings to help attract New Americans and supports needed to keep them here
 - A staff attorney with the refugee and resettlement office with DHS attended. They're building out a network of immigration attorneys to provide training and advising for those serving the refugee community. They would like to launch hubs around the state.
 - Immigrant resource guide shared
- Workforce Solutions Series
 - Four sessions, held at Clyde Ironworks on Oct. 21, Nov. 19, Dec. 17, Jan. 14.
 - Topics include:
 - Navigating the Future of Work: Adapting to Remote, Hybrid, and Flexible Models
 - Collaboration Across Sectors: Who's in Your Sandbox?
 - Changing Perceptions: Enhancing Duluth's Appeal as a Work Destination
 - Cultivating a Thriving Workforce: Enhancing Culture and Inclusivity.
 - \$100 for all or \$30 for each meeting, pre-register here: [Workforce Solutions Series Registration - The Northspan Group, Inc.](#)
- Local/regional plan launch
 - Plan is being signed by the Mayor at the moment
 - Will be ready to submit to DEED and launch publicly soon
 - Will be on DWD website with the summary presentation
 - How do we get the word out?
 - Audience—organizations doing workforce development work, those working in economic development
 - Suggestions—press release, send to list of organizations we align with and Chamber meetings

Action Items:

- Minutes
 - May 2024 DWD board meeting minutes were approved by all in attendance.
 - June 2024 DWD board meeting minutes were approved by all in attendance.
- Self-Sufficiency Standard
 - Reasons why relevant
 - Under federal and state dislocated worker program, if you're enrolled in that program and enrolled in training, you are not able to work earning above 80% of the wage you were making when you were laid off. This is challenging and unrealistic for most people.
 - We see dislocated workers who won't enroll because they need to work

- We read the rules and policies and it said either 80% of wages on date of dislocation or a self sufficiency threshold established by the service provider.
 - That means that empowers this board to set a different standard and we can use that as the standard threshold for the ways that someone can earn while they're in school.
 - To figure out wage thresholds, we looked at DEED's cost of living tool. It takes a look at costs like housing, childcare, food, etc., and breaks it down by family size. We can look at whatever that says for that individual participant's family size, and they can't earn more than that wage while they're in school.
 - Setting this as a standard would help open up enrollment in the dislocated worker program.
 - Threshold for self- sufficiency determined by board gives us a benchmark to work off.
 - DEED Cost of Living Tool can be found here: [Cost of Living in Minnesota / Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development](#)
 - Self-sufficiency standard approved by all members in attendance
- Local Incumbent Worker Training policy
 - We provide funding to help employers train current workers. Nationally, it's called Incumbent Worker Training Funds. In NE MN, we call it the Talent Development Program. City of Duluth and JET pool together to market this program to employers.
 - We are allowed to use up to 20% of our state and federal dislocated worker funds to support incumbent worker training.
 - The local board can define, clarify and set priorities
 - In terms of use of funds it says that we will set aside an amount of money
 - We set a limit for each employer of \$10,000 a year to support incumbent worker training, funds available July 1.
 - Special circumstances, board can approve higher amounts
 - Employer must contribute a portion of total project costs – amount depends on employer size.
 - Cost contribution can be training costs, employee wages during training, or other shared costs
 - Employer needs to demonstrate a clear and tangible benefit for the employee
 - Employee needs to advance in job title, in wage or both
 - Prevent lay off
 - Tangible benefit to employer (add jobs, remain competitive, etc.)
 - Priorities (not requirements) – will be used to weigh and prioritize applications
 - Employer hasn't previously received incumbent worker funds
 - Training leads to an industry recognized credential for the employee
 - Training helps support economic growth and tax base expansion
 - Business eligibility
 - If applicant is a sole proprietor, must be adding an employee over the next 12 months
 - Self-attestation on part of employer required that employees benefiting from training have worked there for at least six months, unless it's a group training then 51% of training participants have worked there for at least six months.
 - Employer agrees to report on results and outcomes
 - DWD will follow up on outcomes

- For employers who are requesting additional rounds of funding in subsequent program years, it needs to be different employees (unless it's shown that it's a special project with specific benefits to employee)
 - Local incumbent worker training policy addendum approved by all members in attendance
- Member terms
 - There are a number of board members whose terms expire on October 31, 2024. Governance Committee will be reaching out to members to see if they'd like to renew terms.
- Attendance policy
 - Reminder that we have an attendance policy and important that we have a quorum in order to pass action items
 - Members are required to attend at least four meetings a year
 - If you have several unexcused absences, someone on the governance committee might reach out to you
 - Due to open meeting law, we cannot hold meetings virtually
 - Unexcused means that you didn't reach out to Elena in advance to notify that you must miss the meeting
- Formation of talent attraction/New Americans committee
 - Potential interest, but concern about capacity to lead additional committees
 - Define what the scope and direction of this committee would be helpful
 - The Equity Committee may be able to take on some of this work
 - Other committees may be able to do some of this as well

Education/Occupation Alignment Analysis for NE MN - Results-Carson Gorecki

- Objective/Concept
 - Assess the alignment of supply and demand of workers in our region; identify potential gaps in talent pipelines, career pathways
 - Inform and focus additional inquiry
 - Supply: workers with newly-obtained postsecondary degrees or training
 - Demand: Regional occupations with above average demand that typically require postsecondary education or training
- Education-Occupation Alignment Methods
 - Looked at top 100 regional occupations in demand that require some postsecondary education/training
 - Matching occupation with education program to determine if there is alignment between projected demand and the number of people completing relevant training each year
- Results Summary
 - Categories are based on the number of completions as a share of projected openings
 - Occupations Requiring Graduate and Professional Degrees are harder to track/match, as programs are often hybrid or online and may be offered by schools around the state
 - Some occupations requiring a Bachelor's degree are tricky to match, given some programs have sub-concentrations and others can be matched with many different occupations. Others are a more clear match.
 - Occupations Requiring Associate Degrees are easier to make connections between local job opportunities and associated training

- For some occupations, the data shows that we have enough graduates, but employers are still saying that they're struggling to fill positions. Talent attraction is key – particularly connecting recent college graduates to local employers.
- Summary
 - Despite limitations, this is the most detailed, local analysis of how our education and training systems match up with our labor market
 - Highlights areas of greatest need
 - Works toward a common understanding, basis for collaboration
 - Living document
 - For the future
 - Review by local institutions to confirm or identify misses
 - Comparison to other proprietary sources

Committee Reports

- Construction Working Group
 - Have been getting a sense of where the construction industry is at. Employers are saying they are currently staffed, but we have large projects in the future like the bridge that we need to plan for.
 - Meaningful conversations about barriers.
- Healthcare Working Group
 - Discover Healthcare event coming up October 2 at St. Scholastica.
 - LSC updates to some of their programs.
- Emerging Workforce
 - Better ways to engage 14-15 year olds
 - Looked at youth strategic plan
- Equity Committee
 - Equity Dashboard about to launch
 - Toolkit about to launch as well
 - Monthly lunch and learn events continue
- Manufacturing Working Group
 - Have a work plan and monthly meetings
 - Subgroup came together to map out an info graphic
 - Prepping for tour of manufacturing
 - Met with state apprenticeship office
 - Exploring concept of having expo event
- Governance
 - Looking for members

Meeting Adjourned at 3:54 p.m.

Next meeting: Monday, November 18, 2024; 2:00-4:00 p.m., Main Library, Green Room, 520 W. Superior St., Duluth, MN 55802